

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALIST IDEAS AND  
TACTICS AND THE POLICIES OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA : 1897-1905.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contains a discussion of the organization, ideas and methods of the Indian nationalists from 1897 to 1905, the response of the Government to the nationalists, and the policies of the Government which were opposed by the nationalists. It covers the final two years of Lord Elgin's Viceroyalty and the whole of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. In 1897 India suffered severe famine and plague. The famine confirmed the nationalists in their view that India's population was growing poorer as the result of high revenue assessments and the drain of wealth to Europe. The persistency of claims to this effect led British officials to initiate inquiries into both the land revenue system and the expenditure of Indian revenue in England. The measures used to combat plague in Western India were deeply resented. In Poona members of a conspiratorial organization murdered a British plague official. The Government did not find the last of the murderers until 1899. In the meantime officials decided that without tighter control over education and the press, political disaffection was likely to spread. Accordingly, measures were adopted providing for stricter supervision of education and a summary procedure of action against seditious newspapers. The plague threatened the commerce of Bengal and

u the Indian Municipal Commissioners of Calcutta, who were held responsible for the insanitary condition of that city, were relieved of their control of the municipality in the hope of checking the plague.

The Indian National Congress movement was suffering from internal divisions, inactivity, and falling popularity. But the Japanese victories over Russia and the partition of Bengal unexpectedly revived it. In the agitation against the partition, new sections of the population became involved in politics and new methods were used.

This thesis is based on contemporary newspapers, periodicals, and tracts, and on Government records and the private papers of several officials, including those of Lord Elgin (Viceroy 1894-98), Lord Hamilton (Secretary of State 1895-1903) and Lord Curzon (Viceroy 1899-1905).

ABBREVIATIONS

Agri.	Agriculture.
C.P.E.A.	Correspondence with Persons in <sup>England</sup> <del>India</del> and Abroad.
C.W.P.I.	Correspondence with Persons in India.
C.W.S.S.	Correspondence with Secretary of State etc.
Ch.Sec	Chief Secretary.
Chrmn.	Chairman.
Com.	Commissioner.
Confid.	Confidential.
Corresp.	Correspondence.
Dept.	Department.
Dist.	District.
Div.	Division.
Educ.	Education.
Fam.	Famine.
Gen.	General.
Gov.	Government.
H. of C.	House of Commons.
I.H.P.	India Home Proceedings.
I.N.C.	Indian National Congress
Jud.	Judicial
Leg.	Legislative.
Lt. Gov.	Lieutenant-Governor.
Mag.	Magistrate.
Munic.	Municipal.

N.W.P. & O. North West Provinces and Oudh.  
Offg. Officiating.  
P.P. Parliamentary Papers.  
P.S.L.I. Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures  
Received from India.  
Parl. Parliamentary.  
Pol. Political.  
Pri.Sec. Private Sec.  
Prog. Proceeding(s).  
Pub. Public.  
Rev. Revenue  
Sec. Secretary.  
T. and D. Selections. Thagi and Dakaiti Department,  
Special Branch, Selections from  
the Newspapers Published in India.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to define the ideas and tactics of the Indian National Congress and its supporters, and to show how the Government in India responded to those ideas and tactics. The Congress is the centre of this study because it was the only political organization in India that made any pretence of being "national" or representative of all races and religions.

The Congress as an organization offers an unsatisfactory object of study because in the years 1897 to 1905 it was more a general movement, an idea, and an attitude of mind than a concrete political party. It met for three days each year, it passed a number of resolutions which were carefully selected and edited so that minority groups within the Congress would not object to them. But there was no debate, only speech-making, in the annual sessions; there was no standing organization which carried on the political work of the Congress in India between the annual sessions; and there were no official Congress publications, except India which was published in London by the British Committee of the Congress and which printed more contributions from the British friends of the Congress than from Indians themselves. Therefore a study of nationalism in this period, if it is to be meaningful, must be concerned with the individual members of the Congress acting in their private capacities or on behalf of their local

political organizations.

With the spread of education and the growth of the press one might expect that there would have been an increase in political unrest and activity. Except for enlarging the size and functions of the Legislative Councils, few of the Congress demands were met between 1885, when the Congress was founded, and 1905. Meanwhile, the numbers of newspapers and of educated Indians were growing rapidly. In 1885, there were 160 English newspapers and periodicals with a circulation of 90,000; in 1905, there were 309 English newspapers with a circulation of 276,000. In the same period, the number of vernacular newspapers and periodicals increased from 599 to 1,107 (newspapers only) and their circulation from 299,000 to 817,000. In 1886, 4,286 Indian students matriculated and 708 received their B.A.s; in 1905 the numbers were 8,211 and 1,570 respectively. In 1887, there were 298,000 persons studying English and in 1907 there were 505,000.<sup>1</sup> Despite this growth, the period under review was a time of political decline and stagnation for the Congress and the local political associations. Without exception, the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Rafai-am Association of Lucknow, the Indian

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1. Govt. of India despatch, 21 March 1907, No.7, I.H.P., Pub., MSS.Eur. D.573/29.

Association of Lahore, the Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona, the Presidency Association of Bombay, and the Mahajana Sabha of Madras showed less vitality than in previous years. The Founding of the Congress removed part of the raison d'être of these bodies, and their leaders, who had put most of their effort into local political work, divided their time after 1885 between provincial and national activity, without making the sacrifices necessary for the success of either.

There was a growing realization that the Congress movement had neither created a national spirit nor aroused a political consciousness among the population. The ideal of an all-Indian political organization seemed further from fulfilment than it had in the early years of the Congress, and there was a tendency to concentrate on the unification of the religious, regional, linguistic, and caste units instead. The Congress had tried to attract the Muslims but, with a number of individual exceptions, they had refused to join, largely because, as a minority group, they distrusted Congress demands for representative institutions and competitive examinations for government service. Some Muslims also feared that any political activity by the Muslims would be mistaken by the British for disloyalty. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan had been instrumental in keeping the arguments against joining the Congress

before the Muslim community but after his death in 1898, there was discernably less anti-Congress sentiment. The United Indian Patriotic Association and the Muhammadan Anglo- Oriental Defense Association, the two organizations founded to combat the Congress, had ceased to be effective. Furthermore, in the years 1898 to 1903 there was shift among the Muslims in some areas from "active resistance" to "passive acquiescence" and there was discussion as to whether the Muslims ought to join the Congress.<sup>1</sup> The Bengalee even told the Muslims that if they did join, the demands for representative government and simultaneous and competitive examinations for the civil service would be dropped. But this suggestion was made by Surendra Nath Banerjea who was exceptionally conciliatory, and it would probably not have received the assent of most other Congress leaders.

Three Congress leaders Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who were probably the most influential Congress members in their respective provinces, pursued lines of action which damaged the prospects of a Hindu-Muslim political combination. In the

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1. See article by Alfred Nundy in the Bengalee, 5 Dec. 1900. Also Kayastha Samachar, Vol.3, No.4 (April 1901) p.p.d 93-96. For a comprehensive study of the Muslims in this period, see Rafiq Ahmed Zakaria, Muslims in India: A Political Analysis (1885-1906), London Ph.D. Thesis, 1948.

Punjab, Lajpat Rai wrote in 1901 that the Congress ought to abandon "this attempt at forced union" with the Muslims. He thought the Hindus should devote their energies to a Congress which would give them "unity and strength as a religious unity". "It is futile to attempt a chemical and premature union of the various religious nationalities." Instead each community should have "a free hand to strengthen themselves, and to exhaust all means by which they can do so at the cost" of the other communities. Among the particular steps Lajpat Rai envisaged were the reconversion to Hinduism of persons who had embraced Islam and Christianity and the substitution of Hindi and the Devanagiri script for Urdu and the Arabic script.<sup>1</sup> This

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1. Lala Lajpat Rai "The Coming Indian National Congress - Some Suggestions," Kayastha Samachar, Vol.IV, No.5 (Nov. 1901), pp.377-82. Lala Lajpat Rai was almost certainly the author of an article entitled "The Shivaji Cult and Its Detractors" [Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, Nos. 3 & 4 (Sept. Oct. 1902), p.243] He attacked the Hindus who were trying to replace the Shivaji festival with an Akbar festival. Akbar, he said, did not play the role "of a national leader battling against the foreigner and the oppressor, rousing the energies and the enthusiasm of his nation for the defense of the fatherland." He condemned "the fawning and supplicating attitude which certain Hindu leaders assumed in order to win the Mohammedans to the Congress fold." In 1897 Lajpat Rai wrote biographies of Shivaji, Garibaldi, and Mazzini in Urdu for schoolboys.

toughness of mind was by no means general but it was spreading.

In the North West Provinces and Oudh, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya led or helped to lead most of the communal agitations for many years, including the campaign for the prevention of cow killing which led to serious Hindu-Muslim rioting in northern India in 1893-94, and the campaign for a Hindu University at Benares. He also was instrumental in the agitation for the recognition of Hindi as an official language in the North West Provinces and Oudh which succeeded in 1900 and was vehemently opposed by the Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

In Bombay, Bal Gangadhar Tilak followed a similar course. He championed the cow-protection movement and the right of Hindu processions to play music while passing mosques, although this caused the Muslim members of the Sarvajanic Sabha to resign their membership. He converted the Ganapati festival from a primarily domestic occasion into a political celebration with public processions which the Muslims regarded as an offensive parody of their own Muharram festival. In the 1894 Ganapati festival, one of

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1. See Hamid Ali Khan, The Vernacular Controversy: An Account and Criticism of the Equalisation of Nagri and Urdu, as the Character for the Court of the North-West Provinces and Oudh...(1900).

Tilak's close friends, Tatyasaheb Natu, led one of the Ganapati processions past a mosque in which Muslims were praying, ignoring police orders to stop playing music. A riot ensued in which a number of Muslims lost their lives. Tilak probably hoped that by provoking the hostility of the Government and the Muslims, a sense of community and political awareness would be stimulated among the Hindus. Reporting on the cause of the Poona Ganapati riot in 1894, the Commissioner of the Central Division, Bombay, wrote that he supported "the views entertained by the more respectable natives that the agitation by the Deccan Brahmans is directed in reality not against the Muhammadans, but against the Government. Their pretended earnestness on behalf of the Hindu religion ... is only a blind."<sup>1</sup> In 1895 Tilak started a second popular festival, the Shivaji coronation celebration, which was resented by the Muslims. Its purpose was similar to that of Ganapati melas in that it was designed to broaden and intensify the nationalist movement by reviving memories of Shivaji's heroism and the glorious days of Maratha independence. Commenting on the early Ganapati and Shivaji festivals, the Seditious Committee

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1. J. Down, Inspector General of Police, to Under Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Ind. Dept., 15 July 1899, Enclosure to S.W. Edgerley, Sec., Govt. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Aug. 1899, Sept. Prog. No.6, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5640. For an account of the Ganapati festival, see Victor Barnouw, "The Changing Character of a Hindu Festival," American Anthropologist, Vol.56, No.1, (Feb. 1954), p.14.

of 1918 cited them as the first "indications of a revolutionary movement" in India.<sup>1</sup> Tilak himself admitted in 1919 that "Swarajya" (self-rule) was "the end of the (Shivaji) festival."<sup>2</sup>

The shift in emphasis from national to parochial objectives was often only a change in method since the ultimate aim of Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak was, like that of the less resolute leaders, some form of self-rule. But the shift was no less important because of this. The decline of the Social Conference was another indication of the retreat from the hope of immediate national union. The Social Conference, when it was started in 1887, was closely connected with the Congress and its leaders. It held its meetings in the Congress pandal immediately after the Congress session adjourned and many Congress delegates attended the Social Conference. In 1895 when the Congress and the Social Conference were due to meet in Poona, Tilak and the local orthodox Brahmans objected to the use of Congress enclosure by the social reformers. Tilak claimed that his objection was based on his belief that politics and social reform should be separated: to insist on social reform would alienate large

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1. Sedition Committee, 1918. Report, p.1.

2. The Legal Proceedings in the Case of Tilak versus Chirol and another before Mr. Justice Darling and a Special Jury, p.116.

numbers of potential supporters for the more crucial political movement. However, much of the opposition to the Social Conference arose out of the threat it posed to Brahman superiority. Tilak's campaign against the Maharaja of Kolapur for appointing non-Brahman officials revealed where Tilak's sympathies lay. The "orthodox" group held a public meeting on 22 October 1895 to protest against the proposed use of the Congress enclosure by the reformers. The meeting developed into a fracas between the reformers and the orthodox, and the police intervened to restore order. But the meeting did adopt a resolution moved by Tilak which regretted that "the work of the Indian National Congress is drifting into the hands of a small clique", and expressed the wish that the work be entrusted to people "who are prepared to work for the Congress alone." Finally Justice M.G.Ranade, Secretary of the Conference, agreed not to stage the Social Conference in the Congress pandal, but only after further violence, the intervention of Congress leaders of Calcutta and Bombay and the resignation of Tilak from his position as Secretary of the Poona Congress Committee.<sup>1</sup>

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1. S.L.Karandikar, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak: The Hercules and Prometheus of Modern India, pp.125-28. Also, J.Down to Under Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Jud. Dept. 15 July 1899, op.cit.

The Social Conference was allowed to hold its meetings in the Congress pandal when the Congress met in other cities. Nevertheless, it was thought that "a certain amount of pronounced antipathy to social reform and reformers is becoming a passport to popularity for the Congress politician."<sup>1</sup>

Except in Bengal, where the reaction against social reform was most complete, the caste conferences were usurping the role of the Social Conference as the main vehicle for reform. Hargovind Dayal, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 1899 Social Conference, told the Conference that "if India is to be regenerated and unified, we must begin with the units of which it is composed. It is impossible that they should be reformed on the same lines."<sup>2</sup> The caste conference movement was supposed to promote social reform within each caste. It was hoped that by encouraging inter-dining and intermarriage between the sub-castes, the fragmentation and decay in Indian society would be checked. The caste conferences were also a reaction against Western concepts of individualism and a movement in favour of India's supposed traditions of collectivism. In an editorial against the individualism

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1. K.S.Rau, "Social and Political Reform", East and West, Vol.1, No.4 (Feb, 1902), p.425.
  2. Report of the 13th Social Conference, 1899, p.8.

which the Congress was said to be promoting, the Indian Mirror of Calcutta commented that "the wonder of the situation is that those who thus help to destroy a nation by sundering its ties congratulate themselves on being nation-builders" because they organise national congresses and conferences. "To think that a nation can be built up not by a common faith in trial by jury, local self-government, technical education, and things of this kind, is the wildest of dreams."<sup>1</sup> The caste conferences, which began in 1887 with the Kayastha Conference, met at Christmas time, and detracted somewhat from the Congress sessions on which they had been modelled. Some Congress leaders regretted the conferences because they tended to promote inter-caste rivalry, antagonism, and jealousy. But it was recognized that they induced people "to take an interest in public matters who cannot otherwise be reached."<sup>2</sup>

In the period covered by this thesis, some nationalist leaders, who had previously been hostile to or refused to discuss caste, discovered new merits in the social system. In 1889, for instance, Bepin Chandra Pal, had said "the war-cry of modern Indian politics is Representative Government, but, he asked, "in the new Democracy of young

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1. Article entitled "Japan and India", Indian Nation, 1 Aug. 1904, Enclosure No.15, Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 2 Feb. 1905, Feb. Prog. No.166. I.H.P., Pub., Vol.7046.
  2. Alfred Nundy, "Caste as a Factor in Indian Politics", Kayastha Samachar, Vol.5, No.2, (March 1902), p.253.

India, where is the Pariah and his like to be?". His ideal was the formation of one class with equal duties and equal rights, and he condemned "this brainless attempt to prop up tumbled-down superstitions, to defend time-worn monstrosities" in "this caste-ridden, this priest ridden, this authority-ridden country."<sup>1</sup> But in 1904, he said that India's social organization showed "genius" in the "constitutional freedom" it provided. Similarly, Surendra Nath Banerjea, who had previously regarded caste as a divisive force, discovered in 1905 that it was "a source of National Unity .... Henceforth the Indian leader of genius will be the one who can use caste, not one who requires to fight against it."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Bipinchandra Pal. Writings and Speeches, Vol.1, pp.19-24.
  2. Ibid, p.40.
  3. Bengalee, 10 Nov. 1905.  
H.H.Risley ["Race Basis in Indian Politics", Contemporary Review, Vol.57 (May 1890), p.755] had written "that the Indian social system, among both Mohomedans and Hindus, presents about the most perfect example of organized, though as yet unused, political machinery that it is possible for the human imagination to conceive." For a discussion of the political function of caste, see Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Associations," Pacific Affairs, Vol.XXXIII, No.1 (March 1960), p.5.

The Government of India did not have a definite policy towards the Congress except that of non-recognition and tolerance. The Government tried to avoid acknowledging its influence by refusing to receive its deputations and by seldom referring to it in public statements. Equally, it avoided giving the impression of persecuting the Congress. There were some occasions on which the Congress was recognized by the Government. Starting in 1901 the Congress organized an annual industrial conference in conjunction with the Congress session itself. Officials not only assisted the Congress with the industrial conferences, but even donated money to it. In 1899 Curzon removed from his "native Honours" list all the names" of persons connected "with anti-British papers or Societies".<sup>1</sup> However, in subsequent years, association with the Congress was not in itself a necessary disqualification from honours. N.G.Chandavarkar and C. Sankara Nair, former Presidents of the Congress, were appointed to serve as High Court Justices, and Pherozeshah Mehta was knighted. The

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 7 June 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/2.

main reason for the absence of a comprehensive policy towards the Congress was that the nationalist movement was not regarded as an immediate danger to British rule outside of the Bombay Deccan. The Congress was seldom discussed in the private correspondence of Lord Elgin<sup>1</sup> and Lord Curzon. Curzon, in particular, seemed unconcerned with the nationalist movement. When he did write about it, he usually said that the Congress was declining as the result of his administrative and economic reforms. He seemed to have no awareness of ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> psychology of nationalism and this led him to ignore the Congress and the educated classes when he carried out his policies. In his correspondence he often wrote of the wisdom of consulting and conciliating public opinion. But the times he emphasised the importance of public opinion seemed to be the occasions on which he most clearly ignored Indian feeling, as in 1901 when he decided upon sweeping educational reforms and in 1905 when he partitioned Bengal. Curzon's willingness to flout nationalist opinion, was an indication of the Congress's weakness. But more importantly, it stemmed from his assumption that the people of India were extraordinarily inferior to Englishmen in "character" and "capacity".<sup>2</sup>

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1. The year 1897 was an exception. See Chapters I and II.
  2. Curzon to A.J.Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury, No.211, C.P.E.A., 1899-1901, Curzon Papers.

Curzon possessed an unusual understanding and insight into Indian administrative problems and he respected, at least in the abstract, the fact that India had an ancient history and civilization. But his correspondence contains so few references to Indians other than the rulers of Indian states, that it is possible he had neither curiosity nor knowledge about the remainder of Indian society. He did not foresee a time when the British Government of India might be forced to make concessions to rising aspirations. In fact, he asked Indians to give up privileges which he thought were incompatible with efficient government. The main danger to British rule, in his opinion, came from the exacerbation of racial feeling in India. But he attributed the growing racial antagonism almost entirely to the failure of European officials and juries to punish Europeans who killed Indians in shooting accidents and "affrays."<sup>1</sup>

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1. In 1903, Curzon wrote to Hamilton on twelve different occasions about European outrages on Indians and miscarriages of justice, but he barely mentioned nationalism in that year. Curzon's efforts to secure equal justice for all races in cases of this type were among the most admirable and courageous policies he adopted. He sacrificed much popularity with the European community but he believed that unless the number of violent collisions was checked, racial feeling might "boil over in mutiny and rebellion." Between March 1898 and March 1900, there were 129 affrays between European soldiers' shooting parties and Indians, but because of Curzon's new rules for shooting expeditions, only 45 such cases were reported in the next five years. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the Home Department, p.14.

Although the Government did not have a comprehensive policy towards Indian nationalism, it did take measures to impede the social changes taking place in India and to assist the classes which were falling behind in the competition for government service, education, and land. The possibility, or probability, that a limited number of castes - the Brahmans, Kayasthas, Vaidyas, Khatris, Banias - would utilize the institutions of an open society in order to place themselves in a position from which they could dominate the rest of society had been recognized before 1895. But it was during the Viceroyalties of Elgin and Curzon that a decisive departure was taken from the policy of liberalism and towards a policy of paternalism and state interference. The significance of this departure for a study of nationalism is that its effect might well have been to strengthen the potential allies of the British and to remove the grounds for discontent among the classes who were still beyond the influence of nationalist feeling. As far as the Congress supporters themselves were concerned, the shift in policy threatened the vital economic interests of the middle class from which they came.

The official summary of Lord Curzon's administration contains an account of how the land was appropriated by the middle classes.<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this account were shared by officials who helped prepare legislation between 1895 and 1899 to restrict the expropriation of land by the middle classes. It suggested that before British rule began, agriculturists had to surrender all their produce, except what was needed for subsistence, to the State and the revenue collectors.

"As the State gradually moderated its demands the landholder found himself blessed with a larger and larger surplus. His land, which in former days no one would accept as a gift, became now valuable property. The landholder therefore began gradually to borrow on the security of his land, the moneylender began to find the security good. The more reckless the landholder became the more usurious became the moneylender; and by degrees the land through large tracts of country passed on mortgage or sale from the old agricultural families to an entirely new class of man. To the English rulers of the country this at first seemed well and good. To them - brought up as they were on the ideas of Bentham and Mill - the agriculturist and the moneylender were mere units in the process of production and the free transfer of land was a feature of progress which could bring no one any thing but benefit. By open courts, and free competition the land went to the economically strong who best deserved it, and if the economically weak were thus ground out of existence, this was an inevitable result of the forces which work for progress."

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1. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, pp.22-23

In the latter part of the nineteenth century officials and landholders began to protest. The Government tried

"to find remedies by interfering with the strict laws of contract, by altering the strict rules of evidence, by insolvency proceedings, by conciliation, by reducing the revenue. But it was found to be all in vain. The land continued to pass - in some areas steadily, in others with appalling rapidity - from its old owners to the moneylender, the townsman, the successful lawyer, the prosperous merchant; <sup>these men were out of sympathy with the peasantry.</sup> Land to them was a commercial asset and a tenant a rival to be rack-rented. They <sup>to men</sup> were always of a different class from the agriculturist; often of a different caste of nationality; and in many cases of a different religion. They were inferior in physique and inferior in moral calibre to the men whom they supplanted. Their accession to property in land entailed in all cases impoverishment, and in many cases social and political discontent, among the dispossessed peasantry."

The measures adopted during Lord Curzon's administration to check the alienation of land in Bombay and the Punjab were intended to meet this problem.<sup>1</sup>

During the period covered by this thesis, there was a conscious effort to strengthen the aristocratic and conservative classes. For Hamilton, at least, it was a means of combatting the influence of nationalism. He wrote "if we could break the educated Hindu party into two sections holding widely different views we should, by such

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1. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the Revenue and Agriculture Department, pp.22-23.

a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our present system of Government.<sup>2</sup> The laws to keep the landed estates from passing out of the hands of old families,<sup>1</sup> the decision in 1902 to grant army commissions to sons of aristocratic families, and Lord Curzon's insistence upon a higher conception of public service and responsibility among the rulers of native states are examples of official efforts to preserve the aristocracy from decay and profligacy.

The other measure adopted for the purpose of preventing a "class rule" was the abolition of the competitive examination for the provincial civil service. In 1900 the

1. Apart from the Punjab Land Alienation Act and the Bombay Land Revenue Code Amendment Act, these laws were not of major importance. They included an act to enlarge the powers of the Court Wards in the North West Provinces and Oudh in 1899; an act to check the subdivision of revenue-free assignments (jagirs) in the Punjab in 1900; an act to enlarge the powers of the Court of Wards in Madras in 1902; and act to restrict the alienation of land in Chota Nagpur in 1903; acts providing a special insolvency procedure for encumbered estates and restricting the alienation of land in Bundelkund in 1903; an act to preserve ancient zamindari estates in Madras in 1904; an act to establish a Court of Wards in Bombay Presidency; and an act to prevent the transfer of ancestral land outside the agnatic family in the Punjab in 1905. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture. pp.123-25.

2. Hamilton to Curzon, 20 Sept. 1899, MSS. Eur. C. 126/1.

the Secretary of State asked the Government of India if "the system of public instruction in India provided a suitable and loyal class of Government servants" and if unsuccessful candidates for Government service might not "become a political danger." The Government of India decided "that the principle of competition for appointments was of recent and foreign origin and of uncertain and unsatisfactory operation." Accordingly, in March 1904 in the United Provinces, Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, the provincial civil service examinations were abolished. In the United Provinces it was decided to specify that deputy collectors should be chosen from "the landlord class" and the "European schools."<sup>1</sup>

There still were occasions when officials could intervene in politics in order to prop up the older families. In Lucknow, for instance, the Talukdar Association, the main landholders' organization in Oudh, had fallen into the hands of a number of pro-Congress lawyers. Sir Anthony MacDonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces and Oudh, was visited by several of the talukdars who complained that the Maharaja of Ayodhya, the President, had allowed the lawyers to gain control by his ineptitude. They "said they did not know how to correct

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1. Summary of Administration of Lord Curzon of Kedleston in the Home Department, pp.179-80.

matters; and begged of me to help. I managed to argue Ayodhya over; and now a regular procedure has been prescribed which will clip the wings of the vakils who were, for their own ends, pulling the strings.<sup>1</sup> In another case, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir John Woodburn, had to intervene to settle a rancorous dispute among the Bengal zamindars over election procedure in the British Indian Association.<sup>2</sup> But generally speaking, the allies of the British Government were losing their former position of strength.

Although the landed families of Bengal and other provinces were falling behind in the competition with the professional middle class at the turn of the century, persons like the Gaikwar of Baroda and the Maharaja of Darbhanga still possessed more influence and prestige than the Bal Gangadhar Tilaks and the Surendra Nath Banerjeas. This fact was realized by the Congress leaders who seldom deliberately antagonized an important zamindar. A contest for the seat on the Bengal Legislative Council in 1904 revealed both the power of the titled zamindar and the

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1. A.P. MacDonnell to Curzon, 29 April 1899, No. IX, C.W.P.I. 1899, Curzon Papers.
  2. Bengalee, 30 Aug. 1901. The dispute was between the Calcutta zamindars and the mofussil zamindars. The latter formed the Bengal Landholders' Association in August 1901 and immediately raised Rs. 1,35,000 in subscriptions. This was more than twice as much as the Indian National Congress could raise in most years.

precarious political position of the lesser zamindar, who did not join the Congress. Sitanath Roy, one of Dacca's wealthiest zamindars and merchants, was competing with Ambica Charan Mazumdar, a lawyer and a Congress leader, for the seat to be chosen by the Local Boards of the Dacca Division. According to Sitanath Roy, he had been promised the six votes of the Mymensingh District Board's delegate and therefore was assured of victory. But then Surendra Nath Banerjea and other Congress people persuaded the Maharaja of Mymensingh that it would be a serious blow to the influence of the Congress if one of its prominent members was defeated. In consequence, the Maharaja told the delegate from Mymensingh to cast his vote in favour of A.C.Mazumdar although it had been the Maharaja who had promised the Mymensingh votes to Sitanath Roy in the first place. The result was that A.C.Mazumdar won and Sitanath Roy, who had helped the Congress leaders in the early agitation against the partition of Bengal, told the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal "that all his services were at the disposal of the Government."<sup>1</sup>

Most of the major clashes between the nationalists

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1. A.H.L.Fraser to Curzon, 31 Aug. 1904, and its enclosure, Note of an interview with Rai Sitanath Roy Bahadur and his brother, No.125, Correspondence during Lord Curzon's Absence from India, 1904, Curzon Papers.

and the Government during this period were not the result of Government policy towards the Congress. Their origin lay elsewhere. The most important differences grew out of plague administration, land revenue policy, Curzon's drive for efficiency, and the financial relations between India and England. The outbreak of violent nationalism after 1905 cannot be attributed to the Government's policy towards nationalism, but rather to the policies which were adopted in spite of the nationalists, and to the failure of the moderates in the Congress to provide adequate leadership.

CHAPTER I.THE UNREST OF 1897

Between September 1896 and September 1897, British India experienced a series of misfortunes of greater magnitude than in any previous year since the Government of India was transferred to the Crown. It was a year of plague and famine, of riots, political unrest, and sedition. There were costly and dangerous tribal risings along the North-West Frontier, and Assam was devastated by an earthquake. It was a year which gave The Times the "painful" impression "that India continues under British rule, very much as it was under Mughal rule, the arena of disruptive forces on a vast scale."<sup>1</sup> For many politically conscious Indians, it was a year in which they witnessed "the inauguration of a repressive regime unparalleled in the annals of India" since the Mutiny.<sup>2</sup>

The start of the famine coincided with the first outbreak of plague late in the summer of 1896. By the end of the year extensive famine relief was being given in Bombay, the Central Provinces, Madras, Bengal, and the North-West Provinces and Oudh. By the end of 1897, India had experienced "intense and severe distress" over a larger area than in any previously recorded famine.<sup>3</sup> An area covering 225,000

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1. The Times, 19 July 1897.

2. Bengalee, 31 July 1897.

3. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898, p.234.

square miles was affected and an average of 2,220,000 persons received relief daily for one year.<sup>1</sup> Although few deaths were officially attributed to starvation, many thousands succumbed to cholera and other diseases which, in ordinary times, they would have withstood. In the Central Provinces the mortality rate rose from its annual average of 33.76 (1891-95) to 69.34 per mille in 1897;<sup>2</sup> in Bombay, where the normal rate was less than 30 per mille, it reached 45 in 1896-97.<sup>3</sup>

The resistance to the payment of the land revenue demand in Bombay was the most notable political feature of the 1896-97 famine. The Bombay Government, which had been frequently criticized for its failure to suspend sufficient amounts of the demand in years of scarcity,<sup>4</sup> issued a notice to its revenue officials early in December 1896 affirming the principle that no cultivator should be forced to borrow in order to pay the assessment. Several days later, however, the Government learned that "persons not immediately connected with the land" were fostering "a determination to pay no revenue." Because of this the Commissioner of the Central Division, Bombay Presidency, felt it necessary to

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1. Ibid, p.196.

2. Ibid, p.173.

3. Ibid, p.182.

4. See especially "Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the working of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, 1891-92," paras. 65-66. Also, E.C.Buck, Sec., Rev. and Agric. Dept. Govt. of India, to H. Babington Smith, Pri. Sec. to Elgin, 29 April 1894, Reg. No. 267B, MSS. Eur. F.84.

reverse the earlier instructions and he ordered the Assistant Collectors in all the affected districts as well as in Thana, Kolaba, and Ratnagiri to issue "notices preliminary to the forfeiture of occupancy" to all persons who had failed to pay an instalment of the revenue within 10 days of the date on which it was due. The only persons to be excepted from this order were those persons who were "not well-to-do" in the opinion of the mamlatdar and whose "crops have not reached four annas" (i.e., 25% of a theoretically normal crop). Both conditions were necessary in order to qualify for a suspension.<sup>1</sup>

This policy was carried out with vigour. In the whole Bombay Presidency only Rs. 9.6 lakhs were suspended and a half lakh remitted.<sup>2</sup> Of the total demand 94% was recovered. In Bijapur District, where "the crops wholly failed", the Collector remitted none of the assessment and suspended a mere one-fifth.<sup>3</sup> The Famine Commission of 1898 thought that this "questionable" policy probably forced "the majority of the smaller landholders" to borrow in order to pay the revenue demand.<sup>4</sup>

The "persons not immediately connected with land" were representative of the Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona. From its

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1. Resolution and Memorandum by the Commissioner, Central Div., 30 Dec. 1896.
  2. In the N.W.P. and O., Rs. 1,44 lakhs were suspended and Rs.65 lakhs were remitted. In the Central Provinces, out of a total demand of Rs. 90 lakhs, Rs.24 lakhs were suspended, and another Rs.27 remitted. Report of Indian Famine Commission, 1898, p.204.
  3. Ibid, p.89.
  4. Ibid, p.185.

founding in 1870 the Sarvajanic Sabha had taken an active interest in economic conditions in the villages. During the 1877-78 famine, Mahadev Govind Ranade had organized an intelligence service among Sabha workers to determine the effect of scarcity on villagers and to suggest improvements in the Government's relief measures. The Sarvajanic Sabha's criticisms were welcomed by the Government of Bombay until it was suspected that the Sabha agents had instigated a strike among the labourers on the relief works.<sup>1</sup> In 1896 the Sabha again sent its members into the affected areas to explain, by means of lectures and pamphlets, the provisions of the Famine Code, and to collect information.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1896, one of the Sabha workers, Anantrao Eksambekar, was apprehended in Dharwar District while he was distributing pamphlets stating that the Government had issued orders to the Collectors to grant remissions of land revenue "in places where the out-turn of crops is 6 annas and to postpone its realization till next year where the crop is 12 annas." In theory a normal crop equalled 16 annas. In fact no such orders had been issued.<sup>3</sup> Other

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- James Kellock,
1. Mahadev Govind Ranade: Patriot and Social Servant; p.30.
  2. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 9 Jan. 1897, and T.V.Parvate, "Bal Gangadhar Tilak: A Narrative and Interpretive Review of His Life, Career and Contemporary Events", p.79, together give the names of seven Sarvajanic Sabha famine agents. Parvate says there were many others as well.
  3. Letter from Commissioner, Central Div., 26 Jan. 1897, Famine Prog. No.875, Bombay Rev. Prog., Famine, Vol. 5326.

members of the Sarvajanic Sabha were arrested in December 1896, including Professor Shivram Mahadev Paranjpe, Professor Achyut Sitaram Sathe, and Govind Vineyak Apte. Two more persons, Pimpulkar and Karulkar, neither of whom were members of the Sabha, were also arrested. All these people were charged under Section 117 of the Indian Penal Code which made it an offence to abet the commission of an offence by a public group. The trial of G.V.Apte and Professor A.S.Sathe was held at Pen, Kolaba District, on 10 January 1897 and attracted considerable publicity. The accused were defended by a number of lawyers from Bombay and Poona. B.G. Tilak and Professor S.M. Paranjpe attended the trial and were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of several thousand people.<sup>1</sup> The case against Professor A.S.Sathe was dismissed, as were the other cases against Paranjpe, Pimpulkar and Karulkar,<sup>2</sup> but Apte was convicted, fined Rs.200, and sentenced to one year's simple imprisonment. Apte was alleged to have counselled a crowd of 3,000 villagers on 18 December 1896 to withhold payment of the land revenue, to take wood and toddy without permission from Government forests, and to assault any Government official who tried to arrest a fellow villager.<sup>3</sup>

The early attempts of the Sarvajanic Sabha to persuade landholders to refrain from paying the revenue seem to have

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1. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 16 Jan. 1897.
  2. Bombay Leg., Council Prog., 4 Aug. 1897, p.41.
  3. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 16 Jan. 1897.

been highly successful. J.P.Orr, Assistant Collector in Poona District, reported that in his charge "not a pie of the revenue instalment" due on 10 December 1896 had been paid.<sup>1</sup> In the Dharwar District, where Eksambekar had distributed leaflets, there were combinations against the payment of revenue even in areas where there was no distress.<sup>2</sup> The Collector of Kolaba District complained that his camp was besieged by crowds of up to 4,000 people with petitions for revenue suspensions and remissions. Many of the petitions were on printed forms.<sup>3</sup> Correspondents of The Times of India reported that several of the meetings convened by agents of the Sarvajanic Sabha attracted upwards of 2,000 villagers.<sup>4</sup>

When the no-rent campaign began, several of Elgin's colleagues in the Government of India wanted to adopt "very drastic measures" to counteract it. But after the Kolaba trial the agitation subsided and the Bombay Government simply withdrew its recognition of the Sarvajanic Sabha as a body with "any claim to address the Government on questions of public policy."<sup>5</sup> By the summer of 1897 the

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1. Memorandum from Collector of Poona to Asst. Collectors in Poona Dist., 28 Dec. 1896. Enclosure to Memorandum from the Commissioners, Central Div., 30 Dec. 1896. Famine Prog. No.98; Bombay Rev. Prog., Famine, Vol.5326.
  2. Letter from the Commissioner, Southern Div., 26 Jan. 1897. Famine Prog. No.875; Bombay Rev. Prog., Famine, Vol.5326.
  3. Memorandum from the Commissioner, Central Div., 6 Feb. 1897, Famine Prog. No. 559, Bombay Rev. Progs., Famine, Vol. 5326.
  4. The Times of India, (Overland Edition), 2 and 9 Jan. 1897.
  5. Govt. of Bombay Resolution, 17 March 1897, Famine Prog. No. 875, Bombay Rev. Prog., Famine, Vol.5326.

agitation "had completely broken down".<sup>1</sup>

Tilak, it seems, had been largely responsible for organizing the no-rent campaign.<sup>2</sup> He realized that the peasantry would be a valuable ally for the Congress. He had written in the Kesari in January 1896:

"For the last twelve years we have been shouting hoarse [sic], desiring that the Government should hear us. But our shouting has no more affected the Government than the sound of a gnat....Let us now try to force our grievance into their ears by strong constitutional means. We must give the best political education possible to the ignorant villagers. We must meet them on terms of equality, teach them their rights and show how to fight constitutionally. Then only will the Government realize that to despise the Congress is to despise the Indian Nation. Then only will the efforts of the Congress leaders be crowned with success. Such a work will require a large body of able and singleminded workers, to whom Politics would not mean some holiday recreation but an every-day duty to be performed with strictest regularity and utmost capacity." <sup>3</sup>

Famines were used, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as an opportunity for certain middle class Indians to exhibit their concern for, and to make contact with, the poorer classes. In Bengal, Vivekananda,<sup>4</sup> the Sadharan Brahma

1. Elgin to Hamilton, 10 Feb. 1898, MSS.Eur. 509/8.
2. See D.V.Athalya, The Life of Lokamanya Tilak, p.86. Also, J. Down, Inspector General of Police, Poona, to Under Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Judic. Dept. 15 July 1899, Enclosure No.C-1 to S.W.Edgerley, Sec., Govt. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Aug. 1899. Sept. Prog. No. 6. I.H.P., Pub., Vol.564C.
3. Kesari, 12 Jan. 1896, quoted by Theodore Shay, The Legacy of the Lokamanya: 'The Political Philosophy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, p.79.
4. Ramprasad K. Desai, Life of Swami Vivekananda, p.160.

Samaj, and the Indian Association opened relief works during famines.<sup>1</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai has described the work of the Arya Samaj with orphans during the 1896-97 and 1899 famines in the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and Bombay. The Arya Samaj, together with the Hindu Orphan Relief Movement, made special efforts to keep orphans out of the hands of Christian missionaries. In the 1899 famine the Arya Samaj "rescued" 1700 orphans from Bombay, Kathiawar, and the Central Provinces. Lajpat Rai thought that the competition with the Christian missions for the orphans benefited the Hindus because it united the various castes, brought the educated and the masses into contact, opened opportunities for social service and taught self-reliance.<sup>2</sup> It was only in Bombay that middle class famine activities were objected to by the Government. But the famine activities in Bombay, Bengal, and the Punjab were similar in that they were self-conscious attempts to bridge some of the existing divisions in Indian society.

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1. See Chapter IV below.
  2. Lajpat Rai, The Arya Samaj: An Account of its Origin, Doctrines and Activities, with a Biographical Sketch of the Founder, pp. 213-17.

The first officially recognized outbreak of bubonic plague occurred in Bombay City in September 1896, coinciding with the start of the famine. Within several months it spread to other areas of the Bombay Presidency, and by the end of 1898, isolated areas in every province except Burma had been affected. It remained most severe in Western India where it reached its height in 1899.<sup>1</sup>

Although the economic consequences of plague were mild compared to those of the famine, and although the ordinary death rate was not seriously affected,<sup>2</sup> the impact of the plague was immense. The unpopular measures adopted to combat plague caused only slightly less terror than the novel and usually fatal attacks of the disease itself. Between 1896 and 1900, there were ten major riots in India against the plague measures and many more disturbances were avoided only by the timely withdrawal of the more objectionable regulations.<sup>3</sup> Plague continued to haunt India throughout the period under discussion, but the first few years were the most difficult ones as both the people and the Government adjusted themselves to living with it. And in 1896-7, plague was confined almost entirely to Western India.

Medical authorities believed that insanitary conditions

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1. P.P. Cd.810 of 1902. Indian Plague Commission Report, 1901, Chapt. II, pp. 7-8 and 48.
  2. Ibid, Chapt. II, p.50.
  3. P.P. Cd, 748 of 1902. Reports and Papers on Bubonic Plague, pp. 216-17.

favoured the growth of the plague bacillus and that human beings were one of the chief conveyors of the disease. Therefore it was thought necessary to cleanse thoroughly areas infected or in danger of infection, and to isolate plague patients and their contacts. The cleansing operations often involved destruction of private property and other unpopular measures. Houses in infected areas were cleaned and lime washed; traps and house connections were overhauled and disinfected; roofs, walls, and other obstructions to light and air were opened; old clothes and rags were burned; sewers were flushed; whole houses were destroyed or altered.<sup>1</sup>

Despite Government efforts to provide compensation, people resented the destruction of personal property, especially when it was accompanied by a display of force such as the breaking down of barricaded doors, the destruction of furniture and crockery, and the digging up of floors.<sup>2</sup> Municipal officials were not always sensitive to the feelings of the local population or mindful of the need to obtain Indian cooperation. For instance, minor panic occurred in Bombay when, in the words of the City Health Officer, "we treated houses practically as if they were on fire, discharging into them from steam engines and flushing pumps quantities of water charged with disinfectants."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt. II, p.10.

2. Ibid, Chapt. VI, p.404.

3. Quoted in the "Memorandum of the Army Sanitary Commission. Report of the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay, 1896-97.", Jan. Prog., I.H.P., Munic., Vol.5646.

The chance of gaining the public's cooperation in sanitary measures was reduced as it became apparent that cleanliness often was not decisive in preventing the spread of the disease. In Bombay and other towns, plague was more prevalent in the well-planned suburban sections than in the chaotic slums near the town centre,<sup>1</sup> and the Plague Commission was "unable to find anything in the nature of statistical evidence" to prove that insanitary conditions favoured the spread of the plague.<sup>2</sup>

Forced segregation of plague cases was even more obnoxious to the general population than the sanitary operations. The history of segregation and compulsory removals in Bombay and Poona resembles the pattern of events in other places, although in these two cities the opposition to the Government took more extreme forms. In Bombay on 6 October 1896, the Plague Commissioner ordered the evacuation of infected houses and the removal of the sick to hospitals. This order was followed by great excitement and wild rumours about Government intentions. Health Department officials were in constant danger as hostile crowds stoned the ambulance vans. Tension built up steadily, and on 29 October shops were closed throughout the city and one thousand mill hands attacked the Municipal Hospital. City

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1. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt. VI, p.404.

2. Ibid, Chapt. III, p.169.

officials anticipated severe rioting and they feared that the municipal sanitary staff, without whom Bombay would be uninhabitable, might join the mill workers. On the following day the plague regulations were modified so that patients could remain at home if a proper degree of isolation and ventilation were attainable.<sup>1</sup>

During November and December 1896 plague in Bombay increased and trade began to decline.<sup>2</sup> Several European governments and various English trading interests appealed to Hamilton, the Secretary of State, for stricter enforcement of the plague regulations. The European Governments claimed that they wished to prevent the passage of plague to Europe, but Hamilton suspected that they would have welcomed plague as an excuse to boycott imports from British India.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Sandhurst, the Governor of Bombay, considered that compulsory segregation of plague patients would cause terror and that general paralysis of the city's life would follow. Even without strict segregation more than 400,000 of the population of 846,000 had fled from the city. Nevertheless in March 1897 the Government of Bombay gave in

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1. Ibid, Chapt. VI, p.334.
  2. During the fiscal year 1896-7, the aggregate value of the Port of Bombay's trade fell off by 10%. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 13 Nov. 1897.
  3. Hamilton telegrams to Sandhurst, 6 and 8 Jan. 1897. Enclosures to Sandhurst to Elgin, 20 Jan. 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/70. Also, Hamilton to Elgin, 21 Jan. 1897, MSS.Eur. C. 125/2.

to "imperial" considerations and relieved the municipal authorities of their control over plague operations. In their place an executive committee of Government officers under General Gatacre was established with orders to remove all plague patients to public hospitals or the more numerous community and caste hospitals.<sup>1</sup> Search parties composed of health officers, private citizens, the police, and the military began to make forcible searches of private homes. These parties were usually supported by cordons of soldiers to prevent people from escaping, and they were greeted with "unreasoning fear" almost everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

The policy of forcible evacuation and house to house searches lasted for over a year in Bombay. However, it did not prove more effective than the relaxed policy pursued previously. Not only did it fail to locate all the plague-stricken, who were carefully concealed by friends and relations, but it also tended to scatter the sick and thereby spread the disease. Therefore, in March 1898, the Governor of Bombay began to consider plans for the suspension of the search parties and the substitution of native volunteer committees in an attempt to enlist the cooperation of local leaders with the plague measures.<sup>3</sup>

Before these plans were announced the Jhulias of Bombay rioted. The Jhulias were a community of Muslims who had

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1. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt. II, p.11.

2. Ibid, Chapt. VI, p.325.

3. Sandhurst telegram to Hamilton, 17 March 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.102.

recently moved to Bombay and who had played a prominent part in the Bombay communal riots of 1893. The riot of March 1898 started when the health officers attempted to remove a young Jhulia girl who was thought (incorrectly, as it turned out) to have plague. For two and a half hours the rioting raged out of control. The Jhulias were joined, unexpectedly, by hundreds of Hindus in attacks and arson attempts on public buildings. Before the military could restore order, two European soldiers were killed and 42 policemen, mostly Europeans, were wounded.<sup>1</sup>

For the next several days the city was tense. Shops remained closed and 10,000 cartmen and a majority of the dock labourers struck work in protest against compulsory removals.<sup>2</sup> Many Europeans, who were nervous because of the anti-European nature of the riotings, suspected a premeditated plan between the Jhulias, shop-keepers, cartmen, and dock workers. But the Commissioner of Police believed that although the strikes and hartals were prearranged, the Jhulia outbreak had been spontaneous. After a few days Bombay became quiet once more.<sup>3</sup>

After the Bombay disturbances (and the earlier

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1. Letter from Commissioner of Police, 1 April 1898. Judic. Prog., No.949, Bombay Judic. Prog., Vol. 5549.
  2. Strikes and hartals were used in many towns to place pressure on the plague authorities.
  3. Letter from Commissioner of Police, 1 April 1898, op.cit.

troubles in Poona which are discussed below) coercive methods were not generally used to enforce the plague regulations. They were of doubtful utility when not supported by Indian leaders, and British prestige suffered each time concessions were made to public demonstrations and disturbances. In any case there was no convincing evidence that plague could be eradicated immediately even with the full cooperation of the Indian population.

There were other irritating restrictions that interfered with the ordinary pattern of Indian life, such as the inspection of Indian women by Europeans, the practice of detaining Indian travellers (but not Europeans) in the quarantine camps,<sup>1</sup> and the prohibition of the pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>2</sup> After 1899, home isolation of the sick, disinfection, and notification of disease were generally preferred to quarantine, cordons, and segregation of contacts.

The greatest controversy about the plague measures occurred in Poona. It was well known that the large Brahman community of Poona was proud of its religious and racial traditions. Yet 1100 soldiers, mostly British, were used to remove the sick, segregate contacts, and disinfect private

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1. In actual fact Europeans were relatively immune to plague. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt. III, pp. 38-39.
  2. The pilgrimage was suspended in 1896-7 in deference to the wishes of European Governments who were apprehensive lest plague spread to Europe via Arabia. The Government of India was reluctant to stop the pilgrimage because of the possible reaction of the Muslims but it agreed to the suspension after Lord Salisbury and Lord Hamilton insisted that otherwise British trade would be seriously hampered by the enforcement of strict quarantine regulations in European ports. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Feb. and 4 March 1897. MSS. Eur. C. 125/2.

homes.<sup>1</sup> And, if the testimony and reaction of the local population are reliable indications, the search parties exhibited scant regard for Indian sensibilities and prejudices. When the operations began early in 1897 and it was learned that all-British search parties would be used, there was a mass exodus from Poona. Lord Sandhurst intervened at this point<sup>2</sup> and the search parties were altered to include Indian soldiers and interpreters to indicate what areas British soldiers were forbidden by custom to enter.<sup>3</sup> Gradually the use of volunteer Indian search parties and caste hospitals was extended, and, according to the Poona Plague Commissioner, W.C.Rand, relations between the authorities and the citizens of Poona became "on the whole friendly".<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the Poona newspapers, even after the epidemic began to subside in mid-April, continued to charge the plague workers with ignoring local customs, with corruption,

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1. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt. II, p.18.
  2. Sandhurst to Elgin, 17 March 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/70.
  3. It was not only British soldiers who were objected to. High caste people strongly opposed searches by low caste soldiers and plague workers. In Dhawar, a Hindu priest committed suicide after his house was disinfected by low caste people. Indian Mirror, 11 Sept. 1898, T. and D. Selections, P.S.L.I., Vol.107. The Kalidas (Dharwar), 7 Oct. 1898, expressed the opinion that "the death of many a patient in the hospital is accelerated by contact with low-caste people." T. and D. Selections, 24 Oct. 1898, P.S .L.I., Vol.109.
  4. Indian Plague Commission Report, Chapt.VI, pp.326-27.

oppression, and other forms of misbehaviour. Soldiers and officials engaged in plague work were referred to as "butchers"<sup>1</sup>, "barbarous brutes and wild bulls";<sup>2</sup> and the bravery shown by Maratha ancestors in overthrowing the oppressive Mughals was pointedly recalled.<sup>3</sup> One newspaper reported, with no justification, that pure carbolic acid had been poured on the head of a patient in the Poona General Plague Hospital, killing the patient.<sup>4</sup> Then on 22 June 1897, after plague had almost disappeared from Poona, W.C.Rand, the Plague Commissioner, and Lieutenant C.E.Ayerst were fatally shot while returning home from a celebration of the Queen Empress's Jubilee near Poona. The two assailants escaped.<sup>5</sup>

The same evening an English official was murdered in Peshawar.<sup>6</sup> It seemed likely that the murders were deliberately intended to coincide with the Jubilee,<sup>7</sup> as an expression of disapproval of the non-utilitarian and very expensive

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1. Kalpatara, 18 April, quoted in the Bombay Gazette, 26 June 1897.
  2. Sudharak, 3 May, quoted in ibid.
  3. Dnyan Prakash, 10 May; Kesari, 27 April and 6 May and Maharashtra Mitra, 29 April; all quoted in ibid.
  4. Dnyan Prakash, 12 April. The editor apologized and thereby escaped prosecution. Letter from District Magistrate, Poona, No.42, 19 July 1897, Judic. Prog. No.1871 of 27 Sept. 1897.
  5. Pioneer, 25 June 1897.
  6. It was learned subsequently that the murderer was a Ghazi and that his motives were unconnected with the internal political conditions of India. Sir Mackworth Young, Lt. Gov. of the Punjab, to Elgin, 15 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.
  7. Pioneer, 11 July, 1897.

festivities during a year of plague and famine.<sup>1</sup> It also appeared that, although Ayerst had not been connected with plague work, the motive of the murderers "was not personal revenge or religious fanaticism, but an attempt to punish those executing" the plague policy.<sup>2</sup> British opinion in India and England<sup>3</sup> was uneasy about the apparently political character of the killings. English newspapers and officials suggested there might be a connection between the writings of the vernacular press of Poona and the murderers, and it was suggested that a new press act was needed.<sup>4</sup>

In Poona itself there was no trace of the murderers, who, it was thought, might be part of a widespread political conspiracy.<sup>5</sup> A reward of Rs. 20,000 with a full pardon was

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1. A manifestation of this opposition to the Jubilee festivities appeared in Lahore in May 1897 when leading English and Indian citizens called a meeting in the Town Hall to discuss proposals for a statue of Queen Victoria. A number of Indian school boys tried to speak at the meeting but they were ruled out of order by the chairman. They then held up the meeting with catcalls and hissing and the chairman, after attempting for half an hour to restore order, left the hall with many other Europeans and Indians to the accompaniment of further jeers. Then the schoolboys continued the meeting and resolved to send money for the relief of orphans in the Central Provinces. Bengalee, 5 June 1897.
  2. Hamilton to Elgin, 24 June 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.
  3. Hamilton telegram to Elgin, 3 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.
  4. See Hamilton to Elgin, 2 July 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2. Also The Times, 2 July 1897; Morning Post, 2 July 1897; Daily News, 2 July 1897 (MSS.Eur.F.84/79); and The Times of India (Overland Edition), 2 July 1897.
  5. Elgin to Sandhurst, 28 June 1897 Register No. 698B

offered to any person who would provide evidence leading to the conviction of the gunmen, and a punitive police force consisting of 200 men, was assigned to Poona at the cost of the City Municipality.<sup>1</sup>

The Rand Murder brought into prominence the charges of misconduct which had repeatedly been levelled against officials and soldiers in the plague operations. Four of the most serious allegations were given wide publicity, but with one exception, they were not substantiated. The first of these was made by G.K.Gokhale to a meeting of M.P.'s and to a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian. Gokhale, in England to testify before the Welby Commission,<sup>2</sup> claimed that two Poona women had been outraged by British soldiers. One was said to have died subsequently.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State for India denied this in the House of Commons.<sup>4</sup> Gokhale, upon his return to India, found that he had been misinformed, and he sent letters of apology to the Manchester Guardian and The Times of India, completely withdrawing his charges against the soldiers. Many nationalists thought Gokhale had been too abject in his apology and he had to face their hostility and resentment for many months after making the apology. So strong was the feeling against Gokhale that at

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1. The Times of India, (Overland Edition) 2 July 1897.
  2. A royal Commission to examine the financial relationship between India and the United Kingdom.
  3. Manchester Guardian, 2 July 1897.
  4. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 5 Aug. 1897, 4th Series, Vol.LII, p.381.

the Amraoti Congress in December 1897, he was prevented from addressing the Congress.<sup>1</sup> Soon after the Amraoti session, Gokhale complained in a letter to the press of the manner in which he was treated.<sup>2</sup>

The second and third allegations were communicated to The Daily News by Surendra Nath Banerjea on behalf of the Indian Association of Calcutta. Two European officers were reported to have attempted to outrage two Hindu girls at a plague inspection camp at Khana, Bengal. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal confirmed this. The third allegation had been made by Pandita Ramabai, an Indian Christian who ran an orphanage in Poona. She maintained that one of her girls had been seduced in the Poona plague camp. However the Governor of Bombay said that this was untrue and that the girl had been discharged cured.<sup>3</sup> The final allegation was made in a petition from the Deccan Sabha of Poona and brought to public notice by William Wedderburn. It alleged that plague workers stripped women in the street, polluted Hindu temples, removed people to plague hospitals without giving them

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1. V.S.Srinivasa Sastri (Life of Gopal Khrishna Gokhale, p.25) said that "it would appear it was the Bengali delegates that made themselves specially prominent in this demonstration" against Gokhale.
  2. See the Pioneer, 14 Jan, 1898, and T.V.Parvate, Gopal Krishna Gokhale: A Narrative and Interpretative Review of His Life, Career and Contemporary Events, pp.71-87.
  3. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 26 July 1897, 4th Series, Vol.51, pp.1091-92. In June 1898, a British soldier was convicted of criminal assault on a girl while he was engaged in plague work at Girgaum, Bombay Presidency, India, 15 July 1898.

proper medical examinations, and used unnecessary violence in the process. The Government of Bombay emphatically denied each of these accusations.<sup>1</sup> The Collector of Poona conducted an investigation of 721 out of the 1,699 signatures on the Deccan Sabha's petition and he claimed that only 144 of the signers could be found and that of these, many claimed ignorance of the contents of the petition.<sup>2</sup>

The failure of the Government's critics to substantiate their allegations was damaging to the Congress cause in England and in India since Gokhale, Wedderburn, Banerjea, the Indian Association, and the Deccan Sabha were all intimately connected with the Congress. Lord Sandhurst expressed a view which was doubtlessly shared by many officials when he said that those "gross and malevolent" charges were made for the purpose of undermining public respect for the Government.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after the murders in Poona there were serious disturbances among the Muslims of Calcutta over the possession of a small building which, although not originally mosque, had for many years been used as one. A Civil Court had ruled that the land upon which the building stood belonged to the Tagore Trust Estate and it ordered the

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1. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 5 July 1897, 4th Series, Vol.50, p.1119.
  2. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 5 Aug. 1897, 4th Series, Vol.52, pp. 381-82.
  3. Quoted by Hamilton, Parl. Debates, H. of C., 13 July 1897, 4th Series, Vol. 51, p.21.

demolition of the building. When the local Muslims objected, Sir Jotendra Mohun Tagore offered to lease them the property. But C.C.Stevens, the Officiating Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, refused to sanction any compromise, declaring that he must "see the law enforced." Accordingly the building was demolished.<sup>1</sup>

On the night of 29 June, 2,000 Muslims assembled at the disputed site and rebuilt several feet of the wall before they were dispersed by the Calcutta Police. On 30 June, the crowd attacked the Tallah Pumping Station where they had been refused water for the construction work.<sup>2</sup> This attack was repulsed but disorders spread to other sections of Calcutta and for several days large groups of Muslims roamed the streets, rioting and attacking isolated Europeans. Upper-class Muslims, including Nur Mahomed and Prince Bakhtyar Shah tried to calm the demonstrators by circulating pamphlets explaining that the European officials were only carrying out the law and that Islamic law forbade the use of the property as a mosque site. But their efforts had little effect. So Abdul Rahman Khan, son of Nawab Abdul Latif, the

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1. C.C.Stevens, Offg. Lt.Gov. of Bengal, to Elgin, 8 July 1897, Enclosure to Elgin to Hamilton, 14 July 1897, MSS.Eur.D.509/6.
  2. C.W.Bolton, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal to J.P.Hewett, Sec., Home Dept., 7 July 1897, enclosure to Elgin to Hamilton, 14 July 1897, op.cit.

founder of the Muhammadan Literary Society,<sup>1</sup> wrote to Maulana Amanutullah, a religious leader in Ghazipur with a large following in Bengal. The Maulana agreed to go to Calcutta to try to pacify the rioters.<sup>2</sup> But before he arrived, the situation worsened when Muslim workers in the English-owned mills at Barrackpur, Cossipur, Serampur, and Howrah went on strike. On 6 July these workers began to march towards Calcutta to assist the rioters. The military blocked the roads to Calcutta and the strikers returned towards the mills where armed European civilians narrowly prevented them from looting and burning the factories. After this the mill hands drifted back to work and Calcutta returned to normalcy.<sup>3</sup>

The remarkable features of these disturbances were the attacks on Europeans, but not on Hindus, and the panic among the European community. Many Europeans carried loaded revolvers<sup>4</sup> and ventured into the streets only when necessary.<sup>5</sup>

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1. During the Wahabi movement the Muhammadan Literary Society persuaded certain ulama to issue fatwas declaring that India was dar-ul-Islam and therefore that jihad against the British was unnecessary. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis, p.6.
  2. Magistrate of Ghazipur to Commissioner of Benares, 9 July 1897, Enclosure to A. MacDonnell, Lt. Gov. of N.W.P. and O, to Elgin, 16 July 1897, Ms. Eng. Hist. c.353.
  3. Ibid.
  4. There was a run on revolvers in Calcutta arms stores during the disturbances. Pioneer, 3 July 1897.
  5. Elgin to Hamilton, 14 July 1897, MSS.Eur. 509/6.

The Anglo-Indian Press stimulated European fears by publishing exaggerated reports of the riots and by suggesting that they were connected with the Frontier uprisings, the prohibition of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and a general pan-Islamic revival. Officials in Calcutta, however, saw less reason to be alarmed. They acknowledged that Indian Muslims were excited by the recent Turkish victories over Greece but in their view the "mosque", and not wider issues, was the main cause of the Calcutta disturbances.<sup>1</sup>

The Graeco-Turkish War produced an important effect on Indian Muslims. With the increasing European interference in Ottoman affairs, the Sultan gradually became recognized by more and more Indian Muslims as the defender of the Islamic faith against Christianity. The Sultan had encouraged this concept by means of his pan-Islamic propaganda. He had set up a pan-Islamic Council in Constantinople<sup>2</sup> and he had sent emissaries throughout the non-Ottoman Muslim world to arouse a pan-Islamic consciousness. The importation into India of two Constantinople newspapers, the Sabah and the Mulumat, was prohibited by the Government of India in August 1897 after they made offensive remarks about the misery of

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1. See C.S. Bayley, Gen. Supt. of Operations for Suppression of Thagi and Dakaiti, to H. Babington Smith, Bri. Sec. to the Viceroy, 12 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.  
Also C.W. Bolton to J.P. Hewett, 7 July 1897, op.cit.

2. Hamilton to Elgin, 30 July 1897, MSS.Eur. 125/2.

British India and the maltreatment of women in Poona. Both newspapers had been subscribed to and quoted by a number of Indian Muslim newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

Many British observers suspected a connection between the pan-Islamic movement<sup>2</sup> and the Frontier uprisings which had been anticipated by rumours in the bazaars of some Indian cities and by writings in the Turkish Press.<sup>3</sup> Many observers thought that the risings were the inevitable consequence of the Government of India's forward policy. However Lord Hamilton, and to some extent the Government of India, supported the view that the action of the tribes was too sudden and extensive to be simply a reaction to the forward policy. They thought that the risings were inspired largely by religious fanaticism - fanaticism aroused by the Turkish victories in the Middle East and by the prospect held out by the Mullas that the Amir of Afghanistan would join the tribesmen.<sup>4</sup> Similar incitements might have stirred Indian

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1. Memorandum on the Pan-Islamic Movement, Enclosure to Gov. Gen. Despatch to S. of S., 15 June 1899, Foreign Dept. Despatch No.110 of 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.114. Also, S. of S. telegram to Gov. Gen., 18 Aug. 1897. Oct. Prog. No. 289, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5181.
  2. The pan-Islamic movement in India attracted considerable notice in England in 1897. See Canon MacColl, "The Mussulmans of India and the Sultan", The Contemporary Review, Vol.LXXI (Feb. 1897); Lepel Griffin, "The Breakdown of the Frontier Policy", The Nineteenth Century, Vol.XLII (Oct. 1897); and F.Fawcett, "The Moplas of Malabar", Asiatic Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, (Oct. 1897).
  3. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C. 125/2.
  4. P.P. C.8714 of 1898. Papers re British Relations with Tribes and British Military Operations on the North-West Frontier of India, 1897-98, No.111. S. of S. Despatch to Gov. Gen., 28 Jan. 1898, para.10.

Muslims to action; in fact it was certain "that a considerable number of men from within the British Indian frontier took part in the fighting against us."<sup>1</sup> Hamilton feared that a slight reverse in the fighting would lead to disturbances in some of the towns in upper India.<sup>2</sup> But the decisive defeats inflicted on the tribes in July and August 1897 had a "sedative effect" on the Indian Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

The Sultan's name was being used more frequently in the khutbah<sup>4</sup> in Indian mosques and subscriptions to the Sultan from India were increasing. In May and June 1897 mosques and Muslim homes throughout Northern India were illuminated in honour of the Turkish successes against Greece. At the same time a holiday was declared and shops were closed in Poona and Bombay,<sup>5</sup> while in Calcutta Urdu leaflets were circulated every afternoon giving the latest news of the Graeco-Turkish War.<sup>6</sup> A fund was started to assist distressed Muslims in Crete.<sup>7</sup> Indian Muslim leaders such as

1. Ibid, No.6. Letter from Govt. of India, For. Dept., to S. of S., 1 Sept. 1897, para.15.
2. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.
3. See MacDonnell to Elgin, 22 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71. MacDonnell, who was concerned about the number of Afghans in the North-West Provinces and Oudh, ordered officials to take census of trans-frontier people in his province. MacDonnell to Elgin, 7 Jan. 1898, MSS.Eur. F.84/72.
4. Sermon during Friday prayers.
5. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 4 June 1897.
6. Bengalee, 8 May 1897.
7. Memorandum on the Pan-Islamic Movement, op.cit., para.21.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Rafiuddin Ahmed denied that the Sultan could claim any temporal or spiritual allegiance from Indian Muslims.<sup>1</sup> But evidently the idea was gaining ground that he was the Caliph for Muslims throughout the world. A concomitant of the pan-Islamic movement in India was a spate of anti-Gladstone writings in the Muslim newspapers<sup>2</sup> which was in contrast to the adulatory opinion of Gladstone held by Surendra Nath Banerjea. The Bengalee was unsympathetic to Ottoman claims over the non-Turkish people of the Middle East because, it said, "it is the ordering of Divine Providence that every nation must be the arbiter of its own destinies."<sup>3</sup>

Enthusiasm for the Turkish successes and discontent over the prohibition of the pilgrimage and other plague measures led some Muslims to abuse British rule. Maulvi Hidayat Rasul of Lucknow addressed a public meeting on 13 July 1897 and, in congratulating the Sultan of Turkey and the Amir of Afghanistan for their championship of Islam, he made some allegedly seditious remarks. For these he was

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1. See the review of Sir Sayyid's contribution to the Aligarh Institute Gazette in The Times of India (Overland Edition), 25 Sept. 1897, and Rafiuddin Ahmed, "India: Is the British Raj in Danger?", The Nineteenth Century, Vol. XLII, (Sept. 1897).
  2. See the Pioneer, 4 July 1897, Also, Rafiuddin Ahmed, "A Moslem's View of the Pan-Islamic Revival", The Nineteenth Century, Vol. XLII (Sept. 1897).
  3. Bengalee, 20 Feb. 1897.

sentenced to one year's simple imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> A young follower of Maulvi Hidayat Rasul wrote an anonymous letter to the District Judge, who had sentenced the Maulvi, and threatened to murder the Judge and all other Europeans in Lucknow. He, too, was convicted and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> In the North West Provinces and Oudh the editor of the Jami-ul-ulam of Moradabad was convicted of attempting to excite disaffection in an article which appeared in 14 July 1897.<sup>3</sup> In September the Governor General in Council ordered that the editor of the Muslim Deccan of Bombay who was not a citizen of British India, be deported from India for his violent attacks on the Indian Government.<sup>4</sup> In December 1897 the Calcutta police warned the proprietors of the Hublu-l-matin that his articles were seditious. The editor, Mirza Sayyid Jalal-ud-din Husain, was reported to receive an annual stipend of about Rs.6,000 from the Sultan, and his newspaper was said to be widely read in Persia.<sup>5</sup>

If the Turkish victories and the Frontier fighting stimulated Muslim unity and heightened Indian consciousness

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1. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 6 Aug. 1897.
  2. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Gazette, 18 Oct. 1897.
  3. Queen-Empress v. Amba Prasad, XX Allahabad 55, Indian Law Reports. Amba Prasad was a Hindu Kayasth but his subscribers were predominantly Muslim.
  4. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 18 Sept. 1897.
  5. Memorandum on the Pan-Islamic Movement, op.cit., para.24.

of the non-Indian Muslim world, the effect of this new awareness varied from area to area. In the Punjab in recent years the Muslims had been aroused by the proselytizing activities of both the Arya Samaj and the Christian missionaries (European and Indian). Anjumans had sprung up all over the Punjab and they sent their agents into the bazaars to preach, distribute tracts, and to persuade Muslims to purify their faith of non-Islamic features.<sup>1</sup> In early 1897, Hindu-Muslim antagonism in the Punjab flared up when a Muslim murdered a well-known Arya Samaj preacher named Lekh Ram. Lekh Ram had recently written a book attacking both Christianity and Islam, and the murderer was said to have been "deliberately sent to commit the crime".<sup>2</sup> The situation was delicate, too, because of the cow protection movement, which the Lieutenant-Governor thought caused Hindu-Muslim relations to be "like a powder magazine."<sup>3</sup>

In other areas of India the quickening of the Islamic revival was not accompanied by Hindu-Muslim disturbances. This was surprising since as recently as 1893-94 there had been many communal riots. Over large areas in 1897 there were even signs of a new friendliness between the two communities. In Rohilkhand, in the North West Provinces and Oudh, where Hindu-Muslim relations were traditionally strained, the District officers reported a widespread

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1. A.T. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p.285.

2. Elgin to Hamilton, 24 March 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/4.

3. Young to Elgin, 15 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.

rapprochement between Hindus and Muslims. Sir Anthony MacDonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor, was uneasy about this; he did not know if this unusual phase in Hindu-Muslim relations was due to Congress pleas for unity, to Muslim political ambitions which would require unity as a "necessary antecedent to effective political action against us", or to a common determination to resist unpopular measures.<sup>1</sup>

In the first six months of 1897 there had been general unrest over large parts of India. Much of the unrest was traceable to the unpopularity of the Government's plague measures and to food shortages and high prices. But were there signs of a general combination against British rule? Observers in both India and England were uneasy about the simultaneous occurrence of the Poona murders, the Calcutta riots, the Frontier uprisings, and the unusual degree of Hindu-Muslim fraternization.<sup>2</sup>

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1. MacDonnell to Elgin, 16 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.
  2. The St. James Gazette (3 July 1897) and the Morning Post (3 July 1897) suggested that there was a similarity between the events of 1897 and the period preceeding the 1857 Mutiny. MSS.Eur. F.84/79.  
Twenty-four questions about conditions in Poona were asked in the House of Commons during the six weeks following the Rand murder. Parl. Debates, 4th Series, Vols. 50-52.

CHAPTER IISEDITION AND ITS PREVENTION

Lord Elgin doubted whether the Poona murders were connected "with any widespread movement" but some of his colleagues thought that the situation, at least in the Bombay Presidency, was "distinctly dangerous."<sup>1</sup>

In view of the alarmist opinions held in some quarters, Lord Elgin decided to consult the heads of the Local Governments and other officials about the state of public feeling in Northern India.

C.S. Bayley<sup>2</sup> reported that he could see "no sign of disaffection of any kind" in Bengal nor did he think the Calcutta riots were important except that they showed how excited Indian Muslims became when they believed an injury was being done to their religion.<sup>3</sup> Judging from the relative absence of discussion few people regarded either Madras and Bengal as areas where political trouble was likely to occur. It was thought that the northern provinces and the Maratha areas, with their martial and historical traditions, were potentially more dangerous.

MacDonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces and Oudh, wrote after consulting his district

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1. Elgin telegram to Sec. of State, 4 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.
  2. General Superintendent of Operations for the Suppression of Thagi and Dakaiti.
  3. C.S. Bayley to H. Babington Smith, Pri. Sec. to Elgin, 12 July 1897. MSS.Eur. F.84/71.

officers, that "the entire English-educated section" were "dissatisfied with the existing order of things" and although their object was to alter rather than to destroy British rule, they would do anything to embarrass the British Government. Their influence was slight, he felt, but it was growing.<sup>1</sup> MacDonnell thought that the majority of the Hindu landlords in the North West Provinces and Oudh were loyal. But this situation might change if they continued to lose their family lands through inability to pay their debts. MacDonnell believed them to be "by far the most powerful influence for good or evil." The great mass of the Hindus were generally indifferent to the Government except in extraordinary circumstances such as during the cow-protection agitation when they were opposed to the Government, or during the famine when they were grateful for relief. He expected little trouble from the poorer Hindus as long as the Government did not interfere with tenant-landlord relations and religious matters.<sup>2</sup>

MacDonnell did not have the same confidence about the Muslims in his Provinces. While he did not think there was an anti-British conspiracy, the Islamic revival taking place there could more easily develop into one than a similar revival could "among the more divided Hindu population." Although the Muslims represented only one seventh of the

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1. A. MacDonnell to Elgin, 16 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.  
2. A. MacDonnell to Elgin, 22 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.

population in those provinces, 140 of the 240 tehsildars (revenue collectors) were Muslims police officers compared to 2,120 Hindus. MacDonnell favoured Hindus in making new appointments in order that, eventually, a proportion of 5 Hindus to 3 Muslims could be established in the government service. He also made certain that there was "a predominance of Hindus in the armed Police in the more important Mahomedan districts." MacDonnell did not expect trouble from the Muslims but he believed that precautions were necessary when "we have to deal with religious effervescence" which might take sudden and unexpected forms. Therefore he wanted to prepare an emergency plan for guarding the railways and to increase the number of British troops in the North West Provinces and Oudh.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Mackworth Young, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, reported that although the population of his Province was generally loyal, there was a growing "opposition to authority" in the larger towns.<sup>2</sup> Unrest was most evident among the educated classes, whose numbers were growing too rapidly to be absorbed by existing opportunities, and who were consequently disappointed by their failure to find jobs.

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1. MacDonnell to Elgin, 22 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.
  2. Between 1891-2 and 1896-7 the annual number of riots in the Punjab increased from 653 to 855; of murder and attempted murder, from 534 to 736; of grievous hurt, from 1,310 to 1,679. The Times of India, (Overland Edition), 25 Sept. 1897.

Young thought that these embittered people, separated from their traditional values, used the native press to "vent their spleen against constituted authority". The native press was no longer "a safety-valve of honestly felt dissatisfaction," but an engine of "slander", "disloyalty", and "factious misrepresentation" for the dissatisfied section of the educated class "whose motives are not honest and whose voice is heard more than is necessary". He favoured legislation similar to Lytton's Press Act to check the "hitherto unrestrained license of the press." Without it the spirit of unrest would increase.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Mackworth Young regarded the Arya Samaj, whose agents were preaching in all the principal towns of the Province. as the most dangerous, "disloyal", and active organization in the Punjab. He thought the followers of the Samaj had abandoned their original purpose of reshaping Hinduism in a form which would withstand modern criticism when they "found that the subject was above the heads of the common people." Instead, "they have raised the standard of opposition to kine-killing in order to get a hearing." The immediate danger of the Arya Samaj was not so much its anti-British propaganda, he felt, but rather its provocative attempts to convert Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

In the Central Provinces there were "no signs ... of

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1. W. Mackworth Young to Elgin, 15 July 1897, MSS.Eur.

F. 84/71.

2. Ibid.

political movement of any kind" except in Nagpur and its Maratha vicinity. Even there the Maratha leaders were believed to have "had no sympathy" with the Poona murders. The head of the Congress Party in Nagpur, G.M.Chitnavis, was "a very loyal man", in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of the Indian army, according to the leading military officials, was "highly satisfactory, more so in fact than it had ever been." Earlier in the year they had been apprehensive about the loyalty of the Pathans in the campaign against the Muslim tribesmen in the Tochi Valley but in the fighting the Muslim troops were as loyal as the Sikhs.<sup>2</sup> In 1894 there had been many signs of restlessness in the army (including the passing of chupattis) caused, it was supposed, by the cow-protection agitation and low wages. But since that time wages had been increased and the cow-protection propaganda of the Arya Samaj and other groups had had little effect.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Hamilton was worried by what he regarded as the increasing solidarity of Indian opinion, race, and religion

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1. C.J.Lyall to Elgin. 17 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71. There were grain riots in Nagpur in September 1896 and a police guard had to be sent to protect the house of G.M.Chitnavis who was a money-lender and a landlord. A.H.L.Fraser, Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots, pp.111-20.
  2. Elgin to Hamilton, 6 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.
  3. C.S.Bayley to H.Babington Smith, 12 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.

in opposition to British rule.<sup>1</sup> He did not know whether he preferred Hindu-Muslim unity, which was politically dangerous, or Hindu-Muslim collisions, which were an administrative nuisance. "Of the two the latter is the least risky, though it throws anxiety and responsibility upon those on the spot where the friction exists."<sup>2</sup> Hamilton thought that "the development of national feelings or religious enthusiasm" was being stimulated by "the process of education" and a free press. This tended "to make the onslaught against our Government more powerful, while the powers behind the authorities do not correspondingly multiply."<sup>3</sup> He wondered if the frontier uprisings and the Poona troubles did not provide a timely opportunity to exhibit the Government's strength. "In governing Orientals an assertion of strength and fighting power is periodically necessary." British prestige, he felt, might be strengthened both "internally and externally" by a demonstration of the loyalty and fighting ability of the Indian troops and by one or two successful prosecutions of the seditious press. "Whether we like it or not our rule exists upon the maintenance of prestige. Justice may in the Britisher's mind be a powerful and ubiquitous influence, but it does not appeal in the same way to the masses, and the privileged

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1. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2. Also, Hamilton to Elgin, 21 Jan. 1898, MSS.Eur. C.125/3.
  2. Hamilton to Elgin, 7 May 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.
  3. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C. 125/2.

classes do not like being treated on all fours with their inferiors."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Elgin, who usually took a calmer view than his colleagues of matters concerning Indian nationalism and unrest, disagreed with Hamilton and was "not persuaded that any solidarity of interests" existed between the university-educated classes and other classes, "upwards or downwards", and he thought "the intense jealousy" which Muslims "feel of the clever Hindu" prevented any substantial union between those two groups.<sup>2</sup> Elgin admitted that in a country ruled by foreigners it was difficult "to concede the same liberty of action to educational processes, and that political societies and movements which elsewhere might be treated with forbearance might have to be put under some restraint." But nevertheless, even though the Indian National Congress "not infrequently trespasses on the borderland of what is permissible" no responsible man "would ever propose to prohibit the Congress." Elgin accepted as axiomatic that British rule in India would "never be free from anxiety."<sup>3</sup>

The general consensus of official opinion was that most of the disorders and unrest observable in 1897 were directly attributable to the unusual circumstances of plague and famine, except in Poona, and were not symptomatic of a

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1. Hamilton to Elgin, 9 Sept, 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.  
 2. Elgin to Hamilton, 30 Dec. 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/8.  
 3. Elgin to Hamilton, 20 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.

general movement against the Government. The educated sections of the population were, as a whole, "disaffected" but they would become a major threat to British rule only if they succeeded in obtaining a following among the masses. Elgin summed up the official view by saying that "the dangers of the present and future" were concentrated in "a movement that they can no more stop than Canute could restrain the waves, the progress of education and the acquisition of knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

While Lord Elgin consulted official opinion in the rest of India, the Bombay Government failed to find either the murderers or the suspected conspiratorial organization. Lord Sandhurst's first reaction was to ask for an increase of executive powers in order to deal with what might be an extremely dangerous situation in the Poona area. But Lord Elgin refused to consider this request since Sandhurst already had at his disposal in the Regulation XXV of 1827 "summary powers of arrest and imprisonment which ... possibly exceeded those of the Czar of Russia."<sup>3</sup>

It seemed to many officials that the Indian press was instrumental in arousing hostility towards the Government if not in actually precipitating the Poona murders. In the opinion of the Bombay Press officer, twelve of the 200

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1. Hamilton to Elgin, 19 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.  
 2. Elgin to Hamilton, 20 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.  
 3. Elgin to Hamilton, 6 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.

provincial newspapers printed criticism of the Government which "frequently so far transgressed the limits of fair or reasonable criticism as to come perilously near" to sedition.<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State Hamilton refused in the House of Commons to say that there was a direct connection between the Poona murders and the Indian press, but he did admit that the Government of India had for some years been concerned about "the habitual dissemination of false intelligence and of appeals to religious animosities by a portion of the Vernacular Press."<sup>2</sup> Neither the Bombay nor the Indian Governments were completely confident that a conviction could be obtained against the offending newspapers. There had been only one previous prosecution under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code which made it a criminal offence to excite or attempt "to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government."<sup>3</sup> In the Bangabasi case of 1891, the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court dismissed the proceedings when the jury failed to arrive at a unanimous decision.<sup>4</sup> With this single experience of the working of Section 124A the Government was reluctant to initiate proceedings against

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1. Quoted in Elgin to Hamilton, 3 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.
  2. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 1 July 1897, 4th Series, Vol.L, p. 863.
  3. Section 124A of the I.P.C. was passed into law as Act XXVII of 1870, in response to the Wahabi movement of the late 1860's.
  4. The articles for which the editor of the Bangabasi was prosecuted criticised the Government of India for passing the Age of Consent Bill in 1891. Queen Empress v. Jogendra Chunder Bose, India Law Reports, XIX Calcutta 35.

an Indian newspaper editor and then face the probability that the Indian jurymen would not vote for a conviction. A Judge might accept the European jurymen's majority vote and find the accused guilty. Or the Judge might dismiss the proceedings because the Indian minority did not agree with the European majority. But in the former case the decision would appear to be based on racial considerations; in the latter the Government would appear to have been mistaken in initiating proceedings in the first place. In both cases British prestige would suffer.

Two weeks after the Poona murders, Lord Hamilton suggested that the Government of India should adopt a new Press Act to circumvent this impasse. The Act would provide the Government with the executive power to warn erring newspapers, and then "to confiscate their plant" if the warnings were disregarded.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Elgin replied to Hamilton's suggestion that the "executive powers for the arrest and punishment of dangerous and criminal persons are already ample" and that he and his colleagues considered special executive powers to control the Press as "undesirable." They wanted to test the efficiency of the existing law of sedition before recommending new legislation.<sup>2</sup>

But Hamilton telegraphed to Elgin that he regarded

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1. Hamilton to Elgin, 8 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/17.

2. Telegram from Elgin to Hamilton, 17 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.

this delay as unnecessary. The political climate in England was favourable for new coercive measures:<sup>1</sup> in two or three months, when the memory of the Poona and Calcutta disorders had faded, this opportunity might have passed.

Elgin "very earnestly" begged the Secretary of State to reconsider his views about strengthening the law. In the first place any immediate legislation would have to be passed at Simla without the presence of the Indian members of the Legislative Council. This would be a distinct departure from the ordinary procedure and it "would be politically inexpedient if not dangerous."<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Lord Elgin explained, "I am personally averse to these restrictive measures altogether: I do not believe in them." Any change in the law should be carried through without any "appearance of haste" and only "after a full consideration of all possible alternatives." He told Lord Hamilton that he was "disturbed" by the proposals for immediate legislation.<sup>3</sup> On 30 July, Hamilton, faced with the unanimous opinion of the Governor-General and his Council,<sup>4</sup> agreed

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1. Telegram from Hamilton to Elgin, 19 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.
  2. Telegram from Elgin to Hamilton, 22 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.89/20.
  3. Elgin to Hamilton, 20 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.
  4. Telegram from Elgin to Hamilton, 29 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.

to defer the legislation until after the existing law had been tested by the impending Bombay press trials.<sup>1</sup>

On 28 July 1897 the Poona police arrested Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Keshav Madev Bal of the Kesari, Shunkar Vishvanath Kelkar of the Poona Vaibhav, and the Natu brothers.<sup>2</sup> Several days later four more people were taken into custody: Kashinath Waman Lele of the Moda Vritta, Succaram Gopal Parandekar of the Poona Vaibhav, and Ramchandra Narayan and Krishnaji Dhondev of the Pratod.

The seven newspaper men were charged under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code with attempting "to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government" of India. The Government of Bombay, in initiating the proceedings, did not suggest that there had been a connection between the writings of the newspapers concerned and the Poona murders. But in each instance the articles in question had appeared in the three months preceeding the shootings.

The Natu brothers were held under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827 which gave the Government summary powers of detention "to ensure a portion of Her Majesty's dominions

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1. Telegram from Hamilton to Elgin, 30 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/20.  
2. The Times of India (Overland Edition), 30 July 1897.

from internal commotion." This Regulation, and the similar Bengal Regulation III of 1818 and Madras Regulation II of 1819, were used in the frontier areas and against semi-religious outbreaks such as those of the Kukas in the Punjab and the Moplahs in Malabar. But this was the first occasion on which it was employed against an educated nationalist. Lord Sandhurst's Government resorted to the Regulation because it possessed no judicially acceptable evidence that the Natus were connected with murders although there was a rumour that Tilak and the Natus were at "the bottom of the whole matter."<sup>1</sup>

Five and a half months after the arrest of the Natus, Hamilton was pressed in the House of Commons for the reasons for their continued imprisonment without trial. He replied that the Bombay authorities believed that the Natus "did everything in their power to stir up unrest" against the Government. One of the Natus was alleged to have sent a letter during the plague to a professional nurse "pointing out that it would be to her detriment, if she joined and worked with a search party." The nurse served anyway and, in consequence, "she lost the whole of her private practice" through "intimidation". The Bombay authorities also reported that, at the time of Gokhale's claim that rape had been committed by British soldiers, one of the Natus "had attempted in a most assiduous way to induce the police to

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1. Sandhurst to Elgin, 25 July 1897, MSS.Eur. F.84/71.

declare that a woman who had really died from disease had<sup>1</sup> been violated by a British soldier, and died in consequence."

There are several curious aspects to Hamilton's statement about the Natus. Bala Saheb Natu wrote a letter to the Champion of Bombay denouncing as "totally false" the information given by Hamilton in the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup> The statement was made on 18 February 1898 but the Bombay Government had not mentioned these allegations to the Natus themselves during their five and a half months' imprisonment. Nor did Sandhurst inform Elgin or Hamilton of these "facts" when they asked him for the reasons for the detention.<sup>3</sup> Sandhurst's Government did not release these "facts" in India although it claimed through Hamilton in the House of Commons that it possessed a deposition from the nurse in question.<sup>4</sup> It seems probable that the Bombay authorities expected to find a connection between the Natus and murders but when no such link was discovered, they decided to shift their justification onto these other "facts" for which the Bombay Government may or may not have had evidence.

The Natus were kept in detention for almost two and a half years. During the first six months the Government of Bombay not only failed to inform the Natus of the specific reasons for their arrest, but it also refused to allow

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1. Parl. Debates. H. of C. 18 Feb. 1898, 4th Series. Vol. 53. pp. 1076-77.
  2. Quoted by the Bengalee, 7 May 1898.
  3. See Sandhurst to Elgin, 25 July 1897, MSS. Eur. F. 84/71. Also, extract of Sandhurst to Hamilton, 30 Oct. 1897, enclosed in Sandhurst to Elgin, 4 Nov. 1897, MSS. Eur. F. 84/71.
  4. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 18 Feb. 1898, 4th Series, Vol. 53. p. 1077.

relatives, friends, or lawyers to visit. Regulation XXV of 1827 authorised the attachment of immovable property but the Government illegally attached the Natus' moveable possessions as well.<sup>1</sup>

The first of the 1897 sedition trials in Bombay ended on 27 August when Narayan and Dhondev of the Pratod of Islampur were found guilty at the Sessions Court, Satara, and sentenced to life and seven years imprisonment respectively.<sup>2</sup> Their sentences were subsequently reduced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and three months simple imprisonment following an appeal to the High Court of Bombay.<sup>3</sup>

Bal Gangadhar Tilak's trial came next. It attracted far more publicity than any of the other 1897 trials. By 1897 Tilak was a well-known figure among Congress followers throughout India. His nomination for a second term on the Legislative Council of Bombay had recently been accepted by Sandhurst; he was a leading member of the Sarvajanic Sabha, a member of the Bombay Standing Committee of the Congress, and the editor of two influential newspapers - the Kesari and the Mahratta. Congress supporters saw in the Government's prosecution of Tilak an attempt to punish a person for making independent criticisms of the Government. The timing of the prosecution suggested that the Government was trying

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1. Sandhurst telegram to Hamilton, 3 March 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.102.
  2. Imperatrix v. R.Narayan and K.Dhondev, May Prog. No.352, I.H.P.Pub.Vol.5413.
  3. Indian Law Reports, XXII Bombay 152.

indirectly to place the blame for the Poona murders on Tilak.<sup>1</sup>

The trial began on 8 September in the High Court of Bombay.<sup>2</sup> Tilak and Bal were charged with attempting to excite disaffection by publishing and printing, respectively, two articles in the Kesari of 15 June 1897. The first was a poem entitled "Shivaji's Utterances" and it related the imaginary observations made by Shivaji upon seeing how conditions had deteriorated since his time. The second article was ostensibly an account of four lectures delivered at a meeting in honour of Shivaji. The lectures included both discussion of the morality of Shivaji's killing of Afzal Khan and an appeal to leaders of Indian society to ignore their differences and to unite in regaining their lost "Swatantrya".

The Advocate General, for the Crown, argued that Tilak's poem was intended to excite disaffection by drawing a highly unfavourable comparison between India under British rule and India at the time of Shivaji. Under Shivaji men

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1. See Bengalee, 30 Oct. 1897.

2. Imperatrix v. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Keshev Mahadeo Bal, Indian Law Reports, XXII Bombay 112.

The more complete proceedings of the final three days of the Tilak trial appear in May Prog. No.356, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5413. The full six days' proceedings may be seen in The Times of India, 10 Sept. 1897 and the Supplement to The Times of India, 18 Sept. 1897. There are also accounts of the trial in A Full and Authentic Report of the Trial of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, edited by S.S.Sethur and K.G. Deshpande, and in Imperatrix versus Bal Gangadhar Tilak, edited by Bhaishanker and Kanga, Attorneys for the Accused, both published in 1897.

were brave, virtuous, and prosperous; Brahmans and cows were protected. But under the British, according to the poem, the Indian economy was ruined, cows were slaughtered, Brahmans were persecuted, Indian women were attacked in railway carriages, and Indians could no longer obtain justice, especially when a European and an Indian were involved in the same case.<sup>1</sup>

The Advocate General maintained that by taking every issue likely to arouse people's prejudices and passions, Tilak had sought to create disaffection. In his opinion, Tilak could have but one object in repeatedly stating that India was suffering under foreign rule, and at the same time pointing out that Shivaji was a great man because he established 'Swarajya' or self-rule.<sup>2</sup>

For the defence, Mr. Pugh thought that the Crown's case was based on an incorrect translation of many key words. He denied that the poem was intended to incite hatred of the British Government. Rather it was simply a poem in praise of Shivaji which pointed out that India was growing poorer from overtaxation. That was not sedition since many Europeans made the same argument. Nor did he think that the complaints about the protection of Brahmans and cows were illegal. In 1894 a number of Brahmans had been sentenced<sup>3</sup>

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1. Imperatrix v. B.G.Tilak and K.M.Bal, 4th Day, pp.3-7.  
May Prog. No.356, op.cit.

2. Ibid, p.5.

3. By Mr. Rand. However this was not mentioned by the Advocate General nor did the Rand murderer refer to this fact in his confession.

to prison at Wai for playing music in front of a mosque, and anyone had the right to criticise a specific court decision such as this. As for the cows, it was undeniably true that they no longer received protection from the Government and it was not an offence to state an obvious fact. According to Pugh, Tilak was suggesting that people should petition the Government for the removal of their grievances.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing the account of the Shivaji meeting, the Advocate General told the jury he thought that the reports of the speeches were a mere guise for approving political assassination and spreading discontent. The killing of Afzal Khan was justified because it was done for the public good and without selfish motives. The implication of the article was : Indians should overcome their social and religious differences, and, remembering that Shivaji and the heroes of the French Revolution did not commit murder by killing, they should regain their lost independence.<sup>2</sup>

Pugh denied that this was the intention of these speeches. The discussion was a continuation of the historical question of the morality of Shivaji's killing of Afzal Khan. It had no relevance to modern times. The references to the terrible burden did not apply to the British Government but to the schisms, the poverty, and the degradation of the Indian nation in modern times.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid, pp.16-23.

2. Ibid, pp.8-10.

3. Ibid, pp.29-36.

On the sixth day of the trial Judge Strachey began his summing up to the jury. In giving his famous interpretation of Section 124A he held that "disaffection means simply the absence of affection. It means hatred, enmity, dislike, hostility, contempt, and every form of ill-will to the Government." The offence, he continued, consists of "the exciting or attempting to excite certain feelings." It was not necessary to prove that the accused had attempted "to induce" action as opposed to feelings. It was "absolutely immaterial" if any disturbance had actually resulted.<sup>1</sup> The Jury was also directed to consider the time of the publication, the prejudices of the readers who would see the articles, and the likely effect upon them with regard to the abnormal conditions of plague.<sup>2</sup>

Judge Strachey told the jury that a man was permitted by law to argue that in view of Hindu feelings, cows should not be killed. A man might also criticize the unjust acquittal of British soldiers or the unjust conviction of Brahmans. But, he asked, "has it been argued or has it been strung upon a string of similar topics in such a way as to appeal not to the reason, but to the passions of a people whose passions are easily inflamed?"<sup>3</sup>

"A man may criticise or comment upon any measure or act of the Government...he may express the strongest condemnation of such measures, and he

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1. Ibid, p.57.
  2. Ibid, p.60 et.seq.
  3. Ibid, p.70.

may do so severely, and even unreasonably, perversely and unfairly. ... But if he goes beyond that, and, whether in the course of comments upon measures or not, holds up the Government itself to the hatred or contempt of his readers, as, for instance, by attributing to it every sort of evil and misfortune suffered by the people, or dwelling adversely on its foreign origin and character, or imputing to it base motives, or accusing it of hostility or indifference to the welfare of the people, then he is guilty under the section..."<sup>1</sup>

The Jury found Tilak guilty by a vote of six to three, the three Indians voting for his acquittal. Bal was unanimously acquitted.<sup>2</sup> Judge Strachey accepted the Jury's verdict and sentenced Tilak to 18 months rigorous imprisonment.

Sympathisers with the Congress movement denied that Tilak was guilty.<sup>4</sup> They objected to Strachey's definition of

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1. Ibid, p.59.

2. Ibid, p.89.

3. Ibid, p.90.

4. The Bengalee, (25 Sept. 1897) for instance, appeared with a black border. It argued that no Indian, especially an intelligent one, could be disloyal to the British Government because the alternative was "anarchy" or "Russian domination", and all educated Indians realized this.

"disaffection" as "simply the absence of affection." In their view Strachey had misdirected the Jury by stating that a seditious feeling might be passive and not necessarily an active feeling.<sup>1</sup> It was feared that Strachey's interpretation of Section 124A would "seriously affect the liberty of the press and freedom of speech."<sup>2</sup> A campaign was launched throughout India to raise enough funds for Tilak to appeal to the Privy Council. Its success was immediate.<sup>3</sup> All together, over Rs. 50,000 was collected: Rs.10,000 ... by Calcutta, Rs.11,000 by Bombay, and the rest by Gujarat, Sind, Madras and Central India."<sup>4</sup>

After making an unnecessary and unsuccessful application to the High Court of Bombay for leave to appeal to the Privy Council,<sup>5</sup> Tilak made an application to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council itself for leave to appeal against his conviction.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Bengalee, 2 Oct. 1897.
  2. Quoted from appeal by a Tilak Defence Fund Committee composed of Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Hon. Norendra Nath Sen, Hon. Kali Charan Banerjea, J. Ghosal, Motilal Ghose, Rabindra Nath Tagore, and others. Bengalee, 9 Oct. 1897.
  3. Bengalee, 30 Oct. 1897.
  4. Bengalee, 22 Oct. 1898.
  5. Note of Proceedings before the Full Bench of Her Majesty's High Court of Judicature at Bombay, in re the application of Bal Gangadhar Tilak for leave to appeal to the Privy Council. 18 Sept. 1897. May Prog. No.362, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5413.
  6. A summary of the proceedings before the Privy Council appears in the Indian Law Reports, XXII Bombay 528. The full proceedings may be found in a Special Supplement to India, Dec. 1897, and in May Prog. No.378, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5413.

Herbert Asquith, Q.C., appeared in London on Tilak's behalf. He maintained that Strachey had misdirected the Jury by giving them a "far too extensive" definition of disaffection. In his opinion, "the essence of the offence is that you should be seeking to excite in the minds of those to whom your language is addressed an intention or disposition to resist the lawful authority of the Government," and not, as Strachey had said, merely "any feelings of hatred or ill-will or enmity."<sup>1</sup>

Asquith also objected to Strachey's treatment of the "Explanation" to Section 124A. Strachey had said, in effect, that the Explanation was "an exhaustive enumeration of the cases which are not intended to fall within the section" and not merely one example of what was not sedition.<sup>2</sup> Asquith thought that Strachey's construction of the explanation was "most irrational and impractical" when he held that comments on the general "policy or structure" and "the spirit or general intention or motive which characterizes

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1. "Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Petitioner versus the Queen Empress" p.21. May Prog. No.378, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5413.

2. The Explanation read: "Such a disapprobation of the measures of the Government as is compatible with a disposition to render obedience to the lawful authority of the Government, and to support the lawful authority of the Government against unlawful attempts to subvert or resist that authority, is not disaffection. Therefore the making of comments on the measures of the Government, with the intention of exciting only this species of disapprobation, is not an offence within this clause."

the Government policy as a whole" were not protected by the Explanation and that such comments fell within the meaning of Section 124A. The "purpose of the criticism", Asquith continued, ought to be more important than the subject matter.<sup>1</sup>

Asquith further objected to Strachey's instructions to the Jury to consider the state of public feeling at the time the articles were published as no evidence concerning public feeling had been presented. Strachey had misdirected the Jury, Asquith felt, by speaking of "an inflamed state of feeling" which "culminated in the murders" of Rand and Ayerst.<sup>2</sup> Actually, he pointed out, plague in Poona had subsided over a month before the murders and the search parties of British soldiers had been withdrawn on 20 May.<sup>3</sup> There were lesser points about which Asquith thought Strachey had been mistaken. But on 19 November 1897, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council refused Tilak's application for leave of appeal.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in effect, the Privy Council upheld Strachey's view that "disaffection means any feeling of hatred" and not "only such as involves a disposition to resist".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid, pp.21-22.

2. Imperatrix v. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Keshav Mahadeo Bal, op.cit. p.66.

3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Petitioner v, the Queen Empress, op.cit., p.19.

4. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Petitioner v. the Queen Empress, op. cit., p.26. Also, XXII Bombay 528, India Law Reports.

5. Report by the Legal Adviser, India Office, on the Proceedings before the Privy Council on the occasion of Tilak's application for special leave to appeal against his conviction. 29 Nov. 1897, May Prog. No.379, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5413.

The third Bombay sedition trial of 1897 ended on 17 September. S.V.Kelkar and S.G.Parandekar of the Poona Vaibhav were tried under Section 124A in the High Court but, when the Jury failed to agree on a verdict, the case was held over until the next Sessions.<sup>1</sup> On 26 November 1897, at the retrial, both the accused submitted apologies and they were discharged.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth prosecution resulted in a unanimous decision of guilty by the Jury in the High Court on 26 November 1897. K.W.Lele of the Moda Vritta was sentenced to nine months simple imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

Thus four of the five 1897 sedition trials succeeded.<sup>4</sup> This seemed to indicate that the Indian law of sedition was adequate. However, the Government of India decided to make major alterations in the existing law. Hamilton was largely responsible in persuading the Government to act. He did not think that the situation in India was urgent but he wanted to be prepared for future trouble and 1897 provided a good opportunity to strengthen the sedition law before the effect of the Rand murder on British public opinion had worn off.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Imperatrix v. Shankar Vishvanath Kelkar and Sakharams Gopal Parandekar. May Prog. No.366, *ibid*.
  2. Imperatrix v. S.V. Kelkar and S.G.Parandekar. May Prog. No.372, *ibid*.
  3. Imperatrix v. Kashinath Waman Lele. May Prog. No.374. *ibid*.
  4. Including the prosecution of the editor of the Jami-ul-ulam of Moradabad. See Chapt. I.
  5. Hamilton to Elgin, 12 Aug. 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.

The Government of India, in proposing to amend the sedition law, was careful to state its preference for a non-executive law of general application, and to reject the idea of a new law similar to the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 which covered only those newspapers printed in a non-European language. The preference for a law providing for action "taken not by the executive Government but through the Courts in the ordinary course of law"<sup>1</sup> was shared by most of the officials consulted although the Secretary of State,<sup>2</sup> the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab,<sup>3</sup> and Justice Strachey<sup>4</sup> had originally indicated their preference for a law containing executive powers to control the press.

In February and March 1898, the Government of India passed major amendments relating to the sedition law in two sections of the Indian Penal Code and in two sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure. When the Government of India submitted its proposed amendments to the Secretary of State in October 1897, it did not plan to amend Section 124A of the Penal Code.<sup>5</sup> However, Hamilton in sanctioning the amendments, advised that the definition of disaffection in

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1. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 14 Oct. 1897, para.2, Feb. Prog. No.182, India Leg. Prog., Vol.5479.
  2. Hamilton to Elgin, 23 July 1897, MSS.Eur. C.125/2.
  3. Elgin to Hamilton, 20 July 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/6.
  4. Minute by Justice Strachey, 1 Jan. 1898, Enclosure to S.W.Edgerley, Sec., Govt. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., 10 Jan. 1898, Appendix A35, India Leg. Prog., Vol.5479.
  5. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 14 Oct. 1897, op.cit., para.5.

Section 124A ought to be changed.<sup>1</sup> Justice Strachey had said in the Tilak trial that disaffection meant "simply the absence of affection." Justice Parsons, on the other hand, had ruled in the Narayan (Pratod) appeal case that disaffection could not be construed as meaning "dislike or hatred, but is used in its special sense as signifying political alienation or discontent, that is to say, a feeling of disloyalty to the existing Government which tends to a disposition not to obey, but to resist and subvert" the Government.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation went far beyond the other definitions given in 1897 and it directly contradicted the rulings of Justices Strachey,<sup>3</sup> Farran,<sup>4</sup> and Edge.<sup>5</sup> Strachey thought that it diluted "the vigour" of his own ruling and reintroduced "the old uncertainties which have for years made the Government afraid to prosecute."<sup>6</sup> Hamilton proposed to resolve the conflict in interpretations by adding an Explanation to Section 124A stating that disaffection "includes all feelings of ill-will."<sup>7</sup>

This proposal aroused great opposition in India from Indians and Europeans alike who argued that the definition

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1. Sec. of State to Gov. Gen. in Council, 6 Dec. 1897, para. 3, Feb. Prog. No.183, India Leg. Prog., Vol.5479.
  2. Imperatrix v. Ramchandra Narayan, Indian Law Reports, XXII Bombay 152.
  3. See account of Tilak Trial, above.
  4. Imperatrix v. Narayan and K. Dhondev, Indian Law Reports, XXII, Bombay 152.
  5. Imperatrix v. Amba Prasad, Indian Law Reports, XX Allahabad 55.
  6. Arthur Strachey to M.D.Chalmers, the Law Member, 6 Dec 1897, Reg.No.751B/15, MSS.Eur.F.84.
  7. Sec.of State to Gov.Gen.inCouncil, 6 Dec.1897, op.cit.para

of disaffection was far too wide and too vague, and that certain criticisms which would arouse ill-will towards the Government were perfectly compatible with a disposition to obey the Government and to support it against all attempts to subvert or overthrow it.<sup>1</sup>

M.D.Chalmers, the Law Member of Elgin's Council, denied in the Legislative Council that the Government was altering the meaning of Section 124A except to make it more similar to the British law of sedition.<sup>2</sup> This was a dubious argument. According to Stephen's Digest of the Criminal Law, a seditious intention was not an intention to show "that Her Majesty had been misled or mistaken in her measures, or to point out errors or defects in the government or constitution as by law established, with a view to their reformation, or to excite Her Majesty's subjects to attempt by lawful means the alteration of any matter in Church or State by law established...."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, under the British law

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1. See Sec., Bombay Presidency Association, to Sec., Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., 26 Jan. 1898, Appendix A47, India Leg. Prog., Vol.5479. Also, Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, Sec., British Indian Association, to C.W.Bolton, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 21 Jan. 1898, Appendix A 42, *ibid*.
  2. India Leg. Council Prog., 21 Dec. 1897, Vol.XXXVI, pp.379-81.
  3. James Fitzjames Stephen, A Digest of the Criminal Law (3rd ed., 1883), p.65, article 93. Stephen's articles on sedition were accepted "almost verbatim" by the Criminal Code Commission which reported in 1879. J.F.Stephen, A History of the Criminal Law in England, Vol.II, p.299.

a person was protected in his criticism if he sought reform by lawful means. The proposed Indian law gave no such protection. Chalmers may have realized the weakness of his argument because two months later he told the Legislative Council that argument about the law of sedition in England was

"more or less academic. No one in his senses would contend that because a given law is good and suitable in England it is therefore good and suitable in India....Language may be tolerated in England which is unsafe to tolerate in India, because in India it is apt to be transformed into action instead of passing off as harmless gas."<sup>1</sup>

However, a small concession was made to critics of the new Section 124A. Before the amendment became law on 18 February 1898, the Select Committee altered the Explanation to say that disaffection included "disloyalty and all feelings of enmity." It was admitted that "a certain amount of ill-will may be compatible with genuine loyalty."<sup>2</sup>

The other section of the Penal Code relating to sedition which was amended was Section 505. Section 505 made it an offence to publish or circulate a false rumour, report, or statement, with the intention of causing a mutiny or an offence against the state or public tranquility. According to the Government of India, the section had been "unworkable

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1. India Leg. Council Prog., 18 Feb. 1898, Vol. XXXVII, pp.33-34.

2. Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the Penal Code, Appendix A49, India Leg. Prog., Vol.5479. The original and the amended Sections 124A are appended to this chapter.

owing to the impossibility of proving that a person" knew the rumour, report, or statement to be false. The Government proposed to remedy this by rewording the Explanation to the section, so that the burden of proving the truth of the rumour, report, or statement would lie on the accused. The section was also to be extended to cover rumours, reports, or statements which were "likely to cause", as well as which were intended to cause, an offence.<sup>1</sup> Thus under Section 505, the accused would have been liable to conviction, regardless of the actual effect or intention of the rumour, report or statement, unless he could prove its truth. Before the amendment was introduced into the Legislative Council on 21 December 1897, a further change was made at the suggestion of the Secretary of State. True statements were also to have been made punishable if they were likely or intended to cause an offence.<sup>2</sup> Critics of these amendments argued that the Government would be placing an impossible burden on the accused by requiring him to prove that his statement was true and that he made it without malicious intention. On this Section also the Select Committee made a slight concession. It altered the amended section so that the accused would not be required to prove the actual truth of his statement, but only that he had "reasonable grounds for believing"

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1. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 14 Oct. 1897, op.cit., para.10.

2. Sec. of State to Gov. Gen. in Council, 6 Dec. 1897, op.cit., para.9.

that it was true and that he made it without criminal intent.<sup>1</sup>

The charges introduced into the procedure of the laws of sedition in 1898 were even more important than the amendments to the substance of the offences. The main criticisms made by officials against the existing law of sedition have already been stated. From 1870 to 1897, the law of sedition (Section 124A) had remained almost inoperative, largely because officials had anticipated that jury members would not vote for the conviction of a person belonging to their own community (as in the Bangabasi case in 1891 and the Tilak case in 1897) or that the accused would acquire the stature of a martyr through the inevitable publicity attending a sedition trial.

The Government of India introduced two amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure which were intended to provide alternative means of dealing with sedition. The amendment to which the Government of India attached "the greatest importance" contained a "summary method of stopping the dissemination of seditious" matter.<sup>2</sup> The amendment, which became Section 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, authorized Chief Presidency and District Magistrates, as well as specially empowered Presidency and First Class Magistrates, to take security from any person suspected of

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1. Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the Penal Code, op.cit., para.5.
  2. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 14 Oct. 1897, op.cit., para.7.

disseminating or attempting to disseminate seditious matter. This amendment, like the other alterations to the sedition laws, was condemned by almost all of the 30 odd Indian and European groups who submitted criticisms.<sup>1</sup> The Rafai-am Association, a pro-Congress political organization in Lucknow, said the amendment would "serve as a terror, which will dry up all feelings of independence" among Indian newspaper editors.<sup>2</sup> The Calcutta Bar objected that the amendment would give extensive powers to Magistrates

"whose actions by virtue of their public position and the very wide powers they enjoy, are likely to meet with disapproval and to be the subject of strong criticism at the hands of the press, and who, therefore, will be the most intolerant ... and the most inclined to be prejudiced."<sup>3</sup>

The European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, which had been founded in 1883 to protect the privileges of the European community,<sup>4</sup> asked that either the amendment be

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1. The only two bodies to give full support to the sedition Bills were the Muhammadan Literary Society and the Central National Muhammadan Association. Both bodies were in Calcutta and their Secretaries held Government appointed judicial positions. See enclosures to C.W. Bolton, Ch. Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Sec. Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., 19 Jan. 1898, Appendix A6, India Leg. Prog., Vol. 5480.
  2. Bipin Bihari Bose, Sec., Rafai-am Association, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 8 Feb. 1898. May Prog. No. 343, I.H.P., Pub., Vol. 5413.
  3. N.B. Chatterji, Sec., Calcutta Bar, to Sec., Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., 24 Feb. 1898, quoted in Englishman, 4 March 1898.
  4. S. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, 1880-1884, p. 146.

cancelled or the Magistrate be required to possess definite proof of a person's guilt or seditious intent before taking security for good behaviour.<sup>1</sup> In response to these views, the Select Committee and the Government made a number of changes in the new Section 108 before it was enacted on 12 March 1898. Magistrates were allowed to require bonds to be executed for good security without also requiring sureties. This was important since many Indian newspapers had such limited capital that the necessity of making even a small deposit for good behaviour would have compelled them to cease publication. The other important concession was the making of all orders issued under Section 108 subject to revision by the High Court.<sup>2</sup>

Besides giving Magistrates the power to demand security for good behaviour, the Government extended the jurisdiction over cases tried under Section 124A to Chief Presidency and District Magistrates, and to specially empowered First Class Magistrates.<sup>3</sup> This provided the Government with another means of acting against political offenders without recourse to a jury trial although serious offences

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1. W.C.Madge, Sec., European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, to Sec., Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., 10 Feb. 1898, Appendix A31, India Leg. Prog., Vol. 5480.
  2. Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend to the Penal Code, op.cit., para. 24.
  3. This extension was accomplished by making an addition to Column 8 of Schedule II of the Criminal Procedure Code in the line relating to offences under Section 124A of the Penal Code.

requiring severe punishments were to continue to be tried by a Court of Session.<sup>1</sup>

The sedition law amendments provided the Government with a definition of disaffection which was both wider and more clearly defined than the old law. They also supplied a procedure which was expected to be efficient, swift, and free from the embarrassing publicity of past sedition trials. The amendments might have been even more sweeping but for the opposition of the non-official European community of Calcutta. The President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Alan Arthur, told Elgin that the Europeans opposed the Government's amendments because they feared that an extreme law would be overturned by a future "Radical" Government in England.<sup>2</sup>

The Government of Bombay was not content to rely on the strengthened sedition law. It established Press Committees to warn newspapers which published objectionable matter and to supply correct information to misinformed newspapers. The Committees, which were appointed by the District Magistrate and consisted of both official and non-official

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1. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 14 Oct. 1897, op.cit., para.8. District and First Class Magistrates could not ordinarily pass sentences exceeding two years' imprisonment, Rs.1,000 fine, or whipping. See Section 32(i) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
  2. Elgin to Hamilton, 10 Feb. 1898, MSS.Eur. F.84/72.

Indians,<sup>1</sup> warned or corrected more than fifteen newspapers in the first year and a half of their existence.<sup>2</sup> The Committees were condemned by the 1898 Congress<sup>3</sup> and even Hamilton thought a Press Committee "approaches very nearly to a Press Censorship without any legal authority behind it."<sup>4</sup> After W.A.Chambers, one of the Congress leaders of Bombay, had complained to audiences in England about the autocratic nature of the Committees,<sup>5</sup> and after the subject was raised in the House of Commons, Hamilton officially informed the Bombay Government that the "expediency of a measure, so apt to be misunderstood, appears to me very questionable."<sup>6</sup>

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1. G.K.Gokhale served on the Poona Press Committee. Sandhurst to Elgin, 11 May 1898, MSS.Eur. F.84/72.
  2. Reports on the working of the Press Committee, enclosures to Govt. of Bombay to Sec. of State, 12 Jan. 1900, Feb. Prog. 245B, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5872.
  3. Resolution VIII. The Bengalee (18 March 1899) published a letter from C.Hudson, District Magistrate, Ahmadnagar, to the editor of a local newspaper. The letter said the editor "is warned that his article of July 10, 1898, on the conviction of a soldier and the partiality of the Bombay High Court where Europeans are concerned, was conceived in bad taste, and that its tone is objectionable."
  4. Hamilton to Elgin, 20 May 1898, MSS.Eur. C.125/3.
  5. India, 5 Aug. 1898. Henry Hyde Champion had served in the second Afghan War as an artillery officer. After the War he became a pacifist and gave up his commission. He was converted to socialism by Henry George and became a "labour orator and editor" in the East End of London. After his journal failed he went to India in 1889 where he edited the Champion and worked as an engineer. He played a leading role in the Presidency Association and in 1900 he was selected as Bombay's only member on the General List of the Indian Congress Committee which was, theoretically, the ruling body of the Congress. Bengalee, 7 and 21 May 1898.
  6. Sec. of State to Gov. in Council, 23 June 1898, July Prog. No.222, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5414.

After a couple of years the Committees were quietly allowed to lapse.

The other means by which political alienation was thought to be spreading were the schools and colleges. The Tilak trial in particular drew attention to this problem. Mr. Pugh had argued in Tilak's defence that the substance of the Kesari articles was similar to that of books sold in the Government book depôts and used in the schools aided by Government funds.<sup>1</sup> These books contained passages to the effect that India's wealth was being drained away by foreigners, that the slaughter of cows by foreigners was a burden to India, and that the Marathas should regain their former manliness and courage and kill the foreigners.<sup>2</sup> The Bombay Government also noticed that Tilak's report of the Shivaji celebration contained objectionable speeches by Professor Bhanu of the New English School and Professor Paranjpe of the Maharashtra Native Institution. Both these Poona schools were recipients of Government aid. Furthermore, Professor Bhanu's book, Tales from Maratha History, had been used in the New English School for two years without authorization, and in the opinion of the Government of Bombay, it "contained many objectionable passages." Two other teachers at the New

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1. Imperatrix v. B.G.Tilak and V.M.Bal, 4th Day, op.cit., pp.21-22.

2. The Times, 11 Oct. 1897. See also the exhibits submitted for the defence in A Full and Authentic Report of the Trial of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, ed. by S.S.Setlur and K.G.Deshpande.

English School had published "very violent attacks" on the Government during the plague in their newspaper, the Sudharak. And finally, Professor G.K.Gokhale of the Fergusson College, which was also part of the Deccan Education Society, had made irresponsible statements in England, as already stated, about the conduct of the plague operations.<sup>1</sup>

Because of these "political" activities, the Government of Bombay decided to insist that the aided schools make certain reforms in both their constitutions and rules of behaviour. The Director of Public Instruction entered into correspondence with the Deccan Education Society, the Poona Native Institution, and the Ahmadnagar Education Society. The Government requested the aided institutions to prohibit their teachers from participating in any political agitation, from holding office in any political association, and from maintaining any connection with a political newspaper or journal. According to a Government Resolution, politics were to be entirely dissociated from education, and any departure from this principle would result in the withdrawal of the Government grant-in-aid.<sup>2</sup>

The Council of the Deccan Education Society agreed to suspend Professor Bhanu and Mr. Patwardhan, who was editor

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1. Dir. of Pub. Instru. to Chmn. of Deccan Educ. Soc., 3 Sept. 1897. Appendix L to Abstr. of Dec. Progs. in Educ. Dept., Bombay: Educ. Eccles. Mar. and Leg. Prog., Vol. 5321. Also, Govt. of Bombay Despatch to Sec. of State, 7 Jan. 1898 July Prog., No. 22, I.H.P., Educ., Vol. 5415.
  2. Resol. of Gov. in Council, 28 Feb. 1898, Feb. Prog., No. No. 259, Bombay: Educ. Eccles. Mar. and Leg. Prog., Vol. 5541.

of the Sudharak, for their political indiscretions,<sup>1</sup> and to alter its condition so that the Managing Board of Life-members would no longer have predominant control of the schools under the Society's charge. This reform was insisted upon because Gokhale, Bhanu, and Patwardhan had been among the Life-members on the Managing Board, and their influence was not believed to be healthy. Similar changes were made in the Poona Native Institution's constitution.<sup>2</sup>

The Ahmadnagar Education Society suspended the Headmaster of Ahmadnagar High School for his speech at the local Shivaji celebration in May 1897. In that speech the Headmaster had abused the British and claimed that the British had made preparations to leave India in 1857 after only a day and a half of Hindu-Muslim combination. The Society also dismissed the four masters and one student who managed the Sudarshan newspaper which had published the speech.<sup>3</sup> At the suggestion of the Governor in Council, the Ahmadnagar Education Society agreed that in the future the District Judge or Collector and an Education Inspector would be members of the Managing Board.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dir, of Pub. Instru. to Sec., Govt. of Bombay Educ. Dept., 13 Oct. 1897, Appendix L to Abstr. of Dec. Progs. in Educ. Dept. Bombay Educ. Eccles., Mar. and Leg. Prog., Vol. 5321.
  2. Letter from Dir. of Pub. Instr., 7 Apr. 1898. May Educ. Prog. No. 624, : Bombay: Educ., Eccles. Mar. and Leg. Prog., Vol. 5541.
  3. Letter from Dir. of Pub. Instr., 10 Jan. 1898, Feb. Educ. Prog. No. 259, *ibid*.
  4. Letter from Dir. of Pub. Instr., 16 May 1898. July Educ. Prog. No. 223, *ibid*.

A number of explanations were advanced for the growth of disaffection in the schools. One was that the rapid development of aided-schools, run entirely by Indians, had increased the difficulties of providing proper supervision for text books and faculty and student behaviour. The Education Commission of 1882, under the presidency of Sir William Hunter, had recommended that higher education should be left as much as possible to private control, and that private efforts should be assisted through Government grants-in-aid. Since that time the enrollment in private schools and colleges had increased almost tenfold while that in public institutions had grown by less than a half.<sup>1</sup> Government Education Inspectors were watchful for direct political teaching in the schools but they seem to have been inefficient. One standard text-book, the Matriculation Manual of English, sold 40,000 copies to Indian schools before the following passages were discovered by the Education Inspectors:

1. "Illustrative of adjectives used as nouns:-  
The natives of India, down trodden mortals, are treated by Europeans, whether inferiors or superiors, whether juniors or seniors, worse than criminals.

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1. Govt. of India Resolution, 28 Oct. 1899, in J.S.Cotton's "Report on the Progress of Education in India, 1892-93 to 1896-97."  
Nov. Prog. No.26, I.H.P., Educ., Vol.5641.

2. "Illustrative of expanding sentences:-
  - a) Tilak was condemned unjustly.
  - b) Tilak was condemned, though it, the condemnation, was unjust.
3. "Illustrative of compression:-
  - a) The Press Act, from which all troubles to Indian liberty are expected to arise, must be knocked on the head.
  - b) The Press Act, the source of all troubles to Indian liberty, must be knocked on the head.<sup>1</sup>

By 1897, it was apparent that there was a subtle political influence at work in the schools: the teaching that India had once been united and prosperous, that under British rule it was disunited and impoverished, and that a golden age was approaching in the future. Sir William Hunter wrote an article on this subject for The Times in October 1897 in which he supported the view that the myth of an historical universal Indian Empire "underlies all Indian conceptions of modern politics. It is the cause of much discontent and

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1. These were additions made to the book by M.S.Purnalingam Pillai, editor of the Jnana Bodini of Madras. The book had been written by a Mr. Sheppard and the revised editions were published by Messrs. Thompson and Co. of Madras.  
H.A.Sim, Pri. Sec. to Gov. of Bombay, to W.R.Lawrence, Pri. Sec. to Viceroy, 7 July 1899, Reg. No.1013, P.S.L.I., Vol. 117.

bitterness in the native mind' and press. He objected to the belief that the English had destroyed the "Empire" or "Nation", and that under the native rulers the masses had been freer and more prosperous. Hunter regretted that Indians derived their knowledge of English activities in 18th Century India "from the misleading word-pictures of Macaulay and the partisan vituperation of Burke." He thought that Indian teachers had adopted Burke's objective of securing "a political conviction" rather than presenting "the historical facts."<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State advised the Bombay Government to take more care in the selection of text books and he suggested that teachers and education inspectors encourage respect for authority by exhibiting greater strictness in matters of discipline.<sup>2</sup> The Government of India wondered if, in substituting Government aid for Government control in the schools, the teachers might have become discontented because they were no longer eligible for Government pensions.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Times, 11 Oct. 1897, As it must have been difficult for many Englishmen to admit doubts concerning India's prosperity, so it was similarly advantageous for Indian politicians to accept the Golden Age Theory. For instance, Surendra Nath Banerjea told the 1895 session of the Indian National Congress that "it is a beautiful tradition. It embalms the ever-present sense of dissatisfaction which humanity feels with the present. Dissatisfaction is the parent of all progress, It stirs us on to the ceaseless activity for the betterment of our race. A golden age is, indeed, looming in the future." Report of the 11th I.N.C., p.50.
  2. Educ. Despatch from Sec. of State to Gov. in Council, Bombay, 16 Dec. 1897, paras 2 and 5. July Prog. No.20, I.H.P., Educ., Vol.5415.
  3. J.P.Hewett, Sec., Govt. of India, to Heads of Local Govts., 24 June 1898, July Prog. No.30, *ibid.*

Unemployment among ex-students was believed to be another reason for the political alienation of educated Indians.<sup>1</sup> However, major education reforms were to wait until Lord Curzon's Universities Act in 1904.

The most potent source of anti-British feeling among the educated classes of the Bombay Deccan was the memory and glorification of Maratha rule by the Maratha Brahmans. Sir William Lee-Warner, who served in many official capacities in Bombay before becoming Secretary to the Political and Secret Department in the India Office, expressed in 1900 a widely felt anxiety at the predominance of the Brahmans in the schools and Government service. He said that the Brahmans had usurped most of the scholarships which the Government had intended to give to the backward classes. Similarly, the decision to allow higher education to be run largely by private enterprise had played into the hands of the Brahmans who almost monopolized the private colleges with their superior intelligence, solidarity and organizing ability. The competitive examinations for Government service had also furthered the Brahman ascendancy. In 1869, out of 26 Deputy Collectors in Bombay Presidency, 12 were Brahmans, 9 were Europeans, and 5 were Parsis. In 1899, there were 43 Brahmans, 5 Europeans, 12 Parsis, and 3 others. In 1899, 60 of the 74 Mamlatdars were Brahmans. Yet the Brahmans

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1. See Hamilton's speech, Parl Debates, H. of C., 5 Aug. 1897, 4th Series, Vol.52, pp.436-37.

represented less than five per cent of the population of Bombay. Lee-Warner thought that "the strength and popularity of our rule are not broad-based upon the several classes of the population, but upon the one class whose interests are not identical with those of India as a whole or of ourselves." He thought that the memory of the Peshwa's rule "hangs heavy in the air", that if another Peshwa were to proclaim himself, the descendants of the Peshwa's Government, who maintained their hereditary titles, would assume rule "without dispute or question."<sup>1</sup>

While the Governments of India and Bombay were tightening official control over the press and education, the Poona murder case was partly solved. On 3 October 1897, almost three weeks after Tilak had been sentenced to prison, the Poona police arrested Damodar Hari Chapekar, a twenty-eight year old Chitpavan Brahman, who made a full and voluntary confession. He admitted that he and his brother had murdered Rand, and he described their acts of violence against the Government, Christians, and Hindu reformers

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1. Note on Bombay Affairs, 26 Jan. 1900, by W. Lee-Warner, MSS.Eur. F.92.

during the previous years. His confession was made "in no penitential spirit, but rather in the spirit of one who has done and dared for the cause of his countrymen."<sup>1</sup> While he waited in jail for his trial, he finished writing his remarkable autobiography, the life story of a man with no clear political objective other than a passionate belief in the necessity of independence from non-Indian institutions and influences, which he thought were corrupting Brahman orthodoxy.

Damodar's father had been an itinerant kirtan singer.<sup>2</sup> Damodar had spent his early years travelling with his father's troupe, performing kirtans at shrines and at the durbars of Native States. He had attended the New English School in Poona for at least two years where he discovered that the study of English caused one "to look upon his elders as fools and despise his good and ancient religion."<sup>3</sup>

By the time Damodar was fifteen he had developed a strong dislike of English people and their ways. In the early 1890's Damodar and his younger brother, Balkrishna, started a club to stimulate courage, physical strength, martial spirit, and religious enthusiasm. This club, consisting of about 150 Poona youths, waged mock military battles among themselves with slings and stones. After this club

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1. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Journal, 13 Oct.1897.
  2. A kirtan is the celebration of the Gods' virtues with songs and music.
  3. Autobiography of Damodar Chapekar, Part I, pp.6-10. Enclosure to S.W.Edgerley, Sec.Govt. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Aug.1899, Sept. Prog. No.6, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5640.

broke up, forty of the original members formed a second club, probably in 1894. Religious discussions were held, small weapons were stolen and collected, and gymnastics were practiced. However, this club too, was short-lived.<sup>1</sup>

About the time of the controversy over the use of the Congress Pavilion by the 1895 Social Conference, the Chapekar brothers started a third club consisting of only twenty members. Its object was similar to that of the first two: to attain familiarity with weapons, to build up physical strength, and to discuss ways of ending British rule. This third society developed well beyond the mere preparatory stage. In an anonymous letter published in the Sudharak ("Reformer") on 25 November 1895, the Chapekars elaborated their purpose. The letter was entitled "A warning to the reformers", and its substance was as follows:

"Like your association for removing the obstacles in the way of widow re-marriage, [we also] have formed a society for removing the obstacles in the way of the Aryan religion, that is to say, a league prepared to lay down their lives as well as to take the lives of others for the sake of that religion....There is no necessity for any innovation whatever in our religious observances or our customs of the present day. Both the reformers and the non-reformers are therefore hereby warned that ... they should conduct themselves with great caution hereafter .... [or we will] put them to the sword."<sup>2</sup>

In 1895-96 the Chapekars, with the help of several other members of their club, attacked and severely injured

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1. Ibid, Part II, pp.5-10.

2. Ibid, Part II, p.14.

Wasudeo Balwant Patwardhan,<sup>1</sup> an editor of Sudharak, and Professor N.G. Velingar, a Christian teacher at Wilson College.<sup>2</sup> The Chapekars frequently went to Bombay where they harassed Christian missionaries and attempted to stir up feeling against the Government. They stoned the missionaries who preached at Back Bay, they set fire to a mission building,<sup>3</sup> they disfigured the statue of Queen Victoria,<sup>4</sup> and they burned down the Examination mandap of the University of Bombay.<sup>5</sup>

Damodar scoffed at the Indian National Congress. It was a mere "sham" invented by Hume, Bradlaugh, and other Europeans. At the Poona Congress of 1895, when "all the

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1. Ibid, Part II, p.14. Parwardhan, although a reformer, was an outspoken critic of the administration. In some articles in the Sudharak in 1897 he used provocative language in counselling the people of Poona to resist the unauthorised proceedings of the soldiers engaged in plague duty, For this he was suspended for one year from his teaching at the New English School upon the advice of the Bombay Government. Director of Public Instruction to Chairman of Deccan Education Society, 3 Sept. 1897. Prog. in Educ. Dept., Dec. Appendix L to Prog. in Educ. Dept., Dec. 1897, Bombay Educ., Eccles., Mar, and Leg. Prog., Vol.5321. Also, Limaye, P.M. "The History of the Deccan Education Society: 1880-1935", p.156.
  2. Autobiography of Chapekar, Part II, p.28, op.cit.
  3. Ibid, Part II, pp. 18-19.
  4. Ibid, Part II, p.32.
  5. Ibid, Part II, pp.34-35. In this connection, Damodar wrote that "mlenccha education" caused loss of manliness, caste and religious conviction. But at the time of burning the mandup (31 Oct. 1896) there was an agitation in Poona against the necessity of going to Bombay to sit for University examinations. It seems that Damodar was influenced by this agittation.

Brahmans in our city" were helping the movement, Damodar watched the proceedings with interest. He was not impressed.<sup>1</sup> The Congress demands, in his opinion, were futile, since "efforts not backed by physical force are doomed to failure."<sup>2</sup>

The Chapekars wanted very much to acquire military experience. Four times Damodar petitioned the Commander-in-Chief at Simla about the possibility of enlisting in the army, and he even offered to raise a regiment of Marathas himself.<sup>3</sup> He sent similar petitions to a number of Native States, but they met with no success.<sup>4</sup> Frustrated in India itself, the brothers decided that Balkrishna should seek military experience in Nepal. Balkrishna actually got as far as Allahabad, but then lost heart and returned to Poona.<sup>5</sup> The brothers went regularly to the bazaar in Poona to learn about military affairs from the Indian soldiers. They failed to arouse any response, because, according to Damodar, the soldiers had an anti-Brahman bias which had been inspired by

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1. Least of all by Manmohan Ghose who, "though a Hindu by religion, he dresses like a European from top to toe, and shaves his mustache like a eunuch...[and] had a European to drive his carriage." Ibid. Part, p.17.

2. Ibid, Part II, p.13.

3. This, like most of the claims in the Autobiography, were corroborated by police enquiries.

4. B.G.Tilak wrote to the Diwan of Junagad on 10 January 1896 recommending an unnamed Poona Brahman for military service. Karandikar thinks the "inference unmistakably points" to Damodar Chapekar.

S.L. Karandikar, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak: The Hercules and Prometheus of Modern India, p. 130.

5. "Autobiography of D. Chapekar," op.cit. Part II, p.27.

the English.<sup>1</sup> Damodar was convinced that the English were encouraging "the anti-Brahman spirit [which] has spread amongst people of all castes." He was particularly concerned about the large following of the Satya Shodhak Sabha (the "Truth Searching Association") around Poona and Bombay.<sup>2</sup>

During the plague, in the spring of 1897, the Chapekars became incensed by British interference with caste customs. With vague hopes of delivering their fellow Hindus from foreign oppression, they resolved to assassinate Rand, the Plague Commissioner. They followed Rand for several days before a suitable opportunity presented itself. Then, while Queen Victoria was causing "the raiyats ... to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of her reign ....instead of relieving them" from famine and plague, they shot Rand and Ayerst.<sup>3</sup>

The Chapekars fled to Bombay. The Poona police, their suspicions aroused by the sudden absence of the brothers, received information from two Brahmans named Dravid and Apte who were serving jail sentences for forgery. Damodar was traced through a Bombay gymnasium and was arrested after

1. Ibid, Part II, p.19.

2. This Sabha, founded in the 1870's by Jotirao Govindrao Fule, worked to educate the backward Hindu castes and to reform Hinduism in accordance with the Vedas. Fule had died in 1890, but his successor, Narayan Meghaji Lokhandi, continued to send Sabha workers around the countryside. Lokhandi edited the reformist Din Bandhu, a Bombay weekly. He was also president of the Bombay Mill-Hands Association. Note by Police in Autobiography of D. Chapekar, op.cit., Part II, pp. 19-22.

3. Ibid, Part II, pp.41-2. Bal Krishna shot Lt. Ayerst because, it seems, he feared Ayerst had witnessed his brother shooting Rand.

being lured back to Poona by the police.<sup>1</sup>

Descriptions of Damodar's two younger brothers were issued and while the search for the brothers and several other members of their club continued, Damodar stood trial for the murder of Rand. He pleaded not guilty and claimed he had made the confession under the promise of Rs.20,000 from a police inspector.<sup>2</sup> On 3 February 1898 a jury of four Indians and one European found him guilty, and he was sentenced to death.<sup>3</sup>

Damodar Chapekar's confession and trial failed to show that there was any definite connection between his deeds and the newspapers, Tilak, or the Natus. The Chapekars had visited the gymnasium of Bhanu Saheb Natu and they had attended a Shivaji celebration in the Natus' garden.<sup>4</sup> But apart from this there was nothing to support the suggestion that the Natus or Tilak had had any direct communication with the Chapekars and their club. The Inspector General of the Poona Police, writing in July 1899, tried to explain

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1. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Journal, 6 and 13 Oct. 1897.
  2. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Journal, 3 Feb. 1898.
  3. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Journal, 4 Feb. 1898.
  4. Damodar recited the following "shlok" or song on that occasion. "It is necessary to be prompt in engaging in desperate enterprises like Shivaji and Baji. Knowing this, good people, take up swords and shields, at all events now. Rap your upper arms, and we shall cut off countless heads of enemies....Listen! We shall risk our lives on the battlefield in a national war...."  
J. Down, Inspector General of Police, Poona, to Under Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Jud. Dept., 15 July 1899, p.12. Enclosure to S.W.Edgerley, Sec., Gov. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Aug. 1899, Sept. Prog. No.5, I.H.P., Pub., Vol. 5640.

away this lack of evidence and to justify the continued detention of the Natus who, after two years, had not been told why they were being held. The Inspector General believed that despite Damodar Chapekar's claim that the Rand murder was the inspiration of his own mind, Chapekar's motives and ideas "were but the echoes" of the teaching of the Natus and their friends, and that the members of the Chapekar club were probably, "unknown to themselves, being shaped to a course of action...by the men who for political purposes of their own worked on the religious fervour of men like the Chapekars and incited them to deeds of violence."<sup>1</sup>

One of the Damodar's brothers, Balkrishna, was arrested in December 1898 in Hyderabad State where he had been living with a gang of dakoits. While he was waiting for his trial in Poona, the Dravid brothers, the two principal witnesses in Damodar's trial who were expected to testify against Balkrishna also, were shot and killed in a street in Poona. This murder had been preceded by an attempt to kill one of the police officers investigating the case against Balkrishna.<sup>2</sup> On 9 February 1899, the day after the Dravids were shot, the police located the youngest Chapekar brother, Wasudeo. He was taken to Police headquarters in Poona for questioning where he drew a pistol and fired at the same

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1. Ibid, p.8.

2. Telegram from Sandhurts to Hamilton, 9 Feb. 1899, Official Telegrams, Feb. P.S.L.I., Vol.III.

police officer on whom an attack had been made six days earlier. Wasudeo missed the officer but he "proudly" admitted that he and Ranade, another member of the Chapekar club, had murdered the Dravid brothers.<sup>1</sup> Wasudeo Chapekar and Ranade were tried for the Dravid murder and were found guilty and they were hanged. Another member of the club, Sathe, was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for abetting the murder of the Dravids. In a separate trial, Balkrishna and Wasudeo Chapekar and Ranade were sentenced to hang for the murder of Rand and Ayerst. When they were executed in May 1899, all three of them died praying, and Wasudeo Chapekar and Ranade, who behaved defiantly throughout their trial,<sup>2</sup> went to the gallows calmly.<sup>3</sup>

With these three executions, the Poona murder case came to an end. The police knew the names of the fifteen living members of the Chapekar club, five of whom were regarded as dangerous. The only evidence against these men came from convicted persons and, in any case, after the Dravid murders, few persons were likely to be willing to testify.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Poona Observer and Civil and Military Journal, 11 Feb. 1899.
  2. Ibid, 6 March 1899.
  3. The Times of India, 13 May 1899.
  4. W.D. Sheppard, Dist. Mag. Poona, to Com., Central Div., 2 May 1899, enclosure to S.W. Edgerley to Govt. of India, 25 Aug. 1899, op.cit.

If there was a lesson to be drawn from the events of 1897 and their sequel in Poona, it was that the political danger to the security of British rule came from two directions. On the one hand there were the traditional religious forces which, in the case of both Hindus and Muslims, were showing signs of increasing vitality. In normal times these forces were not threatening, but in the extraordinary circumstances of a famine or plague or a war in the Middle East, religion was potentially the most disruptive element of all. On the other hand, there was the political alienation of the educated classes which was a steadier corrosive, but it was not yet really dangerous because the number of educated Indians was small and because their influence over the rest of the population was slight. However, events in Poona suggested that their influence was growing and that more Government supervision was needed to direct the changes taking place in Indian society.

The old and the amended Indian law of sedition.

Act XXVII of 1870,  
Section 5.

Whoever by words, either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs, or by visible representation or otherwise, excites or attempts to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or for any term, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.

Explanation: Such a disapprobation of the measures of the Government as is compatible with a disposition to render obedience to the lawful authority of the Government, and to support the lawful authority of the Government against unlawful attempts to subvert or resist that authority, is not disaffection. Therefore the making of comments on the measures of the Government, with the intention of exciting only this species of disapprobation, is not an offence within this clause.

Act IV of 1898

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring in to hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards Her Majesty or the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.

Explanation 1: The expression "disaffection" includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity.

Explanation 2: Comments expressing disapprobation of the measures of the Government with a view to obtain their alteration by lawful means, without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, do not constitute an offence under this section.

Explanation 3: Comments expressing disapprobation of the administrative or other action of the Government without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, do not constitute an offence under this section.

CHAPTER IIITHE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL

As the plague spread from Bombay to the other Provinces in 1897 and 1898, municipal bodies throughout India were forced to devote greater resources to sanitation, and where plague actually appeared, to medical facilities. The sanitary conditions of the larger towns of India had been a cause of anxiety to Europeans throughout the 19th century. While there had been great improvement in water supply, conservancy, and sewage disposal in the last half of the century, it had barely kept pace with the growth of the urban populations and the rise in the standard by which the conditions were judged. Plague gave a special urgency, as far as Europeans were concerned, to the problem of sanitation in Calcutta and Bombay because India's foreign trade was threatened by the existence of plague.

When the disease first appeared in Bombay in September 1896, there was an immediate fear in most of the countries trading with India that the plague might be conveyed abroad. It was realized that the long period of incubation of the plague bacillus was not adequately provided for by the regulations agreed upon at recent sanitary conventions at Venice, Dresden, Paris, and Geneva. The first reaction of some European countries according to an official report, was to impose "both antiquated and exceedingly

onerous" restrictions on Indian trade.<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of State for India, at the instigation of the Government of India and the Bombay and Calcutta Chambers of Commerce, persuaded the continental Governments to adopt more reasonable precautions. Then in March 1897, the Venice Sanitary Convention agreed upon comprehensive rules, satisfactory to the Government of India, for the prevention of the spread of plague.<sup>2</sup> But the degree to which Indian trade would be discriminated against still depended upon the ability of the Indian port cities to approach the generally accepted standards of cleanliness of European countries. Therefore, at a time when England's relative share of international trade was declining, and after receiving complaints from the local Chambers of Commerce, the Governments of Bengal and Bombay began to consider new municipal legislation for the two leading commercial cities of India, Bombay and Calcutta, with a view to improving their sanitation.

Many officials in India tended to compare the performance of Indian local governing bodies with a standard of efficiency and public service which they mistakenly imagined to exist in contemporary English local government.<sup>3</sup> As a result they were reluctant to give effect to Ripon's

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1. R. Nathan, The Plague in India, 1896, 1897, (Government of India, Home Department, 1898). Vol.I, p.405.
  2. Ibid, pp.368-419.
  3. Hugh Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma, pp.1-2.

Resolution of 18 May 1882 which recommended that, wherever possible, local bodies be granted great independence and responsibility, that non-officials serve as chairman, and that the elective system be extended. Some officials also deplored "the domination of the non-official element in local government by the middle classes" and they "looked - unavailingly - to the 'natural leaders' of society, men of good family, the landed gentry for a lead in local affairs."<sup>1</sup> This was especially true of Bengal where, in 1892, a scheme was advanced whereby the Government would have tightened its control over mofussil municipal boards and would have raised the franchise qualifications. But these proposals were substantially modified owing to the opposition led by Surendra Nath Banerjea.<sup>2</sup>

In Calcutta the elective system, which had been introduced by Act IV of 1876, had gradually enabled members of the middle class to undermine the position of the Bengali aristocracy in Calcutta politics. In the early years of the reformed Calcutta Corporation, men such as Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra, an important zamindar, and Kristodas Pal, the champion of zamindari interests, had dominated municipal affairs. Both these men appeared to be 'natural leaders'. But by the 1890's, according to a Government of Bengal letter of 1897,

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1. Ibid, p.60.

2. Ibid, p.60.

the city of Calcutta had passed into the control of a group of Hindus, "consisting of five lawyers, two journalists, one ground landlord, one piece-goods dealer, and an attorney's clerk."<sup>1</sup> An indication of this shift may be seen in the increase between 1882 and 1895 in the number of lawyers on the Corporation from 21 to 27, in the decline in the same period in the number of property-owners from 17 to 12, and the decline in the number of Europeans and Eurasians from 23 to 20.<sup>2</sup> With this change in composition and control there arose a greater Indian jealousy of official interference in municipal affairs and an official dissatisfaction with the functioning of local self-government under the more independent-minded Indians.

For their part, many middle class Indians believed strongly in participation in municipal affairs. Among those Congress leaders who were prominent in municipal government before 1905 were R.M.Sayani, P.M.Mehta, and D.E.Wacha of Bombay, G.K.Gokhale and B.G.Tilak of Poona, G.M.Chitnavis of Nagpur, C.Sankara Nair of Madras, and Surendra Nath Banerjea of Calcutta. These men were not only municipal leaders, but after the 1892 Councils Act they were returned to the Legislative Councils, in most cases by their municipalities. They

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1. H.H.Risley, Sec., Govt. of Bengal to Sec., Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, Para.30, Jan. Prog. No.28. I.H.P.Munic., Vol.5419.
  2. Table demonstrating occupations represented on the Calcutta Corporation, Appendix B, Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit.

were easily the most articulate and able Indians returned either by nomination or Government appointment, no doubt partly because of their experience of practical administrative problems in municipal government. In the Presidency towns, after the elective system had been established by legislation in the 1870's enabling Indians to gain majorities on the Corporations, pride was taken in the extensive drainage, road, water, and sewage developments carried through under Indian direction. Naturally the Indians concerned resented any attack on their competence in the one sphere of Indian public administration in which they, as a group, were given real responsibility. In their defence they often invoked Ripon's famous Resolution of 1882 on Local Self-Government. One of the aims of the Resolution was to provide an outlet for the ambitions of members of the westernized middle class who might otherwise constitute a political danger and a "sheer waste of power". By granting increased autonomy to local self-governing bodies, Lord Ripon expected to relieve officials of some of their governing responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> The Resolution stated that "it is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward, and supported. It is chiefly designed as an instrument

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1. Lord Ripon's Resolution on Local Self-government, 18 March 1882, para.6, Panchanandas Mukherji (ed.), Indian Constitutional Documents (1600-1918), Vol.I. See also S.Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, 1880-1884, 1880-1884, pp.83-98.

of political and popular education."<sup>1</sup> Although the Resolution specifically excluded Presidency towns from its recommendations,<sup>2</sup> it was looked upon by many Indians, in and out of the Presidency towns, as a promise of Indian paramountcy in local affairs.

Congress leaders advanced several reasons for their interest in local self-government. Surendra Nath Banerjea, who was a central figure in Calcutta politics from 1876 until 1899, was of the opinion that "our municipal institutions ... are in entire accord with our ancient traditions and the inherited instincts of our race, fostered by the panchayat system" and he agreed with Gladstone's view that "municipal institutions ... are the seed-plots upon which and around which are developed that political capacity and those habits of political thought which ought to be the supreme concern of all Governments to foster and to promote."<sup>3</sup> G.K.Gokhale, who later became President of the Poona Municipality, said that "we value local self-government not only for the fact that local work thereby is better done, but also for the fact that it teaches men of different castes and creeds, who have long been kept more or less apart, to work together for a common purpose."<sup>4</sup> These sentiments were not so widespread

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1. Para. 5.

2. Para. 4.

3. Bengal Leg. Council Prog., 4 April 1898, p.185.

4. John S. Hoyland, Gopal Krishna Gokhale: His Life and Speeches, p.78.

as to draw educated Indians into local governing bodies in all parts of India, but in the Presidency towns their participation was active. It was against this background that the controversy over the Calcutta Municipal Bill began.

But before turning to Calcutta, the parallels and differences between the situation in Bombay and Calcutta may be noted. The Bombay Government found relatively little fault with the work which the Bombay Corporation had done. Although Hamilton had seemed almost anxious to assume that the Corporation was hindering the cleansing operations of the Government, Sandhurst defended the Corporation by informing Hamilton that there had been friendly co-operation between it and the Government, and that the work of the executive had not been interfered with.<sup>1</sup>

In Bombay the European element was smaller than in Calcutta, and a number of Indians in municipal affairs shared with the Europeans a direct interest in the prosperity of trade, while in Calcutta, relatively few Bengalis had business connections. In Bombay the broad distribution of wealth and numbers between the European, Hindu, Muslim, and Parsi communities prevented any one of them from gaining a

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1. Sandhurst to Elgin, 6 Oct. 1897, MSS. Eur. F. 84/71.

predominant position over the others and brought about a willingness to compromise that was absent in the Hindu-dominated Calcutta Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Nor was there in Bombay an alternative class of Indians, like the Bengali zamindars with whom the Europeans would have preferred to deal if only they could or would have taken part in municipal affairs. Furthermore "the public men of Bombay City had deliberately maintained a separation between the 'executive' and the 'legislative' functions,"<sup>2</sup> while in Calcutta one of the major difficulties was the interference of the Corporation with the executive. This was in part due to the superior drafting of the Bombay Act of 1888 which served as the prototype for municipalities in other large cities and which has survived to the present.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Bombay had in the person of Pherozeshah Mehta a man who commanded the respect of all communities and who exercised a moderating influence on the Municipality.<sup>4</sup> Calcutta lacked such a commanding

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1. These were the differences which the Government of Bengal felt made it impossible to adopt in Calcutta a similar constitution to that of the Bombay municipality. H.H.Risley, Sec. Govt. of Bengal, to J.P.Hewett, Sec., Govt. of India, 11 Dec. 1897. Enclosure to Elgin to Hamilton, 13 Jan. 1898, MSS.Eur. D.509/9.
  2. Tinker, op.cit. p.71.
  3. Ibid. p.52.
  4. Sec. R.P.Masani, Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay and H.P.Mody, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta: A Political Biography, Vol.I & II.

personality after the death of Kristodas Pal in 1884.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to introduce the Bombay Improvement Bill was arrived at when it became apparent that the conservancy operations were having no visible effect on the course of plague. The number of plague deaths was rising steadily, from 1,936 in 1896, to 11,003 in 1897, to 18,185 in 1898.<sup>2</sup> The Bill provided for a special Improvement Trust with a strong executive, separate from the Corporation which had all it could manage with the ordinary affairs of the City. The Trust was to build broad streets through crowded areas to improve ventilation, reclaim low-lying areas, improve or demolish existing insanitary dwellings, and provide new, inexpensive accommodation for those persons displaced by re-development schemes. Since the Trust was to have at its disposal lands surrendered by the Government which were valued at approximately Rs. 86 lakhs, the Government thought it necessary to have a predominant representation on the Trust.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Although municipal politics in Bombay may have been more harmonious than in Calcutta, they were not necessarily purer. In 1901 the Chief Judge of the Small Cause Court, Bombay, ruled that two successful candidates for seats on the Corporation should be unseated. One of them had received 927 votes, of which 65 were cast by dead persons, 94 by absent voters, and 11 by relatives, servants, and friends of absent voters. Bengalee, 13 March 1901.
  2. Memorandum by the Army Sanitation Commissioner on the Administration Report of the Municipal Commission for the City of Bombay, 1898-99. I.H.P. Munic., Vol.5880.
  3. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 26 May 1898, May Prog. No.65. I.H.P.Munic., Vol.5419.

When the Corporation, which was going to produce most of the funds for the Trust's work, was consulted about the scheme, "a large majority" of its members agreed that the new development agency ought to be constituted separately from the Corporation although they thought that it was "essential" that at least one-half of the trustees be nominated by the Corporation.<sup>1</sup> To this the Government would not agree, and the Bill, when it was passed, provided for only four Corporation representatives on the Trust Committee of fourteen.

Apart from this one issue of Corporation membership on the Improvement Trust, the Bill was not strongly opposed. In the Bombay Legislative Council none of the Indian members attacked its principles, following the lead of Pherozeshah Mehta who did "not agree with those who think it is an attack upon the constitution of the Municipal Corporation."<sup>2</sup> The Indian members moved a number of amendments and, with one exception, voted together against the Government in support of these amendments. Outside the Council, D.E.Wacha and the others who objected to the Bill received little support, and "the bill for the improvement of the city of Bombay and to provide space for its future expansion" was passed after its

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1. R.M.Sayani, Chrmn, Munic. Corp., to Sec., Govt., Gen. Dept. 29 Nov. 1897, May Munic. Prog. No.39, *ibid.*  
2. Mehta's Speech, 14 Feb. 1898, Bombay Leg. Council Prog. p.32.

third reading on 2 April 1898,<sup>1</sup> seven weeks after it had been introduced, and without any significant opposition. It is true that the 1898 National Congress expressed "its deep sense of disapproval of the reactionary policy of Government with regard to ... the creation of the Bombay City Improvement Trust without adequate popular representation" as well as to the Calcutta Municipal Bill.<sup>2</sup> But the real grievance was the latter measure, and it is doubtful if the Bombay Bill would have been mentioned in a resolution had it not been for the Calcutta Bill.

The municipal legislation for Calcutta was far more radical and far more unpopular. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce had been urging the Government to improve Calcutta's sanitary condition even before plague broke out in Bombay. But the first real alarm was sounded on 9 October 1896 when a boy recently returned from Bombay was discovered in Howrah with a suspected case of plague. The Lieutenant-Governor immediately appointed a Medical Board to determine what action ought to be taken to check the disease in Bengal. This Medical Board, in turn, deputed five sanitary officers to survey health conditions in Calcutta. The report of the sanitary officers showed that many houses were so overcrowded

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1. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., p.173.  
2. Resolution IX.

and badly built that ventilation and efficient conservancy were impossible; that the subsoil of the city was dangerously polluted; that wells, courtyards, stables, drains, and latrines were unclean and unhealthy.<sup>1</sup> On 28 October 1896 the Calcutta Corporation added 200 coolies and 60 carts to the usual conservancy staff in view of a possible outbreak of plague, and on 25 January 1897, "under strong pressure from Government," the Corporation added a further 1300 coolies and 283 carts. This extra staff in less than six months removed 10,722 tons of neglected filth from Calcutta, not including enormous quantities of night-soil removed ... from privies."<sup>2</sup>

Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, gave the public of Calcutta its first knowledge of his dissatisfaction with the Corporation on 26 November 1896 while laying the foundation stone at the new drainage works at Entally. After criticising the sanitation of the city, he made it clear that he did not expect the Corporation to do good work because it did not include "shrewd, capable men of business - manufacturers, merchants, tradesmen and the like" and because it was not elected by a homogeneous population. The "inevitable" result of having men "whose individual stake

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1. Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit., para.4.  
2. Ibid., para.5.

in the town is small, who are not all practical men of business; and who represent themselves in the first place, and a variety of heterogeneous interests in the second", was "far too much speaking for the sake of speaking," frequent and unnecessary interference with the executive, too much deference to special interests, and general inefficiency in administrative affairs. He attacked other features of the Corporation's work, and warned his listeners that if there was not improved cooperation between the Corporation, its Executive, and the Government in enforcing the existing building and sanitary regulations, in driving broad roads through "the pestilential quarters" and "pigsties", and in overhauling the present system, then "there must come a general cataclysm" in Calcutta's municipal affairs, and "radical changes" in the municipal constitution. Calcutta stood, it was "a disgrace to the Empire and the nineteenth century".<sup>1</sup>

Forty of the seventy-five Commissioners attended a special meeting of the Corporation to consider the Lieutenant-Governor's speech, and they passed resolutions expressing their "emphatic protest against the condemnation passed upon them "by Mackenzie. They denied that "the occasional relaxation of the Building Regulations in some of the minor details in special cases, as warranted by the bye-laws",

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1. Mackenzie's Speech, 26 Nov. 1896, Appendix 7, Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit.

interfered with the sanitary arrangements; they rejected the claim "that in the consideration of public questions they are influenced by private interests."

"If in any Committee a jobbery is perpetrated at the instance of any particular Commissioner, there is nothing to prevent the executive from having the matter discussed .... The executive has rarely, if ever, brought up any such matter, though individual Commissioners have not been slow to interfere. It may be admitted, however, that in some instances a rate-payer by hard canvassing has succeeded in achieving certain ends which are undesirable, but such cases are rare, and they probably exist in all communities and in every place."

The Commissioners blamed the unsatisfactory working of the Conservancy Department on the lack of supervision of the Health Officer, who was appointed by the Government and who denied that scavenging was his responsibility. Their efforts to reform the Conservancy Department, the Commissioners alleged, had been frustrated by "the inaction of the Executive." They pointed to the fact that they had spent each year more than Rs.4,35,000, or more than double the statutory requirement, on drainage and busti improvements. And they defended the elective system, which, apart from stimulating public spirit and interest in the municipal affairs of Calcutta, had brought "great sanitary reforms" which would compare favourably with the improvements made in a corresponding period before the introduction of the

elective system in 1876.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the problems referred to in this exchange between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Corporation were not new to Calcutta. The complaints of inadequate sanitation, excessive talking, under-representation of commercial interests, and unclear definition of respective responsibilities had been made at various times in the history of municipal government in Calcutta.<sup>2</sup>

The Calcutta Municipal Bill of 1899 took an exceptionally long time to pass through the legislative process. It was outlined in a Government of Bengal letter in June 1897, given formal sanction in March 1898 by the Secretary of State, and introduced into the Bengal Legislative Council on 19 March 1898 as "A Bill to Amend the Law relating to the Municipal Affairs of the Town and Suburbs of Calcutta and to Authorise the Extension of the same to the town of Howrah." On 2 April 1898 it was referred to a select committee which did not present its report until 26 April of the following year. By this time Mackenzie and Elgin had left India and the new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Woodburn, and the new Governor General, Lord Curzon, had decided

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1. Extract from the Prog. of the Adjourned Special Meeting of the Calcutta Corporation, 28 Jan. 1897, Appendix 8, Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit.
  2. Précis of Legislation relating to the Constitution of the Municipal Governing Body of Calcutta from 1840 to 1888. Appendix No.27 to Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit.

that the Bill needed modification. Consequently it was referred back to the Select Committee on 7 August 1899 and was finally passed on 27 September 1899, almost three years after Mackenzie's original attack on the existing system, and almost a year and a half after it had been introduced.

The specific reasons for reforming the Municipal Corporation were described at length in the Government of Bengal's letter of 17 June 1897. It pointed out that under the 1888 Municipal Act, the Chairman of the Corporation, who was a member of the Indian Civil Service, had not been able to act in contravention of any resolution passed in a meeting of the Commissioners and that the Commissioners could appoint any special or standing Committee of any size to enquire into and report on, or assist the Chairman with, a large number of routine matters. This power to appoint committees had been abused, according to the Lieutenant-Governor, by the "clique of Bengali lawyers and journalists whose habits of mind are opposed to all forms of executive action," and who, through the elective system, had come to dominate the Corporation. They had completely paralyzed the Executive with their committees, including a Complaints Committee, by interfering with even the most ordinary workings of municipal functions.<sup>1</sup> While making excessive

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1. Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit. para.8.

use of their authority to control the Executive, the Lieutenant-Governor claimed that the Commissioners "perverse reluctance ... to make use" of their statutory powers for the collection of municipal rates had resulted in the remittance or cancellation of between 5.2 and 6.1 per cent of the demand in each of previous three years.<sup>1</sup> A later survey of outstanding rates revealed that only slightly more than  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the total demand (current and outstanding) had been collected each year in roughly the same period.<sup>2</sup>

The Lieutenant-Governor reiterated his complaint about "the practical exclusion of European men of business" from municipal government. It was they "who ought to have a predominant influence in the affairs of the Town" but they "stand aside cynically and make themselves felt" through their imperfectly informed associations.<sup>3</sup> So reluctant were European business men to participate in municipal affairs that of the four Commissioners nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce,<sup>4</sup> three of them in 1897 were Indians. The attendance of the ten commercial representatives at Corporation and committee meetings was only 41% in 1897-98,

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1. Para 2, *ibid.*

2. J.P.Hewett, Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept. to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, Munic. Dept., 19 Jan. 1900.  
I.H.P., Munic., Vol.5880.

3. Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, para.27.

4. Most Indian business men in Calcutta belonged to the National Chamber of Commerce. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce was largely a European body.

compared with 52% for the elected Commissioners and 42% for the Government nominees.<sup>1</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor hoped that Europeans could be induced to participate more actively by introducing a system of payment for attendance at Committee meetings.

However, the abstention of European businessmen from municipal affairs was said to be only one of "the effects of the premature introduction of the elective system into a community singularly ill-fitted for it." Some of the Commissioners, according to the Government of Bengal's letter, were "directly corrupt and receive payment for exercising their influence to obtain concessions for their clients; others take up cases in which the Municipality is concerned and make a profit out of the knowledge which their position has enabled them to acquire; others again canvas for appointments under the Municipality or sell their votes to competing candidates."<sup>2</sup> No examples of this corruption were included in the letter to substantiate these allegations, nor was their source revealed.

The letter referred to the "great development of party spirit and to the formation among the Hindu Commissioners of a small caucus who practically settle all municipal questions in private conclave, and manage the duties of the

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1. Admin. Report for the Commissioners of Calcutta, for 1897-98, Nov. Prog. No.27, Bengal Munic. Prog., Vol.5406.  
2. Risley to Govt. of India, 17 June 1897, op.cit. para.30.

General Committee and Corporation on predetermined lines. It is no exaggeration, but the literal truth, to say that certainly for the last ten years, and probably for longer, the city of Calcutta has been governed by a clique of [ten] Bengali Hindus."<sup>1</sup>

There were other complaints about specific shortcomings in the Corporation's performance. The system of water-supply was held to be unsatisfactory<sup>2</sup> and the Accounts Department was said to be in a state of confusion.<sup>3</sup>

For all these reasons, the Lieutenant-Governor thought that a radical remedy was required which would give the municipality an efficient executive free from "the meddling" of the present Commissioners. "It is out of the question that the whole commerce of Bengal and Upper India should run the risk of being ruined by epidemics and consequent quarantine, merely in order that the self-conceit of a few Bengali Babus may be flattered and that the fetish which they ignorantly worship and suppose to be Local Self-Government may retain its pre-eminence."<sup>4</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor realized that any attempt to replace "the narrow oligarchy which now governs Calcutta by a General Committee representing real interests" would provoke "a noisy opposition [which] will no doubt have to be faced.... The average

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1. Ibid, para.30.
  2. Ibid, paras 22 -25.
  3. Ibid, para. . 21.
  4. Ibid, para. 32.

Bengali graduate of the Calcutta University is conspicuous for that ready belief in vague generalities which is a characteristic of imperfectly educated minds. It is with him an article of faith that Local Self-Government is merely an instrument of political education, that its essence is speech-making and electioneering, that it bears no relation to facts, and gives rise to no obligations in respect of the effective administration of the branches of public business made over the local bodies. Of this mischievous cult the Calcutta Corporation is the central figure. For the last twenty years it has been dominated by Bengali Hindus, it embodies their idea of what a Bengali Parliament should be, and it gives the fullest expression of the demoralizing doctrine that practical considerations are to be subordinated to the supposed educational influence of Local Self-Government!<sup>1</sup>

Mackenzie planned to make two major alterations in the constitution of the Calcutta Municipality. The first affected the General Committee, which, under the existing system was composed of 18 members, 12 of whom were chosen by the elected ward Commissioners. Mackenzie's Bill would have enabled the Government and its European supporters to capture control of the General Committee by dividing it into three equal parts - 4 members chosen by the elected

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1. Ibid, para.60.

Commissioners, 4 by the Government, and 4 by the Chamber of Commerce, the Port Commissioners, and the Trades Association.<sup>1</sup>

The other and no less important feature of the new Bill was the careful distinction of the functions of the Corporation, the General Committee, and the Executive in such a way as to "prevent irresponsible committees from interfering in matters with which they have no concern." All executive functions, except those specifically excepted, were to be exercised by the Chairman who, as previously would be appointed by the Bengal Government.<sup>2</sup> By transferring ultimate authority from the Corporation in most matters, and by redistributing the membership of the General Committee so that the Government nominees and the European members would constitute a majority, the new Bill would accomplish the Bengali Government's main objective: the supercession of the Bengali majority in the Corporation by the European-controlled General Committee and Executive. The hope was expressed that the European commercial community would in the future take an active part in the municipal Government of Calcutta.<sup>3</sup>

After the re-distribution of functions between what

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1. Ibid, para.42.
  2. Ibid, para. 41.
  3. Ibid, para.42.

were intended to be three co-ordinate authorities, the only substantial power remaining with the elected members of the Corporation would be the right to pass the annual budget, to fix the rates, to elect 4 of the 12 members of the General Committee, and to appoint certain municipal employees.

Elgin and his Council had given Mackenzie "a pretty free hand" in drawing up the Calcutta Municipal Bill.<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie had been suffering from poor health and, after his doctor had advised him that his nervous system had "gone to pieces",<sup>2</sup> he retired, prematurely, in April 1898. But before this his public speeches had revealed his antipathy to educated Bengalis and he had, in Elgin's opinion, caused himself unnecessary trouble by attacking the personal competency of the Bengali Commissioners in his speech at the drainage works.<sup>3</sup> The Government of India, in approving the Bill, made it obvious to Mackenzie that it did not approve of his tactics by suggesting that it would be more prudent to hold the system of administration, and not the personnel, to blame for the failure of Calcutta's municipal government.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, when the Bill was

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1. Elgin to Hamilton, 23 Dec. 1897, MSS.Eur. D. 509/8.
  2. Mackenzie to Elgin, 19 March 1898, MSS.Eur. F.84/72.
  3. Elgin to Hamilton, 23 Dec. 1897, MSS.Eur. D.509/8.
  4. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 6 Jan. 1898, Jan. Prog. No.34. I.H.P.,Munic., Vol.5419.

*introduced, ~~it~~ the Member-in-charge was*

purposefully moderate in tone, avoiding references to the Bengalis, as opposed to other groups on the Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, when the correspondence relating to the Bill was first published, most of the sections about "Bengali Babus", cliques, corruption, and party-spirit were omitted.

In the last week of 1898, while the Bill was in the Select Committee and the agitation against it was gathering force, Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin as Governor General. Upon his arrival in Calcutta the Statesman reported that "perhaps no Viceroy - at least since Lord Northbrook - has been received with so much enthusiasm."<sup>2</sup> His ability and industry were recognized by both Europeans and Indians. The speeches he had made before leaving England had received wide publicity in the Indian Press, and his remarks showing his sympathy with the scruples and feelings of the Indian people seemed to be pointed at what was regarded as the oppressive and high-handed measures against plague and suspected sedition during Elgin's regime. Curzon's farewell speech in London to the Old Etonians during which he said "the mission of the British ... is to maintain by justice what has been won by the sword" was contrasted with Elgin's farewell speech at Simla in the United Services Club when he said that India was won by the sword and, if necessary,

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1. H.H.Risley's Speeches of 19 March 1898 (pp.26 ff.) and 4 April 1898 (pp.193 ff.), Bengal Leg. Council Progs.  
2. 5 January 1899.

must be held by the sword.<sup>1</sup> The Bengalee, the Pioneer and the Englishman noticed a similarity between Curzon's speeches and the first utterances of Lord Ripon in India.<sup>2</sup>

The main reservation in the almost unanimous approval in India of Curzon's appointment was apprehension over his support for the forward frontier policy and his interest in foreign affairs which, it was feared, he might pursue at the expense of internal policy.<sup>3</sup> Much of the Indian enthusiasm for the appointment resulted from a sense of relief at the departure of the colourless Lord Elgin, whose name, along with Hamilton's, had become associated with repression, and whose personality had failed to make an impression on educated Indians. The Moslem Chronicle described Elgin as "an utter failure as Viceroy of India, as much owing to adverse circumstances as to his own sheer innate incapacity."<sup>4</sup> The Bengalee, in commenting similarly, said "whatever personality he had, he effaced it completely... and it was notorious that others ruled in his name."<sup>5</sup> R.C.Dutt contributed an article to the Indian Mirror in which he said he did not "think that his [Curzon's] training and predilections will

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1. Tribune (Lahore) 1 Nov. 1898, and other newspapers, T. & D. Selections, 7 Nov. 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.110.

2. Bengalee, 7 and 28 Jan. 1899.

3. T. & D. Selections, 12 Sept. 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.107. Even Hamilton was "a little afraid of Curzon's views upon frontier questions". Hamilton to Elgin, 24 Aug.1898, MSS.Eur. C. 125/3.

4. 25 Feb. 1899.

5. 7 Jan. 1899.

incline him to popularize in any marked degree the methods of Indian administration. But, nevertheless, I have respect for Mr. Curzon's courage and strength of convictions, and I believe his administration will be a pleasant change after that of Lord Elgin."<sup>1</sup>

While the Indian Press and the Indian National Congress welcomed Curzon and expressed high hopes in his Viceroyalty, several of the British newspapers most frequently quoted by the Indian nationalist newspapers were less enthusiastic. India, for instance, was luke-warm about Curzon's appointment.<sup>2</sup> The Spectator objected to "a certain note of floridness and self-assertion" in his manner of speaking which, if suited to Parliament, would be out of place in India. The Spectator also thought that Curzon was "inclined to ambition and ... is delighted by personal victories. He takes pleasure, that is, in being visibly the instrument by which a great service is done to his country."<sup>3</sup> Hyndman's Justice was quoted by the Hindu of Madras as saying that it was "hypocritical twaddle" for Curzon to say that he accepted the post of Viceroy because of his "love for India" when actually he was going to India "to squeeze

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1. Quoted by J.N.Gupta, Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt. p.23.

2. 12 Aug. 1898.

3. 13 Aug. 1898.

as much as he possibly can out of the starveling Natives.<sup>1</sup> The Hindustani of Lucknow referred to an article in W.T. Stead's Review of Reviews claiming that Curzon, whose wife was American, had been appointed to gain the good will of the United States.<sup>2</sup> However, these comments did little to dim the hope that Curzon, even if he did not actually make substantial concessions to Congress demands would at least treat the Congress with greater justice and consideration than Elgin and Hamilton had done in the past. From the Congress point of view, the first important issue that Curzon would be confronted with was the Calcutta Municipal Bill. As Ronaldshay has pointed out, it was this issue which first brought Curzon into collision with the Congress.<sup>3</sup> Yet it was not really within Curzon's power to avoid this particular clash. The Governments of Bengal and India, supported by the Secretary of State and pledged to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and other European groups, had committed themselves to a drastic revision of Calcutta's municipal government. Even if Curzon had wanted to, he could not have scrapped the Mackenzie Bill. This, however, was not appreciated by the nationalists.

Soon after he was settled in Calcutta, Curzon learned

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1. Hindu, 30 Nov. 1898, T. & D. Selections, 5 Dec. 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.110.
  2. Hindustani, 19 Oct. 1898, T. & D. Selections, 7 Nov. 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.110.
  3. Ronaldshay, The Life of Lord Curzon, Vol.II, p.74.

that the Bill in its existing form was regarded as unsatisfactory by Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> Risley (the official member in charge of the Bill), and W.R.Bright (the official Chairman of the Corporation).<sup>2</sup> After making a thorough investigation for himself, Curzon arrived at the conclusion that the Bill had been conceived by Mackenzie "partly in panic, and partly in anger"<sup>3</sup> and that it was "entirely illogical" to leave untouched "the old condemned corporation" while setting up at the same time a new General Committee constituted on an entirely different basis. By leaving the elected Commissioners in a majority on the Corporation, he felt that two of the main objects of the Bill would be defeated since Europeans would be unwilling to serve in a Corporation in which they were a hopeless minority and since there would be constant friction between the Indian majority on the Corporation and the European-dominated General Committee.<sup>4</sup> So he decided to withdraw the Bill while, at the same time, making it clear to both Europeans and Indians that he did not disagree with Mackenzie's original premise that the Corporation was "in urgent need of reform."<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly Curzon and Woodburn modified the Bill so that the size of the Corporation was reduced from 75 to 50 members by taking away 25 seats from the elected Commiss -

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 10 Feb. 1899, MSS.Eur. C.126/1.
  2. Curzon to Hamilton, 16 March 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/1.
  3. Curzon to Hamilton, 9 Feb. 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/1.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 2 March 1899, MSS.Eur.D.510/1.
  5. Curzon to Hamilton, 16 March 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/1.

ioners. This left a "native wing" of 25 to balance an "European wing" of the same size. The Bill, as it was finally passed, provided that the 25 elected members would be chosen by the rate payers (an electorate of 13,890 out of a population of 650,000). Fifteen of the remaining Commissioners were to be selected by the Government and the other 10 were to be nominated by the European commercial bodies. The General Committee, according to the revised Bill, was to be chosen in three equal parts by the 25 elected Commissioners, the 10 commercial Commissioners, and the Government. This scheme possessed the advantage that the Government, being able to count on the support of the commercial members, could easily out-vote the elected members' representatives on the Committee. It was based, as the original draft Bill had been,

"on the principle of giving adequate representation on the governing body of the Municipality to the three chief interests in Calcutta - to the European commercial community which has made the city a centre of trade; to the Government which has made it the capital of the Indian Empire, and is responsible to the World at large for its efficient and progressive municipal administration; and lastly, to the residents, householders, and ground-landlords who have been attracted to Calcutta by its creation and maintenance as a commercial capital." 1

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1. Statement of Objects and Reasons: A Bill to amend the Calcutta Municipal Consolidation Act of 1888, 15 March 1898, unnumbered April Munic. Prog. [following Prog. No.124], Bengal Munic. Prog., Vol. 5405.

Probably no Government measure since the Age of Consent Bill controversy aroused as much passion among the educated Hindus of Calcutta as did the **Municipal Bill**. Coming as it did soon after the sedition Trials, the new sedition laws, and the continued detention without trial of the Natu brothers, it seemed to the Bengalee that "we are truly at the parting of the ways. The Government has definitely resolved to abandon the old lines and to adopt a policy of reaction and repression."<sup>1</sup> Speaking at the 1899 Congress, Surendra Nath Banerjea said it is "one of the gravest crises in our history. If we succumb to that crisis, the political enfranchisement of our people will be indefinitely postponed", and he asked "ought we to submit to our being reduced to the rank of hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country?"<sup>2</sup> Malabari's Indian Spectator of Bombay remarked that "the feeling is gaining ground that there has been a deliberate change of policy in regard to India, and that it involves the up-rooting of all that is most liberal in the policy of British Indian administration."<sup>3</sup> The Bill was treated by the 1898 and 1899 Congresses as an attack on the principle of local self-government in India as a whole, and not as merely a local Calcutta issue. The interest shown by the Congress may have been sharpened by

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1. 3 December 1898.

2. Report of the 15th I.N.C., pp.72-73.

3. Indian Spectator, 29 Jan. 1899, T. & D. Selections, 6 Feb. 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.III.

the fact that of the twelve elected members on the Calcutta General Committee, five had served as, or soon became, officials of the Congress - namely, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Norendra Nath Sen, J. Ghosal, Bhupendra Nath Basu, and Nalin Bihari Sircar.

The specific Indian criticisms of the Bill were stated most clearly in the much publicized dissent from the Report of the Select Committee by Banerjea and Sen. Banerjea and Sen, besides editing influential newspapers, were two of the most active Municipal Commissioners. In their Note of Dissent they complained that under the new Bill the Executive and his subordinate officers would no longer be "subjected to the watchful and beneficial supervision of the Ward Commissioners";<sup>1</sup> that the new system would produce unnecessary friction between the different authorities;<sup>2</sup> and that the new General Committee would not contain an adequate number of the elected representatives of the rate payers since the elected members would return only one-third of the General Committee while the Government and Europeans, who paid only 30.8% of the municipal rates, would return

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1. Note of Dissent, Para.12, Report of the Select Committee on the C.M.B. 25 April 1899, July Prog. No.2, I.H.P., Munic., Vol.5646.
  2. Ibid, Para.13.

two-thirds of its membership.<sup>1</sup> "An emasculated Corporation, but lately in possession of supreme power, must view with uneasiness, if not with positive jealousy, the creation of authorities, hitherto subordinate to it, but now rendered independent of it, in respect of the bulk of their powers and functions."<sup>2</sup>

Banerjea and Sen also thought that the Government was giving itself excessive powers of interference by enabling itself (Section 26E) to intervene if "any of the duties [were] ... not performed or ... [were] performed in an imperfect, inefficient or unsuitable manner." Under the existing Act of 1888 the Government might interfere (Section 38) only when "general default" of a "serious character" was committed by the Corporation.<sup>3</sup> Banerjea and Sen admitted that the Government ought to possess some control over the Municipality. "But", they said, "the Government having slept over its powers has partly been responsible for any default, of which the Corporation might have been guilty. Not having exercised the powers of control under the existing law, it cannot be said that by actual experience it has been found that the present provisions are

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1. The total municipal rates were paid in the following proportions:

Jews and Armenians	3.3%
Europeans	18.3%
Hindus	59.5%
Muslims	5.7%
Government	12.5%

Ibid, para.19.

2. Ibid. para.14.

3. Ibid, para.28.

inadequate."<sup>1</sup>

The Calcutta Municipal Bill was designed to withdraw a concrete privilege which the Bengalis had enjoyed for many years. The Bengali political leaders of Calcutta were determined not to give up control of the municipal government without making an effective demonstration of their disapproval. They decided to send a deputation to England to protest against the withdrawal of the right of self-government from Calcutta, and Raja Benoya Krishna Deb was appointed President and Secretary of a fund for that purpose.<sup>2</sup> A large protest meeting was held in the Calcutta Town Hall on 31 August 1898 and eighteen ward meetings were organized between September 1898 and March 1899.<sup>3</sup>

The projected deputation to England was never sent, possibly because of a shortage of funds. Instead Raja Benoya Krishna approached Romesh Chunder Dutt, who had retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1897 in order to pursue his literary interests and to help organize the Congress activities in England. Dutt agreed to act as the representative of the people of Bengal, and in this capacity he wrote letters to India, The Times, and the Manchester Guardian; he distributed 6,500 copies of a pamphlet about the Municipal Bill by Norendra Nath Ghose through the

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1. Ibid, para.32.

2. Bengalee, 1 Oct. 1898.

3. See the Report of the Select Committee on the C.M.B., p.1, and the Bengalee and the Statesman for this period.



motion "struck deeper at the root of self-government in India" than Robert's did since it proposed to interfere with what Hamilton called the process of local self-government in the Bengal Legislative Council. He alleged that in recent years there had been "a steady deterioration both in the character of those who serve on the municipality as well as in the class of work done." Under the new Bill, he said, the interests of the Muslims and poorer Hindus would receive the consideration they had not been given in the past. He also repeated the familiar claim that the Bill was in the interest of the whole of India since plague in Calcutta would damage commerce elsewhere. After Hamilton's speech, the amendment was withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

In India, Curzon's and Woodburn's decision to reduce the number of elected Commissioners from 50 to 25 was made public in the Supplement to The Calcutta Gazette on 12 July 1899, by the publication of the Government of India letter to the Government of Bengal, dated 17 June 1899. This letter made public for the first time a passage from the Government of Bengal's letter of 17 June 1897 outlining the reasons for a municipal reform. Among the reasons was listed "the growth of party spirit and the appearance among the elected Commissioners of a class of professional and in some cases,

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1. Parl. Debates, H. of C., 14 Feb. 1899, 4th Series, Vol.66, pp. 923-970.

corrupt politicians."<sup>1</sup>

Great exception was taken by the Calcutta newspapers and Municipal Commissioners to this charge of corruption. The peculiar aspect of this charge of corruption was that while it was omitted from all published correspondence before 12 July 1899, Mackenzie, speaking in the Bengal Legislative Council on 4 April 1898, had said "we all know that when it comes to the question of making appointments in the Municipality, there is canvassing, there is jobbery, there is even corruption."<sup>2</sup> Apart from a demand for an enquiry by the Bengalee,<sup>3</sup> little was heard of the charge until 12 July 1899 when the Government of India quoted the Government of Bengal's letter of 17 June 1897.<sup>4</sup> However, from 12 July 1899 onwards, the demand for an enquiry into the charges of irregularities was persistent. When Banerjea tried to raise the subject during the debate on the Municipal Bill in the Bengal Legislative Council, Woodburn, as President, several times ruled him out of order. He said "the point to which we are limited is the discussion of the changes in the Bill which the Government of India have desired should be made. I cannot allow any discussion of the reasons which have led the Government of India to come

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1. A.H.L.Fraser, Sec. to Govt. of India, to Sec. to Govt. of Bengal, Leg. Dept. 17 June 1899, July Prog. No.5. I.H.P. Munic., Vol.5646.
  2. Bengal Leg. Council Progs., 4 April 1898, p.217.
  3. 9 April 1899.
  4. Supplement to The Calcutta Gazette, 12 July 1899.

to their decision."<sup>1</sup> That the Commissioners were not allowed to question the charges of dishonourable behaviour which they emphatically denied only heightened their sense of grievance.<sup>2</sup>

If there had been irregularities among the Commissioners of a serious nature, they were not among the main reasons for the introduction of the Calcutta Municipal Bill. As the matter is scarcely mentioned in the official and private correspondence on the Bill beyond the initial reference in the Government of Bengal's letter of 17 June 1897 and the quotation from <sup>the</sup> letter which is contained in the Government of India's letter of 17 June 1899, it would seem that Mackenzie had made the charge without first ascertaining its validity. Hamilton personally doubted that evidence of corruption would be produced.<sup>3</sup> And if Curzon's Government had refrained from mentioning the charge in its otherwise moderate letter of 17 June 1899, then the nationalists would not have been provided with such a convenient focus for opposition.

There had been talk in Calcutta about the possibility of the elected Commissioners resigning from the Corporation. Some Commissioners had considered withdrawing after Mackenzie's abusive speech at the drainage works in November

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1. Bengal Leg. Council Progs., 7 Aug. 1899, p.130.

2. Bengalee, 12 Aug. 1899.

3. Hamilton to Curzon, 28 Sept. 1899, MSS.Eur. C.126/1.

1896 but had decided against it.<sup>1</sup> In 1898 the idea of either resigning or boycotting municipal elections had been brought up again.<sup>2</sup> The Bengalee had said "it is all very well to strengthen the Executive and make it practically irresponsible, but the strongest executive would be impotent for good among an unwilling population who will non-co-operate with them. Even military force, as was illustrated in connection with the recent plague cases, will not avail to enforce the orders of the Executive. A municipal government to be successful must be popular."<sup>3</sup>

Curzon had written that he was "not the least afraid" of the Municipal Commissioners acting on the suggestion that they resign. He did not take seriously the threat in the Press because he felt the Calcutta newspapers had "a sub-latent consciousness that, having unanimously appealed to me as a thoroughly impartial arbiter, it would be somewhat ridiculous if they now turned around and attacked me for the result."<sup>4</sup> This statement contains one of those self-deceptions about Indian public opinion which were to haunt Curzon's relations with educated Indians for the remainder of his Viceroyalty. Few people had actually

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1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 July 1899, T. & D. Selections, 24 July 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.115.
  2. Indian Mirror, 14 Sept. 1898, T. & D. Selections, 19 Sept. 1898, and Power & Guardian, 2 Oct. 1898. T. & D. Selections, 3 Oct. 1898, P.S.L.I., Vol.107.
  3. 21 Jan. 1899.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 19 July 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/2.

appealed to him as an "impartial arbiter"; there had been frequent demands that he either withdraw the Bill entirely or allow a Commission to enquire into the charges of inefficiency on which the Bill had been based. Having made this initial mistaken assumption about the nature of the Indian opposition, it was easy for him to discuss it with self-righteous indignation and regard his critics as "ridiculous".

On the first day of September 1899, after receiving a final refusal from the Bengal Government to withdraw or substantiate the charges of corruption, and in order to emphasise their protest against what they regarded as the "disenfranchisement" of local self-government, 28 of the elected Commissioners resigned from the Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

The Calcutta Municipal Bill was passed on 27 September 1899 by a vote of 12 to 6 after the Legislative Council had sat as a Committee for eleven days and rejected most of 565 amendments which were moved. The six members who opposed the Bill were Hindus, except for J.G.Apcar, who was an Armenian and the nominee of the Municipal Corporation on the the Legislative Council. Supporting the Europeans were

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1. Ronaldshay, (op.cit. Vol.II.) Ronaldshay says "the storm broke" on 27 September 1899 but actually it was on 1 September that the resignations occurred. The Bill was finally passed on 27 September.

two Muslims and a Hindu zamindar. At times the opposition became slightly bitter, but at the end of the debate, three of the British members singled out Surendra Nath Banerjea for "the excellent good temper, patience and courtesy" with which he had "conducted his difficult task."<sup>1</sup> A number of Calcutta newspapers appeared with black borders and the Advocate of Lucknow published an obituary notice on Local Self-Government.<sup>2</sup>

The bye-elections for the 28 seats vacated by the resignations were held on 5 October 1899. Only 12 of the seats were filled and of these, only two were contested. (In the 1898 elections these had been contests in 13 of the 25 wards.) Of the 12 persons elected in the bye-elections, seven were Europeans or Eurasians, three were Muslims, and two were Hindus. Hindus had registered in several other wards as well, but withdrew after the list of candidates had been published or soon after the polls had been closed, in order, according to the Amrita Bazar Patrika, "to create fun or to oust the Musulmans and Europeans who sought to represent them." In any case, the same papers continued, those Hindus who stood for election were "very indifferent members of society."<sup>3</sup> The Government of Bengal had, then, to appoint sixteen persons to serve the unexpired portion

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1. Bengal Leg. Council Prog. 27 Sept. 1899, p.1220.

2. T. & D. Selections, 9 Oct. 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.117.

3. 8 Oct. 1899, T. & D. Selections, 16 Oct. 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.117.

of the vacant seats on the Corporation until the new Calcutta Municipal Bill came into effect on 1 April 1900.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was anxious that people in England should not think that the 28 Commissioners had resigned in protest against his decision to reduce the rate payers' representation on the Corporation. He wanted Hamilton to convey the idea to Parliament that they had resigned because of Mackenzie's charges of corruption, and not because of any action of his own Government.<sup>2</sup> In actual fact the resignations were as much a protest against the Bill itself as against the allegation of corruption, but the Indian press placed most of the blame for the Bill on Mackenzie. So Curzon was justified in seeking to avoid the odium for the dramatic resignations. Hamilton, for his part, thought that the resignations had been due to the Government's refusal to either withdraw or prove the charges of corruption. But as he doubted the Government's ability to produce evidence of corruption<sup>3</sup> and as the case would be "a very difficult one to argue" without evidence, he wanted to preclude anyone in the House of Commons from asking him about the accuracy of Mackenzie's charges. He planned to do this by

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1. W.R. Bright, Chrmn. of Corp. of Calcutta, to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, Munic. Dept. 6 Oct. 1899, Dec. Prog. No.126. Bengal Munic.Prog., Vol. 5631.
  2. Curzon to Hamilton 6 Sept. 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/2. Also, Curzon to Hamilton, 18 Oct. 1899, MSS.Eur.D.510/3.
  3. Hamilton to Curzon, 28 Sept. 1899, MSS.Eur. C.126/1.

saying that the Commissioners resigned in protest against the general action of the Government and not against the charges of corruption.<sup>1</sup> However, the British Committee of the Congress failed to exploit this potentially embarrassing issue and when Herbert Roberts asked for a discussion of the Calcutta Municipal Bill, he did not seek the reasons for the resignations.<sup>2</sup>

The new Calcutta Municipal Act (Act III of 1899) came into effect on 1 April 1900. On the reformed Corporation there were 24 Europeans and Eurasians - four more than in 1897. On the other hand, the number of Hindus declined from 39 to 16 and the number of Muslims from 13 to 7.<sup>3</sup> Thus the balance of power had shifted to the Europeans and Eurasians as the Government had intended.

However, it is highly doubtful if the Bill achieved the desired results in several other directions. A Government of Bengal Resolution, commenting on the working of the Bill in its first year, declared that there had been "an admitted absence of the friction and obstruction which at times marked the proceedings of the Corporation under the former law." But it noted only slight improvement in the collection of outstanding debts in the drainage and water

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 20 Oct. 1899, MSS.Eur.C.126/1.

2. Indian Debates, H. of C., 27 Oct. 1899, pp.5-6.

3. Report on the Munic. Admin. of Calcutta, 1900-1901, Nov. Prog. No.9, Bengal Munic. Prog., Vol.6099.

supply systems, and in the application of the building regulations to existing houses.<sup>1</sup> Curzon wrote in April 1901 that he believed "the existing Municipal administration of Calcutta to be vile and the influence of the Local Government to be almost a farce. No one dares make a move, or take a step, in Calcutta, for fear of the Bengali party." He complained that Woodburn did not have the courage needed to raise the taxes, and he himself was "stirring up so many things in India that am reluctant to add to their number, unless compelled."<sup>2</sup> But the 'Bengali party', which had been vigilant over expenditure when it managed municipal affairs and had campaigned against the Calcutta Municipal Bill as the champion of the poor people, was even less likely to consent to a higher tax rate now that it had been removed from its position of responsibility. However, the Englishman, which had been a strong supporter of the Calcutta Municipal Bill, said in an editorial that "it is not a question of money. It is merely a question of energy." In its opinion the reformed Calcutta Municipality "neglects the work of conservancy and drainage in a manner that is scandalous."<sup>3</sup>

In the last analysis, the Government of Bengal created for itself considerable ill-will and widened the gulf of

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1. Resolution by the Govt. of Bengal on Admin. Report of the Calcutta Munic., 1900-1901, 26 Oct. 1901, Nov. Prog. No.10, Bengal Munic. Prog., Vol.6099.
  2. Curzon to Hamilton, 9 April 1901, MSS.Eur. D.510/7.
  3. 24 July 1902.

racial antipathy in passing an extreme piece of legislation which achieved little of its purpose beyond removing the Bengalis from authority. If it had been an isolated measure, it might not have attracted as much notice as it did. However, it was viewed as another attempt to return to a more autocratic form of government.

CHAPTER IVTHE NATIONALISTS AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Between the passing of the Councils Act of 1892 and the decision in 1903 to partition Bengal, the economic aspects of British rule, rather than the political, most occupied the attention of Indian nationalists. The severe famines of 1897 and 1899-1900 gave weight to Indian complaints about the over-assessment of the land. R.C.Dutt challenged Lord Curzon to defend the Government's policy of assessment. Curzon accepted the challenge and, in his reply, to Dutt, laid down a more liberal policy of revenue collection. Lord Curzon's Government also passed several pieces of legislation designed to protect the poorer agricultural classes from debt, alienation of land, and exorbitant rents. The people who supported the Congress were generally in opposition to protective legislation of this type. They believed that their personal interests would suffer, or that the specific measures were unlikely to benefit the poorer classes, or that only economic liberalism of the kind favoured by Ranade<sup>1</sup> would lead to agricultural prosperity. Closely related to the problem of the land revenue system was the "drain." One of the reasons for keeping the demand on agricultural land as high as the Government did was the need

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1. See below, P P. 210-11.

to pay for India's foreign agency and expenses in London. The belief that the drain was the main source of India's poverty was probably shared by the great majority of Indian nationalists in this period and it would be difficult to over-estimate the effect of this belief on Indian political thinking.

### The Land Revenue Question

R.C. Dutt was the first Indian to rise to the position of Officiating Divisional Commissioner in the Indian Civil Service. After retiring from government service in 1897, he accepted a three year lectureship in Indian history at University College, London. During his stay in London he worked on his translations of Indian epic literature and his economic history of India. He also spoke at public meetings, assisted the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, and wrote letters to the press about the Sedition Bill, the Calcutta Municipal Bill, and land revenue policy. In 1899 he returned to India in order to preside over the Indian National Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Dutt's decision to join the Congress gave it an added respectability at a time when it was still subject to the suspicion aroused by the arrest of the Natus and Tilak. But

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1. J.N.Gupta, Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt, Chap<sup>s</sup>. XV-XVI.

Dutt maintained a distance between himself and the Congress, neither joining the British Committee<sup>1</sup> nor emerging as the leader he might have been had he more actively supported its work. In 1874 he had written contemptuously of the Bengali's "servility" and lack of self-reliance;<sup>2</sup> perhaps his feelings towards other Indians remained complex. Norendra Nath Sen engaged him to write occasionally for the Indian Mirror for the unusually high rate of two guineas an article.<sup>3</sup> Dutt also offered to conduct and finance India upon the condition that he could keep any profits. This offer the British Committee turned down.<sup>4</sup>

Dutt is best known today for his writings on economic history, but during the years following his retirement, his campaign for reform of the Indian land revenue system attracted most notice. He believed that the increasing frequency of famines was the result of over-assessment of the land. Before the British came to India, the cultivators' condition, he believed, was relatively less depressed and the agricultural classes were better able to resist drought.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Bengalee, 28 May 1901.

2. R.C.Dutt, The Peasantry of Bengal, p.182.

3. J.N.Gupta, op.cit. p.238. Behramji Malabari, who edited the Indian Spectator, usually paid contributors Rs.3 per column although sometimes he paid as much as Rs.5 or 10. Englishmen who contributed occasionally accepted 8 annas per column. [Malabari] "The Native Press - Then and Now", East and West, Vol.III, No.34. (Aug. 1904), p.847.

4. Masani, Naoroji, p.315.

5. Dutt said (letter to Lord Curzon, 12 Feb. 1900, Open Letters to Lord Curzon, Part I, p.22) that "no higher rent than one-sixth the gross produce was ever actually realized in any province of India" before British rule began.

Dutt wrote a series of open letters to Lord Curzon in 1900 in which he set out his specific objections to current land revenue policy. His argument was, in general, that in Bombay, Madras, and the Central Provinces the land was over-assessed, that the system of periodic re-settlements under which rents were raised every 20 or 30 years discouraged the landholder from making improvements.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the poverty prevailing in these provinces he cited the permanently settled areas of Bengal where, he said, there was no loss of life from famines and where accumulated capital was not retained by only a few but was "fairly distributed among intelligent, enterprising, and industrious men in all districts and in all classes."<sup>2</sup> In the Punjab and the North West Provinces and Oudh he thought the principle of the revenue system was "fair".<sup>3</sup>

Dutt advanced seven principles which he thought ought to guide the Government's land revenue policy. The principles were as follows:

1. In zamindari areas where the revenue settlement was not permanent, the State demand should have been limited to one-half the rental paid by the tenant to the landlord.
2. In ryotwari areas, one-fifth of the gross produce of the soil should have been the maximum demand on a

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1. Letters to Lord Curzon, 12 Feb., 20 Feb., and 6 April 1900, Ibid.  
 2. Letter to Lord Curzon, 25 April 1900, Ibid. p.60.  
 3. Letter to Lord Curzon, 12 May 1900, Ibid., p.75.

single holding, and one-tenth should have been the limit of the State's average demand for a whole district.

3. In such areas, the sole ground for enhancement should have been a rise in prices.
4. Thirty years should have been the minimum period of assessment. [Most parts of the Punjab and the Central Provinces were under 20 year settlements.]
5. No local cesses should have been levied except for direct benefit of the land, and these should not have exceeded  $6\frac{1}{4}\%$  of the land revenue demand. [Local rates were used to finance roads, schools, salaries of village watchmen, etc.]
6. Payment of water-irrigation rates should have been optional, not compulsory.
7. Appeal against assessment should have been allowed to an independent tribunal.<sup>1</sup>

These seven recommendations, with minor differences,<sup>2</sup> were reiterated in a memorial to the Secretary of

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1. Letter to Lord Curzon, 12 May 1900, *ibid*, pp. 78-80  
 2. For instance, Dutt urged that  $6\frac{1}{4}\%$  be the maximum rate of local cesses; the memorialists suggested 10%. Dutt recommended that a rise in prices should be the only ground for enhancing the revenue demand; the memorialists added another ground, namely, a rise in the value of land due to the construction of Government irrigation works. Dutt suggested that in ryotwari areas it was impracticable to realize one-half the net produce while the memorialists mentioned this as a possible ceiling for the Government demand.

State from eleven former Government officials,<sup>1</sup>

Both Lord Curzon and Lord Hamilton wondered whether Dutt might not be correct in his belief that the land revenue assessment was too high in some areas. Both men also admitted they were perplexed by the involved nature of the land question.<sup>2</sup> Hamilton gave Dutt's statements and figures to Sir Charles Bernard, a land revenue expert, to be analysed.<sup>3</sup> Bernard convinced Hamilton "that Dutt did not understand what he was talking about, and that not only his conclusions, but his whole statement of fact on which the conclusions were based, are erroneous." But at the same time, Bernard, too, had "a sort of uneasy consciousness that our assessments in certain parts of India are too high."<sup>4</sup>

Curzon met Dutt shortly after the latter presided over the Lucknow Congress of 1899 and decided that Dutt was

1. Dutt, Open Letters to Lord Curzon, pp. 81-84. The Memorial which was dated 20 December 1900, was drafted by R.K. Puckle, former Director of Revenue Settlement in Madras. It was signed by Dutt, Puckle, J.H. Garstin (former Member of Council, Madras), J.B. Pennington (former Collector, Madras), H.J. Reynolds (former Revenue Secretary, Bengal), Richard Garth (former Chief Justice, Bengal), C.J. O'Donnell (former Commissioner, Bengal), A. Rogers (former Settlement Officer, Bombay), W. Wedderburn (former Acting Chief Secretary, Bombay), John Jardine (former High Court Judge, Bombay), and J.B. Goodridge (former Settlement Commissioner, C.P.).
2. Hamilton to Curzon, 5 Jan. 1900, MSS. Eur. C.126/2.  
Curzon to Hamilton, 25 Jan. 1900, MSS. Eur. D. 510/4  
Curzon to Hamilton, 20 June 1900, MSS. Eur. D.510/5.
3. Sir Charles Edward Bernard had had experience of land revenue work in the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and Bengal, as well as having served as Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department. In 1900 he was Secretary to the India Office, Revenue and Statistics Department.
4. Hamilton to Curzon, 1 Feb. 1900. MSS. Eur. D. 510/4.

"an amiable and I daresay an accomplished man, but has the incurable vice of the Bengali, namely, the faculty of rolling out yards and yards of frothy declamation about subjects which he has imperfectly considered or which he does not fully understand."<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton was less charitable in his opinion of Dutt. While he had "a sort of internal hankering after the Duttian views", Hamilton believed that Dutt had "so attempted to support his case by many inaccuracies and mis-statements, that, personally, I believe his character as a man of accuracy is gone." He was "afraid" that Dutt was "an unreliable, shifty, fellow."<sup>2</sup>

The Government of India sent Dutt's open letters on the land problem to the local Government's for their opinions. Sir Bampfylde Fuller was appointed to draft a Resolution in answer to Dutt and the memorialists on the basis of the Local Government's replies. However, Curzon was not satisfied with the long, complex, and learned draft which Fuller prepared and he undertook personally to write a Resolution which would "be a vindication of our Land Settlement and Revenue policy urbi et orbi, an answer to our critics, and an attempt to convince a doubting public, and to lay down

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 11 Jan. 1900, MSS.Eur. D.510/4.
  2. Hamilton to Curzon, 27 April 1900, MSS. Eur. C.126/2.  
Hamilton, like Curzon, sometimes perverted the arguments of his critics in order to ridicule them more easily in his private correspondence. For instance, he wrote to Curzon that Dutt and the Dutt school were claiming "that high assessments cause drought."  
Hamilton to Curzon, 9 Jan. 1901, MSS.Eur. C.126/3.

the lines of a sustained and liberal policy in the future." His aim was not to convince the experts, or even primarily the Indian public. Attentive as he was to his future in British politics his purpose was to persuade "English public opinion, the English House of Commons, and the English Press" that the revenue system was on the whole wise and fair, and that whatever defects existed would be corrected by himself.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon took great pains to make his Resolution clear and readable. It was published in the Gazette of India on 18 January 1902.<sup>2</sup> The Resolution was intended to establish four propositions: that Dutt's statistics concerning the incidence of the land revenue demand were incorrect; that the actual incidence did not greatly exceed, and sometimes did not even approach, the maximum demand suggested by Dutt; that the severity of recent famines was not influenced by the level of the revenue assessments; and finally, that the Government intended to lay down three principles of its own which would mitigate any possible harshness in the existing revenue system.

Unless the statistics contained in the replies from the local Governments were grossly inaccurate - and there is little reason to believe they were - Dutt was in error in some of his contentions. For instance, Dutt had stated that

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 7 Aug. 1901, MSS. Eur. 510/8.
  2. The Resolution, along with the local Governments' reports on Dutt's letters, were published by the Government of India in 1902 in Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government.

the revenue demand in the Central Provinces equalled about one-third of the gross agricultural produce;<sup>1</sup> the Government of the Central Provinces replied that the proportion of gross rental to produce "ranges from one-sixth to one-fourteenth."<sup>2</sup> Dutt, in urging that one-fifth of the gross produce be the maximum assessment in Bombay, implied that this figure was often greatly exceeded;<sup>3</sup> the Bombay Government said that apart from the exceptionally fertile areas of Gujarat, one-fifth was seldom exceeded and that the average assessment for the Province as a whole was nearer to one-tenth than to one-fifth.<sup>4</sup> Dutt had blamed over-assessment for the frequency and severity of famines, but the Government of India maintained that there was little connection between land revenue demand and famines, claiming instead that climatic conditions were to blame.<sup>5</sup> The Government argued that not even the complete abolition of the land revenue demand would enable a community to withstand the failure of the rains. Proof of this could be seen in the estimate that the agricultural classes of the Central Provinces lost Rs. 40 crores between 1895 and 1902 - "an amount equivalent to the

1. Letter of 12 Feb. 1900, Open Letters to Lord Curzon, p.27.

2. Resolution of 18 Jan. 1902, para. 17.  
Philip Woodruff (The Men Who Ruled India : The Guardians, p. 158) incorrectly states that "the average was less than one-twentieth."

3. Letter of 6 April 1900, Open Letters to Lord Curzon, pp. 46-49, 53.

4. Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government, Pub. by order of the Gov. Gen. of India in Council (Calcutta 1902), p. 59.

5. Resolution of 18 Jan. 1902, para.3.

total land revenue of 50 years.<sup>1</sup> The Government was not prepared to accept Dutt's contention that the Permanent Settlement protected Bengal from famine. The relative immunity of Bengal (excluding Bihar) to famine was due to special advantages of climate, soil fertility, and trade, and not to the Permanent Settlement. The Government believed that when Dutt stated that the Permanent Settlement had secured the prosperity of the Bengal peasantry, he was confounding the result of the Tenancy Acts of 1859 and 1885 with the effects of Cornwallis' Settlement. In fact, the Government said, in consequence of the Permanent Settlement "the Bengal cultivator was rack-rented, impoverished, and oppressed" by the zamindars until the Government had intervened. Furthermore, the tenantry of Bihar had displayed less resistance to famine than the peasantry of many temporarily settled areas.<sup>2</sup>

The Government Resolution discussed five of the seven principles recommended by Dutt and the memorialists regarding future revenue policy. To the recommendation that the Government demand on zamindars in temporarily settled areas should not exceed one-half the rental, the Government replied that there was a progressive tendency to approach that level, and that since this was the case, it did not propose to issue new orders upon the matter.<sup>3</sup>

In discussing the second point, namely, that in

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1. Ibid, para. 28.

2. Ibid, paras. 5 and 6.

3. Ibid, para. 13.

ryotwari tracts the maximum revenue demand should not exceed one fifth of the gross produce, the Government warped the argument of Dutt and the memorialists by implying that they had recommended one-fifth as the standard revenue demand. Having thus misrepresented the suggested rule, Lord Curzon's Resolution proceeded to show that by taking one-fifth of the gross produce, the Government would be enhancing the demand in most places.<sup>1</sup>

The memorialists had asked that improvements in the land carried out with private capital be exempted from enhancement. The Resolution replied that there was a variety of rules in the different Provinces governing the types of and periods for which improvements were exempt. The Government intended to consider how "the expenditure of private capital upon the improvement of land" might be stimulated and how legitimate profits on such expenditure could be secured. But it refused to surrender increased profits arising from the growth of population, introduction of new crops, and improvement of irrigation and communications.<sup>2</sup>

The demand for a 30 year minimum on the period of assessment was rejected on similar grounds. Where there was

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1. Ibid, par. 17. Philip Woodruff (op. cit., p. 158) in showing that the arguments of "poor Dutt" were demolished by Curzon, ignored the discrepancy between what Dutt had actually written and what Curzon stated Dutt had written.

2. Resolution of 18 Jan. 1902, para. 20.

"much waste land, low rents, and a fluctuating cultivation, or again where there is a rapid development of resources owing to the construction of roads, railways, or canals, to an increase in population, or to a rise in prices, the postponement of a re-settlement for so long a period is both injurious to the people, who are unequal to the strain of a sharp enhancement, and unjust to the general taxpayer who is temporarily deprived of the additional revenue to which he has a legitimate claim."<sup>1</sup>

To the suggestion that local cesses should be limited to  $6\frac{1}{4}\%$  (Dutt) or 10% (the memorialists) of the revenue demand, the Government replied that only in Sind, Madras, and Coorg did local taxation amount to more than 10%. It did not think local taxation was "on the whole either onerous or excessive" unless, as there was reason to believe, landlords shifted the burden on to their tenants. The Government hoped it could "mitigate imposts which are made to press upon the cultivating classes more severely than the law intended," but otherwise it did not plan to move in the matter.<sup>2</sup>

Having dismissed or discounted most of Dutt's arguments, Lord Curzon's Resolution concluded with three positive proposals concerning land revenue, and herein lies the statesmanship of the Resolution. The first was that when large enhancements were made at each settlement - and large enhancements were necessarily "the direct consequence of long-term settlements" - the enforcement of the increased

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1. Ibid, para. 23.

2. Ibid, para. 18.

assessment should be gradual and progressive, and not sudden.<sup>1</sup> The second principle enunciated by Lord Curzon was that greater flexibility should be introduced into the collection of the land revenue demand in years of crop failure. And finally, he emphasised the expediency of granting prompt exemptions from the revenue demand in areas of general economic deterioration.<sup>2</sup>

There was nothing novel about these three principles. Indian landowners and politicians had in the past repeatedly complained of the inflexibility of revenue collection. Sir Anthony MacDonnell's Famine Commission had emphasised the value of revenue suspensions and remissions, "as a measure of constant application" when the condition of the soil deteriorated.<sup>3</sup> But these principles had often been lost sight of by Provincial Governments, and most especially in Bombay where they were in need of authoritative re-statement and enforcement.<sup>4</sup>

Curzon may have been right in saying that revenue relinquished by the Government was not used by the cultivator for protection against famine.<sup>5</sup> He was also probably correct in his belief that although remissions and suspensions were vital in years of famine, in average years the assessment was reasonable. However, in making his recommendations for graduated enhancement, flexibility, and liberality

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1. Ibid, para. 34.

2. Ibid, paras. 36-38.

3. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, paras. 270-71.

4. See below, pp. 204-09.

5. Resolution of 16 Jan. 1902, para. 29.

in depressed areas, Curzon was tacitly acknowledging the general assumption behind Dutt's argument: that suffering during famine could be reduced by reforming the land revenue system.

Dutt refused to give in to Curzon's overwhelming performance. He reaffirmed in letters to the Pioneer that the land revenue assessment was "not moderate and equitable; and sufficient margin is not left to landlords and cultivators to meet the strain of occasional bad harvests." The existing revenue practices, in his view, were not in conformity with the description made in Curzon's Resolution.<sup>1</sup>

Philip Woodruff has said that with the land revenue Resolution Lord Curzon scored an undoubted intellectual victory. But "sonorous, pompous and usually acid, the sentences flow from his lordship's pen; every paragraph makes a telling point and every other alienates the reader."<sup>2</sup> It was the Resolution of a politician, of a Government front-bencher trying to reveal the Opposition in a ridiculous light. It was not written in the detached and dispassionate tone which Curzon's predecessors had customarily used in public controversy.

With his advocacy of the Permanent Settlement, Dutt laid himself open to the charge that he was a champion of zamindar interests and that he ignored the welfare of the

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1. R.C.Dutt and others, Land Problems in India, p.36, letter to Pioneer, 12 March 1902.  
 2. Woodruff, op.cit., p.157.

peasants. And the charge was made.<sup>1</sup> Dutt was himself a zamindar. In 1902 he was elected an honorary member of the British Indian Association.<sup>2</sup> This would have been unthinkable in 1874 when he published The Peasantry of Bengal in which he described the peasants as "a worthier class" than the zamindars<sup>3</sup> and included as an appendix some anti-zamindari extracts from Bankim Chandra Chatterji's Banga Darsana. Dutt had hoped that his book would lead to an inquiry into the landlords' treatment of their ryots. The zamindari spokesman, Kristodas Pal, gave Dutt's book a "scathing" review in the Hindoo Patriot under the title of "Revolutionary".<sup>4</sup>

A complete change in Dutt's attitude to the zamindar-ryot problem would appear to have taken place. In 1874 he had written "seldom in the annals of any country has hasty legislation been productive of effects so calamitous as the ill-conceived Permanent Settlement"<sup>5</sup> while in 1899 he stated that "no single act of the British Government that can be named has done so much for the prosperity and well being of the people as the permanent settlement of the land revenue of Bengal effected by Lord Cornwallis in 1793."<sup>6</sup> In 1874 Dutt held that the peasants could expect assistance only

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1. For instance by C.W.McMinn, Famine Truths, -Half Truths, - Untruths., pp.68-9. McMinn (p.70) described Dutt as "a Mazzini disguised as Uriah Heep."

2. Ibid., p.68.

3. p.59.

4. J.N.Gupta, op.cit. p.57.

5. R.C.Dutt, The Peasantry of Bengal, p.49.

6. R.C.Dutt, Open Letters to Lord Curzon, "Famines in India", p. 15, reprinted from the Fortnightly Review of August 1897.

from alien rulers and not from the Indian aristocratic and middle classes. Most of the bhadralok, he said, owned zamindaris and their sympathies therefore lay with the landowners.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-five years later he was suggesting that the interests of "the voiceless millions of cultivators and artisans" could be better safeguarded by Indians (or, by implication, the middle classes who joined the Congress) than by foreigners.<sup>2</sup>

In his land revenue Resolution, Lord Curzon attempted to capitalize on Dutt's advocacy of the Permanent Settlement. Dutt had not actually recommended the extension of the Permanent Settlement in his open letters, knowing that the India Office had firmly rejected the idea<sup>3</sup> and that many of the retired civilians who supported his other revenue recommendations did not agree with him on this issue. But Dutt's views on the benefits of a Permanent Settlement were implicit in his open letters and explicit in most of his other writings of this period. In his Resolution, Curzon chided Dutt and the other critics of the Government for not paying more attention to tenant rights.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, he neglected to mention that Dutt had urged the extension of "occupancy rights to all settled tenants in Northern India."<sup>5</sup> Nor did Curzon refer to the rejection of this proposal by the

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1. The Peasantry of Bengal, p.76.
  2. Report of the 15th I.N.C., p.21.
  3. Dutt and others, Land Problems in India, p.36.
  4. Resolution of 16 Jan. 1902, para. 9.
  5. Letter of 12 May 1900, Open Letters, p.75.

Governments of the Punjab and the North West Provinces and Oudh.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Dutt had ceased to regard the tenantry problem as crucial to agricultural prosperity.

No doubt part of this shift of opinion may be explained by Dutt's view that the Bengal rent laws of 1859, 1868, and 1885 had given to the tenantry the security provided to zamindars by the Regulation of 1793. But it must be emphasised that in the late 19th century when Dutt and other Indians spoke of extending the permanent settlement, they were not usually thinking of creating a zamindari system where it did not already exist.

The shift in Dutt's position, then, was as much one of emphasis as of principle. As a young Civilian he had concerned himself with the oppression of the tenantry by the zamindars; as a landowner and a retired Civilian he exhibited no hostility to tenantry interests in claiming that the permanent limitation of the Government's demand would be the best protection against famine. Effective tenancy laws had a definite place in his panacea for Indian agriculture.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to see the accumulation of wealth in the hands of all agricultural classes, without which there could be neither

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1. Gov't. of Punjab to Govt. of India, No.243, 28 Dec.1900, para.2, and Govt. of N.W.P. and O. to Govt. of India., No.4256, 22 Dec. 1900, para.4, Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government, pp. 74 and 81.
  2. See, for instance, his paper, "Famines in India, 1770 to 1900", (Open Letters to Lord Curzon, p.18) in which he said "wise laws have been made to restrict the demands of landlords [in Bengal and Northern India], though a further extension of these laws may be still necessary".

protection against calamity nor incentive to improvement. When most other Congress advocates of the Permanent Settlement discussed the agricultural problem, they did not mention tenancy measures. The only Congress session during the first twenty years which passed a resolution recommending tenancy legislation was in 1899, the year Dutt presided. Dutt was probably responsible for this resolution because the recommendation was not repeated in subsequent years when Dutt was not present and because the resolution was in line with Dutt's Open Letters. It did not make the usual request for an extension of the Permanent Settlement but instead asked that no enhancements should be carried out except upon the grounds of a rise in prices.<sup>1</sup>

The term "Permanent Settlement", when it was used in the Congress in the early Sessions, meant a Permanent Settlement of the Bengal type. But gradually it evolved to include a permanent ryotwari settlement and, in Dutt's case, even to include the permanent limitation of the landlord's demand on the tenant. That the Congress passed a resolution almost every year requesting the extension of the Permanent Settlement can not be attributed solely to zamindari influence. When most delegates to the Congress from Bombay and Madras used the term, they were thinking of a permanent ryotwari settlement. There were also at least a few members who kept quiet at the annual Congress sessions but who held

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1. Resolution II of 1899.

radical social ideas, judged by contemporary Indian standards. One such person was K. Ferraju, a pleader and member of the Madras Legislative Council, who wrote that "zamindars have not done anything socially or politically to merit state aid and protection."<sup>1</sup> Another was C.Sankara Nair, who "strenuously advocated the cause of the tenants against the landlords, though he was a Malabar landlord of sorts." Nair, who had a strong anti-Brahman bias and favoured the abolition of caste, was President of the 1897 Congress and became a High Court Judge in 1903.<sup>2</sup>

Those Congress leaders who were anxious that the Congress should appear to be a truly national rather than a class or sectional organisation were sensitive to the suggestion that the Congress championed zamindari interests.<sup>3</sup> Because of this sensitivity and the ambiguity of the term "Permanent Settlement" it is not easy to discover the social and economic values of the individuals who spoke in favour of the Permanent Settlement, much less those of the Congress as a whole. Yet the views expressed in the early years of the Congress before the Subjects Committee became effective in filtering out all contentious issues, and before the "Permanent Settlement" came to mean various ideas, are revealing.

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1. K. Ferraju, "Impartible Estates in India," Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VII, No. 5 (May 1903) p. 424.
  2. The Statesman, 6 Jan, 1898, quotes a biographical sketch of Nair from the Pioneer.
  3. See speech of V.R.Natu, Report of the 10th I.N.C. pp. 37-8.

First mention of the Permanent Settlement in the Congress was made at the second session. D.E.Wacha stated that the Bengali ryots were not materially better off than ryots in other parts of India<sup>1</sup> and A.O.Hume alleged that the Bengali "masses" were the poorest in India, implying that the Permanent Settlement should not be extended.<sup>2</sup> In reply, Moti Lal Ghose gave "an unqualified denial" to Hume's estimate of the conditions of the Bengali lower classes.<sup>3</sup>

In 1888 a resolution advocating the extension of the Permanent Settlement was approved by the Subjects Committee for the first time. An English delegate, one J.E.Howard of Allahabad, argued that a careful study ought to be made of the subject before the Congress as a whole passed such a resolution. He mentioned J.S.Mill's maxim that unearned increment from the land should go "to the whole people" rather than to individual proprietors. He and Telang advised the Congress to postpone discussion of the Permanent Settlement until it had been fully considered.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the problem was referred to the Standing Committees which were instructed to submit reports<sup>5</sup> to the 1889 Congress. In the usual manner the reports were not handed in the following year. Nevertheless, the 1889 Congress passed a resolution advocating the extension of the Permanent Settlement. It was

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1. Report of the 2nd I.N.C., p.61.

2. Ibid, p.68.

3. Ibid, p.69.

4. Report of the 4th I.N.C., pp. 115-17.

5. Resolution XIV of 1888.

introduced by Boikunta Nath Sen, whose intimate connections with the Bengal zamindars <sup>will</sup> be <sup>3</sup> mentioned, and was supported by S. Subramania Iyer. Iyer told the Congress how he had first become a landowner fifteen years previously when he invested money saved from his legal career in Tanjore. Since that time, he complained, the revenue demand on his land had been raised. He argued that the Permanent Settlement was needed in order to secure for the tenant or ryot the fruits of his improvements.<sup>1</sup>

In subsequent years if there was opposition to the extension of the Permanent Settlement it was expressed in the secrecy of the Subjects Committee although in 1894 a European landowner, Captain Banon from Kulu in the Punjab, introduced an amendment to the Permanent Settlement Resolution. The proposed amendment said that the Congress would not object to the re-assessment of Bengal if this would enable the Government to extend fixity of the revenue demand to the rest of India. Banon told the Congress that it would, by passing his amendment, controvert the allegation that the Congress favoured the richer as against the poorer classes. He believed the original resolution alienated "the support of the radical party in England who are against landlordism and the unearned increment." No one would support Banon's amendment and it was dropped.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Report of the 5th I.N.C., p.60.

2. Report of the 10th I.N.C., p.39.

3. See below, p. 289.

If one were to attempt to draw inferences about Congress attitudes to the Permanent Settlement from the meagre information available in the first twenty Congress Reports, four facts would have to be considered. First, the three persons who suggested that championing the Permanent Settlement might be inadvisable were British.<sup>1</sup> Four other persons who seemed hesitant about supporting the Permanent Settlement in the early years before its meaning became ambiguous were from Bombay.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, the three persons who spoke most often in favour of the Permanent Settlement were Peter Paul Pillai, barrister, zamindar and agent of the Madras Landholders' Association, Boikunta Nath Sen, zamindar and zamindar's pleader, and R.N.Mudholkar, zamindar and pleader.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hume, J.E. Howard, and Captain Banon. Robert Knight, editor of the Friend of India and Statesman, also opposed its extension. He thought the Bengal Permanent Settlement had been an "economic mistake". (Robert Knight to Ram Gopal Sanyal, 13 Sept. 1886, quoted by Ram Gopal Sanyal, Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Great Men of India, Both Official and Non-Official, for the Last One Hundred Years, p. 158) However, the Permanent Settlement Resolutions of 1891 and 1897 were introduced by Pringle Kennedy and John Adams, respectively. (Kennedy's wife and daughter were murdered by a terrorist in the Muzaffapur bomb case in 1908.) Wedderburn wrote in 1897 that he favoured the extension of the Bengal type of permanent settlement in which collection of the land revenue would be assigned "to men of good local standing, and on terms which made them interested in the improvement and prosperity of the land." He had written in 1878 that "we merely state a commonplace when we condemn government interference between Labour and Capital. (Ratcliffe, Wedderburn, pp. 35, 44.)
  2. Wacha, Tyabji, R.M.Bhide, and V.R.Natu. Ranade, on the other hand, tried to add a plea for the extension of the Permanent Settlement to a resolution at the 1887 Congress. (Report of the 3rd I.N.C., p.143).
  3. B.N.Sen spoke in 1889, 1892, 1893, and 1894, P.P.Pillai in 1892, 1893, 1894, and 1903, and Mudholkar in 1890, 1896, 1901, and 1904.

Finally, no Indian delegate openly suggested that there might be a conflict of interests between ryots and landlords. This silence or omission may only in part be explained by the unwritten rule of the Congress that subjects likely to arouse controversy should be avoided.

If the Congress treatment of the issue of the Permanent Settlement gives little revealing evidence of Congress social attitudes, other issues drew the Congress teeth. One such issue was the Cadastral Survey. The 1893 and 1894 Congresses passed resolutions expressing

"the profound alarm which has been created by the action of the Government in interfering with the existing permanent settlement in Bengal and Behar (in the matter of survey and other cesses) ... and deeming such interference with solemn pledges a national calamity."

The Congress pledged "itself to oppose in all possible legitimate ways all such reactionary attacks on permanent settlements and their holders."<sup>1</sup> The survey cesses referred to in this unusually strong-worded resolution were those levied on the zamindars of Bihar for the Cadastral Survey.<sup>1</sup> The Cadastral Survey was intended to supply a definite record of rights for the tenants in permanently settled areas so that zamindars would not be able to take unjust rents. While the Congress resolution itself objected to the

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1. Immediately before this resolution was unanimously adopted by the 1893 Congress, a Brahma missionary named Pundit Lakshman Prasad intimated that he wished to move an amendment if the proposed resolution "goes against the Cadastral Survey." President Naoroji said it did not so the Brahma withdrew his amendment. Report of the 9th I.N.C., p.116.

cess and not the Cadastral Survey itself, the speech made by Boikunta Nath Sen in introducing the resolution in 1894 revealed that more than the cess was involved. He said that the Survey (as distinct from the cess for the maintenance of the Survey records) was a violation of the permanent settlement and that tenure holders and agriculturists "do not require it." Boikunta Nath Sen also criticised the Government for including the lands of the Maharaja of Darbhanga in the Survey and then proceeded to praise Darbhanga for "the bold attitude he has taken, the noble and magnanimous way in which, at considerable sacrifice, and I may say even risk, he has been trying to maintain the integrity of the permanent settlement."<sup>1</sup> This is interesting because some of the villages in the Darbhanga Raj estate had been singled out as areas in need of Government interference in determining fair rents. The Maharaja of Darbhanga's brother, Raja Remeshwar Singh was also mentioned for having "of late years very greatly and severely enhanced his rents."<sup>2</sup> The question may be raised as to whether the generous financial support given to the Congress by the Maharaja of Darbhanga was<sup>3</sup>

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1. Report of the 10th I.N.C., p.35.

2. P.P.No.188 of 1892, East India (Bihar Correspondence) Copy of Correspondence...as to the Advisability of carrying out the proposed Cadastral Survey. Enclosure No.7 to No.3. H.S.Beadon, Col.of Darbhanga, to Com. of Patna Div., 20 Feb. 1889.

3. See below, pp. 287 and 294.

related to the Congress position on the Cadastral Survey.<sup>1</sup>

An examination of the reception given to Government efforts in the Punjab and Bombay to reduce agricultural indebtedness and to limit the transfer of land from the agricultural classes to the non-agricultural classes further indicates that the Indians who joined the Congress were generally unsympathetic to the interests of the lower classes.

In 1886, S.S.Thorburn's book, Musalmans and Money-lenders in the Punjab, was published. It warned that the

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1. Lord Randolph Churchill sent a paper criticising the Cadastral Survey to The Times of 31 July 1893. He said the paper came from "an Indian gentleman of high position..... I cannot vouch for every allegation in the letter, but I can endorse from knowledge its general tenour." Lord Lansdowne was "quite sure" that the paper had been written by Darbhanga or his advisers because both the actual language and the argument agree "exactly with those Memoranda which Durbhanga has, at different times, sent me." (Lansdowne to A.MacDonnell, 26 Aug. 1893, Ms.Eng. Hist. d.236) The paper was published while Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was before Parliament and when Conservatives were apprehensive about the future of Irish landlords under the prospective Irish Legislature. The paper seemed calculated to play on Conservative sympathies. It stated that if the Government of India's present anti-zamindari policy was continued, it "must lead to the same state of things in India as is now the case in Ireland. It sets one class against another." The author of the paper went on to say that Sir Anthony MacDonnell, one of the Cadastral Survey's architects, was "a Home Ruler and holds very strong Irish views on the subject. His scheme is nothing more than an attempt to be generous to the tenants at the expense of the landlord." In the author's view, the ryots were not in "need of any further protection."

land of the western Punjab was passing out of the hands of the Muslim peasantry into the hands of the Hindu money-lenders at an alarming rate. Thorburn believed that unless there was "some Act of Bunniah spoliation", "half of our magnificent peasantry" might rise up against the "despised" money-lenders. Or there might be a serious rebellion if the agrarian unrest came into contact with an Islamic religious fanatic, a famine, or a land reform agitator.<sup>1</sup> Thorburn's views were shared by other Punjab officials who were concerned about the effect of land transfers on the Punjab peasantry "who furnish the flower of the Native Army of India, and who look forward, amid all the hardships and glories of a military career, to spend their declining years on their ancestral acres."<sup>2</sup>

The warnings of the likely consequences of unchecked borrowing and alienation attracted the notice of the Government of India, and on 26 October 1895, Denzil Ibbetson, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, invited the views and proposals of the local administrations on the

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1. S.S.Thorburn, Musalman and Money-lenders in the Punjab, pp. 39-41.
  2. Speech of Sir Charles Rivaz, subsequently Lt. Gov. of the Punjab, India Leg. Council Prog., 27 Sept. 1899, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 327.  
Thorburn wrote with feeling about the different burdens borne by the Punjabi peasantry and the Bengalis. The former had to fight India's wars, were over-taxed, and were harrassed in the law courts while the Bengalis were "drones", contributing little to India's army or revenues. S.S. Thorburn, His Majesty's Greatest Subject, p. 115.

problem of land transfers. Ibbetson remarked that "the gift of the free power of transfer" had produced "evils" which amounted "to a positive political danger" in some parts of India and contained "the germs of danger to the commonwealth."<sup>1</sup> Thorburn was appointed to inquire into the problem in the area between Rawalpindi and Lahore. His conclusions, which bore out his earlier estimates of the extent of land alienation, were set out in his "Report on Peasant Indebtedness" in 1896.

The amount of land changing hands in the Punjab had increased rapidly. Sales averaged about 88,000 acres a year from 1866 to 1874. From 1875 to 1879, sales averaged about 93,000 acres annually, from 1880 to 1884, 160,000 acres, from 1885 to 1889, 310,000 acres, and from 1890 to 1894, 338,000 acres a year. Mortgages were registered at the annual rate of 143,000 acres from 1866 to 1874, and then at "212,000, 296,000, 590,000, and 554,000 acres a year in the succeeding quinquennial periods."<sup>2</sup>

Thorburn believed that before British rule began, most land in the Punjab was held by the village community and that the transfer of land out of the community was rare. The British created individual property rights and set up

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1. Govt. of India, Dept. of Rev. and Agric., Land Rev., Confid. Circ. No.24/75-1, 26 Oct. 1895, to all local Governments and Administrations. Enclosure to Govt. of India, Dept. of Rev. and Agric., Land Rev. No. 58 of 1895, to Sec. of State, 30 Oct. 1895, Rev. Letters from India, 1895.
  2. H. Calvert, The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab, p.263.

the laws and law courts which enabled cultivators to offer their land as security for loans and which enabled money-lenders to foreclose on their loans. The process of transfer was greatly facilitated, according to Thorburn, by the British system of land revenue which, unlike that of earlier regimes, was inflexible and forced cultivators to turn to the money-lender in years of scarcity. The technical laws also gave a definite advantage to the money-lender and his lawyer friends over the ignorant cultivator.<sup>1</sup>

Thorburn favoured a return to the Lawrence school of administration in the Punjab. In 1897 he wrote a novel, His Majesty's Greatest Subject, about a future Viceroy of India. One of the first things the Viceroy did after assuming office was to consider "the measures to elasticise the Land Revenue collections, disable money-lenders from holding agricultural land, and substitute village courts of equity for the detested technical law-courts and system of the Government."<sup>2</sup> In 1907, before the Viceroy could carry out his reforms, the Muslims formed a no-rent league in the Punjab, refused to pay the Hindu money-lenders until their accounts were "examined, principal separated from interest, compound interest cut out, and all payments already made duly credited." The District Collector, Mattra Das, a member of

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1. Thorburn, op.cit. pp. 47-50. Also, Thorburn, The Punjab in Peace and War, pp. 229-39.  
 2. Thorburn, His Majesty's Greatest Subject, p.151.

a Lahore banking family, informed the no-rent league that under the Contract Act and the Civil Procedure Code, they had to pay the money-lenders their demands. The Hindu servants of the Courts were sent to attach the property of the cultivators, a Hindu-Muslim riot ensued, and soon communal explosions flared up throughout India.<sup>1</sup> The British were taught a much-needed lesson - like that of 1857<sup>2</sup> - and the Viceroy was able to throw over "a great part of the existing laws and institutions" and substitute "simple protective and restrictive laws adapted to the mental darkness of the needy peasant millions."<sup>3</sup> From 1908 onwards, the peasants "were no longer harassed and fleeced by usurers and usurers' allies, the law-courts and the pleaders. They were no longer required to pay land revenue when their crops had failed." They were able to borrow from the Government at four per cent interest instead of from the money-lender at thirty-six per cent. India was to "be governed on Indian lines, the form of rule being a benevolent and conservative despotism."<sup>4</sup> One of the Viceroy's more despotic actions was to lock up 300 Indian politicians and to deport a half dozen M.P.'s. The results were beneficial: "treason-mongering ceased to be attractive."<sup>5</sup> The Viceroy was unusual in another way. He threw over his English fiancée and married

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1. Ibid, pp.155-59.

2. Ibid, p.304.

3. Ibid, p.277.

4. Ibid, pp.303-04.

5. Ibid, pp. 97-99.

an Indian Princess.<sup>1</sup>

The remedies prescribed by Lord Curzon's Government for India's political problems were more prosaic. It passed into law in October 1900 the Punjab Land Alienation Act. The Act divided the population of the Punjab into three categories. First, there were the agricultural tribes. Secondly, there were other agriculturists who possessed a long standing interest in the land. The final group included the money-lenders. The Act applied restrictions only on the first class. A member of an agricultural tribe was permitted to sell land to other members of his tribe or group as he wished, but if he chose to mortgage his land to someone not belonging to his own tribe or group of tribes, the mortgage had to be "in one of three prescribed forms, which secure that either the mortgagor shall remain in cultivating possession at a reasonable rent, or that the mortgagee shall hold possession for a reasonable time not exceeding 20 years, at the expiry of which the mortgage debt and interest thereon will be considered cancelled."<sup>2</sup>

It was realized that the money-lenders of non-agricultural castes would be reluctant to lend money to peasants who were unable to offer their land as security. However,

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1. Ibid, p.279. Marriages between Indian Civil Service officers and indigenous women were discouraged. In 1903, Government officers in Burma, where intermarriage was becoming increasingly frequent, were warned that such marriages would damage their opportunities for future promotion. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon in the Home Department, p.324.
  2. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, p.25.

members of the agricultural tribes could be expected to be less improvident and when they did need capital, they would be able to borrow from their own caste members or from agricultural banks and co-operative societies.<sup>1</sup> There would be far less political danger in the alienation of land by, for instance, a Jat peasant to a Jat money-lender than by a Jat to a Khatri.

Before the Act was passed, it encountered strong criticism from many Punjabi Congress supporters. The majority of the Punjabi Hindus who attended the Congresses belonged to the money-lending and commercial castes. Among those most closely connected with the Congress in the Punjab, excepting the Bengalis, nearly all were Banias, Khattris, Aroras, or Agarwals. Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Murli Dhar were Agarwals, Bakshi Jaishi Ram was a Khatri, and Lala Harkishen Lal was an Arora. Although none of these persons seems to have been a money-lender, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dyal Singh Majithia,<sup>2</sup> Lala Harkishen Lal, and at least ten other persons who attended the Congress were officials of

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1. The number of co-operative societies in the Punjab rose from 300 in 1901 to 1,000 in 1911.  
A. Latifi, The Industrial Punjab: A Survey of Facts, Conditions and Possibilities., p.xviii.
  2. Dyal Singh died in September 1898 and therefore was not a party to the Alienation Bill controversy.

the Punjab National Bank or the Bharat Insurance Company.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian Association of Lahore and the Congress press in the Punjab were united in opposition to the Alienation Bill. The Indian Association addressed a letter to all the sahlukars of the Punjab, asking them for their opinions and commenting that the Bill would lower the value of the land, destroy the credit of the agricultural classes and injure the livelihood of the classes who, "unable to compete with Europeans in commerce and manufacture," invested their money in land.<sup>2</sup> The Tribune of Lahore charged that the Bill appeared to be an attempt to divide and rule and that the "rather jubilant" attitude of the peasants was an indication of their ignorance, because the Bill would take away their credit.<sup>3</sup> The Tribune also estimated that the Punjabi

1. Harkishen Lal as Honorary Secretary, Dyal Singh Majithia as Chairman, Jaishi Ram, Lala Lal Chand, and Bhagwat Ishar Das - all Congress members - had started the Punjab National Bank in Lahore in 1897, with capital of almost 2½ lakhs. By 1901 it had opened a branch in Rawalpindi and had a working capital of 15 lakhs. The Bharat Insurance Co., Ltd., was said to be the first exclusively Indian life insurance company. Delegates to the Congress were often elected on the grounds of the Bharat Insurance Co. The Bharat Insurance Co. was floated in 1896 with the help of Seth Jassawala, a Parsi merchant of Lahore, and others. Its constitution required all its shareholders to be Indian. Bengalee, 19 Jan. 1901. See also L.R.Nair and P.N.Kirpal, op.cit., p.36, and K.L.Gauba, The Rebel Minister: The Story of the Rise and Fall of Lala Harkishen Lal, p.20.
2. The letter was published in the Rafiq -i- Hind, Lahore, 25 Nov. 1899. T. and D. Selections, 1 Jan. 1900, para.21, P.S.L.I., Vol. 119.
3. Tribune, 9 Dec. 1899, T. and D. Selections, 18 Dec. 1899, para. 953 (ii), P.S.L.I., Vol. 118.

sahukars would lose about twelve crores as a result of the Bill.<sup>1</sup> No other major Congress newspaper may so definitely be identified with a single class as the Tribune may be with the money-lenders. In 1891 the Tribune published a series of articles and a pamphlet complaining about "the illegal and outrageous oppression of money-lenders by executive authorities."<sup>2</sup> One of the examples of oppression it gave was of the District Magistrate of Amballa District who ordered the panchayats to settle disputes between debtors and money-lenders. The panchayats then coerced the money-lenders into surrendering part of their claims on the debtors.<sup>3</sup>

Not all the Muslim newspapers favoured the Bill although it was the Muslim peasantry who stood to benefit most from the restriction on alienation. Lord Curzon and the Punjab Government were prepared to abandon the Bill in the event of Muslim opposition. Curzon thought there would be "no loss of dignity in withdrawing a Bill which has been designed in the interests of parties who are unwilling to accept it."<sup>4</sup> But this was not necessary because the Muslim community in general, including the PaisaAkhbar, the newspaper with the largest circulation in the Punjab, backed the

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1. Tribune, 21 Nov. 1899, T. and D. Selections, 4 Dec. 1899, para. 914 (iii), P.S.L.I., Vol. 118.
  2. [Tribune], Philanthropy Run Mad (1892), p.22.
  3. Ibid., pp. 63-6.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 10 May 1899, and its enclosure, Rivaz to Curzon, 3 May 1899, MSS.Eur. D.510/1.

Government.<sup>1</sup>

The educated Muslims of the Punjab had with a few exceptions remained aloof from the Congress prior to the Alienation Bill. At the 1899 Congress - the second consecutive session at which no Punjabi Muslims appeared - a resolution was adopted which would not have been accepted by the Punjabi Muslims. It expressed regret at the introduction of the Bill which would reduce the credit of the agriculturists and landholders and "make them more resourceless."<sup>2</sup> The Congress opposition to the Punjab Land Alienation Bill had been foreshadowed by an 1895 resolution criticising proposals to restrict the right of private land alienation. The 1895 Congress endorsed the view that agricultural indebtedness was due not to the abusive use of the right of alienation, but to the ignorance of the agricultural classes and the "application of a too rigid system of fixed revenue assessment which takes little account of the fluctuating conditions of agriculture in many parts of India."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Paisa Akhbar (Lahore), 17 Feb. 1900, T. and D. Selections, 12 March 1900, para. 247, P.S.L.I., Vol. 121. Maulvi Muharram Ali Chisti, editor of the Rafiq -i- Hind, law student, and staunch Congress supporter, organised the Muslim zamindari support for the Alienation Bill. The Legislative Department of India printed 87 pages of translations from Muharram Ali's Rafiq -i- Hind articles on the Bill. The views of no other person, official or non-official, were given so much space. Translations from Rafiq -i- Hind, enclosure to Sec., Rev. and Fin. Dept., Punjab, to Sec., Govt. of I., Leg. Dept., 7 July 1900, Appendix A-37, India Leg. Dept. Prog., Vol. 5938.
  2. Resolution II of 1899.
  3. Resolution X of 1895.

The 1899 resolution was introduced by Lala Murli Dhar, a pleader from Amballa who owned no land himself and who was anxious not to appear to be an advocate of the sahkars. He admitted that the agricultural classes had suffered at the hands of the money-lender whom he called "a money-grabber, a contemptible leech, ... a man who sucks the blood of the poor agriculturist." His concern was with the zamindar who would not be able to transfer his land or to borrow in order to pay the Government's revenue demand.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Lala Kanhaiya Lal, a pleader in the Lahore High Court, complained that the object of the legislation was "to crush down the money-lender."<sup>2</sup> The anonymous author of the introduction to the Report of the Lucknow Congress of 1899 also left no doubt about his sympathies. "Why", he asked, "in your zeal to protect the agriculturist from the consequences of his extravagance or improvidence ... punish the money-lender for his shrewdness in making the best investment of his money? Surely he, too, in equity is entitled to some protection."<sup>3</sup>

None of the Congress members of the Indian Legislative Council attended the debates on the Bill at Simla. The Muslim member, Nawab Muhammad Hayat Khan supported the Government while Sir Harnam Singh of Kapurthala argued against the Bill in speeches which Lord Curzon believed to

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1. Report of the 15th I.N.C., pp.44-5.

2. Ibid, pp.46-7.

3. Report of the 15th I.N.C. (1899), p.xviii.

be written by "some interested pleader at Lahore."<sup>1</sup> Sir Harnam maintained that the Bill would cause a decline in the market value of agricultural land and in "its availability for the investment of capital" which in turn would hamper "the accumulation of capital itself in the hands of the commercial classes."<sup>2</sup>

When the 1900 Congress met at Lahore, the Muslim delegates from the Punjab objected to the repetition of the resolution condemning the Punjab Land Alienation Bill. In the Subjects Committee, Muharram Ali Chisti succeeded in getting this resolution omitted.<sup>3</sup> This was one of the few occasions on which the delegates from one religious community tried (and succeeded) in blocking a resolution favoured by the majority community.<sup>4</sup> The decision of the Subjects Committee, which was composed of 6 Muslims and 116 non-Muslims,<sup>5</sup> to give in to Muslim opinion was an indication

1. Curzon to Hamilton, 15 Aug. 1900, MSS. Eur. D. 510/5.
2. India Leg. Council Prog., 22 June 1900, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 211-212.
3. Bengalee, 30 Dec. 1900. President Chandavarkar announced to the Congress that the matter had been dropped at the request of the Muslim members of the Subjects Committee at least until the working of the Act had been studied. (Report of the 16th I.N.C. p.70.) The decision was reached in deference to the Muslims, and not out of sympathy with the peasants as Azim Husain has suggested. (Fazl -i- Husain: A Political Biography, p.77.)
4. Resolution XIII of 1888 provided that when the Hindu or Muslim delegates as a body objected to the discussion of a subject, then it would not be discussed.
5. Report of the 16th I.N.C., pp. 24-25.

of the leaders' determination to keep communal problems out of the Congress. However, they failed to win over the Punjabi Muslims permanently to the Congress. In 1901 Sheik Umar Baksh, a Lahore pleader, Muharram Ali Chisti, and four other Muslims went to the Congress in Calcutta. But in 1902, 1903 and 1904 no Punjabi Muslims attended, and in 1905 only Sheik Umar Baksh made the trip to Benares.<sup>1</sup>

The forbearance of the 1900 Congress in dropping the Punjab Alienation Act resolution was notable when one considers that besides the money-lenders, many members of the legal profession stood to lose some of their practice under the working of the Act.<sup>2</sup> Most of the leaders of the Congress in the Punjab were lawyers, including Lala Harkishen Lal, Lajpat Rai, Lala Murli Dhar, Kali Prasanna Roy, and Bakshi Jaishi Ram. At the Lahore Congress of 1900, 203 out of the 420 Punjabi delegates were in the legal profession. The only specific mention of lawyers in the 1900 Congress session was made by Surendra Nath Banerjea who

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1. See the lists of delegates for those years.
  2. The Act confined jurisdiction over cases under the Act to revenue officers and thus kept them out of the law courts. There was a certain amount of animus towards the legal profession in the writings of British observers who said that lawyers took unfair advantage of the poor. See S.S.Thorburn, Musalman and Moneylenders (p.133-34) and His Majesty's Greatest Subject (p.65). Also Monier Williams, Modern India and the Indians: Being a Series of Impressions, Notes, and Essays, p.145. Sir Michael O'Dwyer (India As I Knew It : 1885-1925, pp.254-55) wrote in 1925 that the Punjab Land Alienation Act "was and still is strongly opposed by the urban middle classes, who regard the peasantry as theirs to exploit."

asked with regard to the Alienation Act, "who has ever heard of a law which places the whole of the legal profession under a ban?"<sup>1</sup> The number of students in the Punjab Law School declined from 433 in 1896-97, to 248 in 1900-01, to 159 in 1901-02. Sir Charles Rivaz, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, attributed the drop in part to the Alienation Act.<sup>2</sup>

Despite earlier signs of stiff opposition to the Alienation Bill, the Act came into effect in June 1901 without much excitement or difficulty. But its effects were momentous. Whereas before 1901 the agricultural tribes were losing land, after the enactment of the Alienation Act the process was reversed, as the statistics demonstrate:

Annual Average area sold in acres.<sup>3</sup>

	By Agricultural Tribes	To Agricultural Tribes	Gain or loss
1902-03 to 1905-06	150,000	149,000	- 1,000
1906-07 to 1910-11	170,000	178,000	+ 8,000
1911-12 to 1915-16	188,000	217,000	+39,000

Similarly, the amount of land mortgaged to and reclaimed by the agricultural tribes exceeded the amount of land mortgaged by the agricultural tribes by an annual average of 150,000 acres from 1902-03 to 1905-06, by an

1. Report of the 16th I.N.C., p.71.

2. Bengalee, 10 Feb. 1903.

3. H. Calvert, op.cit., p.266.

average of 275,000 acres from 1906-07 to 1910-11, and by an average of 244,000 acres from 1911-12 to 1915-16.<sup>1</sup>

The Punjab Land Alienation Act did not put an end to peasant indebtedness or to the transfer of land. But it did largely prevent the Khattris, Aroras, and Banias from acquiring land from Muslim and low caste Hindu peasants. As a measure of social engineering it had no equal in the post-mutiny period of British rule.

In Bombay, legislation was passed to meet a problem similar to that in the Punjab, i.e., extensive transfer of land to the money-lending and professional castes - in this case, Marwaris, Gujars, and Brahmans - from the peasants - the Marathas and Kunbis. The problem had been recognised as acute in 1875 with the attacks on money-lenders by indebted cultivators in the Poona and Ahmednagar Districts. Decisive police intervention prevented wide-spread killing but there were 951 arrests and 501 convictions for assault, arson, and other offences in the two districts.<sup>2</sup> The Deccan Riots Commission, which was appointed to inquire into the causes of the disturbances, recommended the curtailment of the legal advantages enjoyed by the money-lenders in realizing their debts. To this end the Deccan Relief Act of 1879 was passed, covering the districts of Ahmednagar, Poona, Satara, and Sholapur.

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1. Ibid, p.267.

2. Deccan Riots Commission Report, para.10.

The Act, however, had little effect. By 1899 the percentage of land alienated in those four districts was 35.02, 24.42, 12.53, and 21.72 respectively.<sup>1</sup> The Famine Commission of 1901 estimated that probably "one-fourth of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency have lost possession of their lands; that less than a fifth are free from debt; and that the remainder are indebted to a greater or lesser extent."<sup>2</sup> The Government of Bombay regarded this situation as "fraught with alarm" because the discontent created among those persons losing land to money-lenders would be fertile ground for the work of political agitators. The agitators the Government had in mind were the Maratha Brahmans who had organized the no-rent campaign throughout the Presidency in 1896-97 and who directed from Poona an organization "for calling public meetings to protest against the acts of Government whenever they appear distasteful to certain classes."<sup>3</sup> Even in the 1875 riots, Government officials had suspected the collusion of educated and high caste persons with the rioters. The Deccan Riots Commission absolved such persons from having "organized or fostered" the riots "with any comprehensive design" but found "that in

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1. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, para. 334.
  2. J.W.P.Muir-Mackenzie, Sec., Govt. of Bombay, to Sec., Govt. of India, Dept. of Rev. and Agric., 7 Oct. 1899, Rev.(Confl.) No. 7100/168 of 1899, para.8. Bombay Rev. Prog., Land, Vol. 5777.
  3. J.W.P.Muir-Mackenzie, 7 Oct. 1899, op.cit., para.12.

some cases the rioters had the support and countenance of persons of influence in their neighborhood."<sup>1</sup> Since that time the loyalty of persons of influence had become even more doubtful, as the attitude of the Maratha Brahmans towards the Government in 1897 had shown. The fact that the Brahmans were often the persons into whose hands the land was passing had no great mitigating influence on the possibility that Brahmans might be able to exploit the discontent of the dispossessed. In the 1875 riots, while the alien-seeming Marwari and Gujar Sahukars were the victims of attacks, the Brahmans usually escaped molestation.<sup>2</sup>

In order to prevent extensive transfer of land in the future, the Government of Bombay introduced the Bombay Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill of 1901. It gave the revenue officials the authority to cause lands for which the revenue was in arrears to be forfeited, and to grant the former cultivator a new short-term lease for the land on the condition that the right of occupancy would lapse if the leasee alienated his land without official permission. The Government expected that under the Bill, a new class of occupants would appear along side of the older type of occupants. The older type would be the men with means and credit who would retain their transferable and hereditary right to the land.

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1. Deccan Riots Commission Report, para. 119.

2. Ibid, para.12. The reasons for the comparative immunity of the Brahman money-lenders are discussed in ibid, para. 39.

The new class would consist of the cultivators without means who could not pay the land revenue and who would have neither the power of transfer nor the traditional 30 year settlement.<sup>1</sup>

When the Bombay Government asked for leave to introduce the Bill in 1899, the Governor, Lord Sandhurst, dissented from the view of his Government that a Bill of this sort was advisable. He thought that the "clever, active and unscrupulous" class in the Deccan, who had been involved in the cow-protection, Shivaji, Ganapati, and no-rent movements, would find the Bill "just what they have been looking for." They would represent the Bill as an attack on the rights of property and stir up trouble.<sup>2</sup> Despite Sandhurst's objections, the Government of India assented to the Bill and it was introduced into the Bombay Legislative Council on 30 May 1901.

The Bill was "unanimously" condemned by the Indian newspapers of Bombay Presidency<sup>3</sup> and was severely criticised in numerous public meetings.

Lord Hamilton and Sandhurst's successor as Governor

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1. Speech of James Monteath, Sec. to Bombay Govt., Rev. and Fin. Depts., Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 30 May 1901, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 178-86.
  2. Sandhurst's Minute of Dissent is included in J.W.P. Muir - Mackenzie, 7 Oct. 1899, op.cit.
  3. Summary of newspaper comment on the Bill, T. and D. Selections, 24 June 1901, para. 432, P.S.L.I., Vol. 135. Actually there was at least one newspaper which supported the Bill. It was Dnyanodaya, a Bombay Anglo-Marathi weekly which was edited by an Indian Christian. Its circulation was 625.

of Bombay, Lord Northcote, believed that the opposition to the Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill was almost entirely organized by the money-lenders. Hamilton said that in Northern India, where the forms of land tenures were various, any state action to limit the alienation of land affected a large number of interests. But in Bombay, under the ryotwari system the only persons "prejudicially affected would be the money-lenders" and, to a lesser extent, the legal classes who represented the money-lenders in court or who wanted to buy land.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the agitation against the Bill was not so simple as Hamilton and Northcote were ready to believe. The money-lenders were, of course, deeply stirred, for the Bill was designed to prevent them from acquiring land and it would place obstacles in the way of recovering their debts. Some criticisms of the Bill were motivated by a concern for the money-lenders welfare. Tilak, for instance, predicted that the Bill would ruin the sahuakar and destroy the mutual relationship between money-lender and ryot.<sup>2</sup> Tilak's newspaper the Mahratta, whose editor, N.C.Kelkar, was the son of a

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 2 Oct. 1901, MSS. Eur. C.126/3.  
2. Pradhan and Bhagwat, op.cit., pp.132-33.

money-lender,<sup>1</sup> complained of the Government's "zeal to kill money-lenders." The Government, it said, feared the social and political influence of the money-lender over the ryot and "it was evidently to the interest of the Government that the money-lender be crushed and his influence undermined."<sup>2</sup> N.C.Kelkar wrote an article in which he protested that the Bill would interfere with the realization by the money-lenders of their "legal dues" from the cultivators.<sup>3</sup> Daji Abaji Khare defended the money-lenders in the Legislative Council and alleged that the Bill was aimed "at the extinction of the saving classes."<sup>4</sup> Finally, S.M.Paranjpe,<sup>5</sup> editor of the Kal, landowner, and the son of a money-lender,

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1. Statement of English Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the Bombay Presidency During 1905, May Jud. Dept. (Confid.) Prog. No.2, Jud. Dept. Prog., Confid., Vol. 7476. The editors of the Gujarati(Bombay) and the Shri Sayaji Vijaya (Baroda) were Banias and the editor of the Dnyan Prakash and the Karmanuk (Poona) was a money-lender. These newspapers were among the most widely circulated in the Presidency. Statement of Anglo-Vernacular and Vernacular Newspapers and Periodicals, published in Bombay Presidency during 1905, *ibid*.
  2. Mahratta, 7 July 1901, Bombay Newspaper Report, 13 July 1901, para. 30.
  3. N.C.Kelker, "The Recent Land Legislation in Bombay", Kayastha Samachar, Vol.IV, Nos. 3 and 4 (Sept. - Oct. 1901), p.237.
  4. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 23 Aug. 1901, Vol.XXXIX, p. 327.
  5. Statement of the Anglo-Vernacular and Vernacular Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the Bombay Presidency During 1905.

and Bala Sahib Natu, a landowner and a money-lender, were active in the agitation against the Bill.<sup>1</sup> This connection between the money-lenders and the Bill's opponents no doubt influenced the agitation.

The official in charge of the Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council insinuated that the opposition to the Bill arose out of misrepresentations and concern for the money-lender by organizations such as the Sarvajanik Sabha rather than out of economic or practical objections.<sup>2</sup> Five of the elected members of the Legislative Council who regarded this as "a breach of decorum" and an insult to their integrity, walked out of the Legislative Council in protest.<sup>3</sup>

There definitely were other important elements behind the deep resentment against the Bill besides the money-lenders and their friends. In the hundreds of extracts from the Bombay press commenting on the Revenue Code Bill, there are few that may be identified as solely concerned with the money-lenders. It is doubtful that the officials who compiled the selections would have omitted "interested" comments if many had appeared. On the other

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1. See Kesari, 3 Sept. 1901, Bombay Newspapers Report, 7 Sept. 1901, para. 50.
  2. Speech of James Monteath, Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 23 Aug. 1901, Vol. XXXIX, p. 272.
  3. Ibid, pp. 367-68. The five were P.M.Mehta, Sir Balchandra Krishna, G.K.Parekh, D.A.Khare and G.K.Gokhale. Wacha said the exit was pre-arranged. Report of 17th I.N.C., p. 42.

hand, the absence of "interested" comment does not necessarily mean the press campaign was not a money-lenders' agitation. Many editors had probably learned to be circumspect in commenting on class interests in order to avoid giving the Government grounds for its claim to protect the poor from the wealthier classes.

Granting that some critics may have had direct connections with the money-lenders, the bulk of the criticism did not mention money-lenders' grievances. G.K.Gokhale's criticisms, for instance were clearly not motivated by class interest. He argued that the Bill was unlikely to help the large class of ryots who were "practically serfs in the hands of [sahukars]" because the sahkukars would not allow land which was mortgaged to them to be forfeited to the Government. Instead the sahkukars would pay the revenue themselves. But if the Bill did work, and a large portion of the land was forfeited into Government hands, then the Bill would virtually constitute "a scheme for the nationalization of forfeited lands."<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Bombay newspapers thought the Bill would lead to nationalization of the land or state landlordism<sup>2</sup> in the following way. The landed proprietor would be unable

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1. Bombay Leg. Council. Prog., 24 Aug. 1901. Vol. XXXIX, pp. 336-44.
  2. State landlordism was distinguished from the ryotwari system in that, under the latter, the cultivator was secure from enhancement for thirty year periods.

to borrow from the money-lender because he could no longer offer his land as security. In consequence he would not be able to pay the revenue demand and the Government would cause the land to be forfeited. The landed proprietor would become a tenant-at-will of the Government or perhaps even a field labourer. The general view was that to come under the new form of short-term lease would be far more objectionable than whatever hardships were involved in the alienation of land to the money-lenders.<sup>1</sup>

The Bombay Government made a tactical mistake by not making a convincing effort to persuade its opponents that it did not intend to bring large areas of land under direct state control. James Monteath, the member of the Bombay Legislative Council in charge of the Bill, actually gave the impression that state land-lordism was the aim of the Government when he said that unless arrears of revenue were paid up better than in the past, "there will be an opportunity of creating the special [non-transferable] tenure in some districts on a very extensive scale".<sup>2</sup> Lord Hamilton thought that this statement was "very injudicious". He believed that the Bill "should have been described as a merciful effort on the part of the Government to try and prevent" the conversion of the ryots into "the money-lenders' serfs;

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1. There is a general summary of newspaper comment on the Bombay Revenue Code Amendment Bill in the Bombay Newspaper Report, 22 June 1901, para. 43.

2. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 30 May 1901, Vol. XXXIX, p.186.

instead of which Monteath so described the Bill as to allow an interpretation to be put upon it that the Government were taking advantage of the exceptional impecuniosity of the cultivators, caused by a continuance of drought, to curtail their rights of occupancy for the benefit of the Government.<sup>1</sup> Hamilton did not dare reject the Bill, "for such a slap in the face to a Presidential Government would be an encouragement to the money-lending class all throughout India."<sup>2</sup> Instead limitations on its scope were imposed administratively when the Government of India sanctioned it. The operation of the Act was restricted to narrow limits by laying down that the new tenure should not be "forced upon cultivators whose revenue had been remitted or suspended."<sup>3</sup>

Any land measure which the Bombay Government introduced between 1896 and 1902 would probably have been regarded with deep suspicion by many educated people in Bombay Presidency. Several factors had combined with the unpopularity of the plague measures and the detention of the Natus to create distrust of the Government. One was the introduction in 1899 of a Bill to amend the Khoti Settlement Act of 1880. The Bill was not of great importance and it applied only to Ratnagiri District. The controversial section required tenants to pay their rents to the Khots<sup>4</sup> in a fixed cash

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 2 Oct. 1901, MSS. Eur. C.126/3.
  2. Hamilton to Curzon, 22 Aug. 1901, MSS. Eur. C. 126/3.
  3. Summary of the Administration of Lord Curzon in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, p.27.
  4. The Khots were hereditary revenue collectors.

payment instead of in a share of the crop. The Bombay Government hoped that this would remove one of the means by which the Khots, who were mostly Brahmans, oppressed their tenants.<sup>1</sup>

The five Indians on the Bombay Legislative Council who were connected with the Congress voted against the first reading of the Bill.<sup>2</sup> Daji Abaji Khare, who acted as spokesman for landlord and money-lending interests, argued that the Khots had converted Ratnagiri from a sterile to a fertile district, that the Bill would excite "false hopes in the breasts of ignorant ryots", and that "above all it entirely supersedes vested interests."<sup>3</sup> In the Congress itself M.R.Bodas, a Brahman High Court Pleader, had complained of the "retrograde" policy of the Government in introducing the Khoti and "other tenancy Bills."<sup>4</sup> Tilak wrote a series of articles deploring Government usurpation of Khoti rights. "Just as the Government has no right to rob the Sowcar and distribute his wealth among the poor, in the same way Government have no right to deprive the Khot of his rightful income and distribute the money to the peasant."<sup>5</sup> The Khot Amendment Bill was finally passed as Act III of 1904.

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1. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 25 Jan. 1899, Vol. XXXVII, p. 13-4.
  2. D.A.Khare, G.K.Parekh, G.B.Garud, Balchandra Krishna, and N.Chandavarkar.
  3. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 25 Jan. 1899, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 21-28.
  4. Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.65.
  5. Pradhan and Bhagwat, op.cit., p.134.

There was another and more important cause of friction between the Bombay Government and the educated classes in the years 1896 to 1902. It involved both the level of the land revenue assessment and the rigidity with which it was collected in years of drought. The last round of revision settlements of the revenue demand had been carried out during the period of high prices caused by demand for Indian cotton during the American Civil War and by the partial failure of crops in the years 1866-68. From 1870-71, prices began to fall, and the fall was associated in the public mind for years afterwards with the revision settlements.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the settlements made during the late 1860s were too high is a matter for debate. The Bombay Government, in commenting in 1901 on R.C.Dutt's allegation that the Bombay assessment was excessive, argued that the rapidity with which land passed into the hands of the money-lending classes was proof that these shrewd people regarded land as a profitable investment and, therefore, that the revenue demand was light.<sup>2</sup> The Bombay Government even suggested that

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1. E. Keatinge, Rural Economy in the Bombay Deccan, p.25.
  2. This is not an unreasonable argument. Inquiries in the Punjab were said to have proved that money-lenders were most active in the more fertile districts of the Punjab, that as the peasants margin of profit increased, he fell into greater debt, and that only a minor proportion of the cultivator's debt was the result of borrowing to pay the Government's land revenue demand. Agricultural indebtedness in the Punjab was said to be a function of agricultural prosperity rather than of poverty.  
H. Calvert, op.cit., pp.251-62.

the resources of the Bombay cultivators were so great during the famines of 1896-97 and 1899-1900 that "it may reasonably be doubted whether in any country in the world so large a proportion of the population could have been thrown out of occupation and deprived of their ordinary means of livelihood for such lengthened periods with less disastrous results."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Famine Commission of 1901 questioned the Bombay Land Records Department's estimate of the burden of the revenue demand and concluded that of all the Provinces of British India, only in Bombay was the incidence of the assessment "full".<sup>2</sup> Significantly, in 1900 when new revision settlements were due to be made in Bombay, most of the existing settlements were not altered.<sup>3</sup> The practice in Bombay and other provinces up to this time had been to increase the assessment by a considerable amount, and often by as much as a quarter.

Reference has been made above to the stringency employed in collecting the revenue during the 1896-97 famine in consequence of the no-rent campaign. In the two years intervening between that famine and the next, the Government experienced further difficulty in collecting the revenue and resorted to coercive measures on an exceptional scale, as

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1. Memorandum in reply to the letter of R.C.Dutt concerning Land Revenue Settlements in the Bombay Presidency, paras. 26 and 31.  
Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government.
  2. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901. paras. 265-68.
  3. Keatinge, op.cit., p.25.

the following figures show:<sup>1</sup>

Number of notices served for non-payment of revenue demand.

Ave. of 5 years to	1896-97	1897-98	1898-99
Northern Division	32,605	44,713	53,651
Central Division	35,284	1,26,665	109,216
Southern Division	13,933	28,987	32,973

Cases of distraint and sale of moveable property.

Ave. of 5 years to	1896-97	1897-98	1898-99
Northern Division	189	475	375
Central Division	26	194	2,269
Southern Division	226	352	667

Number of forfeitures and sales of occupancy.

Ave. of 5 years to	1896-97	1897-98	1898-99
Northern Division	573	942	565
Central Division	92	287	703
Southern Division	90	136	413

1. Reports of the Revenue Settlements of the Northern, Central, and Southern Divisions and of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture for the Year 1898-99. Bombay Rev. Dept. No. 6680, 25 Oct. 1900, Bombay Rev. Prog., Land, Vol. 5967.

The determination not to pay the revenue increased with the famine of 1899-1900. The Collectors of Surat, Nasik, Kaira, and Ahmedabad Districts reported organized combinations against the payment of the revenue demand. In all four districts, the principal offenders were the money-lenders and the more prosperous agriculturists who were in a position to meet the demand. Members of the Sarvajanic Sabha were not implicated as they had been in the earlier famine. Revenue officials succeeded in breaking the resistance to payment by serving notices on, and causing the forfeiture of, lands belonging to defaulters, and by singling out the leaders of the no-rent campaign for the more extreme forms of compulsion such as attachment of moveable property.<sup>1</sup>

A series of letters signed "Gujarati" appeared in The Times of India during 1900, alleging that in collecting the revenue, subordinate officials had been oppressive. The Bombay Government appointed Evan Maconochie of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Government of India, to make a formal inquiry after Goculdas Parekh made similar accusations in the Legislative Council. Maconochie found substance in some of the complaints but the Government of Bombay refused to accept his conclusions.<sup>2</sup> Instead it referred to reports

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1. Extracts from Reports by Collectors of Kaira, Ahmedabad, Broach, Surat, Khandesh, and Nasik. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 24 Aug. 1900. Appendix H, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 189-92.
  2. Evan Maconochie, Life in the Indian Civil Service, p. 125.

of the Collectors as proof that "there had been organized opposition to the levy of assessment from people well able to pay it" and that the principles governing the suspension of the demand for those unable to pay had "on the whole been properly and equitably applied."<sup>1</sup>

The attention of the Government of India was drawn to the controversy by letters and editorials in The Times of India, by Vaughan Nash's articles in the Manchester Guardian,<sup>2</sup> and by the instances in which the Government of Bombay ignored the warnings of F.S.P. Lely, the Commissioner of the Northern Division,<sup>3</sup> about the necessity for revenue suspensions and about the system of wages and fines for short work on the relief works.<sup>4</sup> After making inquiries, the Government of India suggested that a more liberal policy might be followed. Rigorous discrimination between those able and those unable to pay the revenue, the Government of India advised the Bombay Government, "devolves minute and inquisitorial inquiries as to the circumstances of thousands

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1. Famine Dept. Resolution No.3161, 22 Aug. 1900. This Resolution, along with the reports on the allegations in letters signed "Gujarati" to The Times of India of 4 July, 18 July, and 7 August 1900, are contained in Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 24 Aug. 1900, Appendix F, Vol. XXXVIII.
  2. These articles were published as a book in 1900: The Great Famine and Its Causes.
  3. Lely was remembered in Gujarat for many years after the famine by the jingle "Lely, Lely, raish no beli" or Lely, the protector of the people. L.S.S. O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930, p.184.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 18 and 25 July 1900, Nos. 32 and 33, MSS.Eur. D. 510/5.

of petty farmers ... and it opens the door to the evils of personal favouritism and official corruption."<sup>1</sup> Lord Curzon also wrote privately to the Governor, Lord Northcote, suggesting a more liberal policy of suspensions and remissions, and Curzon visited Gujarat and discussed the matter with district officials.<sup>2</sup> The result of this pressure on the Bombay Government was to bring its policy into line with the recommendations of F.S.P.Lely.

The Famine Commission of 1901 found that the action of the Bombay revenue officials during the scarcity had been "directly in conflict with" the "vital" principles of famine policy, including the rule that "nobody should be forced to borrow in order to pay the assessment."<sup>3</sup> Actually the Bombay Government was more liberal in the matter of revenue suspensions in the 1899-1900 famine than in the 1897 famine. Of the 1899-1900 demand, 31% was suspended.<sup>4</sup> But the need for liberality was much greater in the second famine since many cultivators had exhausted their savings in the first.

The hostile reception given to the Bombay Government's attempt to give the cultivators greater security of

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1. P.P.Cd. 1179 of 1902, East India (Famine) Papers regarding the Famine and Relief Operations in India during 1900-1902, Vol. 1, paper No.68. T.W.Holderness,, Sec., Govt. of India, to Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Famine, No.1058-171-1-F, 23 May 1900.
  2. Maconochie, op.cit., p.127.
  3. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, para. 241.
  4. Ibid, para. 240.

tenure may, then, be partially explained by the general suspicion with which the Government's revenue policy as a whole was regarded. However, apart from the distrust of the Government's wisdom and motives, there was a principle influencing the Bombay politicians and probably educated Indians in other provinces as well. The principle was stated by Ranade in an essay in 1880 called "The Law of Land Sale in British India" and was quoted during the 1901 discussion of the Bombay Revenue Code Amendment Bill by Daji Abaji Khare in the Legislative Council<sup>1</sup> and by the Gujarati.<sup>2</sup> Ranade questioned the wisdom of the Government's efforts to legislate in accordance with the instincts and traditions of Conservative India. Ranade believed that India was

"passing from semi-Feudal and Patriarchal conditions of existence into a more settled and commercial order of things, ... from payments in kind to cash payments, from the laws of custom to the rule of competition, from a simple to a more complicated Social Organization. No Economical Legislation can succeed under such circumstances, which seeks to run against the current, or stem the torrent. In all countries property, whether in land or other goods, must gravitate towards that class which has more intelligence, and greater foresight, and practices abstinence, and must slip from the hands of those who are ignorant, improvident, and hopeless to stand on their own resources. This is a law of Providence."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Bombay Leg. Council Prog., 23 Aug. 1901. Vol. XXXIX, p. 326.
  2. Gujarati, 25 Aug. 1901, Bombay Newspaper Report, 31 Aug. 1901, para. 53.
  3. M. G. Ranade, Essays on Indian Economics, pp. 325-26.

In the matter of industry and trade, and even of agricultural credit, Ranade was in favour of State intervention and protection. But with land ownership, he believed that a laissez faire policy was most likely to bring about agricultural prosperity.<sup>1</sup> In 1883 he criticized the Bengal Tenancy Bill because he thought it would set one class against another, violate the pledges given to the zamindars in the Permanent Settlement, and "cover the land with one dead level of pauper Tenants". It would "simply confiscate the interests of one class to benefit another, and can only be justified on Socialistic or Communistic principles."<sup>2</sup> Anything tending to retard the accumulation of wealth was to be avoided in India because only the free action of economic processes could break down the social conditions inhibiting India's national prosperity. Those social conditions included the "prevalence of Status over Contract; of Combination over Competition;" the absence of a large middle class; laws and institutions which encouraged subdivision and not concentration of wealth; religious ideas which condemned the pursuit of wealth; and "scarce, immobile, and unenterprising" capital.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ranade was in favour of some state intervention to prevent the unfettered transfer of land to the money-lender, as opposed to the capitalist farmer, since the former often failed to improve the land. D.G.Karve, Ranade, the Prophet of Libertaed India, pp. 89-90.
  2. M.G.Ranade, "Prussian Land Legislation and The Bengal Tenancy Bill," Essays on Indian Economics, pp. 276-90.
  3. Lecture to Deccan College, Poona, 1892, ibid, pp. 22-23.

Although other Indians did not give such full reasons for their opposition to tenancy and land-alienation measures, it was evident that these views were widely held. In the North West Provinces and Oudh a Tenancy Bill was passed for the purpose of preventing landlords from manipulating the village records, from arbitrarily ejecting Tenants or enhancing the rents, and from shifting tenants from field to field in order to prevent the accumulation of occupancy rights. The two Congress leaders on the Legislative Council of the North West Provinces and Pandit Bishambar Nath,<sup>1</sup> and two of the Lucknow Congress newspapers, the Hindustani and the Advocate, attacked the Bill as likely to injure the zamindars.<sup>2</sup> A Bill to provide tenants in Madras with occupancy rights was similarly criticised by the members of the Congress in the Madras Legislative Council. P. Ratnasabhapatil Pillai, C. Jambulingam Mudaliar, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, and P. Rangia Naidu expressed resentment at the imputation that zamindars and ryots oppressed their tenants and at the interference with the freedom of landlords' and tenants' rights to make their own contracts.<sup>3</sup> Pillai, Mudaliar, and Vijayaraghavachariar also opposed the Bill to secure to tenants in the Malabar District compensa-

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1. N.W.P. and O. Leg. Council Prog., 15 Oct. 1901, pp. 51-53 and 65-69.
  2. Hindustani, 11 Oct. 1899, T. and D. Selections, 6 Nov. 1899, para. 855, and Advocate, 7 Nov. 1899, T. and D. Selections, 13 Nov. 1899, para. 876, P.S.L.I., Vol. 118.
  3. Madras Leg. Council Prog., 13 June 1898, Vol. XXV, pp. 146-53, 166-68, 186-90, and 192.  
This Bill was not passed during Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty.

tion for improvements. The Bill was intended to remove one of the causes of the periodic Moplah riots against their Hindu landlords and the British,<sup>1</sup> but these three Congress leaders argued that the Moplahs already received sufficient compensation for eviction and that the Bill would reward the Moplahs for their violence.<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion that may be drawn from the discussions of land policy in the period under review is that the educated Indians who made their opinions known in the newspapers and the legislative councils were almost entirely devoid of altruism when their landed interests were affected.<sup>3</sup> They often spoke of the impoverished condition of the poorer classes but their solution was the removal of the drain, the protection and encouragement of Indian industries by the State, the reduction and the stabilization of the land revenue demand, and the adoption of a more flexible policy of collecting the land revenue in years of drought. A redistribution of wealth was not a part of contemporary schemes for India's economic regeneration unless the redistribution took place through free competition. Middle class Indians borrowed the anti-imperialist vocabulary of European Socialists, and Dadabhai Naoroji spoke in England about the

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1. Madras Leg. Council Prog., 24 Jan. and 14 Nov. 1899, Vol. XXV., pp. 21-29 and 344.
  2. There were Moplah risings in 1873, 1885, 1894, and 1896. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis, p.244.
  3. The exception to this was in Bengal. See ~~below~~ <sup>below,</sup> pp.272, 307.

"iniquitous distribution of wealth"<sup>1</sup> and the socialists "to whom the future belongs",<sup>2</sup> but nationalists in India avoided radical political thought.

### The Drain.

The 'drain' gained special prominence during the 1890's because of the increasing amount of the Indian revenues required to pay Home Charges. The persistent complaint punctuating many writings and speeches between 1895 and 1910 was that India was being 'drained', 'throttled', 'bled', 'sucked', and 'exploited' of her wealth, that the British were removing the surplus capital without which no economy could develop.

In the description of the 'drain' which follows, it is important to remember that few officials were impressed by the drain argument. Lord Curzon, for instance, described as 'nonsense' the idea that India 'is bleeding under British rule'.<sup>3</sup> Sir John Strachey thought that

'The payments made by India are the result and the evidence of the benefits which she derives from her connection with England.

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1. Speech at Holburn, 29 July 1905, to meeting under the auspices of the Metropolitan Radical Federation and the National Democratic League, of which Naoroji was a Vice President. Bengalee, 23 Aug. 1905.
  2. Masani, Naoroji, p.398.
  3. Curzon's speech to the Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore, Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton, 5 April 1899, MSS.Eur.510/1.

In place of constant anarchy, bloodshed, and rapine, we have given her peace, order, and justice; and if our Government were to cease, all the miseries from which she has been saved would inevitably and instantly return. Her payments in England are nothing more than the return for the foreign capital in its broadest sense which is invested in India, including as capital not only money, but all advantages which have to be paid for, such as the intelligence, strength, and energy on which good administration and commercial prosperity depend.<sup>1</sup>

But if officials were not usually sympathetic to the 'drain' argument, the nationalists were not convinced by the Strachey thesis either. In 1904 R.C.Dutt was urging 'Retrenchment and Representation'<sup>2</sup> while Lord Curzon was increasing Government expenditure and saying that political reform had progressed as far as was possible.<sup>3</sup> With this wide measure of disagreement between the official and the nationalist outlook, the ultimate solution could only be a political one.

The key to the drain was to be found in the financial arrangements between the United Kingdom and India. These arrangements were submitted to a variety of analyses between 1895 and 1905. In 1895 the Welby Commission was appointed to inquire into the military and civil expenditure in England on behalf of India and 'the apportionment of charge between the Governments of the United Kingdom and India for purposes

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1. India: Its Administration and Progress (1903), p.195.
  2. Romesh Dutt, India in the Victorian Age: An Economic History of the People. (1904), p.612.
  3. Curzon's speech on the 1904-05 Budget Statement, 30 March 1904, India Leg. Council Prog., Vol. XLIV, p.560.

in which both are interested'. The appointment of this Royal Commission followed a demand by the Indian Parliamentary Committee, for an inquiry into the economic condition of India.<sup>1</sup> Wedderburn, Naoroji, and W.S.Caine were members of the Welby Commission, and H. Morgan-Browne (Secretary to the British Committee of the Indian National Congress), G.K.Gokhale, G.Subramania Iyer, D.E.Wacha, Surendra Nath. Banerjea, and Naoroji appeared before it as witnesses. The final Report, which was presented in 1900, was not signed by Wedderburn, Caine, and Naoroji who appended their own Report, declaring their disappointment that the Welby Commission did not consider 'whether the Government of India, with all its machinery as then existing in India, had, or had not, promoted the general prosperity of the people in its charge, and whether India was better or worse off by being a province of the British Crown'.<sup>2</sup>

The drain and its consequences were discussed in numerous speeches and in several books during the period under review. Among the principal books were R.C.Dutt's England and India: A Record of Progress during a Hundred Years (1897), The Economic History of British India (1902), and India in the Victorian Age: An Economic History of the People (1904); William Digby's 'Prosperous' British India (1901); and Dadabhai Naoroji's Poverty and Un-British Rule

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1. India, Dec. 1896.

2. P.P.Cd. 131 of 1900, Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.IV. Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration of the Expenditure of India. Report by Sir. W. Wedderburn, W.S.Caine, and D. Naoroji, para.3.

in India (1901). The drain was also referred to, although in less detail, in Prithwis Chandra Ray's The Poverty Problem in India (1895), M.G.Ranade's Essays on Indian Economics (1899), and G.Subramania Iyer's Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India (1903).

It is necessary to understand what an Indian nationalist meant when he used the word 'drain'. The most common meaning attached to the word was the wealth that left India for which there was no equivalent return in merchandise or treasure. By this definition, the drain equalled the surplus of exports over imports or the visible balance of trade.<sup>1</sup> In the ten years, 1899-1900 to 1908-09,<sup>2</sup> the value of India's exports annually exceeded its imports by an average of £15,051,000. This should not be regarded as the amount by which India was impoverished each year. In the years 1903 to 1908, the following countries also had large annual export surpluses: Brazil (£14,099,000), Australian Commonwealth (£19,898,340), Russian Empire (£33,175,000) and the United States (£98,698,000).<sup>3</sup> An export surplus is frequently a feature of the trade of a country in the early stages of

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1. The drain was defined as the surplus of exports by R.C. Dutt (India in the Victorian Age, p.528), Naoroji (Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, p.34) and Digby ('Prosperous' British India, p.216). This is also the definition accepted by C.J.Hamilton, The Trade Relations Between England and India 1600-1896, p.136, and by Holden Furber, John Company at Work, p.304.
  2. This period is used rather than a period covering the 1890's because the 1890's are unrepresentative and would be less illuminating due to the exchange crisis and the fall in exports during the famine years.
  3. Quoted from the Financial and Commercial Supplement of the London Times, 30 Sept. 1910, by Theodore Morison The Economic Transition in India, p.206.

industrial development.

Sometimes the 'drain' was used to include, besides the visible balance of trade, estimates of the interest paid to England on private capital investment and the remittances of European non-officials. Naoroji apparently was doing this in 1901 when he stated that the annual drain was £30,000,000<sup>1</sup> although the average export surplus in the preceding four years had been only about £13,000,000 per annum.<sup>2</sup> Naoroji and the other persons who followed him in estimating the drain at £30,000,000 seem not to have understood the mechanics of private remittances. In the first place, private remittances to Europe in this period, were not much in excess of fresh European investment in India. so that, in balance, the amount of private money leaving India was not large.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, most of the private remittances were made through Exchange banks. The European in India wishing to make a remittance would pay Rupees into the Indian branch of an Exchange bank and receive a bill payable in Sterling in London. The London branch would honour the bill from money received from the sale of Indian goods in the United Kingdom or from bullion imported from India.<sup>4</sup> In either case, the

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1. Naoroji, op.cit. p. viii.

2. Dutt, India in the Victorian Age, p.528.

3. Sir George Cambell estimated in 1887 (The British Empire, p.70) that the private remittances were about balanced by the flow of fresh capital into India from Europe. Quoted by Digby, op.cit. p.231.

4. The function of the exchange banks described by Vera Anstey, The Economic Development of India (4th ed., 1952), pp. 116-17.

actual transfer of capital would be shown in the trade figures. Thus, to count the money remitted privately in this manner as part of the drain would be to count it twice.

Sometimes the word 'drain' was used figuratively and included expenditure in India on such items as the Army or European Agency.<sup>1</sup> But the usual meaning was surplus of exports for which India received no commercial equivalent.

Theodore Morison devoted two chapters of his book, The Economic Transition in India (1911), to the drain. He made a distinction between the "actual" and the "potential" drain. The actual drain was the excess of exports, or £15,051,000 per annum from 1899-1900 to 1908-09. The potential drain which Morison computed consisted of, besides the excess of imports, the increase of the Government of India's capital liabilities in England (£4,193,000 per annum), the "interest on private capital, earnings of English merchants and professional men, and freights earned by English ships in Indian waters". The potential drain represented the amount by which India's exports would have had to exceed her imports in order to avoid borrowing capital abroad to meet her foreign obligations. Morison estimated the potential drain to be £21,000,000 per annum for the years 1899-1900 to 1908-09. In arriving at this figure he guessed that the amount of foreign capital invested privately in India

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1. A.J. Wilson seemed to be doing this when he set the drain at £35,000,000 annually. (An Empire in Pawn, p.64).

was at most £2,000,000 or one-half as large as the amount borrowed by the Indian Government in England.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Anstey regards Morison's discussion as one of the most intelligent analysis of the drain. Neither Anstey nor Morison regard the drain as impoverishing. On the contrary, they both believe the money spent on European agency, railway development, and defence as well spent, on the whole.<sup>2</sup>

As already indicated, a surplus of exports was not necessarily incompatible with increasing prosperity. A country with such a surplus would accumulate credit abroad. Actually, it was the Home Charges, on which India's foreign credit was spent, that Indian nationalists objected to. In order to pay the Home Charges, the Government of India, in the years 1899-1900 to 1908-09, not only paid to England the £15,051,000 representing the annual balance of trade, but it also had to borrow in England enough to pay the remainder of the £17,598,000 representing the average annual Home Charges.<sup>3</sup> In these years, the Home Charges usually amounted to more than one-fourth of the total expenditure of the Government of India.<sup>4</sup>

The surplus of exports was transformed into credit for India through the sale of what were known as Council Bills. When an importer in Europe wanted Rupees to pay for

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1. Morison, op.cit., pp. 197-203.

2. Anstey, op.cit., Appendix G. pp. 599-600.  
Morison, op.cit., pp. 240-41.

3. Morison, op.cit., pp. 196-8.

4. General Statement of the Gross Expenditure charged against Revenue in India and England, Statistical Abstract relating to British India from 1899-1900 to 1908-09, pp. 50-51.

his imports from India, he paid Sterling to the Secretary of State in London in return for Council Bills. These Bills were then presented at the Government treasury in India where the holder received rupees out of the Indian revenues in exchange for the Bills. In this way the Secretary of State obtained most of the money required to pay the Home Charges.<sup>1</sup>

Exchange difficulties between 1873 and 1898 added a considerable burden to the amount paid from the Indian revenues for the Home Charges. Until 1893 India was on a silver standard and England was on a gold standard so that India had to meet her obligations in England in gold. As long as the gold value of silver remained constant this arrangement was satisfactory to India. But after 1873 the value of silver began to depreciate. The result was that India was forced to remit more silver (i.e., spend more rupees) in order to meet the same obligations in England. In 1873-74, the exchange value of the rupee had been about 2s.; by 1892-93, the exchange value had fallen to 1s 2d.<sup>2</sup> This meant that in 1892-93 the Government of India had to raise Rs.264,780,000 to meet the Home Charges of £16,532,000. Had the exchange rate of 1873-74 still prevailed, the Government would have had to spend Rs.177,520,000, or Rs.87,260,000 less for the 1892-93 Home Charges.<sup>3</sup> In 1893 a committee

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1. The Secretary of State sold Council Bills to be drawn on the Indian Treasury at the annual rate of £17,500,000 from 1899-1900 to 1909-10. Sir John Strachey, India: Its Administration and Progress (1911), pp.210-11.
  2. Cambridge History of India, Vol.VI, p.321.
  3. Strachey, op.cit., p.197.

was appointed under the presidency of Lord Herschell to consider the problem, and in accordance with the committee's recommendations the Government of India closed the mints to the free coining of silver in 1893.

As the Government ceased to add to the number of rupees in circulation, the demand for rupees began to grow, the price of rupees rose, and by 1898 the exchange value of the rupee had reached the desired 1s.4d. After 1898 the exchange rate was maintained for fifteen years at 1s.4d. with only minor fluctuations.<sup>1</sup>

The stabilization of the rupee at 1s.4d. saved the Indian taxpayer large sums of money on the remittances to England. But the currency legislation affected the cotton goods trade unfavourably and this obscured for some of the Congress supporters the benefit conferred upon the balance of payments by the currency reforms. When the gold value of silver had been low, Indian exporters and manufacturers had been at an advantage in selling to gold standard countries. For the same reason the Government of India and importers had lost through exchange. After the gold value of the rupee increased, the Indian cotton industry no longer possessed its former advantage. It was actually at a disadvantage in its principal market, China, which continued on the silver standard, and sought its cotton goods increasingly from its

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1. P.P.Cd. 7236 of 1914, Final Report of the Royal Commission on India Finance and Currency, 1914 (Chamberlain Commission), paras.15-20.

own mills or from Japan, rather than from gold standard countries like India. The decline of the Chinese demand for Indian cottons was one of the reasons for the five year slump after 1900 in the Bombay mills,<sup>1</sup> and the nationalists blamed the Government currency legislation for the difficulties in the one major industry in which Indian investment predominated over foreign.<sup>2</sup>

It would be misleading to suggest that the Home Charges exactly or even approximately represented the amount by which India was impoverished or exploited. An analysis of the components of the Home Charges shows that some of the charges were similar to those paid voluntarily by independent countries.

The Home Charges consisted in 1901-02 of the following items. The year 1901-02 is taken as the year between 1899-1900 and 1908-09 in which the Home Charges most closely approximate to the annual average for that decade.

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1. D.H.Buchanan, The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India pp. 155, 200.
  2. See Speech by Vithaldas Damodar Thakarsey, Report of the 18th I.N.C., p. 99.

Railways, interest and annuities .....	£6,416,373
Interest on debt (excluding that on the railway debt) .....	3,003,782
Management of debt .....	48,628
Army Services .....	4,383,059
Stores .....	1,918,206
Civil Charges, Furloughs, Pensions, Allowances, and Miscellaneous .....	1,370,903
Charges on account of Departments in India .....	227,704
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Total	£17,368,655 <sup>1</sup>

The Home Charges may be divided between two categories: the "economic" payments and the "political" payments.<sup>2</sup> The economic payments consisted of the interest on the railway and the permanent debt, the management of the debt, and the stores, or in other words, foreign expenditure of a type which any independent country might make in the early stages of industrial development and railway building.<sup>3</sup> The political charges would be the military, administrative, and civil charges, pensions, and allowances which India could not presumably have paid as an independent country. If such a hypothetical division is made for the year 1901-02, the economic

1. These figures are compiled from the Statistical Abstract ... 1899-1900 to 1908-09, pp. 70-71, and the Moral and Material Progress Report for 1901-02, pp. 134-35.

2. Theodore Morison suggested these categories. *op.cit.* pp. 236-37.

3. It is not intended to suggest that an independent India would have spent as much as British India did on these items.

charge was £10,386,989 and the political charge was £6,981,666.

The individual items of the Home Charge may be examined. The largest item was the railway charge and it was increasing rapidly in the period under review. In 1899-1900 it was £5,913,780; by 1908-09 railway payments in England amounted to £8,249,846. However, the nature of the payments was changing. In the former year £2,172,336 of the railway expenditure had been interest paid on guaranteed lines, while in the latter year none of the expenditure was on guaranteed lines.<sup>1</sup> The early railway lines had been built by European Companies whose profits were guaranteed by the East India Company at the rate of 5 per cent. Private European capital probably could not have been attracted at the mid-century without a guarantee, and five per cent was a low rate of interest for railways before 1870.<sup>2</sup> But the arrangement was unsatisfactory from several points of view. The Government took the risk without the opportunity of receiving the profits while the Companies reaped the profits with little incentive to economy. Daniel Thorner has labelled the guarantee system as "Private Enterprise at Public Risk".<sup>3</sup> During the latter half of the century the Secretary of State for India found that India could borrow in London at lower

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1. Statistical Abstract ... 1899-1900 to 1908-09, p.70.
  2. W.J.MacPherson, "Investment in Indian Railways, 1845-1875", Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., Vol.VIII, No.2 (1955), p.181.
  3. Investment in Empire: British Railway and Steam Shipping Enterprise in India: 1825-1849, (1950).

rates of interest for State Railways and that private companies would enter contracts on terms more advantageous to India. In guaranteeing the early railways, the right had been reserved to purchase the lines after the lapse of certain periods of time, and the Secretary of State exercised this power so that by the end of 1907, the last of the guaranteed railways had been bought up.<sup>1</sup> With the decline of payments on the guaranteed railways and the increase in the volume of traffic, the public works of India began to show a profit to the public revenues for the first time after 1900. In 1900-01, there was a slight profit; in 1901-02 it was £750,000; and 1904-05, they earned India £2,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

India borrowed in England at a lower rate of interest than other foreign countries did. In the early years of this century, Japan, for instance, paid  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 per cent on its foreign loans while India paid about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.<sup>3</sup> The yield to British investors on Indian railways in 1907 was 3.87 per cent; on colonial railways 4.0 per cent; on American railways, 4.5 per cent, and on other foreign railways, 4.7 per cent.<sup>4</sup> Thus, at the beginning of the century, Indian nationalists had less reason to complain about the current rate of interest paid to foreign capitalists. Furthermore, they could no longer say that railroads were unprofitable to

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1. Statistical Abstract ...1899-1900 to 1908-09, Note, p.49.

2. Cambridge History of India, Vol.VI, pp.325-26.

3. Morison, op.cit., p.239.

4. Albert H. Imlah, "British Balance of Payments and Export of Capital, 1816-1913", Economic History Review, 2nd Ser. Vol.5, No.2 (1952).

the state.

Rather, it was the priority given to railway construction, and the public debt incurred by the earlier and more extravagant expenditure which were open to criticism. Complaint was made that the total outlay before 1902 on railways had been £226,000,000 compared to £24,000,000 spent on irrigation works,<sup>1</sup> that some railways were built for military purposes and could not be expected to yield a commercial return,<sup>2</sup> and that other railways were built at the request of English manufacturers who wanted to open Indian markets to cheap, British manufactured goods, thereby hastening the de-industrialization of India and converting her into a producer of raw materials only.<sup>3</sup>

While the railway or 'productive' debt was increasing, the ordinary or 'unproductive' debt was decreasing. The ordinary debt had included the £12,000,000 owed to the stockholders of the old East India Company, the cost of suppressing the mutiny, and expenses arising out of other wars. The ordinary debt stood at £96,000,000 in 1862; by 1897 it had

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1. Dutt, India in the Victorian Age, p.550.

2. Speech of D.E.Wacha, Report of the 17th Indian National Congress, p.46. The North-Western Railway, a large part of which was classified as military, accounted for a net charge to the Government of Rs.25.33 crores up to the end of 1900. The net charge of all the other State railways to the end of 1900 was Rs. 6.08 crores. Statement of Financial Statistics of State Railways ..... for and to the end of, the Year 1900. Supplement to Gazette of India, 6 July 1901.

3. For a fuller nationalist view, see D.E.Wacha, Indian Railway Finance (1912), W.J.MacPherson gives instances in which British commercial groups influenced railway policy in directions not necessarily beneficial to India. "Investment in Indian Railways, 1845-1875", op.cit.

been reduced to £72,721,161, or by more than 24 per cent. In the same period the rate of interest paid on the debt declined from 4.543 per cent to 3.393 per cent. In consequence the annual charge of interest on the permanent debt was reduced between 1862 and 1897 by about 50% not including exchange, or by 16 per cent including exchange.<sup>1</sup> By 1909 the ordinary, or unproductive debt had been reduced still further, to £37,700,000.<sup>2</sup>

Looking now at the Total Permanent Debt of India, including the productive and unproductive debt, and the debt held in India as well as in England, it will be seen that it was growing rapidly in the period under review, and that it was increasing more rapidly in England than in India. In 1899-1900 the Total Permanent Debt in India was Rs.1,124.75 millions; in 1908-09 it was Rs.1,345.66 millions. In England during the same period, the debt rose from £119.64 millions to £160.97 millions.<sup>3</sup> Even these figures do not give an adequate idea of the degree to which the Indian Government depended on foreign capital. The Welby Commission reported that 'out of Rx.103,000,000 borrowed in India, Rx. 25,000,000 was actually held at home [United Kingdom], that Rx. 48,000,000 was held by Europeans in India, and that only Rx. 30,000,000 was held by Natives of India'.<sup>4</sup> Why was more

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1. Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration of the Expenditure of India, paras. 121-29.
  2. Strachey, India: Its Administration and Progress (1911), p.251.
  3. Statistical Abstract . . . 1899-1900 to 1908-09, p.267.
  4. Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.IV, Final Report, para. 350.

of the Government's capital not borrowed from Indians themselves? The most important reason was that English interest rates were lower than Indian ones. The Government of India could borrow in England at the rate of between 3 and 4 per cent. In Bombay, according to Wacha, capital could be borrowed for as little as 4 to 5 per cent but in most places Indians wanted 6, 7, 8, or 9 per cent.<sup>1</sup> A study is needed of the Government's efforts, or lack of them, made to raise Indian capital. Again, a word of caution is needed about the significance of the Indian debt and the interest paid on it. India's public debt was small compared to that of the United Kingdom, and the interest India paid to the United Kingdom on private and public loans was only a fraction of the £60,000,000 or so which the United States was annually remitting to Europe about 1910 as interest.<sup>2</sup> It is a truism, but nevertheless worth repeating, that the significance of India's foreign obligations was not to be found in their absolute size. The question is whether India should have put surplus capital back into her economy at once, or invested it in railways in the hope of future economic expansion.

M.G.Ranade was among the minority of nationalists who felt that 'far from complaining, we have reason to be thankful that we have a Creditor who supplies our needs at

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1. Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.III, Minutes of Evidence, Question 17,566.

2. Morison, op.cit., p.215.

such a low rate of interest'.<sup>1</sup> A more common view was that foreign investment was more or less the same as foreign exploitation. The Power and the Guardian of Calcutta made this point when it said that from the point of view of an Indian, an influx of British capital

'will be one of those irreparable evils which make their sinister influence felt upon distant generations. It is doubtful if the indigenous population will ever have strength enough to shake off the financial bondage which the larger and freer influx of foreign capital will necessarily impose upon the country. What the zealous capitalist calls increased material prosperity is from another point of view nothing but greater exploitation'.<sup>2</sup>

The next item of the Home Charges - the £4,383,059 in 1901-02 for army services - was the section of the Charges open to easy attack. In 1900 India employed about one-third of the whole British Army. The Indian revenues were charged with the cost of training these men in England (16,000 men a year in 1890), with a major share of the pensions, with their transport to and from India, and with all expenses incurred by the Troops between the day they left England and the day they returned, or for an average of six years per man. Between 1875-76 and 1896-97, the net army expenditure in

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1. In Augural Address to the 1st Industrial Conference, Poona, 1890. Essays on Indian Economics: A Collection of Essays and Speeches, p.186. Ranade also said that although there was 'good cause for complaint' about the Home Charges for pensions, administration, and defence, 'we should not forget the fact that we are enabled by reason of this British connection to levy an equivalent tribute from China by our Opium Monopoly'.
  2. Power and the Guardian, 15 July 1899. T. and D. Selections, 24 July 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol. 115.

England rose from £3,476,000 to £4,133,000. Because of the <sup>231</sup> fall in the exchange value of the Rupee this meant that the cost to India increased from Rs.38,580,000 to Rs.68,650,000. In the same period, the total army expenditure in England and India, including exchange, increased from Rs.162,590,000 to Rs.259,730,000.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the increase had nothing to do with the direct defence of India, and it was not only the nationalists who complained of this. In one of the numerous formal representations made by the Government of India about military costs,<sup>2</sup> Lord Lansdowne's Government expressed its opinion to the Secretary of State that

'the revenues of India have been charged with the cost of many changes in organization not specially necessary for the efficiency of the army in this country, and with the cost of troops employed on Imperial service beyond the limits of India. Millions of money have been spent on increasing the army in India, on armaments, and on fortifications, to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies, or to prevent the incursions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.IV, Final Report, paras. 218-227.
  2. See P.P.C. 8131 of 1896, Suakin Expedition: Correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State in Council regarding the incidence of the cost of Indian Troops when employed out of India.
  3. Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.II, First Report, No.1 of Appendix 45, Government of India to Secretary of State, No.70, 25 March 1890, para. 21. Government protests against the financial arrangements with the United Kingdom were a favourite source of ammunition for nationalist speakers. This particular despatch of Lansdowne's was quoted by Srinivas Rao at the 1902 Congress. Report of the 18th I.N.C., p.103.

On 18 July 1900, about one-tenth (23,022) of the Indian army were serving outside of India, including 9,186 men in South Africa and 10,616 in China, although in these particular instances the Home Government paid the costs.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which expenses for military expeditions beyond India's borders were divided before 1895 may be seen in the following statement:

Expedition	Date	Ordinary charges.		Extraordinary charges	
		Paid by India	Paid by England	Paid by India	Paid by England
1st Afghanistan	1838-42	All	None	All	None
1st China	1839-40	All	None	None	All
2nd China	1856-57	None	All	None	All
Persia	1856	All	None	Half	Half
3rd China	1859	None except expenses of Indian Navy vessels	All	None	All
Abyssinia	1867-68	All	None	None	All
Perak	1875	All	None	None	All (by Colonial Government)
Malta	1878	None	All	None	All
2nd Afghanistan	1878-80	All	None	All but £5,000,000	£5,000,000
Egypt	1882	All	None	All but £5,000	£5,000
Soudan	1885-86	All	None	None	All

1. Curzon to Hamilton, 18 July and 15 Aug. 1900, MSS.Eur. D.510/5.
2. Indian Expenditure Commission, Vol.II, First Report. Appendix No.45, para. 123 of sub-appendix to No.13 Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 20 Aug. 1895, Mil.Dept. No.154 of 1895.

In 1900, upon the recommendation of the Welby Commission, India was relieved of a total of £257,000 on account of the Home Charges. This sum included one-half the cost of transporting Troops to and from India (£130,000) and one-half the military charge for Aden (£72,000). The Congress and the Government of India were disappointed with the size of the relief granted. The Government of India protested to the Secretary of State that the £257,000 'falls far short of according to India the just and liberal treatment which was claimed for her'.<sup>1</sup>

The slight relief given on account of the Home Charges was more than offset by the decision to increase the pay of the British Army. The increase, which ultimately meant an additional charge of £786,000 per annum, on the Indian revenues, was unsuccessfully resisted by Lord Curzon's Government.<sup>2</sup> A still further although temporary increase in the military expenditure occurred in 1904-05 and 1905-06 with the reorganization of the Indian Army. The reorganization involved an additional expenditure for India of £869,932 in India, and £1,401,933 in England. Altogether the net Indian military expenditure in England and India grew

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1. P.P. No. 169 of 1902, Indian Expenditure (Royal Commission). Copy of Further Correspondence . . . ., No.3. Government of India to Secretary of State, 6 June 1901.
  2. P.P.No.237 of 1903, East India (Liability for Increase in British Soldiers' Pay). Return of the Correspondence....

from £15,376,473 in 1899-1900 to £19,602,988 in 1908-09.<sup>1</sup>

The history of India's economic relations with Great Britain generated at least as much nationalist indignation as the contemporary financial arrangements between the two countries. R.C.Dutt gave organized expression to the prevailing belief about the early period in The Economic History of British India. He rejected the notion that India's 'intense poverty' and 'repeated famines' could be explained by factors such as increasing population, drought, peasant improvidence, and alienation of land to the money-lender. The narrowing of India's sources of wealth was due to other reasons.

India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and Europe. It is, unfortunately, true that the East Indian Company and the British Parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufacturers of England. Their fixed policy, pursued down the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth, was to make

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1. Statistical Abstract ... 1899-1900 to 1908-09, pp.68-9. In 1904, in the Governor-General's Legislative Council, the Military Member, Sir Edmond Elles, made a rather feeble attempt to prove that military expenditure was decreasing in proportion to revenue receipts, and not as Gokhale had alleged, increasing. To support this tendentious point, Elles selected as the starting point for his comparison the years 1896-97 to 1899-1900 when revenue was low due to famine and plague, and when military spending was high as a result of the Frontier Wars. India Leg. Council Prog., 30 March 1904, Vol.LXIII, p. 525.

India subservient to the industries of Great Britain, and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was pursued with unwavering resolution and with fatal success; orders were set out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; Commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers; prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of a nominal duty'.<sup>1</sup>

Four Western writers were often invoked in support of nationalist views. H.H.Wilson's continuation of Mill's History of British India was used to prove that Indian textiles were kept out of British markets by prohibitive duties while India was prevented from protecting her own industry. "The foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have competed on equal terms". Had Indian goods not been kept out of England, "the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam."<sup>2</sup> Robert Montgomery Martin<sup>3</sup> and Sir

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1. Dutt, The Economic History of British India, pp.vii-viii.
  2. H.H.Wilson, Mill's History of British India, Vol.VII. The History of British India. From 1805 to 1835, (1845) Footnote, pp. 538-39, quoted by R.C.Dutt, Economic History of British India, pp. 262-63 and by P.M.Mehta, Industrial Exhibition of 1902, Report of the 18th I.N.C., p. 160.
  3. The Political, Commercial, and Financial Condition of the Anglo-Eastern Empire, in 1832 (1832) and The Indian Empire: History, Topography, Geology,... 3 Vols. (1859). Cited by Naoroji, Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, p.viii; Digby, 'Prosperous' British India, pp.xxi, 81; and R.C.Dutt, The Economic History of British India, pp. 289-90, 409-10.

George Wingate<sup>1</sup> were quoted about the exaction of "tribute" from India. Finally, Brooks Adams' view that plunder from India was instrumental in financing Europe's industrial revolution was accepted.<sup>2</sup>

The portion of the Home Charges expended on pensions, furlough allowances, exchange compensation allowances, and on the employment of foreign agency in general was objected to because it represented to nationalists both a denial of the promises of equality contained in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and an extravagant means of running the Government. The cost of foreign agency was higher than is sometimes realized. Probably in no other country in the world were civil servants paid so liberally. In Algeria, for instance, the highest judicial officer, the First President of the Court of Appeal, received a furnished house and £720 each year while the Chief Justice of Bengal earned £4,911, including exchange compensation allowance.<sup>3</sup> Other comparisons between French salaries in Algeria and British salaries in India reinforce this point.<sup>4</sup> In 1892 a Parliamentary Return was prepared showing the amount of money received from the revenues of India in 1889-90 by persons earning

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1. A Few Words on Our Financial Relations with India (1859) Cited by Naoroji; op.cit., pp.viii-ix; Dutt, op.cit., pp.419-20; and Dutt, India in the Victorian Age, pp. xvi, 214, 219.
  2. The Law of Civilization and Decay:An Essay on History (1895)pp.259-60. Cited by Digby, op.cit., pp.31-33; also in Surendranath Banerjee's Presidential Address, Report on the 18th I.N.C., p.43.
  3. India List and India Office List for 1902, p.174.
  4. Strachey, India: Its Administration and Progress (1903), p.84, Note.1.

Rs.1000 or more. In the following totals, sums paid in England have been converted from sterling into rupees at the rate of 1s.4d.<sup>1</sup>

Paid by the Government, 1889-90

Annual Salaries Paid to Europeans in India	Rs.8,77,14,431
Absentee Allowances " " " "	46,36,314
Pensions " " " "	23,28,882
Amounts Paid to Europeans in England	5,56,60,170
	<u>Rs. 15,03,39,797</u>

Paid by the Railway Companies, 1889-90

Amounts paid to Europeans in India	1,16,06,891
Amounts paid to Europeans in England	8,17,830
	<u>Rs. 1,24,24,721</u>

Total Paid to Europeans from the

Revenues of India, 1889-90. Rs.16, 27,64,518<sup>3</sup>

Total Government Expenditure in

England and India, 1889-90. Rs.82, 47,31,700

1. The actual rate of exchange for 1889-90 was 1s.4.566d. R.C.Dutt (Economic History of British India, p.444) converted the figures from the Parliamentary Return into sterling at the rate of 2s., thus exaggerating the amount received by Europeans.
2. Eurasian pensions are included in this figure.
3. P.P. No.192 of 1892. East India (Salaries) Return of the Number of all Persons who received from the Revenues of India, during the Year 1889-90, Annual Allowances .... of which the Amount was not less than 1,000 Rupees for each Person.

Dadabhai Naoroji called the exclusion of Indians from positions of responsibility India's 'moral drain'. By employing Europeans where Indians could perform the job, he said, the British Government was stunting the capabilities and intelligence of the Indians.<sup>1</sup> In 1900 Naoroji wrote to Lord Hamilton, the Secretary of State, hinting that if the pledges of equality were not honoured, India might 'under the persistence of the present evil bleeding fall from the British frying pan into the Russian fire or free itself from a destructive rule'.<sup>2</sup>

In the Indian Legislative Council in 1904, Lord Curzon vehemently denied that Indians had received an inadequate share of the civil employment. He stated that in 1867 there were 13,431 Government posts in India with a salary above Rs.75, and of these, Europeans and Eurasians held 55 per cent. In 1903 the total number of posts was 28,278, of which only 42 per cent were held by Europeans and Eurasians, Curzon demonstrated the improvement of the Indian position in another way. He said that the aggregate pay of the European and Eurasian Government servants had increased by 6 per cent since 1867 while the pay of the 'Natives' had grown by 191 per cent.

Curzon thought that these and other figures he produced proved 'how honestly and

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1. Naoroji, op.cit., pp.56-58.

2. Naoroji to Hamilton, 12 Oct. 1900. Quoted in the Bengalee, 4 June 1901.

faithfully the British Government has fulfilled its pledges, and how hollow is the charge which we so often hear of a ban of exclusion against the children of the soil.... Will anyone tell me in the face of these figures that our administration is unduly favourable to the European or grudging to the native element? I hold, on the contrary, that it is characterised by a liberality unexampled in the world'.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon rested his case largely on the unquestioned increase in the proportion of Indians in subordinate positions in the Civil Service. But it was the superior positions which Indians coveted, and Lord Curzon had definite views on the racial superiority of Europeans which disqualified all but a few Indians from holding these positions. Those few Indians who could proceed to England and pass the civil service examinations might be employed. But

'the highest ranks of civil employment in India ... must nevertheless, as a rule be they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind, and the vigour of character, which are essential for the task and that, the rule of India being a British rule, and any other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it'.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon believed that 'the greatest peril with which our administration is confronted' was 'the system under which every year an increasing number of the 900 and odd higher

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1. India Leg. Council Prog., 30 March 1904, Vol. XLIII, p.562.  
2. Ibid, p.560.

posts that were meant and ought to have been exclusively and specifically reserved for Europeans, are being filched away by the superior wits of the Native in the English examinations'. Curzon realised regretfully that the time had passed when a racial qualification could be placed on the entrance to the civil service.<sup>1</sup> But the Government of India found a number of reasons for keeping Indians out of the higher posts in the Forest, Customs, Salt, Opium, Postal, Telegraph, Survey, Jail, and Police Departments.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the necessity of sitting for the I.C.S. examination in India, there were other barriers to Indians. For instance, the Post Office Department preferred to send Europeans to arrange postal services during military operations in China, Africa, and the North West Frontier. Again, in some areas of Assam and Bihar, travel could be done only with the assistance of the planters, and this ruled out Indians for assignments in these areas.<sup>3</sup> In the Preventative Branch of the Customs Department, Europeans were preferred because of their ability to withstand 'great exposure in all weathers' and the need to enforce

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 23 April 1900, MSS. Eur.D.510/5.
  2. See Hon.Sec., Indian Association, to Sec. Govt. of India, Home Dept., 18 Dec. 1899. Enclosure to C.W.Bolton, Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Govt. of India, Home Dept., 9 March 1899. Dec. Prog. No.236,  
Also, J.P.Hewett, Sec., Govt. of India, to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 20 Dec. 1900. Dec. Prog. No.237, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5874.
  3. A.U.Fanshawe, Dir.-Gen. of Post Office of India, to Sec., Govt. of India, Finance and Commerce Dept., 25 April 1898. Oct. Prog. No.290, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.5640.

customs and port rules on European officers and sailors. Indians were not permitted to sit for Police Department Examinations in London. Most central and district jails were run by medical officers,<sup>1</sup> and the Indian medical Service was open only to those persons 'registered in the United Kingdom under the Medical Acts'.<sup>2</sup> Other Departments needed Europeans because Indian performances had not 'been found to be altogether satisfactory', because of the high standard of scientific accuracy' required, 'the rough and solitary life', the poor quality of Indian applicants, the need for 'energy and physical capacity'.<sup>3</sup>

G.Subramania Iyer contributed an article to the Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar in which he contradicted Lord Curzon's statement that Europeans were not unduly favoured in the civil service.<sup>4</sup> Using the same figures as Curzon, Iyer proved that the number of posts carrying salaries of Rs.1,000 or above which were held by Europeans and Eurasians had increased more between 1867 and 1903 than the number held by Indians. The increase in the Public Works Department for Europeans and Eurasians had been 133, for Indians, 11; the increase in the Land Revenue Department

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1. J.P.Hewett to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 20 Dec. 1900, op.cit.
  2. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State. 13 Oct. 1898, Oct. Prog. No.168, I.H.P.,Pub., Vol.5414.
  3. J.P.Hewett to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 20 Dec. 1900. op.cit.
  4. G.Subramania Iyer 'Employment of Indians in the Public Service ----Fiction and Fact'. Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.X, No.4 (Oct.1904), p.327.

for Europeans and Eurasians had been 95, for Indians, 19; in the Medical Department (Civil) the increase, had been 95 and 6, respectively; in the State Railways, 95 and 0, respectively. In only one Department - the Judicial - had the number of Indians holding positions with salaries over Rs.1,000 gained more than the number of Europeans and Eurasians. Taking the total net increases of all such positions between 1867 and 1903, the Europeans and Eurasians increased their share by 591, Indians by 84.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, it may be said that an important part of the background to the disorders beginning in 1905 was the firm rejection of two of the major demands of the Indian National Congress. The Congress had asked for a vast reduction of the Home Charges; instead India was relieved of only £257,000. The Congress had demanded the Indianization of the civil services; Lord Curzon, in reply, gave an unqualified assertion of the racial basis of employment in the higher positions of the Civil Service.

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1. These figures are compiled from the Tables appended to *ibid*, pp.330-44.

CHAPTER IVUNITY AND ORGANIZATION IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Congress movement suffered a prolonged relapse after the well-attended Congresses of 1894 and 1895. This relapse took the form of poor attendances, internal divisions, a reluctance among its earlier supporters to continue to finance its activities in England and India, and a widespread indifference to the Congress organization and platform among educated Indians in general. Lord Hamilton, the Secretary of State, wrote in 1900 that "there is little doubt that the Congress is losing its popularity and influence"<sup>1</sup> and a year later he was contemplating the total collapse of the Congress.<sup>2</sup> The Governor-General was no less sanguine. Lord Curzon believed "that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."<sup>3</sup> This ambition was neither entirely fanciful nor based on a false assessment of the Congress movement.

The roots of the Congress weaknesses extend back to the early years of the movement. The Congress began hopefully in 1885. Attendances grew steadily in the first five years, reaching almost 2,000 in 1889. The organizers were able to boast that the Congress attracted men from almost all geographic areas, races, and classes, excepting the old aristocracy

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 22 February 1900. MSS.Eur. C. 126/2.  
2. Hamilton to Curzon, 24 January 1901. MSS.Eur. C. 126/3.  
3. Curzon to Hamilton, 18 November 1900. MSS.Eur. D. 510/6.

and the lower classes.<sup>1</sup> In the first years the Congress also enjoyed the sympathy of British Indian officials. Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, had been consulted by A.O. Hume before it was started, and at the 1886 Congress he entertained the Congress leaders while in the following year the Governor of Madras, Lord Connemara, extended a similar invitation.<sup>2</sup>

Government tolerance was forfeited through the employment of certain tactics in the years 1886 to 1889, when the Congress tried to gain for itself the support of the Indian masses. Using the methods which Bright and Cobden had used in their anti-Corn Law campaign,<sup>3</sup> the Congress circulated 50,000 copies of two tracts, published in 12 different translations.<sup>4</sup> In an idiomatic language, they explained how the Congress could make British rule less despotic and impoverishing. Mass meetings, sometimes drawn together by traditional Indian entertainments, were held as an exercise in the political education of the people. Hume, the General Secretary of the Congress, argued that the poverty of the masses was so overwhelming that only by channelling the popular discontent into legitimate forms could an agrarian uprising be avoided.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Report of the 2nd I.N.C., p.5.

2. A.C.Mazumdar, Indian National Evolution, (1st ed.), p.79.

3. Wedderburn, Hume, p.68.

4. A Congress Catechism by M. Viraraghava Chariar and A Conversation between Molvi Fariid ud Din, M.A., Vaquil (Barrister) of the High Court, Practicing in the Zillah Court of Hakikatabad, and Rambaksh, one of the Mukaddams (Chief Villager) of Kambakhtpur. English translations appear as an Appendix to the Report of the 3rd I.N.C.

5. Wedderburn, op.cit., p.68.

Grave exception was taken to the two pamphlets by Lord Dufferin and Sir Auckland Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces and Oudh, who thought that the pamphlets misrepresented Government policies and were designed to create hatred of British officials among the masses. Dufferin was not convinced of either the unrest among the masses or of their growing poverty. On the contrary, the reports requested by the Viceroy indicated an improvement in the economic condition of the very poor. Furthermore, Dufferin saw in the Congress efforts a dangerous parallel to attempts to arouse agrarian discontent in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Colvin, too, felt "the extreme unwisdom and unfairness of writing and circulating [the pamphlets] among ignorant and excitable people, foreign to us in blood."<sup>2</sup> The Congress only represented "the wishes of a class, and that a minute and exceptional class."<sup>3</sup> Colvin believed that it was absurd for this class to claim to represent the interests of the peasantry when, for the most part, it had, through its representatives in the Legislative Council, opposed the Government's tenancy legislation in Bengal, in 1885, and Oudh, in 1886.<sup>4</sup>

These views were made public in October 1887, when Hume's and Colvin's correspondence on the Congress was published<sup>5</sup> and again on 30 November, 1888 by Dufferin in a farewell speech. Dufferin asked, with reference to the

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1. Dufferin to Cross, 17 August 1888, No.107, MSS. Eur.E.243/25.

2. Audi Alteram Partem, p.17.

3. Ibid. p.24.

4. Ibid. p.11.

5. Ibid.

Congress, how any reasonable men could "be content to allow this microscopic minority to control their administration." He stressed the unrepresentative nature of the Congress, whose selfish platform was defended by "no Native statesman of weight or importance." He regretted the circulation among the masses of the pamphlets which, he said, "were animated by a very questionable spirit, and whose manifest intention is to excite" hatred of the Government. He also referred to Hume's "silly threat" that the Congress "hold in their hands the keys not only of a popular insurrection but of a military revolt."<sup>1</sup>

The Government showed its growing suspicion of the Congress in other ways. In November 1887. the Government of India established an intelligence department called the Special Branch of the Department for the Suppression of Thagi and Dakoiti to watch religious, social and political movements and to report on the activities of Indians connected with them.<sup>2</sup> The head of this new department, Col. P.D. Henderson, along with the Head Constable of Allahabad and the Madras Commissioner of Police, were reported to have been seen near the Congress pandal at Bombay in 1889.<sup>3</sup> The efforts of the previous year's Reception Committee at Allahabad to find a suitable site for the Congress pandal had been frustrated by the municipal authorities until the Maharaja of Darbhanga came

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1. Dufferin's Speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, Calcutta, 30 November 1888. Enclosure to Dufferin to Cross, 3 December 1888, No. 121., MSS. Eur. E. 243/25.
  2. Govt. of India., Sec/Int. Despatch to Sec. of State., No.179 15 November 1887: cited in Govt. of India., Home Dept. Jud., to Sec. of State., No.6., 28 March 1901., P.S.L.I., Vol.131.
  3. Report of the 5th I.N.C., p.19.

forward and purchased Lowther (later Darbhanga) Castle and its grounds for the use of the 1888 Congress.<sup>1</sup> In 1890 the Government of Bengal issued, for the first time, a circular advising Government officers not to attend the Calcutta session. Pherozeshah Mehta objected to this circular in a letter to Lord Lansdowne, the Governor-General, who replied that Government servants might attend the Congress as observers but otherwise they would remain neutral with regard to political matters, not placing pressure on anybody to join or abstain from any legally conducted movement.<sup>2</sup> Previously Indian members of the Civil Service had collected funds and acted as propaganda agents for the Congress.<sup>3</sup> After 1890, although pressure was doubtless applied in private, the Viceroy, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors refrained from attacks on the Congress until Lord Curzon, during his Viceroyalty, attempted to ridicule the economic thinking of the Congress.

Organized Indian opposition to the Congress movement also appeared in 1887 when the United Indian Patriotic Association was founded. Although most of its members were Muslims from the North West Provinces and Oudh and although the Association collapsed after a few years, the views of the original members are significant as they were shared by an important section of Indians, who remained aloof from the Congress

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1. A.C.Mazumdar, Indian National Evolution (2nd ed.), p.73.
  2. Report of the 6th I.N.C., p. xxxiv.
  3. Dufferin to Cross, 24 September 1888, No.112. MSS.Eur. E.243/25.

in later years. As the reaction of Government officials had been, the opposition of the Patriotic Association was stimulated by the Congress demand for representative institutions and by the campaign among the villages to interest the masses in politics. Syed Hosain Bilgrami, Secretary of the Nizam of Hyderabad's Council of State and an admirer of the civilizing effects of British rule, thought that:

"Those who have a stake in the country and have something to lose in the general upheaval apprehended from the spread of democratic tendencies which have no home in this country, ought to appreciate the full importance of keeping supreme power intact and untouched, and hedging it round with as much of the elements of awe and reverence as can be saved out of the wreck of old ideas and traditions which are in the process of being ruthlessly destroyed by a blind, ill-judged, and ill-digested imitation of European radicalism."<sup>1</sup>

Another member of the Patriotic Association, the Maharaja of Benares, dismissed democracy as a Western institution, unsuited to Hinduism whose basis was the Varna (caste) system, and he asked "how would you care to have Kalvars and Mochis as our legislators."<sup>2</sup> A third member, the Raja of Bhinga, a Rajput, said that "the brave races of India are as yet untouched; the natural leaders of the people still hold aloof" from the Congress.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Dufferin saw the Patriotic Association as the first Indian conservative party in recent history,<sup>4</sup> and he

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1. Letter to Syed Ahmed Khan, 20 August 1888, in The Seditious Character of the Indian National Congress, pub. by the United Indian Patriotic Assn. (1888), p.55.
  2. The Seditious Character of the Indian National Congress, p. 45.
  3. Ibid., p.3.
  4. Dufferin to Cross, 1 February 1887, No.26. MSS.Eur.E.243/22.

predicted that his proposed Legislative Council reforms would help the Conservatives "and provide us with that kind of strength among the Natives which we most need."<sup>1</sup> Dufferin was under the completely mistaken impression that, by giving the right of nomination to certain municipalities, Universities, and Muslim bodies, less radical members would be returned to the Councils than had been in the past. Previously the Government had appointed Councillors after informal consultations with local political associations.<sup>2</sup> He did not think that the Congress was a seditious organization nor did he doubt the good intentions of its principal members. The main threat to the Government came from a small minority within the Congress,<sup>3</sup> from the agitation among the masses, and from a possible union between the "Indian Home Rulers" and the British radical party.<sup>4</sup> But he nevertheless suggested in a rash moment, that when the Councils were enlarged, "a legitimate opportunity would be afforded of getting rid of the Congress."<sup>5</sup>

During Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty (1884-1888) the Congress had been impugned for seeking representative institutions and for trying to arouse the masses. During Lord Lansdowne's Viceroyalty (1888-1894) serious doubt was cast on the motives and integrity of several Congress members who championed the cause of the Maharaja of Kashmir. Early in 1889 the

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1. Dufferin to Cross, 15 March 1887, No.32. MSS.Eur. E.243/22.
  2. Dufferin to Cross, 20 March 1887, No.33. MSS.Eur. E.243/22.
  3. Dufferin to Cross, 3 December 1888, No.121. MSS.Eur. E.243/25.
  4. Dufferin to Cross, 4 January 1887, No.22. MSS.Eur. E.243/22.
  5. Dufferin to Cross, 17 August 1888, No.107. MSS.Eur. E.243/25.

British Resident in Kashmir, Colonel Nisbet, accused the Maharaja of intriguing with the Russians against the British, and he succeeded in securing the Maharaja's resignation. A Council under the direction of the Resident was set up to replace the Maharaja. The Maharaja, however, denied that he had either intrigued with the Russians or that he had resigned voluntarily. He charged instead that the Government of India had broken its treaty pledges and acted upon forged letters between himself and a Russian agent.<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja's allegations were supported by the Indian Political Agency. This agency had been started in London by William Digby and in Calcutta by Shishir Kumar Ghose and W.C. Bonnerjea for the purpose, inter alia, of defending the interests of the Native States and their rulers.<sup>2</sup> The Agency in London published a book by Digby which contained official papers relating to Kashmir and the Government of India's actions.<sup>3</sup>

The Political Agency enlisted Charles Bradlaugh's support for the Maharaja. Bradlaugh questioned the Under Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons in June 1889

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1. A.P. Nicholson, Scrap of Paper: India's Broken Treaties Her Princes and Their Problems, p.104.
  2. J.M. Banerji, "William Digby: Friend of India". Hindustan Review Vol.xii, No.73. (Sept.1905). p.250-52.  
A recurring theme in nationalist writing in India was that Indian rule in the Native States and Indian rule before the British came was more enlightened than Englishmen often suggested. See Dadabhai Naoroji; India Reform No.ix: The State and Government of India under its Native Rulers.
  3. Condemned Unheard: the Government of India and H.H. the Maharaja of Kashmir: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.

but received an evasive answer.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the year he went to India for the Congress Session where he contacted Motilal Ghose.<sup>2</sup> On 3 July 1890, Bradlaugh forced a debate in the Commons on a motion for the adjournment on the Kashmir issue. By this time the India Office and the Government of India, realizing that the letters in question were probably not authentic, had decided to defend their action on the grounds of misgovernment by the Maharaja. The Maharaja's demand for an investigation into the Government of India's allegations had been refused and Bradlaugh tried to elicit an explanation from the India Office as to why the Maharaja was not allowed "any judicial or Parliamentary inquiry" into the charges.<sup>3</sup> These tactics of the Maharaja's sympathisers could not reasonably be objected to by the Government of India which had acted with dubious legality in Kashmir. But in India certain events reflected unfavourably on the good faith of the Maharaja's well-wishers.

The Government of India came into possession of the correspondence which passed between Shishir Kumar and Motilal Ghose of Calcutta<sup>4</sup> and Pandit Gopinath of Lahore.<sup>5</sup> These letters revealed that the agitation for the restoration of

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1. Parl. Debates, H. of C. 20 June 1889, 3rd Series. Vol. 337. pp. 299-301.
  2. Copy of Motilal Ghose letter to Pandit Gopinath, n.d. p. 769, Demi-Off. Corresp., Pol. and Sec. Dept. Vol. 3.
  3. Parl. Debates. H. of C. 3 July 1890, 3rd Series. Vol. 346, p. 699.
  4. The Ghose brothers edited the Amrita Bazar Patrika, one of the most outspoken newspapers in Bengal. Although they were fervid nationalists, they attended the Congress irregularly.
  5. Pandit Gopinath edited three Lahore newspapers, including the popular Akhbar-i-Am, and attended occasional Congresses.

the Maharaja to the gadi (throne) was being directed from Calcutta by Shishir Kumar and Motilal Ghose, and from Lahore by Congress members and ex-servants of the Kashmir State, but with little support from Kashmir itself. Motilal sent detailed instructions to Lahore explaining that a petition, on Kashmiri paper, should be circulated in Kashmir. And he repeatedly asked for more money for Digby's work in London.<sup>1</sup> Jogendra Chandra Bose went to Jammu to seek support for their efforts and he wrote a pamphlet defending the Maharaja.<sup>2</sup> Despite these activities, Government intelligence sources reported that sympathy in Kashmir for the Maharaja was negligible.<sup>3</sup> The Maharaja's Congress advocates worked without the benefit of financial aid from the Maharaja.<sup>4</sup>

The Ghose brothers somehow obtained a copy of a Foreign Office Confidential Minute on Kashmir, written by Sir Mortimer Durand, which they published, in an edited version, in their newspaper, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, in October 1889. Sections of the Patrika version were misquoted and fabricated in such a way that the intention of the Government of India seemed to be to annex Kashmir while the original Minute gave no such impression. Lord Lansdowne, characterized the Patrika version

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1. Copies of these letters appear on pp.719-807, Demi-Off. Corresp., Pol. & Sec. Dept., Vol.3.
  2. Jogendra Chandra Bose was editor of the Tribune, one of the leaders of the Congress in the Punjab, and a former employe of the Maharaja's. The title of his pamphlet was Cashmere and Her Prince: An Authentic Exposition of the Recent Imbroglia in Cashmere.
  3. Extract from Sec. Report of T. and D. Dept., No.29, 17 Aug. 1889. Enclosure to Lansdowne to Cross, 19 Aug.1889, No.38. MSS. Eur. E.243/27.
  4. Motilal Ghose, Speeches and Writings, p.146.

as a "sheer and impudent fabrication";<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to believe, in reading the original and Patrika version side by side that the intention was not malicious.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the Amrita Bazar Patrika published its copy of the Minute, the Government of India drafted and enacted a Bill to Prevent Disclosure of Official Documents and Information, providing penalties up to transportation for life for wrongfully obtaining or communicating information of State importance.<sup>3</sup> Lord Lansdowne used the occasion of its introduction in the Imperial Legislative Council to expose the differences between the true copy and the Amrita Bazar Patrika's copy.<sup>4</sup>

The Confidential Minute on Kashmir was one of three highly confidential matters leaked by the Congress Press. The Bengalee made public Lord Dufferin's despatch outlining his proposals for the expansion of the Indian Legislative Councils;<sup>5</sup> and subsequently the Hindu of Madras printed a letter from its London correspondent divulging the contents of one of Lord Lansdowne's letters on Council reforms.<sup>6</sup> The Government never discovered how these latter two items were obtained but William Digby was thought to have secured the Kashmir despatch from the India Office<sup>7</sup> and it is possible that he got hold

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1. Speech of 17 October 1889, India Leg. Council Prog., p.272.
  2. The true and the Patrika copies are enclosed to Lansdowne to Cross, 17 Oct. 1889, No.46. MSS. Eur. E.243/27.
  3. A similar law was passed in Parliament in 1889.
  4. India Leg. Council Prog. 17 Oct. 1889, pp.271-76.
  5. Lansdowne to Cross, 14 Oct. 1889, No.46. MSS. Eur. E.243/27.
  6. Lansdowne to Cross, 19 May 1890, No. 76. MSS. Eur. E.243/28.
  7. T. and D. Dept., C.S.B. No.551 of 1889, to Bradford, 16 Sept. 1889., Demi-Off. Corresp., Pol. and Sec. Dept., Vol.3.

of the other two items as well. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Digby was the London correspondent for the Patrika, the Bengalee, and the Hindu.<sup>1</sup>

After the Kashmir affair, Pandit Ajudhia Nath, the Joint-General Secretary, made a special point of dissociating the Congress from Digby's Political Agency.<sup>2</sup> Digby ended his formal connection with the Congress in 1892 when he resigned as Secretary to the British Committee of the Congress although he continued to use his Indian Political Agency. He made himself persona non grata with the Government of India in 1892 by writing to the Diwan of Mysore State, asking him to settle certain claims with a Madras client of Digby's Agency. Digby implied to the Diwan that he possessed great influence with the India Office and the House of Commons, and he expressed the hope that he would not be compelled to publish the details of the claim in the newspapers. In an interview with Digby in December 1892, Lord Lansdowne informed Digby that the Government of India would not tolerate any attempt to exploit the native Chiefs.<sup>3</sup>

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1. A.C.Lethbridge, Gen.Supt. for Sup. of T. and D., to D.M. Stewart, Council of India, 12 Oct.1892, Confid.C.S.B. No.619 Enclosure to Memorandum on Digby, Demi-Off.Corresp., Pol. and Sec.Dept., Vol.4.
  2. Report of 6th I.N.C.(1890) p.60.
  3. Memorandum of an Interview between the Viceroy and Mr. William Digby on the 16th December 1892, p.131. Demi-Off. Corresp., Pol.and Sec. Dept.,Vol.5. Another friend of the Congress, Seymour Key, a former Radical M.P. put forward a claim in 1904 to the Nizam of Hyderabad for Rs.5,00,000 as a reward for his efforts to have Berar returned to Hyderabad. The Nizam repudiated the claim and the Foreign Office informed Key of its displeasure. (Col.Sir.D.W.K.Barr, Resident, Hyderabad, to Ampthill, 5 June 1904, No.66. MSS.Eur. E.233/34/1.) Both Key and Digby were business men. Key managed and partly owned some cotton mills in Hyderabad; Digby was Chairman of Madras Electric Tramway Company.

The other possible means by which the Viceroy's letter and despatch may have fallen into Indian hands is through W.C. Bonnerjee. In December 1895 a genuine printed copy of one of Lord Elgin's letters about Kashmir was found in the hands of one of the Ghose brothers and its contents were communicated to the Maharaja of Kashmir. According to Elgin's Private Secretary, W.C. Bonnerjee employed an European in Calcutta for the purpose of obtaining copies of this and other private letters.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately for the Congress, no definite proof was found, and Lord Elgin was denied the pleasure of putting "one of the most prominent leaders of the Congress in the dock on the charge of stealing letters."<sup>2</sup>

It is not always possible to determine why or even when individuals left the Congress. There was no formal membership, and not more than a handful of persons from any one province regularly made the trip to the annual sessions. Those that did attend were but a fraction of the Indians who read the pro-Congress newspapers, attended Provincial Conferences and protest meetings, or passively supported the Congress. Yet it does seem that after 1890 a particular class appeared less often at the annual session. There were a large number of exceptions, but generally this group consisted of titled and wealthy landholders who had often attained success in a profession as well, and who maintained close relations with the European community, either socially or professionally in

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1. Note by H. Babington Smith. Enclosure to Elgin to Hamilton, 10 March 1897. MSS. Eur. D.509/4.
  2. Elgin to Hamilton 10 March 1897, op.cit.

the towns, or officially with Government servants in the districts. This class enjoyed the special respect of much of the professional class from which the Congress drew most of its members. When a new political or literary society was formed, a landholder was more often than not asked to be President and to donate funds; at most public functions this class was seated on the speakers' platform; in newspaper accounts of public gatherings, middle class editors listed the names of titled and aristocratic persons first. Naturally, then, the defection of this class from any public movement would have been a setback. But this happened at the time of, or soon after, the adoption of militant proselytizing tactics by the Congress. These tactics, and the consequent disapproval by Government officials, may have influenced many wealthy and titled persons to withdraw from the Congress. It is a fact that the following men from Bengal did not attend the Congress in the decade after 1891; Sir Jotendra Mohun Tagore; Raja Rajendra Narain Deb, President of the Indian Association; Maharaja Kumar Nilkrishna Deb; Nawab Ghulam Rubbani, a member of the Mysore Princes family residing in the 24 Parganas; Rajendralal Mitra, President of the British Indian Association<sup>1</sup> Peary Mohan Mukherji, Honorary Secretary of the British

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1. Rajendralal Mitra was Chairman of the Reception Committee in 1886, the only year in which he attended the Congress. From 1856 to 1880 he served as Director of Wards Institution where he supervised the education of numerous zamindars' sons. He was a noted Orientalist and was elected President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1885. He died in 1891. G.P.Pillai, Representative Indians, pp.57-64.

Indian Association; Syama Charan, Joyobind, and Doorga Charan Law, zamindars and three of Bengal's wealthiest Indian merchants; Sitanath Roy, zamindar, merchant and Secretary of the National Chamber of Commerce; Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, zamindar and editor of the Hindu Patriot, and Raja Shashi Sekharieswar Roy of Tahirpur. In the rest of India, where fewer men of great wealth had joined the Congress than in Bengal, the number of defections was less dramatic. In Madras, it included Sir Savali Ramaswami Mudaliar, Vice President of the Mahajan Sabha and Sheriff of Madras, Raja Sir T. Madava Rao;<sup>1</sup> P. Somasundaram Chettiar, a leader of the Madras mercantile community, Hazi Mahomed Abdulla Badshaw, Merchant and Vice President of the Central Mahomedan Association, Raja T. Rama Rao and P. Chentsal Rao Pantulu, zamindars and members of the Madras Legislative Council. From Northern India there was Sirdar Uttam Singh, landowner, banker, and political pensioner (Lahore), Nawab Reza Ali Khan, landowner (Lucknow), and Nawab Shameshad Dowla, landowner (Lucknow).<sup>2</sup>

This did not mean the end of the Congress connection with people from these social strata, for the Congress continued to receive support from the Chowdhury family of the 24 Parganas, some of the Tagore family, Raja Benoy Krishna Deb, and the Maharaja of Darbhanga in Bengal; the Raja of

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1. T. Madava Rao was President of the Reception Committee in 1887, after which he did not attend the Congress. A Maratha Brahman, he served in high offices in the States of Travancore, Indore, and Baroda. He died in 1891. G.P. Pillai, Representative Men of Southern India, pp. 33-46.
  2. See Appendices to Congress Reports.

Ramnād, Mir Humayun Jah, and his son, Nawab Syed Mahomed in Madras; Dyal Singh Majithia in the Punjab; and Raja Rampal Singh in the North West Provinces.<sup>1</sup> Congress sessions were attended by other, less well-known persons of the same class from time to time. However, it is safe to state that fewer well-known representatives of the monied, titled, and landed classes went to the Congress after 1890 than before, and that those who did go were the exceptions.

There are other reasons why the Congress attendance in the years 1890 and 1893 was smaller than in 1888 and 1889. The sense of mission which showed itself in the first years slackened. When officials expressed disapproval of the Congress pamphlets, some members had second thoughts about their campaign among the masses. Although the 1888 Congress rejected a proposed resolution repudiating the pamphlets,<sup>2</sup> no serious further effort to involve the masses in the Congress was made for many years. There was also a feeling that by 1889 one of the main functions of the Congress had been "accomplished", namely, the consolidation of Indian public opinion. As British officials in India "as a body deny utterly the justice of our contentions," the Congress was advised to begin what Wedderburn called a "flanking movement" or the education of the English electorate in the Congress platform.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly the

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1. See below, pp. 284-94.

2. Lansdowne to Cross, 11 Dec. 1888. No. 1. MSS. Eur. E. 243/26. Lansdowne also wrote that he was told by some Indians in Bombay that they had quit the Congress on account of its intemperate claims.

3. These ideas were expressed in Hume's letter to Congress leaders in February 1889. Wedderburn, Hume, pp. 85-6.

1890 Congress resolved to hold the 1892 Congress in London.<sup>1</sup> The possibility of carrying out that project was not great for the expense would have been prohibitive and many Congress members feared the loss of caste which a sea voyage entailed.<sup>2</sup> However, not only was the matter discussed, it was also suggested that the Congress in India should suspend its activities in India until after the English session of the Congress.<sup>3</sup>

Although the English session was never held, steps were taken in 1889 to enlarge the sphere of nationalist influence in England. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress was formed on 27 July 1889, with Wedderburn as its chairman and Digby as its Secretary to supervise the accounts and activities of the Indian Political Agency.<sup>4</sup> After the Political Agency was disowned by the Congress, the British Committee became the sole official Congress organ in England. The first move towards reviving the Indian Parliamentary Committee was also made in 1889 when a meeting was held at the

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1. Resolution xi.

2. This was shown in the debate in the 1889 Congress on an amendment moved by John Adam, Principal of Pachiappa's College, Madras, to the resolution asking that examinations for the Indian Civil Service be held simultaneously in England and India. Adam's amendment recommended that candidates who succeeded in the Indian examination should proceed to England for further training so that they would be familiar with Western society, culture, and political institutions before being finally admitted into the Civil Service. But the amendment, which would have restored the resolution to the form in which it was passed in 1885, was dropped when the idea of sea voyage was strongly opposed. Report of the 4th I.N.C., 27-38.

3. S.N. Banerjea's Speech, Report of the 7th I.N.C. (1891) p. 11.

4. Resolution xiii(d) of 1889 formally approved the appointment of the British Committee.

National Liberal Club under the Presidency of George Yule.<sup>1</sup> The Committee had originally been started in 1883 with the assistance of John Bright "to secure 'combined Parliamentary action in matters affecting Indian public interests'," but it began to function in July 1893 for the first time.<sup>2</sup>

The small number of M.P.'s active in the Parliamentary Committee received information on Indian affairs from the British Committee of the Congress and were often assisted by it in their election campaigns. The British Committee also organized public meetings and lecture tours for Indians visiting England and for other people interested in Indian reform. It published a newspaper, India, which was intended to be "a store-house from which arms and materials are supplied to all those who are willing to strike a blow on behalf of India".<sup>3</sup> The weakness of the Congress movement in India after 1890 may partly be explained by the existence of India, the British Committee of the Congress, and the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and by the under-lying belief that the main hope for Indian reform resided in England rather than in India.

Another of the Congress objectives was fulfilled in its early years when the numbers and privileges of the Indian members of the Legislative Councils were increased by the Indian Councils Act of 1892. There was dissatisfaction that

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1. Wedderburn's Speech, Report of the 5th I.N.C.(1889). p.8. George Yule was a Calcutta merchant who presided over the 1888 Congress.
  2. India, Vol.vii, No.5. (May 1896). p.133.
  3. Wedderburn, Hume, p.97.

the right of election and provision for <sup>even</sup> greater freedom of discussion and criticism were not explicitly included in the Act,<sup>1</sup> but nevertheless, the Congress had gained a major victory, and many Congressmen were returned to the reformed Councils.<sup>2</sup> Feelings of resentment against the Government for excluding Indians from responsible positions were also blunted by the fact that eight other persons associated with the Congress served as High Court Judges between 1885 and 1905: M.G. Ranade, K.T. Telang, N.G. Chandavankar, Badruddin Tyabji, R.C. Mitter, Guru Das Banerji, C. Sankara Nair and S. Subramania Iyer.

A.O. Hume, who had been responsible more than any other individual for the success of the early Congresses, left India before the 1892 session, and no effective organizer with an all India influence emerged in his place. The person who might have filled the role, M.G. Ranade, stated in 1892 that he intended to retire from the High Court after a year or two and devote most of his time to Congress work. He did not however, and, as P. Ananda Charlu said, "the withdrawal by Mr.

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1. See, for instance, Resol. I of 1893, Resol. IX(b) of 1894, Resol. II of 1895, Surendra Nath Banerjea's Presidential Speech at the 1895 Congress.
  2. Including the following from 1893 to 1899: P. Rangiya Naidu, P. Ananda Charlu, C. Sankara Nair, Kaliana Sudaram Iyer, N. Subba Rao Pantulu, A. Subapathy Mudaliar, C. Vijayayaghavachariar, P. Ratnasabhupati Pillai, C. Jambulingam Mudaliar, Raja Rampal Singh, Pandit Bishambar Nath, G.M. Chitnavis, Guru Prasad Sen, the Maharaja of Darbhanga, Saligram Singh, Surendra Nath Banerjea, W.C. Bonnerjee, Lal Mohun Ghose, Kalicharan Banerjea, Norendra Nath Sen, Ananda Mohun Bose, Pherozechah Mehta, V.R. Natu, C.H. Setalvad, R.M. Sayani, J.U. Yajnik, D.A. Khare, Balchandra Krishna Bhatavadekar, G.K. Parekh, D.S. Garud, and B.G. Tilak.

Hume of the loving and loveable despotism... told upon our efficiency".<sup>1</sup> The occasion of Hume's departure was not wholly pleasant, for Hume had been discouraged by the failure of the Congress to provide funds for its work.<sup>2</sup> He also found himself at odds with the moderates in the Congress over the inevitability of an agrarian revolution. In a circular to Congress leaders on 16 February 1892, he said that "no earthly power can stem an universal agrarian rising in a country like this" and when it comes, "there will be no lack of leaders".<sup>3</sup> The circular attracted much attention in both England and India, and the British Committee of the Congress communicated a resolution which it had passed to the London Times, dissociating itself from the "unjustifiable conclusions" to which Hume appeared to have been driven "in face of the consideration of the deplorable condition of large portions of the Indian people."<sup>4</sup> Hume returned to India once again and, in his final parting speech on 18 March 1894, he warned the Congress supporters that they would face a period of reaction against the rising tide of democracy. He told them not to become despondent but to acquire "that habit of

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1. P. Ananda Charlu, "The Indian National Congress: A Retrospect" Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.viii, Nos. 1 and 2 (July.Aug. 1903), pp.20-21.
  2. Naoroji wrote to Wacha on 23 December 1891 that "Hume is discouraged for want of funds. It will be disastrous to India if he gives up." Quoted by Masani, Naoroji, p.312.
  3. Quoted by Masani, Naoroji, p.313.
  4. Ibid, p.314. Tilak, through the Kesari, was one of the few Congress editors to support Hume's prediction. Pradhan and Bhagwat, Tilak, p.79.

unwavering persistence that as a nation you so sadly lack."<sup>1</sup> He said also that "a want of a due conception of the sanctity of a promise ... is the characteristic sin of the East..... I speak from painful experience - men promise, promise, promise - no doubt in all good faith; but when the time comes for performance, how often do they allow any trifle to intervene, to prevent their redeeming their word?"<sup>2</sup> In the years 1894 to 1904, there was little cause for Hume to change his estimate of the Congress membership.

The Congress drew its membership from, roughly speaking, three groups in Indian society - the professional classes, the landholding classes, and the commercial classes. In Upper India the landholding classes, for the most part, did not join the Congress and often opposed it. But they lacked the organization and education to form an effective opposition party. In Bengal, however, an organized alternative to the Congress existed in the form of the British India Association, the zamindars' political organ. There, at least until the founding of the Congress, the landholding community, through its size, wealth, education, and proximity to the seat of government, exercised greater influence on the Government of India than any other vested interest in any other Province.

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1. Mr. A.O.Hume's Farewell to India. pp.13-16.

2. Ibid.pp.19-20. It is clear from the context and from N.G. Chandavarkar's speech (p.23) that Hume was referring to Congress funds.

As the Congress had been started after the Ilbert Bill controversy, similarly, the British Indian Association was founded in 1851 soon after a successful agitation by the Anglo-Indian community against proposals to reduce the racial privileges held by Europeans in the matter of the jurisdiction of law courts over criminal cases.<sup>1</sup> The British Indian Association made what was probably the first attempt to bring political agitation in Bengal, Bombay, and Madras under a common organization,<sup>2</sup> and as the Congress did in later years, it maintained a paid agency in London from 1852 to 1856 for the purpose of influencing Parliament.<sup>3</sup> In time, however, the Association became increasingly identified with the land-owning interest, it criticised the Government with increasingly less vigour and independence,<sup>4</sup> and it turned down suggestions that its membership fees should be lowered to meet middle class complaints of inability to pay.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Bimanbehari Majumdar, History of Political Thought from Rammohun to Dayananda (1821-84), Vol.i, pp.174-76.
  2. See Sujata Ghosh, "The British Indian Association (1851-1900)". Report of the Regional Records Survey Committee for West Bengal (1957-58), p.40.  
also, Iris M.Jones, The Origins and Development to 1892 of the Indian National Congress (unpublished London Thesis, M.A., 1947), pp.165-66.
  3. *Ibid.*, p.168. Also Sujata Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p.22.
  4. In its radical, younger days, the British Indian Association took a leading part in the demand for more favourable working conditions and legal rights for the indigo plantation ryots, after the Indigo disturbances of 1859-60. It also gave financial assistance to Rev. James Long in the Nil Darpan case. Sujata Ghosh "The British Indian Association and the Indigo Disturbances in Bengal." Indian Historical Records Commission: Proceedings, Vol.xxxiv, Part II, (Dec.1958) pp.141-42.
  5. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, History of the Indian Association 1876-1951, p.9.

Debarred from joining the British Indian Association and feeling a need for an organization of their own, members of the middle class founded two political societies in 1876, the Indian Association and the short-lived Indian League. The establishment of the Indian Association was welcomed by the British Indian Association "in an openly patronising manner".<sup>1</sup> Soon, though, major differences divided the two during the discussions about the Bengal Tenancy Bill in the early 1880's when members of the Indian Association first supported the principle of tenancy protection and then criticised the Government for compromising with the zamindars before the Bill was enacted.<sup>2</sup> Resentful of middle class complaints of zamindari oppression, the British Indian Association withheld its assistance from the National Conference, organized by the Indian Association, in 1883.<sup>3</sup> Then the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1885 removed this source of dissension and it cleared the way for co-operation between the two associations at the Congress Session at Calcutta in 1886.<sup>4</sup>

The British Indian Association entered the Congress with the understanding that delegates from various local political bodies would meet once a year at the Congress, formulate a general policy on issues of national importance, and then disband for twelve months, "leaving the execution of that policy" to the individual local organizations. After a

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1. Sujata Ghosh, "The British Indian Association, 1851-1900", op.cit., p.41.

2. Bagal, op.cit., pp.70-72.

3. Ibid, p.64.

4. See Report of the 2nd I.N.C. p.10.

constitution was drafted in 1888 which would have converted the Congress into "a separate and permanent organization", the British Indian Association informed the Congress "that while the Association had co-operated with the Congress for the past three years and would do so in the future, it definitely objected to the tentative" constitution. The delegates from the Association tried without success to have a resolution adopted by the 1888 Congress embodying their view that the functions of the Congress should be limited and in the following year the Association instructed its delegates to participate only in the discussion of the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the extension of the Permanent Settlement.<sup>1</sup> As already noted, after 1889 contact between the Congress and the wealthier Bengal zamindars decreased.

Despite a certain amount of jealousy and difference of opinion on the role of the Congress, the cleavage was by no means as clear-cut as the division between Congress supporters and the aristocracy in the Punjab and the North West Provinces and Oudh. On a large number of issues the Indian Association and the British Indian Association were agreed in principle, if not in degree, in opposition to the Governments of India and Bengal, and in some agitations, such as that for the Indianization of the Civil Service, joint consultations were held, with Surendra Nath Banerjea attending meetings of the British Indian Association's Managing Committee.<sup>2</sup> But

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1. Sujata Ghosh "The British Indian Association(1851-1900)", op.cit. pp.42-3.

2. Ibid. p.41.

the application of the elective system under the Councils of 1892 brought the Bengali zamindars into frequent opposition to the Bengali Congress leaders of the Indian Association.

In the first Bengal Council elections, in 1893, only two of the six Indians elected were known as zamindars,<sup>1</sup> and one of these, Maharaja Jagadendranath Roy of Natore,<sup>2</sup> was nominated after the Government had disallowed the election of a lawyer whose residency qualifications were held inadequate. Of the six, four were important members of the Congress: Surendra Nath Banerjea, Ananda Mohan Bose, W.C. Bonnerjee, and the Maharaja of Darbhanga; one was a Muslim; and only the Maharaja of Natore belonged to the British Indian Association.

In the second elections, in 1895, not a single important zamindar candidate was successful as four lawyers and a newspaper editor (S.N. Banerjea) were returned. Ananda Mohun Bose defeated Rajkumar Sarvadhikari for the University seat and Guru Prasad Sen, another Congress leader, was elected after his opponent, Raja Surjakanta Acharea Chowdhury of

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1. Not including Ananda Mohun Bose, who came from a family owning estates in Sylhet and Myensingh and who himself owned a tea plantation. Hem Chandra Sarkar, A Life of Ananda Mohan Bose, p.2.

The Government of Bengal and the British Indian Association, in deprecating the successes of the professional classes in elections, invariably ignored the fact that many middle class politicians owned zamindaris.

2. The Maharaja was at various times closely associated with the middle class nationalists. He presided over the 1892 protest meeting against the Bengal Municipal Bill, he was Chairman of the Reception Committees of the 1897 Bengal Provincial Conference and the 1901 Indian National Congress. He also became Secretary of the Bengal Landholders Association. Bengalee, 14 Dec. 1901.

Mymensingh withdrew.<sup>1</sup> The key contest was for the Calcutta Municipal Corporation's seat between S.N. Banerjea, Secretary of the Indian Association and the favourite of the Congress press in Bengal, and Kalinath Mitter, who was supported by the British Indian Association, the Hindu Patriot, the Englishman, and the Pioneer.<sup>2</sup> After Banerjea won, by 41 votes to 23,<sup>3</sup> the Pioneer alleged that he had received the votes of persons acting "under the terror of immediate personal pressure and the horror of being shown up in a certain native newspaper", and it stigmatized the voting system as "a scandal and a deception".<sup>4</sup> The Hindu Patriot commented similarly, attributing Banerjea's victory, firstly, to his bullying of Municipal Councillors by threatening to expose them in the press and, secondly, to Kalinath Mitter's "resolute contempt for the vulgar arts of the professional canvasser".<sup>5</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika suggested that zamindars should not be returned to the Legislative Councils, because, it said, being in possession of large estates, they would not act independently of the Government and the District officials.<sup>6</sup> The Bengalee resolutely opposed this argument,

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1. Bengalee, 27 July 1895. Previously a candidate from another old family - Sitanath Roy of the Bhagyakal family - had withdrawn from the contest. Bengalee, 27 April 1895.
  2. Ibid. 8 June 1895.
  3. Later in the year, when the Bengal Legislative Council was about to select one of its members for a seat on the Governor General's Legislative Council, Banerjea withdrew his candidacy, leaving the field clear for the election of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Ibid. 26 Oct. 1895.
  4. Quoted by the Bengalee, 1 June 1895.
  5. Quoted from the Madras Standard by the Bengalee, 15 June 1895.
  6. Bengalee, 8 June 1895.

saying that "representative Government means a Government that is representative of all classes. The zamindars form a most important class of the community. To exclude them from our Councils is to declare that representative institutions are an impossibility in this country."<sup>1</sup> Despite this sentiment, the elections indicated a decisive victory for the middle class Congress candidates over their moderate, upper class opponents.

There was talk of starting a new moderate party in Bengal. A meeting was held at the Calcutta Town Hall to discuss the possibility, and the Hindu Patriot backed the prospect with an editorial entitled "The Parting of the Waters". The General Superintendent of the Thagi and Dakoiti Department reported that he knew of no other "such definite change of opinion... among the leaders of Native Opinion and this may be the beginning of a new departure, which will probably be echoed in the [other] Provinces."<sup>2</sup>

The new Moderate Party did not materialize but most of the larger Bengali zamindars remained outside the Congress. At the time of the 1897 Council elections, when again not a single zamindari candidate was elected,<sup>3</sup> the Hindu Patriot explained why the zamindars did not join the Congress.

"The chief cause, in our opinion, has been the attitude of the so-called leaders of the people towards the zemindars. Many of the former look

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1. Bengalee, 18 May 1895.

2. Lt. Col. A.S. Lethbridge to H. Babington Smith, 1 July 1895. Register No. 413B. MSS. Eur. F. 84.

3. One of the successful candidates, Saligram Singh, a Vakil occasionally practising in Calcutta, did own land.

upon the latter in the same light in which the followers of Tom Mann and John Burns look upon the territorial magnates' of Great Britain..... In the elections to the Council or to Municipalities, the zemindars have seldom received even the scantiest support from the rising village politicians. The zemindar is approached only when money is wanted."<sup>1</sup>

The 1892 Councils Act, besides ending the predominance of the landholding classes in the Bengal Legislative Council, had considerably reduced the relative strength of the landholders in the other Provincial and the Governor-General's Legislative Councils. Before the 1892 Act, in the Governor-General's Legislative Council, from 1862 to 1888, out of a total of 36 Indian members, 23 had been landholders and only 3 had been lawyers while in the same period 17 Indians on the Bengal Council had been diwans, zamindars, or zaminadri agents, and 9 had been in the legal profession. In Madras the balance between landholding and professional interests had been roughly even; in Bombay, the number of merchants had been equal to the number of zamindars, sirdars, Chiefs, Amirs, Nawabs, and ex-diwans. In the North West Provinces and Oudh, where a Legislative Council was established in 1887, 3 of the first 4 Indians to receive appointments were landholders.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, after the passing of the Councils Act, from 1893 to 1907, the District Boards in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and the North West Provinces failed to return, as the

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1. Quoted by the Bengalee, 26 June 1897.

2. Parl. Accounts and Papers 1890, Vol. liv, C.5950(42). Statement of the Additional Members of the Councils of the Governor General, Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and the North West Provinces and Oudh for making laws and Regulations.

Government had intended, representatives from the landed classes. Instead, they returned, out of 54 Councillors, 36 barristers and pleaders and only 10 landholders. In the elections by District Municipalities to the 4 Provincial Councils, 40 out of 43 members chosen were barristers or pleaders. This imbalance was partially corrected through Government appointments, so that, of all the 338 non-official members returned to the reformed Legislative Councils, 77 (22%) were landowners while 123 (36%) were lawyers.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the lawyers in elections to the Legislative Councils may be explained by several factors. The Bombay Government was of the opinion that:

"Merchants, bankers and land-holders have, as a rule, only a purely local influence which does not extend beyond their own town or district, whereas a pleader, and notably a High Court Pleader, possesses influence in various districts, understands the art of canvassing and ...has the support and good-will of his brother lawyers at the various centres of the Divisions".<sup>2</sup>

Pleaders, too, were often more capable and better educated than the men of other vocations who did, it should be remembered, constitute the majority of the District Boards and Municipalities in most areas. The Arundel Committee said in

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1. Report of the Committee Appointed to consider reforms in The Indian Councils (Arundel Committee), para. 45. MSS. Eur. D.573/29. Also P.P.Cd. 4435 of 1908, East India (Advisory and Legislative Councils.) Vol.II, Part I, Replies of the Local Governments. Sir Harold Stuart, Off'g Sec. to Govt. of India, to Ch.Secs. of Prov.Gov'ts. 24 Aug. 1907. Home Dept. Public, Enclosure No.1 to letter from Gov't of India, No.21, 10 Oct. 1908.
  2. S.W.Edgerley, Sec. to Govt. of Bombay, Leg.Dept. to Sec. to Govt. of India, Home Dept., 12 April 1899. para.3. July Prog. No.20. I.H.P.Pub.Vol.5639.

its Report in 1907,<sup>1</sup> that "the more stable elements of the community" were not always willing to run for office because canvassing for votes was regarded as derogatory and, more importantly, these elements would not risk defeat by persons of inferior social status.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of representation came to a head in 1898 when the Government of Bengal introduced and passed a Bill to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. This Bill, which had been demanded by the Bengal zamindars, was intended to ease some of the restrictions placed on the realization and enhancement of rents by the Tenancy Act of 1885. During the debate in the Legislative Council on the Amendment Bill three of the elected members, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Kali Charan Banerjea, and Norendra Nath Sen, opposed the Bill as being harmful to the interests of the ryots because it gave zamindars and their agents new opportunities to raise their tenants' rents.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of the Bengal Revenue Department, Michael Finucane, who had himself edited the Tenancy Act of 1885, rejected the amendments moved by the three members who, he said "represent the popular view". "There is scarcely a single alteration proposed in the law in favour of zamindars which", he complained, "one or other of those Hon'ble Members is not prepared to strike out".<sup>4</sup> And the amendments were

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1. "Report of the Committee appointed to consider reforms in the Indian Councils", signed by A.T.Arundel, Denzil Ibbetson, H. Erle Richards, and E.N.Baker. MSS.Eur.D.573/29.
  2. Ibid. para. 46.
  3. Bengal Leg. Council Prog., 2 April 1898, pp.66-82.
  4. Ibid., p.68.

defeated.

H.H.Risley declared in the Legislative Council two days later that the stand of the three Bengali members was further proof that the elective system

"gives undue prominence to a section of the community - Young Bengal, New India - whatever you choose to call it, the soi-disant democratic section of a society which, from top to bottom, is essentially undemocratic.....It leaves the elder generation and those who follow in their steps out in the cold.....It does not give us, as a rule, either here or in the Mufassal, the genuine representative Hindus, the men we really want." <sup>1</sup>

One of the justifications used for not granting greater representation to Indians in the Legislative Councils was that only British officials understood and sympathized with the needs of the Indian "people" so distinct from the Indian "classes".<sup>2</sup> The corollary to this common assumption was that the interests of educated Indians were in basic conflict with the interests of the remainder of Indian society. Yet the issue was not as clear-cut as officials tended to assume. In Bengal in 1885 and 1898, the Government yielded to the pressure of the zamindars over tenancy legislation despite

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1. Ibid. 4 April 1898, pp.195-96.

2. See Dufferin to Cross, 20 March 1887, No.33. MSS.Eur. E.243/22.

Also Lansdowne to Cross, 12 Feb. 1889, No.10. MSS.Eur. E.243/26; Curzon's Farewell Address to Byculla Club, Bombay, 16 Nov. 1905. Lord Curzon in India, Being a Selection From His Speeches As Viceroy and Governor-General of India 1898-1905, ed. Sir Thomas Raleigh, p.585; G.N.Curzon, British Government in India The Story of The Viceroys and Government Houses, p.131; and Govt. of India Despatch to Sec. of State, 21 March 1907, No.7 of 1907. Govt. of India, Home Dept, pub., MSS.Eur.D.573/29.

the protests of the Bengalee and a minority of the middle-class nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

The British Indian Association and another landholders' organization, the Zamindari Panchayet, reacted sharply to the pro-ryot stand of the elected members of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1898. In representations to the Government, they requested the right to return a representative of zamindari interests direct to the Council.<sup>2</sup> The British India Association maintained that the Regulations issued under the 1892 Councils Act had in effect withdrawn from the Association the privilege of electing a member of the Council, a privilege of "long established usage, sanctioned by the action, of successive Lieutenant-Governors" who had appointed or recommended members of the British Indian Association to the Indian and Bengal Councils 39 times between 1863 and 1892.<sup>3</sup> In 1893 the Association had asked for the right under the new

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1. Rokeya Rahman, Social and Administrative Policy of the Government of Bengal: 1877-1890 (unpublished London Thesis, M.A., 1959) pp.342-43.  
Also, Bagal, op.cit. pp.50ff.; Bengalee, 2 April 1898. There can be few times when the Government of India modified a Bill in response to Indian opinion as radically as it did the Bengal Tenancy Bill between 1883 and 1885. In the face of zamindari opposition, sections providing protection to ryots in regard to occupancy rights, compensation for ejection, and enhancement of rent were omitted. C.E.Buckland, Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors, p.811.
  2. Pransankar Roy Chaudhuri, Hon.Sec., Zamindari Panchayet, to Gov. Gen. of India, 8 Oct.1898. Nov.Prog.No.118., I.H.P. Pub., Vol.5414. Rai Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, Sec., British India Assn., to Ch.Sec. Govt. of Bengal, 30 April 1898. Nov.Prog.No.114. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., para 12, The names of these members are contained in Appendix B. This evidence indicates that Indians were elected in certain cases to the Legislative Councils even before the Councils Act of 1892.

Regulations to recommend members to the reformed Council, and although the Viceroy, in his reply, refused to grant that right, he did say that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal "intends ordinarily to consult the British Indian Association and other bodies of land-holders, and the Governor-General in Council has no doubt that the recommendations of the Association will receive full consideration at the hands of the Government." Despite this assurance, the British Indian Association had not been consulted since the Councils Act of 1892 was passed.<sup>1</sup>

When it received the zamindars' representations, the Government of India agreed to re-examine the position of the landed interests in the Legislative Councils. The Provincial Governments were asked whether or not the Regulations issued under the 1892 Councils Act had given an undesirable preponderance to the professional classes and, in particular, to the legal profession. The Bombay Government replied that in the Bombay Council, the only seat held by landed interests was that reserved for the large jagirdars and zamindars of Sind. The landholdings of the Presidency proper were usually small and the peasant proprietors seldom spoke English, so that, in the absence of suitable candidates, the official members of Council had to be relied upon to safeguard the landed interests.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid. para. 15.

2. S.W.Edgerley, Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Leg.Dept., to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 12 April 1899, para 2. July Prog. No.20., I.H.P.,Pub., Vol.5639.

The Governments of the North West Provinces and Oudh and Madras each nominated to their Councils a land-holder to represent his class. This arrangement was held to be sufficient in the North West Provinces and Oudh;<sup>1</sup> the Madras Government did not believe that the landholders' seat was an adequate measure of the influence which that class possessed in the Madras Council.

"There is a most intimate connection between the professional classes and the richer Government ryots, the former being to a very large extent recruited from the latter and constantly investing their savings in the purchase of land."

Although all five of the elected Indian members were lawyers, the Government of Madras thought that "no better representatives could possibly be found for the interests of the Government ryots".<sup>2</sup> With the zamindars, also, "the legal members are closely associated, because investment in small zamindaris coming into the market is much in favour with the professional classes."<sup>3</sup> In fact since 1893, the legal members had defended zamindari interests with greater ability than the zamindars themselves could have. But the Madras Government also made it clear that some of the legal members supported the interests of the ryots.<sup>4</sup>

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1. J.O.Miller, Ch.Sec., Govt. of N.W.P. & O., to Sec. Govt. of India, July Prog.No.16. Ibid.
  2. H.Tremenheere, Sec., Govt. of Fort St. George, Leg.Dept., to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 31 Jan. 1899, para 6. July Prog. No.17. Ibid.
  3. The per centage of the numbers of the legal class who owned land in Madras in 1891 was stated to be 18.98%. In Bombay it was 13.57% and in the North West Provinces it was 15.16%. General Report on the Census of India, 1891, p.116.
  4. Ibid., para.7.

The result of these enquiries was, then, that only in Bengal was it possible and desirable to increase the representation of the landholding classes. This was effected by taking one of the two seats previously assigned to the mofussil municipalities and giving it to the Bengal zamindars.<sup>1</sup> However, before this change was announced, hostilities were opened by the zamindars against the active Congress supporters in Bengal for the attitude of some of them towards the Bengal Tenancy Act Amendment Bill.

Raja Peary Mohan Mukherji made a speech at the 1898 annual meeting of the British India Association in which he denounced the Congress and advised the Government to remember that "men of wealth and station, men who have a large stake in the country, are the real pillars of State, that anything which strikes at their influence and authority reacts on the strength of the Government", whose stability depended upon the maintenance of "social gradations".<sup>2</sup> The Hindu Patriot urged young officials "to mix freely not with the noisy agitators, who know more of the exploits of a Garibaldi or a Mazzini than of every day life of the dwellers in huts and hovels who constitute the nation, but with the local aristocracy" who are alone familiar with the needs and condition of the local population.<sup>3</sup> The Congress newspapers, including the Bengalee, the Amrita Bazar Patrika,<sup>4</sup> the Hindu,<sup>5</sup> the

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1. Gov. Gen. in Council to Sec. of State, 6 July 1899. para. 5. July Prog. No. 21. Ibid.

2. Quoted in Bengalee, 6 Aug. 1898.

3. Quoted from the Hindu of Madras by the Bengalee, 14 May 1898.

4. Bengalee, 18 June 1898.

5. Bengalee, 25 June 1898.

Madras Standard<sup>1</sup> and the Advocate,<sup>2</sup> denounced the British Indian Association and the Hindu Patriot for their unpatriotic attitude, and in particular, for their support of the Calcutta Municipal Bill, which was at that time before the public.

Before Lieutenant-Governor Mackenzie left Bengal in April 1898, he informed Elgin that he had "not failed to accentuate" the split between the two parties in Bengal, a split which he regarded as "a great gain".<sup>3</sup> In reply to a farewell address, Mackenzie told the British Indian Association that democratic notions, if pushed to an extreme in India, would cause trouble. He said he thought the Association had fallen "into strange company of late, but I trust this was only a temporary aberration. No doubt times change and circumstances alter," he went on in an obvious reference to the tenancy legislation, "and you, gentlemen, are the best judges of who are your friends, and who are your enemies."<sup>4</sup>

One of the most serious aspects of the split from the Congress point of view was the possibility that zamindari contributions to Congress funds might cease. It was a real possibility, for the Hindu Patriot, in commenting on the Bengalee's support of ryot interests, declared that the zamindars "will remember it when the hat is again sent round to them for the benefit of the microscopic minority the sole

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1. Bengalee, 9 July 1898.

2. Bengalee, 18 June 1898.

3. Mackenzie to Elgin, 5 April 1898, Appendix No.xx. MSS.Eur. F.84/72.

4. Statesman, 14 April 1898.

ambition of which seems to be to secure monopoly of representation in the Legislative Council."<sup>1</sup>

The Indian middle class had relied heavily for its public activities in the second half of the 19th century on the patronage of the Indian chiefs and zamindars. For example, a number of nationalist newspapers had received pecuniary assistance. Rai Jaiprakash Lal, Diwan of the Dumroan Raj, gave funds for the maintenance of the Behar Herald which was edited by Guru Prasad Sen, for years the most active Congress worker in Bihar.<sup>2</sup> The Indian Mirror was started in 1861 by Manmohan Ghose with money supplied by Debendranath Tagore.<sup>3</sup> Dyal Singh Majithia, the very wealthy Sirdar who was known to finance most political movements in the Punjab,<sup>4</sup> set up the Tribune Press and continued to pay for its operation for many years.<sup>5</sup> Raja Benoya Krishna Deb helped Surendra Nath Banerjea convert the Bengalee from a weekly into a daily in 1899.<sup>6</sup> And Raja Rampal Singh of Kalahankar supported the Hindustani of Lucknow.<sup>7</sup>

Another common form of assistance received by the middle class from zamindars and Chiefs was money for living,

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1. Quoted from the Hindu of Madras by the Bengalee, 11 June 1898.
  2. Bengalee, 21 Oct. and 25 Dec. 1900.
  3. Loke Nath Ghose, The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars, Part II, pp.76-79.
  4. Statesman, 29 Sept. 1898.
  5. Lajpat Rai Nair and Prem. Nath Kirpal, Dyal Singh Majithia (A Short Biographical Sketch), pp.46, 90-91.
  6. Surendra Nath Banerjea, A Nation in Making, pp.144-45.
  7. Bengalee, 25 Dec. 1900.

studying, and travelling outside of India. The Raja of Bhinga established a scholarship for Kshatriyas to study at Oxford or Cambridge;<sup>1</sup> the Raja of Ramnad sent Vivekananda to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893;<sup>2</sup> Sir Muncherji Bhowmagree drew an annual pension from Bhownagar State while he was in the House of Commons;<sup>3</sup> the Raja of Vizianagram was believed to have given Rs.5,000 towards Surendra Nath Banerjea's expenses as a member of the Congress delegation to England in 1890;<sup>4</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji started the East India Association in London in 1866 to represent the nationalist cause with donations from the Gaekwar of Baroda, Holkar of Indore, Sindia of Gwalior and the Rao of Cutch.<sup>5</sup> In 1873 the Gaekwar of Baroda gave Rs.50,000 to Naoroji for various services he had performed in London.<sup>6</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that the Congress itself received considerable money from the landed and titled classes, and that even a partial withdrawal of that money was a matter of serious financial concern for the Congress.

Congress expenditure falls under two headings: the

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1. C.H.Rao, Indian Biographical Dictionary, 1915, p.45.
  2. Bengal District Gazatteers, Howrah (1909) by L.S.S.O'Malley and Monmohan Chakravarty, p.48.
  3. Bengalee, 25 Aug. 1900.
  4. Note by C.S.Bayley, 18 June 1899, Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton 28 June 1899, MSS.Eur. D.570/2. However Banerjea says in a passage of his autobiography which is seemingly intended to show his self-sacrifice that he cashed Rs.4,000 worth of Government securities to finance his trip. This was, according to Banerjea, the larger part of his and his wife's only savings. S.N.Banerjea, A Nation in Making, p.111.
  5. Famous Parsis: Biographical and Critical Sketches, G.A.Natesan, (ed.) p.110.
  6. Masani, Naoroji, p.137.

money spent on the annual session and, when it was kept up, the Joint General Secretary's establishment,<sup>1</sup> and secondly, money spent on agitation in England. Each of the annual sessions between 1897 and 1903 cost the Reception Committee between Rs.30,000 and Rs.50,000. This included the cost of the pandal, decorations, and sometimes lodgings and food for the delegates. Some of this expenditure was recouped from fees collected from the delegates and visitors although the practice of waiving fees for certain groups restricted that income somewhat.

The Reception Committee in the host city bore the sole financial responsibility for the annual meeting. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was usually a Brahman, a wealthy or titled person, an ex-Government servant, or, in other words, someone possessing influence with a wide range of classes.<sup>2</sup> Greater publicity was given to contributions to the Congress in its early years than later when contributors became reluctant to be known to the Government as Congress

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1. After Hume left India, from 1892 to 1894, no money was assigned by the Congress to the Joint General Secretary and his clerical staff, and from 1895 to 1898, a lump sum was designated for the British Committee, India, and the Joint General Secretary's Office. The evidence suggests, however, that in these years there was very little activity or expenditure by the Joint General Secretary. See Resolutions XXIII of 1895, XXII of 1896, XIX of 1897, and XXV of 1898.
  2. In 1905, the prototype of this person was found. He was Munshi Madho Lal. He was a Brahman, a lawyer, a banker, a landholder, an ex-judge, and a member of the U.P. Legislative Council. He donated Rs.5,000 to the Congress and Industrial Exhibition funds.  
Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.xi, No.3. (Mar.1905). p.283. Also. C.H.Rao, Indian Biographical Dictionary, 1915, p.261.

supporters.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless it is possible to suggest a tentative pattern of financial help, using the press, official observations, and the annual Congress reports, especially those of 1887 and 1889 which contain lists of contributions.<sup>2</sup>

Bombay and Bengal seem to have had the least difficulty in attracting funds. In Bombay City, Wacha,<sup>3</sup> Telang,<sup>4</sup> Pherozeshah Mehta, and Naoroji<sup>5</sup> may have been influential in persuading the Hindu and Parsi industrialists to assist the Congress. Among the millowners who gave were V. Dipchund,<sup>6</sup> G.G. Tejpal,<sup>7</sup> and J.N. Tata.<sup>8</sup> In the Bombay Deccan, the Maratha Brahman Congress leaders were closely associated with the moneylenders, bankers, and merchants through their caste,

1. Report of the 4th I.N.C., p.vii.

2. Report of the 3rd I.N.C., p.13, and Report of the 5th I.N.C. pp. 79-82.

3. Wacha was a mill agent and was an active member of the Mill-Owners Association.

4. Telang was responsible for getting "the wealthy shettias of Bombay, his friends" to subscribe to the 1889 Congress. See Wacha's speech at the 1903 Telang Anniversary, Bombay, quoted by the Bengalee, 7 October 1903.

5. He was a partner in Cama and Co. from 1855 to 1858 or 59, and then he started a firm of his own in England with two other Parsis. Masani, Naoroji, pp.71-78.

6. Rs.1275 in 1889. Report of 5th I.N.C. p.80.

7. Rs.1000 in 1889, Ibid., p.80.

8. Rs.1000 in 1895. Letter from H.Kennedy, Com. of Bombay Police, to E.C. Cox, 20 July 1899. Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton, 27 Sept. 1899. MSS.Eur.D.510/3.

Tata also gave money to Behramji Malabari for his Indian Spectator which often differed with the Congress.

(Unsigned article by Malabari, "The Native Press - Then and Now". East and West, Vol.iii, No.34. (Aug.1904)p.853.)

Tata was often criticised for his failure to support Congress finances. His 1895 contribution seems to have been his only. His biographer is wrong in saying that "his participation in politics was confined to regular attendance at the Congress": he did not even attend the Congress except upon rare occasions. (F.R.Harris, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata: A Chronicle of His Life, p.258).

the Sarvajanic Sabha,<sup>1</sup> and the Congress itself.<sup>2</sup>

Starting in 1901, the Congress held an Industrial Conference in conjunction with its own session, and when the 1902 Congress and Conference met in Ahmedabad,<sup>3</sup> previously little affected by nationalist politics, the cotton mill-owners responded by attending and by contributing towards the Reception Committee's expenses.<sup>4</sup> A majority of the 195 Ahmedabad delegates were millowners, mill agents, mill engineers, mill managers, bankers, Seths, Shroffs, and merchants.<sup>5</sup> Ambalal Desai, Chairman of the Reception Committee, explained why "commercial Guzerat" had become interested in the Congress. It had seen that the leading industrial

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1. See occupations of Sarvajanic Sabha members attending the 1892 Congress, Appendix to Report of the 8th I.N.C.
  2. When the Congress was held in Poona in 1895, an exceptionally large proportion of the delegates (437 out of 1584) belonged to the commercial classes. Most of them came from Poona and the surrounding area. See Table, P.C.Ghosh, thesis, The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892-1909, p.50-51; Report of the 11th I.N.C., Appendix ii. Pradhan and Bhagwat (Tilak, pp.20, 97-98) say that Mahadeo Ballal Namjoshi "was largely instrumental in establishing a contact between the merchants and trading class and the extremist party led by Tilak." Namjoshi helped start the Poona Metal Factory and the Poona Industrial Exhibition, and he purchased the Kesari's first printing press. He died in 1896.
  3. The local political association, the Gujerat Sabha, consisted of 23 persons in 1901. Commissioner, N.D., to Under Sec., Bombay Rev. Dept. Telegram No.169, 1 Aug.1901. Bombay Rev. Prog., Land, Vol.6239.
  4. Report of the 18th I.N.C., p.1.
  5. Actually 261 persons were elected to attend the Congress at a meeting in Ahmedabad on 6 December 1902, but 67 of these came from outside Ahmedabad. Ibid, Appendix.

countries of the West had used political power to advance their commercial position. The erection of protective barriers "for the exclusion of foreign products... has been an object lesson to the commercial classes" who had realized the vital relation between economics and political action by the State.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to associate itself with an Industrial Conference had an important side effect on the Congress since the Conferences were attended and patronized by high Government officials in 1902, 1903, and 1904. This, one would guess, would have given the Congress added respectability and would have partly dissipated the fear of official disapproval among potential contributors of the Congress. F.S.P.Lely, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, Bombay Presidency, received an assurance from the Ahmedabad Reception Committee in 1902 that the Congress and Industrial Conference Accounts would be kept separate, but the money collected as entrance fees was turned over to the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

Another source of funds in Western India were the Indian Chiefs, including the rulers of Kolhapur, Baroda, Junagad,<sup>3</sup> Bhowanagar, and Gondal.<sup>4</sup> The Gaekwar of Baroda and the Thakur of Gondal were especially helpful to Dadabhai

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1. Report of the 18th I.N.C., pp.5-6.

2. Bengalee, 14 April 1903.

3. The Governors of Bombay wrote in 1906 that Junagad State was giving Mehta and Naoroji about Rs.600 a month "for the exercise of their moral influence in behalf of the State at headquarters." Lamington to Morley, 26 Dec.1906. Microfilm Reel No.675, MSS.Eur. B. 159.

4. H.Kennedy to E.C.Cox, 20 July 1899, op.cit.

Naoroji in London in the 1890's.<sup>1</sup> Naoroji, in fact, was given so much money that he was able in 1895, to turn down an offer from J.N.Tata of Rs.5,000 towards his campaign expenses.<sup>2</sup> The question of the way in which Naoroji used his money arose in 1892 when certain British newspapers claimed that he had received £28,000 from the Indian Princes.<sup>3</sup> John Biddulph, Agent at Baroda, 1893-95, reported that more than Rs.100,000 had been removed from the Baroda Treasury without the Minister's knowledge and that Naoroji was heard to boast during a visit to Baroda "that he could do what he liked with the Irish members."<sup>4</sup> However, a number of officials were willing or anxious to believe the worst about the nationalists, and such hearsay is worth little without independent confirmation.

The Reception Committees of the Congresses held in the Bombay Presidencies not only raised the necessary funds with seeming ease, but the Bombay leaders, at the 1903 Congress

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1. The Gaekwar admitted in 1899 in an interview with Lord Curzon that he gave £1,000 to Naoroji's campaign funds and Rs.1,000 annually to the Congress. "Memorandum of Conversation with the Gaekwar of Baroda." Enclosure of Curzon to Hamilton, 12 July 1899. MSS.Eur.D.510/2. William Lee-Warner, Secretary of the Political and Secret Department, India Office, was told that the Thakur of Gondal gave Rs.500,000 to Naoroji's campaign expenses. W.Lee Warner to C.S.Bayley, 30 Aug.1897. p.195, Political Dept. Demi-Off. Corresp., Vol.12. See also Masani, Naoroji, p.373.
  2. Masani, Naoroji, p.372.
  3. Ibid. p.322.
  4. Note by C.S.Bayley, 18 June 1899, op.cit. F.H.O'Donnell (History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Vol.ii, p.428) wrote that in 1878 the Irish members were offered financial assistance from the Indian nationalists if Ireland would return some Indian members to Parliament. Cited by Dr. Mary Cumpston, "Some early Indian Nationalists and their allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906", English Historical Review, Vol.LXXVI, No.299(April 1961), pp.282-83.

when the movement was in the doldrums and no other Province was willing to take its turn as host to the next session, invited the Congress to Bombay for the 1904 meeting - the second time Bombay Province had held a session in three years. The Reception Committee of the 1904 Bombay Congress, which was said to have been the most successful in many years, raised Rs.1,58,231, or roughly twice as much as at any previous Congress.<sup>1</sup> Of this sum, Rs.36,058 was transferred to the Industrial Conference whose total expenditure was Rs.3,47,192 and whose accounts were kept separately. After financing the Congress session and contributing to the Industrial Conference, the 1904 Reception Committee was able to deposit a further, unspent Rs.69,895 in the Congress account in the Bank of Bombay.<sup>2</sup> This enormous surplus may be attributed only in part to the fund-raising techniques of the Bombay leaders. The Universities Act, the Official Secrets Act, and the proposed Partition of Bengal no doubt acted as a stimulus also.

Bengal was the other Province in which the Reception Committees found funds with comparative ease. There it was the legal profession, its clients, and some of the zamindars, rather than the commercial classes, who subscribed. Among the

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1. Rs.13,000 of the first Rs.60,000 collected was contributed by the Indian Chiefs. The largest single contribution was Rs.5,000 from the Gaekwar of Baroda.
  2. A full statement of the Accounts of the 1904 Congress and Congress Industrial Exhibition, Bengalee, 29 Dec. 1905.

larger zamindars<sup>1</sup> who contributed before the Tenancy Bill controversy in 1898 were the Maharajas of Darbhanga, Cooch Behar, Hutwa, Dumraon, Mymensingh and Natore, as well as Raja Benoya Krishna Deb, Raja Shashi Sekhaheswar Roy of Tahirpur, Maharani Sharnamayi of Cossimbazar, Rai Yotindra Nath Chowdury of Gati, 24 Parganas, Maharaja Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, Sir Surendra Mohan Tagore, and members of the Debendra Nath Tagore family.<sup>2</sup> To what extent Government pressure was successfully applied in 1898 and later to persuade these persons not to give to the Congress may only be guessed at. Sir Lachmeswar Singh, Maharaja of Darbhanga, President of various landholding associations, and one of the most

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1. The relative value of the largest holdings in Bengal may be seen in the following list of "Capitalized Values". The list was quoted from Capital (Calcutta) by the Moslem Chronicle, 11 November 1899.

Darbhanga Raj	Rs. 2,50,00,000
Cooch Behar Raj	2,50,00,000
Orissa Temple Endowments	1,00,00,000
Burdwan Raj	75,00,000
Nawab Abdul Guni's Estate	50,00,000
Hutwa Raj	30,00,000
Gidhur Raj	30,00,000
Dumroan Raj	25,00,000
Murshidabad Nawab's Estate	25,00,000
Mohsin Endowment	25,00,000
Tagore Family Endowment	15,00,000
Tippera Raj	15,00,000
Natore Raj	15,00,000

2. These names are given in C.W. Bolton's letter to C.S. Bayley, 18 July 1899, Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton, 2 Aug. 1899. MSS. Eur. D. 510/2. Bolton's letters also said that the brothers Sir Jotindra Mohan and Sir Surendra Mohan Tagore subscribed to the Congress from fear of the Press and not from sympathy with the Congress. The Debendra Nath Tagore family were active Congress supporters and included Jyotirindra Nath Tagore who helped start the Hindu Mela, Rabindranath Tagore, J. Ghosal, and Sarala Devi Ghosal, the most active woman in the Congress at this time.

important benefactors of the Congress, was seen by Lieutenant Governor Mackenzie at the time of the debate on the Bengal Tenancy Act Amendment Bill. Afterwards Mackenzie wrote that he thought he had "now brought him to see that the Congress is hostile to the zamindars and ought not to be allowed to 'blackmail' him any longer."<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja died on 17 December 1898 and was succeeded by his brother who was not a friend of the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

In 1897, Raja Benoya Krishna Deb resigned from the Congress.<sup>3</sup> His resignation, however, may not have been influenced by official pressure.

The differences between the Congress and the larger zamindars have been emphasised above but the connections between the two groups were also many, and some of these connections may have been instrumental in securing zamindari funds for the Congress. They certainly influenced the attitude of the Congress towards the Permanent Settlement as will be demonstrated in a subsequent chapter. Among the Congress members in Bengal who were closely linked with the landholding community was Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter. He was an influential member of both the British Indian Association and the Zamindari Panchayat, and he was Chairman of the Reception Committee in 1887 - probably his only Congress activity before he resigned from the High Court in 1890.<sup>4</sup> There was also Guru

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1. A.Mackenzie to Elgin, 5 April 1898, op.cit.

2. Speech of S.Sinha, Report of 18th I.N.C., p.119.

3. At the time of his resignation, The Amrita Bazar Patrika was attacked by the Englishman (4 Nov.1897) for referring to such people as "whining curs".

4. G.P.Pillai, Representative Indians, p.321.

Prasad Sen, lawyer, zamindar, and editor of the Behar Herald, the mouthpiece of the Behar Landholders' Association;<sup>1</sup> Saligram Singh, lawyer, zamindar, and Secretary of the Behar Landholders' Association;<sup>2</sup> Boikunta Nath Sen, a lawyer who owned extensive properties, managed the Cossimbazar Raj estate, and held legal briefs for most of the important zamindars of Murshidabad District ;<sup>3</sup> J. Ghosal, zamindar and merchant who was connected through marriage to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the Debendra Nath Tagore family;<sup>4</sup> Asutosh Chowdhri, Secretary of the Bengal Landholders' Association and related by marriage to the Tagores; and finally Surendra Nath Banerjea, whose "great friend" was Raja Benoya Krishna Deb<sup>5</sup> and who received money on various occasions from the Maharaja of Vizianagram and Maharani Sharnamayi of Cossimbazar.<sup>6</sup> There were also a number of other Congress leaders from Bengal who were zamindars: Ananda Mohan Bose, R.C.Dutt, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Abdul Kasim, Ambica Charan Mazumdar, Jagendra Nath Mukerji, and Prithwis Chandra Roy. In other words, it was in the ordinary course of things for the Bengali politician to be a land-owner.

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1. Bengalee, 21 Oct. 1900.

2. See obituary in Hindustan Review, Vol.xii, No.71. (July 1905) p.93.

3. Bengalee, 10 March 1903; Boikunta Nath Sen complained at the 1893 Congress that the Bengal zamindars had not been given a seat on the reformed Legislative Councils. Report of 9th I.N.C. p.51.

4. J.Ghosal married Debendra Nath's daughter and the son of this marriage, J.Ghosal of the Bombay Civil Service, married the eldest daughter of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar

5. S.N.Banerjea, A Nation in Making, pp.144-45.

6. Ibid. pp.104-05. Vizianagram gave Banerjea Rs.15,000 for the Indian Association's Building Fund.

However, this would hardly lead them to attitudes similar to those of the great Bengal landowning families.

The sources of Congress income in Madras were more diffuse than in Bombay and Bengal. Madras lacked an Indian industrial class as wealthy as Bombay's and a zamindari class as large and lightly taxed as Bengal's. Nor did it have patrons as generous as Baroda and Darbhanga. In the early years of the Congress funds were received on one or more occasions from the rulers or zamindars<sup>1</sup> of Mysore,<sup>2</sup> Travancore

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1. The annual incomes of the largest zamindari estates in 1904 in Madras were as follows:

Vizianagram	Rs.16,00,000
Venkatagiri	12,14,000
Ramnad	9,25,732
Sivaganga	9,28,433
Pittapuram	9,13,919
Nazvid	7,91,354
Karvetnagar	6,26,036
Kalahasti	5,35,159
Nidadarole	5,24,002
Jeypore	4,75,000
Parlakimedi	4,67,433
Bobbili	4,60,000

J.Thompson, Gov.of Madras, to Amthill, 20 Sept.1904.  
No.370. MSS.Eur. 233/34/2.

2. The Maharaja of Mysore gave Rs.1,000 to the 1887 Congress and was later told that the Government of India did not consider it advisable for Native Chiefs to take any part in politics in British India. The Nizam of Hyderabad, who had given a much larger sum to the United Indian Patriotic Association, was advised similarly.  
Dufferin to Cross, 8 Oct. 1888. No.114. MSS.Eur.243/5.

Cochin, Ramnad, Vizianagram, Bobbili, and Venkatagiri;<sup>1</sup> successful lawyers such as P. Ananda Charlu, Eardly Norton, P. Rangia Naidu, and S. Subramania Iyer; and merchants such as Sir Savalai Ramaswami Mudaliar and Sabapathy Mudaliar.<sup>2</sup> Of all these people, the Raja of Ramnad seems to have given the most.<sup>3</sup> In 1894 alone he donated Rs.10,000<sup>4</sup> and in 1897 he invited the Congress to meet at Madura, offering his "means and services" if it did.<sup>5</sup> It may only be an accident of the greater publicity given to Congress finance in Madras, but one receives the impression that Congress members of the professional class in that Province gave more frequently from their own pockets than members in either Bombay or Bengal,

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1. The Raja of Venkatagiri gave Rs.500 to the 1887 Congress and Rs.200 to the 1898 Congress. (Bengalee, 31 Dec.1898). Such small contributions do not necessarily signify active sympathy with the Congress, although the Raja of Venkatagiri may have been grateful to the Congress for its demand that the Permanent Settlement be extended. Venkatagiri was President of the Madras Landholders' Association from its founding in 1890 until his death in 1916. Venkatagiri, like his brother, the Raja of Bobbili, represented the Madras landholders on the Madras Legislative Council.  
Alladi Jagannatha Sastri, A Family History of Venkatagiri Rajas, pp.127-131.  
Also, Maha-Rajah of Bobbili, A Revised and Enlarged Account of the Bobbili Zemindari.
  2. Report of the 3rd I.N.C., p.13, and Report of the 5th I.N.C. pp.79-82.
  3. Raja Bhaskara Sethupathi, like previous Rajas of Ramnad, often faced financial embarrassment from the uneconomic management of his estates. He died in 1903. A. Vadivelu, Ruling Chiefs...of India, p.570-1. The only obvious similarity between Ramnad, Baroda, and Darbhanga was that each was educated by an English tutor.
  4. Report of 11th I.N.C., p.57.
  5. Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.96.

and relied less on large landowners, Chiefs of Native States, or industrialists. Door-to-door canvassing was used in Madras before it was adopted in other Provinces. In 1887, when 30,000 Tamil copies of Viraraghava Chariar's Congress Catechism were circulated, Rs.5,500 was collected from 8,000 persons in amounts ranging from one anna to Rs.1-8, and Rs.8,000 was given in sums of Rs.1-8 to Rs.30.<sup>1</sup> The Reception Committee of the 1894 Madras Congress boasted that almost half of its Rs.40,000 came in small amounts and that door-to-door collections had been made.<sup>2</sup> Once again, in 1898 the Madras Reception Committee collected "funds in dribblets from the mass of people instead of in hundreds and thousands from a few rich individuals." At that time it was predicted that this system would become general in view of "the forced coldness of the money aristocracy due to official influence", and the success of this system was cited as proof that the Congress was "striking its roots in the hearts of the people."<sup>3</sup>

Details of Congress finance in other Provinces are not readily obtainable. The death in 1898 of Sirdar Dyal Singh Majithia was a severe loss to the Congress in the Punjab where he had helped the nationalist cause with money from his vast estates and successful business activities.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Report of the 3rd I.N.C., p.11.

2. Report of the 10th I.N.C., pp.9, 14.

3. Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.iii.

4. Dyal Singh was Chairman of the 1893 Lahore Reception Committee, President of the Lahore Indian Association, and Proprietor of the Tribune, the leading Congress newspaper in the Punjab.

The Congresses of 1898 (Madras), 1899 (Lucknow) and 1900 (Lahore) experienced difficulty in finding funds. The causes have already been suggested: the death of Dyal Singh and the Maharaja of Darbhanga, Government pressure, and the hostility of the Bengal zamindars. It was suggested that in view of the lack of support from the aristocracy, the Congress would have to rely more heavily on the middle and lower classes.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, a renewed emphasis was placed on the need for the political education of the masses.<sup>2</sup> In 1899, 30,000 copies of an appeal for funds was distributed,<sup>3</sup> and in 1901, the Calcutta Reception Committee had 15,000 Bengali, Uriya, and Urdu pamphlets printed.<sup>4</sup> Various economies were also suggested, including the reduction of the costly decorations and celebrations which had become a customary part of the annual session.<sup>5</sup> In 1899, under the pressure of financial need, it was decided to have the chairs for the Congress made in India instead of following what was apparently the more natural course of importing them from Australia.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.iii, also, Report of the 15th I.N.C., pp.v-vi, Report of the 16th I.N.C., p.2; Bengalee, 1 Jan. 1901.
  2. Bengalee, 12 April 1901; also, Report of the 15th I.N.C., p.vi. However, the Bengalee (14 March 1903), in comments on the failure to carry out schemes for enlisting the masses, said "the wisdom, inculcated by Chankya, the Indian Machiavelli, that it is folly to lead the masses, seeing that in the case of success, the fruit of it is equally shared by all... still influences, unconsciously perhaps, not a few of us."
  3. Statesman, 7 Sept. 1899.
  4. Bengalee, 25 Dec. 1901.
  5. For instance, Speech of Kali Prasanna Roy, Chairman of Lahore Reception Committee, 1900. Report of the 16th I.N.C. p.8.
  6. Bengalee, 16 Sept. 1899.

There were two funds in India from which the Congress could draw in the event of an emergency. One was the Congress Permanent Fund. This was established in 1889, when Rs.59,000 was voted to it by the Congress. Actually, only Rs.5,000 was collected in the first year of the Permanent Fund, and this was lost when the Oriental Bank of Bombay went into liquidation in the Bombay financial crisis of 1890.<sup>1</sup> More money was voted to the Fund by the Congresses of 1890 and 1892,<sup>2</sup> and in 1893, an "Indian Friend", believed to be the Maharaja of Darbhanga, gave Rs.15,000 to the Fund.<sup>3</sup> At one point the Fund contained as much as £4,000 but by 1895, £1,900 had been borrowed to pay back debts which the Standing Congress Committee had failed to remit to the British Committee.<sup>4</sup> It seems that by 1899 the Fund was wholly depleted for in that year the Congress appointed a Committee to take, among other things, "such steps as they may deem fit to raise a permanent fund for carrying on the work of the Indian National Congress<sup>5</sup>s." This proposal was not acted on.

The other fund was the National Fund in Bengal. It was started in 1883, according to Surendra Nath Banerjea, "as a memento" of his imprisonment for contempt of court.<sup>6</sup> The original sum of Rs.20,000 was given to the Indian Association which later agreed to contribute the annual accumulation of

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1. A.C.Mazumdar, Indian National Evolution, p.300.
  2. Resolutions XII of 1890 and XVII of 1892.
  3. Note by C.S.Bayley, 18 June 1899, op.cit.
  4. Report of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress for 1894-95. Bengalee, 7 Dec. 1895.
  5. Resolution X(ii) of 1899.
  6. A Nation in Making, p.81.

interest (Rs.500) to the Congress Permanent Fund. However, in 1896, 1897, and 1898 no contribution was made by the Indian Association.<sup>1</sup> Banerjea wrote that "this fund was most useful in the anti-Partition agitation."<sup>2</sup>

The Presidency Association of Bombay almost came into possession of some money in 1897 when the Bombay Branch of the East India Association voted to discontinue payments to the London Branch of interest accruing to the Association's Bombay Bank deposit. The Bombay Branch was founded in 1868 to collect funds and act as an agency for the London East India Association which, in turn, had been started by Dadobhai Naoroji in 1866. Holkar gave the new Branch Rs.25,000 in 1872 and a Board of Trustees was appointed to send the annual interest to London. However, in 1896, when D.A.Khare was the only surviving Trustee and the London East India Association had passed into the control of Indians and Englishmen hostile to the Congress movement, payment of interest was discontinued. The Bombay Branch voted in 1897 to dissolve itself and turn the Trust fund over to the Bombay Presidency Association. The London East India Association, acting through Sir Lepel Griffin, Sir William Rattigan, and Sir M. Bhownagree, filed a plaint against Khare in the High Court of Bombay. Justice Tyabji refused to accept Khare's claim that the London Association had ceased to have any moral right to the money, and he ordered Khare to give the

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1. C.W.Bolton to C.S.Bayley, 18 July 1899, Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton, 2 August 1899. MSS.Eur.D.510/2.
  2. A Nation in Making, p.81.

money to the London Branch.<sup>1</sup>

The amount of money spent in England by the British Committee of the Indian National Congress each year was usually larger than that spent by the Reception Committee of the annual Congress session. The newspaper India was the chief expenditure, costing about £2,000 a year from the time it became a regular monthly, in 1892, until 1898 when it was converted into a weekly.<sup>2</sup> After that presumably the deficit was even greater. India contained little advertising and it was distributed free of charge to M.P.'s and other people interested in India.<sup>3</sup> The activities of the British Committee cost another £1,000,<sup>4</sup> and included political breakfasts, and lecture tours, and the preparation of material for Parliamentary debates, British newspapers, and witnesses appearing before such bodies as the Welby Commission on Indian Finance.<sup>5</sup>

Theoretically, the £3,000 budgeted for the British Committee and India was to be supplied by the Congress in India. For this purpose the annual session usually passed a Resolution assigning Rs.60,000 to the British Committee and India.<sup>6</sup> The bulk of this sum would have been collected if the annual subscription fee of Rs.6 had been paid for each of the copies of India sent to India, and, indeed, at one stage, when 10,000 copies of each issue were sent, the whole

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1. Bengalee, 10 Feb. 1903.

2. Speech of Surendra Nath Banerjea, Report of the 10th I.N.C., p.155.

3. Wedderburn, Hume, p.98.

4. Banerjea, Report of the 10th I.N.C., p.155.

5. See monthly issues of India; Masani, Naoroji; and Wedderburn, Hume.

6. Rs.40,000 was voted annually from 1889 to 1891.

Rs.60,000 should have been gathered. But most people who received India did not pay, and the money that was remitted to the British Committee often consisted, in part, of surplus funds from the Reception Committee<sup>1</sup> or donations from Princes and zamindars. In the seven years from 1894 to 1900, the total amount transmitted to the British Committee by the Congress was Rs.2,25,800, or Rs.32,257 per annum.<sup>2</sup> This was slightly more than half the amount promised.

Hume, Wedderburn, and Naoroji sent periodic letters to the Congress Standing Committees reminding them of the Congress promises. These reminders, when they became public, caused the Anglo-Indian press to suggest that the Congress was bankrupt<sup>3</sup> and they encouraged officials like Curzon and Woodburn, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in their belief that the Congress was losing strength.<sup>4</sup>

The reluctance of people in India to contribute to Congress activities in England was possibly related to the improbability of their Liberal and Radical friends achieving success in Parliament against the Liberal Front Benches and the large Conservative majority. There was also a feeling in

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1. Rs.25,000 of the surplus of Rs.28,000 from the 1896 Congress were sent to the British Committee. (Bengalee, 13 Feb. 1897.). There was a surplus of about Rs.30,000 from the 1894 Congress, also. (Bengalee, 13 April 1895.)
  2. Letter from Alfred Nundy, Assistant Secretary of the Congress, reviewing Report of the British Committee, Bengalee, 29 May 1901.
  3. Report of the 5th I.N.C., p.lxv; Bengalee, 13 Feb.1897.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 2 Aug. 1899, and its Enclosure, C.W.Bolton to C.S.Bayley, 18 July 1899. MSS.Eur. D.510/2.

India that the British Committee was extravagant and often inactive, and that India was not well conducted.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the only direct communication to Congress supporters from the British Committee was more often than not the occasion of another appeal for payment of outstanding debts. Alfred Nundy, the Assistant Secretary of the Congress, found during his fund-raising tour in 1900 that

"more than one Secretary adopted the plan of never opening the cover of a letter from the British Committee from fear it may contain a demand for money; and by far the larger number of them after reading the letter, either throw it away or file it, instead of circulating it to members of a Committee where one exists."<sup>2</sup>

The failure of the Secretaries of the Standing Congress Committees to collect subscriptions for India became a crucial problem only after the death of the Maharaja of Darbhanga in 1898. The Government of Bengal reported that he had given Rs.10,000 annually to India<sup>3</sup> and he was also said to have paid for the conversion of India into a weekly.<sup>4</sup> Hume and Wedderburn had also largely helped the British

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1. For instance, Speech of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Report of 17th I.N.C. p.80: Mahratta, 6 Aug.1899, T & D Selections, 14 Aug.1899, para.590, P.S.L.I. Vol.116; Bengalee, 20 Jan. and 26 Dec.1900. 24 and 29 May 1901.
  2. Bengalee, 24 Dec. 1900.
  3. C.W.Bolton to C.S.Bayley, 18 July 1899, op.cit. C.S.Bayley believed that Darbhanga gave large amounts but he had no proof that he contributed Rs.10,000 a year. Note by C.S.Bayley, 18 June 1899, Hamilton Papers, op.cit. An informant of Lee Warner's, who claimed he had seen the Congress accounts, said that Darbhanga donated Rs.50,000 a year to the Parliamentary Indian Party's funds". This, although not impossible, is difficult to give credence to. W.Lee Warner to C.S.Bayley, 30 Aug.1897, Pol.Dept., Demi-Off. Corresp. Vol.12.
  4. Hamilton to Elgin, 26 Aug. 1897, MSS. Eur. F. 84/15.

Committee in lieu of contributions from India, and neither of them was willing to continue to supplement Congress funds from their own resources. In the first years of the Congress Hume had spent "ten or fifteen thousand rupees out of his own pocket" for work in England and India.<sup>1</sup> In later years, Wedderburn bore the greater burden so that by 1904, he had spent £10,000 or Rs.150,000 on the Congress.<sup>2</sup> In 1900, when he decided not to stand for re-election to Parliament, it was said that he was retiring because he had been physically and financially overtaxed by his work for the Congress.<sup>3</sup>

By 1899 the signs of strain between the British Committee and the Congress in India were beginning to show in public. In October 1899, Wedderburn and Hume sent a tart letter to the Standing Congress Committees, saying "it is almost incredible but is none the less the fact, that of the Rs.60,000 voted annually ... only Rs.16,205 have as yet been received on account of 1898 and only Rs.2,064 on account of the current year, now in its last quarter."<sup>4</sup> Ten weeks later, at the Congress session, Surendra Nath Banerjea made his third appeal for funds for India and the British Committee.

1. Annually, it seems. Speech of Surendra Nath Banerjea, Report of the 5th I.N.C.
2. Speech of D.E.Wacha, Report of the 20th I.N.C.p.227. Naoroji and Bonnerjee also gave money to India. According to Alfred Nundy, Wedderburn, Hume, Naoroji and Bonnerjee all helped raise the special Deficit Fund in 1896 but then none of them contributed from 1897 until 1901. Bengalee, 29 May 1901.
3. "Manifesto" sent by Wedderburn, Hume and Naoroji to Secretaries of the Standing Congress Committees. Bengalee, 28 Nov. 1900.
4. Enclosure to Curzon to Hamilton, 28 Dec.1899. MSS.Eur. D.510/3.

He repeated the familiar argument that "your voice will be like that of one crying in the wilderness" unless the same voice was heard in the British Parliament, Platform, and Press. He reminded the Congress that the Irish agitation for Home Rule had little success until it was transferred to England, and this, he said, demonstrated that "we must follow the same methods".<sup>1</sup> However, the argument that reform would come only from appealing to the British electorate seemed to be losing its appeal because in 1899 it brought a mere Rs.3,000.<sup>2</sup> while Banerjea's similar appeal in 1892 had attracted almost Rs.13,500<sup>3</sup> and his 1889 appeal had produced Rs.65,000.<sup>4</sup>

The 1899 Congress, besides contributing a niggardly Rs.3,000 for arrears of debts to the British Committee and India, passed a resolution saying that funds should be raised for the establishment of a new agency in London "for the purpose of organizing, in concert with the British Congress Committee, public meetings for the dissemination of information on Indian matters".<sup>5</sup> The reason for passing this resolution is obscure in the Congress Report but it would seem to reflect the feeling that the British Committee was inadequate. The new agency was to be under the direction of that year's President, R.C.Dutt, who, significantly, had not joined

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1. Report of 15th I.N.C., pp.104-05.

2. Ibid. p.xxvi.

3. Report of the 8th I.N.C., p.115.

4. Report of the 5th I.N.C., p.lxv.

5. Resolution XXII.

the British Committee since arriving in London in 1897. As this resolution was not followed up,<sup>1</sup> the British Committee alone continued officially to represent the Congress effort in England.

However, there was another organization, called the London Indian Society, which claimed to represent Indians Resident in the United Kingdom. Whereas the British Committee was a closed body largely controlled by Englishmen, the London Indian Society, with its open meetings and predominantly Indian composition, was the more natural focus of allegiance for Indian students. The Society made special arrangements to meet students arriving in England and to help them find lodgings. The India Office had the Society's annual conference in December, 1898 "specially reported" and found that the proceedings, which were intended to correspond to the Indian National Congress session, were "violent in language".<sup>2</sup>

The British Committee, realizing that its expenses far exceeded the contributions received from India, reduced in 1900 the number of copies of India allocated for India, from 10,000 to 6,000, or just 800 more than the actual number of subscribers (not necessarily paying). It was hoped that by limiting the supply to the demand, waste expenditure would be reduced. At the same time, the British Committee decided

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1. S.N.Banerjea, A Nation in Making, p.165.  
 2. Undated foolscap signed by W.Lee-Warner, attached to T. and D. Selections, 19 June 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.114.

to increase the subscription rate from Rs.6 to Rs.9. As an inducement to more efficient collection, the local Congress bodies were allowed to keep 4/54 of the amount subscribed.<sup>1</sup> In the same year Alfred Nundy toured India for the purpose of collecting funds and improving Congress morale. In neither task did he have notable success. During the first six weeks he raised Rs.4,000 for the British Committee.<sup>2</sup>

In a further effort to solve the financial problem, the Indian Congress Committee decided in 1901 that instead of sending funds and correspondence direct to the British Committee, the Standing Committees should send them to Wacha, the Joint General Secretary, in Bombay, who would then remit them to London.<sup>3</sup> Evidently the British Committee regarded this as a usurpation of their functions or they thought that Wacha was not likely to have any more success than themselves in collecting funds, for the British Committee sent a circular to the Standing Committees, contradicting the Indian Congress Committee's previous circular. The British Committee informed the Standing Committees that subscriptions should be sent direct to London and that in the future, India would be sent only to those persons who paid in advance. Subsequently, when the circulation of India to defaulters was stopped, the Secretaries of the Standing Committees found that they were unable to collect any of the outstanding subscriptions, and

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1. R.C.Dutt's circular letter to the Provincial Congress Committees, Bengalee, 16 Feb. 1900.

2. Bengalee, 24 April 1900.

3. Alfred Nundy's Circular Letter to Secretaries of Standing Congress Committees, Bengalee, 28 June 1901.

almost none of the current ones.<sup>1</sup>

The British Committee had already announced, on 24 February 1901, that it had finally decided to give up its rooms in London and discontinue India if the outstanding balance of Rs.37,500 had not been received by the end of June 1901. But by the last week of June, the total collections for 1901 amounted to only Rs.12,000.<sup>2</sup> Then, after the Bengalee had expressed regret at the shut down of the British Committee,<sup>3</sup> W.C.Bonnerji and "others" made contributions<sup>4</sup> and Dadabhai Naoroji deposited Rs.25,000 with Wedderburn as a guarantee against loss for the remainder of the year. The British Committee was able to continue operations and it turned down R.C.Dutt's offer to take over India.<sup>5</sup>

India continued to be a difficult concern after these adjustments. It was converted into a Joint Stock Company with 2,000 shares priced at £1 each for sale in India. The shares did not sell, at least in Bengal, where Bhupendra Nath Basu and Nalin Behari Sircar, in order to spare Bengal the shame of defaulting, it was said, put up the whole of Bengal's allotted £400.<sup>6</sup> In 1905 the Standing Congress Committees were relieved of their responsibility for collecting funds for the British Committee by the Joint General Secretary

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1. Alfred Nundy's Circular Letter to Secretaries of the Standing Congress Committees, 25 June 1901, Bengalee, 28 June 1901.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Bengalee, 18 June 1901.
  4. Bengalee, 21 June 1901.
  5. Masani, Naoroji, p.315.
  6. Speeches of Bhupendra Nath Basu and Surendra Nath Banerjea at the Burdwan Provincial Congress. Extraordinary Edition of the Bengalee, 28 June 1904.

(Gokhale) and his establishment.<sup>1</sup> Other sources of income were also found including a fund-raising campaign by Gokhale's Servants of India Society.<sup>2</sup>

The trouble experienced in finding money for the Congress was only part of the general crisis through which the movement was passing between 1896 and 1904. On almost all sides there were reports of apathy and inactivity,<sup>3</sup> or alternately, factionalism. In the Central Provinces and the North West Provinces and Oudh, the Congress leaders had not yet followed the other Provinces in holding Provincial Conferences.<sup>4</sup> Each year a contingent from these two Provinces appeared at the Congress, but apart from this there seems to have been little political activity.

In the Punjab the first Provincial Conference was in 1895 and it was attended by 40 persons.<sup>5</sup> But after a couple of years the Conference was discontinued.<sup>6</sup> The Indian Association of Lahore, the main spirit behind the Congress in the Punjab, had, in 1897, only 24 members and subscriptions

1. Bengalee, 24 Jan. 1905.

2. Masani, Naoroji, p.315.

3. Malabari wrote in 1903 "What has come over our local Associations? From every province comes the cry - no attendance, no funds, no regular work - in short, no corporate activity to speak of.....They seem to have suffered almost concurrently with the rise of the Congress movement. "Ranade and His Times" East and West, Vol.II, No.25, (Nov.1903), p.1299.

4. Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, No.5. (Nov.1902), p.490.

5. Bengalee, 28 Dec. 1895.

6. Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, No.5. (Nov.1902), p.490.

amounting to Rs.144 per annum.<sup>1</sup> Not only was the number of Congress members small, but they were confined to the areas in and around Lahore, Amritsar, and Umballa. In fact in the years 1894 to 1904 only 13 Punjabi delegates from other Districts travelled to a Congress outside the Punjab. In no other Province was the Congress membership limited to such a small area.<sup>2</sup>

In Bengal the lack of enthusiasm for the Congress cause was also marked. As early as 1895 the Bengalee had warned that the Bengalis were in danger of being left behind by the more energetic Bombay politicians.<sup>3</sup> The Sanjivani in 1898 implored the Bengalis to shake off their lethargy and "take part in the sacrifice for the mother".<sup>4</sup> And in 1899 Ambica Charan Mazumdar, the President of the Provincial Conference, acknowledged that the Congress had "ceased to exhibit any tendency towards further development and expansion".<sup>5</sup>

In 1900 the Bengal Provincial Conference was held in Bihar (Bhagalpur) for the first time in an effort to interest the Biharis in the Congress once again, as some of them had become resentful of the position of the Bengalis in the Bar,

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1. Its membership was larger previous to the Government decision in 1890 to forbid officials from participating in political movements. L.W.Dane, Off'g Ch.Sec. to Govt. of Punjab, to Sec. to Govt. of India, 20 April 1897. June Prog. No.13, I.H.P.Pub., Vol.5180.
  2. See L.R.Gokhale, The First Twenty Years of the Indian National Congress, Vol.1, Part II, Table III.
  3. 27 April 1895.
  4. 10 December 1898, T & D Selections, 2 Jan. 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.III.
  5. Quoted in Bengalee, 20 May 1899.

the Civil Service, and education in Bihar,<sup>1</sup> and, in consequence, had withdrawn from the Bengali-dominated movement in Eastern India. There was an anti-Congress demonstration in Bhagalpur and some of the Bengali leaders refused to make the long trip from Calcutta, including J.Ghosal, A.M.Bose, and W.C.Bonnerjee. Nevertheless the 1900 Conference at Bhagalpur was a qualified success.<sup>2</sup> But when the Bengali leaders decided to hold the 1902 Provincial Conference in Cuttack, Orissa, the combination of anti-Bengali sentiment<sup>3</sup> and political apathy was too great, and the Conference was cancelled. In April 1904 four months after the plans for the Partition of Bengal had been announced, the Provincial Conference had to be postponed due to lack of preparation and organization.<sup>4</sup>

After the first few years of the Indian National Congress, there was a falling off of activity by the Indian Association of Calcutta. It no longer issued annual reports or, it seems, even held annual meetings except for the purpose of electing delegates to the Congress.<sup>5</sup> In the first 15 years of its existence (1876-1891), the Indian Association

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1. See Speech of Dip Narain Singh, Ch'mn of Reception Committee, Bhagalpur, Bengal Provincial Conference, Bengalee 21 April 1900. Also, Brajendrenath De, "Reminiscences of an Indian Civilian" Calcutta Review Vol.133, No.2. (Nov.1954), p.92.
  2. Bengalee, 14 April 1900.
  3. See Brajendranath De, op.cit. Calcutta Review, Vol.130.No.3. (Feb.1954), p.145. Also, Bengalee, 7 Dec.1904. For an interesting sidelight on the divisions within the Bengali community in Orissa, see Radha Krishna Bose, The Present Situation of the Domiciled Bengalees of Orissa and the Way Out of It. (Cuttack 1917).
  4. Bengalee, 15 June 1904.
  5. Surendra Nath Banerjea, as editor of the Bengalee, published reports of the meetings of Muslim, European, Eurasian, cultural, trade, and official organizations, but not of the Indian Association in the years 1897 to 1905.

had been active in a number of directions: in organizing the National Conferences of 1883 and 1895 at Calcutta,<sup>1</sup> in organizing mass meetings in the mofussil to explain to the ryots their "real needs",<sup>2</sup> in forming "Rent Unions" among the ryots as protection against zamindari oppression, and in establishing night schools for adult education.<sup>3</sup> It also sent agents to famine areas to collect information during the grain scarcities of 1884, 1886-87, and 1889, and in 1884, in conjunction with the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, it opened relief centres in distressed villages.<sup>4</sup> Dwarkanath Ganguli, the Assistant Secretary from 1882 until his death in 1898, was particularly enthusiastic about this line of work, and although his successor, Dwijendra Nath Basu, visited scarcity areas in Howrah District in 1901,<sup>5</sup> the activities of the Indian Association were, for the most part, confined to Calcutta after Ganguli's death.

The number of Branches of the Indian Association had declined also. After Banerjea's tour through Northern India in 1877 there were 10 Branch Associations,<sup>6</sup> by the end of 1885 there were 80 Branches in Northern India and Bengal,<sup>7</sup> and in 1886 twenty-one Branches sent delegates to the Congress.<sup>8</sup> During subsequent years most of these Branches

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1. Bagal, op.cit. p.80.

2. Ibid. p.109.

3. Ibid. pp. 46-49.

4. Ibid. pp. 78-108.

5. Bengalee, 28 Aug.1901.

6. Bagal, op.cit. p.21.

7. Ibid.p.79.

8. Appendix, Report of the 2nd I.N.C.

disappeared or were succeeded by organizations with different names.

Political activity in Madras, too, was said to be sluggish.<sup>1</sup> In 1900 the Mahajana Sabha, whose name was more synonymous with the Congress movement in Madras than the Indian Association was in Bengal, had a membership of 200 and required a quorum of 15 members to conduct its business.<sup>2</sup> The Madras Provincial Conferences were held annually except 1903 when the experiment of convening four District Conferences was made instead.<sup>3</sup>

In Bombay political activity was temporarily suspended in 1897 after the Rand murder, the sedition trials, and the detention of the Natus. The moderate Deccan Sabha discontinued its work in order to demonstrate its disapproval of the murder and it became active again only in January 1900 after the Natus had been released.<sup>4</sup> Little was heard of the Sarvajanic Sabha while Tilak was in jail and its Journal was discontinued after 1897. "The decadence in the activity and

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1. Speech of John Adams, President of Madras Provincial Conference. Bengalee, 16 April 1898.  
Also, Madras Mail, 30 Dec. 1898, T.& D. Selections, 2 Jan. 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.III.
  2. Curzon address to Mahajana Sabha, 11 Dec. 1900.  
Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol.I. p.395.
  3. Bengalee, 20 June 1903. The District Conference at Bezwada in May 1903 was the 12th annual Kistna District Conference. The existence of District Conferences in Madras while other Provinces were having difficulty in organizing even a Provincial Conference, suggest that more attention was given to organizational activities in Madras than elsewhere. Report of the Twelfth Kistna District Conference Held at Bezwada on 23rd and 24th May 1903. (Bezwada, 1904).
  4. Bengalee, 2 Feb. 1900.

the influence" of the Bombay Presidency Association was deplored by the Native Opinion of Bombay while the Bengalee reported that many of Mehta's and Wacha's earlier associates had quit politics.<sup>1</sup> In 1897 and 1898, when plague was still rampant, the Bombay Provincial Conference was not held.<sup>2</sup>

The political life of the Bombay Presidency was revived by the publication on 17 March 1899 of an article in the Poona newspaper, Kal. The editor of Kal was Shivram Mahadeo Paranjpe, a 32 years old Chitpavan Brahman who was an officer of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha and a member of the Poona Standing Congress Committee. A close associate of Tilak's, he had participated in the no-rent campaign in 1896-97. He started the Kal in 1898 as a Marathi weekly and almost immediately it gained one of the largest circulations in India. Paranjpe was warned by the Bombay Government in 1899, 1900, 1904, 1905, and 1907 that the tone of the writing was seditious.<sup>3</sup> On 3 September 1904 Paranjpe published an article which, in the view of the acting Viceroy, Lord Ampthill, and the Governor of Bombay, Lord Lamington, hinted at the assassination of Lord Curzon, who was then in England.<sup>4</sup> Paranjpe was finally convicted of seditious libel in 1908 and sentenced to 19 months imprisonment.<sup>5</sup>

The Kal article of 17 March 1899 discussed the action of the Chapekars and Ranade in murdering Rand. Ayerst, and

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1. Bengalee, 16 June 1900.

2. Ibid. 2 Feb. 1900.

3. Sedition Committee, 1918. Report, p.3.

4. Ampthill to Curzon, 19 Sept. 1904. No.59. MSS.Eur.E.233/37..

5. Sedition Committee, 1918. Report, pp.3,5.

the Dravid brothers, and it suggested that their deeds should be looked at "not from the point of view of the laws made by Councils, but from the point of view of the law of God, and the injunction of religion. They are, in a word, not murderers, but martyrs". India's grievances were compared to Russia's and the assassination of Plehve was praised.<sup>1</sup>

The Congress Committee of Calcutta, acting on the advice of a member of the Standing Congress Committee of Bombay City, issued a condemnation of the Kal article and sent a telegram to the Standing Committee of Bombay, urging it to take similar action. At a meeting attended by 14 members, the Bombay Committee adopted a resolution saying that Paranjpe should "be excluded from all connection with the Congress".<sup>2</sup> In London, the London India Society met to consider a resolution "that this Society regrets and condemns the recent statements in the (Poona) Kal with regard to the Poona murders and considers them prejudiced to the best interests of India." Unexpectedly, the Society defeated this resolution by a majority of one vote. Dadabhai Naoroji, who had presided over the meeting, decried the attitude of the members who, he said, "had virtually expressed their concurrence" with the Kal's justification of assassination. He threatened to resign the Chairmanship of the Society if the next meeting did not change its decision.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Pol.Dept. Minute Paper, Registry No.420, P.S.L.I., Vol.112.

2. Statesman, 20 April 1899.

3. T. & D. Summary of Newspaper (unspecified) articles.  
T. & D. Selections, 26 June 1899, P.S.L.I. Vol.114.

In India most of the Congress press expressed disapproval of the Kal article but a number of newspapers questioned the right of any Congress Committee to censure or expel a person from the Congress. It was suggested, that without a written constitution, the right did not exist.<sup>1</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika, which seldom missed an opportunity to attack the Calcutta-Bombay leaders who in effect ran the Congress, commented

"So you Bengalis are now controlled by a certain clique of Bombay! An open quarrel between the Poona Party and the Bombay clique is imminent, and the action of the Calcutta Committee has made it almost inevitable. An open split seems to be at hand. Unless the differences are soon amicably settled, the next Congress will have to decide either to lose the Bombay clique or the Dekhan sympathy. The crisis in fact is serious."<sup>2</sup>

The Mahammadan of Madras, a pan-Islamist paper, detected a dilemma for the Congress leaders loyal to British rule because they were confronted with "an inner and widening ring of Extremists who apotheosize the assassin". The Moderates, it went on, must realize that they may be

"the unwilling tools of malcontents, who use constitutionalism as did a certain Egyptian King his avaunt-guard of cats, which he pushed on before his army, knowing that the foe, regarding these animals as sacred, would refrain from showering their missiles for fear of hurting them and thus give the astute royal tactician time to rush the position. The moderates, who would draw the line at assassination have brought into being a Frankenstein from whose presence they now blench;

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1. Advocate (Lucknow), 7 April 1899, T. & D. Selections, 10 April 1899; also Indian Mirror (Calcutta), 22 April 1899 and Tribune (Lahore), 22 April 1899, T. & D. Selections, 1 May 1899. P.S.L.I., Vol.113.
  2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8 April 1899, T. & D. Selections, 10 April 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.113.

but as they, like the Extremists, go on the same bill of indictment, with the difference - and a vast difference it is - that they talk, while the Extremists act, truth to tell - granting sound the [premises] common to both - the latter are more logical." <sup>1</sup>

Soon after the Kal controversy had subsided, Tilak, having been released from jail, resumed the editorship of the Kesari. In his first editorial he wrote, "political movements must now be resuscitated in Poona, forgetting all distinctions between the so-called moderationists and extremists".<sup>2</sup> However these distinctions were not to disappear. A dispute arose at the 1900 Bombay Provincial Conference at Satara when Tilak tried to persuade the Subjects Committee to adopt a resolution condemning Lord Sandhurst's administration for its Plague and repressive policies.

Tilak had moved a similar resolution in the Subjects Committee at the 1899 Lucknow Congress, only to be told by the President, R.C.Dutt, that the resolution was out of order since it was only of Provincial interest. After Tilak correctly pointed out that previous Congresses had passed resolutions on Provincial subjects, Dutt forced Tilak to withdraw the Resolution by threatening to resign if he persisted.<sup>3</sup> The Satara dispute followed a similar course. It began during the nominations for members of the Subjects Committee. The Poona delegation, headed by Tilak, submitted a list of 20

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1. Mahammadan, 26 June 1899, T.& D. Selections, 3 July 1899, P.S.L.I., Vol.115.
  2. Kesari, 4 July 1899, T.& D. Selections 24 July 1899. P.S.L.I., Vol.115.
  3. Ram Gopal, Tilak, pp.205-06.

names. The President, Goculdas Kahandas Parekh, ruled that Bombay, Poona, and Satara could each nominate only 6 or 7 persons and Poona complied by submitting seven names. But then one of the Poona delegates tried to add several more names. Finally, after a noisy demonstration the President agreed to name two more Poona delegates to the Subjects Committee.

During the Subjects Committee meeting Tilak moved that his resolution condemning Lord Sandhurst be adopted. Parekh threatened to resign if the resolution was selected but Tilak produced a written statement signed by 124 of the 175 or so delegates at the Conference, asking that the resolution be included. Tilak was relying on a rule adopted at the 1891 Provincial Conference which said that if one-third of the delegates wished to discuss a subject rejected by the Subjects Committee, then the matter would be discussed. When Parekh, like Dutt in 1899, refused to consider it, there was an uproar from Tilak's supporters and the Conference seemed likely to break up in disorderly scenes. So Parekh agreed to adjourn the Conference until they had worked out a compromise.<sup>1</sup>

Later in 1900 there was more dissension, this time over the selection of the President of the Congress. Bishambar Nath, P. Ananda Charlu, G.M. Chitnavis, Wedderburn, Caine, and Norton were all mentioned as possible Presidents,<sup>2</sup> but in the end N.G.Chandavarkar was chosen. He was a contro-

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1. Kesari, 20 May 1900, T.& D. Selections, 28 May 1900, P.S.L.I., Vol.123. Also, Letter signed "A Voice from Bombay", Bengalee, 17 June 1900 and S.L.Karandikar, Tilak, p.174.  
 2. Bengalee, 25 Oct., 6 Nov., 17 Nov., 22 Nov.1900.

ersial choice because, as President of the Prarthana Samaj, he was closely identified with the social reformers in Bombay, to whom Tilak and other orthodox Hindus were vehemently opposed, and because he had not attended a single Congress session in ten years. For these reasons his selection as Congress President "disgusted" a portion of the Indian Press.<sup>1</sup>

The selection was also controversial because Chandavarkar had been designated to fill a vacancy in the Bombay High Court, pending the Secretary of State's sanction. Chandavarkar conferred with the Governor of Bombay, Lord Northcote, before accepting the Presidentship and Northcote approved, hoping to use Chandavarkar to split the moderates of Bombay of whom he was a recognized leader, from the more extreme Congress members. Lord Hamilton was sceptical about giving the appearance of rewarding political agitation<sup>2</sup> but finally consented after hearing Lord Curzon's argument in favour of confirming the appointment. Curzon felt that the Congress, in selecting Chandavarkar as President, "wanted to hold out the olive branch to me". If Hamilton failed to approve Chandavarkar's appointment, Curzon warned that the moderates would be thrown back "into an attitude of hostility and revenge".

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 Feb. 1901. MSS. Eur. D.510/7.  
See also comments of Mahratta 30 Dec. 1900, Vyapari (Poona), n.d. and Moda Vritta n.d.  
T. & D. Selections, 31 Dec. 1900, P.S.L.I., Vol.128.
  2. Hamilton to Curzon, 7 Feb. 1901. MSS. Eur. C. 126/3.

"I should be sorry to see this done because, as I have often told you, the Congress is, in my opinion, rapidly sinking into insignificance. Any tactics that might savour of persecution would at once revive it as a fighting force, and give us much trouble in the future".<sup>1</sup>

Although there was no lack of political feeling and controversy in the Bombay Presidency between 1899 and 1905, the Presidency Association, the Sarvajanik Sabha, and the Deccan Sabha scarcely functioned during this period.

Other signs of disunity appeared during the attempt to provide the Congress with a constitution. For those people who thought the Congress was beginning to resemble an "annual Christmas tamasha [festival] of only three days duration",<sup>2</sup> a written constitution seemed a logical solution. Resolutions concerning the drafting of a constitution had been pressed at the Congresses of 1887, 1894 and 1895, but it was in 1898 and 1899 that one was finally drafted and adopted.

The 1899 Constitution itself is not of particular importance because it functioned ineffectively for less than two years, but the reasons for its failure are interesting. It provided an organizational framework on three levels which was supposed to restore vitality to the Congress movement. At the top, there was to be an Indian Congress Committee, consisting of 45 members with an Honorary and a paid Assistant Secretary. This Committee was to meet at least three times a year to nominate the President, draft resolutions, and make

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 Feb. 1901. MSS.Eur. D.510/7.

2. Speech of P. Rathnasabapathy Pillai, Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.126.

rules for the election of Congress delegates. At the Provincial level, Provincial Congress Committees, whose rules and bye-laws were subject to the approval of the Indian Congress Committee, were to carry "on the work of political education, on lines of general appreciation of British rule and of constitutional action for the removal of its defects, throughout the year, by organizing Standing Congress Committees, holding Provincial Conferences, and by such measures as they may deem proper." The functions of the third level bodies, the Standing Congress Committees which were in theory already in existence, were not defined.<sup>1</sup>

The most notable feature of this constitution is that it laid down an important departure from previous practice by providing for an elected Committee to exercise general control over the Congress. Forty of the 45 members of the Indian Congress Committee were to be elected upon the recommendation of the different Provincial Congress Committees<sup>2</sup> in a set proportion: 8 from Bengal, 8 from Bombay, 8 from Madras, 6 from the North West Provinces and Oudh, 4 from the Punjab, 3 from Berar, and 3 from the Central Provinces. It is true that there was nothing in the constitution to guarantee that the Provincial Committees would be representative of nationalist opinion in any one Province as provision had not been made for election to the Committees. Nevertheless, the

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1. Resolution X of 1899.

2. In the absence of Provincial Committees, the assembled Congress delegates of the respective Provinces would elect the Committee members.

new constitution was likely to end the virtual monopoly of the Calcutta and Bombay City leaders over the Congress. This seems to have been one of the objectives of some of the delegates who had been pressing for a written constitution.

The Punjabis, in particular, had been seeking a constitution since 1893.<sup>1</sup> In 1895 the foremost Punjabi leader, Bakshi Jaishi Ram, suggested that all office holders in the Congress should be elected and that each Province ought to be represented on "a Cabinet or Council" of the Congress.<sup>2</sup> This view was opposed by some of the better known leaders from that time until the Surat split in 1907. These leaders, especially those from Bombay and Calcutta, maintained that the Congress was too young for set rules,<sup>3</sup> and that some of the oldest parliamentary bodies in the world functioned without a Constitution. The real issue was probably whether or not the men who helped organize the Congress in its first years and who continued to give it financial help, had a sort of proprietary right to continue to run the Congress as they

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1. Speech of Surendra Nath Banerjea, Report of the 11th I.N.C., p.17.
  2. Report of the 11th I.N.C., p.60.
  3. For instance, speech of J. Ghosal, Ibid. p.59. Report of the 19th I.N.C. p.xvi.

saw fit.<sup>1</sup>

The first meeting of the Indian Congress Committee was held at Delhi on 10 October 1900. It was a disappointment for those who wanted the new Constitution to be a success. Only seven out of the 45 members attended: the Joint General Secretary (Wacha) from Bombay, four members from the North West Provinces and Oudh,<sup>2</sup> and two from the Punjab.<sup>3</sup> Bengal, Madras, Berar, and the Central Provinces were unrepresented.<sup>4</sup> But at least a start had been made towards giving the Congress a ruling body responsible to and representative of its members.

The next Congress, at Lahore in 1900, redistributed the seats on the Committee at the request of the still dissatisfied delegates from the Punjab and the North West Provinces and Oudh. Bengal, Bombay, and Madras each gave up a seat while the Punjab gained two and the North West Provinces

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1. The Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, [Vol.IX, No.1. (Jan.1904), p.77.] said that the present leaders were obliged to take responsibility for the Congress on themselves and probably would continue to do so until there was an organization to relieve these "few leaders of the heavy pecuniary responsibility which they bear almost alone at present".  
The Indian Spectator, 6 January 1901, (T. & D. Selections 14 Jan. 1901, P.S.L.I., Vol.129) reported that "the handful of veteran leaders" were not representative of the majority of the Congress members "who would like to see the Congress take a racial or religious colour."  
The Indian Spectator did not think that anything "can prevent the present numerical preponderance from being translated into a moral one."
  2. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Bishen Narain Dhar, Ganga Prasad Varma, and Alfred Nundy.
  3. Bakshi Jaishi Ram and Lala Harkishen Lal.
  4. Mahratta, 21 Oct. 1900, T. & D. Selections, 29 Oct. 1900, P.S.L.I., Vol.128.

and Oudh gained one.<sup>1</sup> The Lahore Congress also elected a new Indian Congress Committee for 1901.

The new Committee met at Allahabad in September 1901 and again the attendance was poor. When none of the Bengali members came, it seemed probable that the Bengalis were intending to abolish the Committee at the Calcutta Congress at the end of the year. It seemed that they had not brought the subject up at the Lahore Congress of 1900 because they knew that the Punjabis, with their majority, would reject such a move. Just before the Calcutta Congress of 1901 it was announced that the Indian Congress Committee would be done away with. But the opposition to this was so strong, especially among the Punjabis that the question was not formally raised. Instead the Bengal and Bombay delegates, acting in concert, prevented the election of a new Committee. Furthermore, according to one delegate, the three men who "entirely ruled" the proceedings - Wacha, Mehta, and Bonnerjee - neglected to notify the delegates of the decision taken by the Indian Congress Committee to reduce the expenditure on the British Committee of the Congress in order to make more funds available for "propagandism" in India.<sup>2</sup> That this decision of the Indian Congress Committee should have been unpalatable to Wacha, at least, is understandable because he wanted to cut Congress expenditure in India so that the

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1. Resolution I.

2. A Discontented Congresswallah, "The Indian National Congress" Kayastha Samachar, Vol.V, No.1. (Jan.1902), pp.57-58.

Congress work in England could be extended.<sup>1</sup> Whether this was one of the reasons for suppressing the Indian Congress Committee or not, discontent was widespread.<sup>2</sup> The Punjabis let it be known that they would quit the Congress if the next session did not obey the 1899 Constitution and restore the Indian Congress Committee.<sup>3</sup>

The next session (1902) was to be held in Ahmedabad. If the Congress Committee had still been in existence, it would have selected the next President, as the 1901 Committee had picked Wacha. But as no Committee was elected at the 1901 Congress, some people expected a reversion to the pre-1899 practice whereby the Reception Committee consulted the Standing Congress Committees, or where they existed, the new Provincial Congress Committees. However, in 1902, no Committees outside Bombay were consulted. Wacha simply wrote to

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1. Interview with D.E.Wacha, quoted from the Kayastha Samachar by the Bengalee 15 Oct. 1901.
  2. Alfred Nundy wrote of the "total demoralization" of the Congress ranks due to the abolition of the Congress Committee. Nundy asked W.C.Bonnerjea why he and P.M.Mehta objected so vehemently to the Committee, and Bonnerjea replied that the Committee was too cumbersome to accurately reflect the views of most members, that its members would not always attend or feel a proper responsibility for such a large Committee; that some of the "young and comparatively inexperienced members" would be given more responsibility than they could handle, and because the existing Committee had taken a stand on a particular issue to which the older leaders had objected. Nundy did not reveal what the issue was. Alfred Nundy, "The Troubles of the National Congress" East and West, Vol.II, No.26 (Dec.1903), pp.1404-7.
  3. "Squabbles in the Congress Camp and the Forthcoming Congress" Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, Nos.3 & 4 (Sept-Oct. 1902), pp.343-45.

Surendra Nath Banerjea, asking him to preside, and after hesitating, he accepted.<sup>1</sup>

This minor incident brought more disapproval on the Congress inner circle. The Hindu and the Madras Standard of Madras, the Indian Social Reformer of Bombay, the Advocate of Lucknow, the Kayastha Samachar of Allahabad and the Indian Nation of Calcutta all complained of the unconstitutional method used to select Banerjea.<sup>2</sup> It was less Banerjea himself, than the arbitrary method, to which exception was taken although John Adam, Eardley Norton, R.N. Mudholkar, and Kali Charan Banerjea were mentioned as candidates possibly deserving notice before choosing a man who had already served as President.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Banerjea, following A.M. Bose, R.C. Dutt, Chandavarkar, and Wacha, would be the fifth consecutive President from the Bombay-Calcutta coterie.

Nevertheless Surendra Nath Banerjea presided at the 1902 Congress Ahmedabad and the proceedings passed without incident. But the Punjabis deliberately stayed away in protest against the despotism of the leadership.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Banerjea wrote in his autobiography with his usual lack of false humility that when Wacha invited him to preside over the Ahmedabad Congress, he "replied begging to be excused ..... Sir Dinshaw wrote back to say that there was the great Delhi Durbar of 1902; a counter-attraction and a counter-influence had to be set up" and Banerjea therefore accepted. A Nation in Making, p.173.
  2. Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, No.5 (Nov.1902), pp.477-79; also in same issue : "President of the Coming Congress", reprinted from the Madras Standard.
  3. Ibid.
  4. A Madras Delegate, "The Coronation Congress", Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VII, No.1, (Jan.1903), p.31.

In 1903 Lal Mohan Ghose returned to the Congress movement after a long absence to preside over the Congress at Madras. He had been the leader of the unsuccessful attempt to start a new moderate party in Bengal in 1895 although at the time it was suggested that he was motivated less by disagreement with Congress policies and tactics than by personal resentment at his failure to be recognized as a Congress leader.<sup>1</sup> Lal Mohan Ghose used his 1903 Presidential speech to insinuate that Pherozeshah Mehta was guilty of despotism and demagoguery, and he reminded the Congress delegates

"that as the very aim and object, the raison d'etre, of this National Congress is to introduce some little popular element into the autocratic constitution of the Indian Government, so if they aspire to be the leaders of our people, they should be especially careful that their own acts may not be condemned as autocratic by the rank and file of our party".<sup>2</sup>

In the Subjects Committee, Pherozeshah Mehta made a long speech defending his conduct against allegations of despotic behaviour. Discussion in the Committee was agitated, centering on the constitutional question, with the Punjab and Madras delegates pressing for a constitution laying down regular and representative methods of procedure.<sup>3</sup> G. Subramania Iyer made explicit his views on the failure of the

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1. Bengalee, 29 June 1895.

Lal Mohan Ghose was a successful criminal lawyer, as his brother, Manmohun Ghose, had been. They came from a prominent zamindari family and Lal Mohan was a member of the Bengal Landholders' Association. He was the unsuccessful Liberal candidate for Greenwich in the 1885 General Election.

2. Report of the 19th I.N.C., p.11.

3. Bengalee, 29 Dec. 1903; Report of the 19th I.N.C., p.xvi.

Congress leadership and this so angered some of the older leaders that they succeeded in persuading the Subjects Committee to pass "a vote of censure" on him.<sup>1</sup>

The 1903 Congress would have been notable for Lal Mohan Ghose's Presidential Speech alone, for it was the first time the Congress leadership had been challenged before an open session of the Congress. But the 1903 Congress was marred by low attendance<sup>2</sup> and a storm which flooded the Congress Hall, making it necessary to shift the meeting to a verandah where speakers shouted against the noise of falling rain before a small audience.<sup>3</sup> The Hindustan Review declared that the 1903 Congress was distinguished from all its predecessors as "a distinct and dismal failure".<sup>4</sup> Altogether, the Congress reached a low point in that year, so low, indeed, that some nationalists suggested "that the movement might with advantage be stopped for a time."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Alfred Nundy, "The Troubles of the National Congress", op.cit., p.1404.
  2. The Madras Congress of 1894 had been attended by 1163 delegates, the Madras Congress of 1898 by 614, and the 1903 Congress by only 538 delegates.
  3. Report of the 19th I.N.C., p.xvii.
  4. Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.IX, No.1, (Jan.1904), p.76.
  5. W.C.Bonnerjee, A Call to Arms, p.5.  
The possibility that the Congress might collapse had been mentioned before, by the Indian Mirror, 14 Dec.1898, (T.& D. Selections, 19 Dec. 1898. P.S.L.I. Vol.110) and by the Kesari, 11 Dec.1900 (T. & D. Selections, 31 Dec.1900, P.S.L.I. Vol.128). The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13 Dec.1898, (T. & D. Selections, 19 Dec.1898, P.S.L.I. Vol.110) reported that a minority of the delegates at the 1897 Congress had suggested that the Congress should close its operations. The Bengalee, 9 Dec.1899, admitted that it did "not indeed regard the Congress as a permanent institution". And the Poona Vaibhav, 28 Dec.1899, (T.& D. Selections, 15 Jan.1900, P.S.L.I., Vol.120) advised the Congress to disband since its lavish expenditure had achieved nothing.

Apart from the arguments over the organization of the Congress there were differences of opinion on its functions. Some members, such as Wacha and Kali Prasanna Roy, regarded the Congress criticism of Government policies as either inadequate or superficial. In the place of speech-making they wanted committees of experts to prepare the Congress case in detail on each subject before submitting it to the annual session.<sup>1</sup> It was pointed out that the Congress had for years demanded an enquiry into the corruption of the Indian Police, but when the Police Commission was appointed the Congress sent neither witnesses nor evidence. Similarly, it sent no witnesses to give evidence before the Universities Commission.<sup>2</sup> A need, too, was felt for a Congress literature systematically presenting the nationalist argument about the "drain",<sup>3</sup> the Indianization of the Civil Service, and similar subjects. The British Committee had published various pamphlets and so had individual Indians. But the Congress in India as a body had almost entirely limited its agitation to the platform ever since it had abandoned the attempt to recruit the masses to the nationalist movement.

There was a body of thought which held that the Congress should limit either the type or the number of delegates

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1. See Speech of Kali Prasanna Roy, Chairman of the Lahore Reception Committee, 1899, Report of the 15th I.N.C., p.6; also, Interview with D.E.Wacha from the Kayastha Samachar: Bengalee, 15 Oct. 1901.; Speech of A.M.Bose, Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.35.
  2. See quotations from the Indian Nation: Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, No.6. (Dec.1902), p.609.
  3. See Speech of N.Subba Rao Pantulu, Chairman of the Madras Reception Committee, 1898, Report of the 14th I.N.C., p.14.

attending the annual session. Lala Lajpat Rai, for instance, thought the practice of bringing people who had no qualification "except in increasing the number of delegates from a particular class" ought to be abolished so that "the honour, the dignity and the prestige of the Congress" could be preserved.<sup>1</sup> Norendra Nath Ghose and Ananda Charlu would have kept out the "nobodies",<sup>2</sup> others would have given greater attention to the election of delegates.<sup>3</sup>

The expediency of constitutional or legal methods of agitation was another issue over which opinion was divided although it did not become a central issue to the Congress until 1905. The ideas of Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai in the pre-1905 period stand out as the most serious challenge to the older conception of the proper functions of the Congress movement. Mention has already been made of Tilak's advocacy of the boycott of European goods, of the refusal to pay land

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1. Lajpat Rai, "The Coming Indian National Congress - Some Suggestions", Kayastha Samachar, Vol.IV, No.5. (Nov.1901). pp.377-78.
  2. P.Ananda Charlu, "The Indian National Congress: A Retrospect", Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar Vol.VIII, Nos.1 & 2 (July-Aug.1903), p.14.
  3. The method of election was, it seems, one of the matters which "agitated the Madras and Punjab delegates". The Report of the 1903 Congress, after mentioning the demand for a written constitution, says that "it is not disputed that, in sending up delegates, there have been proceedings which should have been avoided....[but] nothing to indicate any systematic abuse in the election proceedings. After all it is common knowledge that the best regulated elections do not invariably result in the return of the best man, A good deal has to be left to the good sense and patriotism of the educated men of the various localities". Report of the 19th I.N.C., p.xvi.

revenue to the Government, of the methods of Shivaji.<sup>1</sup> In 1902 he revealed to a Poona audience the new lines along which he was thinking:

"You must realize that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration in India is conducted. You are yourselves the useful lubricants which enable the gigantic machinery to work so smoothly.

Though down-trodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so. It is you who manage the railroad and the telegraph, it is you who make settlements and collect revenues, it is in fact you who do everything for the administration though in a subordinate capacity. You must consider whether you cannot turn your hand to better use for your nation than drudging on in this fashion."<sup>2</sup>

Lala Lajpat Rai's ideas, published in Sachchidananda Sinha's Hindustan Review and Behramji Malabari's East and West, probably reached a more widespread audience than Tilak's. He wrote that few of the Congress leaders could be called true patriots because patriotism required an ascetic, self-denying life, and the present leadership was both inactive for most of the year and unjustifiably confident in the ultimate success of the Congress agitation. He asked Indians to realize that politics "is a religion, and a science, much higher, both in its conception and in its sphere, than mere political agitation" and, further, "that no nation is worthy of any political status if it cannot distinguish between begging such rights [the Congress

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1. See above, pp. 31-36.

2. Quoted by Theodore Shay, The Legacy of the Lokamanya, pp. 94-95.

Demands] and claiming them".<sup>1</sup>

Surendra Nath Banerjea, on the other hand, is representative of the older generation. Banerjea's view was that "in due time we shall want Home Rule and get it too. But for the present we shall be satisfied with much less....We are making steady progress, and we are bound to win in the long run".<sup>2</sup> Banerjea resisted all suggestions that peaceful political agitation was useless and should be abandoned for other methods. The reform of the Legislative Councils, the modification of the Educational Commission's recommendations - these were concessions obtained by traditional methods. And even when these methods - their critics called them the methods of mendicancy - did not succeed, Banerjea thought the very act of trying brought "a distinct moral gain - do we not feel all the better and nobler for it?"<sup>3</sup> The difference in outlook was between a generation believing in self-improvement and a generation impatient for self-rule.

The demand for new and more determined methods of political agitation was closely related to the desire for a democratic Congress organization and although Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and G. Subramania Iyer were foremost in pressing for these changes, it is misleading to call the disputants "moderates" and "extremists". A large number of people who supported change did so because they wanted a representative constitu-

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1. Lajpat Rai, "The First Principles of Political Progress" East and West, Vol.1, No.10. (Aug.1902), pp.1038-40.
  2. Bengalee, 15 June 1895.
  3. Ibid. 26 July 1904.

tion for the Congress and a comprehensive program of political agitation, and not because they favoured extra-legal methods. Alfred Nundy, Kali Charan Banerjea, Lal Mohun Ghose and Norendra Nath Ghose were as "moderate" and pro-British as Mehta, Charlu, Banerjea, or Bonnerjee, yet they were among the harshest critics of the older leadership. When Tilak and his friends chose the constitutional issue in 1907 as the issue over which to join battle with the older leaders, they did so with the comforting knowledge that they were acting under the banner of democracy and majority rule.<sup>1</sup>

Friends of the Congress in England tried to rally the movement away from its drift towards disunity and inactivity. In 1903, Wedderburn, Naoroji, Bonnerjee, and Hume contributed "A Call to Arms" to the Hindustan Review.<sup>2</sup> In it they each

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1. The Times of London had this to say about the Congress: "It asks for a better system of representation, but its own methods are a direct negation of all recognized principles of representation. It clamours for an elective form of Government but it dares not to introduce the proper system of election into its own organization because its controllers know that if they did, the result would instantly be that they would be swept away by an inrush of apostles of disorder. It is, in short, a complete and constant refutation of its own programme and the most striking of all existing proofs of the utter impossibility of granting self-government to India. Probably there was never so remarkable an instance of a body, formed to secure self-government, but controlled in the most autocratic manner by a mere handful of men who being to this extent men of ability and common sense, know that no other than autocratic methods are possible under existing conditions in India." Quoted without date, in The Congress Split (anon., Calcutta 1908), pp. xxii-iii.
  2. A Call to Arms, (Allahabad 1903), reprinted in pamphlet form from the Hindustan Review, Dec. 1903.

urged the nationalists to overcome their despair. Wedderburn, writing in the vein in which he and Hume had often written before, spoke of the failure of the British mission to awaken "this great and ancient race to a higher national existence." But unlike Hume, Wedderburn professed optimism about the future.<sup>1</sup> "For the last eight years this country has been dominated by the party of aggression abroad and selfish class interests at home". Now the pendulum was about to swing towards the Liberals. "With a fresh Parliament, and an awakened national conscience, the Court of Appeal will be open."<sup>2</sup> W.C.Bonnerjee, too, expected much of the Liberals.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Naoroji and Hume tended to minimise the significance of a change of Government in England. Naoroji thought the struggle against "an intelligently and blindly selfish power" would have to be continued until "Self-Government under British Paramountcy" was attained, and until then, "there is no chance of the evil bleeding, of the plunder of an unceasing foreign invasion, the cause of all our sufferings, ever ending."<sup>4</sup>

Hume's message broke a long period of silence which

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1. The differences between Hume and Wedderburn had, of course, been demonstrated before and they were recognized in an article in 1901 by a member of the British Committee [R.C.Dutt?] who described Wedderburn as "a firm believer in the sweet persuasiveness of reason" while Hume, he said, "has within him the blood of revolutionists". "Indian Politics in England: A Peep behind the Scenes". Kayastha Samachar, Vol. III, No.5. (May 1901), p.395.
  2. A Call to Arms, pp.2-3.
  3. Ibid. p.5.
  4. Ibid. pp.3-4.

his associates had urged him to end so that no one would interpret it as indicating a loss of sympathy with or faith in the Congress. He advised Indians not to anticipate much help from the Liberals. Nor should Indians think that their position was comparable to that of the Irish who had some 90 M.P.'s and who had been "fighting tooth and nail...for nearly a century." The Indians, he said, had no M.P.'s, "and you are, most of you, alas! it seems to me, never more than half in earnest in your fight! You meet in Congresses; you glow with a momentary enthusiasm;" and then few people devoted earnest thought or work to India's cause. He placed the blame for India's unhappy political position on the Indians themselves who showed neither self-sacrifice nor mutual trust. "You have indeed ever eagerly clamoured for and vainly clutched at the Crown, but how many of you will touch the Cross with even your finger-tips?"<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with the preceding pages as background, it may be possible to understand why the authority of the older Congress leaders was challenged and to appreciate the revolutionary effects of Lord Curzon's policies in 1904 and 1905 on the course of Indian political life, which had exhibited so little vitality in the earlier years of his Viceroyalty.

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1. Ibid.p.9. Eardley Norton similarly told an audience of Indian friends in Bombay in 1892 that Indians lacked "grip" or "moral courage". When a European friend of the nationalists was faced with danger or difficulty, he said, "The invariable rule was that his native friend deserted him at a vital moment, and pushed him to the front to bear what blame and odium there was."  
Statesman, 30 April 1892.

CHAPTER VI

THE PARTITION OF BENGAL AND THE  
POLITICAL REVIVAL

On 16 October 1905, the partition of Bengal came into effect. A new province, called Eastern Bengal and Assam, was created by transferring three Divisions from Bengal to Assam. The effect of the partition was to place the Bengali-speaking Hindus in a minority in both Bengal and the new province and to set off an agitation that was unexpected and different in character from earlier agitations. The agitation will be discussed in detail because of its uniqueness and also because it reveals something of the social conditions of Bengal at the beginning of this century.

There is little reason to doubt that the reasons for partitioning Bengal, when it was first considered, were almost entirely administrative and economic. As they were not related to nationalism, there is no need for detailed notice here.<sup>1</sup> Briefly, Bengal, with a population of 78½ million, was held to be too large for efficient administration by a single government; "the spread of English educa-

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1. See, for instance, Lovat Fraser, India under Curzon and After, p.19; Sufia Ahmed, Some Aspects of the History of the Muslim Community in Bengal (1884-1912) (London Ph.D. Thesis, 1960) pp.334-42; and P.P., H. of C. Cd. 2658 of 1905, East India (Reconstruction of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam).  
H.H.Risley, Sec., Govt. of India, to Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 3 Dec. 1903.

tion and the wider diffusion of the native press tend to increase litigation, to give greater publicity to the conduct of officials, and in every way to place a heavier strain upon the head of Government and upon all ranks of his subordinates;"<sup>1</sup> and Calcutta and the surrounding areas tended to absorb the attention and the revenues of Bengal while the eastern districts were rife with crime, under-educated, under-staffed, and under-developed.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Curzon's original scheme for reducing the size of Bengal would have resulted in a much smaller transfer of territory to Assam than the scheme eventually adopted. It was published in the Gazette of India on 12 December 1903. It proposed that Bengal should lose Chittagong Division, Dacca and Mymensingh Districts, and Hill Tippera to Assam, lose Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces, and gain certain Uriya-speaking areas from Madras and the Central Provinces. These transfers, had they been carried out, would have relieved the Bengal Government of the administrative burden of almost eleven million people and they would have united the Uriya-speaking people under a single administration. It was also hoped that the transfers to Assam would promote the economic development of Assam by giving it an

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1. Risley, 3 Dec. 1903, op.cit., para.2.

2. Ibid. paras. 3, 19-25.

outlet on the sea (Chittagong). The Bengal-Assam railway was nearing completion and could be expected to provide the undeveloped resources of Assam with an easy access to the sea. Furthermore, the new province of east Bengal and Assam would be large enough, it was hoped, to recruit its own civil servants instead of borrowing from the Bengal Civil Service on a short-term basis. This would lead to more efficient administration.<sup>1</sup>

No one has yet produced any evidence to show that the purpose of Lord Curzon's original partition proposals were other than administrative and economic although J. Chaudhuri denounced the proposals at the 1903 Congress as "an attempt to break up our presidencies and to break up our nationalities, to divide us and rule." There seems to be no ground whatsoever for the charge that Curzon, in 1903, hoped to divide the Bengal speaking people in order to reduce their political strength. If the purpose of these changes had been political, if the Government of India had intended to separate Hindus from Muslims or eastern Bengalis from western Bengalis, then it would not have achieved its purpose by splitting off from eastern Bengal an area containing only about 11,000,000 people while leaving the bulk of the

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1. H.H.Risley, Sec., Govt. of India, to Ch.Sec. of Madras and Ch.Coms., of Assam and the Central Provinces, 3 Dec. 1903, Enclosure No.2. to H.H.Risley to Sec. of State, 3 Dec. 1903, op.cit.

Bengalis, Hindu and Muslim, under the administration of Calcutta. In the official comments on the original plans, political considerations were not mentioned nor was it suggested that the Muslim community in particular would benefit from partition. Moreover, almost five months after the partition plan was announced, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Bampfylde Fuller, informed Curzon confidentially that he thought Bengal could be better relieved by taking away Bihar than by taking away Dacca and Mymensingh.<sup>1</sup> It is not likely that Fuller would have been unaware of a political design behind the partition proposals had one existed.

The early protests to the partition scheme took the form of public meetings and the sending of memorials and telegrams to the newspapers and the Government. Although the meetings, which began in December 1903 and were mostly in eastern Bengal, were free of incident, they were unprecedented in number. A list prepared by Prithwis Chandra Ray contains the locations of more than 300 protest meetings held in January 1904 alone.<sup>2</sup> Although the agitation subsided after January, the Bengalee was probably correct in saying that the initial response to the partition scheme was an explosion of public feeling for which there was nothing

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1. Fuller's Confidential Note, enclosure to Fuller to J.O. Miller, Private Sec. to Curzon, 5 April 1904, No.135, C.W.P.I., 1904, Vol.I, Curzon Papers.
  2. Prithwis Chandra Ray, The Case Against the Break-up of Bengal, (Calcutta, 1905), p.90.

comparable in recent Indian history.<sup>1</sup> The Englishman reported that in Dacca and Mymensingh districts, there was "a storm of passionate protest which has surprised those who have led it," and that the partition proposals were supported by no one. To the casual observer it would appear, according to the Englishman, that the Government had searched for the quickest means of "setting the province in a ferment" and had chosen partition.<sup>2</sup> The Englishman also found a "startling" change in the atmosphere at the Calcutta Town Hall protest meeting of 18 March 1904. "There was none of that honeyed euphemism which we are accustomed to hear from Bengali orators, no matter how greatly their feelings may be stirred." The grimness of the proceedings was relieved only by the Maharaja of Natore who quoted the verse:

"The toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth point goes.  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to the toad"<sup>3</sup>

The early months of the partition agitation witnessed a common front between the professional classes and the big landowners. The divisions of the preceding years were ignored as many important zamindars joined the agitation.

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1. Bengalee, 5 Jan. 1904.

2. Englishman (Weekly Summary), 28 Jan. 1904.

3. Ibid, 24 March 1904.

Among the many petitions received by the Government of Bengal in the early months of the agitation, there was one from the British Indian Association, but the Indian Association which usually was more extreme, apparently did not feel it necessary to submit one of its own.<sup>1</sup>

The Bengalee gave the agitation added impetus on 26 January 1904 by publishing a note written by Sir Henry Cotton in 1897, while he was Chief Commissioner of Assam, which revealed that he and the High Court Judges had opposed the proposal to transfer Chittagong Division to Assam at that time.

A variety of objections were made against the partition plan announced in December 1903. Protests were made against the incorporation of a part of Bengal into Assam which was governed by a Chief Commissioner without the assistance of a Legislative Council, a Board of Revenue, or a High Court. Without a Legislative Council, public opinion would have no formal means other than petitions, of commenting on either new administrative regulations or on the behaviour of civil servants, as the representatives had in the Bengal Legislative Council through interpellation and debates. The Sanjibani and other newspapers warned the

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1. See enclosures to W.C. MacPherson, Offg. Ch. Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 6 April 1904. Feb. Prog. No. 157, I.H.P. Pub., Vol. 7046.

zamindars that the Permanent Settlement, in the new non-regulation Province, "could be abolished by a mere Gazette notification."<sup>1</sup> Without a Board of Revenue, there would be no court of appeal before which revenue petitioners could appear. And without the High Court, there would be no judicial tribunal independent of the executive. In other words, the inhabitants of the transferred districts would lose what was called the "apparatus of civilized government!"<sup>2</sup>

It was also alleged that, with the loss of the University of Calcutta, the educational opportunities of the people in the transferred districts would suffer. Similarly, the number of available posts, government and private, would be reduced. Calcutta firms would not hire people from the transferred area and the people from the Dacca District, who held 1/10 of the posts in the Subordinate, Judicial, and Executive Services in the 48 districts of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, would be limited to Government service in the transferred districts only. This

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1. Report on the Agitation Against the Partition of Bengal, para.6. Enclosure to R.W.Carlyle, Offg. Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Jan. 1906. June Prog. No.175, I.H.P.,Pub., Vol.7312.
  2. These and the following objections were discussed in W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit. paras. 20-22, 41-49. The objections themselves were made many times, and were succinctly stated in Sita Nath Roy, Hon.Sec., Bengal National Chamber of Commerce. to Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 3 Feb. 1904, enclosure No.4 to W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit. ; and in Ananda Chandra Roy, Pres., Peoples' Assn., Dacca, and Sec., Landholders' Assn., Dacca, 4 March 1904, enclosure No.8. to W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit.

anticipated loss of opportunity for Government employment was especially resented because it was alleged that limitations had recently been placed upon the employment of Bengalis in Assam and the United Provinces.<sup>1</sup>

The revenues of Dacca and Mymensingh, it was feared, would be used to develop Assam and the port of Chittagong. Many east Bengal zamindars and merchants had property, agents, and other interests in Calcutta or other parts of Bengal outside the districts to be transferred. Partition would cause inconvenience, and in some instances, financial loss, to these persons. Others feared that the trade in jute and rice would be diverted from Calcutta to Chittagong. Furthermore, it was said that people in the affected districts looked to Calcutta "for inspiration and guidance".<sup>2</sup> They were said to "stand together on social and political questions", to "follow the same leaders," and to be "represented by the same press" as the people of western Bengal.<sup>3</sup>

Cultural, racial, and linguistic considerations also played an important role in the agitation against the original partition plan. The Jyoti of Chittagong predicted that "association with the Assamese will have a deteriorating effect upon the Bengalis of Chittagong, just as the

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1. Ananda Chandra Roy, 4 March 1904, op.cit.
  2. Nawab Syed Ameer Hussain, Hon. Sec., Central National Muhammadan Assn., Calcutta, to Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 17 Feb. 1904, enclosure No.7 to W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit.
  3. W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit. para.46.

[Assamese] have deteriorated by reason of their association with the Burmese."<sup>1</sup> The Charu Mihir of Mymensingh said it made one "shudder" to think of the effect that the Assamese language would have on Bengali. "The half-educated Assamese", it went on, "will continue to be the lords of the administration of the country, and we shall be judged and tried by them. What a misfortune!"<sup>2</sup> The Dacca Prakas, too, feared the effects of contact with "the naked barbarians of Assam."<sup>3</sup> Critics of partition repeatedly asserted that the Bengali people were united by a common history, language, and race, and that to divide Bengal would be to divide a nation. This was what Lord Curzon termed the sentimental opposition.<sup>4</sup> The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and the People's Association of Dacca provided a concrete example of how partition would affect the unity of the "nation". They pointed out that the movement among the Brahmans and Kayasthas in favour of marriages with caste-fellows who lived outside their own half of Bengal would be set back, for as the latter organization claimed, contact with Assam would be socially degrading.<sup>5</sup> Some of the arguments were distinctly hysterical. For instance the Sanjivani said "the partition of Bengal will undoubtedly bring about the ultimate

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1. Jyoti, 11 Jan. 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, 23 Jan. 1904, para.58.
  2. Charu Mihir, 22 Dec. 1903, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Jan. 1904, para.35.
  3. Dacca Prakas, 27 Dec. 1903, *ibid.*, para.50.
  4. Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol.III, Address at Mymensingh, 20 Feb. 1904, p.319.
  5. Sita Nath Roy, 3 Feb. 1904, *op.cit.* and Ananda Chandra Roy, 4 March 1904, *op.cit.*

extinction of the race."<sup>1</sup>

The official opinions elicited by Lord Curzon's Government in January and February 1904 on the proposal to transfer Dacca and Mymensingh Districts, Chittagong Division, and Hill Tippera to Assam revealed that educated Bengalis were almost unanimously hostile to the partition plan and that the masses were indifferent.<sup>2</sup> None of the opinions distinguished between Hindu and Muslim feeling. None suggested that the public feeling was dangerous or so strong that the partition ought to be abandoned. Generally, official opinion was in favour of a reduction in the size of Bengal but few thought that Lord Curzon's scheme went far enough.<sup>3</sup> The Government was urged to transfer a larger area of Bengal to Assam in order to give more substantial relief to the Bengal Government and, at the same time, create a new province that would be large enough to have its own Board of Revenue and Legislative Council. The Commissioner of Dacca Division, H. Savage, believed that "perhaps the most important reform which would follow" from a wider scheme of partition would be that the Muslims

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1. Sanjivani (Calcutta), 10 Nov. 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, 19 Nov. 1904, para.37.
  2. These opinions are enclosed in W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit.
  3. C.E.Buckland and the other members of the Board of Revenue, K.C.De, Magistrate of Faridpur, and H.W.P.Scroppe, Collector of Tippera, were opposed to the partition of the Bengali-speaking districts. See enclosures 17, 18, 19, and 20 to W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit.

"would have education offered to them in their mother-tongue, Bengali, unhampered by the Sanskrit tendencies of the Hindus, who up to now have controlled and practically monopolized education in Bengal, or by the few educated men of their own religion, who have shut their eyes to facts and persuaded or tried to persuade themselves and others that the vernacular of the Eastern Bengal Musalman is Urdu."<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a wider scheme of partition commended itself to Lord Curzon and when he made his speaking tour through Chittagong, Dacca, and Mymensingh in February 1904, he attempted to dispel popular apprehensions by hinting broadly that a larger area than originally planned might be transferred from Bengal. He pointed out that such a scheme might enable the new province to be equipped with a Lieutenant-Governorship, a Legislative Council, and an independent revenue authority. He also said at Dacca that that city might become the capital of a new province "which would invest the Mahomedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musulman Viceroys and Kings."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Savage to Chief Sec., Govt. of Bengal, 15 Feb. 1904, enclosure No.19 to W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit. H.H.Risley, in the 1901 Census Report, regretted attempts by speakers of Bengali and Hindi to introduce Sanskrit words into their languages. He reported that literature had "been divorced from the great mass of the population, and to the literary classes this is a matter of small moment..."  
General Report on the Census of India, 1901, para.508. For a Bengali view of the disadvantages of "linguistic miscegenation" (the adoption of English or Persian words into Bengali), see Bijaychandra Mazumdar, The History of the Bengali Language (2nd ed. pp. 14-16.
  2. Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol.III, Address at Dacca, 18 Feb. 1904, p.303.

The first appreciable Muslim support for the partition dates from Lord Curzon's visit to Dacca in February 1904 and his open hints that a new province with a Muslim majority was under consideration. The central figure in this shift in Muslim public opinion in east Bengal was Nawab Salimullah of Dacca. It has been pointed out that Nawab Salimullah was obliged to the Government of Bengal for past financial help, that the value of his real estate would have been increased by the establishment of a capital at Dacca, and that after partition was effected, he was appointed to the Bengal and Indian Legislative Councils and lent a very large sum of money by the Government of India.<sup>1</sup> But it would be entirely misleading to suggest that Nawab Salimullah's personal interests resulted in the widespread support which the larger partition scheme received from the Bengali Muslims in 1905. The Bengali Muslims had few newspapers or political organizations and they fared badly in competition with the Hindus for education and government employment. In Bengal, in 1901, only 22 out of every 10,000 Muslims knew English compared to 114 out of every 10,000 Hindus.<sup>2</sup> They held only (41) of the "high appointments" under the Government while the Hindus, who were less than twice as numerous as the Muslims, held 1,235.<sup>3</sup> After the partition

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1. C.J.O'Donnell (The Causes of Present Discontents in India, p.69) said it was £20,000, Henry W.Nevison (The New Spirit in India, p.192) put the figure at £100,000.
  2. General Report of the Census of India, 1901, p.175.
  3. Ibid. p.217.

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was effected, the Government found that of the ministerial posts in divisional, district, and sub-divisional offices in Eastern Bengal, Muslims held less than one-sixth of the appointments although they made up two-thirds of the population.<sup>1</sup> In the Police Department in Eastern Bengal the Muslim position was even worse. In what was called the Eastern Bengal Range, where Muslims equalled 59% of the population, they held 4 of the 54 Inspectorships, 60 of the 484 Sub-Inspectorships, 45 of the 450 head constableships, and 1,027 of the 4,594 constableships.<sup>2</sup> In view of this striking imbalance it is hardly surprising that many Muslims should have welcomed hints of a larger share of state patronage.

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1. The Hindus had gained their commending position in Government offices through a system of unpaid apprenticeships. After partition the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam declared that it was advisable to fix a proportion of Muslims and to make special efforts to notify and encourage Muslims to apply for vacancies.  
P.C.Lyon, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Coms. of Divs., 25 May 1906, May Appointment Dept. Prog. No.16, Eastern Bengal and Assam Judicial Prog., Vol.7215.
  2. In December 1905, the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal expressed his hopes that "strenuous and continued efforts" would be made "to raise the proportion of Muslims in the police". The existing situation, he believed, was "unfair to the Musalman community." It was "politically very unsound, and it must have the effect of depriving of police protection the great mass of the raiyats" from their Hindu zamindars.  
Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Inspector-General of Police, 12 Dec. 1905. Oct. Confid. Jud. Prog. No.6., E.B. and A. Jud. Prog., Vol.7218.

By 1911 the position of the Bengali Muslims had improved through the opening of new jobs in Eastern Bengal and Assam and the abolition of the competitive examination for the provincial civil service. Whereas in 1901 they held roughly one-eighth of the 1,235 higher appointments, in 1911 they occupied almost one-fifth of the 2,305 gazetted appointments held by Indians.<sup>1</sup> While recognition of Muslim interests was an important factor in the official support for a wider scheme of partition, this recognition was not the result of an intention to alienate Hindus from Muslims. Or if it was with certain individuals, evidence has yet to be produced to prove it.

The public was left in ignorance of the ultimate shape of the partition between the time of Curzon's trip to east Bengal in February 1904 and the announcement of the final scheme on 19 July 1905. Curzon had made it clear that a wider scheme than that announced in December 1903 was being considered but its details were not known.

During this interval several events occurred which destroyed any chance that the partition of Bengal would be received passively by the Bengali Hindus. The passing of the Universities and Official Secrets Bills, Lord Curzon's

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1. Sufia Ahmed, op.cit. p.217.

Convocation Address, and the Russo-Japanese War further aroused people already alarmed by the partition proposals.

The Universities Bill was based on certain recommendations made by the Universities Commission of 1902.<sup>1</sup> The Commission had recommended that the quality of teaching should be improved by raising fees, supplying a larger degree of European control and Government supervision, tightening the rules for University affiliation, abolishing the second class colleges which failed to measure up to the rules for affiliation, and doing away with all private law classes. The Report of the Universities Commission was submitted in June 1902 and was so strongly criticised by Indian public opinion that the Government of India announced on 24 October 1902, its intention to modify the proposals to fix minimum rates of college fees and to abolish second class colleges.<sup>2</sup> The Government also dropped the plan to concentrate all law classes in Government colleges. These modifications removed the more contentious features of Curzon's educational reforms. Curzon's opponents argued

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1. This Commission was appointed after Lord Curzon's closed Simla Conference of European education experts in September 1901. Its chairman was Sir Thomas Raleigh. When it was originally appointed, it contained only one Indian, Syed Hosain Bilgrami, an official in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad for many years and a member of the Aligarh school. Following many nationalist protests, Justice Guru Das Banerjea was added. He dissented from the Commission's Report.

2. Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration in the Home Department, p.32.

that those reforms would have made education the privilege of the rich and would have destroyed the independence and private initiative of Indian educators. They gave the impression that the Government of India regarded educated Indians as a nuisance, and by narrowing the opportunities for education that nuisance might be removed.<sup>1</sup>

While Lord Curzon's Government compromised on the questions of rates, second class colleges, and law classes, it did not abandon its plans to bring higher education under closer Government surveillance and direction. Hamilton and Curzon were convinced that without careful European supervision the Universities would produce semi-educated, discontented, and seditious, graduates.<sup>2</sup> The Universities Bill provided for tighter control by reducing the number of Fellows on the University Senates, which meant, in effect, increasing the proportion of European Fellows, and by converting the term of the Fellowship from life to five years. Previous to the passing of the Bill, most Fellows were appointed by the Government for life and did not possess special knowledge or experience of education. The Bill was supposed to enable the Government to fill the Senates with

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1. See N.N.Ghose, "The Report of the Indian Universities Commission", Kayastha Samachar, Vol.VI, Nos. 3 and 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1902), pp.217-27. Also, C.Y.Chintamani's speech, Report of the 20th I.N.C., pp.90-95.
  2. The political danger of the existing state of the Universities was mentioned in Hamilton to Curzon, 18 May 1899, MSS.Eur.C.126/1, and in Curzon to Hamilton, 28 Aug. 1901, MSS.Eur. D.510/8.

persons specially interested and qualified in education.

It was evident from some of the comments on the existing state of the Universities that the reforms were directed principally against the University of Calcutta. Alexander Pedlar, Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, complained that while in 1880 the European Fellows on the Calcutta Senate outnumbered the Indians by 177, in 1902 the Indians had a majority of 47. In 1880, "'Western ideals of education and Western ideas of discipline' were prominently kept in view ... and now, more or less, the majority of the members of the Senate represent Eastern, rather than Western, education."<sup>1</sup> After the Universities Bill became law, of the 64 Fellows nominated by the Chancellor (the Viceroy) and the 10 Fellows elected by the registered graduates, 39 were Europeans and 35 were Indians. Of the 35 Indian Fellows, 12 were officials and a few others were on Government pensions. Thus Curzon gained in Calcutta what was popularly believed to be his object: the officialization and Europeanization

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1. India Leg. Council Progs., 18 March 1904, Vol. XLIII, p. 167.

Lord Curzon also singled out conditions at the University of Calcutta as evidence of the need for reform. See his speeches in the Legislative Council debates of 18 Dec. 1903 and 18 and 21 March 1904.

of the University's management. In Bombay, on the other hand, where an Indian majority was not regarded by the Government as incompatible with efficient and sound education, the Indians outnumbered the Europeans, 57 to 43, on the reformed Senate.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Universities Act did not fix college fees or abolish second class colleges, it did allow the Government, acting through the Senates, to set certain standards which, if they had been harshly applied, would have enabled the Government to restrict educational opportunities. Under the Act, Regulations were passed by the University Senates preventing secondary schools from sending up candidates for the matriculation examination unless the schools conformed to certain rules relating to staff, management, purpose, buildings, discipline, and fees.<sup>2</sup> But these rules did not have a radical effect, so that the main change effected by the Universities Act was the reduction of Indian control over the management of the Universities.

Pherozeshah Mehta and some other Bombay politicians perceived a fault in the drafting of the Universities Act and they seized upon it and opened legal proceedings against, in effect, the Government of Bombay. Legal proceedings against the Government or its officials were to

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1. Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.X, No.4 (Oct. 1904), pp.410-15.
  2. Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration in the Home Department, p.155.

become an important tactic of the nationalists in the partition agitation. On 24 January 1905 a suit was filed in the High Court of Bombay seeking an injunction against the University of Bombay's provisional Syndicate. The Universities Act had not provided a full programme for the transition from the old to the reformed Senates and Syndicates. In the absence of prescribed procedure, the Chancellor had appointed a provisional Syndicate to conduct the University's executive business until the Act came into full operation. Pheroza Shah Mehta and the other plaintiffs claimed in their suit that the Chancellor had acted illegally, that he was obligated to follow the old procedure and allow the Senate to elect the Syndicate.<sup>1</sup> But before a ruling was given, the Government of India drafted and passed a Validating Bill which legalized the provisional Bombay Syndicate.<sup>2</sup>

The other unpopular measure passed by Lord Curzon's Government in 1904 was the Official Secrets Amendment Bill. The Indian and Anglo-Indian newspapers were almost unanimous in branding the Bill a gross violation of the freedom of the press.

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1. Hindustan Review, Vol. XII, No. 72. (Aug. 1905), p. 168. Also Lord Lamington, Gov. of Bombay, to Curzon, 24 Jan. 1905, No. 68b, C.W.P.I., 1905, Vol. 1, Curzon Papers.
  2. The Bill was introduced on 3 February 1905 and passed seven days later.

The decision to amend the Indian Official Secrets Act of 1889 grew out of a case in which a military fort in the Bombay Presidency was photographed by a Parsi. The Government of India considered prosecuting the man but realized that a conviction could not be obtained since the Official Secrets Act of 1889 placed the onus of proving criminal intention upon the prosecution.<sup>1</sup> The Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill of 1904 shifted the onus of proving innocence onto the accused. It also made it an offence to publish information about non-military affairs which "are of such a confidential nature that the public interest would suffer by their disclosure."<sup>2</sup> The newspapers in India, including the Pioneer, the Englishman, and the Statesman, were of one voice in condemning the decision to place civil affairs on the same level with military matters. The Bill was denounced as an infringement of the liberty of the press worthy of Machiavelli or the Tzar's Government.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously pained at the reception given to the Universities and Official Secrets Bills, Lord Curzon gave one of his unfortunate sermons on the short-comings of Indians at the Convocation of the University of Calcutta on 11 Feb-

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1. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Pub. to Sec. of State, 6 March 1902, No.12 of 1902, Pub. Letters from India, 1902.
  2. Speech by Sir Arundel Arundel. India Leg. Council Prog., 5 Feb. 1904, Vol. XLIII, p.20.
  3. See Englishman, 28 Jan. 1904; Sir Thomas Raleigh's introduction to Lord Curzon in India, pp.1-11; and C.J.O'Donnell, The Causes of Present Discontents in India, pp.50-51.

ruary 1905. Among the many Indian vices he warned his audience to avoid, were exaggeration of language, flattery, vituperation, invective, arrogance, lack of independent judgment, rhetoric, and "the tyranny of faction and the poison of racial bitterness."<sup>1</sup> In the same address he made his famous remark: "I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception."<sup>2</sup>

The Sandhya of Calcutta, whose editor was convicted of sedition on 4 December 1905, for subsequent articles, replied to Curzon's Convocation speech: "What a rash, foul-tongued man! ... A good thrashing is the cure of foolishness. But when the Viceroy is foolish there is nothing to be done."<sup>3</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika retorted that "in degraded India, in spite of moral decadence on all sides, Indians have not fallen as low as to require the services of a Westerner, whose civilization is still in its infancy, to teach them what constitutes the highest forms of truth and honour."<sup>4</sup>

This Convocation speech revealed a blindness to Indian sensibilities. It was but one of several occasions during the last two years of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty on which

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1. Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol. IV, pp. 73-84.
  2. Ibid, p. 75.
  3. Sandhya, 16 Feb. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 25 Feb. 1905, para. 30.
  4. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 Feb. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 18 Feb. 1905, para. 201.

his public utterances exhibited pique and querulousness. His judgment sometimes left him and he failed to see the reason or the sincerity behind the mounting criticism of his policies. In December 1903 in the Legislative Council, G.K.Gokhale criticized the Government's failure to appoint a representative of nationalist or Congress opinion to the Universities Commission and Curzon complained with some bitterness, "I suppose that I have taken more trouble than anybody else about Commissions. I have to represent provinces, interests, classes, creeds, upon them, and I have spent many hours of time in the attempt to make these Commissions fair. But we never get any thanks for our efforts."<sup>1</sup> Gokhale also complained that the Universities Bill would reduce the number of Indian Fellows on the Senates. That was a fact. It was one of the purposes of the Bill. Yet Curzon replied facetiously that Gokhale was mistaken, that the Bill was a "great step forward" because it would give "statutory recognition" to the Fellows for the first time.<sup>2</sup> Curzon was technically correct in saying that the Fellows owed their position to custom rather than to a written law but this was a disingenuous quibble since no one had challenged the legality of the existing system.

Although the reforms and speeches of Lord Curzon were

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1. Speech in the India Leg. Council, 18 Dec. 1903, Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol.III, p.264.  
2. Ibid, p.267.

resented, it was the Japanese victories over Russia which made the most profound impression on educated Indians in 1904 and 1905. The industrial progress of Japan had been attracting notice in India for some years. In 1903 the first Bengali student to study in Japan returned to India after five years of work in a mine and at the University of Tokyo in mining engineering.<sup>1</sup> A member of the Japanese Diet attended the Ahmedabad Congress of 1902<sup>2</sup> and in 1905 Viscount Moriyoshi Nagaoka, F.R.G.S., became the first President of an Indo-Japanese Association in Tokyo established to promote cultural, educational, and commercial exchange.<sup>3</sup> A Shivaji meeting in Tokyo on 7 May 1905 was attended by 80 persons, including twenty Indian students and representatives of Nepal, China, Korea, the Philippines,<sup>4</sup> Japan and Siam. Three cheers were given to Shivaji ("Shivaji Maharaj ki jai!") and three banzais were given to the Mikado. Bengali students predominated at the meeting. One Mr. Pottadar of Poona explained in a speech that such hero worship would enable them to reassert their own nationality and also to stimulate "the common Asiatic unity, or - as I

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1. Bengalee, 9 Oct. 1903.

2. Ibid, 4 Aug. 1904.

3. Ibid, 3 Dec. 1904.

4. British treatment of India was occasionally contrasted with American policies towards the Philippines. The Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar [Vol.X, No.1. (July 1904), p.92] observed that after six years of American rule the Philippines enjoyed more autonomy than India did after a century and a half of British rule.

like to call it - a higher humanity."<sup>1</sup>

The actual events of the Russo-Japanese War were followed closely in India. A relief fund for Japanese widows and orphans was opened in Bengal in 1904,<sup>2</sup> and on many occasions in 1905, the Bengalee contained advertisements for a "cinematograph" of the war.

A number of lessons were drawn from the Japanese successes. A contributor to the Hindustan Review thought that "whatever Japan may owe to Europe ... the genius of the race is distinctly Asiatic and absolutely different from that of any European nation. The influence that radiates from Japan is gentler, more subdued and more human than that which emanates from the arrogant nations of Europe."<sup>3</sup> For many Indians, Japan's "easy and brilliant ascendancy in the East has for ever exploded the fiction regarding the inherent superiority of the Western races."<sup>4</sup> The Japanese successes were "the talk of the market place, the topic of conversation in the family circle, the one absorbing theme which interests and gratifies us all .... We feel that we are not the same people as we were."<sup>5</sup> The Punjabi of Lahore predicted that Asia was "to get her innings at last."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid, 14 June 1905.

2. Ibid, 4 March 1904. The Bengalee of 17 April 1904 reported that Rs.1,596 had been collected so far.

3. N. Gupta, "Jap the Giant Killer", Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar, Vol.X, No.3, (Sept. 1904), p.240.

4. Bengalee, 10 June 1905.

5. Ibid, 14 June 1905.

6. Punjabi, 19 June 1905, Punjab Newspaper Report, 24 June 1905, para.2.

Lord Curzon was on leave in England from April to December 1904. During this time Lord Ampthill, Governor of Madras, acted as Governor-General. Ampthill and other officials were concerned about the security measures to be adopted for Curzon's return to Calcutta via Bombay. In September and November, the Kal of Poona had praised the assassination of M. de Plehve in Russia and had hinted that the tyranny of Curzon might be combatted as the socialists and nihilists fought the autocratic rule of the Tzar.<sup>1</sup> Curzon himself had received threatening letters from India. Ampthill was taking "every conceivable police precaution" to guard Curzon because he feared the effect of the Russian terrorists on India although he believed that "happily the native of India has not got that moral courage which induces the European anarchist to risk his own life."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon returned, however, without any attempt on his life. Shortly after his return, Ambica Charan Mazumdar sent a letter to the Government of Bengal inquiring its intentions with regard to the partition<sup>3</sup> and Sir Henry Cotton presided over a meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall which passed a resolution insisting upon the public's right to know of any changes the Government might be considering

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1. The text of the Kal articles may be seen in the enclosures to P.E.Percival, Under Sec., Govt. of Bombay, Jud. Dept. to C.G.H.Fawcett, Rembrancer of Legal Affairs, 23 Sept. 1904, and Percival to Fawcett, 21 Oct 1904, Jud. Dept. (Confid.) Prog., Sept. No.A-3 and Oct. No.A-3, Bombay Jud. and Home Prog., Confid., Vol.6958.
  2. Ampthill to St. John Brodrick, Sec. of State, 21 Sept. 1904, No.60, MSS.Eur. E.233/37.
  3. Bengalee, 17 Dec. 1904.

before any final decision was made.

While the issue was unsettled, alternative plans were put forward by the nationalists. It was suggested that the non-Bengali areas of the province, such as Orissa, Chota Nagpur, and Bihar might be removed instead<sup>1</sup> or perhaps Bengal could be given a Governor with a Council in order to lighten the burden of the administration.<sup>2</sup> The first solution would have been popular in Orissa and Bihar, although not in Bengal. For some years there had been a movement in Orissa in favour of the establishment of a Uriya-speaking province. The movement was led by a Christian, Modu Sadan Das, and his Utkal Union Conference which, according to Bepin Chandra Pal's New India, was one of the few public movements in India that had agents and organisation in the villages and was in

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1. See Sir Henry Cotton's Presidential Address, Report of the 20th I.N.C. (1904) p.46; Also, Cotton's speech, Town Hall Conference, 10 Jan. 1905, All About Partition, p.78.
  2. Prithwis Chandra Roy, The Case Against the Break-up of Bengal, p.F; also Memorial adopted by Town Hall Meeting, 18 March 1904, *ibid*, appendix C.

touch with the common people.<sup>1</sup> While the main motive behind the Uriya movement was the desire for unification of the Uriyan people who were divided between Madras, Bengal, and the Central Provinces, the demand for a Bihari province grew out of the dominance of Bengalis in government and public life.<sup>2</sup> The movement in favour of a separate Bihar was said to date from the birth of the Behar Times in 1893. The editor of this newspaper, Mahesh Narain, argued in 1896 that the Biharis were more akin to the people of Upper India

1. New India, 8 Oct. 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II 1904, para. 8142. The final section of the weekly newspaper reports for Bengal in 1904 and 1905, contains extracts from Orissa newspapers. The movement is mentioned almost weekly. The movement is discussed in P.P., H. of C. Cd. 2746 of 1905, East India (Reconstruction of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam). Further Papers, Enclosure 3 to No.2 B. Robertson, Ch.Sec. to Ch.Com., Central Provinces, to Sec. Govt. of India, Home Dept., 16 March 1904. The Madras Congress of 1903 showed little sympathy to Uriyan demands for unification under a single administration. V. Krishnaswami Iyer attempted unsuccessfully to omit from the Partition resolution the protest against the transfer of Ganjam District and Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency Tracts to Bengal. Iyer knew that the Uriyas favoured the transfer although the Telegus objected.  
Report of the 19th I.N.C. (1903) pp.131-33.
2. According to the Bihar News (14 Jan. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 21 Jan. 1905, para. 87) the Biharis welcomed the abolition of the complete examination for the provincial civil service because it would enable Biharis to get more jobs. In Bankipur, known as "a hot-bed of animosity between the Bengalis and the Biharis", a Bengali Defense Association was founded late in 1904. (Hitavarta, 25 Dec. 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, 31 Dec. 1904, para.56).

than to the Bengalis and that therefore the Biharis should have a separate administration. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Alexander MacKenzie, discouraged the idea and the Bihari separationists were quiet from 1896 to 1903. Then the partition Resolution of 12 December reopened the issue. On the other hand, even with the threatened division of the Bengali-speaking area, many Bengalis remained hostile to the idea of a separate Bihar.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Cotton suggested the idea in his Presidential address at the 1904 Congress and proposed a resolution embodying it in the Subjects Committee. But according to Mehesh Narain, the proposed resolution, which was supported by Sachchidananda Sinha, the only Bihari present, was "simply laughed down" by the Bengalis who dominated the proceedings.<sup>2</sup> In its place, a resolution was passed recording an "emphatic protest against the proposals of the Government of India for the partition of Bengal in any manner whatsoever."<sup>3</sup> There seem not to have been any petitions or memorials from Bengalis previous to the summer of 1905 which recommended the creation of a non-Bengali province including Bihar.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Mahesh Narain, The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Behar? (Allahabad, 1906, reprinted from the Hindustan Review). pp.1-20.

2. Ibid, p.9.

3. Resolution XIV. Emphasis added.

4. On the other hand, the separation of Orissa was suggested in memorials from the Bengal Landholders' Association, 1 March 1904, and the Central National Muhammadan Association, 17 Feb. 1904, Annexures 9 and 10, W.C. MacPherson to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept, 6 April 1904. Enclosure 5 in No.2. East India (Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam) Further Papers.

Nevertheless the separation of Bihar would have been far less objectionable to Bengali public opinion than either the scheme announced on 12 December 1903 or the plan ultimately adopted.

Why did not the Government of India leave the Bengali-speaking areas intact and instead separate Bihar and perhaps Orissa and Chota Nagpur? This was the solution adopted in 1911 when the partition was undone and it would have been the logical alternative to the plan carried through by Lord Curzon in 1905. The Government of India's letter of 3 December 1903, in which the partition was proposed, recognized the linguistic argument in favour of the unification of the Uriyas:

"Where the population speaking a distinct language and the area over which it is spoken are too small to constitute a substantial portion of a province, the foreign unit is almost of necessity neglected .... Hence in dealing with a question of this kind, it may be that the true criterion of territorial redistribution should be sought not in race but in language."<sup>1</sup>

If this argument applied to the Uriyas, why was it not valid for the Bengalis as well?

The answer seems to be that the Bengalis were unlikely to suffer from neglect in a divided Bengal, that the

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1. H. H. Risley to Ch. Sec., Govt. of Bengal,  
3 Dec. 1903, op.cit., para. 13.

(Bengalis were unlikely to suffer from neglect in a divided Bengal), that the position of the Uriyas, who were spread out in Madras, the Central Provinces, and Bengal, was not similar. But even more important, the interests of the Indian Civil Service were at stake. The Government of India believed that if Bihar and Orissa were removed from Bengal, "it would take from Bengal all of its best districts and would make the province universally unpopular."<sup>1</sup> However, the separation of Bihar was not seriously considered.<sup>2</sup> Few Bengalis favoured it before mid-1905 and even the Biharis pressed their demand for their own state with far less determination than the Uriyas.

Lord Curzon's enlarged scheme of partition received the assent of the Secretary of State, St. John Brodrick, on 9 June 1905.<sup>3</sup> Under the scheme as finally accepted, the

1. P.P.Cd. 2746 of 1906.  
East India (Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam) Further Papers., No.2.  
Extract of Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 2 Feb. 1905.
2. Dr. P.C.Ghosh (op.cit., p.123) is not correct in saying categorically that the separation of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal was not considered by Lord Curzon.
3. East India (Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam) Further Papers..., No.2,  
Extract of Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. in C. 9 June 1905.  
The actual decision in favour of an enlarged scheme was made by H.H.Risley and Sir Andrew Fraser while Curzon was in England although presumably Curzon could have vetoed it if he had wished. Ampthill to Curzon, 19 Sept. 1904, No.59, MSS.Eur. E.233/37. Also, A.HL.Fraser, Lt. Gov. of Bengal, to Curzon, 16 April 1904, No.146, C.W.P.I., 1904, Vol.1, Curzon Papers.

new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam consisted of Assam, the Chittagong, Dacca, and Rajshahi Divisions, the District of Malda, and the State of Hill Tippera. This entailed the transfer of 24.5 million or  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the Bengali speakers of Bengal to the new province. Bengal also lost the five Hindi States of Chota Nagpur and gained Sambalpur and five Uriya States. In the final division, Bengal was left with a population of about 54 million which included 42 million Hindus but only 17 million Bengali-speakers. Eastern Bengal and Assam contained 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus. It was placed under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court and was given a Legislative Council and an independent revenue authority. In giving his approval to this arrangement Brodrick was grudging. He questioned the urgency of reform and suggested that Curzon under-valued "the strength and substance of the sentiment" behind the agitation against the partition.<sup>1</sup> However, when the final partition plan was announced in July 1905, no mention was made of Brodrick's lack of enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup>

The only solid evidence that this enlarged partition plan was adopted in order to divide and rule is a paragraph

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1. Sec. of State to Gov. Gen. in Council, 9 June 1905, Confid. Oct. Prog. No.163, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.7048.
  2. East India (Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam) No.2. Resolution of the Govt. of India, Home Dept., 19 July 1905.

in the Government of India's letter to the Secretary of State on 2 February 1905. The latter asked for the Secretary of State's approval for the final scheme and contained the passage:

"... it cannot be for the lasting good of any country or any people that public opinion or what passes for it should be manufactured by a comparatively small number of people at a single centre and should be disseminated thence for universal adoption, all other views being discouraged or suppressed. The present agitation furnishes a notable illustration of the system under which a particular set of opinions expressed practically in the same words is sent out with a mandate from Calcutta to be echoed in the form of telegraphic protests and formal memorials from a number of different places all over Bengal...."

From every point of view it appears to us desirable to encourage the growth of centres of independent opinion, local aspirations, local ideals, and to preserve the growing intelligence and enterprise of Bengal from being cramped and stunted by the process of forcing it prematurely into a mould of rigid and sterile uniformity. In course of time, if the subtle tendencies which determine social expansion and intellectual advancement are only given a fair field, it may be expected that such centres will arise among the Muhammadans at Dacca, among the natives of Behar<sup>at Patna</sup> and among the Uriyas at Cuttack."<sup>1</sup>

G.K. Gokhale quoted this passage in his presidential address to the 1905 Congress and said that it showed an

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1. Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 2 Feb. 1905, op.cit.

attempt to prevent the "growing solidarity" of the Bengalis, to "weaken their power of co-operating for national ends." "After this," he continued, "let no apologist of the late Viceroy pretend that the object of the partition was administrative convenience and not political repression."<sup>1</sup> It is not possible to say with certainty how much weight Curzon gave to the political argument for partition. But it may be said that the political argument had little influence (and it may not have even occurred to him) on his decision to partition Bengal in 1903. It was only during the protests against the original plan that officials first saw the possible political benefits of a divided Bengal. The Government of Bengal in its letter of 6 April 1904, said that the predominance of Calcutta in Bengal's political life was "not wholly to the advantage of the people of Eastern Bengal." The Muslims were said generally to be unsympathetic to the political leadership of Calcutta and others felt the influence of Calcutta "to be of a somewhat tyrannical character." The agitation against the partition was illustrative of the disadvantage "that may result from the subordination of Bengal to Calcutta."<sup>2</sup> Lord Curzon, too, during his trip to east Bengal in February 1904, had remarked on the

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1. Report of the 21st I.N.C., p.9.

2. W.C.MacPherson, 6 April 1904, op.cit. para.46.

alleged role of Calcutta in manufacturing public opinion in the mofussil.<sup>1</sup> In one of Lord Curzon's letters to St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State, Curzon gave five reasons for partitioning Bengal and the fifth was that the Calcutta politicians dominated public opinion in other parts of Bengal and India and that Calcutta had an undesirable influence on the High Court, the Government of Bengal, and even the Government of India.<sup>2</sup> But this was the only letter among the dozens written to people in India and England in which Curzon mentioned this argument. Even in this one letter, in giving this fifth reason to Brodrick, Curzon seemed to be less concerned with convincing him of the necessity for dividing Bengal than to explain why the Calcutta leaders objected. The reference to Calcutta politicians was one of the few times that Curzon mentioned Bengal politics. There is, then, little evidence that Curzon was concerned about the political power of the Bengalis. It is much more likely that it was Curzon's lack of concern which led him into the gross miscalculation of the possible effect which the partition would have <sup>on</sup> Bengali feeling.

The evidence suggests that "divide and rule" was not

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1. Speech at Dacca, 18 Feb. 1904 and speech at Mymensingh, 20 Feb. 1904. Speeches of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol.III, pp.299 and 318.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 Feb. 1905, No.15. C.W.S.S., 1904-1905, Curzon Papers.

one of the main reasons for the partition of Bengal. The Governments of India and Bengal, it is true, perceived and considered the political advantages to be derived from separating Calcutta from east Bengal. It was one of the reasons why the larger scheme of partition was favoured. However, neither the Government of India's letter of 2 February 1905 nor the Government of Bengal's letter of 6 April 1904 - the two official letters which mention the political argument in favour of partition - give much prominence to that argument. Lord Curzon and his advisors decided that a wider plan of partition was preferable to Curzon's 1903 scheme because it would enable the new province to have the judicial, executive, and legislative machinery of a province governed by a Lieutenant-Governor and it would make available to the Muslim community opportunities for employment and education formerly absent or not utilized. That the wider partition scheme would also undermine the formidable power of the Bengali Hindu politicians was a further advantage. But it was only an additional or incidental justification for the partition which would have been carried out regardless of the political consequences. However in politics it is often the appearance rather than the reality which counts most.

For some months before the announcement of the final, enlarged partition plan on 19 July 1905, the agitation against partition had been almost non-existent because it was known that the Government of India was considering a new scheme, the details of which were unknown to the public. When the final plan was suddenly announced there was indecision among the Bengali leaders about what should be done. The fact that the final plan included a Legislative Council, High Court jurisdiction, and a revenue authority did not, as Lord Curzon had hoped, make it palatable to the vast majority of politically conscious Hindus.

There was general agreement among the Bengali leaders that traditional methods of protest had failed to influence the Government and that new methods were needed. The method of protest favoured by the two most extreme Bengal newspapers - New India and Sandhya<sup>1</sup> - was the renunciation of all posts held under the Government. In May 1904 Bepin Chandra Pal's New India warned those persons who were trying to revive the Congress movement that in the last

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1. When Lord Curzon's resignation became known in August 1905, the Sandhya (25 Aug. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Sept. 1905, para.26) commented: "The source of our annoyance and mischief is removed - sing, therefore the name of Hari." Hari is sung in funeral processions while bearing the body to the funeral pyre.

thirty years progressive ideals had altered. It was no longer possible to serve on the Legislative Councils with self-respect and patriotism.<sup>1</sup> Bepin Chandra Pal delivered a speech on 3 August 1905 at a meeting at the Star Theatre, Calcutta, during which leaflets containing a boycott vow were distributed. The vow said that self-government was the only government ordained by God, that "I admit no other form of Government ... to be binding", and that "although oppressed by poverty and misfortune, I shall never accept service under this [British] Government."<sup>2</sup> Lal Mohan Ghose also suggested that all Indians serving on Legislative Councils, District Boards and Municipalities, and as Honorary Magistrates, should resign. He made the suggestion at Dinajpur on 21 July 1905 at one of the first mofussil protest meetings held after the final partition plan was announced.<sup>3</sup>

However, it was decided not to resign honorary appointments. These positions were recognized by the Bengali leaders as "a source of local influence which would be useful in the coming struggle." And probably of greater importance: it was doubtful if such action would receive wide support. As Surendra Nath Banerjea has said, a partial

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1. New India, 25 May 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 11 June 1904, para. 3086.
  2. Daily Hitavadi, 4 Aug. 1905. Bengal Newspaper Report, 12 Aug. 1905, para. 57.
  3. Sandhya, 24 July 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 29 July 1905, para. 50.

failure in the early stages might have led to the collapse of the agitation.<sup>1</sup> Another suggestion which received even less support and was also allowed to drop was that the Bengalis should boycott the approaching visit of the Prince of Wales.<sup>2</sup>

The plan of action finally adopted, following a series of conferences at the Indian Association and the houses of Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore and Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya of Mymensingh, was the boycott of British goods.

The boycott was a familiar idea to many nationalists. In 1894, when the counter-vailing duties on cotton goods were imposed, public meetings in Calcutta, Madras, Berar, Bombay, Poona, Satara, and Ahmedabad resolved to boycott Lancashire goods and to wear only Indian cloth. Few people carried out this plan.<sup>3</sup> The man responsible for

1. A Nation in Making, p.189.

2. This was the significance of the resolution passed at Ripon College on 17 July, that the students should promise not to participate in any public amusement or rejoicing for six months, and of similar suggestions made at the Town Hall meeting of 7 Aug. 1905. Englishman, 9 Aug. 1905 and Report on the Agitation against the Partition of Bengal, para.27. Enclosure to R.W.Carlyle, Offg. Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Sec. Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Jan. 1906, June Prog. No.175, I.H.P.,Pub., Vol.7312. This Report which was written by the Inspector-General of Police in Bengal, will be cited frequently below and will be referred to as the Partition Report.

3. Englishman, 18 Sept. 1905. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10 Nov. 1905, quoted the Nasik Gazetteer to the effect that in 1726 a Bengali ascetic named Gurupada Swami, who lived near Nasik, carried on a campaign against the use of foreign goods. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 31.

popularizing the boycott in Bengal in 1905 was a Punjabi named Tahal Ram Ganga Ram. In February and March he spoke to crowds of students every evening in College Square, Calcutta, urging them not to buy British goods. According to the Report of the Inspector-General of Police, these speeches made a deep impression on the students who discussed the boycott idea frequently in the months preceding the final announcement of partition.<sup>1</sup> The resolve of the Chinese to boycott American goods also impressed many Bengalis in 1905.<sup>2</sup>

The Calcutta leaders, who probably included J. Chaudhuri, Ambica Charan Mazumdar, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bhupendra Nath Basu, and some of the titled zamindars, decided to stage a gigantic demonstration at the Calcutta Town Hall to formally adopt the boycott plan. Originally the date was set for 1 August but then it was postponed until 7 August. ✓ The Inspector-General of Police thought the delay might have been decided upon in order to allow enough time for mofussil boycott meetings to be held. This would have given the boycott movement an appearance

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1. Partition Report, op.cit..para. 29.

2. See Sanjivani, 22 June 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 1 July 1905, para. 50; Daily Hitavadi, 30 June 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 8 July 1905, para.45; and the Statesman, 9 Aug. 1905. The Englishman (8 Aug.1905) reported that the Chinese boycott had directly inspired the Bengali boycott decision.

of spontaneity and avoided the suggestion that the movement was being directed from Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> The boycott resolution passed at the Town Hall meeting in Calcutta on 7 August stated

"That this meeting sympathizes with the resolution adopted at many meetings held in the mufassal, to abstain from the purchase of British manufactures so long as the Partition Resolution is not withdrawn, as a protest against the indifference of the British public in regard to Indian affairs and the consequent disregard of Indian public opinion by the present Government."

This resolution was worded so that Calcutta seemed simply to be following the lead of the mofussil.

The meeting of 7 August was impressive, judged by the standard of previous Indian demonstrations. In the early afternoon Ambica Charan Mazumdar, Surendra Nath Banerjea, and J. Roy organized the students of at least a dozen colleges into a procession of "not less than twelve thousand", according to the Statesman.<sup>2</sup> From about two o'clock onwards the students marched two by two from College Square to the Town Hall, carrying pennants with the words "United Bengal". In many parts of Calcutta all shops were closed. Having gathered around the outside of the Town Hall at about four o'clock, "the students formed an army ... that attempted to swarm up the stairs, but they were

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1. Partition Report, op.cit. para.38.

2. 8 Aug. 1905.

blocked with tables and they were commanded to go back to the Maidan where a meeting would be held."<sup>1</sup> Surendra Nath Banerjea announced that because of the number of people, there would be three meetings: on the upper and lower floors of the Town Hall and on the Maidan.<sup>2</sup>

"The expected speakers and the leaders of the community began to arrive and the enthusiasm of the crowd burst forth, cheer succeeding cheer as the Maharaja of Mymensingh, the Maharaja of Cossimbazar the Raja of Nasipur, and the Raja of Natore took their seats on the platform."<sup>3</sup>

"As it was towards five o'clock the hall was densely packed and late arrivals, who thought themselves qualified, had to fight for the honour of a chair. With discernment worthy men were recognized in the crowd by self-appointed ushers and cheerfully propelled to honourable positions; others not so desirable were with perfect good-nature thrust away."<sup>4</sup>

Literature was circulated giving the names of places where Indian goods could be bought, and a pamphlet was distributed recounting cases of assaults by Europeans on Indians.<sup>5</sup> The Town Hall had been draped with a large black cloth as a sign of mourning. But when it was learned that the meetings' organizers had rented English cloth from the firm of Messrs. Hall and Anderson, there was an indignant protest and it was removed.<sup>6</sup> The speeches delivered at the three meetings were earnest but restrained - so much so

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1. Englishman, 8 Aug. 1905.

2. Statesman, 8 Aug. 1905.

3. Statesman, 8 Aug. 1905.

4. Englishman, 8 Aug. 1905.

5. Ibid.

6. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 38.

that the Sandhya published an article entitled "Slavishness in Protest", criticising the failure of the meeting to definitely resolve to boycott British goods and deprecating the repeated use of the word "constitutional" by the speakers.<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja of Cossimbazar chaired the main meeting and expressed his great anxiety for the future of the Bengali race. He observed that the Bengalis of west Bengal would be in an even worse position than the Bengali Hindus of Eastern Bengal and Assam because, while the latter would be outnumbered by Muslims, the former would be "in a hopeless minority" among non-Bengali speakers. In the old province of Bengal, there had been six Divisions but in the new Bengal, there would be only one and a half Bengali-speaking Divisions. "We shall be strangers in our own land", he said.<sup>2</sup>

§ The meeting of 7 August was attended by a large number of Muslims and Marwaris, whose support was required for a successful boycott. The sympathies of the Marwaris were particularly appealed to and when a Marwari spoke, he was loudly applauded.<sup>3</sup> The meeting passed off without any disorderly incidents. The Englishman was disturbed by the meeting. It thought the support offered to the boycott of British goods was sinister, and although the Bengalis had

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1. Sandhya, 9 Aug. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 12 Aug. 1905, para. 51.
  2. Statesman, 8 Aug. 1905.
  3. Englishman, 8 Aug. 1905.

"hitherto displayed no capacity for combination", it wondered if the Government had realized the gravity of the feeling aroused by partition.<sup>1</sup>

In a population such as that of Bengal, where the vast majority had had no connection with nationalist politics and probably had no understanding whatsoever of what the re-arrangement of Bengal's administrative boundaries meant, a boycott movement required, if it was to succeed, great organization, education, and leadership. In August, September, and October 1905, the movement attained a large measure of success, because of the well organized campaign of picketing.

Swadeshi pickets and patrols, composed of schoolboys, college students, and clerks, paraded through the bazaars and main thoroughfares of Calcutta and the mofussil towns, encouraging and sometimes coercing purchasers not to buy, and shopkeepers not to sell, foreign goods. These patrols began soon after the meeting of 7 August at which the boycott resolution was passed. It was at about this time, too, that the term "swadeshi" came into popular use. Up until 3 October, the Commissioner of the Calcutta Police reported, the patrols did little harm "beyond causing annoyance and seriously affecting the sale of imported articles,"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid, 9 Aug. 1905.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

Coercion was occasionally used but few people dared complain to the police. In August there was a scuffle between swadeshi pickets and people trying to buy Dawson's boots on Bentinck Street, Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> The Englishman published exaggerated accounts about the activities of the pickets and patrols and claimed that in early September North Calcutta was in the control of gangs of boys who prevented the sale of foreign goods. It said that "the worst of the matter is that the frenzy amongst Bengali children of the better classes have communicated itself to urchins of the lower orders and cases are reported of gutter-snipes mobbing and assaulting Europeans." Previously the Englishman had questioned the wisdom of partitioning Bengal but now it said that serious observers were beginning to think that any amendment of the partition scheme would be a major mistake, that it would be attributed to the boycott and intimidation by students.<sup>2</sup>

The first important incident involving the swadeshi patrols was on 3 October in Harrison Road, Burra Bazaar. Police Inspector Carroll came across a man in tears who was surrounded by students trying to compel him to return some foreign cloth to the shop where he had purchased it.

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1. Nevertheless, the Bengalee and the Amrita Bazar Patrika continued to carry Dawson's boots advertisements on their front pages. Ibid, para.39.
  2. Englishman, 5 September 1905.

Inspector Carroll interfered, the students left and the man proceeded on his way. But the man was again surrounded by the students, upon which Inspector Carroll returned and arrested one of the intimidators. The prisoner was turned over to a constable but on the way to the police station a crowd attempted to rescue the prisoner. More police arrived and in the ensuing struggle the prisoner escaped and Inspector Carroll was assaulted by a number of persons. The police made seventeen arrests on the spot.

Shortly after the prisoners were taken to jail, A.C.Banerji and A.K.Ghose visited the Commissioner of Police in his home and asked for the release of the prisoners on bail. The Commissioner agreed. The following day A.C.Banerji, A.K.Ghose, Surendra Nath Banerjea, and Bhupendra Nath Basu called upon the Commissioner at home again and guaranteed to "stop further picketing in the town and suburbs of Calcutta" if the proceedings against the seventeen accused were dropped. The Commissioner accepted the bargain, but insisted that Rs.100 be given to Inspector Carroll as compensation for the assault and warned the leaders that it might be necessary to swear them in as special constables to help the police to deal with future intimidation.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57, report by Commissioner of Police, Calcutta. Although the police reports and the Englishman stated that bands of "students" were responsible for the intimidation, out of the 17 persons arrested in Burra Bazaar, only 5 were students, the remainder being clerks.

The Indian Mirror and the Bengalee appealed to students to refrain from violence and intimidation<sup>1</sup> but some other newspapers took another line. New India said that constitutional agitation was not possible because the people had no constitutional or popular rights.<sup>2</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika stated that the Government had showed its contempt for constitutional agitation and therefore Indians should imitate the indigo ryots' actions of 1859-60, i.e. that they should rise against their oppressors.<sup>3</sup> The Charu Mihir of Mymensingh hinted at the use of force and predicted that "Mother Bengal is about to wash away your misfortunes today by her own blood."<sup>4</sup> Surendra Nath Banerjea and Bhupendra Nath Basu may have been willing to call off the pickets but they were in a minority, so picketing continued.

On 7 October in Chitpur Road, Sobha Bazaar, a man purchased some foreign-made dhoties from a shop, departed, and then returned with a crowd of students. The man insisted that he had asked for swadeshi dhoties; the shopkeeper denied it. The crowd grew, people shouted "Bande Mataram", and the police, fearing that a riot might occur, dispersed

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1. Indian Mirror, 6 Sept. 1905 and Bengalee, 8 Sept. 1905. Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 16 Sept. 1905. paras. 1196-97.
  2. New India, 9 Sept. 1905, *ibid*, para.1207.
  3. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12 Sept. 1905, *ibid*, para.1208.
  4. Charu Mihir, 12 Sept. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 23 Sept. 1905, para.26.

the crowd. The next morning a large crowd reassembled in front of the same shop and demanded, as punishment for allegedly selling "belati" as swadeshi cloth, a contribution to the National Fund<sup>1</sup> and a quantity of foreign cloth for a bonfire.<sup>2</sup> Both demands were met by the shopkeeper's son, who proclaimed to the crowd that he would never sell foreign goods again. A bonfire consumed the European cloth in front of the police and the cheering crowd, and that night bands of students carrying sticks paraded through the streets of North Calcutta shouting "Bande Mataram" everytime they passed a European or a police station.<sup>3</sup>

The effectiveness of the students reached its height on the day partition took effect - 16 October. The night before determined efforts were made to persuade shopkeepers not to open on partition day, and as a result, early in the morning of the 16th, hardly any shops were open in the Indian quarters of Calcutta, although late in the morning Muslim shops on the Chitpur Road began to do business.<sup>4</sup> A special effort was aimed at closing the New Market where the Europeans and their servants did their shopping. Pickets were posted on the approaches to New Market in the early

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1. The National Fund was established to promote the growth of Indian industries.
  2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57, accounts by various police officers. The Indian Daily News and the Englishman gave highly sensational reports of the affair of 7 October, the latter saying that "many men were seriously injured" in the "riot" which, according to the police reports, never took place.
  3. Englishman, 9 Oct. 1905.
  4. Report by Com.of Police, Calcutta, quoted in Partition Report, op.cit, para. 57.

hours of the morning. At 3:00 A.M. news reached New Market that a string of carts carrying meat had been stopped in Wellington Square. Chaprassis were sent to fetch the police and the pickets fled. Thus the Europeans got their meat supplies. With the fruit and vegetable carts entering Calcutta from Garden Reach, the pickets were more successful. They were stopped on the Kidderpur Road and by the time the police arrived, the carters had returned home. "Not a single pound of fresh fish" reached New Market<sup>1</sup> but in this case it was not the pickets, but rather the three major Indian fish contractors, who were responsible.<sup>2</sup> New Market itself was visited by bands of Swadeshi Volunteers who harangued the shopkeepers but the police and the chaprassis kept them moving and the shops remained open.

Swadeshi Volunteers were stationed in the principal tramway and railway termini, distributing rakhis (thread wristlets) to passengers. The rakhis were tied to the wrists of two or more people to symbolize the continued unity of the Bengali race. In Calcutta many Bengali clerks removed their shoes and socks - foreign and un-Hindu objects - and, according to the Englishman, "the streets presented the spectacle of hundreds of Babus hurrying to office bare-footed and with shoes in their hands."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Englishman, 17 Oct. 1905.

2. Report by Com. of Police, Calcutta, quoted in Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

3. Englishman, 17 Oct. 1905.

The other features of partition day were fasting, bathing in the river, and a meeting on the Upper Circular Road for the laying of the cornerstone for a "Federation Hall." The Federation Hall meeting took place in the afternoon after huge crowds had wandered through the streets throughout the morning. Shortly before the meeting, the crowds began to break up, the Muslims going to Wellesley Square while the Hindus, accompanied by a small number of Muslims, marched two by two to Upper Circular Road behind an old man who chanted Sanskrit hymns and occasionally gave the sign for a "Bande Mataram" cry. At the Muslim meeting in Wellesley Square, there was not complete unanimity in favour of swadeshi and the boycott, but most Calcutta Muslims disapproved of the partition, if with much less feeling than the Hindus. Two moulvies advised the Wellesley Square meeting to have no part in the agitation against partition.<sup>1</sup>

There were few incidents during the day. Hundreds of policemen were stationed throughout the city but in order to avoid provocation, they were not armed with batons. Many of the Pathan traders, who came to Calcutta at the start of the cold weather to sell goods and who were finding business slow, "were evidently spoiling for a row, for they would push into knots of Hindus, listening to an orator, and laugh

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1. Ibid.

loudly and insolently." But no one lost his temper.<sup>1</sup> A Jewish shopkeeper initiated a charge for "house-trespass" against one K.M.Banerji who tried to force him to close his shop.<sup>2</sup> In the other intimidation case of the day, a Hindu shopkeeper entered the shop of a Muslim who refused to close down and, in the words of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, "more in a friendly spirit than anger, shook him by the neck and uttered the words 'Bande Mataram'". The Magistrate dismissed the case against the Hindu shopkeeper after he had apologised and paid Rs.25 into the poor box.<sup>3</sup> In Burra Bazaar a group which included students held up a tramcar by placing themselves in front of it. The passengers were urged not to ride in tramcars. The police arrived and the cars were allowed to proceed. Except for these incidents, the day's proceedings were good-natured. The labourers at Ralli Brothers Jute works at Chitpur refused to work and there was an almost total strike among the carters of Calcutta but an attempt to persuade the coal depôt coolies at Kidderpur to strike failed.<sup>4</sup>

The boycott of foreign goods could be successful only so long as effective picketing was maintained, or, as the Government of Bengal realized, students were allowed to

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1. Ibid.

2. Report by Com. of Police, Calcutta, quoted in Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

3. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21 Oct. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 28 Oct. 1905, para.1386.

4. Report by Com. of Police, Calcutta, quoted in Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

patrol and picket in the bazaars. The boycott movement in and around Calcutta was seriously checked by the issue of a Government circular, dated 10 October, calling upon Magistrates and Collectors to inform the heads of schools and colleges that if their students participated in any political, boycott, or picketing activity, then the school in question would be liable to lose their grants-in-aid, the right to send students up for Government scholarships, and even the recognition of the University of Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> The circular also asked the Magistrates and Collectors to warn those persons connected with the management of schools and colleges that they might be called upon to serve as special constables if a disturbance seemed likely.<sup>2</sup> Students were further discouraged from boycott activities by several prosecutions. After an assault on the police who were attempting to disperse picketing students in Bhowanipur bazaar, Calcutta, in November, three students were fined for obstructing public servants in the performance of their duties, and one of the students was sentenced to one

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1. The Englishman, 7 Oct. 1905, had suggested to the Government that it had an effective weapon against the boycott movement. The Government could shut down the colleges involved "for ever" and it could bar any student from appearing in Government examinations or aided institutions for 5 or 6 years.
  2. P.P.Cd. 3242 of 1906. East India (Resignation of Sir. J.B.Fuller), No.1, Circular Letter from R.W.Carlyle, Offg. Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Mags. and Cols. 10 Oct. 1905.

month's rigorous imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> On 27 November, a group of boycotters tried to persuade some and prevent other students from attending two schools in Shampukhur, Calcutta. The police dispersed the boycotters who returned in the evening and were chased away once again. In the process, fifteen persons were arrested and later fined small sums for obstructing the police.<sup>2</sup> In another case, a student was sentenced to receive fifteen stripes of the whip for shouting "Bande Mataram" in the street.<sup>3</sup>

In the village of Andul, Howrah District, where the boycott was carried on with great vigour, several persons were appointed as special constables,<sup>4</sup> ostensibly to help in the event of disturbances, but the actual reason was probably to coerce them into giving up the boycott movement. The Government of Bengal believed that the decline in the boycott movement in western Bengal in December 1905 could be attributed to the Carlyle circular barring the students

1. Englishman, 1 Feb. 1906; Partition Report, op.cit. para. 60(4).
2. Bengalee 29 Nov. 1905; Englishman, 29 Nov. 1905; Partition Report, op.cit. para.60(7).
3. This boy was given the warmest reception at the meeting at Grand Theatre, Calcutta, on 14 Feb. 1906, at which twenty or so persons punished for anti-partition activities were garlanded and presented with silver medals. A Calcutta Police Report, Annexure to R.W.Carlyle, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Bengal, to Sec., Govt. of India Home Dept., 23 March 1906, June Prog. No.178, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.7312.
4. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

from political agitation, the prosecution of student pickets, and the appointment of the special constables at Andul, Howrah District.<sup>1</sup>

Religion was used to support the boycott movement. One of the devices often used to encourage the boycott of foreign sugar and salt was to say that they were purified with parts of pigs and cows and that they were therefore forbidden to both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Leaders of the agitation contacted religious leaders. A.C. Banerji, whom the Inspector-General of Police called "one of the most dangerous and seditious" agitators, went to his home in Santipur, Nadia District, and tried to enlist the aid of the local pandits who were revered in many parts of Bengal.<sup>3</sup> A large

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1. R.W. Carlyle to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 25 Jan. 1905, op.cit. para.13.
  2. See, for instance, Medini Bandhav (Midnapur), 13 Sept. 1905. Bengal Newspaper Report, 23 Sept. 1905, para.39; Also summaries of agitation in Pabna, Birbhum, Burdwan, and Noakhali Districts. (Partition Report, op.cit. para.57). The Bangabasi published a letter from a correspondent who claimed to have seen bits of beef and pork being removed from salt on a Liverpool ship. (Partition Report, para.45) The Bangabasi, 2 Sept. 1905, appealed to the pandits of Nabadwip, Nadia Dist., and of Bhatpura, 24 Parganas, to persuade people not to lose caste by using foreign salt. (Enclosure E, Partition Report, op.cit.).
  3. Partition Report, op.cit. para.45. According to the Sandhya (23 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Dec. 1905, para.3) and the Amrita Bazar Patrika (23 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, Part II, 25 Nov. 1905, para. 1518) Banerji's house was guarded by four police constables and he was followed wherever he went.

number of religious figures did support the boycott, and around Calcutta Brahmans refused to perform religious ceremonies at which foreign articles were worn or used. The Amrita Bazar Patrika reported that one hundred itinerant sadhus met at Puri and vowed to preach swadeshi throughout India. However, Special Branch investigations failed to turn up any cases of these sadhus carrying out their vows.<sup>1</sup>

The religious character of the boycott movement was most evident on 28 September at the Kalighat temple ceremony near Calcutta. In previous years many high caste Hindus had avoided the Mahapuja ceremonies at Kalighat because of the sacrifice of animals.<sup>2</sup> But not in 1905. High and low castes alike - more than 50,000 people in all, according to the Bengalee - gathered at Kalighat on 28 September and took the swadeshi vows administered by the Hindu priests.<sup>3</sup> The Englishman declared that this attempt to bring the "lower orders" into the partition agitation was particularly sinister since the Government had the means of controlling "Babus" and clerks who had to earn a respectable income, but not the masses who had nothing to lose from the collapse of law and order.<sup>4</sup>

The boycott movement in Calcutta achieved great successes in its early months. A report written by the

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1. Partition Report, op.cit. paras. 47-48.

2. Englishman, 30 Sept. 1905.

3. Bengalee, 3 Oct. 1905.

4. Englishman, 30 Sept. 1905.

Collector of Customs on 21 September 1905 showed that European firms dealing in wholesale trade were able to sell only a limited amount of the boots, soaps, perfumes, and piece goods imported for the Puja holidays when presents were traditionally purchased on a large scale. A distinction was made by Bengalis between Continental and English goods, and one firm was able to sell its English goods only by marking them "Made in Germany." Japanese goods sold especially well.<sup>1</sup> A senior partner in a Leicester hosiery firm wrote to the Secretary of State for India complaining that Ralli Brothers had suffered a decrease of Rs. 70,000 per day in their Indian sales and that the English might lose business to the Germans.<sup>2</sup>

The Collector of Customs was not able to appraise accurately the effect of the boycott on the retail sale of piece goods. The Marwari bazaar dealers had purchased their stocks from European firms early in 1905 so that most of the stocks were held in the bazaars rather than in the warehouses. During the boycott movement an agreement was reached between the Bengali boycott leaders and the Marwaris to the effect that the boycott would not be applied to the

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1. "Notes on the extent to which the "Boycott" has at present affected wholesale and retail trade in Calcutta," Enclosure F to Partition Report, op.cit.
  2. H.A.Thornton, Partner of Thornton and Mawby, Sock and Hosiery Manufacturers, to Sec. of State, 14 Sept. 1905, and enclosed letter from the Calcutta representative, J. and P. No.2861, Judicial and Public Papers, Vol.731.

existing stocks if the Marwari dealers would not make any fresh purchases for four months. The situation was further complicated by a dispute between the Marwaris and the importing firms over the terms of their agreements. The Marwaris took advantage of the boycott movement to try to force the European firms to modify the system under which the Manchester manufacturer could fail to deliver the goods promised without the Marwari having any redress, while, on the other hand, he could compel the Marwari to accept delivery at any time of goods already ordered.<sup>1</sup>

From the beginning of the boycott movement some of the political leaders were aware that the boycott could be sustained for only a limited period of time. Hand-woven cloth was more expensive than machine-made cloth and poor people could not be expected to pay the extra cost often. Even the price of Bombay cloth began to rise as the supplies of swadeshi material became scarce.<sup>2</sup> That the boycott achieved a large measure of success for two months in Calcutta was due to the general climate of opinion which supported the swadeshi patrols and pickets. According to the Inspector-General of Police, "even when the agitation assumed its most reprehensible form the general mass of educated Bengalis, it must be admitted, fully sympathised with the

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1. "Notes on ... the "boycott" ... in Calcutta," op.cit.  
2. See the letters to the editor, Bengalee, throughout August 1905. In particular, see letters from Satis Chandra Mukerji in Bengalee, 13 and 19 Aug. 1905.

most extreme measures taken," and "few men of position" publicly spoke against the excesses of the agitators.<sup>1</sup> The success of the boycott also depended, to some extent, upon a fear of intimidation and violence. In March 1905, students in College Square burnt an effigy of K.G.Gupta, a Divisional Commissioner who supported the partition.<sup>2</sup> One of the ugliest incidents involved Dr. Aghore Nath Mukerjee of Kidderpur. It was his custom to purchase European-made articles and he received a letter threatening him with death if he persisted in buying foreign goods. He was enticed into a garri, ostensibly to visit a sick patient, but instead he was taken to a deserted spot where coal-tar was poured on his head.<sup>3</sup> The Englishman reported that other people had received anonymous, threatening letters for not supporting the boycott.<sup>4</sup> The tone of some newspapers was menacing. The Charu Mihir, for instance, said that "those who will refrain from agitation at this terrible crisis are traitors to their fatherland."<sup>5</sup> A reporter of the Pratijna (Calcutta) saw several Indians taking notes on Bepin Chandra Pal's speech at the Grand Theatre, probably to

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1. Partition Report, op.cit, para.56.
  2. Daily Hitavadi, 28 March 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 8 April 1905, para.114.
  3. Bengalee, 30 Sept. 1905.
  4. Englishman, 29 Sept. 1905.
  5. Charu Mihir, 29 Nov. 1904, Bengal Newspaper Report, 17 Dec. 1904, para.47.

determine if the speech was seditious. The Pratijna said these Indians ought to be thrashed, that a man who "ridicules your national feeling" ought to be slapped.<sup>1</sup>

A number of assaults were made upon Europeans, mostly by students, both in Calcutta and in the mofussil during the 1905 agitation. The Inspector-General of Police attributed them to the agitation against partition and "to the turbulent anti-English spirit" which it had aroused.<sup>2</sup> In August, W.D.R. Prentice, Joint Magistrate of Howrah, was driving along the Strand Road in Calcutta when he was surrounded by a group of students marching in a swadeshi procession who struck him with their fists and sticks.<sup>3</sup>

On 22 September 1905 a crowd of 6 - 7,000 people, mostly students, attended a protest meeting on the Maidan in Calcutta. After the meeting, a group of students threw mud, stones, and insults at four European women passing along the Maidan in a private conveyance. In consequence, the Commissioner of Police informed Bhupendra/<sup>Nath</sup> Basu that no

1. Pratijna, 30 Aug. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 9 Sept. 1905, para.45.
2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.59. According to the Sandhya, the new assertiveness was expressed against Eurasians, also. On 24 November, the Bengali students of Sibpur Engineering College, 24 Parganas, occupied the seats at the front of a classroom, which were customarily reserved for Eurasians. The students involved were punished. Sandhya, 29 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Dec. 1905, para.10.
3. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 59(1).

more meetings would be allowed on the Maidan and that if any were convened, they would be dispersed by the police.<sup>1</sup>

F. Blewitt, Manager of the Ballyganj branch of the Aligarh Dairy Farm, took a hackney carriage from Calcutta on 28 September with the intention of returning to his farm. Just outside Calcutta, the driver halted the carriage and demanded an extra Rs.5 from his passenger. Blewitt then stepped out of the carriage and the driver, with the help of his syce, forced him into the drain next to the road. The driver and syce were sent up for trial.<sup>2</sup> Early in October, Captain G.M.T. Symmers was beaten on the head with umbrellas by some "Babus" in Calcutta because he had dismissed an Indian from the British Indian Transport Department and replaced him with a European.<sup>3</sup> On the night of 30 October, in Calcutta, 5 or 6 Indians induced an unidentified European into a dark lane and started to assault him. He drew a pistol and before escaping, critically wounded two of his assailants.<sup>4</sup> In early November, Manning Fox of Ballyganj "was waylaid and assaulted in broad daylight in a well-populated European thoroughfare by a party led by a dismissed servant."<sup>5</sup> The Englishman reported two other cases in which European "masters" were

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1. F.L. Halliday, Com. of Police to B.N. Basu, 25 Sept. 1905, Englishman, 27 Sept. 1905.
  2. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 59(5).
  3. Englishman, 3 Oct. 1905.
  4. Ibid. 31 Oct. 1905.
  5. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 59(6).

insulted on the streets with vile language and complained that servants and their friends boycotted Europeans who dismissed a servant.<sup>1</sup> On 12 November, crowds surrounded two parties of Europeans in Beadon Square, threw mud at them, and shouted "Bande Mataram". Justice Stephen of the Calcutta High Court was with one of the parties.<sup>2</sup> A day or two later, Professor Russell of Presidency College, who had annoyed the students by writing a report criticising the condition of their hostels, was struck by one or more students while leaving his classroom.<sup>3</sup> In another November incident, a missionary preaching in Beadon Square was stoned.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the more serious collisions between Indians and Europeans took place in the mofussil. On 19 September, Mr. Cattell, the jute agent in Madaripur, Faridpur District, was moving through a crowd when he pushed the umbrella of a 15 year old school boy who was in his path. The umbrella swung back and hit Cattell in the face. Cattell demanded to know the boy's name and the boy refused to give it, saying that he was not afraid of him. Cattell then struck the boy with his fist, causing a nose bleed and swelling on the nose and over the eyebrows. Several hours later 100 school boys

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1. Englishman, 22 Nov. 1905.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.59.(11).

3. Ibid, para.59(12). Also Daily Hitavadi, 14 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 18 Nov. 1905, para.25.

4. Partition Report, op.cit. para.59(10).

gathered at the scene of the incident and intercepted Cattell's durwan,<sup>1</sup> assaulted him, and took away his lantern and Cattell's private letters. The injured boy charged Cattell with assault in the local court but the case was discharged when no witnesses appeared for the proceedings. Cattell, on the other hand, did not make a complaint to the court. The Inspector of Schools visited Madaripur and, as none of the boys involved in the attack on Cattell's durwan could be identified, he ordered the Head Master of the School to collect a fine of Rs.50 from the older students: Rs.25 for the charitable dispensary and Rs.25 as compensation for the durwan.<sup>2</sup>

At Serajganj, Pabna District, Mr. Carberry, the local Agent of the Bank of Bengal was attacked with stones and sticks after he had rebuked some schoolboys for frightening his horse by shouting "Bande Mataram".<sup>3</sup> At Brahmanbaria, Tippera District, stones were thrown through the windows of a mission. The ladies of the mission were stoned and taunted with cries of 'Bande Mataram' and efforts were made to keep students from attending the Mission's school.<sup>4</sup>

Bakarganj District was the scene of more trouble than any other area. Events there led to the ban on public processions, on student participation in the anti-partition

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1. A durwan is a doorman.

2. This account is given by the Superintendent of Police, Faridpur and quoted in the Partition Report, op.cit. para.59(7).

3. Partition Report, op.cit. para.59(16).

4. Ibid, para. 59(8).

agitation, and on the shouting of 'Bande Mataram', and indirectly to the resignation of Sir Bampfylde Fuller. The first anti-European incident occurred in August at the Zillah School, Barisal where the Assistant Superintendent of the Bakarganj Police "was hustled and followed" by the students.<sup>1</sup> Later in the town of Jhalakati a group of schoolboys picketing in the bazaar "molested" the servants of a European merchant named Ziggler who were attempting to purchase some cloth. When Ziggler came to the aid of his servants the boys shook their fists at him and used phrases such as "What is one European?"<sup>2</sup>

In another incident, Mr. Landon, an employee of the Telegraph Department at Bakarganj had "an altercation" with some schoolboys who "mobbed him and forced him to return to his boat, throwing mud and stones at him." Landon fired his gun into the air to frighten the boys away.<sup>3</sup>

Another feature of the campaign against partition was the large number of strikes in and around Calcutta. The Inspector-General of Police thought that most of them could be attributed to the general excitement created by the partition agitation.<sup>4</sup> Although in each strike there was a

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1. Ibid, para. 59(2).

2. Ibid, para. 59(3).

3. P.C.Lyon, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 21 Nov. 1905, June Prog. No.170, I.H.P., Pub., Vol.7312.

4. Partition Report, op.cit. para.61(1).

specific, non-political grievance, previously industrial strikes had been infrequent. Furthermore, in several instances the strikers shouted "Bande Mataram" - the phrase adopted as a nationalist war cry by the educated classes at the Calcutta Town Hall meeting of 7 August 1905.<sup>1</sup> The leaders of a few of the strikes were reported to have consulted with and received funds from Bengali Congress leaders.

The first strike was among the clerks at Messrs. Burn and Co. Calcutta, in September. The main grievance of the clerks was the introduction of a new clock machine for registering the time of workers' arrivals and departures. A.C. Banerji "took charge of the strikers" and the Bengalee and the Sanjivani raised a fund for them which was said to have reached Rs.6,000. However, Messrs. Burn and Co. broke the strike by dismissing all the strikers and hiring new clerks.<sup>2</sup>

Another strike in which A.C. Banerji, as well as

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1. A few lines of "Bande Mataram" were included in Hemchandra's Bengali poem, "Rakhi Bandhar" at the time of the Calcutta Congress of 1886 and Rabindra Nath Tagore sang "Bande Mataram" at the 1896 Congress at Calcutta. But the phrase "Bande Mataram" came into general use only in August 1905.

Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, Bande Mataram and Indian Nationalism (1906-1908), pp.11-13.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 61(2); also Bengalee, 4 Oct. 1905. This strike was dramatized in a Calcutta theatre in October and November 1905. See the daily advertisements in the Bengalee for "Kerani Bibhrat" or "The Clerks' Troubles".

A.K.Ghosh, were involved was that at the Government Printing Offices. It began in late September, ostensibly as a protest against inadequate conditions and pay. The Englishman reported that soon after the employees at the Government of India and Government of Bengal Presses struck, agitators began to visit other European presses in an attempt to bring other employees out.<sup>1</sup> S.Rainy, Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, was deputed to make an inquiry into the workers' grievances. He visited the Government Presses and refused to allow any legal practitioner to appear on behalf of the strikers and he declined to receive the petitions of any workers who had not returned to work. About the time of Rainy's visit it was announced that any striker not returning to work by 3 October would be dismissed.<sup>2</sup> On 3 October seven of the ringleaders of the strike lost their jobs<sup>3</sup> and the 600 compositors at the Hastings Street Branch of the Government of India Press, who were still absent, were also dismissed, leaving a total of 600 compositors still at work. On the next day 150 of the remaining compositors stayed away from work in sympathy with the 600 who had been dismissed.<sup>4</sup> At/<sup>the</sup> same time, one of the strikers was arrested and charged with wrongful

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1. Englishman, 28 Sept. 1905.

2. Englishman, 3 Oct. 1905.

3. Ibid, 4 Oct. 1905.

4. Ibid, 5 Oct. 1905.

restraint and criminal intimidation of composers who ignored the pickets.<sup>1</sup> A.C.Banerji and A.K.Ghosh defended the accused. The case was eventually dismissed when the witnesses, who were composers, retracted their earlier statements.<sup>2</sup> The decision to dismiss the strikers was relaxed and many of the composers who applied were reinstated.<sup>3</sup> However the Government Presses refused to take back the seven strike leaders. In consequence, on or about 24 October, the composers at the Hastings Street and Dhurruntollah Street Branches of the Government of India Press walked out and a lock out was proclaimed. Then the Government of India Press composers walked to the Bengal Secretariat Press and persuaded most of the composers there to come out.<sup>4</sup> While the lockout at the Government of India Press continued, all the Government of India's printing was done elsewhere. The Bengal Secretariat Press, on the other hand, was not completely shut down and some men continued to work, living on the premises throughout the day and night. The coolies who brought the food to these men were harrassed by the pickets until they were given police escorts.<sup>5</sup> The resolution of the strikers was strong. On 25 October, out of the 450 composers usually employed at the Bengal Secretariat Press, only 55

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1. Bengalee, 5 Oct. 1905.

2. Englishman, 24 Oct. 1905.

3. Ibid, 10 Oct. 1905.

4. Ibid, 24 Oct. 1905.

5. Ibid, 27 Oct. 1905.

were at work, and two weeks later the number had risen to only 101.<sup>1</sup> On 16 November, the Englishman reported that most of the serious grievances had been removed and that the Press strike was almost at an end. The Inspector-General of Police thought that A.C. Banerji and A.K. Ghosh had been "the leaders and guides in this strike, and there is no doubt that these two succeeded in keeping the strikers from returning to work long after they were willing to do so, and were unwilling to let them return when they did."<sup>2</sup> If this is correct, it shows that these two men possessed a high degree of organizing capacity.

On 5 October the conductors on the Calcutta Tramways went on strike against the existing system of payments, under which they were paid according to the number of trips they made, and not by the hours they worked. The result of this system, naturally, was that conductors working on long routes received little pay. Many conductors worked from 5 p.m. until 12 o'clock noon with only a short and indefinite period for rest. The strikers were demanding fixed hours of work at a specific hourly rate of pay. The strike was largely effective and services were drastically curtailed. A number of conductors were reported to have been intimidated by strikers.<sup>3</sup> In one case, two strikers were arrested

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1. Englishman, 7 Nov. 1905.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para. 61(6).

3. Englishman, 6 and 7 Oct. 1905.

and charged with trespassing on a tram car and threatening to criminally assault the conductor. The accused were defended by A.K.Ghosh and A.C.Banerji in this strike also, and the latter called upon the Director of the Calcutta Tramways Company to discuss the grievances.<sup>1</sup> Concessions were granted to the strikers and the whole affair was ended after a relatively short time.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time that the Tramway strike began, the guards on the East Indian Railway struck work in protest against the introduction of new rules governing the payment of allowances. The Englishman reported that the strikers were Eurasians and that the strike was connected with the boycott movement.<sup>3</sup> Then it corrected itself and stated that the Eurasians had not struck but were "manfully standing by their employers" and that the strikers were from the English working class.<sup>4</sup> The Inspector-General of Police believed the strike had "no possible connection with the agitation"

An effort was made to persuade the Calcutta police to strike. For two years they had been asking for higher pay. With the partition troubles, the Police Commissioners became worried about the effect of the agitation on them and he went to Darjeeling on 5 October to plead for an

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1. Englishman, 10 Oct. 1905.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.61 (4).

3. Englishman, 6 Oct. 1905.

4. Ibid, 7 Oct. 1905.

immediate increase. His mission was successful and the effect on police morale was beneficial.<sup>1</sup>

There was a brief strike at the General Post Office in Calcutta.<sup>2</sup> The Calcutta Post Commissioner averted a strike among the Bengali Tally clerks at the Kidderpur Docks by engaging Christian orphan boys to substitute for strikers.<sup>3</sup>

There were other labour troubles in the districts near Calcutta. The workers at the Gouripur Jute Mill, 24 Parganas, struck work when a European assistant wounded two coolies while firing his gun at a dog. The strike ended after the Magistrate had fined the European Rs.40 and awarded compensation to the injured men.<sup>4</sup> At the Fort Gloucester Jute Mill in Bauria, 24 Parganas, the workers went out on strike in October and, after returning, shouted "Bande Mataram" and were impertinent to the European assistants, according to a report prepared by the Superintendent of Police. The manager of the mill, Mr. Forester, had two of the workers who shouted 'Bande Mataram' caught and he took them to his office to find out their names. After they had given their names they were released. But the workers in the mill disapproved of this action and on the

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1. Partition Report, para.57, report on the Calcutta agitation through 16 October by the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta.
  2. Englishman, 11 Nov. 1905.
  3. Bombay Gazette (Overland Edition), 7 Oct. 1905.
  4. Report, op.cit. para.61(3).

next day, the 9,000 men started shouting "Bande Mataram" five minutes before closing time. Several assistants tried to stop the shouting and were jostled by the workers. As the workers left the factory, some of them provocatively shouted 'Bande Mataram' in the faces of the European assistants. The assistants seized two of the workers but other workers charged, and in the fight which followed, the two escaped. Forester telephoned the District Magistrate after the workers had left the premises and asked for armed police protection, which he was given. Several days later the police arrested two of the workers who had been involved in the fight with the assistants. In protest, all 9,000 workers left the mill, refusing to return until the case against the arrested men was dropped. The Superintendent of Police believed that some of the "Babus" who worked in the mill had been in communication with people in Calcutta who had probably "engineered" the strike.<sup>1</sup>

On 14 October, the spinners at the Lower Hooghly Jute Mill struck, alleging that the European assistants assaulted them and levied heavy fines. Armed police were sent to the mill but the strike ended without disturbance after two days.<sup>2</sup> In November the Muslim weavers at the Wellington Jute Mill, Hughly District, went out in protest

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1. Partition Report, op.cit. para.61(9).

2. Ibid, para. 61(7).

against the short time allowed for breaking Ramadan (fast) before returning to work in the evening.<sup>1</sup>

In the town of Howrah, on 2 November, there was a riot between Europeans and Indians: Messrs. Kilburn and Company were laying an electric installation. One of their Muslim coolies refused to move when asked to by a European assistant named Robertson, who then pushed the coolie. The coolie responded by throwing a handful of stones at Robertson, and at Ryan, another assistant, who came to Robertson's aid. Ryan and Robertson attacked the coolie with fists and a cane. A crowd soon gathered and threw stones at Ryan and Robertson, but was dispersed by the "workmen" who sided with the assistants against the coolies and the crowd. The police arrived and, upon finding that the crowd had left, went away again. The Muslims then returned to attack Robertson. Robertson tried to run away but was felled by a stone and was assaulted again. The police arrived and arrested two "Babus", two railway labourers and a boy.<sup>2</sup>

There was one occasion upon which anti-machine slogans were shouted. On 22 September on Chowringhee in Calcutta, a wealthy zamindar was distributing alms to a crowd of about one thousand aged, blind, and crippled persons when an elderly beggar woman was knocked down and

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1. Ibid, para. 61(8).

2. This account was given by the Superintendent of Police, Howrah, *ibid*, para.59(13).

killed by a tram car. An angry crowd gathered, threatening to tear up the tram tracks and to pull down the tram poles. However, the police intervened before the crowd could act.<sup>1</sup>

The anti-partition movement was as strong, if not stronger, in many Bengali-speaking districts of the mofussil as it was in and around Calcutta. In the years preceeding the partition many mofussil politicians participated in political demonstrations and movements, but in most cases they did so only when they were in Calcutta. In 1905, the agitation affected the whole of such districts as Bakarganj, Mymensingh, Tippera, and Faridpur, and large areas of many other districts.<sup>2</sup> The reports prepared by the Inspector-General of Police and the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government emphasise the role played by the Calcutta leaders in arousing support for their campaign.<sup>3</sup> Sita Nath Roy and his brother, zamindars of Bhagyakul, Dacca District, were said to be "the most ardent workers in spreading the agitation from Calcutta." Sita Nath Roy was Secretary of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and he and his family owned various jute and other trade concerns.<sup>4</sup> Among the prominent

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1. Englishman, 23 Sept. 1905.

2. The Inspector-General of Police summarized the progress of the agitation in each district in para. 57 of the Partition Report.

3. Partition Report, para.10; P.C.Lyon, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., 21 Feb. 1906, June Prog. No.177. I.H.P., Pub., Vol.7312.

4. Partition Report, para.11.

Calcutta leaders who visited the districts were Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bepin Chandra Pal, J. Chaudhuri, who all made extensive tours, and Lal Mohun Ghosh, Abdul Gaznavi, Kali Prasanna Kavyabisharad, and Bhupendra Nath Basu. In at least two districts, Khulna and Mymensingh, the boycott movement gained momentum immediately after visits by Calcutta politicians.<sup>1</sup> Several Bengali leaflets, which the police claimed were printed and distributed from Calcutta, were circulated in the districts. One of the leaflets - "Who is our King" - was sent from Calcutta by post to the Bar Libraries at Mymensingh and Jamalpur and copies of it were also found in Rajshahi and Assam.<sup>2</sup> It called upon "the babus and zamindars" not to submit to the foreigners. "Has none of them the force of lathials at their command? Well, die we must one day, so why should we not die after teaching the salas a lesson?"<sup>3</sup> It went on to urge the Hindus and Muslims to unite and appoint their own panchayats and chaukidars. "We will burn the houses of those who accept appointments under Government as panchayats and chaukidars. We will never pay revenue if it is now enhanced. If the zamindars oppress us, we will give up our lives and take theirs." After stating that the Bengalis would govern

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1. Ibid, para.57.

2. Ibid, para.24.

3. A lathial is a club-man, often retained by zamindars to fight in disputes with other zamindars. Sala is a word of strong abuse.

themselves, it concluded:

"Hindu and Mussalman brethren, this nation of cannibals coming over from across seven oceans and thirteen rivers has insulted our mother - our dear golden Bengal - and you look on in silence. You have yet, brothers, strength in your arms, even now you take credit by quarrelling and fighting among yourselves. Surely you can save the mother's honour at least with lathis. Come brothers, come, once again, and let us prove to be the worthy sons of our mother and protect her by fighting courageously and shedding our blood ungrudgingly."<sup>1</sup>

A similar leaflet was also distributed in the mofussil. The Calcutta Police believed at the time that it was written by Bepin Chandra Pal, printed by the Sanjibani Press, and issued by the Brata Samiti, a swadeshi organization with a branch in Calcutta.<sup>2</sup> It called upon Brahmans, Kayasthas, Sudras, Chandals, Muslims, and Christians to combine against the firinghis.<sup>3</sup> "In our presence the feringhis have made our mother naked.

"Why does not blood gush out of our eyes? They have been attempting to dishonour our mother, we are still standing silent. Bravo to us! Come, brother, let us all show to the world how we ungrudgingly sacrifice our lives to maintaining the honour of our mother. Let

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1. Annexure B to P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit.. The publication of a translation of this leaflet in the Pioneer created a stir among both the Indian and Anglo-Indian newspapers. Englishman, 16 Sept. 1905.
  2. Partition Report, para.25. Subsequently it was ascribed to Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab, according to Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, Bipin Chandra Pal and India's Struggle for Swaraj, note 26, pp.27-28.
  3. Firinghi is an abusive term for a European.

the whole world see how we Bengalis, hated and down-trodden as we are, take pride in maintaining the honour of our mother .... Death for the sake of the motherland, what is more pleasant than this? Such deaths lead to everlasting paradise."<sup>1</sup>

Although Calcutta may have stimulated the agitation in the mofussil, it is clear that social conditions in the mofussil itself enabled the boycott movement to spread as much as it did. In Calcutta there were many European teachers in the schools who often acted as an effective break upon the boycott activities of the students, but in the districts, the European element was small. The Education Department of the transferred districts contained only four Europeans and three of these were affiliated to Dacca College. In many of the schools, the teachers either sympathized with or actively organized the student pickets. Similarly, in the police and civil services, the Hindus in many instances gave the Government little assistance. In Bakarganj, where there were more assaults and cases of lawlessness than anywhere else, 19 of the 23 police officers who had charge of police stations were Hindus. In Faridpur District throughout which the swadeshi movement spread, out of the 34 superior officers working for the Government, 3 were Europeans, 2 were Muslims, and 29 were Hindus.

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1. Enclosure Cto Partition Report. This extract is not included in the extract quoted by Haridas and Uma Mukherjee (Bipin Chandra Pal, pp.25-27) but is similar in substance and style.

Altogether there were 92 Europeans to supervise Government work in the transferred districts containing 26 million people. The police resources of the transferred districts were also poor. They were below their recommended strength everywhere and frequently they tolerated, out of sympathy, the excesses of the boycotters. Apart from the under-staffed and unreliable civil police, there were only 50 military police in the transferred districts, representing the total "reserve of physical force available" to reinforce the ordinary civil police.<sup>1</sup>

The other factor aiding the agitation in the mofussil was the social structure of Bengal. Under the Permanent Settlement the Bengali zamindars enjoyed a measure of independence from government officials not possessed by landholders in temporarily settled areas, and, in practice, the Bengali zamindars and their agents tended to have more absolute power over their tenants. One of the many exceptional features of the early partition agitation was the use of this power by the zamindars. It helps explain why protests came from classes of the population not previously touched by politics. The amla<sup>2</sup> of zamindars were especially successful in preventing tenants from buying foreign goods in Jessore, Khulna, Nadia, Hughly, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para. 7.

2. The clerical servants of zamindars.

Pabna Districts.<sup>1</sup> Among the zamindars who were reported to have compelled their tenants to purchase only swadeshi articles were the Maharaja Girija Nath Roy of Dinajpur and the Maharaja of Cossimbazar - the latter on his estates in Rangpur, Nadia, and Rajshahi Districts.<sup>2</sup>

Since swadeshi cloth was more expensive than foreign cloth - and it became increasingly so as the supply ran low - it was a serious burden for the peasant who was forced to buy it. But it is probable that cloth purchases often were simply postponed until the boycott movement subsided. In many cases the difference between the price of swadeshi and foreign goods was paid by the zamindar or the school-boys who prevented the poor people from buying non-Indian material. It was rumoured in Calcutta that the Maharajas of Cossimbazar and Mymensingh paid for the purchase of the foreign cloth and cigarettes which were lavishly fed to bonfires.<sup>3</sup>

The zamindars also put pressure on the shop-keepers. In Faridpur the Marwaris complained that the local zamindar

1. R.W.Carlyle, 25 Jan. 1906, op.cit. para.10.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

Sir Andrew Fraser thought the fact that the Maharaja of Cossimbazar was of the Teli caste - a depressed caste of oil producers - helped to explain his bad behaviour in opposing the partition. A.H.L.Fraser to Curzon, 11 Aug. 1905, No.40, C.W.P.I., 1905, Vol.II, Curzon Papers.

3. Partition Report, op.cit. para.43.

had threatened to expel them from the bazaar;<sup>1</sup> the durwan of Raja Peary Mohan Mukherji visited Dhaniakhali and Uttara para bazaars, Hughly District, and ordered the shop-keepers not to buy foreign salt, sugar, or cigarettes; and the Hindoo Patriot reported that a bania of Chandrabazar, Hughly District, had been fined by a zamindar for purchasing foreign sugar.<sup>2</sup>

In some towns, whole castes or professions resolved to boycott persons who patronised foreign goods. In Dinajpur and other places, the doctors, pleaders, and mukhtears threatened to boycott the Marwaris. In Faridpur the Muchis (shoemakers) vowed not to mend European shoes and the dhobies not to wash European clothes while the confectioners of Bankura town decided upon a caste fine of Rs.100 for anyone who used foreign sugar. And at the Juggernath temple in Puri, it was decided not to admit people refusing to use swadeshi goods.<sup>3</sup>

While the zamindars, and to a lesser extent, caste and professional groups, helped enforce the boycott, the students in the mofussil were, as in Calcutta, the most conspicuous agency of the campaign. Sir Bampfylde Fuller, Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, knew that since he could not rely upon the full co-operation of his police and

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.4.  
 2. Partition Report, para.57.  
 3. Ibid.

officials, "a policy of general repression was impracticable, even if desirable."<sup>1</sup> He had instead to use indirect methods. He decided to tour the transferred districts to meet and explain to local leaders the purpose and probable benefits of the partition. On 30 October, he set out from Shillong on a tour which took him to every Eastern Bengal district except Bogra and Malda.<sup>2</sup> Before beginning his trip, he issued a circular on 16 October to all the district officers in the transferred divisions expressing his sympathy with the anti-partition feeling and offering "to let bygones be bygones" except with regard to the seditious leaflets. He also stated that the students of schools and colleges who ignored Government warnings against participation in the boycott campaign would be formally barred from Government service and their schools would lose their grants.<sup>3</sup> The tone of this circular was decidedly more conciliatory than the circular of 10 October which was issued by the Government of Bengal. But it failed to disarm the public sentiment against the earlier circular and it may actually have increased it. When Fuller reached Dacca he was informed that in some towns the students were getting out of hand so he sent out two more circulars on 8 November.<sup>4</sup> One repeated the warning of 10 October that Government aid would be

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.8.

2. Ibid, para.9.

3. Demi-off. Circular from P.C.Lyon, Chief Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Coms. and all district officers of all transferred districts, 16 Oct. 1905.

4. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.10.

withdrawn from schools whose management did not make every effort to prevent student participation in politics.<sup>1</sup> The other circular of 8 November - the most unpopular one of all - ordered the Commissioners of Dacca, Chittagong, and Rajshahi Divisions to forbid political and quasi-political meetings and processions, except on private property, and to prevent the shouting of "Bande Mataram" in public places.<sup>2</sup> The effect of all these circulars was to intensify the agitation.

One of the towns on Fuller's itinerary was Rangpur. The District Magistrate, Thomas Emerson, wrote to W.C.Gupta, a municipal councillor of Rangpur and a leading member of the local Bar, informing him of the Lieutenant-Governor's impending visit and asking him to consider a suitable welcome. A meeting of Rangpur's zamindars and other first citizens rejected a resolution in favour of welcoming Fuller; (other towns also refused to present the customary welcome) and the students of Rangpur Zillah School attended a meeting and procession at which "Bande Mataram" was shouted, patriotic songs were sung, and some rowdyism took place.<sup>3</sup> The District Magistrate ordered that all 200 students who participated in the meeting should be fined

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1. P.C.Lyon to Inspectors of Schools, Rajshahi, Dacca, and Chittagong Divisions, 8 Nov. 1905, Annexure B to P.C. Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit.
  2. P.C.Lyon to Coms., Rajshahi, Dacca, and Chittagong Divisions, 8 Nov. 1905, Annexure B to P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906.
  3. Englishman, 2 Dec. 1905.

Rs.5 before returning to the school and warned the boys that if the incident was repeated the school would be closed. In consequence, 400 students boycotted the school while only 10 attended.<sup>1</sup> W.C. Gupta and some other Rangpur men set up a new school for the boys - the "National Institution". After the District Magistrate tried in vain to get an undertaking from Gupta and his friends that the boys would not attend future political meetings, Gupta and 22 other men were informed that they had been appointed special constables under Act V of 1861 by the District Superintendent of Police, A.Taffman. They were ordered to appear at the Police Lines for instructions and drill. Most of them refused, believing that their appointment as special constables had been made vindictively. Summonses were issued against fourteen of the men but W.C.Gupta appealed against their appointment. A High Court Judge ordered District Magistrate Emerson to show cause why the prosecution of Gupta should not either be quashed or transferred to another magistrate.<sup>2</sup> In February, 1906, upon the suggestion of the Chief Justice, the Advocate-General withdrew the case against Gupta.<sup>3</sup> But 263 boys who refused to return to the Government or Government-aided schools in Rangpur had their names removed from the school lists, were disqualified from appearing at University examinations, and

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1. Bengalee, 7 and 8 Nov. 1905.

2. Englishman, 2 Dec. 1905.

3. Englishman (Weekly Summary), 8 Feb. 1906.

were refused transfer certificates.<sup>1</sup>

Students were punished in other towns as well for their political activities. In Dacca, for instance, some students were fined for attending the Collegiate School barefooted. The Hindu students struck and an attempt was made to burn the school down but eventually all but 60 students paid their fines and returned. Two other Dacca boys were caned for rescuing a prisoner from the police. At Noakhali, one boy was caned, three were rusticated for one year, three others had their names removed from the rolls, and the Headmaster was dismissed after the students became involved in a minor political disorder. A student was caned at Jalpaiguri for picketing while five Hindu boys at Dinajpur were "whipped by the head master in the presence of the whole school" for having beaten up a Muslim boy who presented a petition to Lieutenant-Governor Fuller. In three other instances boys were punished in Eastern Bengal through judicial action: in Madaripur a boy was fined and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment for assaulting a European while in Mymensingh two students accused of an offence leading out of picketing were bound over to keep the peace. In several other cases, Government aid or recognition

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1. Telegram from Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Govt. of India, Home Dept., 17 April 1906. June Prog. No.182, I.H.P. Pub., Vol.7312.

was withdrawn from schools and colleges.<sup>1</sup>

The other means adopted by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam to prevent intimidation and lawlessness was to station extra police in the trouble spots. Mymensingh was one of the towns to which police reinforcements were sent. Throughout the month of November pickets had tried to prevent the purchase of foreign goods in Burrabazar, the main market of Mymensingh. The boycotters claimed they used only verbal arguments to dissuade purchasers from using belati goods; the police and a small number of witnesses willing to testify maintained that intimidation was used.<sup>2</sup>

A reporter of the Englishman went to Mymensingh to see the boycotters at work. He found that every afternoon at 4.30, the nearly empty Burrabazar would suddenly be filled with boys who rushed there as soon as school finished for the day. On the particular day the reporter visited, half a dozen police constables without lathis tried unsuccessfully to move the crowd of pickets. Then a line of 20 policemen with lathis advanced and the boys melted away down the street and into side alleys. Six constables were stationed at the far end of the bazaar from the police

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.13. Also Telegram from Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, 17 April 1906, op.cit.
  2. See the judgment delivered by R.R.Garlick, the Joint Magistrate of Mymensingh in the Mymensingh Swadeshi Case. Swadeshi Cases, pub. by the Swadeshi Club (Calcutta, 1906), pp.56-66.

station from where the reporter was watching. As it became dark, expectant crowds remained in the alleys and on the roof-tops. Suddenly there were cries of "Bande Mataram" as the six constables were "attacked by a shower of stones and brick bats which came chiefly from the roofs of houses."<sup>1</sup> Police reinforcements were sent and in the mêlée, several constables were "seriously hurt".<sup>2</sup> Five persons were arrested and taken to the police station where they stayed until some local pleaders appeared and put up security for them.<sup>3</sup> All five were convicted subsequently for their part in the riot and the assault on the police. In passing sentence on them, the Joint Magistrate of Mymensingh took into account "the means they have evidently had at their command for their defense for which counsel from Calcutta was engaged as well as half the bar of Mymensingh." He sentenced each boy to 15 days' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.300. Two other boys were fined Rs.100 each for failing to disperse when ordered to.<sup>4</sup>

Swadeshi speakers urged the people of Mymensingh to defy Government orders and to welcome the opportunity of going to jail because they would be able to teach the other prisoners to shout "Bande Mataram".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Englishman, 2 Dec. 1905.
  2. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.12(2).
  3. Englishman, 2 Dec. 1905.
  4. Swadeshi Cases, pp.65-66.
  5. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

Fifteen extra police constables were sent from Assam to Serajganj, Pabna District, after the assault on Mr. Carberry of the Bank of Bengal. It was learned that the boycott leaders planned to hire lathials to fight with the police and, as a precaution, the police made special efforts to keep firm control on the crowds in the town.<sup>1</sup> On 4 December, Sasadhar Neogy, a medical practitioner and an Honorary Magistrate, complained to the Divisional Inspector of Police that one of the constables from Assam had beaten him. The next day Neogy filed a complaint with the Sub-divisional Officer of Serajganj, A.Marr, claiming that after making the complaint to the Divisional Inspector, he had been stopped on the road by six constables of the Assam police and struck with belts/<sup>from</sup> front and behind. However the Sub-divisional Officer refused to take cognizance of Neogy's complaint and he gave no reason for his action. Neogy's pleader went before the Calcutta High Court to seek a ruling which would, in effect, require the Sub-divisional Officer to recognize the complaint against the police constables. The ruling was obtained and the Sub-divisional Officer heard the case. He asked Neogy to accept an apology from the accused constables and to drop the case. Neogy reluctantly agreed.<sup>2</sup> There seems to have been no doubt that the constables had behaved as Neogy had complained.<sup>3</sup>

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.12(3).

2. Swadeshi Cases, pp.52-56.

3. See P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.12(3).

However, the use of police in Barisal caused far more controversy than the Seranganj incidents. Barisal was the headquarters of Bakarganj District, the district in which foreign salt was forcibly taken from dealers and destroyed, boats carrying foreign goods were stoned and in two cases sunk, Lord Curzon's effigy was burnt at a mock sradh ceremony,<sup>1</sup> two Europeans were insulted and stoned, and in which, altogether 60 cases of lawlessness were reported. Lieutenant-Governor Fuller decided that if further violence was to be prevented, a show of force was needed. He stationed a company of 100 Gurkhas from Assam in Bakarganj District and visited Barisal himself.<sup>2</sup>

While in Barisal, Fuller called Aswini Kumar Dutt and four other boycott leaders to an interview on 15 November 1905. These five men had previously issued a circular encouraging people to maintain the boycott of foreign goods in spite of Fuller's circulars. Fuller told the men that he thought the circular was likely to lead to disorders.

According to their account as published in the Statesman and the Bengalee, Fuller would not allow the men to explain and he bullied them into signing their names to a letter withdrawing the circular.<sup>3</sup> The letter which the men signed was addressed to Fuller's Private Secretary and

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1. Offerings are given in honour of deceased ancestors at a sradh ceremony.

2. P.C.Lyon, 21 Nov. 1905, op.cit. paras.3,4 and 8.

3. Bengalee, 3 Dec. 1905.

it said:

"We have the honour to state that as His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is of the opinion that our appeal ... contains certain expressions that may tend to lead people to commit breaches of the peace, we withdraw the same and request the favour of your communicating it to his Honour."<sup>1</sup>

Fuller labelled as incorrect the many Indian newspaper reports which said that his manner in the interview had been rude and over-bearing, and that he had extracted the signatures against the will of the boycott leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Two days after Fuller's meeting with the Barisal leaders, the new District Magistrate, James Charles Jack, issued a notice in Bengali saying that the signatories of the Swadeshi circular had withdrawn their appeal, "having been convinced that there occur in it expressions of sedition [which tend] to excite the populace."<sup>3</sup> This further annoyed the Barisal leaders, who, far from issuing a "seditious" appeal, had expressly written that in the boycott campaign, no laws should be broken, no force should be used, no false rumours disseminated, that nothing more extreme than "excommunication" could be used to persuade people to adopt the boycott.<sup>4</sup>

J.C. Jack also called a dozen of the boycott leaders to

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1. Daily Hitavadi, 24 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Dec. 1905, para.34.
  2. P.C. Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.10.
  3. Daily Hitavadi, 24 Nov. 1905, Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Dec. 1905, para.34.
  4. Bengalee, 3 Dec. 1905.

see him on 16 November. What he said to them was the subject of much discussion in the Bengal Press. Depositions were taken from each of the men by A.J.Pugh, a Calcutta solicitor. These men included some of the leading Barisal pleaders, Municipal Councillors, including the Chairman, members of the District and Local Boards, the Principal of the Brojomohun College, a Brahmo missionary, and two medical practitioners. These men alleged that in interviews with one or two persons at a time, Jack asked them not to hold any meetings for a period of two weeks since there was a danger of a Muslim rising against the Hindus and public feeling was running high. Jack allegedly told some of the men that he would give their names to the Gurkha soldiers if there was any disturbance and he would be unable to protect them from the Gurkhas. He told six of the men that they ought to leave Barisal for a fortnight, implying that otherwise they would not be safe from the Gurkhas or the Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Swadeshi Cases, pp. 35-42. The 35 depositions recorded by A.J.Pugh also appear in the Bengalee, 10 Dec. 1905. According to Rajani Kanto Guha, principal of Brojomohun College, Jack asked "if you read Burke, ... what do you find there? If you address the lower class people you only inflame their passions. They do not understand reason."

Was there really as much danger of a Hindu-Muslim explosion as J.C. Jack was said to have claimed? In the report on the partition agitation sent by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, the supposed hostility of the Muslims to the boycott movement is mentioned repeatedly. In discussing the pressure applied by zamindars, castes, and professional groups on users of foreign goods, Fuller's report that "in all places, the members of the Muhammadan community were more specially subjected to oppression of this kind."<sup>1</sup> Fuller said that Muslim feeling had largely influenced his decision to send police reinforcements to Serajganj and to Bakarganj District.<sup>2</sup> As soon as he arrived at Dacca on his tour of the transferred districts, a Muslim deputation called upon him to protect against the intimidation practiced by the boycotters.<sup>3</sup> Yet the only specific evidence of Muslim feeling which Fuller offered with regard to Serajganj and Barisal, where the tension was supposedly great, was a petition signed by some Muslims of Serajganj, dated 20 January 1906, two months after Jack's interview and the dispatch of the extra police.<sup>4</sup> The explanation that Hindu government officials prevented

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1. P.C. Lyon, 21 Feb, 1906, op.cit, para.4.

2. Ibid, para.11.

3. Ibid, para.5

4. Annexure H to ibid.

Muslims from filing complaints in court is not altogether convincing.<sup>1</sup> The report of the Inspector-General of Police on the agitation in Bakarganj District gives less prominence to Hindu-Muslim antagonism. It mentioned a report of communal feeling in September against Hindu bullying but said that there had been no danger of violence. In one instance a zamindar's peon was assaulted by six Muslims for trying to stop the sale of Liverpool salt but otherwise the Inspector-General seems not to have been worried about the Muslim attitude towards the boycott in Bakarganj.<sup>2</sup>

It would not be possible to decide without seeing the local reports whether Muslim hostility towards the boycott tactics was such that drastic measures really were necessary to prevent blood-shed or whether Sir Bampfylde Fuller and J.C.Jack greatly exaggerated the position in order to provide themselves with an excuse for frightening Aswini Kumar Dutt and the Barisal leaders into abandoning the boycott and for sending in the Gurkhas. The first possibility is supported by the fact that generally the Muslim community was not opposed to the partition and that intimidation was used by the boycotters on a large scale against

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1. P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit. para.5.

2. Partition Report, op.cit. para.57.

both Hindus and Muslims. The second possibility is suggested by the absence of concrete evidence for Fuller's claim of Hindu-Muslim ill-feeling and by the general tone of Fuller's remarks on the agitation, which give the impression of exaggeration, hostility to the Hindu political leaders, and a desire to suppress the agitation by harsh measures.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that when Fuller's Government stationed a total of 33 additional police in the villages of Madhabpasa, Banoripara, and Narotampur in Bakarganj District, the Muslims were exempted from payment of the costs which the villages had to bear for one year.<sup>1</sup> But again, local records might reveal good reasons for this unusual manner of apportioning charges for punitive police.

If there really was a possibility that the Muslims were contemplating an attack on the boycott leaders, Jack's alleged suggestion that the leaders should leave town was an unusual method of avoiding a communal outbreak.

Two law suits were initiated against J.C.Jack. One was by Aswini Kumar Dutt who claimed losses and damages amounting to Rs.10,000 because of the loss in public esteem and reputation caused by Jack's vernacular notice which

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1. Proclamations Nos. 1010J and 1011J, Jud. and Gen. Dept.,  
16 Nov. 1905, Eastern Bengal and Assam Gazette,  
18 Nov. 1905.

had said incorrectly that Dutt had admitted issuing a seditious leaflet. The other legal action was brought by Priya Nath Guha, editor of the Bikas newspaper, who claimed Rs.2,000 compensation for being humiliated in the public eye and for inconvenience and anxiety caused by Jack's alleged warning that the Gurkhas would deal with him if he did not leave town.<sup>1</sup>

After Fuller's visit and Jack's interviews the state of public feeling in Barisal remained tense. The behaviour of the Gurkha soldiers in particular, was resented. The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam claimed that the shop-keepers of Barisal raised their prices against the Gurkhas so that it was necessary to impose a tariff on the whole bazaar. But 12 shop-keepers including 7 Muslims, signed depositions alleging that Gurkhas had taken goods without paying the full price.<sup>2</sup>

On 23 November J.C. Jack called out the Gurkhas to prevent the holding of a political meeting which he believed was being planned. The Gurkhas dispersed the crowds in the streets with their lathis. A correspondent of the Bengalee reported that they "beat people ... indiscriminately."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Englishman, 2 Dec. 1905.

2. Swadeshi Cases, pp.46-47.

3. Bengalee, 25 Nov. 1905. One telegram from Barisal to the Bengalee was stopped by the Director-General of Telegrams because it supposedly contained incorrect information. Bengalee, 28 Nov. 1905.

it is certain that they used their lathis freely. That the man who received the most severe injuries was a pleader named Syama Charan Dutt was almost certainly no coincidence. Syama Charan Dutt had filed a complaint against the Gurkhas on the previous day, alleging that 14 or 15 Gurkha soldiers had entered the shop of his client, a sweet-vendor, on 18 November, assaulted him, and removed a sign board containing the words "Bande Mataram" and "Brother, use indigenous goods". When the sweet-vendor first went to the police station to make his complaint, the officer in charge had refused to record his statement.<sup>1</sup>

About a dozen cases were instituted against the Gurkhas for assault and trespass.<sup>2</sup> The Bengal newspapers reported that a reign of terror had been imposed upon Barisal.<sup>3</sup> The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam declared that an unscrupulous campaign was being carried on against the Gurkhas but it gave only one set of evidence for this allegation: a statement drawn up by some Barisal leaders alleging that a mehtar (sweeper) woman had been indecently assaulted by a Gurkha soldier in Barisal and two statements from the mehtar woman and her husband denying the occurrence of the assault.<sup>4</sup> The use of this evidence

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1. Swadeshi Cases, pp. 44-45 and 49.

2. Bengalee, 3 Dec. 1905.

3. See Bengal Newspaper Report, 2 Dec. 1905, paras. 38-50.

4. Annexure F to P.C.Lyon, 21 Feb. 1906, op.cit.

to prove that popular charges against the Gurkhas were untrue suggests that Lieutenant-Governor Fuller reported the facts of the agitation with a definite lack of candour. In fact, the treatment of the Barisal mehtar assault case by Fuller was so peculiar that the facts may be stated. On the morning of 10 December 1905, a mehtar woman was knocked down in Barisal. Her screams attracted a number of people who gave statements to the municipal overseer. The woman herself was said to have claimed that a Gurkha attempted to outrage her but subsequently she and her husband denied that she gave such a statement.<sup>1</sup> The Weekly Chronicle of Sylhet published an article on 13 December stating that a Gurkha soldier tried to rape a sweeper woman in Barisal. The Assistant Superintendent of Police was deputed to investigate the allegation and he reported that he believed an assault was made but that it was by someone other than a Gurkha.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam then

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1. Statements of Mangli Methrani and Gunput Methar, laid on the table of the Legislative Council of India on 21 March 1906 by Sir Arundel Arundel.  
Enclosure to Memorandum from J.M. MacPherson, Sec., Govt. of India, Leg. Dept., to H.H. Risley, Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept. 22 March 1906. May Prog. No. 293. I.H.P., Pub., Vol. 7312.
  2. Dated 14 Dec. 1905, Annexure (to P.C. Lyon, Ch. Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, to Sec., Govt. of India. 1 May 1906. May Prog. No. 296, I.H.P., Pub., Vol. 7312.

declared that the Weekly Chronicle had made "a gross mis-statement" and it withdrew all official advertisements from the newspaper and refused to supply it with any further official information and publications.

G.K.Gokhale, in the Legislative Council of India on 21 March 1906, asked why the newspaper was not prosecuted or why, if the Weekly Chronicle's report had been incorrect, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam did not make a full statement. Gokhale asked a similar question on 28 March. On 21 March Sir Arundel Arundel replied that the allegation of a Gurkha assault had been disproved; on 28 March he said that the Government of India was not aware of any statement alleged to have been made by the mehtar woman charging a Gurkha with attempted rape. Sir Arundel Arundel gave these answers after Fuller had supplied the "facts" to the Government of India in letters of 21 February and 17 March. But in these letters, Fuller deliberately suppressed the alleged statement of the mehtar woman, the report by the Superintendent of Police saying that an assault almost certainly had been committed, and the statements by "five apparently respectable witnesses" whose testimony indicated that the assailant must have been a Gurkha. Fuller knew of the report and the statements because he had visited Barisal on 19 December and seen the papers himself.

Fuller also must have known that an admission of assault by the woman would have led to social ostracism or disgrace for her and her husband and that therefore her denial of the assault was not a solid piece of evidence. The Government of India ordered Fuller to restore Government patronage and advertisements to the Sylhet Weekly Chronicle, commenting that the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government's action had not been "either justifiable or judicious."<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of 1905 the boycott movement in Bengal died down, partly because its participants had spent their energy, partly because Government measures against boycotters and students made it increasingly difficult to enforce. Many politicians also realized that with a new Liberal Government in England and a new Viceroy in India, the chances of Indian reform were improved.

The swadeshi and boycott movements were adopted by a limited number of people outside Bengal. The movement gained the most support in Bombay and in areas where Bengalis lived, especially in the Central Provinces. Bengali clerks in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway offices in Calcutta were reported to

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1. H.H.Risley, Sec., Govt. of India, Home Dept., to P.C. Lyon, Ch.Sec., Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, 31 May, 1906.

have obtained railway passes for the Puja holidays and then to have turned them over to swadeshi agitators who travelled to Jubbalpur and Nagpur. The Arya Samaj and the Maratha Brahmans were also active in the Central Provinces. Among the Poona Brahmans who visited the Central Provinces were B.G.Tilak, Mrs. M.V.Joshi, and the son of Sivaram Mahadeo Paranjpe.<sup>1</sup>

In the United Provinces, the swadeshi movement was reported from 23 districts. Here also the Bengalis and the Arya Samaj were active. An unusually large number of Bengalis visited Benares during the Durga Pujas, and Bengali school boys staged "Bande Mataram" processions. One of the prominent speakers at Benares swadeshi meetings was K.P. Chatterji, editor of the Lahore Tribune. Annie Besant, the proprietress of the Central Hindu College at Benares, told her students not to participate in politics and she prevented them from entering school barefooted.<sup>2</sup> Her effigy was subsequently burnt.

In the Punjab, too, the movement was led by the Arya Samaj and the Bengalis including K.P.Chatterji and the Tribune's sub-editor, A.L.Roy, as well as Sarala Devi

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1. Confidential Report on the effect of the anti-partition agitation on Provinces other than Bengal, by F.C.Daly, Special Asst. to Insp.-Genl. of Police and C.J.Stevenson-Moore, Inspector-General of Police, L.P., 26 Jan. 1906., paras. 1-4 and 31-47, Enclosure to R.W.Carlyle, 25 Jan. 1906, op.cit.
  2. Ibid, paras. 5-30.

Ghosal, wife of Ram Bhuj Dutt, daughter of J. Ghosal, and niece of Rabindranath Tagore.<sup>1</sup>

The swadeshi movement in Madras appeared "to have been remarkably feeble".<sup>2</sup>

In Bombay Presidency the boycott movement was led by Tilak and S.M.Paranjpe who addressed meetings in many different towns. In Poona on Partition Day - 16 October - the crowds shouted "Bande Mataram" and wore rakhis which were said to have been sent by Surendra Nath Banerjea and Sarala Devi Ghosal. A number of boycott meetings were held in places of worship in Bombay Presidency and in three towns, school boys refused to write their examinations on belati paper. In Kolhapur State some students at the Rajaram High School tore up their examination papers and the principal, Mr. Lucy, made the boys submit to corporal punishment before being allowed to sit for the exams. The Sanskrit teacher at the school, who was believed to have encouraged the students, was dismissed by the Political Agent. The Superintendent of Police at Nasik found the words "the Europeans will soon be driven out of India" written in the sand on the local golf course.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid, paras. 75-86.

2. Ibid, para. 87.

3. Ibid, paras. 49-74.

While the Bengali boycott leaders had encouraged the workers to demand and strike for better working conditions and higher wages, in Bombay the boycott leaders reacted differently to the labour movement. The Times of India and the Bombay Gazette had been supporting the factory workers' campaign for shorter working hours. But this campaign came at an inopportune time for the European and Indian textile mill owners who had received, because of the swadeshi and boycott movements, far more orders than usual. By the end of September all the Bombay mills had sold their textile supplies for the next six months.<sup>1</sup> The mills were working over-time with the assistance of electric lighting which had recently been installed. The workers who had been demanding shorter hours objected to the use of electric light and on Sunday, 8 October, when the lights were switched on at 6.15 p.m. at the Phoenix Mill, a crowd of workers gathered and tried to compel all the workers to strike. The crowd smashed the time-keeper's office and destroyed the records and papers they found there. The next day a crowd estimated at 10,000 persons assembled and threatened to smash the machinery in the textile mills if the lights were turned on. As a precaution, several mills

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1. Ibid, para.74.

were shut down. Prompt police action and a number of prosecutions<sup>1</sup> restored order and the mills returned to normal. When Tilak and S.M.Paranjpe addressed a swadeshi meeting in Bombay City, they complained that the workers had been misled although Paranjpe also criticised the Bombay manufacturers for raising their prices.<sup>2</sup> One Bombay mill was selling its cloth at 30 to 40% more than the price of English cloth of the same quality.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the attempts made to popularize the boycott, it was not adopted on any substantial scale outside of Bengal.

The partition of Bengal, viewed as an act of administration, was a gigantic blunder which stirred up feelings which, it may be said with hind-sight, would one day probably have been aroused in any case. But before the partition was attempted, the nationalist movement was suffering from lassitude and incompetent leadership. Lord Curzon, from the nationalist point of view, performed a "great service to India". As the Bengalee said, "there

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1. Of the ten persons convicted for offences connected with the riot of 8 October, six were under 16 years of age.
  2. Bombay Gazette (Overland Summary), 21 Oct. 1905.
  3. Confidential Report on the effect of the anti-partition agitation on Provinces other than Bengal, para.74.

comes a period in the history of national evolution when repression does not destroy, but rather helps the beginnings of national life. We have arrived at this momentous stage."<sup>1</sup> Lord Curzon almost certainly was not thinking of "repression" when he divided Bengal, but that did not make the partition any less objectionable.

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1. Bengalee, 15 June 1905.

## CONCLUSION

In the years 1897 to 1905 the Government of India did not pursue a comprehensive policy towards nationalism. Instead, it dealt with individual problems as they suggested themselves. When it suspected a conspiracy against British rule, it arrested two nationalist leaders who were believed to be capable of intrigue. When the newspapers published inflammatory articles, it prosecuted a number of editors and strengthened the law of sedition. When disaffection was discovered in the schools, it tightened European control and supervision over Indian education. In each case, the Government was reacting to a specific threat.

The Government also attempted to strengthen its position by assisting the upper and lower classes to maintain themselves in an uneven competition for land, education, and government employment. However, this policy grew as much out of British ideas of economic expediency and justice as it did out of an attempt to undermine the strength of nationalism.

Most of the main irritants between the Government and the Congress were policies which were not designed to counter nationalism. The Government not only maintained the existing European dominance in the Civil Service and the

Legislative Councils, but Lord Curzon even announced in 1904, <sup>twelve</sup> ~~twenty-two~~ years after the last constitutional changes, that the "intellectual and moral progress" of India would "be imperilled and thrown back if it is associated with a perpetual clamour for constitutional change." Curzon thereby informed the Congress that no reform was being contemplated.<sup>1</sup> He also turned down a suggestion by Wedderburn that the Government should give "a friendly, though perhaps informal, recognition of the purposes of the Congress as a constitutional means of bringing before the Government a responsible expression of the Indian view of Indian affairs."<sup>2</sup> Wedderburn thought that without such recognition, "the constitutional movement may continue, but tinged with undesirable acerbity, or it may collapse, in which case there will be serious danger of underground machinations, to defeat which was a leading object of the original Congress promoters."<sup>3</sup> Curzon informed Wedderburn that he could not give any form of recognition to the Congress because there were "extreme men" associated with it. Parnell, he said,

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1. Debate on Financial Statement, India Leg. Council, Prog., 30 March, 1904, p.560.
  2. Wedderburn to Curzon, 10 July 1902, No.121, C.P.E.A., 1901-1904, Curzon Papers.
  3. Wedderburn to Curzon, 11 Oct. 1900, No.188, C.P.E.A., 1899-1901, Curzon Papers.

had tried to keep men with extreme objectives in his party and had "failed utterly."<sup>1</sup>

One of the obvious means of dealing with nationalism is granting concessions gradually or at least holding out the prospect of future concessions. Yet Curzon saw no reason to raise the hopes of the nationalists. He believed that the English possessed special qualities which were not shared by the people of India and that these qualities, if accompanied by efficient government, would ensure the continuation of British rule indefinitely. Because of the deficiencies he perceived in the Indian character, Curzon thought that any devolution of responsibility would decrease efficiency and thereby place British rule in danger. And if England should ever lose India, it would mean that England would decline to a third-rate power. If there had been historical precedents of Asian or African national movements seriously challenging a colonial power, Curzon might have pursued a less provocative policy. Or if he had not been misled by the feebleness of the Congress and if he had made an attempt to understand the forces at work in Indian society, he might have avoided the

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1. Curzon to Wedderburn, 15 Aug. 1902, No.116, C.P.E.A., 1901-1904, Curzon Papers.

blunder he committed in partitioning Bengal.

In the years 1897 to 1904 Indian nationalism showed fewer outward signs of strength than in the 1870s and 1880s. Nevertheless vital changes in the character of the movement were taking place. The small group of men who ran the Congress seemed to be as impressed by the fact of their leadership as they were by the urgency of their demands for political and economic reform. Few of the older leaders had had personal experience of economic deprivation and most of them, having uncritically adopted their political ideas from England, failed to understand or refused to exploit the religious and racial passions which were the potential source of a truly popular movement in India. B.G.Tilak and Lajpat Rai insisted upon the necessity of bringing the lower classes into the nationalist movement and of adopting tougher tactics. However, as the Congress was not conducted according to democratic or constitutional procedures, it was not possible to remove the older leadership which resisted extreme forms of agitation. There were experiments in this period with new methods - the no rent campaign, the resignation of municipality seats, the walk-out from a Legislative Council. The Chapekars even carried out a political assassination.

If there was anything which united moderates and extremists, and reformers and conservatives, it was the belief that Indian society lacked altruism and the willingness to make self-sacrifices. The newspapers, the Congress, and the Social Conferences returned to this theme again and again. It was evident that a more dedicated commitment to nationalism might provide the sense of purpose that was needed. The Russo-Japanese War contributed to the feeling that Europeans were not invincible nor Asians inferior, and the partition of Bengal provoked the Bengalis to try and prove it.

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