

# NETAJI'S LIFE and WRITINGS

PART TWO

THE INDIAN STRUGGLE

1920 — 1934



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We had the honour of presenting to the public Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's autobiography, "An Indian Pilgrim" on the occasion of his 52nd Birth Anniversary, i.e. 28th January, 1948.

Today, the 2nd July, 1948, is the 5th anniversary of Netaji's arrival in Singapore to take up the task of leading the struggles of the oppressed peoples of South-East Asia and especially of the Indians there against Imperialism and for Freedom and Democracy. On this memorable day we present to the public Netaji's masterpiece, "The Indian Struggle".

"The Indian Struggle" has a stormy past. It was written by Netaji in Europe during his exile. He was forced to complete it hurriedly in the latter part of November, 1934 when he decided to defy the Governmental ban on his entry into India so as to be at the bedside of his dying father. When on the 3rd December, 1934 he touched the Karachi Airport he was taken into custody and the original manuscript of the book, which he was carrying with him, seized. The book, however, was published in London in 1935, but the Government of India banned it and seized all copies it could lay its hands on. In spite of the legal difficulties, Indian revolutionaries managed to get copies of the book from time to time and its unofficial circulation became an established fact.

The present volume, therefore, is the first Indian Edition. We hope it will meet a long standing demand and take its rightful place among the great works dealing with the History of the Indian National Movement.

*NETAJI ZINDABAD! JAI HIND!*

SHAH NAWAZ KHAN, *Major-General (I.N.A.)*

LAKSHMI SEHGAL, *Lt.-Colonel (I.N.A.)*

MAHBOOB AHMED, *Lt.-Colonel (I.N.A.)*

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*For and on behalf of*

*Calcutta, 2nd July, 1948.*

*Netaji Publishing Society.*



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## INTRODUCTION

### § I. THE BACKGROUND OF INDIAN POLITY

It is only during the last three decades that attempts have been made to give a true picture of the history of India since the earliest times. Prior to that it was customary for British historians to ignore the pre-British era of Indian history. Since they were the first to interpret political India to modern Europe, it was but natural that modern Europe should think of India as a land where independent ruling chiefs had been fighting perpetually among themselves until the British arrived and after conquering the land, proceeded to establish peace and order and bring the country under one political administration.

In order to understand India, however, it is essential to bear in mind at the outset two important facts. Firstly, the history of India has to be reckoned not in decades or in centuries, but in thousands of years. Secondly, it is only under British rule that India for the first time in her history has begun to feel that she has been conquered. Owing to her long history and to the vastness of her territory, India has passed through various vicissitudes of fortune. Neither for the individual nor for the nation is it possible to have an uninterrupted career of progress and prosperity. Consequently there have been in the course of India's history periods of progress and prosperity followed by intervals of decay and even chaos and the former have been always characterised by a very high level of culture and civilisation. Only through ignorance or through prejudice

could one assert that under British rule India began to experience for the first time what political unity was. As a matter of fact, though for reasons of expediency India has been brought under one political administration by Great Britain and English has been enforced on the people everywhere as the state language, no pains have been spared to divide the people more and more. If there is nevertheless a powerful nationalist movement in the country today and a strong sense of unity, it is due entirely to the fact that the people have for the first time in their history begun to feel that they have been conquered and simultaneously they have begun to realise the deplorable effects—both cultural and material—which follow in the wake of political servitude.

Though geographically, ethnologically and historically India presents an endless diversity to any observer—there is none the less a fundamental unity underlying this diversity. But as Mr. Vincent A. Smith has said: ‘European writers as a rule have been more conscious of the diversity than of the unity of India. . . . India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect.’<sup>1</sup> Geographically, India seems to be cut out from the rest of the world as a self-contained unit. Bounded on the north by the mighty Himalayas and surrounded on both sides by the endless ocean, India affords the best example of a geographical unit. The ethnic diversity of India has never been a problem—for

<sup>1</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Introduction p. 10.



throughout her history she has been able to absorb different races and impose on them one common culture and tradition. The most important cementing factor has been the Hindu religion. North or South, East or West, wherever you may travel, you will find the same religious ideas, the same culture and the same tradition. All Hindus look upon India as the Holy Land. The sacred rivers like the sacred cities are distributed all over the country.<sup>1</sup> If as a pious Hindu you have to complete your round of pilgrimage, you will have to travel to Setubandha-Rameswara in the extreme south and to Badrinath in the bosom of the snow-capped Himalayas in the north. The great teachers who wanted to convert the country to their faith had always to tour the whole of India and one of the greatest of them, Shankaracharya, who flourished in the eighth century A.D., built four 'Ashramas' (monasteries) in four corners of India, which flourish to this day. Everywhere the same scriptures are read and followed and the epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are equally popular wherever you may travel. With the advent of the Mohammedans, a new synthesis was gradually worked out. Though they did not accept the religion of the Hindus, they made India their home and shared in the common social life of the people—their joys and their sorrows. Through mutual co-operation, a new art and a new culture was evolved which was different from the old but which nevertheless was distinctly Indian. In architecture, painting, music—new creations were made which represented the happy blending of the two streams of culture. Moreover, the administration of the Mohammedan rulers left untouched the daily life

<sup>1</sup> These and other facts and arguments will be found in Prof Radha Kumud Mookherji's *The Fundamental Unity of India* (Longmans, 1914).

of the people and did not interfere with local self-government based on the old system of village communities. With British rule, however, there came a new religion, a new culture and a new civilisation which did not want to blend with the old but desired to dominate the country completely. The British people, unlike the invaders of old, did not make India their home. They regarded themselves as birds of passage and looked upon India as the source of raw materials and as the market for finished goods. Moreover, they endeavoured to imitate the autocracy of the Mohammedan rulers without following their wise policy of complete non-interference in local affairs. The result of this was that the Indian people began to feel for the first time in their history that they were being dominated culturally, politically and economically by a people who were quite alien to them and with whom they had nothing whatsoever in common. Hence the magnitude of the revolt against the British domination of India.

In order to study the present political movement in India with the proper perspective, it is necessary to make a brief survey of the development of political thought and of political institutions in the past. The civilisation of India dates back to 3000 B.C., if not earlier, and since then, there has been on the whole a remarkable continuity of culture and civilisation. This undisturbed continuity is the most significant feature of Indian history and it incidentally explains the vitality of the people and of their culture and civilisation. The latest archaeological excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa in North-Western India prove unmistakably that India had reached a high level of civilisation as early as 3000 B.C., if not earlier. This was probably before the Aryan conquest of India. It is too early to say

what light these excavations throw on contemporary political history, but since the Aryan conquest of India, more facts and historical materials are available. In the earliest Vedic literature there is reference to non-monarchical forms of government. Where these existed, tribal democracy prevailed. In those days, 'Grama' (or village) was the smallest and 'Jana' (or tribe) was the highest social and political organisation among the Vedic communities.<sup>1</sup> In the later Epic literature, the Mahabharata for example, there is clear reference to republican forms of government.<sup>2</sup> There is also evidence that since the earliest times popular assemblies used to be held in connection with public administration. Throughout the Vedic literature one finds reference to two kinds of assembly—the Sabha and the Samiti (also called Samgati or Samgrama). The 'Sabha' has been interpreted to mean the advisory council of the selected few, while 'Samiti' has been interpreted as a gathering of the entire community. The 'Samiti' met on important occasions like royal coronations, times of war or national calamity, etc.<sup>3</sup>

In the next stage of political development one notices a distinct tendency towards the growth of monarchical power following the expansion of Aryan influence and domination in India. At this time there would be frequent wars between the independent states flourishing in Northern India, with a view to obtaining supremacy. The issue of these wars would be not

<sup>1</sup> *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories* by Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, p. 60, published by Chuckerverty Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 15 College Square, Calcutta.

<sup>2</sup> K. P. Jayaswal, *Republics in the Mahabharata* (J. O. and B. Res. Soc., Vol. I, pp. 173-8).

<sup>3</sup> *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories* by Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, pp. 115-118.

political annexation but acceptance of the overlordship of the victor by the vanquished parties. The victorious king would be called 'Chakravartin' or 'Mandaleswara,' and elaborate ceremonies—'Rajasuya' or 'Vajapeya' or 'Aswamedha'—would be held to celebrate such victories. This tendency towards the centralisation of authority grew stronger during the Vedic and Epic periods of Indian history till from the sixth century B.C. the movement for the political unification of India took definite shape. This movement reached its fulfilment during the next era—namely the Buddhistic or Maurya period—when the Maurya emperors were able to unify India politically for the first time and establish an empire.

After the retreat of Alexander the Great from India, Chandragupta Maurya founded his empire in 322 B.C. About this time and also later on, there were many republics in India. The Malavas, Kshudrakas, Lichchhavis and other tribes had republican constitutions. Mr. K. P. Jawaswal in his book *Hindu Polity* gives a long list of such republics. There is no doubt that when India was unified politically under one emperor, these republics continued to flourish as autonomous states recognising the suzerainty of one emperor. Besides, the popular assembly was a well-established institution during this period of Indian history. The greatest of the Maurya emperors was Asoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, who ascended the throne about 273 B.C. Asoka's empire embraced not only modern India but also Afghanistan, Beluchistan and a portion of Persia. Under the Maurya emperors, public administration reached a high level of efficiency. The military organisation was perfect for that age. The government was divided into separate departments

under different ministers. The municipal administration of the capital, Pataliputra, near modern Patna, was also creditable. In short, the whole country was politically unified for the first time under one sound administration. And when Asoka accepted Buddhism, the entire state machinery became the handmaid of the Buddhistic faith. Not being contented with political sovereignty or with propagating Buddhism within the limits of his empire, Asoka sent missionaries to all parts of Asia—from Japan on one side to Turkey on the other—to preach the lofty tenets of Buddhism. This period has been regarded by many people as the Golden Age of Indian history, when there was a uniform and all-round progress in every department of life.<sup>1</sup>

After some time decay set in and there was an interval of chaos—religious, cultural and political. Largely because of its exaggerated asceticism, Buddhism lost its hold on the Indian people and there was a revival of Brahmanical Hinduism. On the philosophical side, the Vedanta philosophy which was first propounded in the Upanishads, was restored to its pride of place. Socially, there was a revival of the caste-system and a new breath of realism took the place of the morbid asceticism of the later-day Buddhists. Political anarchy was ended through the rise of the Gupta Empire which flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. The greatest of the Gupta emperors was Samudragupta who ascended the throne in A.D. 330. During the Gupta period, the country was not only unified politically but art, literature and science flourished<sup>2</sup> and once again reached the

<sup>1</sup> An impartial observer like the Greek Megasthenes bears testimony to the above facts.

<sup>2</sup> Impartial testimony is borne this time by the Chinese pilgrim and traveller Fa-hien.

high-water mark of excellence. This renaissance took place under the influence of Brahmanical Hinduism and this period is therefore regarded by orthodox Hindus as a more glorious age than the preceding Buddhistic period. As under the Maurya emperors, India once again had active contact, both cultural and commercial, with Asia and also with some countries in Europe, like Rome. After the fifth century the political power of the Gupta emperors came to an end but the cultural renaissance continued unabated till once again it reached its peak in A.D. 640, when under King Harsha the country was once again unified politically.

This did not last very long and after some time, once again signs of decline appeared. Then there appeared a new element in Indian history—the Mohammedan invaders. Their raids into the heart of India began as early as the tenth century A.D. but it took them some time to conquer the country.<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Bin Tughlak succeeded for the first time in bringing a large portion of the country under one rule in the fourteenth century but it was reserved for the Moghul kings to unify the country and usher in a new era of all-round progress. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century under the rule of the Moghul emperors, India once again reached the pinnacle of progress and prosperity. The greatest of them was Akbar, who ruled in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The great merit of Akbar was not only the political unification of the country, but what was perhaps more important, the working out of a new cultural synthesis—in order to reconcile the new stream of culture with the old—and

<sup>1</sup> Sindh was conquered in the eighth century but this remained as an isolated phenomenon.

evolve a new culture.<sup>1</sup> The state machinery which he built up was also based on the whole-hearted co-operation of the Hindu and Mohammedan communities. The last great emperor among the Moghuls was Aurangzeb who died in 1707 and after his death the empire began slowly to break up.

From the above historical narrative it will be evident that democratic republican forms of government existed in India in the ancient times. They were usually based on a homogeneous tribe or caste. In the Mahabharata these tribal democracies are known as 'Ganas'.<sup>2</sup> Besides these full-fledged republics, in monarchical states also, the people enjoyed a large measure of liberty, as the king was virtually a constitutional monarch. This fact which has been consistently ignored by British historians has now been fully established through the researches of Indian historians. Besides political matters, in other matters also, the people enjoyed a large measure of liberty.

Indian literature from the earliest times abounds in references to public bodies called 'Paura' and 'Janapada'. The former correspond to our modern municipalities—while the latter probably mean non-urban public bodies of some sort. Moreover, owing to the existence of caste, the people were self-governing in social matters, through a system of caste-democracy under the control of a 'Panchayat'.<sup>3</sup> There were popular 'Panchayats' in India since the oldest times, not

<sup>1</sup> Akbar even attempted to bring about a synthesis of religions. He evolved a new religion on an eclectic basis and called it 'Din Ilahi'. He had many supporters during his lifetime but after his death the new religion lost all following.

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1927 the writer has personally seen such institutions flourishing among the Khasi tribe in Assam in North-East India.

<sup>3</sup> Panchayat, which literally means a committee of five, is a very ancient institution.

only for carrying on the village administration—but also for administering the caste-regulations and maintaining discipline within the caste. Throughout the succeeding Buddhistic period the people enjoyed large self-governing powers. During this period, the ‘assembly’ and the ‘vote’ were popular institutions. The advent of Maurya imperialism did not encroach on these powers nor did it destroy the republics which still continued to flourish. The Empire of the Guptas and of Harsha proceeded on the same lines. Under the Mohammedan rulers, though there was unbridled autocracy, the Central Government rarely interfered in provincial or local affairs. The governor of a ‘Suba’ or a province was of course appointed by the Emperor, but as long as revenue was regularly sent into the imperial coffers, the provincial administration was not interfered with in any way. Though occasionally a fanatical ruler would attempt proselytisation, on the whole the people enjoyed complete freedom in religious, cultural and social affairs, no matter who occupied the throne at Delhi. British historians are without exception guilty of overlooking this fact and when they loosely talk of despotism to which orientals are accustomed, they forget that behind this cloak of despotism, the people enjoyed a large measure of real liberty, which they have been denied under British rule. Both before and after the Aryan conquest of India, autonomous village institutions have been a consistent feature of the public life of India. This is true as much of the Aryan kingdoms of the north of the Tamil kingdoms of the south.<sup>1</sup> But under British rule these institutions have been destroyed and the long arm of the bureaucracy stretches into the remotest

<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is worth while studying the Chola Kingdom of South India of the tenth and twelfth century A. D.



villages. There is not one square foot of land where the people feel that they are free to manage their own affairs. With regard to political literature also, ancient India has much to boast of. The Mahabharata is a storehouse of knowledge and information for the student of political science. The *Dharma Sastras* also, with a mass of subsidiary literature, are of immense value. But most interesting of all is *Arthashastra* of Kautilya which probably belongs to the fourth century B.C.

To resume the thread of our narrative, with the gradual disruption of the Moghul Empire, the question arose as to which power would take its place. About this time, two indigenous powers made a bid for supremacy—the Mahratta power from Central India and the Sikh power from the north-west. The Mahratta power was consolidated by Sivaji (1627-80) who was great as a general and great also as a ruler. After his death the Mahratta power flourished till the end of the eighteenth century. Its expansion was checked in 1761 A.D. at the third battle of Panipat, where the Mahrattas were defeated, and it was finally overthrown in 1818 by the British. Though Mahratta rule was based on benevolent despotism it could boast of a highly efficient army and an excellent civil administration. The Sikh power was consolidated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), who during his lifetime built up a fine army and an excellent civil administration. But after his death, no one with equal ability could take his place and when war broke out between the Sikhs and the British, the former were overthrown. Unfortunately for India, while she was going through a period of political anarchy and was attempting to evolve a new social and political order, she became the sport of the European powers. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the

French and the British came in succession. Each of them, not content with carrying on trade or preaching religion, tried to wrest political power from the warring chieftains. In the long run a lively struggle took place between the French and the British. Luck favoured the latter. Moreover, British diplomacy was more astute and their strategy more clever—while their Home Government gave them greater support than did France to her nationals. The French made South India the base of their operations and attempted to dominate India from the south. The British following historical precedent operated from the north, after seizing Bengal, and were more successful than the French.

After going through the pages of Indian history, chapter by chapter, we can draw the following general conclusions :

- (1) A period of rise has been followed by a period of decline, to be followed again by a new upheaval.
- (2) The decline is the result chiefly of physical and intellectual fatigue.
- (3) Progress and fresh consolidation has been brought about by an influx of new ideas and sometimes an infusion of fresh blood.
- (4) Every new epoch has been heralded by people possessing greater intellectual power and superior military skill.
- (5) Throughout Indian history all foreign elements have always been slowly absorbed by Indian society. The British are the first and the only exception to this.
- (6) In spite of changes in the Central Government, the people have all along been accustomed to a large measure of real liberty.

## § II. LANDMARKS IN BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

England first obtained her foothold in India through the East India Company. This company received a Royal Charter which conferred large powers in the matter of trade monopoly, acquisition of territory, etc. The East India Company succeeded in establishing itself in India towards the beginning of the seventeenth century as a trading concern. Gradually friction arose between the Company and the local Indian rulers of the day. And this led in some places, as Bengal, to armed conflict. During the course of one of these conflicts the then ruler of Bengal, Nawab Sirajudowla, was defeated by the combined forces of the Company and the Indian renegades who conspired against him. This was practically the beginning of the political conquest of India. A few years later, in 1765, the Emperor Shah Alam of Delhi, who was then the nominal ruler of India, granted the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company. The grant of the Dewani meant that the entire revenue and financial administration of these areas passed into the hands of the Company. Thus the East India Company, while being a trading concern, became an administrative body as well. During the course of the next few years, there were complaints about the corruption and maladministration of the Company's officials. In 1773, therefore, an Act was passed, called Lord North's Regulation Act, which provided for governmental control over the policy and administration of the East India Company. The principal administrative change introduced with the passing of the Act was that the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, which had been independent of one another, were brought under a Governor-General who with the

help of four councillors was to rule over all the territories, his headquarters being in Bengal. There were manifold defects in the new system introduced and in addition to that, there were serious complaints of corruption against the administration of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings. After some time, therefore, another Act called Pitt's India Act was passed in 1784 which provided for a Board of Control. There were cabinet ministers on this board and the entire operations of the East India Company were brought under its control. The appointment of a Board of Control, composed partly of cabinet ministers, eventually led to the establishment of the supremacy of the British Parliament over India.

The East India Company had to renew its charter from time to time. The Charter Act of 1833 introduced a remarkable change in the status and function of the Company. With the passing of this Act, the East India Company ceased to exist as a trading concern and became a purely political and administrative body, governing India on behalf of the British Crown. According to the provisions of the Act, the direction of the entire civil and military administration and the sole power of legislation were vested in the Governor-General in Council. Twenty years later, that is in 1853, when the Charter Act was renewed, the Control of the Government over the Company was further strengthened. The Act required that one-third of the members of the Court of Directors of the Company should be nominated by the Crown. So far as India was concerned, further administrative changes were made. Bengal was made a separate province under a Lieutenant-Governor and the Government of India was thereby separated from the provincial governments. The Act also provided for a

Legislative Council for India consisting of twelve members, all of whom were, however, to be officials. During the discussions in the House of Commons in connection with the renewal of the Charter in 1853, John Bright spoke strongly against the Company's administration, which he said had 'introduced an incredible amount of disorder and corruption into the state and poverty and wretchedness among the people'. He demanded that the Crown should assume direct responsibility for the administration in India. The advice was not heeded and a few years later the revolution (called by English historians the 'Sepoy Mutiny' and by Indian Nationalists the 'First War of Independence') broke out. After the suppression of the revolt, a new Act was passed called the Government of India Act, 1858. By this Act the Crown took over from the East India Company the entire administration of India. With the introduction of this Act, Queen Victoria issued a Royal Proclamation, which was read out by the Governor-General, Lord Canning, on November 1st, 1858, at Allahabad. In view of the responsibility of the British Cabinet to the British Parliament, the latter became the virtual arbiter of India's political destiny.

The next important step was taken in 1861 when the Indian Councils Act was passed. The Act provided for the Governor-General's Legislative Council which was to have not more than twelve and not less than six members, half of whom were to be non-officials. Besides the Central Legislative Council, Provincial Councils consisting partly of non-official members appointed by the Government were also introduced. Thus Bengal got a Provincial Legislative Council in 1862 and the North-West Provinces and Oudh (now called the United Provinces) in 1886.

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The failure of the revolution of 1857 was followed by a period of reaction and during this period all anti-British movements in India were ruthlessly suppressed, while the people at large were completely disarmed. By the eighties of the last century the political depression was over and the public began to raise their head once again. This time the policy and the tactics of the liberty-loving and progressive Indians were quite different from those of 1857. An armed revolution being out of the question, constitutional agitation was substituted in its place. Thus in 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded for striving for self-government for India by constitutional means. The agitation conducted by the Indian National Congress made the Government of India feel that a further political advance was necessary. So in 1892 another Act was passed called the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Under this Act the Legislative Councils were given the right to put questions and to discuss the Budget, though voting on the Budget was not allowed. Further, provision was made in the Legislatures for a non-official element to be appointed by the Government. The Governor-General's Legislative Council was also increased by sixteen members.

With the dawn of the present century there was a national awakening in India on a large scale and Bengal, which had suffered longest from the British yoke, was the pioneer in the new movement. In 1905 the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, ordered the partition of that province. The official reason given for this action was one of administrative exigency—but the people felt that the object was to cripple the new renaissance in Bengal. A stormy agitation against the partition was set in motion in Bengal and this was accompanied by a powerful

movement all over the country, in the course of which attempts were made to boycott British goods as a retaliatory measure against the Government. The pressure of these events forced the Government to make another meagre concession to popular clamour and so the Morley-Minto Reforms followed. Lord Morley was then the Secretary of State for India and Lord Minto the Viceroy of India. The Morley-Minto scheme of reforms was first announced in December 1906, and was finally passed into law as the Indian Councils Act of 1909. As a result of official inspiration, a few months before the announcement was made, a deputation of Mohammedan leaders led by the Aga Khan waited on the Viceroy on October 1st, 1906. In connection with the impending reforms they demanded that the Mohammedan community should have a certain number of seats reserved for them and that these seats should be voted for, not by the general body of Indian voters, but only by Mohammedan voters. This demand by the Mohammedan leaders of what is known in India as 'separate electorate' was granted in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. This Act provided for enlarged legislative councils both in the provinces as well as at the centre. Additional powers were given to the members in the matter of putting supplementary questions, moving resolutions, discussing the budget, etc. The method of election was however indirect and the Act was therefore regarded by many Indians as a retrograde measure in some respects, as compared with the Indian Councils Act of 1892. The constituencies were very small, the largest of them having only 650 voters.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the view expressed by Sir Surendranath Bannerji in his book *A Nation In Making*, pp. 123-25.

After the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms, an Indian was for the first time appointed as member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and Sir (later Lord) S. P. Sinha was the first recipient of this honour. This was followed by the visit to India of King George V who was crowned at Delhi as Emperor—following the ancient Indian precedent. It was the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who was largely responsible for this arrangement, as also for the transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. Lord Hardinge had a wonderful historic sense and he thought that by these measures British rule would be more firmly installed in India. Others, like Lord Curzon, the former Viceroy, were opposed to these innovations and they felt on the contrary that Delhi had been the grave of many empires. However, the visit of the King Emperor in December 1911, and the annulment of the partition helped to assuage public feelings and anti-governemnt agitation subsided to a large extent. Within the Indian National Congress a split had occurred in 1907 leading to the expulsion of the 'Nationalists' (or 'Extremists') from that body. Moreover, many of the leaders of the Congress Left Wing disappeared from the political arena for the time being—through imprisonment, as in the case of Lokamanya B. G. Tilak of Poona, or voluntary exile, as in the case of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal. Things were therefore quiet till the Great War broke out, when the revolutionary party which had been born during the first decade of this century became very active. During the Great War public opinion in India demanded an announcement from the British Government regarding the policy of British rule in India. This demand was made all the more because Britain gave out that she was fighting for the freedom of small nations and of



suppressed nationalities. To placate Indian opinion an announcement was made on August 20th, 1917, by Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, that the policy of His Majesty's Government was that of 'the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.' In order to follow up this announcement, Mr. Montagu visited India and a joint report was made by the Secretary of State for India and the then Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, on the question of the Indian constitutional reforms. The reforms proposed in the Montagu-Chelmsford report, were embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919. The most important innovation made in this Act was the system of government, called dyarchy. In the provinces the government was to be composed of two sections, called 'transferred' and 'reserved'. The transferred departments like Education, Agriculture, Excise and Local Self-Government were to be administered by ministers who must be elected members of the Legislative Council and who would be removable by a vote of that council. The reserved departments like Police, Justice and Finance were to be administered by members of the Governor's Executive Council, who would be appointed by His Majesty's Government and who would be independent of the vote of the Legislative Council. The Governor's Cabinet was thus to be composed of ministers administering 'transferred' departments and of members of the Executive Council administering 'reserved' departments. In the Central Government there was to be no dyarchy. All the departments would be administered by members of the Executive Council

of the Governor-General, who would be appointed by His Majesty's Government and who would be independent of the vote of the Central Legislatures—the Lower House, called the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Upper House, called the Council of State. The Central Legislatures were to be composed only of representatives from British India and the Indian States ruled by Indian Princes were to be independent of the Central Government with regard to their internal administration, subject to the provisions of the treaties made between them and the British Government. The inadequacy of these reforms, the atrocities committed by the armed forces of the Crown in the Punjab in 1919 and the attempt of the Allied Powers to dismember Turkey—set in motion a powerful movement in India in 1920 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But in spite of the unprecedented awakening in the country no further political advance was made by the British Government. The Government of India Act, 1919, contained a provision for the appointment of a Royal Commission, ten years later, that is in 1929, with the object of determining what further advance, if any, should be made in the direction of self-government. In accordance with this provision a Royal Commission was appointed in 1927 under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon.

The Commission reported in 1930. Thereafter a Round Table Conference of British and Indian representatives, nominated by the British Government, was convened for threshing out the details of the New Constitution. After three sessions of the Round Table Conference, the Government came forward with their own proposals regarding the new Constitution. These proposals were published in March 1933, in a White

Paper. The White Paper was duly placed for consideration before a Joint Committee of both Houses of the British Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

### § III. THE NEW AWAKENING IN INDIA

In considering the political conquest of India by such a small country as England the first point that strikes one is as to how such a feat could be at all possible. But if one knew the Indian temperament and Indian traditions, it would not be difficult to understand. The Indian people had never any feeling against the foreigner. This mentality had been developed partly through the philosophical outlook of the people as a whole and partly through the largeness of the country which made it possible to welcome as many people as could come into the country. In the past, India had been invaded by new tribes and peoples over and over again. But though they came as foreigners they soon settled down and made India their home. The feeling of strangeness disappeared and the foreigners became a part of the body-politic. On the whole, there was no intercommunal friction for any length of time after foreigners came in. An understanding would be soon effected and the foreigners would become members of the great Indian family.

Thus it was that when the European races—Portuguese, Dutch, French and English—first arrived in India they did not excite any suspicion or hostility or animosity. It was not a new phenomenon in the history of India—at least so the people thought. The

<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee has been published on November 22nd, 1934. Even the meagre proposals of the White Paper have been further whittled down by the Joint Committee.

fact that the majority of the foreigners were either peaceful missionaries or traders further served to disarm opposition. They were given facilities and even allowed to acquire territory for carrying on their peaceful avocation. Even when the foreigners took part in any political strife, they were always careful to side with a section of the people, so that they would never get the entire people against them. In this respect the diplomacy of the British was by far the best. The question crops up here as to why a section of the Indian people sought the help of the foreigners in their own internal disputes. The reply to that has been given already above. As contrasted with India, neighbouring countries like Afghanistan, Tibet and Nepal, have still remained comparatively independent, because people in these countries have been always suspicious of and hostile towards foreigners. Besides their diplomacy there was one other factor which accounted for the success of the Europeans. That was their superior military skill. Unfortunately for India, though up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries she kept abreast of the modern world in her knowledge of the science and art of warfare, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries she was no longer up to date. Her geographical position had kept her isolated from modern Europe. The wars of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe had effected a considerable improvement in the science and art of fighting and this knowledge was at the disposal of the European races, when they went over to the East. The first physical conflict between Indians and Europeans showed that the former were at a disadvantage in the matter of military skill. It is significant that before the British conquest of India, the Indian rulers had Europeans in their service in the army

as well as in the navy and many of them occupied high positions.

The first important success of the British in India happened in Bengal. The ruler was a young man, Sirajudowla, who was still in his twenties. Nevertheless, it must be said to his credit that he was the only man in the province who realised what a great menace the British were and he was determined to try his level best to throw them out of the country. If only he had had as much diplomacy as he had patriotism, he might have been able to alter the course of Indian history. In order to overthrow him, the English won over to their side the influential Mir Jaffar, by giving him a promise of the throne, and their combined forces were more than a match for Sirajudowla. It did not however take Mir Jaffar long to realise that he had been used as a tool by the British and that what they were really aiming at was political mastery for themselves. Sirajudowla was overthrown in 1757 but many decades were to pass before they could extend their supremacy to different parts of the country. In the meantime the rest of India, which was still independent, hardly realised the danger of British conquest. Being practically the first portion of India to come under British rule—the consolidation of British power naturally began first in Bengal. The overthrow of the old regime was naturally followed by a period of disorder and it took the British several years to put things in order. By the end of the eighteenth century, order had been established and the Government then had to face the question of building up their administration on a sound and permanent basis. In order to administer a big country the Government had naturally to educate on their own lines a new class of people who would be able to work as their agents. The

British commercial houses also wanted Indians educated and trained on British lines. In the meantime British missionaries had been active in trying to impart their culture and their religion to the Indian people. Out of these different sources there arose a consciousness on the part of the Britisher of a cultural or civilising mission in India. It was this which produced the first revolt among the Indians. As long as the Britishers were merely trading, no one thought of them since they were petty traders. As long as they were merely ruling, people did not care, for Indians had in the past gone through many political vicissitudes and a change in government had never meant a change in their daily life—because no government in the past had interfered with local self-government. Out of the consciousness of a civilising mission there came the attempt on the part of Britain to ‘anglicise’ every sphere of the life of the Indian people. The missionaries became very active in propagating their religion, and educational institutions on the British model were founded by them, as well as by the state, in different parts of Bengal. The entire educational system was built up on the British model and English was made the medium of instruction, not only in the University but also in the secondary schools. In art and architecture also, British models were imposed on the country. In fact, in inaugurating the new educational system, the Government deliberately stated that their object was to train up a nation who would be English in everything, except in race. In the new schools, students began to think, to talk, to dress and to eat as Englishmen would. The new generation turned out by these schools was quite different from the old. They were no longer Indians in their equipment but English.