I. "SWADESHI" AND "SWARAJ"

World capitalism underwent a basic change towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Monopoly capitalism or imperialism came into being during the time. Wars among the imperialist powers, revolutionary struggles of various nationalities against imperialism and struggles for socialism under the leadership of the working class within the imperialist countries—all this became more widespread and intense, and a new world political situation came into being with all these characteristics.

It was during this period that parties of the working class grew in strength in Germany, France, Italy and other European countries and gained considerable voice in their respective parliaments. In Britain too, which was relatively lagging behind other countries in this respect, an independent party of the working class was formed and it began to participate in the elections. It has to be specifically mentioned
here that Engels, during the closing years of his life was writing articles and letters warmly welcoming these developments and giving practical guidance to the activists of these parties.

The waves of these developments swept over the independence struggle in India, too. When a branch of the Indian National Congress began to function in England, the activists of that organization were initially depending on the Liberal Party; with the formation of the Labour party, it became a mighty sympathizer and advocate of the Indian independence struggle. The activists of Indian independence movement also established relation with the working class socialist movements in Europe and America.

It is on record that Dadabhoy Naoroji and Madame Cama participated in two different conferences of the Second International. Later, Madame Cama and her colleagues established contacts with various revolutionary groups all over Europe, when they started organizing revolutionary groups challenging the leadership of Naoroji and others. They sought the help and cooperation of the revolutionaries in France, Germany and Russia for securing arms and training in their use.

Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the renowned 'extremist' leaders of India stated: It is beyond doubt that the struggle for independence in India receive liberal support from the international forces. The struggles and victories of the working class of England, the sacrifice made by the revolutionaries of France and their ultimate victory, the efforts of the Italians and their victory, the continuous struggles of the peoples of Russia, Poland, Finland and Hungary, of the nationalist forces of Europe, inspire and strengthen us.

Apart from these, certain other events of historic significance also occurred during this period. In 1896, an European imperialist power, Italy, clashed with Abyssenia (Ethiopia), an African country, and met with defeat. England had to undergo a lot of difficulties in the Boer War of 1899-1902. Revolutionary movements emerged in Asfan countries like
China, Persia (Iran) and Turkey. In 1905 an European power, Russia, was defeated by an Asian power, Japan. Following this, workers and other toiling people of Russia conducted a revolution against the Czar’s regime. As a part of the revolutionary nationalist movement in China, a move was afoot to boycott American goods.

The waves of all these developments swept over India, too. Even Swami Vivekananda whose activities confined mainly to spiritual plane, wrote to one of his friends on the Russo-Japanese War: “The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to the necessity of the present times... “Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march. Do you love men? Do you love your country? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward.”

This new enthusiasm found expression in the Indian National Congress, too. The Congress, formed with the moderate objective of working for limited administrative reform through petitions to the British officials in India and to the rulers in Britain, began to change itself into a fighting organization with more radical objective and adopting more intensive agitational forms of struggle. An intense conflict between the extremist Congress leaders who were trying to bring about this transformation and those who wanted to maintain the Congress as a body for submitting petitions.

This conflict led to a split in Congress, which we shall examine later along with the circumstances that led to the split. Here we will deal only with the changes that occurred in the economy of the country which gave rise to these developments.

The British, as we know, first come to India as traders selling goods produced in their country and taking Indian goods to their country. It was the East India Company which

---

obtained first the Charter from the British Crown for carrying on the trade and subsequently obtained from the Emperor of Delhi and the provincial rulers the administrative rights to safeguard their interests.

When the administration gradually extended to cover the entire country, the Company realised that it was not enough for them to confine their activities to commercial transactions and that they must also engage themselves in agricultural and industrial production. Accordingly, they entered the fields of modern capitalist plantation, primary industries for processing raw materials and the railways and transportation network building essential for these activities.

Since the Company's administration was not helpful in all these activities, the administration was gradually brought under the control of the British government. Finally, the administrative powers were fully transferred to the government. Following this, the nature of the British rule once again underwent a change towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

As we know, the main characteristic of monopoly capitalism or imperialism is the export of capital. So, the British monopoly capitalists were not satisfied merely with the availability of cheap raw materials for the British industries or high prices obtained for the British industrial goods. They must also use India for investing part of their profits in England as capital in order to earn more profits. They knew that investment in India where cheap labour and raw materials were available would enable them to earn higher rates of profit. Consequently they formulated and pursued such policies as would serve these purposes.

As an inevitable consequence of this, the British were perforce led to introduce limited industrialization and the resultant social transformations in India. At the same time they would not do anything which would endanger their domination over India. For, they knew that if industrialization were to take place in India as independently and rapidly as it occurred in England, it would result in the
emergence and development of an independent bourgeoisie in India challenging their domination over the country. Therefore, they took all precautions to ensure that no indigenous industry, except those under their direct control and ownership, developed in India. With this aim in view, they took a number of steps including the imposition of export and import duties and fixation of railway and shipping freight tariffs in a manner detrimental to the interests of indigenous industrialists. They also utilized their administrative power to control the production and prices of industrial raw materials in which they had invested capital. In short, they exerted their control over the administration for the purpose of preventing the free development of capitalism in the country.

However, as pointed out earlier, a capitalist class which was capable of challenging the power to an extent developed rapidly, though under the shadow of the British rulers. In fact, Indian economists like Naoroji and Ranade were the spokesmen of this class. The Indian National Congress was formed subsequently by them and other sections of the bourgeoisie.

Thus, when both the British monopolists and Indian capitalists invested their capital in industries in India, their respective interests came to conflict with each other. It came to manifest itself in clear terms in the beginning of the 20th century. The capital invested in India by companies registered in England during the period of the Russo-Japanese war and the upsurge of the freedom fighters inspired by the outcome of that war, was 96.7 million pound sterling, which was thrice the total investment of capital by all the companies registered in India. This shows that the companies registered in England enjoyed a dominant position in India. Moreover, a considerable number of industries registered in India were either owned or controlled by the British.

However, the number of industries registered in India and the volume of capital invested were rapidly increasing. Between 1897 and 1906, the capital invested by companies
registered in India increased by 36.8 per cent. In certain sectors of industry, including the textile industry in Bombay, Indian capitalists had predominance. The British had sought to control some of these industries directly by means of managing agency system and indirectly through governmental policies. It was done with the clear objective of preventing the development of Indian capitalism. The resultant conflicts led to the slogan of Swadeshi and triggered a socio-political movement based on it. The Indian capitalists realized that just as the British capitalists exert influence on their government for the protection of their own interest, so there was a need for them to influence the rulers both in Britain and in India to protect their own interests. But this was of no avail, because the British government was biased towards the British capitalists whenever there was a conflict between the interests of the British and Indian capitalists. So, the latter came to realize further that it was necessary for them to adopt agitational path, rather than depending on petitions and representations. The leaders of the independence struggle suggested the people of India come forward to safeguard the interests of Indian capitalists in the same way as the government came forward to protect the interests of the British capitalists against the interests of the Indian capitalists.

The situation got aggravated in 1905. Swadeshi at that time was the symbol of ‘extremist’ politics, which had been developing as a socio-economic movement over the past quarter of a century. From 1880, voices of protest were being raised in Western India against the crisis of Indian industries. Even at that time, Swadeshi had become a slogan symbolizing patriotism. This is evident from the fact the new textile mill established by Jamshedji Tata in 1885 was named the “Swadeshi Mill”. Mass organizations like the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona adopted Swadeshi as the sole means to liberate India.

The Swadeshi movement which, till then, was confined mainly to the socio-economic sphere, acquired political significance with the new political advance started in 1905. At
that time, along with the "constructive" approach of encouragement to indigenous industries, it also included the "agitational" content of boycott of foreign goods. Just as the slogan of Swadeshi in the socio-economic sphere, so the slogan of Swaraj also came to be raised in the political sphere during the same time. An agitational significance to this slogan was provided by Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, popularly known as the "Lal-Bal-Pal" triumvirate. It was they who placed before the people a programme of action comprising Swadeshi, boycott of British goods, and a national education policy, and strove to get this programme adopted by the Congress. It was again they who openly stated that the aim of the freedom fighters was not administrative reforms, as demanded by the Congress earlier, but an administrative system in which Indians have as much share as the Englishmen have in England. Interestingly, these slogans were adopted by moderates also. For instance, Dadabhai Naoroji, a moderate leader, raised this slogan in his speech delivered as the President of the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906. A resolution adopted by that conference also accepted the Swadeshi and other slogans of the 'extremists'.

As we shall see in the following chapters, this represented only one stage in the conflict between the moderates and extremists in the Congress. The Calcutta session, in fact, helped not to bring about a unity between these two sections, but to prepare the ground for further conflicts. However, the adoption by the moderate-led Congress of the two slogans, Swadeshi and Swaraj, which had hitherto been identified with the programme of the extremists was a significant development in the history of the freedom struggle.

The conflict between the British rulers and the Indian bourgeoisie had now become sharper than ever before. The Congress, which emerged as the mouthpiece of the Indian bourgeoisie and the freedom movement under its leadership, had reached a turning point. In order words, the movement
for independence had now passed from the stage of infancy and entered the stage of adolescence.

II. MASSES ON THE POLITICAL SCENE

As we had noticed earlier, the inspiration for the new anti-imperialist upsurge was the conflict between the rising capitalist class in India and the British capitalists who were tightening their grip over the Indian economy. This was, however, not the only element that inspired the movement that emerged during this period. Another element of equal or more significance was the conflict between the upper classes and the common people.

With the growth of the British and the Indian capitalists, a working class had also begun to emerge. In the early stage of the growth of capitalism, workers in India, as elsewhere in the world, had to toil hard under conditions of extremely cruel exploitation. During the early years of the 20th century, for instance, the working time in the factories was, on the average, 12 hours and 7 minutes per day. In some factories, it was even 14 hours. In Bombay, workers had to toil for over 12 hours (in some factories which had started using electric power it was between 14½ and 15 hours). In Broach it was 14½ hours, in Agra 13 ¾ to 15½ hours, in Lucknow 13½ hours, in Sholapur, 12½ hours to 13½ hours, in Delhi 13½ to 14½ hours and in Amritsar and Lahore, it was 13 to 13½ hours. (The figures are from the data published officially by the Factory Labour Commission.)

This, along with low wage levels, burden of debts and dependence on contractors and middlemen, led to discontent among the workers and to disturbances. Often they were forced to resort to strikes.

Details of strikes that burst out in Bombay and Ahmedabad, though not in an organized way, were given in the Commission’s report cited above. The Commission’s report also gives instances of wage increase and other demands of
the employees in Bombay and Ahmedabad the employers were forced to concede and of strikes in places like Agra and Madras.

In many such cases, the workers had to face the Indian capitalists who were being supported by the British capitalists, administrators, and the British Press. Thus, while clashes were taking place between the Indian and British capitalists, on the other side, clashes were also taking place between the Indian capitalists and workers.

In the agricultural sector, too, class conflicts were getting intensified day by day. The practice of investing capital in the agricultural sector had become universal as a natural consequence of the development of capitalism. But, this investment of capital did not serve to modernize agriculture, as it did in Europe, because modernization in the industrial sector that was required for the modernization of agriculture using machinery and new technologies was not there. On the other hand, the rulers made conscious efforts not to bring about such a modernization.

Capital was used for the purpose of purchasing ownership rights on land. It became the practice of the rich to give loans at high interest rates to the small and middle peasants and force them to sell their land in the event of failure to repay the loans. As a result, the new rich became landowners; on the other side, the small and middle peasants became landless. Thus, while the contradiction between the feudal landlords and their tenants continued, there began another contradiction between the new rich trying to secure ownership of land and the farmers who were deprived of their land. Both contradictions were getting sharpened day by day.

Further, caste-domination, related to land owned by the feudal lords, but more deep-rooted than feudal domination itself, the declining rural industries, absence of land reform or industrialization required to provide employment to those who were formerly engaged in rural industries and the consequent growing unemployment—all these made the life of the
rural people more and more miserable. The tax system introduced by the British and the cruel way of collecting taxes led to the pauperization of the majority of the rural people. Famines, epidemics and deaths became common. Instead of trying to solve these problems, the government continued to function in a most inhuman way.

And a new generation of leadership had also started coming up from among the educated sections of the people. Teachers, lawyers, journalists and various other salary-earning sections of people and students were increasing in number. As noted earlier, the influence of the world revolutionary advance had spread among them. The arrogance of the British bureaucrats was hurting the self-respect of the people. Books and journals giving details of the exploitation and oppression by the British capitalists and high officials roused their ire. The inspiration for self-sacrifice in the fight for independence and democracy gave them a new life.

These were what lay beneath the emergence of radical politics. The forces behind the ‘extremist’ political movement that emerged under the leadership of the Bal-Pal-Lal triumvirate were the middle and poor sections of the people in the urban and rural areas. This was what differentiated the new generation of extremist political leaders from the leadership of the Congress in the earlier period.

Lok Manya Tilak was the most eminent among the extremist leaders—the foremost among the earlier generation of national leaders who laid down everything for the service of the country. The heroic struggles he carried on consistently against the rulers made him the target of their hatred. He was respected and held in high regard even by foreign intellectuals for his scholarship and deep learning, but to the power drunk bureaucrats he was an anathema. On more than one occasion he had to undergo the extreme rigours of the prison life which wrecked his health. But he was able to achieve what none of the previous generation of leaders could achieve: He became the most respected leader of the poor and middle class people in the rural and urban areas.
Even at the beginning of his political life, Tilak manifested the characteristics of the new generation which he represented. Wielder of a sharp pen, Tilak started two journals, *Kesari* in his mother tongue Marathi, and *Maratta* in English. He utilized the columns of these journals to expose the misrule of the bureaucrats and to advocate the cause of India’s independence. Even in the early days of these journals, Tilak and his colleague Agarkar were convicted for publishing articles exposing the misdeeds of the Dewan of the princely state of Baroda in the name of the Maharaja of that state. (In the history of modern nationalist movement, journalists undergoing punishment was not common.) Public contribution for the conduct of the case and the enthusiastic reception accorded by the people to Tilak and Agarkar as they came out of jail on completion of their term of imprisonment were almost the first instance of such events in the political life of India. This was an experience which eminents like Ranade, Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale could not even dream of.

This occurred in 1882, before the formation of the Indian National Congress. The selfless work in the service of the country that Tilak carried on for nearly four decades since then has gone down not only in his life but also in the annals of the Indian history.

During the 1896-97 famine in Maharashtra, when the administration was callously eager to collect taxes from the famine stricken people, Tilak openly opposed and exposed the unlawful acts of the rulers by citing the regulations governing famine affected areas. He called upon the people to resist the unlawful tax collection in an organized manner. “If you have money, pay the tax, but you are not liable to pay the tax by selling your cattle, land and other properties”, he advised the common people in the rural areas.

Before long, another distress overlook the people of Maharashtra when the epidemic of plague spread all over the region. The Government took measures to provide treatment to those afflicted by the disease and to ensure that it did not spread. But the authorities who had no relations with the
people assigned the relief work to the police and military. The latter, on the other hand, organized the 'epidemic relief work' in a manner in which they, without any human consideration, entered homes and harassed women and children. Strongly opposing this, Tilak fearlessly exposed the misdeeds of the bureaucrats. He openly declared that the people had the right to take defensive actions against those who entered their homes and behaved discourteously.

This was the reason for his second term of imprisonment. He was charged with "instigating the people to violence". The prosecution argued that Tilak was the force behind the murder of two officials, one an Englishman, who had earned notoriety for their misdeeds in the relief activities in the plague-affected areas. The judge who tried that case recorded that Tilak had no part in the murder. Yet he was convicted. The judge decreed that the very political activities of Tilak who had no loyalty and affection for the British rulers were punishable.

These two incidents in the life of Tilak revealed the close links the extremist leaders of the new generation had with the masses. At that time, there was no organized trade union or peasant movement. But the movement that developed under the leadership of the Bal-Pal-Lal triumvirate drew the masses, including industrial workers and the peasants, into the political arena. The extremists formulated a programme of action which included Swadeshi, Swaraj, national education and resistance to oppression by the bureaucrats and exploiters. Industrial workers, peasants and other poor sections of the people in towns and villages were inspired. Gradually the working class started using the weapon of strike, their struggles went beyond the limits of struggles for wage rise and reduced working hours and other immediate economic demands; they took the form of political strikes.

The first political strike in the history of India took place when Tilak was sentenced to imprisonment for the third time in 1908. Now the strike was on a common political issue. As Lenin stated, this was an "open declaration of the
maturity of working class in India". Tilak's conviction also
gave a new form of struggle, hartal, which later came to
occupy an important place in the freedom struggle. On the
day of delivery of the judgement people had collected in the
court in large numbers. To avoid them, Tilak was whisked
away by the backdoor. The people protested against this
in strong terms. Shops and markets were closed, students
boycotted classes and wore black badges. Workers, students
and traders acted in unison to express their strong protest.
The people of Bengal had already developed this method of
struggle in connection with the partition of Bengal. Its
adoption in Maharashtra, to demonstrate people's respect and
affection for Tilak, gave the movement an all-India character.

The role Tilak and his colleagues played in giving shape
to the people's protest has rightly been placed high. Justifi-
ably, these leaders earned the love and respect of historians
as well as of the masses. There is one thing, no less important
than the courage and sense of self-sacrifice these leaders
displayed, which needs special mention here. People had
risen with a class consciousness and with the strength of
organized action. The greatness of these leaders lay in the
fact that they were able to gauge this force and give an
organized form to it. And it was this fact which distin-
guished them from the leaders of the earlier generation.

III. THE "DIVIDE AND RULE" TACTICS
AND SETBACKS

We have noticed that the Congress which was formed
with the blessings and help of a section of British bureaucracy
and purely on the basis of moderate programmes, declaring
loyalty to the British, faced opposition and vindictive actions
from the authorities before long. Over the years, this
opposition and vindictive actions became stronger. The
formation of an extremist section under the leadership of
Tilak and others and the adoption by the Congress, as a
consequence of the activities of this section, of the programme of Swadeshi and Swaraj added fuel to the fire of this opposition and vindictiveness.

The very first method used by the rulers to nip in the bud the movement that was developing into a threat to their domination was to subject individual leaders of the movement to repression. Even before the formation of the Indian National Congress, Surendranath Banerji in Bengal and Tilak in Maharashtra had to undergo imprisonment. With the emergence of the Congress organization and the rise of extremist tendencies, the repression became more severe.

Since, however, the rulers found that the movement was not showing any signs of weakness even under these repressive measures, but, on the other hand, was steadily advancing, they sought to use other means to suppress it. As part of this strategy, Lord Curzon, the then Governor-General, formulated and implemented a plan to partition Bengal.

At that time, the Province of Bengal was a source of strength and inspiration for the independence movement in general and for extremist tendencies in particular. It was a movement that had taken roots equally in the city of Calcutta and in the eastern districts of Bengal. The Congress leaders in general, and the extremist sections within the Congress in particular, were able to organize the Bengali speaking population of this area, as they were successful in organizing the Marathi speaking people in Bombay, as an integral part of the national movement. The partition of Bengal was a political device to break the unity which had grown out of this movement. The authorities used the ploy of "administrative convenience" to justify the partition. But there was enough evidence to show that the real motive was political. Three Bengali speaking districts were part of Assam. The Province of Bengal at that time consisted of the rest of the Bengali speaking districts, Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur. The argument justifying the partition was that since the province comprised a vast area, it was necessary to partition it in the interest of administrative efficiency.
The notes and letters of Governor-General Curzon and various other high officials, however, showed that the real reason for the partition was something else. Those who stood in the forefront of the political agitation not only in Bengal but all over India were the educated middle class (the Baboos) who were, through their writings in Bengali newspapers and their speeches, turning the masses against the British rulers. The advance of the movement could be effectively checked only if facilities for such activities were denied to them. In the words of Curzon: "The Bengalis who like to think themselves a nation, and who dream of a future when the British will have been turned out and a Bengali Babu will be installed in Government House, Calcutta, of course bitterly resent any disruption that will be likely to interfere with the realization of this dream. If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again, and you will be cementing and solidifying in the eastern flank of India a force already formidable and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in future."

If the intention was to reduce the size of the province solely in view of administrative efficiency, then this could have been accomplished by removing Hindi and Oriya speaking areas and the tribal territories from Bengal and by adding to it the Bengali speaking areas of Assam. Instead, the plan was to create a new province comprising the districts of eastern Bengal and Assam and to retain the Hindi and Oriya speaking areas and tribal territories in Bengal as before.

The consequence of this was not only the break up of a linguistic group; it also led to the intensification of the linguistic contradictions and quarrels between the two states, one comprising Bengali and Assamiya speaking areas and tribal territories and the other comprising Bengali, Hindi and Oriya speaking areas and tribal territories. Further, because

Dacca was the capital of the new province of East Bengal and because the majority of the population of that region were Muslims, the partition plan would help create the impression of liberating the Muslim population from the Hindu domination of the undivided Bengal.

Thus the plan to partition Bengal helped the rulers to disrupt the unity of the Bengali people and to sow the seeds of Hindu-Muslim conflict in the entire population of India, thereby dividing and weakening the anti-imperialist forces.

The result was, however, different. Voices of protest began to rise high throughout Bengal even as the news of partition began to come in. State-wide meetings and demonstrations in which hundreds and thousands of people participated were staged. There were even meetings in which as many as 50,000 people participated. Students, lawyers, employees and others came out on the streets donning black badges in token of sorrow. Mass protests were registered in various forms like strikes, boycott of classes and hartals.

These were not confined to Bengal alone. Political activists in the other provinces also came out to express their solidarity with their brethren in Bengal who were under such a cruel attack. Resolutions demanding the repeal of partition of Bengal were passed by the Indian National Congress and all other political-social organizations.

It was as an integral part of this agitation that boycott as a form of struggle which was advocated earlier by the extremists, came to be practised throughout the country. Before this, the programme of boycott of foreign goods had been carried out in certain places, but without political motives. Now, it was accepted as a form of political struggle.

Even before the official notification relating to the partition appeared in the press in India on 6th July 1905, an opinion had been expressed that a boycott action should be carried out to express protest against the proposed partition. The programme was, however, given an organized shape only on 7th August by the decision taken at a convention held in
the Calcutta Town Hall. This convention was preceded by a mammoth demonstration in which students and youth who had already taken a pledge of boycott at various local meetings and thousands of others who had not yet taken such a pledge, participated.

As indicated earlier, it was not simply a boycott of foreign goods. The boycott action spread to various sectors and took various forms. For example, shoemakers refused to repair the shoes of Englishmen; cooks and domestic servants from Orissa refused to serve masters who used foreign goods; washermen took a pledge that they would not wash foreign clothes; priests declared that they would not conduct marriage ceremonies where foreign cloth was used. Thus, various sections of people implemented the programme of boycott in their respective spheres.

Though this agitational programme was carried out more strongly in Bengal, its waves swept over other regions of the country as well. The anti-partition agitation and the boycott programme which was a part of it helped the extremist section which had come forward with a new militant programme of Swadeshi, Swaraj and national education to win the acclaim of the Congress ranks and of the people of the country as a whole. It was as a sequel to the sweeping waves of this agitation that Dadabhoy Naoroji, who presided over the Congress session at Calcutta in 1906, came out with the declaration that Swaraj was the goal of the people of India.

This session also justified the boycott movement launched in Bengal to protest against partition and declared that it would be continued. Even moderate leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others raised voice in protest against partition and justified the boycott agitation that was being carried on in Bengal. It was in this background that resolutions were passed at the session on issues like Swadeshi, national education, etc., and on the need for extending to India the form of government similar to that existed in the self-governing colonies of Britain.
Thus the plan for partitioning Bengal, designed to create a split in the nationalist movement, really helped to develop national unity based on an extremist programme. The agitations and boycott of foreign goods, which started merely as an expression of sympathy towards the brethren of Bengal became an integral part of the all-India political movement for Swaraj. The situation developed in such a way that even the stark moderates came to realize that they could not function without giving due consideration to the intense anti-imperialist feelings of the people.

This revolutionary upsurge, however, had its own weaknesses. The movement was constrained by two limitations which enabled the rulers to create a split in the anti-imperialist feelings of the people, which rose first during the partition days in Bengal and later spread throughout India and got reflected in the 1906 Congress session.

First, although the Calcutta session adopted almost all the slogans including Swadeshi, Boycott, and Swaraj, which the extremist section had raised, the leadership of the organization remained with the moderates. What happened at the Calcutta session was only a temporary compromise between the moderate leaders like Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Rash Behari Gosh and Surendranath Banerji, on the one side, and the extremist leaders like Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, on the other. As the circumstance which compelled the moderates to reach a compromise with the extremists, (i.e., the atmosphere of the mass upsurge following the partition of Bengal) began to change, the former came to the fore once again. This, in fact, formed the background of the controversies at the Surat session of the Congress and the split that followed.

Second, the Hindu outlook of the nationalist leaders including the extremists and the Islamic outlook of the new generation of political workers who were emerging from among the Muslims, gave rise to misgivings and lack of confidence between the two communities. This weakness, which later on affected Indian politics as a whole, was cleverly
utilized by Curzon and his successors in the partition of Bengal. The rulers deliberately tried to create the feeling among the Muslim elites that they would be able to establish their domination in the new province which included Muslim majority areas. And this was successful to a large extent. The Nawab of Dacca and other elitist leaders who had earlier participated in the anti-partition agitation subsequently turned out in favour of partition. The Muslim elitist leaders also got the inspiration from the rulers to raise new demands concerning the rights and privileges they must have in Indian politics and to form a new organization, the Muslim League.

In spite of the existence of two conflicting groups in the Congress and of the conflict between the Congress and the League engineered by the rulers, the Government had to revoke the partition and re-unite Bengal into one province in 1911. In other words, the British rulers came to realize that the mass sentiment expressed in the anti-partition agitations was just and irrepressible.

IV. SPLIT IN CONGRESS

Dadabhoy Naoroji’s presidential address and the resolution passed at the 1906 session of the Congress at Calcutta inspired millions of Indian people. But the session angered the British rulers. They had anticipated that the growing conflicts between the moderate and the extremists would weaken the Congress organization and that it would finally split at the Calcutta session. But that did not happen. Instead, both moderates and extremists declared unitedly that the aim of the Congress was Swaraj. The Calcutta session prepared the ground for an agitation including the programme of boycott which was declared just and reasonable, even though its purpose was limited to opposing the partition of Bengal.

The disillusionment and ire of the rulers over this development found expression in the ‘Times’: The split
between the moderates and the extremists who are the avowed enemies of the British rule, which seemed imminent has now been obviated. But the price that the moderates had to pay for such a development was that they had themselves to accept the extremist policy to a very large extent.

It became clear to the rulers that this unity based on agitational programmes must be broken at any cost. The "Times", which entertained the hope that the best way to disrupt this unity was to isolate the moderate leadership by means of threats and pressure, stated: The statement made by the President in his address, opposing the partition of Bengal, was endorsed by the session in the form of a resolution. The convention also declared that 'boycott' was a just form of agitation. The courts may, however, differ from this declaration.

It is quite evident that this was a clear warning that in case the Congress went ahead with the programme of agitation in accordance with the decisions of the 1906 Calcutta session, the organization would have to face dangerous consequences.

Even without such a warning from the rulers, the leaders of the moderate section had already begun to feel that it was essential to arrest the advance of the extremists. They came to realize that the millions who had rallied behind leaders like Tilak and the new generation of activists who responded to their call were raising the Congress from an organization of petitioners and suppliants into a fighting body. They feared that if this move was not checked, they would lose their hold over the organization and that it would pass into the hands of the extremists.

Even at the Calcutta session of 1906, the opinion was in favour of Tilak presiding over the session. Even the arch moderates could not oppose the proposal under the political atmosphere created by the life of Tilak based on sacrifice and the role he played in the adoption of anti-British agitational programmes. At the same time, Naoroji was respected by the extremists because of the role he had played
in exposing the exploitatation and other anti-people policies and measures of the British rulers. Tilak withdrew his candidature as he felt that it would not be proper for him and Naoroji to contest for the presidency.

Since the Calcutta session adopted Swaraj as the objective and the agitational programme, including boycott, to achieve it, it was felt that a new leadership capable of implementing the programmes was necessary. Efforts to have Tilak preside over the next (1907) session were on. The moderates opposed this move as before. On the other side, the extremists also started making organized efforts for a change in the leadership. Even as preparations for the Congress session started, conflicts were expected on the election of the president and on other items on the agenda.

It was decided at the Calcutta session that the next session would be held at Nagpur. The prevailing practice was for the Reception Committee to select the president. Therefore, there was a keen competition between the two camps in enlisting members to the Reception Committee. Though extremists were relatively strong in Nagpur, they did not have the three fourths majority in the Reception Committee required to elect the president. Thus, the functioning of the Reception Committee including presidential election, came to a standstill. It was in these circumstances that the moderate leaders of Bombay decided to shift the venue of the session from Nagpur to Surat which was their strong hold.

Tilak withdrew his candidature because he felt that in the atmosphere of conflicts it would not be helpful if he offered himself as a candidate. Instead, Tilak proposed the name of Lala Lajpat Rai who had by then returned to the country from Rangoon where he was exiled by the British government.

Lalaji was also an extremist like Tilak. That was why he was subjected to repression by the government. In the circumstances, the proposal to make him the president frightened the moderate leaders. In fact, Gokhale opposed this proposal on the plea that in case the government was
unnecessarily annoyed, it could suppress the organization in a moment.

Ultimately, the moderates decided to put up Rash Behari Ghosh as their candidate for the presidency. It was widely known that Ghosh would unleash a sharp attack on the extremists in his presidential address. Besides, thoroughly diluted versions of the various resolutions adopted at the Calcutta session were being made in the camp of the moderates. On the other hand, the extremists were determined to repeat once again the resolutions adopted at the Calcutta session. Thus, everyone thought that Surat would witness a keen conflict between the two camps.

On behalf of the extremists, Tilak had, at the very outset, made one point clear: They had no desire to see a split in the Congress, because they had nothing to gain from a split. They were, however, firm on the point that the Congress should firmly adhere to the resolutions adopted at the Calcutta session; they would stoutly oppose any attempt to dilute them.

The Reception Committee of the Surat session under the leadership of the moderates laid all kinds of obstructions before the extremists. It was a practice to organize reception to prominent Congress leaders during the session. The Reception Committee did not organize such receptions to Tilak, Lajpat Rai and other extremist leaders. But this did not affect them. It was revealed clearly that the masses were not with the moderates. For, at a reception organized by the extremists, vast masses participated. This incident remained an instance of pettiness on the part of official leadership of the Reception Committee.

Although the Reception Committee could not prevent the people of Surat from declaring support to the extremist leaders, the moderate leadership succeeded in defeating the radicals at the conference. The extremists desired to preserve the unity of the Congress at the same time, while standing firm on the policies and programmes adopted at the Calcutta
session. In his address at the reception accorded to him, Tilak, in fact, made this point clear.

As was made clear by Tilak himself and by Lajpat Rai, what they considered more important was the policies and programmes of the Congress, rather than who should preside over the session. They made clear through dialogues and writings their readiness to withdraw from the contest for presidency, if only the Congress adhered to the decisions of the Calcutta session. If, on the contrary, there was any departure, they would express their opposition, including in the election of the president.

But the moderate leaders had already taken a decision to go back from the Calcutta decision and therefore, were not prepared to arrive at a compromise with the extremist leaders. Efforts made by Tilak and other leaders for direct negotiations yielded no result.

The office bearers were not prepared even to distribute the draft resolutions in accordance with the practice usually followed in conferences. They shrugged off the responsibility on the lame excuse that there were no facilities for getting the drafts of the resolutions printed. Further, they proposed a constitution with several conditions which were not at all acceptable to the extremist section of the organization.

It was in this background that the Surat session started. After the welcome address, with the announcement of Rash Behari Ghosh’s candidature for the presidency, the session became noisy. The reason for the confusion was the refusal of the moderates to adhere to the resolution passed at the Calcutta conference as a condition put forward by the extremists for avoiding contest for the presidency. Because of the confusion that prevailed, the day’s session had to be suspended. Throughout the day, efforts were made by the extremist leaders to negotiate a settlement, but the moderate leaders were unbending. So, the next day’s session started in a tense atmosphere. The extremist leaders knew that they would have to fight out issue by issue.
Tilak demanded in writing that he be given an opportunity to speak on the issue of presidency soon after the names of the presidential candidates were announced. Simultaneously, he also requested that he be called to speak, since he had a positive proposal that would help conduct the proceedings of the conference in a cordial atmosphere.

This was the final effort made by Tilak to ensure the smooth conduct of the proceedings by resolving the differences amicably. But, the moderate leaders were not prepared to recognize the spirit of Tilak's conciliation. They rejected his request for being called to speak.

But Tilak felt that he must speak with or without permission and so he mounted the dais and began to speak. This was the beginning of a confrontation between his followers and opponents. Charges and counter-charges were made against each other; one section charged that Tilak was forcibly ejected from the dais and the other section charged that the followers of Tilak had rushed to the dais armed with sticks. Meanwhile, slippers fell on the moderate leaders Pheroze Shah Mehta and Surendranath Banerji. With this the conference was adjourned.

The extremist leaders continued their efforts at conciliation even after these incidents. Following discussions with those who were acting as mediators, Tilak wrote a letter to them: In regard to the matter discussed by us today, taking into consideration the best interests of the Congress, my party and myself are prepared to withdraw our objection to the election of Rash Behari Ghosh as the President of the twenty-eighth session of the Indian National Congress, to forget and forgive the past and to work together in future subject to the following conditions. Firstly, a resolution should be adopted in respect of each of the issues like Swaraj, Swadeshi and Boycott, clearly declaring that we stand firm on the resolutions passed last year. Secondly, in case there is any reference against our party in the Presidential address of Dr. Ghosh, it should be given up.
The moderates were not at all interested in reconciliation. They held a separate meeting of those who favoured them and adopted resolutions and a new constitution for the Congress.

The new provision which they incorporated in the constitution was designed to prohibit all agitational programmes, including boycott. They thought that since the radicals would not accept this provision, it could be used to expel any Congressman from the organization if he started working with a radical perspective.

And this was exactly what happened. The moderates and the extremists who functioned in two different camps within the same organization became two parties and the moderates started using the name of “Indian National Congress”. Subsequently, the Congress and other parties had split more than once and on many such occasions physical fights, including hurling of slippers, had taken place, as it happened in the Surat session of the Congress. Also fierce controversies had risen over the responsibility of this or that faction for the split. As in the case of these splits, in the present split also what used to be made the point of controversy was the legality of actions of groups and individuals in incidents that led to the split. But the real issue is not the legality of this or that action, but the policies and approaches that led to the disruption of unity. Why did such a situation arise in the Congress in 1907?

There was a powerful section within the leadership of the Congress which wanted a change in the futile policies pursued by the Congress for about two decades. Behind them were millions of people belonging to all sections and strata of the population. There was another section in the leadership which, frightened by these developments, wanted to prevent it at all cost. The situation had now reached a level where it was impossible for both the sections to co-exist within the organization. What happened in Surat was just an explosion of this situation.
Here it must be stressed that the extremists throughout worked in a conciliatory manner. They knew that if the Congress remained a single united organization, the people would support their programme. On the contrary, the moderates thwarted all attempts at reconciliation. They knew that a conciliatory attitude towards the extremists would endanger their future. In sum, the threat issued by the British rulers through the "Times" soon after the Calcutta session had its effect.

V. THE CULT OF THE BOMB

The split that occurred in the Congress at Surat gave green signal to the rulers to unleash a fresh wave of repression. The victims of this repression were the Congressmen of both the moderates and extremist sections and politically conscious individuals, organizations and newspapers.

Even before the Surat session, the Viceroy had issued, in May 1907, an ordinance empowering local authorities to prohibit public meetings and prohibiting the holding of public meetings without prior permission. There were also indications that further repressive measures were in the offing. The ordinance was designed to place obstacles before all forms of legitimate political activities.

Many, including the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, questioned the desirability of such measures. But the Government of India secured the approval of the British government on the plea that these measures were essential to face extremist politics which, according to them, was gaining strength in India. The decision taken by the moderates at the Surat session to part company with the extremists helped them to take this course. The authorities went ahead with the expectation that the moderate leaders would lend support at least indirectly to these repressive measures.
In 1908, the Press Act was enacted which empowered authorities to close down the publication of any newspaper and confiscate any printing press at the discretion of the District Magistrate.

The Explosives Act was another measure which provided for deportation for 14 years of any person found in possession of a bomb or the materials for making bomb or any person assisting in the making of bomb. The act also contained another provision for deportation for 20 years of any person who exploded or intended or tried to explode a bomb.

A third Act empowered the authorities to ban any organization which they found to be functioning in a manner prejudicial to the law and order of the country, and to imprison any person participating in the activities of a banned organization, and to confiscate any building, property or material found to be used for the activities of such an organization.

In brief, the legislations passed in this period were designed to curb the activities of political parties and mass organizations.

Even the moderates could not but protest against these measures. They pointed out that the curbs on the activities of organizations would only create further discontent among the people in disguised forms. They accused the government of unleashing repressive measures which would only facilitate the rapid growth of the extremists and revolutionary groups among them, who were being sharply criticized by the moderates.

True, the targets of attack of the government were the extremists and revolutionary groups. For example, Tilak was prosecuted and sentenced under all these acts. Similarly, many other extremists were arrested and imprisoned under the provisions of these Acts. Many were sentenced to transportation for life. The publication of the newspapers Bande Mataram, Sandhya and Yugantar had to be discontinued.

At the same time, actions were also taken against several newspapers which could not at all be considered to be sympathetic to the extremists. This and the restrictions imposed
on political propaganda through public meetings created obstacles in the way of the functioning of even the moderates. The repressive measures introduced on the pretext of curbing the activities of the extremists and revolutionary groups were in effect turned against the activities of all those who were interested in politics.

It was in these circumstances that another movement emerged throughout the country as different from the extremist movement led by Tilak and others, but grown in concert with it to some extent. Like the extremist movement, this new movement, which was variously known as ‘terrorist movement’, ‘revolutionary movement’, etc., was against the ‘petition politics’ of the Congress under the moderate leadership. Like the extremists, they also were of the opinion that no problem could be solved by submitting petition to the authorities. But the alternative to the ‘petition politics’ suggested by the extremists, i.e., conducting agitations with the support of the people organized through meetings, demonstrations and newspapers and other publications did not satisfy them. Along with the agitational programme suggested by the extremists they considered it necessary to physically eliminate the hated government officials by using fire-arms or bombs. And for this purpose, they had been organizing secret groups, collecting arms and training the youth in their use.

This movement had its beginning towards the closing years of the 19th century in Bengal and Maharashtra. The first act of murder attributed to this movement took place in Maharashtra. A British official, who was regarded as the symbol of the barbaric acts of the bureaucracy in the name of providing relief to the people of Maharashtra in the days of famine and plague in 1897, was murdered, along with another British official. We have already mentioned this incident and the action taken by the government against Tilak, foisting on him the responsibility for it. In fact, Tilak had nothing to do with this incident. It was organized by a secret organization formed independently of the movement
led by him. If at all this group had any connection with the movement led by Tilak, it was only the indignation of the people at the brutalities committed by the officials, and the desire to resist such acts. The accused in the killing were sentenced to death. This, however, did not destroy the movement. Instead, certain secret groups in the name of 'Abhinav Bharat' sprang up all over Maharashtra. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the leader of movement, subsequently shifted his activities to England and tried to start a revolution in India with whatever help he could get there. This group, with branches all over Maharashtra, played a prominent role in developing a revolutionary movement not merely in Maharashtra but also all over India. Savarkar was arrested in England. While he was being brought to India with police escort, he tried to escape but was again caught by the police. This incident had become a legend.

During the same period, a revolutionary organization called Anushilan Samiti was formed in Bengal. The Samiti and other revolutionary organizations were organized by young men inspired by the radical oriented journals like Yugantar, and other publications. These organizations formed under the leadership of Aurobindo Ghosh, his brother Berindra Kumar Ghosh and others presented before the members a programme giving the details of an armed confrontation with the British rule by organizing revolutionary activities. The organization that emerged in Bengal was more widespread and stronger than those formed in Maharashtra.

As we have seen earlier, the murder of two British officials in 1897 occurred in Maharashtra before the formation of the all-India movement based on the extremist slogans of Swadeshi, Swaraj, etc. The growth of the extremist political movement and the repression let loose by the government following the split in the Congress at Surat strengthened this trend. Unlike the isolated incident in Maharashtra in 1897, political murders began to occur on a wider scale. Although the first incident among these occurred in Bihar, the target of the revolutionaries was an official who had given orders for whipping in
public some young political activists of Calcutta. But the attack aimed at this official, who was subsequently transferred to Muzaffarpur in Bihar, fell on the wife and daughter of another official. Both of them were killed in the attack.

Of the two accused in this case, one, Profulla Chakki, shot himself dead soon after his arrest and the other, Khudiram Bose, was sentenced to death. In the course of the investigations connected with this incident, the police caught a sizable amount of arms, including bombs and dynamites as well as several individuals connected with the arms. A case known as the Alipore Conspiracy Case was instituted against them. The Public Prosecutor and a Deputy Police Superintendent connected with the trial were shot dead. Fifteen of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment, but the foremost leader of the organization, Aurobindo Ghosh, escaped.

The activities of the secret organizations in Bengal did not, however, subside with this trial. The accused who were sentenced to death for the Muzaffarpur murder and those imprisoned in the conspiracy case were honoured as martyrs and heroes. Hundreds of young men and women were attracted to the politics of the bomb. The feeling began to grow rapidly among the people of the younger generation that in the context of a political situation wherein even the moderate leaders of the Congress, leave alone the extremists like Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, were unable to function freely and independently, there was no way other than physically eliminating the British officials and their Indian henchmen.

It has been estimated that not less than 64 persons belonging to such categories as high police officials, officials of the lower ranks who had earned notoriety for cruel acts of repression, police spys and prosecution witnesses, were killed at the hands of revolutionaries in Bengal between 1907 and 1917. The revolutionaries also committed a series of robberies in order to raise funds for their activities. An official estimate put the number of robberies committed during this period at 112 and the amount thus collected at Rs 700,000.
Although much smaller in scale, similar secret groups were also formed in other provinces like Bihar, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Madras. There, too, political murders were committed. Several young political workers were arrested and imprisoned in connection with such incidents as also in circumstances unconnected with them. They also had to face conspiracy cases, transportation for life and other repressive actions.

During the same period, revolutionary groups emerged amongst the Indian residents in England and other European countries, in America, Canada, etc. Efforts were also made to co-ordinate the activities of the Indians living abroad. "India House", the residence of Shyamji Krishna Verma, the Indian Home Rule Society organized by him and the periodical Indian Sociologist published by him became the centres of activities of Indian residents in London. Verma, Madame Cama, Savarkar (who as we have noted earlier had shifted his activities to England), Har Dayal and others tried to establish relation with Indians residing in the European countries and in American. They started working as a revolutionary group in concert with, but independent of, the moderate-led Congress as well as the extremist group within the Congress. Later, when the World War started, these groups prepared plans to start a revolution utilizing the favourable circumstances created by the war and securing arms and other assistance from international sources and in cooperation with the patriotic sections of the Indian army.

These revolutionary activities which were carried on in various places in various forms made one thing clear: No step or measure being taken by the rulers to put out the urge for independence of the people was adequate to achieve the ends. The younger generation expressed their anti-imperialist feelings secretly where it was not possible to express it openly, and carried out political activities illegally, where functioning in the legal way was denied to them. Now they were ready to face with 'bomb politics' the authorities who were
suppressing even the agitational politics of the moderate leadership.

This was a trend that appeared at a certain stage in the revolutionary movement not only in India but all over the world. For example, this line of thinking influenced the youth in Russia before the emergence of the proletarian revolutionary movement under the leadership of Lenin. Even Lenin's brother was influenced by it and he made an attempt on the life of the Czar, for which he was sentenced to death. They, however, realized later, as Lenin stated soon after this incident, that "this was not the path of the Russian revolutionaries". Russia made its revolution only when the working class and other labouring masses came to realize that it was not a group of adventurers settling accounts individually with rulers notorious for anti-people acts but the masses fighting organized battles to overthrow the exploiting classes, that decided the future of the revolution. Referring to the experience of the working class strikes that took place in India at that time, Lenin stated that in India too, the same forces had started emerging. But the younger generation of Indian revolutionaries failed to realize this fact at that time.

VI. THE BEGINNING OF HINDU-MUSLIM CONFLICTS

The rulers realized that the tempestuous independence struggle sweeping across the country could not be suppressed by repressive measures alone. So they decided to use certain other means. One such means was to isolate the entire Muslim community from the independence struggle, thereby creating the impression that the community as a whole was with the British.

A move in this direction had already been started towards the end of the 19th century. But it was only after the rise of the country-wide protest agitation against the partition of Bengal that an all-India political organization
of the Muslims—the Muslim League—was formed parallel to the Indian National Congress.

Not only on the question of partition of Bengal but also on several other issues that came up later in the history of the freedom struggle, the imperialists used this organization to split the freedom movement. When they were ultimately compelled to leave the country, they were able to divide the country into Indian Union and Pakistan and to earn the support of the Muslim community on that score.

The Machiavellian tactics used by the British* and the policy of the Muslim League leadership helpful to make the tactics effective, had rightly been criticized by the nationalists. It is undisputable that the British rulers consolidated their domination in India by creating a division between the Hindus and Muslims and utilized the communal feeling of the Muslims to curb the urge for freedom, and that the Muslim leaders did acquiesce in it.

This does not, however, complete the real picture of Indian politics over a span of three quarters of a century. For, medieval India, though not as dark as the British historians have painted it, was marked by both friendship and contradictions between Hindus and Muslims. And the history was viewed from that perspective. There has been a widespread tendency to characterize the people’s fights against the autocratic rule of Muslim rulers and Zamindars in the medieval India as fights between Hindus and Muslims without perceiving the reality that basic to such fights was the contradiction between the rulers and the people.

For instance, when the Marattas waged a struggle under the leadership of Shivaji towards the end of the Muslim empire, that struggle was characterized as a fight between the Hindus and the Muslim rulers. Again, when Shivaji commemoration festivals were organized by Tilak, it was interpreted as an anti-Muslim as well as an anti-British move.

When the British advanced step by step and ultimately established themselves as rulers in Delhi, the capital of the Mughal Empire, a majority among the Muslim community
felt that their own community was thrown out of power. That was why the Muslim masses were more active in the 1857-59 popular revolt than the Hindu masses. In the period before the revolt, on the other hand, the members of the Muslim community were lagging behind the Hindus in acquiring English education and the resultant modernization. It was only after the failure of the revolt and the rapid modernization among the Hindus that efforts began to be made to introduce modernization in the Muslim community under the leadership of Syed Ahmed Khan and others. As a natural result of this, the Muslims were far behind the Hindus in modern education and consequently in employment in the government, in politics, commerce and industry. They feared that members of the Muslim community would be pushed out in the competition for success in these fields.

During the same period, agitations to secure a bigger share for Indians in government jobs and in the administration had already started under the initiative of the Hindus who had made advance in these fields. The Indian National Congress was, in fact, organized for this purpose. Members of the Muslim community with a sense of realism could foresee that the government would be compelled to yield to the slogans of the Congress to the extent the agitation organized under its leadership gained strength. The Muslim elites feared that in the event Indians got more jobs and political power their community would be behind others in this regard. This was basic to the attitude of Syed Ahmed Khan and other leaders towards the Congress in its initial stages. It was the opinion of Ahmed Khan at that time that taking part in the anti-government agitations and supporting the Congress would be detrimental to the best interests of the Muslims. He therefore advised the members of the Muslims community to concentrate exclusively on efforts to improve socially and educationally.

It was this fact of the attitude of non-co-operation on the part of a large majority of the Muslims towards the Congress that the British rulers utilized them against the Congress.
But it must be pointed out that the elitist leaders of the Muslim community only refrained from cooperating with the Congress; they did not directly oppose the Congress.

A change in the situation came about with the partition of Bengal and the consequent agitation against it. The propaganda let loose by the British that the Hindu dominated Congress was opposing the partition because the new (East Bengal) province was under the control of the Muslims considerably influenced the Muslims. Even those Muslim leaders who generally supported the political demands of the Congress, rallied themselves against the Congress on the issue of the partition of Bengal.

A Muslim delegation headed by the Aga Khan went to Simla and submitted a representation to the Viceroy on the 1st October, 1896. The memorandum related to the loss of the status once enjoyed by the Muslims and the concessions they must get from the government to compensate for their lost status. Following this, the All India Muslim League was formed at a meeting held in December that year.

It is an irrefutable fact that some British officials had a role in sending the delegation to Simla and also in the formation of the Muslim League. And for that reason the opponents of the League sought to label the organization ‘agents of the British’. But if this contention were to be accepted as such, the Congress too would have to be labelled similarly, since certain high British officials had played a prominent role in the formation of this organization.

It is true that there was a difference between the two. Although the Congress was organized with the help and assistance of British officials, it gradually adopted anti-British attitudes and policies. The authorities encouraged the Muslim League with a view to weaken the Congress.

It is, however, indisputable that in the initial stage the British officials came forward to form the Indian National Congress with a view to giving the general political consciousness developed amongst the educated middle class and the discontent of the people an organized form, thereby
preventing this discontent from going "beyond the limit". Similarly, in the later stage, they took interest in the formation of the Muslim League in order to give an organized form to the growing discontent among the new generation of educated Muslims and to turn that community against the Congress, thereby consolidating their own position.

So, this raises the real question as to why the process of development of dissatisfaction among the entire people and of political consciousness among the educated in the first stage took the form of an exclusive politics of Muslims and its organization, the Muslim League, in the second stage.

A factor relevant in finding an answer to this question has been indicated earlier. The Hindus entertained the idea that independence from British rule would mean the revival of the old Hindu-dominated society in India, while to the Muslims, it meant the re-establishment of the Muslim domination of the days of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Inevitably, these opposing meanings of independence came into conflict with each other. The political leaders belonging to both the communities cannot escape from the responsibility for this development.

Even before the partition of Bengal, another event had occurred arousing the feelings of the people of both the communities. Urdu was the official language throughout North India from the time of the Mughal rule. Hindus contended that since Urdu was not the language of the majority of the people of the region, the language of the majority, namely Hindi, must also be given the status of official language. On 8th April, 1900, the Government of United Provinces accepting the plea, directed that petitions to the government written both in Urdu and Hindi would be accepted and that government notifications would henceforth be published in both the languages.

Muslims resented this order. They organized protest meetings throughout the Province against this measure which they considered would deprive the Urdu language of the prominence it had during the period of the Muslim rule. On
the other hand, the Hindus organized meetings supporting the government order. Thus, the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims became extremely tense.

Evidently, the issue based on which the Muslims conducted their agitation was unjust. It must be noted that the fight of the Muslim elite at that time was not over the right to use Urdu as a language of a minority, a demand for which their own descendants and all democratic minded people had to fight later. On the contrary, they were obstinate in their demand that the majority must not have the right to use their language, Hindi.

Nevertheless, it will not be true to state that the Hindu-Muslim dispute was the creation of this and similar unjustifiable demands raised by the Muslim elites. For, there were the elements of Hindu revivalism in the views of Hindu nationalists before and after the inception of the Congress, even after the emergence of an extremist section within it. For example, one could see clearly the Hindu outlook in the works of the famous Bengali writer Bankim Chatterjee, and in the writings and speeches of the extremist leaders like Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghosh, Bipin Chandra Pal, etc. Even the most respected of the extremists, Tilak, had stated that all Indians must be true to Bhagavat Gita, Mahabharata and Ramayana and that they were the common family property of all Indians.

Bipin Chandra Pal and other Bengali extremists, on the other hand, regarded service to the country as the worship of "Devi", and their political activities were directed towards creating such an atmosphere. And Aurobindo Ghosh, the most eminent among them, subordinated politics and history to the outlook based on religion. (This motivated him later to give up politics and become a Sanyasin.) Lajpat Rai went a step ahead and put forth the idea of forming a separate political organization of the Hindus. In short, the origin of Hindu politics that helped the emergence in later years of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak
Sangh (R.S.S.) could be seen clearly in the political outlook of these extremist revolutionary leaders.

This is not intended to underestimate the role played by these leaders in building up the anti-British movement. Undisputedly, they were the respected and revered leaders of the people. But they all tried to forge anti-imperialism, patriotism and the desire for the country's freedom in the mould of the Hindu outlook which they inherited from the past. For this reason, their political activities, on the one hand, attracted the Hindu masses into the freedom movement, and on the other, turned the non-Hindus, especially the Muslim masses, against the freedom movement or, at least, made them indifferent to it. This is the fact.

Thus, parallel to this rising waves of the anti-imperialist movement based on Hindu revivalist outlook, the educated generation of the Muslim community began imbibing the outlook of Islamic revivalism. It was in this background that the British rulers devised the plan to partition Bengal. The direct result of it was an intense conflict between the Hindu and Muslim masses. The Hindu masses considered that the partition of Bengal would equally endanger the common interests of the country and the interests of their own community. The Muslims, on the other hand, regarded that the Hindu leaders in general and Congress leaders in particular were intent on wresting from them their legitimate rights. The British rulers utilized this situation as an ideal opportunity to create conflicts between the two communities in order to disrupt the unity of the freedom movement.

The seeds of discord thus sown in the days immediately following the partition of Bengal led to a divided independent India in 1947.

VII. POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

The British rulers came to realize that their policy of repression and of creating a division between the Hindu and
Muslim communities would not help in curbing the intense urge of the masses for freedom and in stemming the advance of the mass movement arising out of it. They, therefore, decided to adopt yet another tactic.

As we have seen, the Congress had gone into the hands of moderate leadership following the split in the organization. The government soon began its moves to appease the Congress with a new slogan of "rallying the moderates behind the British rulers".

The Secretary of State for India was the well known liberal, John Morley. Personally, he was opposed to the partition of Bengal and to the policy of suppression of the agitation against the partition and of the Swadeshi movement. But, under the pressure of the British officials in India and of the government, he was compelled to justify the steps taken by them and defend them in the Parliament. He was also compelled to state repeatedly that the partition of Bengal was a fait accompli, which could not be revoked.

The partition of Bengal and the repression unleashed by the government caused embarrassment not only to Morley in England, but also to leaders like Gokhale in India. Obliged as they were to take care of the feelings of the people of India, they could not but oppose the acts of the Government. At the same time, they were frightened by the development of the movement against these acts in which people were participating in thousands. They realized that the government actions would only make the situation get out of control and enhance the influence of the extremists.

It was to get out of these difficulties that certain proposals for "administrative reforms" emerged out of the parallel efforts made by some liberal-minded rulers under Morley in England and the moderate political leaders like Gokhale in India. At a certain stage, the leaders of these two sections exchanged their views in this regard, and even arrived at some informal understanding.

It was when the tide of anti-partition agitation was rising high in the country that the Prince of Wales (who later became
King George V) visited India. Attempts were made to turn the country-wide boycott movement into a movement of protest against the royal visit. But, the moderates under the leadership of Gokhale were able to stall this attempt. Even so, the prince felt the intensity of the feelings of the people of India during his visit. He became convinced of the impossibility of suppressing the movement merely by resorting to repressive measures.

He advised Morley that the government policy should sympathetically view the feelings of the people, while at the same time taking a firm stand on the maintenance of law and order. This advice strengthened the hands of Morley.

It was at this same time that the moderate leadership in India made certain moves. In a speech delivered in the Central Legislative Council in March 1906, Gokhale pleaded with the Viceroy to appease the educated sections of the people by giving them more and more opportunities to participate in the administration of the country.

Soon after that Gokhale left for England. During his 10-week stay in England, Gokhale and Morley held five rounds of talk, as a result of which certain formal understandings were arrived at between them. Morley assured Gokhale that the number of elected representatives in the central and provincial legislatures would be increased, with more powers to the non-official members. He emphasized, at the same time, that "self-government", even as demanded by the moderate section of the Congress, was unacceptable and warned that if the Congress still pursued an agitational course raising more demands or stressed on the re-unification of Bengal, the government would not implement even these limited reforms.

Morley added that he knew that it would be difficult for Gokhale to accept this position in toto, since it was difficult for the moderate leadership of the Congress to take a stand against the slogans of Swadeshi and Boycott which had the backing of a powerful popular movement. Similarly, he wanted Gokhale and other leaders to appreciate the difficulties
that Morley and his colleagues were facing and requested him to work with such a perspective.

Gokhale did not accept this request, nor did he reject it openly. But, the subsequent events showed that Gokhale had already decided to cooperate with the Government as requested by Morley.

The Surat session of the Congress was held about 18 months after the Gokhale-Morley talks. As we have seen earlier, the issues before that session were those that were raised in the talks: Whether the Congress was moving towards a struggle for the revocation of the partition of Bengal and for self-rule (Swaraj) or towards a compromise with the British rulers. As we also know, this was the question that separated the extremists and the moderates from each other.

Owing to the intense anti-British feeling of the masses, Gokhale could not make even his colleagues of the moderate section accept the conciliatory approach towards the rulers as suggested by Morley. It took more than a year for him to bring them round to accept that position. At the first session of the Congress held after the Gokhale-Morley talks (the Calcutta session), resolutions accepting the radical programmes at least partially had to be passed. It was after constant and strenuous efforts after this session that the moderates were able to obviate the "nuisance" of the extremists and re-organize the Congress on completely moderate lines.

Morley also had to remove a number of obstacles from his path. The majority of bureaucrats in India, including the then Viceroy Lord Minto and a considerable section of political leaders in England held views opposed to that of Morley. However, through persistent efforts, he was able to remove all the obstacles and come up with a new administrative scheme known as the 'Minto-Morley reforms'.

These administrative reforms came into effect through an Act of the British Parliament and the rules framed under it. The number of members in the central and provincial legislatures was increased along with the proportion of the elected members in these bodies. However, official members still
constituted a majority (36 out of 68) in the central legislature. The non-official members constituted a majority in the provincial legislatures. But, since they included nominated members, the official members and the nominated non-official members together constituted the majority. Not only in representation but also in the matter of rights of the members, the new constitution contained some provisions which were comparatively progressive. It gave members the right to discuss financial matters including the budget, and vote on them. It also gave them the right to bring issues of public interest under discussion. Till then the members had to remain satisfied with just listening to the replies given by the government to the questions raised by them. Under the new system, they could also raise supplementary questions, providing opportunities to bring out the truth on the matters that were raised through questions.

But, even these wider powers given to the people’s representative did not make the rulers responsible to them. For, any resolution passed by the legislatures was only recommendatory which could be either accepted or rejected by the government. For these reasons, the new “administrative reforms” were not acceptable even to the moderates who felt the need to further improve both in the representation and the rights of the representatives in the legislature. There was another provision in the new Act which strengthened this feeling. It related to the provisions added on the pretext of giving “the Muslim community the representation they deserve.”

It must be noted in this connection that the ideas that emerged in the Morley-Gokhale talks held in 1906 were basic to the provisions in the reforms stipulating the nature of people’s representation in the central and provincial legislatures and the extent of the powers of the people’s representations. We know that Morley sought the cooperation of Gokhale with the assurance that while the demands for legislatures with elected majority and governments responsible to the legislatures were clearly unacceptable, something
would be done on these matters. At the same time, the authorities, both in England and in India, were striving to split the independence movement by organizing the Muslim community and by creating an impression that their demands were being conceded. It was around this time that the visit of the Muslim delegation to Simla and the formation of All India Muslim League took place. Therefore, the Parliamentary legislation embodying the proposals for “administrative reforms” and the rules framed thereunder by the Government of India came up giving importance to the “Hindu-Muslim problem”. For instance, of the 27 members to be elected to the Central Legislative Council, 13 were to be from general constituencies and six from constituencies reserved for Muslims. Of the remaining eight members, six were to be elected from constituencies reserved for landlords and two from traders’ constituencies. Similar was the pattern of representation in the provincial legislatures with constituencies reserved for Muslims, landlords and vested interests.

This was a provision that created discontent and resentment even among the moderates. This was indeed the primary form of a problem that later bothered all those who were involved in Indian politics. It was for the above reasons that the first conference of the Congress held after the details of the “administrative reform” were made known, passed a resolution opposing the different provisions in the Reforms Act, including the provision to allocate separate constituencies for the Muslim community. It must be remembered that the extremist section of the Congress at this stage, i.e., in 1909, was outside the organization.

If this was the position of the moderates, it was no wonder that the reaction of the extremists was much stronger. They declared that the Reforms Act was only a shadow of “administrative reforms”. The leaders of the extremists, including Tilak, were at that time in prison and actions were being taken against the rank and file. The press had been gagged. Thus, the Reforms Act came into force at a
time when the voice of the extremists was not likely to be heard.

The moderates, on the other hand, felt that despite the limitations, the provisions contained in the Act would, to some extent, help protect the interests of the classes and the sections of the people they represented. They thought that the new provisions would be useful to the landlords and those who were holding dominant positions in the spheres of trade and industry in protecting their respective interests and for the politically active intellectuals in becoming the leaders of the nation by utilizing the forum of the new legislatures. They also felt confident of utilizing the provisions of the Act to secure more and more powers. Thus the slogan of "rallying the moderates behind the rulers", which had so far remained on paper, was becoming a practical reality.

An event that demonstrated the direct result of this stand of the moderates occurred very soon. The new legislature constituted under the 1909 Reforms Act met. One of the legislative measures that came up for discussion before the new House was the one that was designed to curb the freedom of the Press. It sought to prevent by law not only such obviously violent activities as political murders, robberies and conspiracies, but also to make it a punishable offence to oppose in any manner the continuance of the British rule. Even the moderates, true to their declared principles, ought to have opposed this measure. But Gokhale and his colleagues, who were members of the new Central Legislative Council, supported these measures. Expressing satisfaction at this stand of the moderates, Viceroy Minto said: The expanded Central Legislative Council which fully represents the Indian interests has given approval to the Act which can rightly be called "repressive". They agree with the Government that it is for the well-being of the country. Thus it has been proved that giving more representation to the Indian communities and interests does not weaken the British administration, but further strengthens it.
But, there was another issue which remained unresolved. The authorities realized that the people would not remain peaceful until the partition of Bengal was revoked, and finally had to revoke it in 1911, forming a new province comprising Bihar and Orissa, restoring the old province of Assam and forming a united Province of Bengal.

For the first time in the history of freedom struggle, the government was forced to yield to the might of the popular agitation. The result: a new principle of "one province for the people who speak one language" was also brought into practice. This was the beginning of a series of incidents which became famous in the later days of the freedom movement.

VIII. THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE

Following the reunification of Bengal, there was a thorough change in the Indian political scene. Before we start examining these developments, it is, however, necessary to make a reference to the problems of Indians in South Africa and their struggle to solve these problems.

Thousands of people in India finding it hard to live in the country owing to the growing pauperization of the rural population had left the country after the establishment of the British rule in India. Among the various countries they went in search of means of livelihood, a large number of them reached South Africa and settled down there as labourers. Amongst those who thus migrated to South Africa included also merchants, lawyers, teachers and persons occupying such other high positions.

There was one problem of life which all members of the Indian community had to face in South Africa, irrespective of the economic and social positions they occupied. The South African rulers were the Whites with the racist outlook of White superiority. The racist White regime treated even those Indians who were occupying a relatively better position in life as members of an inferior race. Feelings
against this discriminatory treatment stirred the entire Indian community residing in South Africa.

It is true that this problem was not peculiar to South Africa. It was the common practice of the European imperialists to ignore and humiliate the Blacks and coloured people. It was, in fact, the protest against the policy of the British rulers in India of excluding Indians from all high official positions and keeping them off the administrative machinery that led to the slogan of "Swaraj" and to the agitational programmes based on that slogan. The problem of Indian residents in South Africa was distinct from those of the Indians settlers elsewhere. It consists of the fact that a mass movement had developed in South Africa against the racial discrimination followed by the White rulers. And this movement had won the sympathies of social and political organizations, including the Congress. Resolutions relating to the problem of "South African Indians" were adopted in many of the Congress sessions and several public meetings organized in various parts of the country. It had thus become a part of Indian politics.

The topmost leader of this struggle was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who subsequently held sway in the Indian politics as its undisputed leader for nearly three decades, and came to be revered as 'Mahatma' Gandhi. At that time he was not connected with the internal political developments in India. But the struggle he conducted for Indians in South Africa had earned the sympathies of the Congressmen, Leaguers and other no-party leaders. Even the founder of the Tata family, Ratan Tata, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Aga Khan and many others contributed to and collected funds in aid of the South African Indian struggles. In fact, the attack on the Indians in South Africa had caused concern to a wide range of political leaders in India, from the extremists organizing struggles for "Swadeshi" and "Swaraj" to those advocating protection of their special interests as a community.

The programme developed by Gandhi to resist the White
racial domination was *Satyagraha*. Later, in the years following the First World War, this came to be used widely in Indian politics also. We shall examine later the various stages of this struggle in India, the various forms it took and other related matters. However, certain features characteristic of the struggle of South African Indians must be dealt with here, because these were the features which appeared in different forms later on in the Gandhian method of struggle in India.

One of the features, as just indicated, was that the struggle was launched and developed by rallying the entire community of South African Indians, irrespective of their status in life, whether they be rich or poor. Its main force was provided by the illiterate and the till then helpless common people. The contribution of the ‘Gandhian form of struggle’ which was in its infancy, was that it inculcated self-confidence and a sense of self-reliance in them. D. G. Tendulkar, the biographer of Gandhi, described an incident as follows.

A Tamil man in tattered clothes, head-gear in hand, with two front teeth broken and his mouth bleeding stood before the young barrister (Gandhi). Gandhi was shocked to see this spectacle and persuaded him to put his turban on and behave like an equal. It was a new experience to the poor slave. Balasundaram, as this poor visitor was called, was serving his indenture under a well-known European resident of Durban. His master beat the helpless worker till he bled. Gandhi sent for a doctor to secure a certificate and took the injured man to a magistrate. It was not Gandhi’s desire to get the employer punished but he wanted Balasundaram to be released from him. Like the slave, the indentured labourer was the property of his master. Gandhi succeeded in transferring him to some one else. Balasundaram’s case reached the ears of every indentured labourer as far as Madras and Gandhi came to be regarded as their friend.4

Following such other incidents, a new sense of self-confidence grew among Indian workers in South Africa. They were able to stand firm in an organized manner with surprising courage in the struggles to protect their rights. Nearly 6,000 coal miners went on a strike. Particularly, the women workers who participated in the strike demonstrated heroism and organizational consciousness in an unprecedented manner. On a historic demonstration staged in connection with the strike Tendulkar wrote:

The strike was in full swing and the stream of labourers still continued by rail and road. Two women with grim courage reached Charlstown though their little ones died on the way. One of the children died of exposure on the march and the other fell down from the arms of its mother while she was crossing a stream and was drowned. But the brave mothers refused to be dejected and one of them said: We must not pine for the dead who will not come back to us for all our pining. It is the living for whom we must work.5

Gandhi had numerous such experiences which had inspired him throughout his life time. Speaking at a felicitation meeting in his and his wife's honour at Madras several years later, Gandhi said:

If one-tenth of the language that has been used in this address is deserved by us, what language do you propose to use for those who have lost their lives, and therefore finished their work, on behalf of your suffering countrymen in South Africa? What language do you propose to use for Nagappan, Narayanaswamy, lads of seventeen or eighteen years, who braved in simple faith all the trials, all the sufferings, and all for the motherland? What language do you propose to use with reference to Valliamma, a sweet girl of sixteen years, who was discharged from Maritzburg prison, skin and bone, suffering from fever to which she succumbed after about a month's time? You have said that I inspired those great men and women,

but I cannot accept that proposition. It was they, the simple-minded folk, who worked away in faith, never expecting the slightest reward, who inspired me to the proper level, and who compelled me by their great sacrifice, by their great faith, by their trust in the great God to do the work that I was able to do. ...They deserve the crown which you would seek to impose upon us. ...These young men deserve all the adjectives that you have affectionately but blindly lavished on us.  

A movement of this kind had not yet emerged in the freedom struggle in India. The tendency to draw inspiration from organized struggles of ordinary labourers, as it was in the case of the struggles of South African Indians, was absent even in the extremist movement led by Tilak or in the revolutionary movement which emerged independent of, but inspired by, the former, leave alone the movements led by the moderates in the Congress and the Muslim League which was formed to challenge it.

Even Tilak who ventured to take the message of agitation and struggle to the rural masses perishing under the spell of famine and epidemics and to the industrial workers fighting for reduction of working hours, wage rise and other demands, failed to get inspiration from the illiterate and helpless masses of people, as Gandhi got in the course of his work in South Africa. Tilak who could inspire the people using his enormously talented leadership and living an exemplary life of self-sacrifice could not get inspiration from the people and return it to the people giving it an organized form, as Gandhi was able to do. Even before Tilak could think in terms of transforming the Swadeshi and boycott movements into a resistance movement, Gandhi had already put into practice such a form of struggle.

The same holds for the revolutionary movements of Bengal and other parts of the country during the closing period of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. True, the revolutionaries who had thrown themselves into the fire of

---

struggle, ready to sacrifice their lives and everything that they had in the struggle for the liberation of the country, rightly earned the love and respect of the people. The soil of our country is reddened with their blood. But these revolutionaries depended mostly upon their own individual heroism and militancy. They could not create, as Gandhi did, heroes like Valliamma, Nagappan, Narayanaswamy, etc., following the Balasundaram incident in South Africa. They failed to perceive that the main condition for a successful revolution is the creation of thousands of such heroes and heroines through organized struggles.

Before closing this section, it is necessary to specially mention here a feature of the Gandhian method of struggle which appeared in primary form in the South African struggles but matured only subsequently. Although Gandhi was able to get inspiration from the masses of the people and evolve a method of struggle based on the inspiration thus derived, his general political perception was different from all others hitherto prevalent in Indian politics. All the social and political movements in India, from the social reform movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the radical and revolutionary movements in general arose as a part of the efforts to modernize India along the capitalist line. This tendency towards modernization was discernible even in the movements initiated by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, the Arya Samaj and the Muslim League, which appeared in the grab of conservatism. Gandhi, on the other hand, tried to pull India back by millenia, instead of modernizing it. The rudimentary form of this Gandhian perception could be seen in his *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1908, in which he sharply condemned not only the British rulers but also the symbols of modern civilization they introduced in India, such as the railways, post and telegraph, telephone and even the modern medical science. He believed that the metropolitan cities of India like Bombay and Calcutta were socially decadent and that they were destroying the people. He declared that “India would not really be free unless it completely unlearned
what it had learned in the past fifty years” and that the railways, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, etc., should cease to exist.

This retrogressive outlook did not, however, negatively influence the South African struggle. In that struggle launched for the solution of a relatively simple issue, socio-political perception of a fundamental nature was not of much relevance. Later on, however, when the same method of struggle was used in India’s internal politics, the merits and demerits of the Gandhian outlook stood out. The people in South Africa and India could perceive only the anti-imperialist character of the South African struggle.

IX. AGITATION FOR LINGUISTIC STATES: ITS BEGINNING

The echoes of the struggle of the people of Bengal against the partition of the province were heard in other provinces also. The revocation of the partition led to the formation of a province comprising areas with people speaking a single language, in place of the earlier multi-lingual province created for the sake of administrative convenience. This, in turn, led to the creation of a sense of solidarity among the people speaking other languages, which developed, later on, into a general demand for a reorganization of provinces on linguistic basis.

With the successful termination of the struggle against the Bengal partition, a section of the people speaking the Oriya language and who were till then in Bengal, and the people of Bihar speaking Hindi became part of a new province (Bihar and Orissa). The struggle also foiled the plan of the British to split the Bengali speaking people who were till then in one province. A new province consisting entirely of people speaking Bengali was formed. It was the first monolingual province formed after the establishment of British rule in India.
Similarly, the people of Andhra expressed the desire to have a state of the Telugu speaking people. The Andhra Mahasabha formed in 1911 for this purpose was the organization which stood in the forefront of the agitation for linguistic states in the country.

Even before this, the Congress, then led by the moderates, had decided in 1906 to organize a separate provincial committee for Bihar in accordance with its constitution. Bihar was then administratively a part of Bengal. This decision was made, apart from meeting the needs for organizational activities, to help the Bengalis in their anti-partition agitation. In effect, it also strengthened the desire of the people of Bihar, Orissa and Andhra for their respective linguistic provinces.

At this stage, the agitation for the formation of linguistic states was in its primary form. It took nearly a decade for this agitation to take a full and clear form. Even so, the formation of a monolingual province of Bengal and the emergence of linguistic provinces at least as a goal in Bihar and Andhra constituted an important event in the national movement in India. One of the sharp weapons that the British used against the Indian patriots who declared national independence or Swaraj as their objective was the “disunity of the Indian people”. In India there were several castes, religions and languages; it was the British who brought them under a single government; if the British left the country, they would start fighting each other as before—this was the argument advanced by the British.

A fitting reply to this was the growth of the national movement and the development of the various national languages as an integral part of that movement. And these were precisely what unified the Indian people by raising their consciousness on modernization and Indian nationalism above caste, religious and linguistic considerations.

The bourgeois democratic movements in India, including those led by social reformers like Ram Mohan Roy and the Indian National Congress and its moderate and radical
sections, accomplished two tasks simultaneously. First, they
gave rise to a pan-Indian movement which stood for the
modernization of Indian society and the liberation of India
from the British rule as their objectives. Second, as a part
of this, they published newspapers, periodicals and books in
different Indian languages and organized and addressed public
meetings and conferences. In this process, a new language
style was developed that suited these purposes.

The bourgeois democratic movement raised the various
sections of the people speaking different languages to the
position of nationalities, each with specific national character-
istics of its own as an integral part of the Indian people
fighting for a common goal and with a common perspective.
That is, it became clear that the development of the conscious-
ness of solidarity among each of the different nationalities like
the Bengalis, Maharashtrians and so on, was not an obstruction
in the path of development of a common national conscious-
ness among Indians, but they were complementary to each
other. It is well known that except for Tamil and the ‘dead’
languages like Sanskrit, Pali, etc., all other Indian languages
were evolved relatively recently. In the ancient period,
Sanskrit and several Prakrit dialects were used in Northern
India. With the growth of Buddhism, Pali also rose to the
level of Sanskrit as scholars used it for literary purposes. In
Southern India, there were several dialects known as Kodum
Tamil and Sen Tamil during the same period. That is, both in
the North and in the South, there existed a literary language
used for scholarly and administrative purposes and several
vernaculars used by the common people.

This situation continued to exist until the last six or
seven centuries when standard literary works appeared in the
different vernaculars. One of the consequences of this was
that with the growth of vernaculars into literary languages,
scholars and poets began to emerge from among the people
of the lower castes, like Ezhuthachan and Kambar in the
South and Tulsidas, Kabir and so on, in the North. Thus de-
developed languages like Malayalam and Tamil in the South and
Hindi, Punjabi, Sindhi, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamia, and so on in the North and North East as national languages. And the old literary language Sen Tamil transformed itself into a new popular literary language by absorbing words and idioms from dialects spoken by the common people.

But, there was a limitation inherent in the progress made in this period. Although the language that came to be used for literature were those of the common people, the content of the new literature was religious. For example, Ezhuthachan, Tulsidas, Kabir, Ramdas and others expressed the contents of the works written in Sanskrit in languages understood by common people. Therefore, the literary works of this period spread only among the people of a particular religion. But, whereas the works of Sanskrit scholars with religious contents catered only to a small minority of the higher strata of society, the new litterateur who emerged from the lower castes spread the religious contents of these works among the masses. This was, in fact, the contribution they made to the growth of their respective languages.

But, the masses belonging to other religious groups had no interest in this body of new literature. To them they were as distant as was the Sanskrit literature. That is, this literary venture did not help the development of a new literature with modern secular outlook that could be imbibed by all people speaking the same language.

A change in this situation was brought about by the bourgeois democratic movements from the social reform movement led by Ram Mohan Roy and others to the moderate-extremist political movements which assumed different forms at different stages. It was at this stage that a literature with contents which were of interest to all sections of the people speaking the same language, irrespective of caste or religious differences, and a style suited for this purpose developed. The new Indian languages thus developed fostered cultural and social solidarity among the people speaking these languages above caste and religious considerations. This solidarity and a body of literature which gave expression
to it, in fact, emerged through the efforts made to accomplish the dual task of modernizing the Indian social system and liberating India from political slavery. Along with unifying each of the national groups on the basis of language and culture, certain common goals and outlooks acceptable to all of them were placed before the Indian people.

The Bengalis stood at the forefront in this process. They were ahead of others in the movements for social reform and cultural modernization as well as in political consciousness. The 'Bengali Babu' became a nightmare for the British rulers. If they devised the plan to divide Bengal with the intention of breaking the unity of the Bengalis, the nationalists inside and outside Bengal conducted organized agitations equally vigorously to spoil the goal of the British. Other nationalities which sympathized with the agitation carried on by the Bengalis found their own future in the anti-partition agitations. That was why people in other parts of India as well expressed their desire, though not in clear and strong terms, to have linguistic provinces of their own.

But, the demand for linguistic provinces suffered from a serious limitation at that time. The demand was then raised only in relation to those parts of India which were known as "British India". The nationalist leaders of those days could not even imagine the incorporation of the princely states in the linguistic provinces visualized by them.

Even the leaders of extremist political orientation did not think of changing the then existing authoritarian rule or the borders of the princely states. Some of them even regarded the princely states as the model for Swaraj.

The agitation for linguistic provinces started with the demand for the formation of Andhra for the Telugu speaking people. But, at that time, the leaders of the agitation envisaged only the separation of the Telugu speaking areas from the existing composite Madras Presidency. A considerable section of the people speaking Telugu resided in the Telengana area of the princely state of Hyderabad. It took another three decades even for the idea of "Vishal Andhra"
incorporating the Telengana region of Nizam's Hyderabad to emerge.

The Telugu speaking areas of the Madras Presidency alone would have constituted a large state. Therefore, it was thought practicable at that time to bifurcate the province into "Andhra" and "residual Madras State". But, this was not the case with the Malayalam and Kannada speaking areas of Madras. The Malayalam speaking area in the Presidency was just a district (Malabar) while the Kannada area was made up of two or three districts which were not contiguous. So, it was difficult to bring all of them together to form a separate Karnataka province.

Moreover, a majority of the people speaking Malayalam and Kannada was in the princely states—the Malayalis in Travancore and Cochin and the Kannada speaking people in Mysore and nearly a dozen other small princely states. Therefore, the demand for linguistic states assumed practical relevance only when it was possible to abolish the princely states altogether and reorganize the people, scattered over different areas, on the basis of language.

We have seen that Maharashtra stood second only to Bengal in the development of bourgeois democratic movements. But, there was no movement there for a separate Maharashtra as in Andhra. The reason is the same as in the case of Kannada and Malayalam speaking people. Maharashtra was part of Bombay Presidency in which there were Gujarati and Kannada speaking people as well. A majority of the latter two was, however, in the princely states. A section of the Marathi speaking people was also in Mahrathwada which formed part of Nizam's Hyderabad. Thus, to form separate states for the Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada speaking people, it was essential to liberate the people from the autocratic regimes in the two large states of Mysore and Hyderabad, and in about 300 small princely states in Gujarat and over a dozen states in Karnataka, and integrate them with the people in "British India". And this was exactly what happened. In 1953-54 Madras province
was bifurcated into Andhra and the residul Madras State. But, Vishal Andhra, Aikya Kerala, Samyukta Karnataka and Samyukta Maharashtra states were formed only in 1956 and thereafter, when the political atmosphere was created to abolish the bigger princely states like Hyderabad, Travancore, Mysore, Baroda, etc., and to unify the population speaking different languages with their brethren in other states.

Bengal was a state which did not have such a problem. There was not one princely state within the Bengali speaking areas. Moreover, till the partition of Bengal, the Bengali speaking people were all within one state, which, however, included the Biharis and the Oriyas. With the successful culmination of the anti-partition struggle, the Biharis and Oriyas were separated, leaving only the Bengalis in the new province. This led to the question being raised among the Telugu speaking people as to why they should not be separated from the Madras Presidency to form a separate state, since a separate state of the Bengalis had already been formed by separating the Biharis and Oriyas from the erstwhile composite Bengal.