CHAPTER TWO

THE SPARK

Partition of Bengal

(1903-1908)

The Onslaught

The Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon was marked by a spirit of resentment on the part of a very large section of the educated Indians. He was regarded as unsympathetic to Indian aspirations and was known to be swayed more by his own whims than be influenced by public opinion. His University Bill raised a cloud of suspicion. His attempt to adopt measures for bringing the Calcutta Corporation under Government control and to muzzle the press through the Official Secrets Act were hotly opposed. His treatment towards the foremost political leaders of the day by refusing to meet a delegation from the Congress in 1904, was treated as a definite affront to India’s sense of self-respect.

The idea of partitioning Bengal was not a new fad with the noble Lord but he was trying to give effect to a suggestion of long standing only to teach a lesson to the meek Bengalis who had not been giving whole-hearted support to all his measures.

In 1868, Sir Stafford Northcote drew attention to the greatly augmented demands that the outlying portion of Bengal appeared to take on the time and labour of those concerned in the governance of the Province. But no further steps seem to have been taken and the matter was left unattended in the official files.

The next phase began with Charles Elliott, a Lieutenant Governor, who before his appointment to the office, had never set his foot on the soil of Bengal. In 1896, this thoroughly inexperienced man revived the idea of separating a portion of Eastern Bengal and uniting it with Assam.

Elliott thought of eliciting public opinion over his proposed measure. As soon as it was made public, it met with an all round
condemnation and was dropped. One of the authorities that Elliott approached for candid opinion was the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. The learned Judges confined their opinion more or less as to how the change, if carried out, would affect the administration of civil and criminal justice "the most important of all objects of administration".

Very much to the credit of the Judiciary, the Judges were constrained to say:

"The proposal seems to be a step in the wrong direction. To transfer districts which, ever since the East India Company assumed the administration, have formed a part of the regulation territory, cannot but appear in the light of a retrograde movement. It seems, therefore, that a transfer of the Chittagong Division to the Government of Assam as at present constituted, would not fail to be a retrograde and mischievous step."

The proposal, after the remarks of the Judges, was given an unceremonious burial.

As early as 1902, Lord Curzon wrote to Lord George Hamilton expressing his views about the Partition of Bengal in connection with his contemplated measure of placing Berar under the administration of the Central Provinces. He thought that "Bengal is unquestionably too large for any single man" to administer efficiently.

For a short time his pet 'child' escaped his attention. On December 12, 1903, the Gazette of India published a letter addressed by H. H. Risley, Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, containing certain proposals for reducing the territorial jurisdiction of Bengal by transferring portions of it to adjacent Provinces.

"subject to the desirability of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal with the object of lightening the excessive burden now imposed upon the Government by the increase of population, the expansion of commercial and industrial enterprise, and the growing complexity of the administration...."

Risley himself was not unmindful of the possible adverse reaction that the proposal might produce in the minds of the people because the Circular mentioned in very clear terms that

"the Governor-General-in-Council thinks that the proposal which has been put forward, may meet with keen criticism and perhaps with strenuous opposition."

Whether 'the Partition' would be able to bring about any
administrative efficiency or not, no body did care to enquire, but it did not fail to fulfil the worst apprehensions of the sponsors of the scheme.

Curzon forwarded his final suggestions in February 1905, to the Home Government and it received the approval of the Secretary of State in June of the same year.

The Press and the people went into hysterics over the scheme. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* characterised the measure, on December 14, 1903, as a “revolutionary and apparently needless move” which was likely to “create the most profound sensation in the country.” It “gave a fair warning that his action will create a feeling which will lead a large number of people to the brink of madness.”

There was a volley of protests in all leading newspapers, especially of Bengal, some of which, amongst many others, were *The Indian Mirror* (13. 12. 03), *The Bengalee* (15. 12. 03), *The Indian Empire* (15. 12. 03), *The Hindu Patriot* (15. 12. 03), *The Charu Mthir* (15. 12. 03), *Sri Sri Bishnu Pritya O Ananda Bazar Patrika* (16. 12. 03), the *Jyoti* (17. 12. 03), the *Sanjibani* (17. 12. 03), the *Pratinidhi* (26. 12. 03), etc., etc.

On December 17, 1903, *The Tribune* roundly condemned the idea dilating on the various demerits that it harboured. According to the *Charu Mthir*, the ukase was to be accepted as a blessing in disguise. It brought men of different avocations and belonging to different stations in life, close to one another. The paper wrote (January 12, 1904):

“The proposal has made impossible things possible; it has made the unlettered rustic speak, the idiot think, the Zemindar whose only ambition was to please the District Magistrate go against him; in short, it has made the whole country unite together in one thought and in one purpose.”

*The Tribune* expressed, (January 16, 1904), satisfaction over the intensity and volume of the agitation generated by the proposed ‘Partition’:

“A more systematic, sincere, and well-organised agitation that is being carried on in the threatened districts of East Bengal against the proposed redistribution of territory has seldom been witnessed in India. Seeing that the contemplated change will benefit none while it will create no end of confusion, and that it will be nothing less than an outrage on the deep-rooted sentiment of millions of His Majesty’s Bengali subjects, one can hardly believe that it will ever be carried into effect.”
The Bengalee questioned, (January 20, 1904), the sagacity of the Government move and expressed its political philosophy by saying

"A Government which converts peaceful citizens into agitators can scarcely be congratulated on the wisdom of its statesmanship."

On January 23, 1904, The Englishman wrote editorially:

"The Government can hardly be in very much doubt as to the popularity of its proposals to dismember the Province of Bengal.... The proposals for partition have been attacked in every key and in every language. They are repugnant alike to sentiment and to commonsense. They are opposed by every community, and by every section of each community. They have awakened a storm of passionate protest which has surprised those who have let it. No still, small voice has been upraised on behalf of the Government. If it had, it would only have emphasised the deafening clamour of the protecting interests. Really, a casual observer might think that the Government have pondered over the best means of stirring up its subjects in Bengal, and had selected this as the quickest and most amusing means of setting the province in a ferment."

A month later, in another article it wrote:

"The advocates of Partition, whose names are certainly not Legion, must find some other weapon than futile attempts to discredit the bona fides of their opponents."

The comment of The Indian Daily News, (January 29, 1904), on the matter was sarcastic to the extreme:

"We have heard the Government of India officially described as one of the most radical Governments in the world. If by radicalism is meant the unnecessary stirring up of discontent and strife and the needless disturbance of the existing order of things in the face of public opinion, the title is justly earned."

Lord Curzon's Government declared that the scheme had the unstinted support of all classes of Mahomedans particularly that of East Bengal. But representative opinion proved that it was absolutely false. Nawab Syed Amir Husain, C.I.E., Honorary Secretary, Central Mahomedan Association, wrote to the Chief Secretary on February 17, 1904, that the Partition "was neither necessary nor desirable", that by disrupting an ancient Province it would "break the prescription of many centuries".

The Poisak Aakhbar was of the opinion, (January 17, 1905), that "the contemplated measure is calculated to affect the social, and commercial conditions of lakhs of human beings."
The rumour of the approval of the Secretary of State being accorded to the proposal reached India and The Tribune commented, (July 8, 1905), on the mischief inherent in it:

"The scheme for the Partition of Bengal has received the sanction of the Secretary of State. This means that the greatest outrage on the sentiment of the native population since British rule began in the country has been perpetrated.

"If a Machiavelli were to bend all the powers of his mind to devising means for making a loyal and contented people distrustful and discontented, he could not hit upon a plan more ingenious, more diabolical, and more efficacious to effect that object."

The same paper advised, (July 11, 1905), every Bengali to express unmistakably

"that the dismemberment of their Province is deeply abhorrent to the instinct and sentiment of every one of them."

The Kesari warned, (August 15, 1905), the British Government by saying that

"to create dissatisfaction amongst the governed in such matters is to endanger the stability of the Empire."

In August 1905, when the matter was placed before the Parliament, Mr. Herbert Roberts, M.P., an ex-Secretary of State for India, complained that the House was entirely without any knowledge of the facts. The Secretary of State for India pledged before the House that nothing would be done till all the papers relating to it had been laid before the Parliament and there had been opportunity of the House giving its decision on the matter.

Wrote O'Donnell (The Causes of Present Discontent in India, pp. 60-61):

"The pledge was broken within two months, and the legislation in India necessary for the enforcement of Partition was carried through at Simla at a hole-and-corner meeting of Lord Curzon and the Official Members of the Legislative Council, at which not a single Indian Member was present."

The writer pursued his theme further with the remark that

"a very singular thing about this extraordinary measure is that the Secretary of State for India has never ventured to say one word in its favour. On the contrary, on the very first occasion on which he addressed the House of Commons, Mr. Morley declared that 'it was and remains undoubtedly an administrative operation, which went wholly and decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned.'"
THE ROLL OF HONOUR

It became quite clear to the people of Bengal that the measure posed matters of an unprecedented nature, the most noticeable being that this was "forced through by a flagrant act of contempt of the House of Commons".

The Judges of the Calcutta High Court of the time must have felt amused for the simple reason that while Curzon consulted everybody and every authority, as O'Donnell says,

"from European merchants to Muslim societies, he very wisely abstained from asking the High Court what it thought of his 'retrograde and mischievous' action. He (Lord Curzon) did not want his pet project to be again described in the accurate, curt, and contemptuous fashion."

The announcement of the proposal by the Home Government was followed by a proclamation on September 1, 1905. Before the month was out, necessary legislation was adopted on September 29, and on October 16, 1905, the Partition became a fait accompli. The educated Bengalis, to quote the language of Surendra Nath Banerjea, "felt that we had been insulted, humiliated and tricked." It was just like a spark thrown into a powder magazine. The people were goaded almost to madness.

On September 11, 1905, the Tihari introduced a new tone to the movement and asked the people of Bengal to remain firm and not to help the foreign Government in India in any way. Following the logic of Hyndman it wrote

"that loyalty to England signified treachery to India.... Our advice to the people in this crisis is that they should remain firm and instead of turning traitors to their country act according to the concept laid down in the Bhagabat Gita: 'If thou art slain in battle, thou will go to Heaven; if thou returnest victorious, thou enjoy the earth'."

Commenting on how the Partition had alienated the support of the people to the Government, The Tribune was constrained to write on September 14, 1905:

"Save for the commendable 'loyalty' of some opium-smokers of Bagbazar, the Nawab of Dacca and a few hereditary basket-bearers of the paternal sircar whose reassuring voices are capable of asserting themselves over the present mighty outbreak of popular indignation in Bengal as the murmuring of a few conch-shells over the roar of the tempestuous ocean.... the Partition of Bengal has landed Government in the unique, unparalleled and unenviable position of having not a single friend left to share the pleasure of its splendid isolation."
About the measure itself, the opinions of sober Europeans, friends of both India and England, were not very favourable. Said Sir Henry Cotton:

"It was no administrative reason that lay at the root of the scheme. It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power and destroy the political tendencies of a growing spirit. Bengalis are the leaders of political agitation in modern India. With all their faults, they are the principal section of the community which has inspired the future hope and destiny of the country. The consciousness and conviction that the Partition was designed to weaken Bengali influence induced the popular irritation on the subject."

Another opinion, coming from a different sphere of life, that of a medical man, Surgeon General, C.B. Ewatt, corroborated Sir Henry's views: Ewatt said that

"any one who looks at below the surface in India must see that a dissatisfied Bengal, gravely reacts in the peace and well-being of India, for her sons are found scattered everywhere over the Indian Empire and always in positions where they can greatly influence administration and opinion. I know that already the effects of dissatisfaction in Bengal are spreading into districts far away from that province, and hence the need of further consideration of the matter, whatever the India Office may say." (The Amrita Bazar Patrika: July 31, 1906).

These gentlemen echoed in their own way the opinion of Sir Syed Ahmad, the most distinguished Mahomedan that India produced during the last century, expressed at Lahore in 1884:

"I assure you that the Bengalis are the only people in our country whom we can be properly proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty, and patriotism are progressing in our country. I can truly say that they are the head and crown of all communities in Hindustan."

But what weighed more with Curzon and men of his way of thinking was the opinion of an evening London Conservative journal that "the Bengali is an object of contempt and hatred to the more virile races" of India. O'Donnell retorted to this remark by saying that

"this is one of the many facts that renders the outraging of Bengali feeling a grave political danger; Hindus throughout the whole of India sympathise with them."

The Programme

In 1905 between the months of June and October, there grew up an agitation that surpassed, in intensity and magnitude, the
wildest expectations of the leaders of the movement for the annulment of the Partition. The announcement was hailed as a matter both for grief and rejoicing. Said Ananda Mohan Bose that

"Lord Curzon had done us indeed signal service and enables us to lay the priceless foundation of a new national life."

The sense of public utterances was that Curzon had sown the germs of national life by his ill-feeling towards the people of Bengal and thorough disregard of public opinion to satisfy his own whims for emasculating the people of Bengal both politically and economically. Now it was time that the Bengalis came to realise that they were badly in need of a good shaking to be roused from the slumber of centuries.

Thousands of meetings were held throughout Bengal, East and West, where the audience would be anything between one thousand and forty thousand people.

Grim determination, unprecedented enthusiasm and burning eloquence marked each meeting and the men present at such meetings took upon themselves the task of carrying the essence and spirit of the resolutions to the farthest corners of a village.

The programme of work to be adopted was passive resistance without breaking the law, of showing no disrespect to the constituted authority, boycott not only of foreign goods but also of the men who betray the interest of the country. The Congress, the most powerful political organisation of the country at the time, should eschew the begging policy which seemed as the core of constitutional movement; title-holders were to give up their insignia of bondage; lastly, to ignore, as far as possible, the competence of the law courts to administer justice in political cases. Solemn pledge was taken in every meeting to make the voice heard by the British public in every possible way of which the boycott of British goods was deemed to be the most potent.

The following Proclamation reflecting the public mind was adopted by the great meeting held in connection with the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Federation Hall on October 16, 1905:

"Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to
counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us."

A. M. BOSE
16. 10. 05

Those with a more practical bent of mind thought of filling up the vacuum created by the boycott by the manufacture of indigenous goods so that there would be no necessity of relapsing into the use of imported articles when the agitation had subsided. The more advanced group contrasted Bengal’s acceptance of the insult lying down with the spirit of belligerence shown by Japan against one of the proudest of the white nations. The burden of the song was:

“Had Bengalis no religion, no patriotism? Let them depend on their own strength. Let them remember their Mother Kali, the Goddess of strength. Let them also think of the great deeds of the Mahrra hero, Shivaji. Let them retaliate on the foreign Government in all possible way, particularly make the boycott as effective as not to allow a piece of foreign goods enter the shores of our Holy Land.”

In this upsurge the people imitated the Chinese, who in May 1905, had started a boycott of American goods as a protest against an Exclusive Treaty proposed by the United States. The Daily Itiabadi wrote on June 30, 1905; that

“at last the United States Government has decided that Chinese travellers and merchants in America should not henceforth be subjected to any ill-treatment by its emigration officers, an outcome of the Chinaman’s resolution not to purchase American goods.”

The situation in its final shape has been described by Lord Ronaldshay (Life of Lord Curzon, p. 326) in the following words:

“Bengal, in fact, was passing through one of those storms of unreasoning passion which were ever liable to sweep its emotional people off their feet. Their nerves were thrumming like the strings of a giant harp to the magic touch of the very sentiment which Lord Curzon was inclined too lightly to brush aside.”

The gradual psychological development for resistance has been portrayed by C. J. O’Donnell, thus:

“The people endured much at the hands of Lord Curzon, but they were patient and orderly. They believed that a better time was coming; but when they found that their prayers were blocked by unjust and unstatesmanlike doctrine of the ‘Settled Fact’, they gave way to that hopeless resentment which in all lands drives men to the verge of passionate despair.”

79
By the first week of November 1905, the people began to ask themselves: “How to proceed?” The example of the Irish people who struggled for seven hundred years for freedom without being able to make any impression on the Britishers, simply because “Ireland failed to collect and concentrate its forces for purposes both offensive and defensive” was retold. The demand of the common people was,

“We want a common object to move us. We want a leader to direct us. We want the sinews of war to strengthen us”

Then followed particularly in the newly created province of East Bengal a worst form of repression ever recorded in the history of any civilised country. In some respects it put into shade the Czarist ukases meant for terrorising people into subjection. A picture, however incomplete, of the situation may be of interest to the present-day reader because the atrocities committed by the Government on an unarmed and peaceful, but determined, people led to organised violence by the Bengalis ridiculed for their meekness and none-too-strong physical health and strength.

The movement gripped the imagination of the younger section of Bengal, and as in all other countries struggling for some great change, the students came out to add force to it.

**Anti-Swadeshi Circular**

The first step taken by the Government for the suppression of the movement was directed against the students and educational institutions. It was that the students taking part or being used for political purposes, and institutions connected with them, but enjoying Government assistance should be punished. The Magistrate and Collector of every district was directed under a Confidential Circular, No. 1679 P.-D dated October 10, 1905, issued from Darjeeling by the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, to take cognisance of such offences as taking

“any public action in connection with boycotting, picketing and other abuses connected with the so-called Swadeshi movement; if found necessary, to stop grant-in-aid and the privilege of competing for scholarships”

and to withdraw such privilege from “receiving scholarship holders” and to ask the University “to disaffiliate such institutions.” Failing to control the boys and their Swadeshi activities, the (loyal)
institutions were to send the names of such boys to proper authorities for necessary action.

Further, the Magistrates were asked "to call on" the teachers of all categories and persons connected with the management of the institutions to act as Special Constables for helping the authority in keeping the peace, much importance being attached to the selection of persons "whom the boys are bound to respect, and who will be able to identify the boys who may offend."

And the circular with requisite paraphrasing and interpretation was sent to all educational institutions for giving immediate effect to its provisions.

The Chief Secretary to the Government of East Bengal and Assam was not slow to move. He issued a Circular on November 8, 1905, on the line of his counterpart in the other half of Bengal with the additional item that the Government "would consider in the interests of the State to debar students...brought up under influence which is hostile to the State" on the assumption that they "cannot be expected to serve the Government loyally".

From the tone and temper of the "anti-Swadeshi Circular", as it came at the time to be known in Bengal, it became evident that the Government was bent upon imitating "the Russian method by placing the students at the tender mercy of the police."

On October 25, 1905, letter No. T.292 was issued by the Director of Public Instruction from Darjeeling in which the name of the offending student, ostensibly supplied by the police, was to be given in the margin and sent to the heads of institutions asking them "to show cause why the student in question should not be expelled from your institution."

The Provincial Governments having performed their onerous duties, there remained for the Government of India to do something in the matter. On May 6, 1907, a Circular was issued by the Home Department (Public) to Local Governments on the same subject as had previously been attempted to be done with the help of the "anti-Swadeshi Circulars" about two years back. A great concern was expressed for "protecting higher education" which was seriously threatened by "the
tendency of both the teachers and their pupils to associate themselves with the political movements."

It regretted such move on the assumption that it engendered "a spirit of lawlessness and resistance to authority" which was bound to "set back the advance of genuine education, to injure the material prospects of students, and to subvert the traditional foundations of the Indian public life."

There was not only the "gravest apprehension of higher education being interfered with", maintained the Circular, "but the efficiency of schools and colleges was bound to be impaired. The minds of the pupils being diverted from their proper work would surely "result in the relaxation of discipline". It was, therefore, found necessary by the Government of India to put some curb on the enthusiasm of students and their teachers of different grades of educational institutions. The punishments to be meted out were on the line of what was prescribed by the previous Circulars, viz., withdrawal of grants-in-aid and privilege for competing for scholarships and receiving scholarship holders, disaffiliation by the University and the like.

There were sober opinions of foreign journalists who looked upon these Circulars as something that brought Britain's fair name into disrepute. Wrote 'Max' in The Capital (quoted in The Amrita Basar Patrika, November 4, 1905):

"The silly Circular reads like a Russian ukase begotten by fear and not like a British document at all. Moreover, it is a most distinct attempt to interfere with the liberty of the subject, and to terrorise the law-abiding student youths of Bengal into not calling their souls their own and intimidate them from giving occasional jubilant expression to any harmless political opinions they may possess. The Circular is a most ridiculous rag of which the Government of Bengal ought to be thoroughly ashamed. It ought to be withdrawn at once. It is in some respects the issue of a warrant for the degradation of every educational Officer in Bengal, converting every Principal into a policeman and every teacher into a detective. It is the attempt to Russianise Bengal and has only to be stated in order to be covered by ridicule."

By bestowing great attention on student unrest, the Government betrayed a weakness which did not escape the notice of the Vihari which wrote on April 15, 1906, under caption Strength of Youngmen:

"In Bengal Government has been displaced with students, and is
suppressing them by Circular after Circular. It is this that has led us to believe that Bengali youths have become purely devoted to their country, and are with great force carrying the Swadeshi agitation, for unless they see true patriotism, the English will never be angry...it is in the Swadeshi agitation this time that the real strength of youth has been awakened."

About this time a London paper, *The London Trades and Labour Gazette*, wrote:

"It looks as if the military element was gaining the upper hand, and that India was destined to be governed by a military despotism."

This is just one side of the shield. The newspapers owned and conducted by Englishmen were jubilant over the Circulars because in them they found a fulfilment of their desires.

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**Bande Mataram**

(*Hail! Mother!*)

(1905-1907)

The East Bengal authorities developed a special dislike for the two simple words, viz., *Bande Mataram*. It was taken as something sounding the death-knell to British Imperialism in India. Every possible measure was adopted to stop the shouting of *Bande Mataram* and in the attempt the Government betrayed signs of weakness by taking recourse to means which plainly smacked of relics of barbarism of the distant past.

The whole student population became the target of persecution. About two hundred boys of the Rangpur Zilla School were fined five rupees each, in November 1905, for attending a political meeting and singing *Bande Mataram*.

On November 11, 1905, an order emanated from the Chief Secretary's Camp, Dacca, that meetings should not be held in public places and that no processions were to be allowed in public streets which were likely to shout *Bande Mataram*. This is just one of the many orders of the type, particularly in the districts of Barisal, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Noakhali.

Old men in their homes, young striplings of seven or eight in the streets were not spared. Students *en masse* of a large
number of institutions were fined, expelled or awarded the birch. "Whipping triangle has been posted outside the Magistrate's Court" (in Barisal), said one newspaper report. The police threatened with flogging if anybody was found shouting Bande Mataram, wrote a correspondent of The Amrita Bazar Patrika from Barisal on November 25, 1905. Three students of the Rangpur Zilla School were fined Rs. 3 each (10.11.05) for shouting Bande Mataram. The chowkidars had instructions to give hard blows on the joints of young offenders for shouting Bande Mataram. They were not to be admitted to any other school of the district if rusticated from one for the same or similar offence. School authorities were ordered by the District Magistrate to produce attendance registers of students to visiting police officers for facilitating identification of students participating in meetings or engaging themselves in joining Swadeshi movement. Principals of Colleges were asked to restrain their students from going to any particular area (here it was Baghbazar, Mymensingh) selected by the Magistrate with the concluding remark that "a disregard of the interests of the Government and discipline in this matter will entail the formal and public barring of the pupils from all services under the Government." (Mymensingh, December 2, 1905).

The Head Master of Kishoregunj High School, Dacca, was requested by the Inspector of Schools, Dacca Division, on January 18, 1906, to call upon boys of the first and second classes to copy out five hundred times: 'It is foolish and rude to waste time in shouting Bande Mataram' and forward the manuscripts, all of which be neatly written with a certificate that each is the unaided work of the boy whose writing it purports to be to the said Inspector. The Head Master was further informed that "unless all causes of complaint are immediately removed all grants will be in danger of being withdrawn."

In the heart of Calcutta, in the Shampukur Thana area, (as also in other areas), some young boys gave vent to their youthful enthusiasm and shouted the offensive words, Bande Mataram, on November 28, 1906. As was rather common in such circumstances, they disappeared from the scene. Some reported the matter to the Police and, reported a newspaper, that the Sub-Inspector of the thana rushed to the scene with a large number of constables and
"began to assault the residents of the locality not excluding some female inmates in private dwellings."

What *Bande Mataram* was to the people of Bengal was interpreted by the *Bangabasi* in its issue of April 28, 1906:

"The expression *Bande Mataram* is indicative of the feeling of patriotism and not sedition. It has in it love of *Swadeshi* and not hatred against the Sovereign. It has light and not darkness, nectar and not poison. It is a lotus root without its thorns. It is life without death. It is a song in adoration of one's mother country and not a war cry."

The words travelled wide and according to *The Tribune*, (November 25, 1905), it became the words of greetings even in distant Punjab. It wrote:

"They have adopted as their cheering cry, the words *Bande Mataram* which has no formidable meaning than 'Hail Mother!' ... And can *Bande Mataram* be abolished by help of terrorism? Even in the Punjab when educated gentlemen meet each other, his salutation now-a-days frequently is *Bande Mataram*. How many soldiers the authorities must have to stop the mouths of countless millions of India? The people of East Bengal have sympathy of all India."

On October 13, 1905, a body named *Bande Mataram Sampradaya* was organised in Calcutta by educated youngmen to "propagate *Bande Mataram* sentiment throughout the city by singing in procession the grand National Anthem."

**Humiliation**

Respectable and more often than not elderly people with nationalist views were put to utter humiliation. At Rangpur, on November 15, 1905, a large number of persons holding responsible positions in society, the popular leaders of the movement, were appointed Special Constables. Some of them were compelled to attend the police lines in the morning and to undergo parade for several hours. Others were made to patrol the town like ordinary constables. When asked to appear with belt and baton on their persons, some refused to accede and orders for their prosecution were passed forthwith for disobeying the provisions of the law.

The Magistrates in general, particularly of Rangpur and Barisal, manifested unmistakable signs of behaving like autocrats having no respect for law. The Barisal satrap invited some gentlemen to his quarters and gave one or two of these the special
distinction of being ‘inflammatory speakers’. The threat, in the Magistrate’s own words, was:

"I have given your name to the Gurkhas. I advise you to leave the station at least for a fortnight... Mind you, if anything happens in the town, whether you are present or not at those places, the Gurkhas will treat you as they like; and they will treat you in a way which will not be liked by any one of you. I will not be responsible for any outrage committed by the Gurkhas."

It may be mentioned that a contingent of 110 Gurkhas were imported in the small town of Barisal and their business constituted mainly in chasing boys and tearing any paper, poster or the like containing Bande Mataram from the walls. At Banoripara, at Madhabpasa and one or two other places, small groups of special police were posted and the locality had to bear the costs of their maintenance. On the reports of the police an Honorary Magistrate was suspended and he was called upon

"to state within one day whether it is true that he took part in, and spoke at, the meeting of the 24th (November, 1905), in Mymensingh when the people of Barisal, Madaripur and Rangpur were thanked for their attitude towards the Government."

Social functions were interfered with indiscriminately if there was the least chance of any nationalistic tendency manifesting itself in any way.

Incidents of indiscriminate and heartless assault on unsuspecting people were of common occurrence in East Bengal districts. All on a sudden, on reports supplied by an irresponsible person, a high official appeared with a large number of constables

"and struck whomsoever they met in Burrabazar (Mymensingh). They even pulled down men who were standing on the verandahs of private dwellings. The District Superintendent of Police personally dealt blows on many young boys and innocent men."

No procession could be taken out in the important cities of East Bengal without a licence being obtained from the police chief of the locality. One such was (No. 471 dated 10. 12. 05) issued on condition that

"no acts or words having connection with the Swadeshi agitation will be employed while the procession is in progress."

A very prominent lawyer of Rajshahi approached the Deputy Superintendent of Police for permission to hold a public meeting
and before he could make his whole submission, he was stopped by a rude outburst of the Police Officer: "Hold your tongue", and the gentleman had to come away from the place greatly humiliated.

The Saraswati Puja was held in the usual way in Jalpaiguri in 1906 as was in other years. On January 31, a procession connected with the immersion ceremony was prohibited on the ground that the boys would shout Bande Mataram on the way.

These are some of the many incidents and orders derogatory to the sense of personal prestige and national honour. These were paving the path of revolution rather smooth and the Punjabee commenting on the Governmental measures seriously asked (November 22, 1905):

"Is Government well advised in exasperating the educated classes beyond the limits of human endurance, and straining their loyalty to the point of breaking? The kind of persecution to which they are subjected both in Bengal and out of Bengal is more than human flesh and blood could bear. 'Vengeance is mine, said the Lord, I'll repay'. But 'Vengeance is also ours' oppressed nations trodden down to dust are apt at times to say. This has again and again been attested by the history of the human race, and history, as we all know, is apt to repeat itself."

**Picketing and Boycott**

Picketing and boycott not only by a student but by any person, though not openly declared as an offence, were tried to be prevented in every possible way, particularly by indirect orders concealing threats in their sleeves.

"Any one who compels another against his wish to buy country-made goods is guilty under the law"

ran an order. Any appeal for boycotting foreign cloth was objected to on the ground that it amounted to a sort of "proclamation which only the Sovereign or his representative is empowered to issue."

The Officials, such as the S.D.O. of Madaripur, found in this measure interference with the free will of the people, buyers and sellers both. The contrary, of "coercing people by threats to purchase foreign goods is not so if done by a Government servant."

In the Eastern and Northern districts of Bengal

"the common spectacle was that European Officers, both executive and police, going about in bazars and markets and inducing people to deal in English cloth, Liverpool salt and the like."
But in Bhola, Barisal, some pleaders (November 23, 1905) and scores of people at the same and at other places were prosecuted for the only offence of asking people not to use foreign salt.

The measure that irritated the rulers most at the time was the boycott of foreign goods because it threatened the industrial and commercial interests of England in the Indian market—the source of a large part of the revenue of the United Kingdom. The other aspects of steeling the hearts of a "conquered people" and the growth of a determination to engage in open conflict were not very clear to those blinded by power, but the Indians found in the movement something sacred which held in its womb the sparks of Promethean fire. Wrote The Bande Mataram on August 6, 1907. under caption: The Boycott Anniversary:

"The 7th of August was the birthday of Indian Nationalism, and Indian Nationalism, . . . means two things, the self-consecration to the gospel of national freedom and practice of Independence. Boycott is the practice of Independence. When, therefore, we declared the boycott on the 7th of August, it was no mere economical revolt we were instituting, but the practice of National Independence; for the attempt to be separate and self-sufficient economically must bring with the attempt to be free in every other function of a nation's life, for these functions are naturally inter-dependent. August 7th, therefore, is a day when Indian Nationalism was born, when India discovered to her soul her own freedom, when we set our feet irrevocably on the only path to unity, the only path to self-realisation. On that day the foundation stone of Indian Nationality was born."

Then direction for celebrating the great event in a befitting manner followed:

"Let us celebrate the day in a spirit and after the fashion suitable to its great and glorious meaning. Let it be a consecration of the whole of Bengal to the new spirit and the new life, a purification of heart and mind to make it the undivided possession and to the consecrated temple and habitation of the Mother. And secondly, let it be a calm, brave and masculine reaffirmation of our independent existence. The bureaucracy has flung itself in savage fury on the new activities of our national life; it has attempted to trample on and break to pieces under its armed heel our economical boycott; it has made the service of the Motherland penal in her young men; it has visited with prison and deportation the preaching of Nationalism by older men. The 7th of August must be an emphatic answer to these persecutions and prohibitions. The boycott must be reaffirmed and this time in its purity and simplicity as the national policy to which all are committed."

The disquieting feature of administration by the police in
Bengal was reported by the Calcutta correspondent of The Daily News on November 23, 1905, rather faithfully.

There are a...series of blunders and follies by which the policy of the Indian authorities has been marked from first to last. They have been had enough, and senseless enough, in all conscience and with any other people in the world other than the Bengalees the consequences might have been of the most serious character."

The gentleman followed his previous despatch with a little more detail on July 8, 1906. It ran thus:

"Twenty meetings were held in May and forty in June against the Partition and supporting the Swadeshi movement. They were attended by 200,000 persons at the lowest estimate.

"The persecution of students continues. Fifteen at Noakhali, in the new Province, have been expelled for attending Swadeshi meetings. The Head Master said that the students were liable to expulsion for shouting Bande Mataram or joining in Swadeshi meetings under the Director's (Director of Public Instruction) circulars.

"In the same school a ten year boy was flogged for not speaking to an anti-Swadeshi school master.

"A new method of muffling the Native press has been invented in the new Province. Secret enquiry is being made by the police through the Post Offices to ascertain the names of subscribers to Native papers. The public apprehend that the object of the police is to prevent the free circulation of Swadeshi papers especially among Government servants."

Shrewd eyes did not fail to see through the screen of dust raised by the Government as to the ultimate outcome of unalloyed repression. Wrote Sir Evan Jones in The National Review (reproduced in the Navasakti, July 24, 1907):

"If once the tolerant millions are fully imbued with the hatred of the British our rule has gone."

"Our army may be strong, but it will be impossible to hold hundreds of millions in check if they are determined to get rid of us."

He was not far wrong; it was only a question of time for his apprehension coming true.
The Gathering Storm
(1905-1907)

Revolt

Ruthless repression in an ever-increasing degree was the answer to the peoples' protest against Partition. The movement now began to move in two channels, one for preparing the country to withstand the onslaughts of the bureaucracy, and the other creating a demand for complete autonomy for the country.

The nationalist press came out with a spate of writings in support of the demand dilating on the evils of foreign domination and on "the necessity of breaking off the chains for achieving national regeneration."

The clamour for breaking off the chains became persistent. Wrote the Pratod (February 2, 1906):

"... so long as the chain of political subjection is round our feet, the result of all efforts to secure our regeneration will be insignificant. No one ever attained true happiness under foreign rule.

"It is the lesson of history that the conquerors should always desire the conquered races to be permanently under their sway and minister to their pleasures.

"If we want true happiness, it is indispensable that we too, should break the chains of subjection round our feet. But this task is not so easy as it seems. To carry it to the end requires extraordinary strength and we are greatly lacking in such strength."

The Vihari also wrote in the same strain (February 12, 1906):

"The Indians must remember well that they are smarting under the agonising evil of the loss of their independence. Utter destruction would be far better than the disgrace of unmitigated slavery.

"From life without freedom
Oh, who would not fly!
For one day of freedom
Who would not die."

As the flow of molten lava from a volcano, exhortations came from all quarters. In the introduction (Suchana, March 3, 1906) the Yugantar declared,

"the Indians must have a true swadesh.... The power of the sword, which is unsheathed for the protection of a right or in the main of a religion is indomitable; but the weapon in the hands of a persecutor has no power at all."
It continued:

"It may today be the duty of the people to give up their lives in silence, but who can say that it will not tomorrow be the mission of the same people to win victory in a religious war."

"Where lies the danger of the King?" it asked:

"If smitten by oppression the people can once realise this truth that the slavery of a hundred centuries does not pass off unless they learn to die, then there is a great danger for the king."

The Bangabasi, (April 21, 1906), declares that the time is come:

"Arise, awake, awake brother! This is the time to attain success in Saba-sadhana (a mystical and magical ceremony performed with a dead body) on the cremation ground."

"Absolute National Autonomy is the national goal, and the nation must attain it or perish in the national attempt," said The New India: (November 10, 1906).

The Yugantar, (December 9, 1906) published a couplet:

"When the lightning of Heaven flashes in the human heart
Then does man achieve the impossible."

It follows with an answer to the vacillating:

"You will enquire how, being weak, we can enter on a trial of strength with the powerful English?

"Be not afraid... Italy has expiated her own sin and washed away in human blood the blackness of her stigma... Are not ten thousand sons of Bengal prepared to embrace death to avenge the humiliation of their fatherland?" (March 3, 1907).

In the same issue the Yugantar suggested the following methods for collection of money for revolution:

"(i) Plundering the people,
(ii) Plundering the established Government,
(ii) Realisation of taxes."

The Bande Mataram, (June 1907), presented its ideal as "a free and united India" and "its mission is to educate the people in its possibilities." It declared its article of faith, (August 12, 1907), in the following language under caption: A Complaint and Some Misconception:

"The motives of Indians are as lofty and noble as those of Mazzini and Garibaldi."
"The restoration of our country to her separate existence as a nation among the nations, her exaltation to a greatness, splendour, strength, magnificence equalling and surpassing her ancient glories is the goal of her endeavours and we have undertaken this arduous task in which we as individuals risk everything,—ease, wealth, liberty, life it may be—not out of hatred or hostility to other nations, but in the firm conviction that we are working as much in the interests of all humanity including England herself, as in those of our posterity and nation."

The next day, (August 13, 1907), the Sandhya gave expression to a sublime sentiment breathing patriotism in every line:

"Our aspirations are higher than the Himalayas.—Our pain is as intense as if we had a vulcano in*us..... Heaven we do not want; deliverance we seek not. O Mother, let us be born again and again in India till her chains fall off. First let the Mother be free; then shall come our own release from worldly bonds."

And the determination of the people to be free will generate the Rise of Popular Power according to the Yugantar (September 2, 1907):

"The force that one day in a fierce aspect kindled the fire of revolution in France, tore asunder the ties of society and sovereignty which had lasted for centuries, and infused a new life, and like the fierce chinnamasta (a headless form of the goddess Kali), cut off her own head, drank her own blood and danced having by its terrible laughter made all Europe tremble. The time is coming when that force will rise up in India, too. India, too, must be shewn the play of that force which in Russia today has by its roar made the life of every oppressor full of alarm and uneasiness and which makes its appearance in every age and purifying the country with streams of blood washes away the accumulated wrong and injustice of centuries."

The country would thus get ready for a revolution. The process which could bring it about was described by the Yugantar (April 7, 1907):

"In almost every country the people come to be divided into the three parties before a revolution. One party turns traitor to the country and helps the established Government; the second party and this consists of the majority of the population, though hankering after freedom and prepared to make a little sacrifice for attaining it are not prepared to plunge into war for its sake; and the third party consists of men to whom life without freedom is a burden and who are not unwilling even to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their ideal.

"It is gradually becoming necessary to form a third party like this in every town and every village and link them together."
When the people’s support has been enlisted:
“the blood that has so long sustained this body will be given as an offering to the mother on the day of worship. That is the day when the child that now lisps will roar. That is a day when the little hands that now carry toys will wield fierce weapons. O Mahakali, in the shape of death what need they fear whose Mother you are?”

Repression for Rejuvenation

The British-owned press lost all sense of decorum and decency, which also blinded its vision completely as would be evident from the following outburst of The Pioneer (August 1906):

“If the Bengalis acted upon the advice that is given them we would descend upon them with the fire and sword and we would shoot and hang as remorselessly as in 1857—perhaps even more so. The tiger qualities of an imperialist race are not dead, they merely sleep.”

The challenge was readily accepted on behalf of the Indians by the Hind Swarajya, (March 2, 1907), which declared that India must attain its goal of Independence. “If we cannot acquire it in this life we shall do it in the next.” The Indians would not be afraid of facing death “if we cannot break loose from the trammels of servitude during our lifetime.”

There is a reward awaiting us. It goes on:

“If in our attempts to escape from our present miseries we meet death, the gates of heaven will be thrown open to us.”

The torrent in its downward march from the mountain-top twits the pebbles and stones that think of holding it in check and to send it back to its source. The fulminations of the English press and British diplomats were received with the utmost ridicule and instead of being cowed down into silence and peace of death, the Indians invoked the maddening effect of repression so that they might shake off lethargy, complacency and fear from the land.

Says the Yugantar: (March 7, 1907):

“We do not want Peace. O Englishmen! we do not want the peace with the establishment of which you are charged. We want oppression and injustice now. Let the terrible lawlessness which has set in, continue. The flame of famine in which untold lives are daily consumed—let the flame continue for some time longer yet in the same fashion. In this death, the Indian will discover nectar…. Go on along the path, according to the nature which is yours. Move on scattering unrest and anarchy on all sides, and even

93
along with it will be sown the seeds of peace and in proper time the Indian will do the sifting and selection."

There cannot be any room for two conflicting forces living in peace in the same land. Also there cannot be the least shadow of doubt that resurgent Indian Nationalism would ultimately triumph over British Imperialism. The Bande Mataram, (May 14, 1907), delivered its verdict in unmistakable language:

"In India politics is a conflict of principles and of bureaucracy against the principle of mutually destructive forces,—the principle of democracy, the alien force of Imperialism against the indigenous force of Nationalism. Our relations with our rulers are not those of protector and protected, but of eater and the eaten. A man and a tiger cannot live together in the same circle of habitation, so Indian Nationalism and bureaucratic despotism cannot divide India between them or dwell together in peace. One of them must go."

The Bande Mataram sought to prove, (June 8, 1907), by numerous illustrations, the power and vitality of ideas and sentiments and pointed out that all despotic organised States invariably made the mistake of overestimating the coercive power, both physical and material, and underestimating the power of thought. The power-mad nation overlooks the inexorable law that

"nationalism, democracy, the aspiration towards liberty have feeble beginnings but a mighty end; while with despotic repressions the beginnings are mighty and the end feeble.

"History shows that despotic rule has always ended disastrously, but in spite of that, each succeeding despot deludes himself with the belief that he will never come to harm. This historic madness has overtaken the British nation in the height of its world-wide power and material greatness. In Egypt, in India, in Ireland it is bracing itself to a policy of repression, regardless of the many new ideas which find in British despotism their chief antagonist. Destiny will take its appointed course until the fated end, and it is left to be seen if England will crush these ideas with ukases and coercion laws, or kill them with maxim and siege guns."

The qualities that go to make a sturdy nation cannot develop under foreign rule. The Yugantar, (July 3, 1907), raises its voice of protest:

"....In whatever sphere it may be, should we owe allegiance to others permanently, our mental contraction will never terminate. Should the aliens continue to control the central part of our national life, we shall never show ourselves what we are. Only a number of loyal statesmen adept in writing petitions will be born in a country where Shivaji and Baji Rao were born."

To a nation steeped in the gloom of slavery the beneficial
effects of repression are overlooked due to the ugly appearance that it presents. One must get under the surface to realise the real value of oppression. It is a benign dispensation from the Giver of all good. The same paper wrote on July 22, 1907:

"It is not that the English are organising all this oppression for grinding you under. It is because a day auspicious for you is at hand; and that is why the beneficent mother has provided this strong treatment . . . . Providence must indeed be well-disposed towards you to have made all these great preparations for you to expiate your terrible sins of centuries and centuries. Come, let us prepare ourselves smilingly to suffer unflinchingly this interminable oppression. Show to the world that the Hindu is not afraid to die, because it is by dying that he will live."

The time has arrived when all sense of false fear should be banished from the heart. A bold stand would tear away the mask of false strength. In a very simple language the Yugantar, (July 30, 1907), presents the whole case:

"The day the people will suspect that this house of cards cannot withstand even a single puff of the entire Indian people, that day will see the beginning of the end of British rule.

"Fear not. The symptoms of reawakening after a swoon have manifested themselves after a long while. Don't you feel that the Mother's cries have reached the abode of the Gods?"

It is an axiomatic truth, (The Bande Mataram: August 1, 1907), that a nation determined to regain independence would discover the source of strength in an atmosphere of enveloping weakness:

"The despots' frown never marred the destiny of a nation. The Austrians frowned but Italy is free; the Britishers frowned but the American colonists are free; the Spaniards frowned but Cuba is free. The seeming weakness of a subject people always turned into invincible strength through the inspiring ideal of freedom. Even if these persecutions bring about a temporary demoralisation, we must not lose heart. Now losing, now winning, we shall proceed to our goal."

The New Creed

Signs of restlessness manifested themselves here, there, everywhere. Ominous clouds gathered in the firmament, a phenomenon that did not fail to give a glimpse of the mighty power that lay in its womb.
The articles of the new creed were published by the *Yugantar*, (November 2, 1907), in the language of Ruskin most approvingly:

"There is no art among a shepherd people if it remains at peace. There is no art among agricultural people if it remains at peace.

"It was this all destroying peace which brought about the destruction of Rome. At the present time it is under the spell of this sorcerer that India is being reduced to impotence.

"We talk of peace and learning, and of peace and plenty, and of peace and civilization, but I found that those were not the words which the muse of history coupled together, that on her lips the words were—peace and sensuality, peace and selfishness, peace and death. I found, in brief, that all great nations learned their truth of word and strength of thought in war; and that they were nourished in war and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war, and betrayed by peace; in a word they were born in war and expired by peace."

People were asked to think of the glory of the past, and the instrument which made it possible to achieve it. The *Hind Swarajya*, (March 2, 1907), reminds people of "the sword of our forefathers":

"Oh favourite Sword!.... Thou shinest in the hand and hang by the side of the valiant. .... Thou wast the sole helper of our ancestors in the preservation of their independence."

It is the hope of the *Aryavarta*, (March 2, 1907), that the new idea would influence every class of people not excluding the military and they "will learn that it is heinous sin to shoot their own countrymen and to help foreigners to cut their throats."

Responsible journals unequivocally asked the authorities to read the writings on the wall and to take caution betimes. The *Gujrati*, (December 29, 1907), wrote:

"If Government do not yield to the wishes of people in time, they need not be surprised if, in bringing pressure to bear upon them, the people transgress the limits of the law and acts unconstitutionally."

The people had been losing faith in British administration and in fact "the Empire of the feringhis", was likened to a "territory that form the hell on earth" by the *Vihari*, (January 28, 1908).

It further pointed out in the same issue the different interpretation given to the word "Patriotism" in different countries. The most aggressive is that of New South Wales which is an "ability to shoot straight." Peculiarly enough, "this motto has been engraved on the main door of every school building."
The *Vihar* asks:

"Is this definition of patriotism taught in any of the Indian schools? If skill in shooting is considered essential for the preservation of independence which a people already enjoys, is it not much more essential for regaining lost independence? ... In California, patriotism teaches the people to drive aliens like the Japanese out of their country at the point of the bayonet. Is it not possible for the Indians to follow the example of Californians and treat the English similarly?"

Others were not slow in preaching similar ideas. The *Kesari*, (February 4, 1908), went a bit further and said:

"Oppressive laws or ordinances should be defied even at the risk of incarceration. Unless we take up such an attitude we are bound to continue in our present condition of slavery."

The sands of time had been running out fast and if any opportunity for rectification went by default the country would be a play-ground of anarchism. The *Gujarat*, (February 11, 1908), uttered its warning:

"Patience has its limits. Government have of late been too hard on the people, and if anarchists spring up and the lives of officials are exposed to dangers they will have none but themselves to thank for it."

Equally emphatic was the tone of the *Novasori Patrika*, (February 9, 1908), against rule by the police and the military. It held that

"the British Government would be mistaken if through over-confidence in the military powers it holds the Indian nation to be beneath contempt."

Another sound advice, to be neglected as usual, was tendered by the *Rajasthan*, (February 8, 1908), to the effect that

"terrible consequences always result from a neglect to cultivate friendly relations with the subjects and from a policy of grinding down the people."

After the murder of de Plehve in Russia, the world received the news with horror of assassination of King Carlos, the King, together with the Crown Prince of Portugal, while driving through Lisbon. The Indian Press, at least a large section of it, regarded it as a lesson for the despotic rulers of India.

The *Arunodaya*, (February 9, 1908), remarked that

"Tyrannical rulers ought to take a lesson from the history of Portugal. It may not be wrong to assume that Government have brought about the terrible tragedy which recently occurred in Portugal with the express
object of giving a warning to those rulers who believe that they can act as they like on the strength of their power and keep their subjects under restraint by means of the sword."

Writing on the same subject the *Vihar*, (February 10, 1908), compared the conduct of the "meek and spiritless" Indians with that of "the Portuguese who did not tolerate the tyranny of the Ruler" and that King Carlos fell a prey to the fury of the oppressed subjects. "The Indians might take a leaf out of the Portuguese manual and act likewise."

"Thanks to the teachings of our religion (that) there is no possibility of any Indian assassinating his ruler," wrote the *Jain*, (February 9, 1908), but it would not, however, cause any surprise "if in the remote future such hellish practices gain a footing in India." It was pointing its finger to the events that had been brewing.

In the opinion of the *Arunodaya*, (February 16, 1908), it was incumbent on the part of the Britishers to "examine the causes which led them (the Portuguese) to perpetrate the deed and the consequences of the deed itself." It was essential, according to the paper, to find out "whether they committed it for selfish or from disinterested motives." If it is the latter, then "those who killed King Carlos were not to be blamed at all." A very bold assertion indeed!

"Old order changeth yielding place to new" and the *Kal*, (February 28, 1908), thundered forth:

"Let kings cry out or parasites moan; the time has gone by when the people would meekly bend their necks to the royal mandate. .... The recent events tend to show that the murders have had a salutary effect in the country where they took place."

On March 28, 1908, the *Hind Swarajya* voiced the determination of the people:

"To secure our rights, we will do anything. We shall either acquire them or die in the attempt."

In the course of the same article it further said that

"it is now futile to try to quiet down the people by repressive measures.... The prisons are delightful to us as the Garden of Eden and we have learnt to look upon it as a pleasure to die in the struggle to secure our rights."
Surcharged

The Patriots of a subject race talk in the same language. Mazzini proclaimed to the Austrian rulers:

“You are not a national Government—that is the justification of our unyielding protest against your rule.”

When arrested for sedition, the Irish patriot O’Leary said,

“England is not my native country. It cannot, therefore, be seditious on my part to go against British rule in Ireland. Can he be guilty of sedition who has no King?”

The theory of loyalty to the British as demanded under the law (of sedition) was now being questioned. It was declared that “it was not consistent with justice for an oppressive ruler to claim loyalty from the people.” In the opinion of the Yugantar, the “masses constantly pained, oppressed and distressed” are finding out “bands of secret assassins.”

It is they, the self-declared lords of India, in trying to

“stamp down the children of the soil, are the promoters of violence and disorder. Strife, disturbance, repressive cruelty, retaliatory violence are inevitable until nature reasserts itself and restores to the indigenous interests their right and just predominance” (The Bande Mataram, July 6, 1907).

The word ‘sedition’ cannot have any meaning for the Indians. Because, asks the Yugantar, (August 2, 1907):

“If it be the united desire and will of a whole nation to shake off the foreign yoke, and to gain independence, in the eyes of the God and justice whose claim is more lawful, the Britisher’s or the Indian’s? Certainly, the Indian’s....”

The demand for freedom was unequivocal and if

“the feringhis take an attitude of hostility—all the hidden strength of India will be arranged against them and a flame will be lighted up” (Yugantar, November 6, 1906) which no power on earth will be able to control. The stage has been reached when “we shall not be able to part with our ideal of freedom and we shall stake our lives” for the cause.

Continuing the Paper (ibid) exhorts the people to realise the inner strength and to break the feringhi trance because “a lion cub never loses the lion in it.”

The public mind should be thoroughly saturated with “ideas of independence and national self-respect—an irrepressible longing must stir the heart the effect of which will be to light up a flame
of discontent all over the country (the *Yugantar*, February 2, 1907).

The ground is to be prepared through (a) Newspapers, (b) Songs, (c) Literature and (d) *Jatras*, theatres, etc.

It is not safe at this stage to preach ideas of independence openly and the services of secret organisations would be necessary. Thoughts would have to be expressed in a “round about language.” A secret place “where truth may cast off its disguise and show itself in its own flaming ardour” has to be discovered. The place would be such as “the ken of the oppressor may not penetrate there” (*ibid*).

It is derogatory to self-respect to rely on British protection instead of having competence to protect oneself. They must “train themselves in physical strength and courage,” (*The Bande Mataram*, March 8, 1907), “to be capable of meeting even the greatest emergency.”

It would be a blunder for the *feringhi bania* to underestimate the growing “brute strength of India”. But India must get ready. The Mother’s “trumpet is sounding” and “Mother’s sons do not tarry”; prepare the entire country for facing death. “But mere words will not avail (the *Sandhya*, May 10, 1907). Without the lathi and the bomb the *feringhi* will not be brought to his senses.”

At the hands of the bureaucracy the people have been suffering a lot but the principle should be accepted that “no suffering is too great for the country’s sake, for the fulfilment of the peoples’ hope and aspiration, to be ruler in their own lands” (*the Sandhya*, June 8, 1907).

The country after 700 years of foreign domination had gone to sleep and inaction. It is necessary to rouse the people up to a sense of gravity of the situation. Words are not sufficient for the purpose. “Power is developed by struggling with the opponent, (*the Yugantar*, August 26, 1907), and self-dependence comes out of it.”

It is only for the purpose of having some exercise that rioting and quarrelling with the antagonist are indulged in as occasion arises. To go to jail uncomplainingly is not due merely to a desire of going to jail, or the desire of creating a sensation, but that of dispelling the fear of the people for the jail. It would be a good thing to be hanged on the gallows, if by that means the fear of
death of a class of men can be conquered. .... It will not do merely to cry like a woman with the distant prospect of a country's awakening. Words may serve to make the idea clear and distinct, but cannot create the trust in self-dependence.

For that purpose discord and dissension must be invited.

"When an idea comes in the country like a flood, it does not come with the slow careful steps like the reasoned arguments of a philosopher. No nation ever made its rise with such measured calculations. The adage: 'Power dies in the jaws of fear' is ever true. Do you want to rouse the country without violating the law? Well, do it, if you can, but—

Without blood, O Patriots!
Will the country awake?"

wrote the Yugantar on August 24(?), 1907, that it was for the country's emancipation that repression had been overtaking the land. The people

"like so many worms, had been awaiting death when all on a sudden with the cut of the whip, we were made to forsake drowsiness. We partially opened our eyes.... closed for 700 years, and saw that the bright sunshine of the morn had reflected on our face, the sky had been filled up with the hum of the busy world, and it was only we who had not risen from the bed.

"A vague idea got into our head that rise we must, and but for that rising we would have no claim to stay in the world. With the cut of the whip growing deeper day by day, we found life horrible. Maddened with annoyance and anguish we cried out, 'Is there no freedom for us?'

At a meeting held in Kalighat, Calcutta, on October 10, 1907, a speaker openly said:

"Let the motto now be: Blow for a blow, eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth."

The Sandhya asks:

"How long will you tolerate oppressions lying down? And why? Will you learn to give blows for blows?"

In its vijoya greetings, the Yugantar, (November 2, 1907), asks the people to forsake fear because "the situation is completely transformed". The loud shouts of Bande Mataram are slowly robbing the enemy of his courage and prowess. Look around and behold the Mother appearing as the goddess Jagatdhatri and promising to kill the demons when they grow too powerful.

"Your Swaraj throne will be established. Go forth from cottage to cottage, to the farthest extremities and proclaim thy gospel of Victory."
"Behold the terrible form of the Mother opening her immense mouth, with her tongue protruded and wishing for the blood of the monster. Before plucking out our hearts and offering to the feet of the Mother, let us contemplate the Mother in destructive form to our heart's content. This time the Mother will not accept the sacrifice of sheep. The highest sacrifice (i.e., the sacrifice of human beings) must be offered. Therefore, make haste, you Patriot!

"Rise up, gain fame, and having conquered thy enemies, enjoy the prosperous kingdom. All these have been killed by me beforehand, be thou only an instrumental cause."

Everything has its limit and patience is no exception. When the line is crossed the heart becomes frantic for vengeance irrespective of the strength of the opponent and the outcome of the fight.

"Unlimited courage and strength are then infused (the Yugantar: March 21, 1908) into the heart, no look is cast behind and not for a moment does what will happen afterwards occur to the mind. At that time an excessive eagerness is born to destroy the obstacle in front. And in order to translate that eagerness into action, weapons are wielded against the opponent. Everyone, no matter whatever he may be, of the opponent's gotra or gosti (race or family or of his lineage) is looked on as a terrible enemy. The flame of vengeance which has its origin in oppression of the people never stops short of extirpating the (entire) race of the enemy and reducing to ashes all his fame."

The Flash

The call to die had been there from the beginning of the agitation, but it is now more persistent, louder in pitch and bigger in expansiveness.

As early as August 12, 1906, a correspondent of the Yugantar sent the following couplet from Japan for publication:

"How can a man die better than  
  facing fearful odds,
  For the ashes of his fathers
  and the temple of his gods."

A poem published (ibid) on October 28, 1906, while reminding the people of their past glory exhorted them to 'sacrifice their lives for the Motherland'.

"You will see that in exchange for one temporal life, (November 11, 1906), you gain undying and eternal existence."

Paying off dues on the spot is much better than carrying the debt to be paid on a future date.
"Return tit for tat; When you get a smite of the fists do not forget
to give a kick. Then will the signs of your manhood appear. Be not afraid
of death. The song that you sing with so much zest so often in public runs:

‘Let life depart (O Mother) if it will
While doing your work in the world and

... *, uttering Bande Mataram.

"Brethren, paying off dues on the spot is pre-eminently the excellent
policy" is the advice of the Sandhya (January 11, 1907).

The Hind Swarajya, (February 12, 1907), repeats this advice,

"Indians should put aside their innate docility and be ready to give tit
for tat to Englishmen."

The laws of England administered in India are based on brute
strength. * And if India must liberate herself it is absolutely
necessary to accumulate similar strength. "There is no other way
of admission into life" says the Yugantar (March 5, 1907).

Developing its argument the Paper writes:

"Are not then ten thousand sons of Bengal prepared to embrace death
to avenge the humiliation of their Fatherland?

"The number of Englishmen in the entire country is not more than
a lakh and a half. And what is the number of English officials in each
district? With a firm resolve you can bring the English rule to an end in
a single day. The time has come to make the Englishmen understand that
enjoying the assets of domination in another country after wrongfully taking
possession of it, will not be permitted to continue for ever. Let him now
realise full well that the life of a thief who steals others' properties is no
longer an easy one in this country.

"Begin yielding of a life after taking a life. Dedicate your life as an
offering at the temple of Liberty. Without bloodshed, the worship of the
goddess will not be accomplished."

In the same issue, (March 5, 1907), the Paper advances an
improved programme for collection of funds for the purchase of
arms. The sources are:

(i) Donations;
(ii) To take money by force from the community for revolution;
(iii) By looting Government property (there is no offence in looting
for defraying expenses of establishing a future sovereign
State);
(iv) By imposition of taxes (whenever control over certain area has
become possible)."
Death and Immortality have become synonymous by this time because according to the Sandhya, (March 30, 1907):

"If death comes in the striving for liberation that death will be converted to immortality."

Succinctly the Yugantar, (May 12, 1907), puts it:

"If death comes let it come. Why should you fear death which is the general lot of humanity?"

There has been a considerable change in the attitude and action of young men relating to their behaviour towards Englishmen. The Sandhya, (May 15, 1907), reports with satisfaction:

"People are soundly thrashing a feringhi whenever they are coming across one. And here whenever a feringhi is seen the boys throw a brickbat at him as he gets the opportunity. And the thrashing of European soldiers is continuing. The feringhis are also getting thrashed. So to what pass they have come? Those feringhis who used to walk defiantly through the heart of the city are today alarmed. They all carry pistols in their pockets and generally avoid the native quarters of the city."

The time is ripe for action:

"'The combat deepens, on Ye Brave, Unto glory or to grave.'

"Come Ye forward who would be first to lay down his life to see the Mother in her pristine glory."

The call comes from the Yugantar, (March 26, 1907):

"The sorrows of the Mother clad in tatters and rolling in dust will have to be soothed; but everybody is looking for the man who will first of all lay down his perishable life for removing the Mother's shame. The path of duty is clear; what is wanted is unserving resolution. Death is now waiting at our doors with the blessing of immortality in his hand. The Mother is anxious to see who will live today through death."

This is followed by another article under caption, Our Hope, (the Yugantar: August 19, 1907), which is more explicit in its exhortations to suffer and to die for the cause of independence:

"Is there not a single man to smash up the dream of happiness of those who by taking steps to cast newspaper editors into jail, are dreaming dreams of enjoying the happiness of a thornless rule?

"Is there not a single man born yet who can prove that the lathi can without distinction of colour descend even on the heads of those who in Barisal are ordering the Gurkhas to ply their lathis?

"Is there not a single young man among the millions and millions of youths in Bengal who has risen superior to the fear of death? Surely there
is; only such men have not yet revealed themselves. . . . Oh! the secret flower of the Mother's mantra, the day has come when you should shoot your death-dealing shaft! Show the few brutes who fired up with pride, stand in the way of achieving your emancipation, that the Bengali henceforward begin to take a life given. Show them that it is not impossible to efface the foreigners' footprint from Bengal in a day.

"There is not the least doubt that we shall not have to wait much longer. With divine eyes we see the goddess in her warlike attitude come and stand in the midst of her sons who are maddened with fight. Look there the terrible sword, glowing with blood, is whirling. Look there, the guerilla bands are swarming the country; there, strengthened by the blessing of the Mother, they are plundering the arsenals; there their cries of victory maddening the sky are filling the enemy with alarms; there, the vacant throne of the demon is being washed away by the waves of the Bay of Bengal."

If application of force can be defended in the case of individuals for "self-preservation" and in "self-defence", the law cannot be otherwise when applied in a larger sphere:

"If it be lawful for an individual to use physical force for self-preservation, why should it be unlawful for a nation to do the same? If it be not a sin to commit manslaughter in order to defend oneself, against thieves and dacoits, why should it be sin to kill a few men in order that a nation might become free?" (The Yugantar: June 9, 1907).

The stage is set. The Sandhya, (August 13, 1907), sends out the call:

"Come let us descend into the arena of war. We hereby summon you to battle. See what a mighty contest presently begins all over the country. The sons of the Mother are preparing themselves, all the arms agneya (fiery), varuna (watery), vayu (airy) in her vaults are being polished. Hark the shouts of the fourfold arms of the Mother. Are we atraf of your cannon and guns?

"Arm, brothers, arm; the day of deliverance is near. We have heard the voice, and we cannot fail to see the chains of India removed before we die. It is now too late to recede."

The Indian 'Army of Liberation' is on its march; nobody can stop it or retard its progress. The Sandhya, (September 27, 1907), directs the course:

"The teaching of the Gita should not be lost sight of. As humble agents of God we should kill those whom He had already destroyed. God gives opportunities to all nations to free themselves from their stupor and strength to make the necessary beginning."

On the question of removing obstacles from our path the Yugantar, (December 28, 1907), adds:
"Kill the destroyer of your religion. Kill him who throws obstacles in the path of your duty or religion, no matter whether he is rich or poor, a zamindar, raja, officer of Government or an Emperor."

The Sadhya, (October 7, 1907), prescribes a rough and ready method of retribution:

"Meetings are of no use now-a-days. It, therefore, ought to be borne in mind that all fear of jail and love of life should be banished from the heart. And as we ourselves shall commit no oppression, we should not allow others to commit any oppression. If the red-faced police or the soldiers from the fort come to oppress us, we must let them off with some of the limbs chopped off."

"True heroism" in the definition of the Vande Mataram, Poona, (February 9, 1908), "consists only in sacrificing of one's life for liberty and justice." For the time and circumstances, this definition seems to be the most appropriate.

Destruction of enemy of the country should be regular and there is no specially suitable time for retribution. Moreover, as the Vishwaroop, (March 1908), says that it should be done for the good of the other fellow:

"Imbecile people maintain that they should wait calmly for the day of justice and not take revenge personally for their own wrongs. But such a policy is destructive of manhood and is opposed to religion and spiritual advancement. . . . The authors of our smritis declare the killing of felons to be no sin. The murderer, the prisoner, the person who robs others of their country and the man who slanders before the kings are felons. Felons should be killed outright. . . . Those who desire to make their nation a living one should devote all their virtues to the destruction of the enemy and to the development of the country. . . . It asks us not to show any favour to the felons, but to be prepared to destroy the enemy. To kill the enemy soon is to do him good, for if he lived longer he would be only adding to his sins."

The 'Drum of Time' (Kaler Veree), i.e., the last phase of the struggle is approaching fast, the 'Soldiers have forsaken the fear of death. . . .'. The Yugantar, (March 14, 1908), sounds a note of warning:

"Or if killed you will attain paradise. . . . The Drum of Time is sounding. . . . At the sound of the drum of great Time, thousands and thousands of lives are rushing on, unsheathed sword in hand, are giving up their lives in open warfare under the influence of some unknown mad desire. There is the Drum of Time sounding, 'Or if killed you shall attain paradise.' And thousands and thousands of lives are jumping into the flame of battle. At the sign of the music of the battle—the Drum of great Time, souls desiring emancipation are rushing on towards paradise."
And in fact the very next month gave out the sound of an explosion at Muzafferapore that shook the foundation of British rule in India.

Hailstones

The whole nation has fully realised that anarchy is far better than the well-regulated 'civilized slavery' of the Britishers. Now it is the question of winning a victory and the path leading thereto must be reddened with the dripping blood of the soldiers of freedom.

Blood in streams and floods will have to be shed and the *Yugantar* (April 22, 1906), says:

"There is a whole religion in the blood; no power can exterminate the seeds of liberty when it has germinated in the blood of great men. Our religion of to-day is still that of martyrdom; tomorrow it will be the religion of victory."

Further (*ibid*):

"It may today be the duty of the people to give up their lives in silence, but who can say that it will not tomorrow be the mission of that same people to win victory in a religious war?"

It is human blood that can wash away the stigma of slavery. We must proceed step by step. "Be not afraid" (*ibid*; March 3, 1907). The lessons of other countries will instil courage into our heart.

A terrible war is envisaged in our effort to remove the "Mother's irons". The *Yugantar*, (March 24, 1907), asks the people to

"prepare a throne of gold for the goddess of Kingdom who will arise after churning the sea of blood shed by millions of hearts."

The growing intensity of our suffering "shows that liberation is inevitable." All the signs which on the surface seem to go against India's interests are on the contrary favourable to us. It continues (*ibid*, June 23, 1907),

"The perverse intellect of the English, the frantic ravings of the loyal, the loud laughter or the scoffing words of the sceptic are to us reasons for hope rather than for despair. That in which you find reasons for discouragement or fear is to real workers rather a source of hope and encouragement. This very darkness indicates the advent of light. In this very death are embedded the germs of life. This very persecution is laying the foundations
of strength. The very bewildering cry of those in fear and in trepidation is the prelude to the harmonious lay of the future. This very cyclone will gradually thicken, gather strength and pave the way for lasting peace. Whosoever longs for an immortal object must be prepared to tread the path environed with perils."

This may be taken as a prelude as it throws just a glimpse of the shape of things to come. One should not lose heart because this is the beginning of the end (ibid).

"The land will be turned into a vast cremation ground, wails will rise from every house, dogs and jackals will leap and frisk and hold revel; human heads and human skeletons will lie scattered on paths and ways; the soil of India that is green with harve-t will be crimsoned with torrents of blood; the horrid dance of the goddess of battle will awake a mighty vibration in every heart; people will be scourged by hunger as keen as that which led the starving sage Viswanittra to the Chandal’s hut, there to partake of dog’s flesh. When people’s life and property will no longer be safe, where the Brahmins and kine and the life and honour of the zenana women will be beset with perils, when the foreign civilization based and buttressed on brute force, will manifest in the fullest measure its true character, then will Brahmanya Dev (the God Brahma) take pity for the sake of the good of Irahmins and kine. God does not incarnate Himself so long religion does not decline and irreligion does not prevail in the fullest measure. That is why we say that the beginnings of this wrong doing, injustice, oppression, and irreligion inspire us with the hope that God will really prove gracious. People are not induced to set to work so long as they do not see prospect of progress. The very fact that we are apprehending obstacles at every step, shows that the longed for good is near at hand. We can now say, ‘Faint not, nor lose heart’.

"Go to the sea-shore and mountain top; Lay hold on winds, meteors and thunderbolts; Search minutely every star in the heaven, and set to work to achieve your end.

"Then and then alone you shall be able to destroy,
To cope with your antagonists,
And to adorn with the jewel of freedom
That head wherein you bear shoes."

The following appeared in the Yugantar, (August 26, 1907), under the pen-name of Mad yogi:

"......I am mad and crack-brained and a sensation monger. The cup of my delight becomes full when I see unrest descending in all directions: Like deaf dumbness I cannot rest any longer. News of loot is reaching me from all quarters, and I am dreaming as if the future guerilla bands were looting money and as if the future war had commenced in the shape of petty dacoities (gang robberies) ...... O Plunder! I worship you to-day; be our helpmate. You so long hid yourself like a canker in a

108
flower and ate away country's subsistence. Come and do again here and there, resuscitate the old martial spirit behind the public eye.... You made me promise that day that by your grace, the Indians, when they remembered and worshipped you, would get both the money to arm themselves and the military training. That is why I worship you today."

The goal is now clear and the Mother's son would advance towards it undaunted even against thousand odds. The Yugantar, (August 2, 1907), is absolutely certain that every Indian is determined to gain the end even he has to swim in a sea of blood.

"The Indian Empire of the English is a vain thing, 'a phantom' and the Indians suffer so much misery because of their having entertained such a grotesquely absurd lie. Ages ago the hermits of India said, 'Destroy what is untrue, and establish the truth.' This system of foreign Government based on crime and injustice is a downright untruth. Therefore, one should substitute a true swadeshi Government for it. Let the truth come out and the whole fabric of lie will be torn into tatters.

The worship of the Mother is to be done in blood. Appearing in the Daily Hitabadi, (October 11, 1907), the following poem exhorts the people to action:

"We keep fasting all the year round,
The base-born comes and snatches away food in our homes, and the goddess of our prosperity.
Seest thou not the asura (demon) who loots the country of the son?
Descend in thy aspect of the destroyer of demons.
Let the drum of war sound
And let us to-day do the worship, terrible and grand,
in human blood."

Thunderbolt

The leaders of the new cult are not slow in thinking about weapons to fight the enemy armed to the teeth. The Sandhya, (May 13, 1907), throws a hint about bombs that are in the making:

"Courage does not come unless one knows what kind of preparations are being made. Many wish to know how many firearms have been collected. It is now very difficult to collect arms. A bomb is being prepared of a kind which will revolutionise the modern style of warfare.... The bomb is also very cheap and all can carry it about in their hands or pockets. But we are not in anxiety about arms. We want a band of sons of India who in spite of our present unhappy lot believe that the day of independence is approaching; who can boldly and heartily declare that they do not wish to die without seeing India free. Let all such combine."

109
THE ROLL OF HONOUR

The next day, (May 14), the same Paper gives a bit of information regarding bombs and the process of their action, but does not fail to suggest that there should be an abundant store of other kinds of indigenous missiles:

“Let every village, every quarter, every hat, every house be turned into a fort. Let there be lathis, sarkis (pikes), sword-sticks and daggers in all hands. Abundant supplies should be laid of bows, arrows and that of Kali Mai’s boma (Mother Kali’s bomb) of ours. It has not to be set fire to; it has simply to be thrown with a little force or dropped from a height among a band of goondas. As soon as it is thrown down you hear a sharp sound and ten to twenty men are brought down. It entails no cost to prepare this Kali Mai’s boma and it does not require to be stored in large quantities. These bombs can be prepared according as they are required.”

In case the feringhis cause breach of the peace, we will not be slow in taking revenge on them. In case they employ brutal force and endanger peace, the Sandhya’s, (August 6, 1907), advice is “the goddess of revenge should be appeased.”

“Let not the cannon or the gun inspire awe in you. Varieties of arms are scattered wide at the backdoor of the Mother’s temple. You do not know how to collect them. You should set limit to the Swadeshi, and turn the evil spirit out. If she trespasses into the enclosure and oppresses you, he must be treated to a sound beating. When beaten the ghosts make themselves scarce. Only stick to the oath. All your doubts will be dispelled and needs be arms and ammunitions will come of themselves.”

It is mock wisdom to think that “killing living beings” is always sinful. It is not so as enunciated in the Gita. It is rather meritorious if it is done for the protection of religion.

Foreign rule in India is the worst specimen of “untruth” and it behoves the people to procure arms for the destruction of that untruth. The all important question:

“How is it possible to procure arms for the purpose of destroying that very sovereign power under whose powerful domination one lives?” is posed and answered (Yugantar, August 12, 1907):

“It is not such a serious matter that it cannot be accomplished if there be firmness and earnestness. The power to manufacture arms is not limited to any particular nation. Every nation having will and perseverance can do it. In a vast country like India where there are numberless mountains and forests, it is quite possible to find out a suitable place for the purpose. Great discretion has to be exercised in the selection of such a place.

“It is beyond the power of a sovereign to keep himself informed of what anybody is doing in a secret part of a vast country.”

110