CHAPTER 5

Epic Escape and Trials

On the first day of July 1910, the steamer S.S. MOREA conveying Savarkar to India started on her historic voyage from London! To avoid complications on the usual route through France the steamer MOREA sailed via the Bay of Biscay. Proud like a kite, she held her prey in the clutches. She tossed on. But woe followed the waves. The book of fate was signed and sealed by destiny! There was some engine trouble and the MOREA required repairs in the neighbourhood of the port of Marseilles. She anchored at Marseilles on Thursday evening, July 7, 1910.

On June 29, the British Government had informed the French Government that the MOREA was bound for India with a political prisoner, and requested the French Government to watch the steamer, if she anchored at Marseilles, and to guard against any possible attempt of Savarkar’s rescue by the Indian revolutionaries on the Continent. Mr. E. John Parker, Scotland Yard Inspector from London, and Mr. Power, Assistant Superintendent of Police from Bombay, and ten other policemen were in charge of the illustrious prisoner. The Police Commissioner of Marseilles, Henry Leblias, saw Parker and showed him the letter of the Commissioner of Police, London, addressed to the Chief of Police, Paris. He promised help if there was any trouble.

Though tied to a sacrificial post, Savarkar talked freely, during the course of the journey, to the amazement of the passengers. Inwardly he was revolving the idea of escape. He had thrown a measuring eye at the port-holes. The halt at Marseilles put his heart in a flutter. Had his message to the comrades on the Continent reached them through Aiyar? Would they come to his rescue? Night was coming on. His expectations now darkened into anxieties. All night long restlessness
tortured him and doubts assailed him. Dawn broke. His thoughts now galloped. Mother Ind seemed to whisper to her darling son: “Flee! flee! the time is not gone! Oh! my son! I would not see your neck in the rope! Did you forget that my great son Krishna ran away when persecuted by the tyrant Jarasandha? Don’t you remember the historic escape of my Shivaji from Agra? Would you not learn anything from the daring escape of Napoleon from Elba? Flee! flee! your flight will bring to light the heroic endeavours of my sons to shatter my fetters. You are not a mouse to be easily trapped. You are the President of a revolutionary party. Flee, for my sake, flee! Now or never!”

An inspired ray appeared in Savarkar’s eyes. He collected himself. His heart throbbed with the thought of swift escape. His face lit with a fire of decision. Yes, he was a lion, and he would not die the death of a mouse. He resolved to venture. Twice he tried to scale out but utterly failed in his attempt. Fortunately nobody knew it but himself. It was now morning. He stood up again! Parker was half awake. He said to him that he wanted to go to the water closet. Parker asked the guards on watch to take him to the water closet. Savarkar entered the water closet. Mohamed Siddick and Singh, two head-constables watched the prisoner. Singh was peeping under the door. So Savarkar had to play a ruse. He bolted the water closet from within. The door of the water closet was set up with a glass pane. This was a special arrangement for watching the man inside.

There was no time to lose. Savarkar’s actions were more rapid than his thoughts. He took off his night gown which he had purposely put on and threw it over the glass pane of the water closet. Then in the twinkling of an eye, he jumped up, squeezed himself out of the porthole at the top of the water closet, and murmuring ‘Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!’ jumped into the sea. The guard caught sight of him. When Savarkar’s half body was out of the porthole one guard tried to force the door but in vain. “He is off!” he shouted. There was a din on the steamer. Savarkar heard bullets whizzing by. This was the time to put to test his hard-won skill in swimming and climbing. The glorious son of Hindustan now dived, now swam through the shower of bullets, reached the steep end of
the harbour of Marseilles, and climbed the quay. Once he fell down, like the lizard before Brutus, in his attempt at climbing the quay. The second time he succeeded and ran off. The pursuing marine gendarmes who had jumped after him could not catch him. He was free, legally, mentally and bodily! He had scored a triumph, and held the British Government to ridicule. Britannia might be once ruling the waves, but she could not rule the waves that carried Savarkar to the shore of France; nor could she rule the waves created by Savarkar, which turned the ship of his Motherland from slavery to Swaraj!

The pursuers were in hot chase. Savarkar ran excitedly for about five hundred yards from the harbour. He saw trams running, policemen on duty. He wanted to hire a cab. But he had no money. His freedom for a coin! He asked a policeman on duty in broken French to take him to the nearest Magistrate, but the policeman did not pay attention to him. The pursuers who had now overtaken him all the while crying out "Thief! Catch him!" greased the palm of the policeman, and with his connivance they caught him by his neck and dragged him to the steamer. It was clearly a breach of International Law. The British guards had arrested Savarkar on a foreign land!

Commissioner M. Le Blais came and had a talk with both Parker and Power. He said he would have to report to the French authorities. Parker, too, telegraphed to his Scotland Yard authorities "Prisoner attempted escape. Recaptured. Report follows."

It was fated that Savarkar's colleagues, Madame Cama and Aiyar, who had planned his rescue, should be late by a few hours. They were driving post-haste towards the harbour. They reached the scene to hear the crowds gossipping with their eyes and fingers towards the steamer. They must have cursed themselves. All day long the whole of Marseilles was agog! Crowds flocked towards the harbour. And mortified at the disgrace, the MOREA set sail early next morning.

The news of Savarkar's thrilling escape on July 8, 1910, crossed the oceans. India's cry for freedom filled the skies, and Mother Ind's heart-rending bewailings stirred the world. India was discussed for the first time in foreign countries. Hindu manhood glowed in resplendent glory and opened the eyes of foreign
institutions which doubted the virility and valour of India. The entire European Press published the Hindu hero's life as best as it could and compared him with Mazzini, Garibaldi and Kossuth, and hailed him as a martyr. Daring and devoted nation-builders like Shivaji, Napoleon, Churchill in 1916, De Valera in 1918 and Subhas Bose in 1941 performed miraculous escapes, but Savarkar's escape was the most heroic and thrilling the world ever witnessed! It is an epic and unique example of 'propaganda by deed.'

Enraged at their discomfiture and filled with fear of degradation in service, the officers in charge, once back on the Morea with their charge, began to use foul, filthy and violent language about Savarkar. They even threatened him with torture at nightfall! One of them exclaimed, "What a breed these Savarkars are!" Savarkar rebuked the boiling guards and officer sternly. He had watched one officer keeping a loaded revolver in his trousers just over his head. Sure of that support at hand, Savarkar struck them dumb with these words: "Look here, you are taking me to the gallows. It is quite natural that I should try my best to escape. If you want to live by the side of your wife and children, take care not to insult or touch me. For I have already set fire to my home and will not fail to vindicate my self-respect and safety by all means. Be then prepared for the eventualities." The guards understood the gravity of the situation and kept mum!

At Aden the s.s. Sasti took charge of Morea passengers and post. The guards huddled Savarkar into a tiny cabin, only a space of four feet was allowed to him to stand, move and walk! Sunlight became a luxury for him. Hand-cuffed and closely tied to each guard by turns on one side, stifled by excessive heat and crushed by a colossal disappointment on the other, Savarkar had to stand a tide of tense feelings for throwing away life at once! But he overcame the feelings and survived.

Savarkar's failure at Marseilles was, however, glorious. A noble failure serves the world no less than a crowning success. Crushing failures have often in them the germs of a glorious future. Our greatest glory, says Goldsmith, consists not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall. G. K. Gokhale expressed the feeling of that heroic generation when he said, "We of the present generation in India can hope to serve our.
country by our failures. The men and women who will be privileged to serve her by their successes will come later."

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The s.s. SASTI reached Bombay without any mishap. On July 22, 1910, the prince of Indian revolutionaries was received at the Bombay Harbour in a befitting manner. Hand-cuffed, he was marched through rows of drawn swords. A close motor-van transferred him to a closed special train which delivered him to the Nasik Police custody. Few days later, he was brought to the Yeravada Jail. Mr. Joseph Baptista, his counsel, interviewed him on September 13, 1910, at the instance of Madame Cama. Mr. Baptista had already received the papers of the case from Mr. Vaughan, Savarkar's London solicitor.

Honest Englishmen were protesting against Savarkar's extradition. Mr. Hyndman in his Justice, the Organ of Social democracy, declared that Savarkar was undergoing trial in Bombay for an alleged political offence and in order that he might not have a fair trial defended by Council and safeguarded by public opinion in this country he was sent back to India, where, innocent or guilty, his condemnation could be officially ensured.¹ In the Manifesto he issued he declared that his Party had neither part nor lot in the outrages and crimes committed by British rule and added that the members of his Party sympathised with the legitimate efforts of the Indians to emancipate themselves from the monstrous domination under which they suffered.

On July 1, 1910, Lord Morley complained of the extradition proceedings taken against Savarkar ² and added that he intended to direct the Government of India to revert to the older practice of requiring the local Government of India before starting the political prosecutions. This came like a bolt from the blue to George Clarke, the Governor of Bombay, at a time when he was oppressed by anxiety. Several telegraphic messages and explanations passed between the India Office and the Governor of Bombay to decide whether or not Savarkar should be tried. The Bombay Government said that delay in prosecution would be dangerous. The Governor threatened Lord Morley with his resignation; but before issuing any final orders in the case the

hesitating philosopher Lord Morley became Lord President of the Council. The new Secretary of State for India at last on August 31, 1910, telegraphed to Bombay Government granting permission to open the trial and added that they would restore Savarkar to France after judgment had been pronounced, should the international issue require it.

Under a Special Tribunal Act a Special Tribunal was appointed to try the case without a jury or a right of appeal. The tribunal was composed of the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir Basil Scott, Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and Mr. Justice Heaton. The Counsels for the prosecution were an imposing array. Mr. Jardine, the Advocate-General, Bombay, Mr. Weldon, Mr. Welinkar and Mr. Nicolson, the Public Prosecutor. The defence consisted of legal luminaries like Mr. Joseph Baptista, Chitre, Govindrao Gadgil and Rangnekar. Mr. Baptista was a selfless, eminent nationalist leader and colleague of Tilak. He came forward to defend Savarkar and the other accused. He was a pillar of strength to the Freedom Movement. Following his example other lawyers accepted, although as professional men, to stand counsel for them.

Three trials were to be heard by the Tribunal. The first trial involved thirty-eight accused including Savarkar, the second involved Savarkar and Gopalrao Patankar, both co-accused in the first and the second trials. In the third, Savarkar was alone! All were to be tried under eight different charges. Kashinath Ankushkar, Dattatray Joshi, W. R. Kulkarni and Chaturbhuj, the cook of India House with whom Savarkar was alleged to have sent twenty Browning pistols to India, were the approvers.

Savarkar was transferred from Yeravada Jail to the Dongri Jail in Bombay to stand his trial. The trial opened on September 15, 1910. A Special party of fifty armed police guarded the High Court. The Police Commissioner of Bombay personally supervised the police arrangements in the Court. Only few representatives of newspapers were permitted into the Court.

Savarkar was brought to the Court in a closed van under an armed escort. As soon as he stepped into the dock, he heard the sound of clapping! It was a stark surprise. He looked at the empty galleries and saw vacant benches. He saw nobody there. Who welcomed him then? They were his co-accused in
the dock down below. They gave a spontaneous ovation to their leader of international fame! A unique reception and homage in the political history of the world by those who stood on the threshold of death to a leader who awaited the same fate! To the pleasant surprise of his comrades, he recognised after a few moments' guess his brother Narayanrao in the dock, now grown into a fine youth. The trial opened like a great thrilling drama. Savarkar's thrilling escape at Marseilles had rivetted the attention of the world on the Nasik Conspiracy Trial at Bombay. Hindustan watched it with mixed feelings of horror and anxiety.

Silence was proclaimed. The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Mr. Jardine, rose and made the opening speech for the prosecution and occupied the whole of the first day's proceedings. When the Court resumed hearing on September 26, it was argued before the Tribunal that they should stay the proceedings and allow Savarkar's appeal against his arrest at Marseilles to go to the French and British Governments. This objection was overruled. On September 27 and 28, the Advocate-General continued his speech. After two prosecution witnesses were examined and cross-examined, the Court asked Savarkar to cross-examine them if he so desired. Thereupon Savarkar rose and stated before the Tribunal that he did not recognise the jurisdiction of the Indian Government to try him as he was entitled to the Right of Asylum and therefore to the protection of French Law. He added that he had entirely abandoned himself to the French Nation, the land of Fraternity, Equality and Liberty, and so he would not take any part in the trial.

On the same day Savarkar's counsel Mr. Baptista raised the point that Savarkar's arrest was illegal. The Court overruled the objection. On October 1, 1910, the provisions of the Extradition Act were fully discussed. When asked by the Court, Savarkar refused to say anything on the point. The Court declared its opinion that Savarkar's illegal arrest at Marseilles did not affect the powers of the Indian Law Courts to try him. During the course of the trial, the prosecution withdrew the charge against Savarkar that the accused had waged war against His Majesty the King. Thus the second trial ended before its start. During the protracted trial many witnesses for the prosecution were mangled. About three hundred witnesses were
examined and cross-examined. Majority of the accused complained to the Court that they had given their statements before the Magistrate under tortures or for saving their relations from harassment at the hands of the police and the same should not be taken to be true.

After the witnesses came the statements of the accused. When the Chief Justice asked Savarkar to have his say, he stated, "I am quite innocent of the charges laid against me. I took part in the proceedings of the trial in England where courts are established by democratic rules sanctioned by the people. In such courts, one can expect to get justice. There the authority does not rely upon brute force. The condition of Indian Courts of Law is quite the reverse. I am not amenable to the Jurisdiction of Indian Courts of Law. I, therefore, decline to give any statement or bring any evidence for my defence."

Then followed the arguments of the counsel. The Advocate-General made a long speech which lasted for a week. Though Savarkar's name was last on the list of the accused, he began with Savarkar! The defence Counsel took a little more than a week to complete their addresses. One of the accused, Ganga-ram Rupchand, read out his own statement in his defence.

Chief of the revolutionary party as he was, Savarkar bore himself with courage and dignity throughout the trial. Dressed in a fine European suit, he glowed with smiles, intelligence and brilliance. He looked like a hero confident of his cause. He had made a sincere appeal to his co-accused to throw as much brunt and responsibility upon him alone as possible and try to mitigate their sufferings, and secure their acquittal. Such a life and death struggle could not embarrass him. On the contrary, he helped the defence Counsel by jotting down points for cross-examination. Throughout the trial he cheered up the broken-hearted and encouraged others. The end was near at last. The accused discussed among themselves about their crowns and crosses. A cross or gallows or transportation was considered first class. Lesser sentences were considered second class or pass class according to the period of the sentence, and an acquittal was deemed a failure!

At last came the day of judgment after sixty-eight days of protracted trial. It was Saturday, the 23rd December 1910. The judges took their seats amid pin-drop silence. After read-
ing the judgment the Chief Justice began to announce sentences and started with Savarkar. He announced: "Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the sentence of the Court upon you is transportation for life and forfeiture of all your property." The sentences on the other accused followed.

The Court struck the leader when he was gagged. The decision was _ex parte_. The legality of his arrest on French soil did not matter to the Tribunal. That he was before them during the trial was sufficient. The fact that he was brought to India on an illegal warrant was not a point of consideration for their just heads. It was indeed a glaring strain on law and outrage on the International Law!

The Special Tribunal passed judgment on a man whose case was _sub judice_ in the International Court at the Hague! In a country swayed by imperialism, justice also assumes an imperious face and imperils truth. It is not justice. It is the dark desire for domination. The vulgarity of the saying, "Everything is fair in love and war," is seen in its hideous colour during such great political trials. The party or Government in power sets lawyers busy not to find truth and give justice, but to find reasons for upholding the predetermined legal answers! Did not Englishmen try Mary Queen of Scots though they had no power or right to do so? Even so did they try Savarkar. Mary was not born an English subject, nor was she ever denizated. One more sovereign point. It is the received doctrine that a foreign sovereign is immune from all processes of law. Her death was a political necessity and Mary's head fell on the scaffold!

Out of the other thirty-seven accused in this famous Nasik Trial, Shankar Vaidya, Vinayak Barve, and Vinayak Fulambrikar were set at liberty at the commencement of the trial. Vinayak Gaydhani, Ramchandra Kothe, Govind Bapat, Hari Thatte, Trimbak Jog, Shankar Mahajan, Mukund Moghe and Keshav Paranjpe—these eight were acquitted. Keshav Shripad Chandvadkar _alias_ Brahmagiri Buwa was sentenced to transportation for fifteen years. Gopalrao Patankar, Krishnaji Khare, and Trimbakrao Marathe—these three were sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment each; Damodar Chandratrye, Purushottam Dandekar, Gopal Dharap, Sakharam Gorhe and Vishnu Bhat—these five to five years' each; Shridhār Shidhaye, Waman
Palande, Damodar Paranjpe and Raghunath Bhave—these four to four years' each; Vishnu Kelkar and Kashinath Tonape—these two to three years' each; Purushottam Gokhale, Anant Konakar and Vishwasrao Davre—these three to three years' each; Vinayak Tikhe, Balwant Barve and Sakharam Kashikar—these three to two years' each; and Vinayak Manohar, Gangaram Rupchand, Narayanrao Savarkar and Raghunath Ambedkar—these four were sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment each.

When the judges rose, the patriot-prisoners sprang up to their feet and shouted "Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!" even on their way to the savage jails. The judges were startled and looked back. The police rushed in. In the dock Savarkar tried to bid good-bye to his brother, but was not allowed to do so. He waved his hat, and under the escort he walked steadily away from the court with his princely countenance. He felt extremely sorry that his brother was cast adrift, befriended by none, hated by many and suspected by a powerful Empire. The fireplace in the house seemed extinguished for ever.

The judgment in Savarkar's trial deals exhaustively with various political and secret activities of the Abhinava Bharat, its inflaming pamphlets, its books, its plans and aims and says: "There is evidence in the shape of certain documents found in the possession of the accused Kashikar, shortly after the arrest of Ganesh Savarkar in 1909, which indicates that the association aimed at some sort of organization founded upon the model of Revolutionary Societies in Russia. The suggested methods of preparation for war are the purchase and storing of weapons in neighbouring countries to be used when opportunity should occur; the opening of many very small but secret factories at some distance from one another for the manufacture of weapons clandestinely in the country seeking independence and the purchase by secret societies of weapons in other countries to be secretly imported in merchant ships."

The judges quote an extract from Savarkar's Bande Mataram pamphlet in which he had said: "This campaign of separate assassinations is the best conceivable method of paralyzing the bureaucracy and rousing the people. The initial stage of revolution is marked by the policy of separate assassination."

This was an historically true assessment of the Abhinava
Bharat. The Society had storehouses of bombs at Bassein and other places. Bomb factories were also started and were working in the suburbs of Bombay and other places in Maharashtra. After describing Savarkar’s various activities the Judges observe: “We find the accused guilty of the abetment of waging war by instigation, by the circulation of printed matter inciting to war, the providing of arms and the distribution of instructions for the manufacture of explosives. He is, therefore, guilty of an offence punishable under Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. We also find him guilty of conspiring with the other accused to overawe, by criminal force or show of criminal force, the Government of India and the Local Government.”

But the tragedy did not stop here! Not content with one transportation for Savarkar the Indian Government of Lord Hardinge and the Bombay Government of Lord Sydenham instituted a second case against Savarkar, this time charging him with abetment of the murder of Mr. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik. The Indian Government dreaded his return even after serving a sentence for twenty-five years. It was mad with vengeance. It knew that a day for this man was a month for others. The same Tribunal was to try him. The show was one-sided like the former one. Savarkar maintained his incontrovertible stand even in this trial, refused to stand to their judgment, and prejudice his case at the International Court. But it mattered little to the Tribunal.

This trial opened on January 23, 1911. After the Advocate-General’s summing-up, Savarkar was brought from the Dock to the Bar to have his say. Savarkar reiterated his innocence and said that he had no direct or indirect connection with the crime. He pointed out to the Court that the only evidence that came before the Tribunal of his alleged complicity was the pamphlet, *Bande Mataram*, found with Chengirirao, who had arrived in Bombay on January 28, 1910. But that too was not concerned with Jackson’s murder; because it was clear from the evidence that it was despatched from London after the murder, he added. As for the pistol, which was used in killing Jackson, it was strenuously contended that there was no sufficient proof that Savarkar was the person, who entrusted the twenty Browning pistols to the cook Chatturbhuj with one of which Jackson was killed.
Despite these overwhelming odds, however, on January 30, 1911, the Tribunal sentenced Savarkar to another transportation for life! Upon this Savarkar rose and declared: "I am prepared to face ungrudgingly the extreme penalty of your laws, in the belief that it is through sufferings and sacrifice alone that our beloved Motherland can march on to an assured, if not a speedy, triumph!"  

Two transportations! Unsurpassable, unheard of! Release after half a century! A unique record and a landmark in the political history of the world! It is significant that the judgments of these famous trials have not been reported in the law reports.

Was Savarkar shocked at the savage sentences passed upon him? Not in the least. He had entered the sacrificial conflagration with iron will and divine devotion. Nothing conquered his invincible spirit, for nature had given him the stoutest heart of his age that could not be crushed by adversity or peril. He fell. He fell for a cause for which Nanasaib died, Tatya Tope fell and the glorious Maha Rani Laxmibai gave her life on the battle-field. The punishment inflicted upon Savarkar was titanic, but his indomitable spirit was an iceberg. He was aged twenty-seven years, eight months and three days when Government laid him in his veritable grave!

The brave son of Hindustan gave a message to the Indian youth. The youth, who were acquitted in the first trial, brought a burning message in the following poetic lines from their leader:

**FIRST INSTALMENT**

"Pleased be Thou, Mother! to acknowledge this little Service of Thy children.

Boundless is our indebtedness to Thee! Thou chose us to bless and suckle us at Thy breast!

Behold! We enter the flames of this consecrated Fire today. The first instalment of that debt of Love we pay.

And totally a new birth there and then will we immolate ourselves over and over again till the hungry God of Sacrifice be full and crown Thee with glory.

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8 Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 117.
With Shree Krishna for Thy redoubtable Charioteer, and Shree Ram to lead, and thirty crores of soldiers to fight under Thy banner.

Thy army stops not though we fall!

But pressing on shall utterly rout the forces of Evil and Thy right hand, Oh Mother, shall plant the golden Banner of Righteousness on the triumphant tops of the Himalayas."  

* * *

The Indian Government prosecuted Savarkar post-haste. As a matter of fact and on principle, the Special Tribunal should have stayed the proceedings from October 25, 1910, as Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary of the British Government, had signed an agreement with M. Paul Cambon, the Ambassador of the French Republic, on that day and agreed to refer the Savarkar case to the International Court at the Hague. This, of course, he had done because of popular French clamour for justice to Savarkar and in recognition of the sovereignty of France.

But this agreement was a result of a powerful agitation of the people and the press. The sensational news of Savarkar's escape first appeared in a few lines in the Paris edition of the Daily Mail of July 11. Savarkar's colleagues, who had failed in their attempts at rescuing Savarkar at Marseilles, wired from Marseilles the news of the thrilling escape of their leader to the L'Humanite, a Socialist newspaper in Paris, edited by M. Jean Languet, the grandson of Karl Marx. He flashed the news of Savarkar's escape on July 12. Pandit Shyamji, Madame Cama and Ranaji lost no time in contacting the great Socialist leader of France, Monsieur Jaures who was also the Mayor of Marseilles and other French influential leaders. M. Jaures took up the cause and voiced the demand for the return of Savarkar to France.

Rana saw also M. Francis de Pressense, President of the League of Man's Rights, who wrote a letter to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs urging him to demand the return of Savarkar to France. In case of refusal Mr. Pressense suggested that the matter should be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration.  

* Savarkar, An Echo from Andamans.

* Rana's letter dated 29 March 1950 to Savarkar.
L’Eclaire, Le Temps, Le Matin and all other national newspapers of France joined the attack and a storm of protest reigned over France against the illegal arrest of Savarkar on their soil.

In England Guy A. Aldred, the young editor of the Herald of Revolt, who was released in July 1910, also raised a hue and cry for Savarkar’s release by his incessant appeals, untiring speeches and a chain of articles on behalf of the Savarkar Release Committee which was established in London in August 1910. Aldred stressed the illegality and immorality of the warrant of the Indian Government and appealed to all freedom-loving citizens of the world to demand Savarkar’s release.

Embassies all over the world, too, were stirred. Monsieur Pierron, Assistant Ambassador of Spain, Monsieur Jambon, Assistant Ambassador of Paraguay, and the Ambassador of Portugal at Calcutta expressed their opinion that the French demand for Savarkar’s return to France was lawful. According to International Law, the surrender to a fugitive must be a national act and not a local act. This point was also hotly discussed in the French Press. In short, “Savarkar’s extraordinary heroism at Marseilles was applauded by the impartial press of the world. His whole career, his patriotic exploits in India and England were recounted at great length everywhere,” and almost all European press supported the French Press in its demand for the return of Savarkar to France. In view of these discussions in the world press in general and the blaze of protest in the French press in particular, the French Government at last made a demand for the return of Savarkar to France.

The British Premier, Mr. Asquith, declared on July 29, 1910, in the House of Commons that the French Government had demanded the return of Savarkar. At the outset English statesmen tried to hush up the matter, calling it their home affair. Papers like The Times, London, opined that international law on the point was not authoritatively settled.

At this juncture Savarkar smuggled a statement of the authentic account of his escape and re-arrest at Marseilles through the Yeravada Jail to his friends in Europe, and gave a fresh impetus to the whole affair. The statement was circulated throughout the world press, and a vigorous demand was again put forward.

* Yajnik, Indulal, Shyamaji Krishnavarma, p. 289.
for Savarkar’s return to France. The entire French press
demanded with one voice the return of Savarkar to France in
vindication of the Right of Asylum. The Socialist Conference
of Europe in its Copenhagen Session held in September 1910,
demanded Savarkar’s return to France, and as a result of this
national and international pressure the French Republic had
to renew its demand for Savarkar’s restoration in vindication of
its sovereignty. And at last the British Government had to
yield.

Thereupon England’s Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey,
and M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London,
signed a six-articled agreement as related above, and submitted
to arbitration the question of Savarkar’s arrest at Marseilles
and return to the Republic. Articles 1, 2 and 3 deal with the
duty, composition and working of the Arbitration Tribunal.
The fourth article defines the place and representation on the
Tribunal and the fifth article lays down that the proceedings of
the Tribunal would be either in the French or the English
language and the decision in the two languages. The sixth
article defines the time limit.

The British opinion was not wholly on the side of its Govern-
ment in this affair. There were some voices of dissent. Sir
Henry Cotton, speaking at the residence of B. C. Pal at a small
gathering held in honour of the New Year, 1911, saw Savarkar’s
portrait in the hall. He admired Savarkar’s intellect, courage
and patriotism, although he warned the Indian youths not to
waste their energy in that way. He then openly appreciated
Savarkar’s claim to the Right of Asylum and expressed the
hope that the British Government would hand him over to
France. There was a huge uproar against Sir Henry Cotton.
Some suggested to the British Government to stop his pension
and even revoke his knighthood! Indian papers like the *Indian
Social Reformer* said that Sir Henry Cotton was deliberately
embarrassing Sir William Weddernburn and others, who were
trying to efface the memories of the past.

From the first M. Briand, the Prime Minister of France, did
not act sincerely in this matter. Under fear of a powerful and
threatening Germany M. Briand looked upon England as a
friend. Naturally powerful nations like Germany and Russia
were dropped out from the panel of the Tribunal and small
nations were selected on it. The Hague International Tribunal was composed of M. Beernaert, ex-Prime Minister of Belgium as its President, M. Graham, an ex-Minister of Norway, Mr. Jonkheer Loman, a Member of the Second Chamber of Holland, England's Earl of Desert and France's Louis Renault as its members. M. Louis Renault was an eminent juristconsult, an authority on international law, a permanent Member of the Hague Tribunal and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1907. This world-famous trial opened on February 16, 1911, and though expected to last about a month as stated in article six of the agreement, wound up its work after a few hurried sittings. On February 24, 1911, they gave judgment in favour of the British Government, “admitting that an irregularity was committed in the arrest of Savarkar and in his being handed over to the British Police.”

The judgment was a shock to freedom-loving minds all over the world. The Morning Post of England, The Post in Germany, the Daily News of England, described this Award of the Hague Tribunal as something that reduced the “Right of Asylum” and International Law to a farce. The Times of India was glad that the British case was upheld by the Hague Court on all points. It added that Savarkar belonged to the meanest and most despicable class of criminals and that steps should be taken against those who were responsible for this unprecedented humiliation. The Times, London, regretted that the award in Savarkar's case should have moved the Berlin Post to violent attack on the Hague Court and the Post represented the most moderating force in German politics and was the recognised organ of the Conservative Party led by Prince Hatzfeldt. Vehemently criticising this gross outrage on International Law, Guy A. Aldred in his editorial in the Herald of Revolt of March 1911, writes: “Savarkar has been damned to a life of sojourn in an Indian dungeon by the infamy of a man who previously betrayed the French proletariat. But for the latter's agitation against the Hindu patriot's irregular arrest at Marseilles on July 8th last—and Briand's fears of a general strike,—the French Premier would never have invited the decision which brought about his resignation three days later. The Hague Award, annulling the Right of Asylum, was only possible because Aristide Briand voluntarily betrayed the sovereignty of France.”
This gross violation of the Right of Asylum and the grave injustice perpetrated on Savarkar were bitterly criticised also by the La Societe Nouvelle published at Mons in Belgium. Its editorial in its issue of March 1912 said: "England's infamous empire rests on blood, ferocious repression and officially acknowledged systematic tyranny." Dora Marsden, editor of The Freewoman, fearlessly attacked the Hague Award and published Aldred's vigorous article under the title "The Savarkar infamy." A German fortnightly published at Zurich, Switzerland, called Der Wanderer editorially supported Aldred's work in connection with Savarkar's case. Most of the British, German, American, Italian and the entire French press condemned the Hague judgment.  

The consequences of the Hague decision were enormous and far-reaching. The betrayal by Briand was so grave and ruinous that only three days after the Hague Award he resigned rather than face the questions in the Chamber of Deputies. On the day of this Hague decision the Russian Duma passed a bill annulling the right of political asylum! As a reward for this marvellous blackmail in connection with Savarkar's case at the Hague, Mr. Eyre Alexander Crowe, an assistant in the Foreign Affairs Office of Britain, was knighted in 1911.

The international issue in the Savarkar case was thus foully settled. But the agitation for the release of Savarkar sponsored by Aldred and Pandit Shyamji went on unabated till the outbreak of World War I when Aldred was imprisoned for anti-war propaganda and Pandit Shyamji had to shift his headquarters to Geneva. But during that period Pandit Shyamji had spread the agitation all over Europe. It was through the efforts of Pandit Shyamji that Professor F. M. Zandrine, officer of Public Instruction and a leading member of the executive council of the Federation of the Italian press, promised Monsieur Pierre Khorat, the biographer of Savarkar, and Pandit Shyamji that the Italian Republican Party and especially the Parliamentary group would agitate for the release of Savarkar and accord-

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7 Aldred, Guy, A., editor of The Word, Glasgow, quoted his articles from his Herald of the Revolt and other extracts from different contemporary newspapers of Europe concerning Savarkar's Case at the Hague in the special Savarkar issue of The Word in April 1947.
ingly in October 1912, the Republican Party of Italy resolved in its meeting at Rome to commence the agitation.⁸

Thus Savarkar’s was the greatest historical trial the world has ever seen. The trial flashed India’s aspirations on the front pages of world press. India’s manhood and valour were indelibly imprinted on the pages of world history. The trial left also an imprint of Savarkar’s personality on the International Law and stamped on Marseilles the footprints of a champion who heroically strove for the deliverance of a suppressed nation. India was discussed for the first time in international politics. Its impact was so great that its righteous pressure, it was said, hastened the fall of the Premiershiop of M. Briand! Such was the magnitude, such was the deathless blow that Savarkar struck individually, nationally and internationally upon the British Empire!

In his introduction to Ranade’s biography of Savarkar N. C. Kelkar states: “The British Government boasts of having bestowed on India a seat in the League of Nations after the great war; but it was already snatched and confirmed for India by Savarkar, when he leapt from the port-hole of the ship into the sea at Marseilles, and standing on the soil of France challenged the nations of the world ‘Speak out gentlemen, speak out’ in the name of International Law!”

*  *  *  *

“Did you recognise me? The garments are different. I am the same man. This prison dress satisfies the basic human want namely protection from cold. Providence willing, we may meet again. If the affairs of life ever tempt you, think for a while! If life means giving birth and rearing young ones, crows and sparrows also do the same in their nests. But if you take a broader view of life, you will agree that we have lived like men. We have extinguished the fire in our kitchen so that some day the smoke of gold may come out of thousands of homes.”

It is the great art of life to forget one’s own petty self, serve others and seek their good. He is a Great Man who follows his path with invincible resolution, who resists temptation both from within and from without; who bears the heavy burdens

⁸ Yajnik, Indulal, Shyamaji Krishnavarma, pp. 304-5.
cheerfully and who is calm in storms and fearless under frowns.

Mark the self-denial and self-control in the aforesaid piece of advice. Standing on the threshold of eternity, a young man, who had been struck with a thunderbolt, was heroically consoling his young wife. It was Savarkar, the hero of Indian Independence. Government was kind enough to permit his wife to interview him in the Dongri Jail, Bombay, in the presence of a Jail Officer before he departed for the Andamans. His wife's grief was indescribable. Her soul was wrung with agony. With the sublime courage of a Sati she saw her rosy life put into a yawning grave. A sad inquiry dwelt in her gaze and wavered on her lip. She had already lost her baby son when her husband was in London. Saintly, heroic, she stood speechless. Crushed with the heavy chains and overflowed with feelings, Savarkar thus interpreted the grandeur and gravity of the fate that had befallen her! There was no time for righteous sighs or sobs. The time for interview ended. While parting Savarkar's brother-in-law, who was also present there, entreated him to recite every morning a certain Mantra, and the scene vanished like a dream.

A week or so before this interview Savarkar was informed in the Dongri Jail that the verdict of the International Court at the Hague had gone against him and that the fifty years' sentence now stood confirmed. He took off his civil dress and gazed at the jail garments and the ticket No. 32778 to be borne on chest, thinking that the dress he was putting on would either leave him in 1960 or his corpse would come out with it. His property worth Rs. 27,000 was confiscated and even his books and dress were put to auction. His father-in-law's property worth Rs. 6,725 was confiscated under the orders of the Ruler of Jawhar State. The cooking pots which were on the fire place at Savarkar's house in Nasik were also seized and his sister-in-law was thrown on the street. His spectacles were returned to him as a favour. Such complete sacrifice in the cause of freedom was made hardly by any other man throughout India's struggle for freedom. Someone sarcastically murmured, "The kind Government will release you in 1960." With a smile Savarkar replied, "Death is more kind. If it delivers me earlier?" Savarkar laughed consciously, the fool freely.
In order to bring the inhuman life sentence for half-a-century under the pale of human laws, Savarkar appealed to Government that the two transportations inflicted upon him should run concurrently. For, a man has but one life. How can he have two life sentences then? But his application was rejected. The officer who conveyed this decision to him said with mixed feelings of humour and sympathy that the Government desired him to undergo during this lifetime the sentence for the next life also. Savarkar then exclaimed: “Then the good thing about this is that the Government has at least rejected the Christian belief in resurrection and accepted the Hindu doctrine of rebirth! This is not a small gain!”

The furnace of tribulations was lit. The first task that was assigned to Savarkar was the chopping of cocoanut shells. He writhed with pain. But his mind took a philosophical turn and interpreted the chopping of the shells as the chopping of the fragments out of the elements of life and twisting them into one whole. “In its process, the compound of life develops to its full size and again dissolves into many fragments returning to the original elements from which it emanates.”

Ordinarily the very idea of the terrible sentence for half-a-century would have crushed even the stoutest heart. But it was Savarkar’s motto that enabled him to bear heroically the colossal shock. His motto was: “Don’t be too much hopeful of success. Be always prepared for the worst possible reverses! For those who are born in an age of despair and darkness must be prepared to face the grim struggle with the possibility of reverses, if they aspire for the dawn of a new era.”

To cope with the titanic term of two transportations he thought out an equally august plan. In order to pay the debt of the Motherland and render service to humanity, he made up his mind to compose an epic, write it on the canvas of his mind and dedicate it to the Motherland through his would-be sons, if he was ever allowed to settle according to the jail rules with his wife on the island, or in any other way. This was the bare minimum that he could do in his hopeless, helpless state. He had no pen, no paper, no light, no lamp.

So Savarkar started in right earnest to compose poems. The first poem he composed was on Guru Govind Singh, the siren of martyrdom. According to Savarkar, Great Men with great suc-
cess shine like the golden domes of great palaces; but the foundation that holds the pillars and domes lies buried under the ground. Guru Govind Singh, who fell in a great cause dejected, betrayed and deserted, was more heroic and appealing than any other hero in the eyes of Savarkar who had also met with the Guru's fate.

Savarkar then composed another poem on the crucified Christ whose divine personage submitted himself to torture and sacrifice and showed considerable physical fortitude in going through the cruel ordeal for his divine mission. Although an advocate of the doctrine of 'protection of the good and destruction of the evil-doer,' he held in high reverence the glorious martyrdom of Jesus Christ.

Savarkar's heroism had thrilled both the hemispheres with his epic adventure. European countries hailed him as a martyr, but he now happened to read the Anglo-Indian papers who stigmatized him as a 'rascal!' Did not the predecessors of these pirates similarly describe in London papers Washington in 1780 and Napoleon in 1803? * But Savarkar took both the remarks in good humour. He equated the jeers with the tears, the rascality from the pen of pirates and pedlars with the glory of martyrdom, and found his individual worth unchanged. The man who stands upon his own conscience and character cares not for praise or censure. Savarkar, however, said to himself that a public servant should be ever prepared both for applause and censure.

From Dongri Jail Savarkar was shifted to Byculla Jail. Savarkar inquired of the sergeant in charge about the name of the jail. Being afraid to pass on the information the sergeant spelt the word Byculla and obliged Savarkar. So strict were the orders governing Savarkar's movements! Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to Thana Jail. Normally warders, havalldars and petty officers cherished in their heart of hearts a very high respect for him. They felt for his colossal ruin. One of the petty officers in the jail tauntingly remarked that Savarkar would be definitely set free in the year 1960. Savarkar silenced the twitters of the small fry when he asked him, "But is the British rule itself going to last for fifty years more?"

* Shaw, Bernard, Saint Joan (Introduction).
The petty officer deified the leonine courage of Savarkar and was proud to be his slave. He did Savarkar a good turn. At dead of night he brought the first note of cheer from Narayanrao Savarkar, then a boy of seventeen, serving a sentence of six months in the Thana Jail. Commenting on his dark future Savarkar brushed over the dark canvas of the Andamans and wrote in reply that he hoped he would at least dedicate an epic to the Motherland during the term of his transportation. The famous English Poet Coleridge once wrote: "I shall not devote less than twenty years to an epic, ten years to collect material and warm my mind with universal science, the next five in the composition of the poem, and the last five in the correction of it." This shows how stupendous is the task of composing an epic!

The day of Savarkar’s final departure for the Andamans soon dawned. Escorted by a squad of armed guards, batches of convicts on transportation reached the Thana Jail from all corners of the Province. Some frightful, some fearless, some tearful, some helpless, some reckless and some repentant, they were specimens of heartless murderers, meanest brutes, daring cutthroats and criminals of every description. But this strange type of humanity conceived a sort of awe and reverence for Savarkar, the Barrister convict. As a mark of goodness and respect they even went to bed rather early to enable the Barrister Babu to have a sound sleep. Their attitude was natural; for it is a notable fact that convicts and prisoners have always a high regard for a barrister. They know he is a man who shelters their crimes and sins under the shield of his intelligence or shatters the web of the villainy of those devils!

The march to the Andamans began. With a kurta, a small pot, an iron plate in one hand, blanket and a mattress under one armpit, Savarkar walked with his hand roped to that of a European officer. Seeing the officers taking special care of Savarkar, the convicts said with a proud note that the Government feared him! In spite of the utmost secrecy observed, the news of Savarkar’s departure leaked out and anxious faces were on the lookout in the streets of Thana for a glimpse of the world-famous Indian patriot. At the Thana station Europeans took their women upon their shoulders to enable them to catch a glimpse of the distinguished prisoner! Savarkar, in hand-
cuffs and irons, was seated in a special compartment and his hand was tied to that of a stout officer. The train then steamed out for Madras.

One officer, travelling in the same train, took a look at Savarkar at every halt. At last, at Madras he came up to Savarkar to bid him adieu. In a moving tone he said: "Good-bye friend, I hope you will be released in December at the time of the Delhi Durbar." Savarkar thanked him for his good wishes and said: "I don’t think so. Our blows on the Government are quite fresh. They will not be forgotten so soon." "All the same," the Officer continued: "I will never forget this your dignified courage." It was a wrong impression prevailing among the Britishers that Savarkar was ungentlemanly, insolent and a dangerous man. They imagined that the presence of a Briton infuriated him. Savarkar, however, corrected their wrong notion with his gentle speeches. He said he never hated anybody simply because he was an Englishman or a Mohammedan. He returned smile for smile, thanks for good wishes and scorn for scorn!

On reaching Madras, the officers took Savarkar to a steamer in a small boat, which was well guarded. While in the boat, one officer tried to pump out some information from him concerning the assassination of Mr. Robert William D’Estoourt Ashe, the Collector of Tinnevelly. Aiyar had left France and had come to Pondicherry. From there he started the revolutionary propaganda work and distributed several pamphlets in Tamil appealing to the youth to become members of the Abhinava Bharat Society. One of Aiyar’s lieutenants, R. Vanchi Aiyar, shot Mr. Ashe at Meenaxi station, who had put down the riots associated with the sentence passed on Chidambaram Pillay. Savarkar had come to know about it in Thana Jail, but the officer wanted him to comment or criticise his statements. So he said: "In the province of Madras there are no thoughtless youth and so it is all quiet here." Savarkar with an implied smile asked him whether he was sure about the statement he made. And the officer understood it all.

On June 27, 1911, Savarkar was lodged in the steamer the S.S. Maharajah. He was put on the lower dark deck in the iron cages meant for the convicts. Would he ever again see his Motherland or die the fate of the Russian exiles in Siberia,
thought Savarkar to himself. But his thoughts were interrupted.
The engine roared. The steamer whistled! His voyage to the
Devil’s Island began. A terrific shock came to him. For his
was the fate of a defeated Washington. Surrounded by the
shabby and vile, wild and wicked men, fed on loathsome food,
lying beside a cask used as water closet, he was overwhelmed by
a feeling of nausea. He was stifled and only the philosophical
bent of his mind came to his rescue. It said, “It is nothing.
Food turns into stool and stool into manure and manure into
food again. Then the food and stool are in reality not dissimilar.”
However, on application, the kind medical officer gave
him the advantage of a ventilation hole to breathe more freely
without worsening the malignant ashtma he had contracted in
London.

For a while even the invincible mind of Savarkar was over-
whelmed with a feeling of despair, sorrow and separation. A
human heart after all! His mind took flight from the limited
‘I’ to the unlimited universe and the elements. He looked at
the endless stretches of seas. He wondered at the fate of man
when compared with the infinite vastness of the oceans and
the universe. He said to himself: “Man has been dreaming
of a good future ever since the dawn of the Vedas. And a
dream is nothing but a flash of light in the pitchy darkness of
the present.” He exclaimed that it would be the greatest day
in the history of mankind when the sun would witness the
millennium and the real Golden Age where man loved his
brother and gave up lust. “Happy the man who saw this pro-
mised land in the distance; happier he, who strove to bring it
nearer; and happiest he, who has the fortune to enter it. Would
that I be one of that shining company! At least some share
of it will surely fall to me. What a glorious fortune that will
be!” Absorbed in such exalted thoughts, Savarkar came to the
end of the journey.

It was the morning of July 4, 1911. A shimmer of golden
sun was shaking through the trees and was giving life and hope
to the denizens in the dreaded Indian Bastille, the Andamans!
The steamer had anchored at Port Blair, the capital of the
Andamans. The terrific jaws of the jail opened. The steamer
was the threshold of life and death. Once one crossed it, one
stepped into the yawning Deathland. As they crossed the gate
of the jail, the convicts quailed with their blankets overhead and plates in their hands. Savarkar was absorbed in great thoughts while going his way to the jail. With the ambition of a patriot, the vision of a poet and the foresight of a prophet, he was engrossed in assessing the importance of the Andamans. Given proper opportunities of development, he murmured to himself, these islands could be the outposts of Free Hindustan replacing Singapore which was so by accident. They would be the gateway of India on the East. If a strong naval base were built there, he thought, no enemy could strike at the Eastern coast of India. How prophetic! The islands have become important naval bases during the present decade.
CHAPTER 6

The Indian Bastille

With a blanket on his head and a platter in one hand, Savarkar stood in chains before the ferocious lofty gates decorated with all kinds of chains, hand-cuffs, fetters, guns and bayonets. The gate creaked! Someone whispered that Mr. Barrie was coming on. Savarkar was preoccupied and was not conscious of Barrie's arrival. A voice roared, "Leave him. He is not a tiger!" The harsh voice waked Savarkar up. Turning to Savarkar the jailer opened conversation with him.

Barrie: Are you the same man that tried to escape at Marseilles?

Savarkar: Yes, why?

Barrie: Why did you do it?

Savarkar: For some reasons. One of them was to free myself from these hardships.

Barrie: But you fell into them of your own accord, is it not?

Savarkar: True. I threw myself into them. Just so, I thought it my duty to escape from all these tribulations.

Barrie: To tell the truth, I am not an Englishman. I am an Irishman.

Savarkar: May be. Were you an Englishman, it would matter little. I would not hate you because you were an Englishman. I have spent the best part of my youth in England and I am a warm admirer of many virtues of Englishmen.

Barrie: But the point is that I was an Irish revolutionary and fought for the independence of Ireland. Now I see the futility of it. Hence as a friend I may tell you that you are still young and I am advanced in age. . . .

Savarkar: (cutting him short): And don't you think that perhaps that may be the reason of the change that has come over you? Not increasing wisdom but dwindling energy!
**BARRIE** *(scandalized):* You see, you are a barrister and I am a mere jailer. Don't discard my advice. Murders are murders and they will never bring independence.

**SAVARKAR:** Quite so; but why don't you try your advice on the Sinn Feiners? And who told you that I was a party to violence?

**BARRIE** *(suddenly assuming his official tone):* What I talked is against the rules. It pained me to see a youth of your great learning and fame among these criminals. I have nothing to do with your past. Mind well you are to abide by the rules. Their breach will bring on its penalty. One thing more. I may inform you that any attempt on your part at escaping from this island will be a feast to cannibals.

**SAVARKAR:** I know Port Blair is not Marseilles!

Thus ended the first passage at arms between Mr. Barrie and Savarkar.

This Barrie had gained a marvellous notoriety among the criminals and political prisoners of India. By nature he was violent, ferocious and stupid. A pot-bellied, bulky, red-skinned fellow with round staring eyes, a fierce moustache, a flat nose, a short neck, he carried a big staff in his hand. No other mediocre official lived so long in the memory of the prisoners in the Andamans as did Barrie for the atrocities he perpetrated in his official capacity as the jailer of the Indian Bastille. He was a half-illiterate, full-blown coward; he lustily loved authority for which he fawned on his superiors and with which he tyrannised the convicts. He was ignorant of intellectual pursuits and his pastime was cruelty. His tone expressed instinctive hatred for political prisoners. He loved self-praise immensely and sometimes displayed his learning which of course consisted of a few lines of poetry and some extracts to evoke a good remark from Savarkar. His poor wife and educated daughter often blunt the edge of his villainy and Christmas reminded the Christian jailer at least not to return evil for good!

Savarkar fearlessly entered the ferocious jaws of the Deathland as the early Christian martyrs faced the lions in the Coliseum of the Romans. He started his life in the Andamans with a salt-water bath which began and ended with the brays of the Jamanor. Then he was locked in a cell on the third floor of the yard No. 7 of the Cellular Jail. The whole floor of yard No. 7
was vacated for him. The most wicked and vicious Pathans drilled in the methods of torturous jail administration were posted to guard his cell. It had been a part of the policy of the British bureaucracy to utilize whenever possible the fanatic Muslim mind against Hindu forces and fighters. At every major crisis, at every decisive event, they gave full reins to their instinctive anti-Hindu bent of mind to frustrate the plans of Hindu leaders or torture Hindu agitators. History is replete with such instances.

It is the characteristic of a great life that it is ever full of duties and sacrifices. The soul that suffers gets stronger and sober. The soul of a Great Man never stands still. For Great Men are the heart of humanity. Their work never ceases for a single second until the day of death. The proverbs that no pains, no gains; no gall, no glory, are undying. After a deed of deathless virtue, Savarkar was also thrown into the furnace of tribulations. The more the gold burns, the brighter it shines; greater the number of clouds, the more dazzling is the splendour of the sun when he breaks forth.

Love of one’s own country or humanity, if from within, is sublime and enduring. Patriotism or service of humanity, if from without, fades and withers. The former originates in a devotion to human progress or a belief in the sanctity of human life. The latter springs from immoral and foul personal ambition. Courage and spirit of self-sacrifice perpetuate true love, and self and pelf scandalize the untrue love. Savarkar belongs to the first heroic line of selfless patriots who belong not to one particular country but to the whole world. Savarkar was a pioneer in this line, and pioneers idealize the real and the successors realize the ideal.

Savarkar’s arrival deeply stirred the whole of the Andamans. There was a feeling of change, freshness and life in the Andamans. To have a talk or a look at Savarkar, the world-famous revolutionary leader, visits of foreigners and guests became a common feature in the Andamans. Ocean-going steamers, warships, mercantile ships would sojourn to give leisure to their men of authority or fame to have a talk with the illustrious Indian prisoner. They even humbly cajoled Mr. Barrie for permitting them to have a look at Savarkar. Next morning after Savarkar’s arrival the Pathan warder announced the com-
ing of Mr. Barrie. Accompanied by a guest, Barrie appeared with his usual staff in hand. He opened the conversation with a reference to 1857.

Barrie being struck dumb on all points his guest interfered, and said to Savarkar: “But don’t you condemn the self-centred rebels like Nana and Tatya Tope?” “Condemn? You see, I am a prisoner. I can’t freely discuss these points here. If you stop me in the middle and try to lower the prestige and honour of my nation, it will be a sheer act of cowardice,” replied Savarkar with a distinct note in his voice. Barrie granted Savarkar’s request and allowed him to discuss freely. “I know,” said Savarkar, “You are feeling the embers. This is a discussion on vital points in history and I will do it freely at any cost. It is sheer cowardice to bear silently vile attacks on one’s national honour.” He proceeded, “The Government had appointed a committee to investigate the so-called atrocities of this nature. It pronounced its verdict ‘that those descriptions were baseless’ and were invented by the wily brains of the British soldiers.”

The flame of righteous pride in Savarkar’s heart was fanned. The hero was justifying the deeds of heroes. With a rise in his voice he said, “You describe Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope as self-seekers. For, Nana wanted to be king and Tatya wanted to attain glory. But is it not also true that Victor Emmanuel wanted to be King, Washington had an eye to the Presidency and Garibaldi craved for Greatness? The fact is that they all fought for their national independence. None should decry them. As for the massacres at Cawnpore, they were an answer to the terrible atrocities and the wholesale burning of villages committed by the British troops approaching Cawnpore.” Barrie’s guest was silenced. The conversation ended.

Before Savarkar’s arrival the revolutionaries of Maniktola case, Savarkar’s brother Babarao with Wamanrao Joshi, some editors from Allahabad and some other political prisoners were rotting in the cellular jail of the Andamans. Out of the first group three had received sentences for life transportation for having waged war against the King Emperor and others were short-termed prisoners. Defeated valiant fighters of ’1857’ were the first and foremost champions to face the hellish fire of the Andamans. Stricken in age, one of the surviving warriors of
'1857' congratulated Savarkar on his having continued the War of Independence. After the heroes of '1857' came the fighters of Wasudeo Balwant. Thus the sacrificial fire was kept burning from 1857 to 1910 in the Andamans and continued to do so by patriots and martyrs who were transported to the Andamans in subsequent years.

The coming of Savarkar brought better days for the political prisoners in particular and convicts in general. Hitherto no discrimination was made there between political and ordinary prisoners. Barrie and his fawning dogs ran amock. Barrie's word was law; his dogs' barkings were its arms. A man of little education, Barrie compensated for his inferiority complex by his harsh voice, bullying nature, crooked ways, and dull wits. His rough life had taken off the edge of his sense so much so that he utterly failed to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In his zest to rule the convicts with an iron hand he proved to be worse than the English officials. Indeed the hot sand is more scorching than the sun itself. He called the revolutionaries bombthrowers, damned rascals and put the letter 'D' round their neck describing them as "dangerous" characters! His attitude towards the ordinary convicts was lenient, but towards revolutionaries inexorably severe. He violently abused the prisoners in general and wickedly harassed them. Even with this sort of harassment, uptil now the political prisoners had failed in giving a united fight to curb the unjust rule of Barrie. Their condition was very miserable.

The revolutionaries had to undergo unbearable physical tortures. They were yoked to the oil-mill. And the working on the oil-mill demanded such hard labour that it squeezed the life out of even the hardened and seasoned convicts, and they trembled at its sight. The oil-mill was, therefore, aptly regarded as the friend of suicide. Prisoners had to turn its handle horizontally for hours together without even a slight break. They had to take their meals and drink water, while the oil-mill was in motion lest the quota of the oil should fall far below the expectation. Even with such hard labour full measure of the required quota could never be fulfilled by even the strongest prisoner. Their hands bled; hearts ached; heads whirled. They fell in dead faints. When they revived, round and round they had to go again in excruciating agony.
Prisoners were sent to water closets in a file of eight or ten and they had to rush out without finishing the natural functions at the whim of the warder or were dragged out in that state too. It was an offence to answer the call of nature except during the scheduled time of morning, noon and evening. If any political prisoner felt the necessity to do so at odd hours, he did it in his cell in the small pot or on the walls of his cell and bribed the scavenger with a pinch of tobacco to get it cleared or else he was punished for this unavoidable natural call by being put into standing-handcuffs from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 12 noon to 5 p.m. During these punishment hours if he could not check his natural calls, he would answer them in that hanging condition.

Political prisoners were not given as much leisure or rest as is given even to the beasts of burden for answering nature’s calls or other natural functions. Educated persons were used as beasts of burden and illiterate persons were given clerical work. Pathans, warders and petty officers gulped down the share of the prisoners’ food and milk. What is more, the doctors followed the diagnosis of the jailer!

A prisoner was deprived of his right of writing letters home once a year even if he broke the file at the time of meals, or talked with his neighbour. Prisoners were forced to take their meals in soaking rains or in the scorching sun. The duration of time for meals depended not on the clock, but on the crowing of the warder. None could ask for more food or eat less. If surplus was thrown away, the prisoner was made to bring it back and eat it up!

Sometimes the prisoners had to drink water with a squeeze on their noses. So dirty was its smell. Some political prisoners were made to do odd jobs at the residence of the officers, to clean streets and to draw carts of the officers. To relieve themselves from the insufferable hard labour prisoners ate some harmful herbs or took some other drastic medicine that brought on diarrhoea or vomits of blood or high fever. Some pretended stark madness covering their faces even with stools. Their last refuge was suicide, the sure guide, friend and saviour, a consummation devoutly to be wished! Thus the cellular jail machine was more soulless and dreadful, more devilish and dehumanising than any other terrific jail machine under the
sun such as the Bastille or the Fortress of Peter and Paul in Czarist Russia.

Writing about this prison life, Savarkar said: "Life in a jail for good, for evil, is a unique chance. Man can never go out of it exactly as he came in. He goes out far better or far worse. Either more angelic or more fiendish. Fortunately for me, my mind has so quickly adapted itself to the changes in circumstances. It seems so strange that a nature so restless and active, roaming over continents, should so quickly feel quite at home in a cell hardly a dozen feet in length. And yet one of the kindest gifts of Providence to Humanity is this plasticity, this adaptability of the human mind to the ever changing environments of life." ¹ To become your own friend you must retire into your own inner self and cultivate the friendship of the conscience, the God in you. A yogi in action can exercise such a tremendous control over his senses. Savarkar had conquered his senses and adapted himself to the new change. His mind climbed the tower of human imagination and saw the vastness of the universe dissolving its identity into Him. "When early in the morning and late in the evening," he wrote from the Cellular Jail, "I try a bit of Pranayam and then pass insensibly into a sweet sound sleep—Oh how calm and quiet is that rest, so calm that when I get up in the morning, it is long before I can realize again that I am in a prison cell lying on a wooden plank. All the common aims and allurements of mankind having receded far, the conscience is perfectly pleased with itself with the conviction of having served under His Banner and served to some purpose. A calm, sweet equanimity is left with my soul and it lulls my mind in an intense peace." ²

Here is a graphic description of the daily life in the Cellular Jail in one of Savarkar's annual letters: "I get up in the morning when the bell goes on at 5 a.m. At its sound I feel as if I had entered a higher college for a higher study. Then we do our work of rigour till 10 a.m. While my hands and feet are automatically doing the given task, my spirit avoiding all detection is out for a morning trip, and across the seas and oceans, over hills and dales, it roams sipping only pleasant things and things noble, like a bee among flowers. Then I compose some

¹ Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 18.
² Ibid., p. 18.
new lines. Then we dine and at 12 noon work again. From 4 p.m. comes rest, reading, etc. This is the usual round of life here.”

The master artist in Savarkar further described the vivid picture in a Voltarian satire. He added: “In a prison what happens on the first day, happens always, if nothing worse happens. In fact, it seems to be the essence of prison discipline to avoid all novelty, all change. Like specimens and curios in a museum, here we are each exactly in the same place and same position, belted and labelled with the same numbers with more or less dust about us... We get up early, work hard, eat punctually at the same place and the same amount and kind of food prepared with the same matchless prison skill and medical care.” He concluded: “Almost every night, I tell you, I break the jail and out by dale and down and by tower and town go on romping till I find some one of you—some one who somewhere had been held close to my bosom! Every night I do it but my beneficent jailers take no notice of it. You have only to wake up in the jail, that is all they say!” Solitary monotony for twelve years in a cell! This is a clue to the introversion that clung to Savarkar in later life and made him disinclined to mix freely with people and personalities. He was isolated from his colleagues and the current of national life.

* * *

For the first fortnight Savarkar was closed in a solitary cell. Then he was given the work of chopping the barks of cocoanuts with a heavy wooden mallet. His hands bled, swelled, ached and the coir was blistered with blood. In order to frighten Savarkar into submissiveness, Barrie displayed the power of his wrath by reviling his co-sufferers in his presence. Barrie’s one aim was to impress upon Savarkar that he was not a political prisoner, but an ordinary criminal. The jailer always tried to dishearten and frighten him by riveting his attention to the ticket on his breast showing imprisonment for half a century. But with all his resourcefulness Barrie could not overpower or overawe Savarkar. His personality, his fame and his courage had outgrown the pale of Barrie’s mind, men and power.

*Savarkar, An Echo from Andamans, p. 39.*
The case of other political prisoners was quite different. With sunken heads they bore humiliations and were mortally wounded in their feelings, when Barrie spurred them with loathing. Savarkar consoled his co-sufferers and breathed life into them. He cheered them. He told them that those who worked for a great cause outside worked much but they who suffered for it in prisons and fields worked more. He said that though they were helpless in those days, yet a day would dawn when statues would be erected to their memory in the very jail. Future generations would make a pilgrimage to that place saying, “Here dwelt for years the patriots of our land, the flesh of our flesh, the spirit of our spirit that fell in the cause of freedom.” He added that their sufferings, their wounds and their struggle would be fruitful in the end.

Indeed, thirty-two years later Netaji Subhas Bose of the Indian National Army hoisted over Port Blair the flag of independence on December 30, 1943, honoured the memory of the Indian revolutionaries by saluting the Cellular Jail and renamed the Andamans “Shaheed Island” in memory of the martyrs. The wheel of destiny had turned. In a press interview in November 1943, Netaji said: “Most of the political prisoners sentenced to penal servitude for conspiracies to overthrow the British Government,—and there have been hundreds of them,—were locked up in this Island. Like the Bastille in Paris, which was liberated first during the French Revolution, setting free political prisoners, the Andamans, where our patriots suffered much is the first to be liberated in India’s fight for independence.” Savarkar’s prophecy came true to the letter!

Subhas Bose was not a degenerated man to disparage the noblest sacrifice of the heroes of the Andamans. He knew that their prison life had only one class. That was facing death in every form at every moment. Not fruit but frown, not cosy beds but wooden planks galled them. There they rolled in dark, damp, dirty, dingy cells. Every hour of theirs they passed in moving, mournful and moanful misery. Their food was half-cooked, soiled, filled with drops of sweat and often seasoned with pieces of reptiles or white dead worms. They toiled like horses and worked as bullocks! The climate sapped their vita-

*Jai Hind*, published by Amritlal Prabhashankar, p. 74.
lity and life. Under the strain and stress of extreme physical rigours some of them showed signs of mental aberration and lapsed into insanity. They underwent these poignant trials for the very liberation of their Motherland. Had they worked safely enough to save their skin, had they loved a life of peace, pelf and position, they would have attained it easily for some of them were sufficiently rich or eminently gifted with rich brains. Subhas knew this and so he honoured them first.

In the middle of August 1911, Savarkar was yoked to the oil-mill, the hardest task, the greatest test and the severest pain the cellular life witnessed. The jail superintendent called Savarkar and said he would not give him that work again if he did it for two weeks. This severest turn of dealing with prisoners was a result of the strong remarks of an officer from Calcutta, the then Capital of the Government of India, to the effect that the prisoners in the Andamans were treated considerately. That visit gave a handle to Barrie to play havoc in the Andamans. Barrie deliberately reminded Savarkar of the fifty years' rigorous sentence and promised him help if he did not refuse to do the work. Heartless as he was, he unkindly remarked that Savarkar was promoted from coir to kolu—the oil-mill! This promotion or rise in the status, curiously enough, was upheld by Bombay University which informed Savarkar only a day before he was harnessed to the oil-mill that his B.A. degree was cancelled. The jail authorities handed over to him on August 14, 1911, a letter from the Secretary, Education Department, informing Savarkar that under section 18 of the Indian Universities Act the B.A. degree which had been conferred on him had been cancelled by the Senate of Bombay University at their meeting held on July 1, 1911, as he was convicted and sentenced in the Nasik conspiracy cases.

As for the remembrance of 50 years' imprisonment Savarkar was used to it now, as an artillery soldier is used to the booming of guns.

The barrister thus began to move around the oil-mill like a bullock. His body ached, muscles writhed with pain, stomach turned and mouth parched, for the prisoner was not even given more than a certain quantity of water. Moved by the sight, some political prisoners helped him secretly. There was even healthy rivalry among them for washing his clothes secretly.
Savarkar was overwhelmed with their feelings. In turn he would sometimes wash their clothes without their knowledge and they sincerely entreated him not to do so.

Savarkar felt that his great powers that would have enriched the destiny of the country were wasting away. Disgustful of dying a slow, painful death, and that too unobserved, his mind drove him to the thought of suicide. In such a state suicide becomes a deed of self-respect. For a while he was fascinated by the idea and greedily looked to the upper side of the window of the cell from where many mounted on to heaven by means of rags tightened to their necks. Dusty and deadly fatigued, one day he reeled against the wall surrounding the oil-mill and fell in a faint.

When he revived, things around him became gradually visible and intelligible to him one by one; he knew by and by who and where he was, and he picked himself up with great effort for work! For some time mind routed reason. Defeated reason again joined battle. It said, "What an ego! You never craved for name, fame and glory. You wished to suffer most for humanity. You attained it. What of your abilities and intelligence! There was a time when there were no Himalayas; there will be a time when they will not be there. Even the sun in the universe has an unsteady position. He will be pricked one day like a bubble and still the universe will go on. Therefore, if you want to die, do not die a cowardly death by suicide, but die valiantly." 5 Reason inspired courage into the mind and it plumed its feathers, soaring, and singing again. Strange breezes of bliss passed over him relieving him from worry and weakness and he experienced fresh glooming joy of the soul and sleep fell as gently on his eye-lids as dew!

The first secret note Savarkar got was from Hotilal Varma. The note dashed against the inside wall of the cell with a stone. The sound caused a great hubub. Warders from below ran upstairs and searched Savarkar and his cell, but in vain. When they were gone, he took it out from the innermost delicate part of the body and read it! In it Hotilalji had informed Savarkar that there was a division among the Bengali revolutionaries. It was a fact that some of them could not stand the

5 Savarkar, Mazi Janmathep, p. 191.
sufferings and turned informants and lackeys. In others the conscience was not yet dead. They told their colleagues to put an end to their lives since life had been made impossible for them due to severe agonies.

Savarkar felt sympathy for the past services and sacrifices of those heroic souls who had turned informants. Their tortured body became untrue to their faith and trampled upon the soul. Yet, he held that none had the right to criticise them but those who had suffered more than they. Those who decided to live under any circumstances avoided tortures by being lackeys and spies of Barrie. Those who despised a life of dishonour preferred death to living as traitors to the cause of the country. There were few who considered life worth living till it did not go against their principles.

* * *

There were rumours afloat in the Andamans that all political prisoners were to be released in memory of the Delhi Durbar. Expectations became rife; rumours rained. Though sceptical of his release, a wave of sensation passed through Savarkar when he heard everyone saying, “Barrister Babu, you are to be released.” On December 7 to 15, 1911, the Delhi Darbar was held. Except the Savarkars and a Bengali political prisoner all were given remission of a month per year. All that Savarkar got was potato-rice. And the cells were again enveloped in utter disappointment.

Savarkar, however, was very anxious to know if India had made any progress with the royal event. He learnt that the settled fact was unsettled; the partition of Bengal was annulled. Savarkar was happy and said to his colleagues: “Once a man is convinced that quinine roots out Malaria, he will take it whenever he gets an attack of Malaria.” The capital of India was about to be transferred to Delhi as foretold by Savarkar, but he said that from the standpoint of history, culture, politics and geography, Ujjain should be the proper place for the capital of India.

December 23, 1912, was the day for the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. But the state entry of Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, in oriental splendour, was greeted with a terrific bomb at the famous Chandni Chowk.
Lord Hardinge was wounded while riding in the silver Howdah upon an elephant. The man behind Hardinge who held the state umbrella was killed. Hardinge fainted from loss of blood and his wounds took some months to heal. It seemed that the royal proclamation could not pacify the revolutionaries. They were grappling as before with the British power for the liberation of the Motherland. The chief man in this act was Rash Behari Bose who fled to Japan. The British Government was persecuting him there. In November 1915 the Japanese Court passed extradition orders against Bose. But Mayo, a patriot of Japan, asked a baker to employ Rash Behari and he eluded the police.

Savarkar’s younger brother Narayanrao Savarkar, who was a student at the National Medical College, Calcutta, was arrested in connection with this Bomb case and brought back to Poona; Barrie heartlessly told Savarkar that his brother Narayanrao was expected in the Andamans as a result of this Bomb case. The police could not rope in Narayanrao Savarkar and so he was released. The word Savarkar was synonymous with sedition and sedition became synonymous with Savarkar! Yet in the eyes of the great ones of the nation Savarkar stood very high. The Chief Commissioner told Savarkar that he had met Babu Surendranath Banerjee on board the steamer and the latter had inquired after the health of Savarkar. Savarkar had nothing but high regard for Surendranath Banerjee. He paid tributes to the uncrowned king of Bengal for the word of encouragement he sent through a German Military Officer-prisoner and the sympathy and help he rendered to the patriots in the cellular jail.

There was another great patriot on whose mind the personality of Savarkar had an indelible impression. It was Lala Lajpat Rai. He wrote in his book Young India: “At this stage we might mention the name of another nationalist who exercised a vast influence on young Indians in England for a number of years is now serving a lifetime in the Andamans. We mean Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. In the simplicity of his life he was of the same class as Arabinda Ghosh and Hardayal. In the purity of his life he was as high as either. In politics he fell in the first category minus their religious fervour. In his general views he was more or less what Hardayal was, minus his
denunciation of those who were engaged in non-political activities. Savarkar had extremely fine qualities of a leader. He was caught because he was reckless; he never cared about his personal safety; he had the dash of the old warrior who always put himself in the post of danger. Hardayal kept himself in the background and avoided danger. Arabinda stood midway between the two."

A fine tribute came unexpectedly from Maxim Gorky. A great Russian literary figure, Gorky praised Savarkar's heroism and denounced the British Government for inflicting a terrible sentence on Savarkar.

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Savarkar resolved to resort to agitation within the four corners of law in the Andamans to secure the privileges of political prisoners for his comrades and to compel the jail authorities to give physical and cultural amenities to political prisoners. To gain his end he first devoted his mind to the education of the political prisoners. The revolutionaries were all youths. Some of them had chosen this life owing to their daring, noble and selfless disposition. Some of them had vague and hazy notions about the fundamental principles of the revolutionary struggle, its aims and its methods. Savarkar decided to drill and steel them in those fundamentals which gave them a solid base of knowledge of Political science, Economics, and Constitutional Law. The contact began at the oil-mill, or at the work of chopping the bark. Besides, such education was imparted through the top of the windows and holes at the bottom of the walls of the cells. It was also imparted on the occasion of the transfers of prisoners from one cell to another and when they went to and came from the jail office and through a secret service of private notes.

This movement needed books; but books were a red rag to Barrie. On Sundays prisoners got books. Every evening they got books, but each his own. Exchange of books was dealt with severely. For this breach of discipline offenders would hang in hand-cuffs for a period of four days. The chief obstacle in the way was Barrie's terrible ignorance and his loathing for books. To his ignorant mind books containing words like 'nation', 'country', 'patriotism', drove men to acts of violence. Books
on theosophy, he held, made them mad! Barrie, perhaps, forgave a prisoner for any trifling offence or a glaring breach, but never for keeping a book or slate! Savarkar cheered his co-sufferers by telling them the stories of heroes from the mythology and history. In jail not a scrap of paper was tolerated. A tiny piece of lead hidden in hair or in the cavity of mouth would amount to a crime resulting in severe punishment. The cell of Savarkar was raided even twice or thrice a week during the first six or seven years. Illegible writing on the walls was considered a wilful damage to Government property.

The task of educating his co-prisoners was difficult. At the beginning even the educated prisoners treated this new move with scant respect and the illiterate fled from it. Pointing out the then confusion in New China due to want of constitutional experts, and the disorderliness in new Iran for want of economists and accountants, Savarkar impressed upon the revolutionaries that for conducting a Government efficiently they should also have Gokhales, Dutts or Sir Madhavraos among them having a mastery of Constitutional Law, Science of Economics and Politics. In their present lot they could do nothing better than store this knowledge in order to equip themselves better for the future work, struggle and action, as some of them were short-termed prisoners and would soon be free. It was Savarkar’s belief that knowledge without action was lame and action without knowledge was blind. To him knowledge that did not issue in any tangible action was like a tree without fruit!

Savarkar fought out the problem of books despite the opposition of Barrie and ultimately secured the Superintendent’s permission to store books. It was mutually arranged every prisoner should ask his relative to send books at a particular time so that every month they might receive a parcel of new books. Still Barrie would have his say. He blackened some pages or tore away those pages of the books which he considered objectionable. The idea of a library appealed to European officers and they also kept their books in the library. Some prisoners were entrusted with the work of maintaining the library. At first the criminals avoided Bade Babu’s (as Savarkar was called by them) literacy campaign. Soon some of them saw its utility and joined; others who fled from him were sometimes awarded scholarships, in the currency of the Andamans, a pinch of tobac-
co, and were won over. The effect was visible. Many completed some course and were appointed Munshis—clerks. Criminals became sober. They read religious books with great devotion. Many learnt to read papers and when they could do so their joy knew no bounds!

With the growth of the literacy movement the library also began to grow. It was filled with complete works of Spencer, Shakespeare, Mill, Vivekananda, Ramkrishna; great works of Gibbon, Emerson, Macaulay, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Voltaire and Tagore. The library also contained Plato's Republic, Thomas Moor's Utopia, Rousseau's Social Contract, Wilson's State, works of Great Mahratta and Bengali Poets; Bengali, Hindi, Marathi Weeklies and Monthlies; Modern Review and Indian Review. It was in the Andamans that Savarkar drank deep at the fountain of Bengali literature. Though he had composed a poem on the Nobel Prizeman, Rabindranath Tagore, he was of the opinion that Bankimchandra, Roy and Madhusudan were equally great in sweep, imagination and rhythm.

But the books that appealed to him most were Yogavashistha and the Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis. The spell of the latter was so irresistible that he gladly received it as a gift from a European officer on his return journey from the Indian Bastille. The energy and patience of Savarkar were inexhaustible! Savarkar taught the criminals and his colleagues with the endurance, insistence and love of a loving teacher. To some of the dull criminals he had to teach the alphabet for over twenty times before his perseverance could bear fruit. The criminals read religious books and newspapers with great interest. Everyone was now eager to secure news about Hindustan and make propaganda for her cause. At the time of Savarkar's departure the library contained about 2,000 books. The object of the campaign was fulfilled. The cent per cent illiteracy amongst the convicts was changed into sixty per cent literacy when Savarkar left the Andamans.

But none of his propagandistic moves aroused so vigorous an opposition and such widespread misunderstanding as did his great efforts for investing Hindi with the importance of the Lingua Franca of India. That Hindi should be the Lingua Franca of India was one of the important creeds of the Abhinava
Bharat. The Abhinava Bharat had declared this times without number. Savarkar struggled hard to impress upon the minds of his colleagues and co-prisoners the importance of Hindi. Struggle, storm, sparks, agreement and spell are the characteristics of Savarkarian movements. They are the fate of every pioneer, precursor and prophet. Savarkar appealed to his colleagues to call for books on Hindi. He taught them Hindi. He insisted that every prisoner should learn his main provincial language and Hindi as the national language. Madrasis and Bengalis were averse to it and adversely criticised Savarkar's stand. They even suspected that Savarkar wanted to kill their mother-tongues under the guise of a National Language. If somebody wished to bestow gifts in memory of the celebration of any good day or event, Savarkar persuaded him to give Hindi books. Savarkar answered his critics that he never persuaded any one to purchase Marathi books and asked them whether he wanted to kill Marathi also.

Not less violent was the opposition from the British Officers. They knew Urdu and therefore they opposed the introduction of Hindi and Nagari and more so because it was a cause propagated by Savarkar. Hence they feared that it would either enormously increase his influence or perhaps develop into a menace in some respects! This latter suspicion was mooted and fomented by the Muslims in the Andamans too!

In this cause the Arya Samajists helped him, as Swami Dayananda, their prophet, was the first and foremost leader to champion the cause of Hindi with Nagari script, as the Lingua Franca of India. Dayananda wrote his books in Hindi. Savarkar's respect for Dayananda was high. He got the Satyarth Prakash read by his colleagues and co-prisoners. He regarded the great work of Dayananda as a fearless and formidable exposition that teaches and implants the noble ideals of Hindi culture, elucidating the importance of Hindu religion as the national religion of Hindustan. Savarkar explained to his colleagues how Hindi had been the national tongue, an all-India language of the saints and merchants, princes and pilgrims from Rameshwar to Badrinath, from Puri to Dwarka ever since the days of Prithviraj.

Before this the second language of the jail office of the Cellular Jail or the Andamans was Urdu and the posts of Munshis had been occupied by persons from Upper India who were educated
through the Urdu medium. Letters, reports and applications to and from the Andamans were written in Urdu! After a long struggle Savarkar persuaded the prisoners to write their letters in the provincial languages or conveniently in Hindi and to write their complaints, answers, or applications in Hindi so that the necessity and urgency of Nagari-knowing Munshis should be felt increasingly. The effect was tremendous. Formerly ninety per cent of the letters from and to the Andamans were in Urdu, a few years after the arrival of Savarkar the tables were turned and the ratio was in the reverse order. Some distinguished prisoners from the Punjab, who had composed their poems in Urdu, got themselves accustomed to Nagari-Hindi and re-wrote their poems in Hindi!

In the colony of free citizens this constant propaganda for Nagari and Hindi took root and the ceremonial invitation cards began to appear in Hindi. From the conversations of Hindus the similes and metaphors describing the Arabic environments disappeared by and by. It was Savarkar’s unfeigned and constant demand for over forty years that Urdu should be preserved for Muslims, but it should not be allowed to replace or dominate Hindi in any field on any account. The propaganda and importance of the Lingua Franca appealed even to the officers who were secretly tutored in Hindi. It was through Savarkar’s efforts and pressure that a Girls’ School was started in the colony but he could not stop the teaching of Urdu in Boys’ Schools as his departure came off suddenly. Savarkar held that if the importance and future of the Andamans was to be increased usefully in reference to the safety and predominance of Hindustan and Hindu culture, Hindi and Nagari should be made compulsory in the Andamans.

The significance of this farsighted move can now be imagined and appreciated. Long before any leader of prominence ever since the days of Dayananda dreamt of its importance or entered the field, Savarkar was the only outstanding Hindu leader who strove in right earnest from 1906 to invest Hindi with the power and prestige of a National Language. On the vital problems of nation building he was always outspoken, uncompromising and prophetic. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha was, of course, toiling in the field, but slogans fail in the field, if guns are not in the forefront. It was after forty-three years since the days of
the Abhinava Bharat’s declaration that the nation accepted Hindi with the Devanagari script as the Lingua Franca of Free Hindustan!

* * *

In the meantime troubles were coming to a head in the Andamans. The boldest among the prisoners resolved to launch upon a strike to vindicate their rights. The strike was marked by many incidents. A Punjabi revolutionary was yoked to the oil-mill. He was sober and sturdy and came of a good family. Having worked till 10 a.m. he took his bath and meals calmly regardless of the words of abuse poured by the petty officers to make him work. The situation grew rather intolerable. The pot-bellied jailer with the staff in his hand appeared on the scene. The prisoner told him that he was chewing his food scientifically. Barrie threatened him with punishment, but he did not yield.

Such rebellious prisoners were kept on rice-gruel, and in order to weaken the strength of their minds doses of quinine or some drastic purgative were forced down their throats. That tortured their physique and aggravated their agonies. Despite these insufferable tortures this valiant revolutionary did not yield. At last Barrie came to terms. After four days’ regular work he was relieved of the hard labour. As a result of this strike, the political prisoners were sent outside for work in deference to their demands. There they did some odd jobs, but one and all refused to draw carts of officers and regained their dignity.

Savarkar’s elder brother was one of the most unbending prisoners. The jailer and his dogs tried every method and measure to torture him. Unfortunately some maladies worsened the trouble. He was seized now and then with a splitting headache, typhoid and cholera, but not a drop of medicine was given to him. He groaned frightfully with pain. Still he was made to chop the shell of cocoanuts. In the closed cell he helplessly passed his watery motions upon the rubbish and threw it outside when the door opened. For such unavoidable breach he was often hung in hand-cuffs in a painful state, his bowels purging and his urine passing the while! Yet this brave man of steel frame worked at the oil-mill with all his might and in spite of his agonies, but never did he yield to humiliation nor did he do a dishonourable act to purchase a sigh of relief. For
good many days the two brothers were not allowed to have even a glimpse of each other. When Savarkar enquired of the officers about the severe illness of his elder brother he was told to speak for himself. They said rules forbade them to disclose his whereabouts to a prisoner or to speak about his health!

In the end secret sympathies worked and Babarao caught sight of his brother. Seeing his younger brother after years, he burst out: "Tatya, how do you happen to be here?" That direct query pierced Savarkar's heart. He was about to speak, but the brothers were suddenly pulled asunder. Subsequently a secret note to his brother from Babarao lamented. "The belief that you were carrying on the fight for the liberation of our Motherland enlivened my heart and lightened my tortures. Who will carry on your work? Your gifts and powers will now go to waste." The reply from Savarkar went in a consolatory tone: "My abilities and powers have stood the grim test. The glory of it is that what I preached I practised and fell fighting in the forefront. It is also a righteous duty to suffer tortures rotting in the cell with curses from those for whom we fell. For the achievement of the final victory, these sighs, sufferings and sacrifices in the cells are as necessary as is the fighting with the blare of the trumpets of glory."

To alleviate the tortures and to blunt the edges of the cruel claws of the administration, the political prisoners headed by Savarkar, began to think out ways and means. It was necessary to bring pressure upon the administration from without. British officers who ruled in the land of Death depended upon each other for company and comforts. They played, they danced, they enjoyed themselves together and naturally their interests did not clash in the administration. Hence a complaint against one was never paid heed to by another. It was, therefore, necessary that the leaders in India should know something of those terrible tortures. But how to bell the cat was the question. At last Hotilal Varma dared and did it. His secret letter to Surendranath Banerjee giving the details of the jail life in general reached the Bengal leader through secret channels. Surendranath published it in his Bengali under the signature of Hotilalji with the numbers of his cell and chawl! It was a veritable bombshell. On hearing this Barrie ran to the cells like a man scorched by embers. He roared at Hotilal:
“Stand up at once. You are a rank rascal,” said he in a voice of thunder. Barrie told Savarkar about the mischief of Hotilal and falsely added that the Press in which the Bengali was printed was confiscated.

Everybody in the Andamans was always anxious to get a piece of news about the happenings in the Motherland beyond the ocean. New-comers were, therefore, always received with utmost cordiality for the sake of news. News also filtered and was circulated through many other channels. A brave son of a great leader of the Punjab serving a term in a prison in the Punjab wrote a letter to Savarkar on the back of the ticket of a convict. The fellow brought it to Savarkar undetected. Sources of foreign news were the rubbish papers at the water closets of the British officers, old soiled wrapping papers of pins, nails and other articles. Many prisoners lost their privilege of working outside the jail for bringing in pieces of newspapers but the news agency worked unabated. Political prisoners secretly shared their bread with those devoted and daring messengers. Barrie gaped and was dumbfounded to know the futility of suppressing news. He often told the Superintendent that even if the devil were appointed jailer it would be impossible for him to stop news going to these bomb-throwers. Sometimes on his night rounds Barrie heard messages transmitted by the political prisoners to one another from one end of the jail to the other through some peculiar sounds of the chains. If at all the illiterate warders suspected something, the political prisoners told the warders that they were muttering prayers in their mind to the tune of chains! This Andaman’s wireless system was introduced in Nagari by Babarao Savarkar.

Among the most heroic sufferers in the Andamans that put up a brave fight to undermine the rigid and rapacious jail administration of the Cellular Jail and to break the spell of terror was one Indu Bhushan Roy. Stout, sturdy and spirited, he was sentenced to transportation for 10 years in the Maniktola case. Indu Bhushan soon fell ill and was thrown into his cell. And instead of giving medicine, Barrie yoked him to the oil-mill. With deadly pale face, Indu walked with great effort and great pain. Savarkar tried to console him by bringing his own severest lot to his attention and cheered him up. But to no purpose. Next morning Indu Bhushan was a stiff block, his
tongue drawn out, his legs hanging loosely. Barrie hushed up the note which Indu had suspended on his chest and stated that Indu’s death was the outcome of insanity. Savarkar challenged this statement and persisted in telling Barrie that it was an outcome of the extreme physical hardships of jail life. Upendra-nath Banerjee of Alipore case was also harnessed to the oil-mill. His whole frame ached and his mental condition grew so much pitiable that a sympathetic word would move him to tears. Ullaskar Dutt of Alipore case whom the judge described as a noble youth was a witty, fearless and good-hearted man. When he was tortured with electric shocks, Ullaskar moaned, raved and pitieously groaned. He was then transferred to the mental hospital and thence to Madras and was afterwards released.

After the tragedy of Ullaskar, Barrie asked Savarkar when he would go mad. Savarkar replied angrily, “Perhaps after you go mad!” At this time a note from Savarkar discussing the policy of an immediate strike was seized and Savarkar was punished by putting him in standing hand-cuffs. Crook as he was, Barrie managed to get Savarkar’s note in Modi read by a Bengali as if it were written in Bengali! Savarkar appealed to the Superintendent to look into the truth and see whether the chit was in Bengali. The truth came out and Barrie was severely reprimanded. The second time Savarkar was hung in hand-cuffs was for his note asking somebody to bring news. Barrie unkindly joked with Savarkar who was given the punishment of standing hand-cuffs, “What is this about?” “Postage!” replied Savarkar. “It has rather cost you much,” said Barrie. Savarkar answered back pungently, “Not at all! In your case you have to pay subscription for newspapers plus postage. We get news free of subscription. Only this sort of postage we have to pay half-yearly or so!”

Savarkar sometimes received such punishments. He was put in solitary confinements thrice, was given cross-fetters once and cautioned twice or thrice for possessing a piece of pencil or paper or for adding a piece of cloth to his dhoti!

The third in the line of martyrs was Nani Gopal, a Bengali revolutionary of good family. As he was yoked to the oil-mill, he gave up all work, observed silence, abandoned jail apparel, and gave up food. The Superintendent decided to flog him.
Savarkar warned Barrie that if they shed his blood the revolutionaries would definitely retaliate. Meantime, thrilling news about Indu Bhushan and Ullaskar appeared in the Indian press. The officers were alarmed. Consequently there was a sudden round-up in the Andamans. Rumours had it that the revolutionaries were planning to bomb the Cellular Jail! Strict measures were adopted. Thorough search was taken in every cell and in the settlement also. Free people and prisoners alike were harassed. Bar-fetters, hand-cuffs, standing hand-cuffs, penal diet, solitary confinement and all sorts of punishments were imposed. Savarkar was told that he would never be allowed to work outside, though according to rules he ought to have been released long before from the Cellular Jail to settle on the island. The Jail Report said that his conduct was exemplary, but his past was dangerous!

Barrie was now wild with rage. He ordered all political prisoners not to speak in English as he thought their talk in English raised them high in the eyes of the ordinary criminals. At once a rebel rose and said in Hindi that because the jailer asked questions in English they answered in English and added that political prisoners were not so much enamoured of English. He further retorted: “It is true that we have not become one with the English tongue and shamelessly enough forgotten our language. Look at our jailer, he is an Irishman, but does not know a word of his mother-tongue!” Barrie was scandalized. In a fit of paroxysm he bragged out: “You Indians, you are our slaves.” A bold voice shot back, “Your slaves! What are you? You are a child of a slave of the British Empire. We are slaves of the British Empire and not yours! Moreover, we have been striving at the risk of our necks to overthrow the foreign yoke while you are calling that empire your own, the empire which has enslaved your Motherland and what is worse, you are living on the crumbs of loaf that are thrown before you!” Upon this all the prisoners burst into shrieks of uncontrollable laughter to the great scandal of the jailer! The order was reversed immediately. He ordered the political prisoners not to speak again in Hindi!
The protests in the press, the questions in the Imperial Council, the growing volume of public opinion and the thrilling stories of the Cellular Jail brought pressure upon the Government of India and the Home Member, Sir Reginald Craddock, paid a visit to the Andamans in 1913. Some selected political prisoners were called for interview. A few were told that they deserved a more grievous fate. Others were told that their past was dangerous. Savarkar had an interview with Craddock on November 16, 1913. It took a shrewd turn.

**CRADDOCK:** Savarkar, what a pitiable condition you have thrown yourself in. I have read your writings. If your intellectual powers had worked in the proper direction, any highest post of authority in India would have been conferred upon you. But you chose this line!

**SAVARKAR:** But it is up to you now to save me these tribulations. I learn Gokhale’s Bill demanding compulsory education has come up for consideration in the Council. If such opportunities are offered to us, almost all from our fold will prefer peaceful methods.

**CRADDOCK:** How do you know that? Do you also know the whereabouts of your comrades and lieutenants?

**SAVARKAR:** How can I? I am here in a solitary cell. But we know each other’s views. It is a sin to follow the path of violence when it is possible to make progress in a peaceful way. Such were my views when we worked in the revolutionary camp. Such were theirs. Perhaps they may be thinking likewise.

**CRADDOCK:** Not at all. They are still proclaiming the battle cry in your name in India and in America.

**SAVARKAR:** I know about it from you. How can I prevent them from using my name?

**CRADDOCK:** We will consider the advisability if you are prepared to write to them about your present views.

**SAVARKAR:** Of course, I shall willingly do it. But that letter must be written by me independently, otherwise it will be of no use.

**CRADDOCK:** The letter must go through us.

**SAVARKAR:** Then, it will mean to them that it was an extraction!
Craddock: We can’t allow it.
Savarkar: I can’t help it.
Craddock (staring a bit): Well then, what are your grievances?

Savarkar began to tell the tale of trials. The Chief Commissioner intervened. “But you all have conspired and acted dangerously. If Russians had ruled India, they would have transported you to Siberia or shot you dead.” He added that political prisoners should be grateful to the British Government for having treated them so considerately.

Savarkar: In that case the Russians would not have disarmed us. People of Siberia can be generals. Had it been possible for us to bear arms, the story of the overthrow of the Mogul empire would have been repeated!
Craddock: What if you had rebelled against the ancient Indian Kings. They would have trampled you all under the feet of elephants.
Savarkar: They would have! In days gone by in England also a man was dragged along the street for committing theft and was beheaded. But it is not so now. The thing is that this advanced stage is the result of the efforts of both the camps. If rebels were trampled under elephant’s feet, they also, when successful, used to behead a king like Charles I. Times are changed. Both camps have improved their methods! It is a sign of progress. You frankly tell us that you are not guided by any rules and we will prepare ourselves for that too.

Craddock came and went. Yet, Nani Gopal had not taken food. Forty-five days glided by. Some political prisoners went on a sympathetic fast and thus the third strike began. Savarkar awaited his home letter, but it was not handed over to him as Dr. Savarkar had written to him that Keir Hardie had compared Irish and Indian revolutionaries in his speech in Parliament and remarked that ‘British Government had harshly crushed Savarkar.’ Savarkar knew this through his secret source and then joined the strike. From the first he was averse to a hunger strike and wasting energy. But Nani Gopal’s life was in danger. He, therefore, declined to take food and asked for
an interview with Nani Gopal. Nani Gopal and Savarkar were allowed to meet. Nani Gopal broke his fast when he knew that Savarkar had gone on a sympathetic fast. Mirzakhan, the notorious pocket edition of Barrie, proudly told Savarkar that Nani was a brave disciple of Savarkar and his courage befitted a Pathan and not a Hindu! Savarkar answered in a Savarkarian way. He said, "Had Nani been a Pathan he would have like a fawning dog licked the dust at the feet of Barrie! Fact is that had all the Pathans been brave and all the Hindus not brave, your Pathan or Mogul Empire would not have been smashed by the Hindus."

The years rolled by and at last came the news that the Government of India had decided to bring back the termed convicts to Indian jails. Those undergoing life terms were to be released from jail to settle on the island, if their conduct was satisfactory. While in prison they were to be given better class food and clothes and after five years they were to be allowed to cook their own food with a little money to easen their life!

Thus pressure from without and struggle from within slackened the rigours and rigid rules of the Deathland!