GANDHI
AND HIS
CONTEMPORARIES
GANDHI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES
P.C. Roy Chaudhury
The India road to Independence had started from Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), the first comprehensive man that India had produced. He was the Father of Indian Renaissance. Since his days India has had an almost continuous history of strife of various kinds. This road to Independence had run through an intricate, chequered and often painful route. Many stalwarts, known and unknown, including quite a few Europeans had slogged and many had laid down their lives playing with fire and bomb. Gandhi (1869-1948) was a very great landmark on this road and after him came Jawaharlal Nehru who had the privilege of reminding us of the tryst India had made with destiny and had heralded the hour when the pledge was redeemed. We have, indeed, lived in thrilling times and a glorious period of India's history.

Gandhi did not work for India's Independence in isolation. There was a galaxy of his contemporaries who had nursed the earlier trends in different ways. India was fortunate that at the turn of this century and till Gandhi died they had given their great contribution for the same cause. In this book a few of them have been discussed with the back-drop of Gandhi who had undoubtedly cast the greatest influence in India and abroad from 1918 to 1948.

The last lap of the struggle started in 1918 when we were young. Now a whole generation has gone by. We have a new generation now which had not seen Gandhi and is more prone to judge him by what has followed in the post-Independence period and by the conduct of his younger followers. The Gandhian wave reached its highest pitch during Gandhi's Birth Centenary celebrations in 1969. The pompous manner with which they were conducted had left many cold and pessimistic. A septuagenarian Swiss lady who along with her husband was very close to Gandhi for years had her eyes dimmed with tears when she asked me softly at Neuchatel in Switzerland in 1970: "Tell me, is it a fact they spent crores over the centenary celebrations without much concrete results?" The present and the future generations in India, particularly, want to know more of
Gandhi in an objective manner and they naturally dislike the overtone of blind charisma.

Many of Gandhi's contemporaries and close followers had fundamental differences with him over his ideology, methods and strategy and as to the concrete results. It is an interesting subject and an attempt has been made to collect some facts for the objective researcher. Abul Kalam Azad, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Sankaran Nair, Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Srinivas Sastri, Annie Besant, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ramananda Chatterjee, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Subhas Bose, M.N. Roy, Mohammed Ali, C.F. Andrews, M.A. Jinnah, G.S. Khaparde, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, Jawaharlal Nehru are some of those who come in this category. We have deliberately chosen some of them along with others who were intimate members of the Gandhi family.

It is now more possible to have a reappraisal of Gandhi because of the availability of new source-materials. The time-gap is also another factor. If Cromwell and Churchill could be denigrated by the subsequent generations no one should read any sinister motive in our objective. Gandhi shall live but we have to be factual and objective.

Let us not shut our eyes to the fact that Gandhi was great, very great, but he was not free from enigmas and had his limitations. At least on two momentous occasions he failed to take a quick decision and failed India. Many think that if C.R. Das had continued living for some more years he could have isolated Gandhi and with the help of Azad and others won India's Independence much sooner. Many think that if Gandhi had not thrown a wedge between Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru when they came closer, India's destiny might have been fulfilled earlier. Home Rule was almost within reach in 1920. Gandhi had taken up the Home Rule Movement from the hands of Annie Besant and had scuttled it. Lord Birkenhead had promised Home Rule in 1930 before his death but Gandhi sponsored the Salt Satyagraha and set back the hands of the clock. Was Gandhi anxious to steal the thunder always and remain in the limelight?

Gandhi could also be impetuous. He had described Ram Mohun Roy as a pigmy in a meeting on the sands of Kathjuri river in Cuttack. Nehru was once much disillusioned and wrote to Gandhi.
Ganhdhi knowing full well that Nehru would not finally go against him asked Nehru to unfurl a flag to revolt against him. When Subhas won the Congress Presidential election, Gandhi at once smelt corruption in the election and isolated Subhas, ultimately making him quit India. An ardent Congressman, Jinnah had to leave the Congress in 1921 because he was not given his proper place in the Congress. Gandhi described Subhas as a misguided patriot in a letter to Amrit Kaur in reply to her letter on the death of Subhas. Again a few years later in 1947 he spoke in public meetings in Assam indicating that Subhas was alive and he would like to communicate with him. Referring to Pakistan, Srinivas Sastri had mentioned that Gandhi had sold India but that Gandhi would not admit it and describe it in some other way. In spite of great regard for him Gokhale had turned down Gandhi’s application for the membership of the Servants of India Society.

Gandhi had not admitted what was due to the Liberal Party. But when in trouble he would turn to Sapru, Jayakar, Mohammed Ismail and others for help. When after visiting Jinnah seventeen times in a month he failed to probe Jinnah’s mind, he asked Sapru to meet Jinnah. Gandhi had an active share in dividing India although the people are constantly fed on his earlier statement that Pakistan could only be created over his dead body. He not only attended the Congress meeting ratifying the partition of India but also took a great part in arriving at the decision.

He always said that he should not be compartmentalised but research cannot follow this dictum. His spiritual sense or humanism or his economic, or social philosophy stand separately and should not be mixed up with Gandhi, the Politician. The posterity should have clear idea about the different aspects of Gandhi, the man.

The India road to freedom leads to tomorrow’s people. As a young boy I had the privilege of following Gandhi from meeting to meeting in Orissa. As a magistrate I had later the unenviable task of attending his public meetings for an official report. After the communal frenzy in Bihar in 1946 I had the advantage of observing Gandhi at very close quarters in his peace mission. After Gandhi’s death I had the opportunity of studying Gandhi through thousands of letters to and by him and by visiting a number of Gandhi Institutions in different parts of India. I was commissioned by The Sunday Standard, a national daily in English, published from seven cities in
India for a series of articles on Gandhi and his contemporaries in 1969—the Birth Centenary year. A few articles were published in *The Hindu* (Madras), *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta), and other papers. I had received a large number of letters from known and unknown persons, some appreciative, some derogatory and some for even a probe as to what had happened to the money and jewels Gandhi used to collect on his tours. All this shows that Gandhi lives and people want to have an objective appraisal of him. I am indebted to the journals for the publicity they gave to the articles which have been brushed up. There are some fresh pieces too.

It is with the view to help the present and the future generations know more of the true Gandhi in some of his aspects that the articles were brushed up, new ones written and are now presented in a book form. Research had to be done over the years in the Sapru House Library, New Delhi; National Archives, New Delhi; Gandhi National Museum and Library Rajghat, New Delhi; Sinha Library, Patna; National Library, Calcutta and other places. A number of authors were read and some knowledgeable persons were contacted. I am grateful to *The Sunday Standard*, Bombay, the authorities of the libraries and institutions visited and a number of friends and correspondents for their kind help. My previous study for the other books: “Gandhiji’s First Struggle in India”, “Gandhiji and International Politics”, “Gandhi the Man”, “C.R. Das” and “C.F. Andrews—His Life and Times” also came handy. For the index I am indebted to Miss K.A. Seethalakshmi, M. Lib. Sc.

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GANDHI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

P. C. Roy Chaudhury
Abul Kalam Azad

The Indian Dominion came into existence at midnight on August 15, 1947 preceded and followed by blood-bath and sufferings all over the Hindustan peninsula. Since the situation had reached a dead-end the Indian leaders were almost unanimously agreeable that the country should be partitioned between India and Pakistan. The proposals of the Cabinet Mission which were carefully planned, thrashed out and resolved upon in the All India Congress Committee had broken down. Jinnah had quickly played upon a casual remark of Jawaharlal Nehru that the Congress party will join the Constituent Assembly without any previous commitments. He took it as an affront to the Muslim League; and thought that since the Congress resiled from their part of the bargain, the Muslim League had no obligation. Mountbatten’s master stroke of British diplomacy was seen when he fixed the dateline for the transfer of power while the sentiments and passions of either side had come to a boiling point. Patel and Nehru were restive and Gandhiji had also succumbed to the magic-wand of Mountbatten, though he had once said that India could be partitioned over his dead body alone.

There was only one stalwart among the Congress leaders who was thoroughly opposed to India’s vivisection—that was Abul Kalam Azad who had been the President of Indian National Congress in 1923, 1930 and from 1940-1946. During his stewardship, we had the years of war, ‘Quit India’ movement, wide-scale arrests and firings and then negotiations for truce. The negotiations had also passed through several phases and ultimately the proposals of the Cabinet Mission were endorsed but failed for the reasons indicated. Azad also saw the working of the Interim Government of the Congress and the Muslim League in 1946. The two constituents of the Government never pulled together for a common good. Patel stuck to the Home Department when the Muslim League ministers joined; and the portfolio of Finance was entrusted to Liaquat Ali Khan who through the Finance Department bossed over every department and torpedoed the moves of the Congress ministers. The communal virus had poisoned the services most and the officers were divided into two camps. Jinnah’s prescription of partition followed and was imple-
mented. Abul Kalam Azad as President of the Congress and as a Muslim had warned against partition. He had pin-pointed that partition would be a bitter-pill which will keep the two countries at loggerheads; and the condition of the minorities would be miserable. He had revolted against the idea mooted by some Congressmen that the minorities would be 'hostages'. He had written, "our national organisation had taken a decision in favour of partition but the entire people grieved over it... If the right solution of the Indian problem could not be found by 15th August, why take a wrong decision and then grieve over it? I had again and again said that it was better to wait till a correct solution was found. I had done my best, but my friends and colleagues unfortunately did not support me. The only explanation I can find of the strange blindness to facts is that anger or despair had clouded their vision. Perhaps also the fixation of a date—15th August—acted like a charm and hypnotised them into accepting whatever Lord Mountbatten said."

Abul Kalam Azad was in the thick of the fight for freedom since his youthful days in Calcutta as a vitriolic journalist and a seasoned speaker. He had blossomed as a wise statesman. A voracious reader, he had an x-ray mind and his somnolent eyes could pierce through the smoke of his chain cigarettes and the smoke of political hypocrisy; and read the other people's mind. The editor of the weekly Al Hilal which had reached a circulation of 26,000 copies in 1915, had the same fire in him till his last days. His statesmanship was openly relied on by Jawaharlal. Azad did not flinch an issue even if it meant disagreeing with Gandhiji. Since the Khilafat days of 1918, Gandhiji valued Azad as a comrade but Azad did not hesitate to express openly as to how Gandhiji sold himself to Pakistan idea by his one and the first visit to Mountbatten.

He did not hesitate to cross swords with Gandhiji on Gandhiji's views whether India should support the war efforts. When there was a real threat of Japanese invasion in 1942, Azad differed from Gandhiji's view that the Japanese would "come not as our enemies but as the enemy of the British", a view also fondly held by Patel. Azad was not happy about Gandhiji's "Quit India" move; and had a clear idea that the Government would take swift and drastic action. Gandhiji's reading of the situation was that the Government would take no drastic action. "I had of course warned him again and again that he was taking too optimistic a view but obviously he had placed greater faith in his own judgement." Azad had also predicted that if the leaders were arrested, there would be wide spread distur-
bances. Azad disliked Gandhiji approaching Jinnah in 1943 and his second move for a compromise with the Government. He wrote “I think Gandhiji’s approach to Mr Jinnah on this occasion was a great political blunder. It gave a new and added importance to Mr Jinnah which he later exploited to the full.... It was Gandhiji who just gave currency to the title “Qaid-e-Azam”, or the great leader as applied to Mr Jinnah.... Gandhiji’s second step in approaching the Government was ill-timed.”

Azad had openly stood up for Bhulabhai Desai when the latter was refused a Congress ticket for elections. Azad thought Gandhiji had been poisoned by Desai’s enemies, a view he did not hesitate to express openly.

For seven years from 1939 to 1946, Azad had rowed the Congress boat through shoals and reefs. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan by both Congress and the Muslim League was largely due to his efforts. India’s destiny was otherwise and she spoke through Jawaharlal that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly “completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise”. In the fateful AICC meeting on June 14, 1947 that considered the official resolution for the division of the country with Govind Ballabh Pant, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhiji as advocates brought out Azad’s view that India was one and should remain as such. As a disciplined soldier, Azad had worked in the Central Ministry and tried to give his best as Education Minister.

It was a tragedy that Azad passed away in 1958 in New Delhi at the age of sixty-nine. Born in Mecca and educated at Cairo he was held in great esteem all over the Muslim world, although his conception of Muslim theology was not narrowed by the dogmas and he had completely allied himself with the Congress movement often described as a movement of the Hindus by a section of the Indian Muslims. Independent India drew considerable help from Azad who stood as a bulwark against calumnies spread particularly by Pakistan. Azad retained his influence on the Muslim countries of the world till his last days. His treatises on the Quran are also famous. His was the main help to convert Tagore’s Shantiniketan into a Central University. He was a landmark in the history of India’s struggle for freedom.
Agatha Harrison

Romain Rolland’s book on Mahatma Gandhi had attracted Miss Agatha Harrison, daughter of a Methodist missionary of England towards Gandhiji. Before she met Gandhiji she had a brilliant schooling in service to mankind of various types for years. Keenly interested in labour welfare work she had worked for some time as Welfare Tutor at the London School of Economics. This work took her to China and she was an active member of the Woman International League in 1928. She first came to India in July 1928 as a member of the Whitley Commission on Labour. Gandhiji was already centre of the turbulent politics in India. She felt the impact of Gandhiji on the changes that had taken place in India. She travelled widely in India and visited Karachi, Delhi, Kanpur, Calcutta, Patna, Jorhat, Shillong, Dhanbad, Madras, Bangalore etc. with the Whitley Commission. Underground woman labour in the coalfields, the hard boiled contretemps and conventions in the Government houses and such other matters had given her an estimate of the Indian situation.

The turning point in this lady’s fruitful life came in 1931 when she met C.F. Andrews in London. She had to look after Andrews who was preparing for Gandhiji’s arrival in London for the Round Table Conference. Andrews with his hundred and one engagements kept her busy. She came in contact with Gandhiji in London. While leaving for India, Gandhiji suddenly asked her to work for the mutual understanding between India and Britain. She wanted instructions. Gandhiji told her that God would direct her steps.

Agatha Harrison fulfilled Gandhiji’s wishes. Apart from being a caretaker of C.F. Andrews, a man dedicated to India, she was assisted by Gandhiji in various ways. She was described by an Indian newspaper as “C.F. Andrews’ gift to Mahatma Gandhi and India”. She had once spoken of Andrews as: “He is blazing a path trodden by few—that of applying Christianity to industrial, inter-racial and international questions. For these road-makers there is no rest”. Andrews died in 1940. On his death Agatha wrote: “Death is only goodnight. I wish I could have said goodnight to him in person. Oh, beloved friend...” She was given
the honour of opening the C. F. Andrews Memorial Hall at Shanti-niketan on December 7, 1949. She broke a garland of sweet-smelling white flowers and placed the petals across the closed door of the library and entered it carrying a lighted lamp which she placed on a low table under the portrait of C.F. Andrews.

As Gandhiji’s emissary she worked wholeheartedly for the mutual understanding between England and India. She would meet learned officials and non-officials, journalists and writers for this purpose. The India Conciliation Group with Carl Heath, a body of mostly Quakers found in Agatha a splendid worker. This Quaker group was in active correspondence with Gandhiji. Gandhiji freely discussed his views with the group. The area of agreement was in the field of politics based on spirituality. Unknown to many this Conciliation Group had helped India greatly when her destiny was being forged in the thirties.

Agatha Harrison came to India in 1934 with the determined purpose of cultivating Gandhiji. Agatha’s visit was not disliked by the British authorities. It was felt she could be useful in making matters smooth and would not complicate a difficult situation by setting one party against the other. She started well by a frank talk with Lord Brabourne, the Governor of Bombay. She went to the earthquake-smitten Bihar where Gandhiji was making a tour. The tour in Bihar gave Agatha a true insight into the poverty and helplessness of the people and a much closer contact with Gandhiji developed. She also did a part of the Harijan tour in Orissa with Gandhiji. She returned refreshed and more fortified in her belief in God and in the sacredness of the cause. She also had the opportunity of meeting Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and others. She also saw some of the hardboiled typical British bureaucratic officers in the different Indian provinces.

One little known fact may be mentioned here. There was trouble in a feudatory State in Orissa. Hearing this Dr Harekrushna Mahtab, the Congress Leader of Orissa, who was outside the Congress Ministry at that time hurried to the spot. At the State Headquarters he found that the Political Officer Major Bazalgette had been killed and his personal military orderly was lying badly injured. Mahtab tried to pacify the crowd and took the injured man and put him in a neighbouring hospital. He informed the neighbouring police station as to what has been done and hurried back to Cuttack to apprise the Chief Minister of the situation. Later Mahtab came
to know that evidence was being led that he was the chief instigator for the murder of Major Bazalegette. Mahtab came to Gandhiji and discussed the matter. Gandhiji referred Mahtab to Agatha Harrison who was in Delhi. Agatha Harrison spoke to the Viceroy and arranged a meeting between Mahtab, Col Robson and the Political Agent who had taken Bazalegette's place. Things were smoothened up. Later when Mahtab visited London as the Chief Minister of Orissa, Agatha Harrison gave a party to meet Mahtab and in her quiet way introduced the chief guest as one who had escaped the gallows!

From 1939 to 1945 India was passing through shifting political currents. The India Conciliation Group alongwith Agatha Harrison kept itself well posted and tried to help the Indian cause. Sir Stafford Cripps had been contacted by Agatha Harrison before he came on his mission to India for ending the political deadlock. She herself was busy in meeting the official and the non-official dignitaries in England and was in correspondence with Gandhiji all through.

She visited India as a delegate to the All India Women's Conference in December 1945. She saw a sullen India on her arrival at Bombay which was riot-torn. She accompanied Gandhiji to Calcutta, Bombay and other places. The Cabinet Mission was in Delhi and she was with Gandhiji in the Harijan Colony, very close to the Viceroy's house. When the mission ended in June 1946 Agatha Harrison flew back to London. In this visit she was in India for seven and a half months. Gandhiji told her again: "God will direct your steps in your work for India." Agatha did not meet Gandhiji again. But the flame that had been lit in her did not die out with Gandhiji's assassination.

Gandhiji's affection for Agatha will be evident from the fact that just before his fast in 1932 Gandhiji had written to Agatha alongwith letters to Tagore and Srinivas Sastrī regarding the step he was about to take. Again in 1933 when Gandhiji started another fast he wrote to Agatha: "I know that I shall have your spiritual cooperation during the coming ordeal."

Agatha Harrison was with Vithalbhai Patel on his sick bed in Geneva. Gandhiji was happy at this and in a letter to Agatha gave her a pen-picture of Patel's funeral procession in Bombay: "They identified themselves with the cause for which he stood, viz., India's unadulterated Independence, not of association with Britain but undoubtedly of the slightest control. That the people are today
helpless and unable to help themselves does not affect their mentality. They know what they want and they seize every occasion that appears to them to let the world know their mind.” He wanted Agatha to bring Subhas Bose back to India. He also kept her informed about the progress made by the untouchability movement. The political situation at that time was stifling and he observed in a letter to Agatha Harrison: “The insatiable desire for humiliating everybody and every organisation is terrible.” Concluding his Harijan tour in August 1934 Gandhiji decided to undergo another fast and wrote to Agatha: “I entered upon the little fast at 6 A.M. today. It is a fitting finish to the Harijan tour. It is a great spiritual instrument.” At that time there was an oppression of the Red Shirts or the Khudai-Khidmatgars, sponsored by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who had been put under detention. Gandhiji wrote to her: “If the so-called Red Shirts are violent, I must know them and disown them. If they are not, I must defend them. I go to Bengal to wean the terrorists from terrorism and not to find any truth as in the Frontier Province.”

Gandhiji in another letter had referred to the Khan brothers: “as a rare type of humanity.” He appreciated Agatha Harrison’s contribution in getting Jawaharlal Nehru released and described the work as “humanitarianism.”

The Indian Conciliation Group had suggested that Rajagopalachari or some important leaders should be sent to England to help the people understand India’s case. In a letter dated April 4, 1935 Gandhiji wrote to Agatha that he had no faith in the deputation “as the official belief was that the Indians were incapable of governing themselves and in this context no front rank man would think of going to England.” Gandhiji bemoaned: “There never has been within living memory such unbending attitude on the part of the Government and it is naked sword that is being dangled before India at the present moment. I regard it as a trial from above.” But on June 13, 1936 Gandhiji wrote: “I did not mean that we have not to convert Englishmen.... It is not our fitness what is in doubt but our harmfulness...I never meant it is wrong for any Indian to go there.” In another letter Gandhiji had written that Jawaharlal was the right man to go abroad on such a mission but the time was not yet ripe.

It will be interesting to know how Gandhiji reacted in a letter to Agatha Harrison when the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee was published. He wrote; “The thing is that you do
not know Sir Samuel Hoare. The Indian Government has always been one man’s rule. Sir Samuel Hoare’s philosophy demands that Indian wishes should not be consulted much less respected except when they reflect those of his advisers. The latter have made up their minds that the White Paper, now the J.P.C. Report is the last word. The Congress has decided that nothing is acceptable unless its wishes are taken into account.” Gandhiji wanted that the kind hearted Britishers should sympathise with India and a change in the Constitution should be made only “by the consent of the governed.”

The debate on India’s future Constitution was going on in Parliament in 1937. Gandhiji had written to Agatha that “Complete independence was the creed of the Congress”. He continued: “Perhaps you do not know the difficulty we have to combat here. It is impossible to have mental reservations when you have millions of mankind to deal with especially when you are training them not for an armed rebellion but for a peaceful revolution as yet unknown to history. I want you therefore not to be agitated over what the diplomats say there or here—your and my just and last care is to hold on to the anchor at all costs but say nothing in anger, nothing equivocal, nothing short of the whole truth and then leave the result to the unseen and uncanny power that overrules our petty decisions at its own sweet will.”

This great confidence that Gandhiji had in this lady was fully reciprocated by her as long as Gandhiji lived, and even afterwards.

Agatha came to India again in January 1949. Gandhiji had been laid to rest. She was in free India and saw the changes, Sarojini Naidu as the Governor and the Congress ministries in the States. She was, however, struck by the great problem of the refugees both in India and Pakistan which she had visited. She was in Calcutta to work with the Friend’s Service Unit in a troubled mill area in Hoogly. She planned to visit India again but died before she could fulfil the desire. Her last wish was to work for the refugees and that was not fulfilled. She passed away literally in harness while working in Geneva in the Asian Conference.
Aghornath Chattopadhyaya

Dr Aghornath was one of the earliest Indian pioneers in spreading nationalism and particularly the cult of *Swadeshi* in a princely state whom Gandhiji had never personally met. But the link between the two was Sarojini Naidu, daughter of Aghornath. In 1915 when Gandhiji returned from South Africa to India, Sarojini Naidu was already his favourite and she had repeatedly invited Gandhiji to Hyderabad to meet her father. Gandhiji could not fulfil her request. On the death of Aghornath the same year Sarojini wrote a very affectionate letter to Gandhiji and described her father as a great soul who had many points in common with him and she sorely regretted that Gandhiji could not meet him in person. The work of people like Dr Aghornath Chattopadhyaya in different parts of India, particularly in the princely states made Gandhiji’s work much easier in later times. Aghornath anticipated Gandhiji’s move decades earlier and made a lasting contribution to the growth of Indian nationalism. Hyderabad State under the Nizam and the iron-clad British bureaucracy was a preserve and it required superhuman nerves, freedom of mind and energy to spread the cult of *Swadeshi* in an area like the Nizam’s Dominions. Aghornath’s work was all the more great because he was not a political demagogue but essentially a conservative educationist to whom the world of science was a heaven. He had obtained a Doctorate in Chemistry from Edinburgh but there was hardly any science subject in his days that he did not know and he was also a successful alchemist. He had been able to extract silver from shrubs and was experimenting to extract gold when he died.

Aghornath was born in a middle class Brahmin family of Bikramganj which is now in Bangla Desh. He was a brilliant student of the Presidency College in Calcutta. Along with 20 other young men who were the flowers of Calcutta University of their time, Aghornath embraced Brahmoism under Keshab Chandra Sen, a famous preacher of the Brahmo Samaj of the seventies in the last century. He then obtained a scholarship and went to Edinburgh from where he got his Doctorate in Chemistry and also won the much coveted Gilchrist scholarship. He was also the Baxter Physical
Science scholar and Hope Prizeman. After his degree in Edinburgh he also studied at the Bonn University. Aghornath knew Sanskrit, French, German and Russian.

In 1853 after the death of Siraj-ul-Mulk, the Chief Minister, Salarjung was called upon by the Nizam to take charge of the office of the Dewan or the Chief Minister of the Hyderabad State. Salarjung took charge on May 31, 1853 and inherited a chaotic legacy. There was very little of civil administration. There was an iron grip of the British Resident. Debts of the State to local merchants and others had amounted to two crores and seventy lakhs of rupees for which Berar had to be ceded.

Salarjung was a man of progressive ideas. Brought up in the lap of gross feudalism he had a certain amount of vision and wanted to recruit bright youngmen to revive the moribund departments of the administration. He knew that the Education Department needed a bright intellectual and when visiting abroad in 1877 he chose Dr Aghornath and offered him the onerous job of introducing English education in Hyderabad. Aghornath accepted this challenging task and arrived in Hyderabad about 1878. Almost immediately a school was established with English as the medium of instruction. Soon after, a college, the ‘Hyderabad College’ was founded and affiliated to the Madras University. Dr Aghornath was its founder-Principal. This College is even now in existence, re-named “Nizam College”. It still has a portrait of Aghornath. The College immediately drew hundreds of students and scholars and became almost a place of pilgrimage.

Dr Aghornath soon turned his attention to the education of women and with the untiring help and efforts of his wife, Varada Sundari Devi, and a couple of other enlightened women, opened a school for girls, the first of its kind, in Nampalli. It is this small beginning that has now developed into the present well-established College for Women, affiliated to the Osmania University. Other girls’ schools sprang up rapidly and became very popular.

This intellectual group at Aghornath’s instance formed an association called the Anjuman-e-Ikwan-us-Safa (The Brotherhood Society). This association met often to discuss ways and means of tackling the social and political problems of the country. Women’s emancipation was one of the objectives.

Salarjung died on February 8, 1883 and the administration of Hyderabad was entrusted to a Council of Regency consisting of some
prominent noblemen of Hyderabad under the Presidency of the Nizam. The Council of Regency soon after was confronted with a great agitation, known as "The Chanda Railway Scheme".

The scheme was that the existing State Railway running from Hyderabad to Wadi should be taken over by a British company which would extend the gauge to Warangal and thence on one side to Bhadrachalam or to Bezwada and on the other to Chanda. The people were not taken into confidence and it was a common belief that the Hyderabad Government was embarking on an uneconomic project. The reticence of the administration to give out the details was extremely unwise as by this time an educated class had grown up in Hyderabad and public opinion had begun to form. The intellectuals and publicmen set up a committee known as "The Committee to Consider the Chanda Railway Scheme" under the leadership of Dr Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and Mulla Abdul Qayum. Dr Aghornath at this time was working as the Principal of the Hyderabad College. The Committee felt that the full facts of the Chanda Railway Scheme should be placed before the public. This was the first time that popular resentment was expressed in a concrete way and a demand was made to know why a certain administrative measure was contemplated. This was too much for either the Council of Regency or the officials of the Residency. The result was that Dr Aghornath Chattopadhyaya was suspended from service and deported from Hyderabad on May 20, 1883 in an unceremonious manner and was escorted by eleven military men.

Both the Residency and the Nizam Government must have been convinced of the hollowness of the action as a few years after Aghornath was brought back and placed in charge of the college which later developed into the Nizam College.

It is indeed interesting but almost a forgotten fact that the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and its strengthening was greatly helped by a few people from the feudalistic State of Hyderabad. Aghornath, Mulla Abdul Qayum, Ramchandra Pillai and a few others belonged to a school of thought that ran against the political creed of Sir Saiyed Ahmad. Mulla Abdul Qayum, a Muslim from Madras whose family had settled in Hyderabad, openly spread the Congress movement in the Hyderabad State. He was an employee in the Survey and Settlement Department and had a life-long strong friendship with Aghornath. He was extremely progressive in his ideas and although severely reprimanded
by the State authorities, he remained undaunted and attended many of the sessions of the Congress till his death in 1906.

The Hyderabad Government did not support the Congress movement. In 1888, the Political and Financial Secretary of the Nizam Government was sent abroad and he threw all his strength against the Congress movement which he said had originated "with the so-called baboos or educated Bengalis." It is amazing that while Nawab Mehdi Ali, the Political and Financial Secretary would hold this view, Aghornath, Mulla Abdul Qayum and others had the courage to openly hold meetings for furthering the cause of the Indian National Congress. A series of articles appeared in the local newspaper Safir-e-Deccan in 1883 in support of the Congress movement. Both Mulla Abdul Qayum and Aghornath were pulled up severely by the State Government for their anti-government views.

The Swadeshi agitation emanating from Bengal became very popular throughout the Hyderabad State and articles with photographs of Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal used to be published quite commonly. Their photographs were published with legends of Bande-Mataram, "Use Swadeshi goods" widely. Dhotis, match boxes, soap, buttons and other articles made in India used to be imported and sold throughout Hyderabad. The Hyderabad State Government did not like this import of Swadeshi goods but could do nothing as British India had not imposed any restriction on their manufacture.

The Swadeshi cult in Hyderabad, however, did not remain non-violent. Mr Jackson, Collector of Nasik, was shot by a young Maratha student, Anant Lakshman Kanare on December 21, 1909. This was followed by widescale arrests and reprisals. A party in Hyderabad was detected manufacturing arms and ammunitions and sending them into British territory. In the list of suspects in the Police Chalan were the names of Dr Kibe, a lawyer of Aurangabad, Gopal Krishna, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Kale, Inspector of Schools and Sohoni, Superintendent of the Technical School. It is needless to mention that they were all punished. A number of persons from the Education Department were removed after Jackson's murder.

It was no wonder that excuses were found to retire Dr Aghornath on proportionate pension. The Science Department in his College was badly equipped and all his schemes for a modern and up-to-date laboratory were deliberately ignored by the Government with
a view to discredit him and then to replace him. When the Madras University Enquiry Commission came round they found an ill-equipped department. Strings were pulled; this great scientist and scholar was retired on proportionate pension and was sacrificed because of his progressive nationalistic ideas.

With the passing away of Aghornath in 1915 India lost a very colourful personality who was a nationalist to the core of his heart and one of the earliest to realise that the princely state should be awakened. His house in Calcutta after retirement was the rendezvous of the great and the small, the intellectual and the vagrant and at any time of the day his house was open for all types of men. Aghornath left a rich legacy in children but not in wealth. Besides Sarojini Naidu, the poet and the great nationalist, Aghornath's son Birendranath Chattopadhyaya was a revolutionary who led a life of political exile in Germany, and died there. Another son, Harindranath has made mark as a nationalist poet. Gandhiji was very fond of this family. Gandhiji was very keen to visit Aghornath and to imbibe inspiration from him but, unfortunately, before he could do so the great scientist passed away.
Annie Besant

Born on October 1, 1847 in London, Annie Besant came of an Irish family. In 1866 she married a young clergyman Rev Frank Besant, a young Cambridge Don. Even before her marriage she tried to break off the engagement. The marriage ties wore out very soon and were finally broken in 1873.

Annie Besant had turned to atheism even when she was the wife of a clergyman. As a member of the Free Thought Society she came in contact with Charles Bradlaugh and an intimate friendship grew between them which lasted till the death of Bradlaugh severed the bond. Both Bradlaugh and Besant had the mental strength to scoff at the insinuations hurled at them. In all the political and social struggles of Bradlaugh from 1874, Annie Besant stood steadfast by him. Both of them after careful deliberation publicised a book on Family Planning which had been published much earlier, advocating conjugal responsibility and prudence against reproduction. A Bristol bookseller added some obscene pictures to the book for which he was prosecuted and convicted. Bradlaugh and Besant republished the pamphlet as they thought there was a right of free discussion on the population question. This led to their prosecution and Annie Besant’s pleading was held to be magnificent. A sentence of six months’ imprisonment and a fine were imposed but in the higher court the sentence was quashed.

Annie Besant joined journalism under the influence of Bradlaugh. She was one of the pioneers of socialistic, women and labour welfare work in England. Her contribution to the Fabian Society from 1885 onwards was remarkable.

Later Annie Besant became a very intimate friend of the great journalist, William Stead, a strange combination of a Christian and an atheist but the common bond was passion for progress and hatred against oppression. Her zeal for journalism, writing and publishing received a very great encouragement from Stead. She worked hard during this period against sweating labour, starvation wages, amenities for the dockers and the children in the slums. For years she was the Secretary of one of the strongest Women’s Trade Unions in England.
Then this lady came under the influence of Madame Blavatsky and Col Olcott and spoke and wrote on "Why I became a Theosophist". The conversion of Annie Besant, an atheist, to the fold of Theosophy, stirred up a furor but she was undaunted. Annie Besant as a thinker was, by now, an inspired genius and her public addresses, writings and social and political work received a much more dedicated slant. She was by then one of the best orators in England who could keep the audience spellbound. With this as her background she had come to India.

Gandhiji’s first contact with Annie Besant was in England through his love of Theosophy. On his admission Gandhiji had crossed the "Sahara of Atheism" when he was in England as a student and had turned to Theosophy. Mrs Annie Besant was then very much in the limelight and had turned to theism from atheism and Gandhiji had read her book, "How I became a Theosophist". Annie Besant was at that time attached to Charles Bradlaugh. Once Gandhiji had been taken to the Blavatsky Lodge and was introduced to Annie Besant. Gandhiji had followed with great interest the controversy about Annie Besant’s conversion.

When Charles Bradlaugh was buried in the Woking Cemetery he had attended the funeral and had again a glimpse of Annie Besant there.

Gandhiji’s regard for Annie Besant was great and when he once came to India from South Africa in 1901 he planned to go to Banaras to pay his respects to Mrs Besant who was then ill. By then Mrs Besant had settled in Banaras and was already a prominent figure both in the circle of theosophists and in that of the politicians who held advanced views about India’s future. Gandhiji saw Annie Besant but the interview was brief as Gandhiji did not want to prolong his visit because of Annie Besant’s delicate health.

The next phase of Gandhiji’s relationship with Annie Besant was when Gandhiji had come back to India permanently in 1915. At Nellore on May 5, 1915, a reception was given to Gandhiji and his wife. At this meeting Annie Besant paid a great compliment to Gandhiji for his self-sacrificing spirit to a great ideal and for under-scoring that there was no dishonour in courting imprisonment for an ideal. Mrs Besant had also participated in a public reception in honour of Gandhiji at Madras a few days later. Here also Annie Besant paid a compliment to Gandhiji. But rift was in the offing as Mrs Besant was not very sure of Gandhiji.
It appears that Gandhiji’s career in South Africa had given rise to a certain amount of misgivings to the stalwarts in Indian politics as they held that Gandhiji was, more or less, unpredictable. To some extent this was the view of Annie Besant and even Gopalkrishna Gokhale who was Gandhiji’s political Guru. Tilak also did not take very kindly to Gandhiji at the beginning. Surendranath Banerjee was also not very affable. Gokhale wanted Gandhiji to join the Servants of India Society and then Gandhiji’s application for membership was turned down by him.

This is one of the reasons why Gandhiji had met with a cold reception at various places in the course of his tours to different places in India in 1915. Gokhale had advised Gandhiji not to open his lips quickly but to go round India, meet leaders and form his own opinion before he spoke or decided on any definite political work.

On February 6, 1916 Gandhiji spoke on the occasion of the opening of the Banaras Hindu University. This was due to the untiring efforts of Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malaviya and a few others. Lord Hardinge was present to inaugurate and the Maharajadhiraj of Darbhanga was the Chairman. There was a brilliant gathering of princes and zamindars in their costly robes and jewellery. A sight of all this had filled Gandhiji with misgivings and he made no secret of them when he was called upon to speak immediately after Annie Besant. In his speech he referred to “the matchless eloquence” of Besant but immediately after twitted at the solicitude of the Maharaja—President who spoke about the poverty of India. He referred to the glittering jewellery that he saw before him and the tight security forces for giving protection to the Viceroy. In his speech Gandhiji referred to the anarchists and their bomb-cult, when Mrs Besant intervened and blurted out ‘please stop it.’ The Chairman, however, allowed him to continue. But the speech had to end abruptly as there was a movement on the platform to leave. This was followed by an acrimonious and probably avoidable newspaper controversy in which both Gandhiji and Annie Besant took part. Letters were published in Annie Besant’s New India and other papers. The rift had begun.

For some time both Gandhiji and Annie Besant brooked each other. Gandhiji had approached Annie Besant for help in his work of recruitment to the Armed Forces. On May 14, 1917 Annie Besant had sought help from Gandhiji in formulating a comprehensive scheme of education which would be a substitute for the Government
Educational Service which was crushing out patriotism and a sense of pride in the country. Mrs Besant wanted an alternative to train Indian students “to look forward to a life honourable to themselves and useful to the country.” She wanted G.S. Arundale to be the Honorary Registrar of the Board which will be under the Theosophical Educational Trust.

It appears that Gandhiji had refused to agree to some suggestions of Annie Besant. On June 7, 1917 Annie Besant had written to Gandhiji: “Thank you for your letter. None of us can wholly understand each other, but we can trust to purity of motive and willingness to sacrifice all. God needs many workers on different lines. Knowing this, I can myself always work with such people on any line on which we agree, and leave the disagreements on other lines. But I do not ask others to share this feeling. God be with you.”

On Annie Besant’s birthday in 1919 Gandhiji paid a homage to her and described his feelings when he saw her first in 1889, and mentioned that since then he had followed her career with unabated interest. He observed therein, “I have sharp differences of opinion with her as to the methods of work. I have also been hurt to feel at times that she has lost her robust independence of 1888.... But I have never wavered in my belief in her great devotion to India... I have no doubt that she has popularised Home Rule in a manner no other person has.”

The real rift began because of Annie Besant’s attitude towards non-cooperation. She did not like the negative side of the Non-Cooperation movement and the idea that the Muslims should join the non-cooperation movement and that the Khilafat question should be tied up with the non-cooperation move. She wrote and spoke incessantly against the techniques of non-cooperation. On May 2, 1920 Gandhiji observed in Navajivan.

“Mrs Besant has passed strong strictures against non-cooperation. Her services to India have been so invaluable, her industry so great and her love for India so fine a thing that I cannot but hesitate to criticise her statements or express my differences with her.”

The rift continued to be more acute. Annie Besant who was at one time the idol of the political platform in India and had presided over the Congress Sessions in Calcutta in 1917 was very badly heckled in the same city in 1920 Sessions of the Congress. The audience will not hear her and Gandhiji had to intervene and ask the
audience to listen to her. But Gandhiji also gave vent to his own personal feelings when he said she had taken up "a position which is wilfully inimical to the interests of the country." He wanted, however, the audience to have respect for her and remember her "magnificent services to India."

The political friends of Annie Besant started dwindling away. There was a certain amount of controversy over S. Subramania Iyer, a Home Rule Leaguer, when he joined the Swaraj Movement of Gandhiji. It may be recalled that Gandhiji had definitely refused to join Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement. Annie Besant held that S. Subramania Iyer had been 'over-persuaded.' On May 10, 1919 Gandhiji replied to Annie Besant refuting this allegation and mentioned:

"It saddens me to see in your writing a new Mrs Besant and not the old Mrs Besant who in utter disregard of man-made laws, whether social or political, stood for truth against the whole world. It is tragic to think that you should now turn back upon your teachings and accuse me of 'leading young men of good impulses to break their most solemn pledges.' I cannot accept the charge but I would certainly advise everyone to break all the pledges he might have taken if they are contrary to truth. You deprive a fellow-being of his or her human dignity when you interpose between him and his conscience, an outsider, no matter how high-placed in spirituality he may appear to be. Those of your followers who obey the voice of conscience in preference even to your own instructions are loyal to you as truly as Prahlad was to his father... I shall continue to think of Mrs Besant whom from my youth I had come to regard as a great and living illustration of fearlessness, courage and truth.

You have written your note in grief. You do not know that greater grief you have caused and are causing to those who know your services to India and who love you for them."

Annie Besant who had started taking active share in Indian politics and had become one of the foremost fighters in India's freedom, by 1915, stood eclipsed by Gandhiji. Her Home Rule Movement sponsored in 1914 had spread to almost every major Indian town. Her weekly paper "Commonwealth" and the English daily "New India" with the caption "For God, Crown and Country" was appreciated by the Indian intelligentsia as one of the foremost newspapers. Her words from the political platform used to be treated as gospel truth. That such a lady should be isolated and comparatively friendless by Gandhiji is an unfortunate fact but this was due to the tidal wave of non-cooperation that was released by Gandhiji, and
Annie Besant's constitutionalism was drowned. Annie Besant wanted to fight the British Government through constitutional ways and she thoroughly disliked the Civil Disobedience Movement and the aftermath in the shape of communal strifes, shootings and arrests. The political upheaval that was brought about by the Non-Cooperation Movement was taken largely by Annie Besant and people of her thought to be the very negative contribution towards India's freedom. The throbbing reverberation in the country that Annie Besant along with a few others had brought in was lost in the nationwide upheaval due to Gandhiji.

The two again met on the question of the All Parties Conference in 1928. In this case Gandhiji was extremely anxious to enlist her support. But it was a different and disgruntled Annie Besant now who had once helped Gandhiji in raising a national memorial at Jallianwala Bagh and had observed that in that project there was "no feeling of hatred for the slayers but only of love for the slain." She had definitely become cool towards Gandhiji. Gandhiji who had written on October 5, 1919 in Navajivan: "It is indisputable that the service rendered to India by Annie Besant will ever remain memorable in the country's history" also lost that enthusiasm for Annie Besant in her later years.

Did Gandhiji still remember the episode at the Banaras Hindu University in 1916 when he had to conclude his speech abruptly due to the intervention of Annie Besant and had written a letter in The Hindu on February 17, 1916 which ended as follows:

"But for Mrs Besant's interruption, I would have concluded my speech within a few minutes and no possible misconception about my views on anarchism would have arisen."

It will be recalled that on Annie Besant's birthday in 1919 Gandhiji had paid a warm tribute to her. He wrote:

"It was in 1889 that I first paid my respects to Mrs Besant when I was studying as a lad in London. I was privileged to do so by the courtesy of two English friends who were at the time ardent Theosophical students. She had only just joined the Theosophical Society there. Not much impression was created on my mind then. I really went not to have impressions but out of mere curiosity to see what this lady who was once an Atheist looked like. My friends had told me that she was the best among the living women orators in the world, and that Madame Blavatsky was in great joy over this big 'capture'. But when immediately after, I went to Queen's Hall, I went not to look at Mrs Besant but to listen to her. And the words she uttered then as she rose to
answer the charge of inconsistency have never faded from my memory. She said as she wound up her great speech which held her audience spell-bound that she would be quite satisfied to have the epitaph written on her tomb that she lived for truth and she died for truth. I had from my childhood an instinctive fascination for truth. The utter sincerity with which, I felt, she spoke these words captivated me and ever since I have followed her career with unabated interest and always with admiration for her boundless energy, her great organising ability and her devotion to the work she might have made her own for the moment. I have sharp differences of opinion with her as to methods of work. I have also been hurt to feel at times that she has lost her robust independence of 1888 and her uncompromising search after and adherence to truth at all costs. But in the midst of all my doubts, I have never wavered in my belief in her great devotion to India. It is no small gain for India to have her many gifts dedicated to her cause with a single-mindedness few of her natural born sons and daughters can claim. I have no doubt that she has popularised Home Rule in a manner no other person has. May she be spared for many a long year to serve the country she has made her own."

For the same birthday Gandhiji had written also very warmly in Gujarati Navajivan on October 5, 1919. In that article he had particularly mentioned:

"She has had a great Share in the political education of India. Even in England Mrs Besant is agitating for Home Rule for India. She is using all her resources for the cause of Home Rule. There may be differences of opinion about Mrs Besant's ideas and her methods of work, but there can be none about her service to India. Not only is she considered the best woman speaker in the world, very few even among men could rival her eloquence. Her pen has great force. For many years, this lady has been using all these great powers in the service of India, and for this the country will ever remain grateful to her. And so the prayer, 'Long live Mrs Besant!' is really speaking, a prayer for our benefit."

The result of Gandhiji's later attacks on her was that Annie Besant lost completely her hold on Indian politics. She turned more and more to Theosophy and her brother Theosophists. In the last few years of her life she led a secluded and most undisturbed life in the campus of the Theosophical Halls at Adyar in Madras. Exactly to the minute at 4 p.m. on September 20, 1933 she passed away.
Avantika Bai Gokhale

Mrs Avantika Bai Gokhale who passed away on March 26, 1949 was one of the great women workers under Gandhiji. She did remarkable service to India in the Champaran district in 1917.

One of the earliest co-workers of Gandhiji, Avantika Bai came from Bombay to Champaran with her husband, Babban Gokhale, an engineer, at Gandhiji’s call to take up the work of social uplift which the latter had started together with his work to set right the agrarian grievances of Champaran ryots against the European indigo planters. It was a unique work requiring a special technique of village uplift. It was a work in which the volunteers were to live with the villagers and share their daily life, food and thought. He wanted that the workers will, by living example, in thought and deed, share the sorrows and joys of the uneducated, backward and frustrated villagers. Their difficulties were to be appreciated and a solution to be found out which was within easy means. For example, to teach village sanitation he told the inhabitants to go out for morning ablution with shovel with which the human excreta could be covered up by the persons themselves. He wanted lifeful village schools to be started in the remote corners of the district where the dirty ill-clad children would be bathed, clothed and fed. He wanted the women to absorb the ideas of sanitation, health, simple cooking and other allied matters so that they could be the true mates of their husbands. For all this work Gandhiji gathered round him a few workers from outside Bihar and one of them was this selfless lady Avantika Bai Gokhale. Kasturba was the chief lieutenant. Avantika Bai was highly cultured and educated and had travelled abroad. Her husband Babban Gokhale, a foreign-trained engineer had seen life in various places. He had also come to work in Champaran under Gandhiji’s guidance.

The first question that Gandhiji had put to this couple, on the arrival at Motihari, was in which class they had travelled in the railway. On their replying that they had travelled all the way from Bombay in a third class compartment, Gandhiji was highly delighted. The first school started by Gandhiji was at village Barharwa Lakhan- sen, about 20 miles from Motihari. This school was put under the
charge of Avantika Bai Gokhale, her husband Babban Gokhale and Gandhiji’s son Devdas Gandhi. The party travelled from Motihari in a motor car of Mr. Ram Dayalu Sahu of Motihari and a meeting was held after which the school was opened. The names of the first batch of students were entered in a register by Gandhiji himself.

As to the work of women in the school, I quote from Gandhiji’s “My Experiments with Truth”:

“So I issued a public appeal for voluntary teachers. It received a ready response. Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande sent Babasaheb Soman and Pundarik. Mrs Avantika Bai Gokhale came from Bombay and Mrs Anandibai Vaishampayan from Poona. I sent to the Ashram for Chhotalal, Surendranath and my son Devdas. About this time Mahadev Desai and Narahari Parikh, with their wives, cast in their lot with me. Kasturba was also summoned for the work. This was a fairly strong contingent. Mrs Avantikabai and Mrs Anandibai were educated enough, but Mrs Durga Desai and Mrs Manibenn Parikh had nothing more than a bare knowledge of Gujarati, and Kasturba not even that. How were these ladies to instruct the children in Hindi?

“I explained to them, that they were expected to teach the children not grammar and the three R’s so much as cleanliness and good manners. I further explained that even as regards letters there was not so great a difference between Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi as they imagined, and in the primary classes, at any rate, the teaching of the rudiments of the alphabet and numerals was not a difficult matter. The result was that the classes taken by these ladies were found to be most successful. The experience inspired them with confidence and interest in their work. Avantika Bai’s became a model school. She threw herself heart and soul into her work. She brought her exceptional gifts to bear on it. Through these ladies we could, to some extent, reach the village women.

“But I did not want to stop at providing for primary education. The villages were insanitary, the lanes full of filth, the wells surrounded by mud and stink and the courtyards unbearably untidy. The elderly people badly needed education in cleanliness. They were all suffering from various skin diseases. So it was decided to do as much sanitary work as possible and to penetrate every department of their lives.”

Later on the spinning wheel became the constant companion of Avantika Bai and she would not let a single birthday of Gandhiji go without offering him a piece of cloth woven by her and out of her own spun-out yarn. In the school at Barharwa, Avantika Bai and her husband taught weaving to about 40 women. They would
themselves clean the villages. Besides teaching in the school Avantika Bai faithfully carried out one of Gandhiji’s objects in starting the said school which was described by Gandhiji himself as “teachers will also touch the lives of many and if at all possible penetrate the Purda.”

Avantika Bai was a noble soul and she cast around her the purity of her character. In her work outside her home she did not neglect her household. She was an excellent housewife, a very affectionate friend and hostess and nothing delighted her more than coming across an old acquaintance from Bombay in her new home at Champaran. She was one of the God’s chosen good women who radiated peace and service, and brought outsiders into her own family fold. She was rightly described by Mr Pyarelal as “an example par excellence of this type of emancipated womanhood. She was highly cultured and educated in the truest sense of the term. She was a devoted wife and a valued helpmate to her husband and impressed everybody who came in contact by her courage, fearlessness, balanced judgment, serenity, gentleness, purity and strength of character.”

Many did not know her during her lifetime as she shunned the glare of publicity, din and bustle, and led a quiet life. She was a true follower of Gandhiji but she had a mind of her own. For years after coming in contact with Gandhiji she would not wear Khadi. Once in her presence another woman had pointed this out to Gandhiji. With a smile in his eyes Gandhiji had observed that Avantika Bai knew best when she should take to Khadi and that he would be the last person to force this on her. In later years she would spin and present Gandhiji with cloth to wear. She was a great organiser and the way she ran the school in Champaran district and did the other domestic chores in the village Ashram won every one’s admiration and regard. Kasturba was just literate and had some prejudices at the time she was called upon to run the social programme of Gandhiji to help the Bihari villagers. Avantika Bai took Kasturba in her hands and by her gentle manner of work, talk and persuasion completely won her over. The two made a great team. No one would believe at that time that she was highly educated and had been to foreign countries because she had become a real Bihari villager to do her work.
Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak passed away on the midnight of July 31, 1920 in Bombay a few hours before Gandhiji inaugurated his great movement. Questions have been asked if Tilak would have fully endorsed Gandhiji and if Gandhiji was right in sponsoring his bastra yagna (burning of foreign cloth) at the memorial meeting of Tilak which was addressed by him.

Tilak was essentially an intellectual and a scholar. He started as an educationist and remained as such till the last. The Deccan Education Society, Poona, is one of his handiwork. His great scholastic books on Mathematics and Astronomy are still authoritative. His fond dream was to serve as Professor of Mathematics after India got Swarajya.

Tilak’s books ‘Orion’, and ‘The Arctic Home of the Vedas’ were results of his deep research and thoughts. He was a journalist with very great catholicity of mind and independence of views. His two papers The Mahratta and The Kesari were read at one time by every educated man of the region. When he was arrested in 1897 on the charge of sedition following the killing of Rand and Lt. Ayerst, Prof. Maxmueller intervened and Tilak was released. His scholarship in particular disciplines was well-known even abroad.

He was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council for some years and his considered opinion was “The work of the Bombay Legislative Council is a huge joke.” He did not seek re-election. He was a keen social worker. His organisation of famine and plague relief work in 1896-97 brought him more in touch with the suffering humanity. Thus in various ways, through his books, his journals, political and social work, Tilak came into great prominence. His slogan “Swaraj is my birth-right,” had once sent a thrill to lakhs of people all over the country.

Tilak soon strayed into politics and could be described as the founder of the school of militant nationalism, directly opposed to Ranade and Gokhale School of Thought which aimed at working for India’s emancipation through the British connection. Through his papers Mahratta and Kesari, speeches and writings Tilak propounded his militant nationalism and very soon Maharashtra
came under his influence and through Maharashtra the other parts of India. He was a genius for creating mass leadership and he joined traditional religious sentiments to his ideas of nationalism. It is with this view that he encouraged the Shivaji and Ganpati festivals. The Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay in 1893 gave him a jolt and he underlined physical development as a part of his creed of nationalism. From 1889 he was associated with the Indian National Congress. He had attended most Congress sessions till his death and his was a powerful voice in the Congress politics. "Lal-Bal-Pal" dominated the Congress for decades. It is a pity that despite several considerations he was never made the President of the Congress.

Tilak became a staunch nationalist after having joined politics in 1899 when he had decided to cut-off his relations with the Deccan Education Society. He soon came in contact with Gandhiji and both had the very intimate type of mutual admiration, though they differed in some of their ideologies. On December 23, 1907 in a public meeting at Surat, Tilak had praised the Passive Resistance Movement of Gandhiji in Transvaal. In 1908 he endorsed Gandhiji’s view that the Swaraj movement need not foster an intolerant attitude and that India could still have Englishmen after getting Swaraj. Gandhiji reciprocated Tilak’s admiration by commenting on Tilak’s deportation by writing an article in the Indian Opinion on August 1, 1908.

Their first meeting was in 1896 when Gandhiji had come to India to canvass public opinion on the issue of colour prejudice in South Africa. Gandhiji admired Tilak’s popularity and Tilak’s solicitude for his movement. He compared Tilak with the ocean while he thought Gokhale was like the Ganges and Sir Pherozeshah as the Himalayas. In 1901 at the Congress Session in Calcutta their relationship was cemented. Their friendship grew when Gandhiji returned to India for good in 1915.

But Gandhiji was at that time an admirer of the British Constitution and helped recruitment of the Indians for the War. Tilak had twitted Gandhiji that when he got his fingers burnt he would also side with him and give up his faith in the British. It was through Tilak that Gandhiji was elected to the Subjects Committee in 1916 at the Lucknow Congress.

Gandhiji had attended some of the Bombay provincial conferences organised by Tilak. At Godhra Conference on November 3, 1917 Gandhiji had spoken about his conception of Swaraj. In December
1917 the Subjects Committee of the Congress at Calcutta had proposed to include Gandhiji in the Congress deputation to England and to make him the leader of the deputation. The move failed and Tilak had remarked to Srinivasa Shastri that "Mahatmaji has one method. Those who accept it win him. He would not play into the hands of others and would not waste his energy in using others as a tool."

It may be recalled that Gandhiji had protested to Lord Willingdon that he was unwilling to speak on the War Resolution and to serve in any Committee unless men like Tilak were brought in. Gandhiji's boycott of the War Conference was mostly due to the influence of Tilak. In his heart of hearts Gandhiji was keen to avail of the opportunity and he sincerely thought that through military service India would gain a lot, and Independence would be granted on a platter after the War. Gandhiji had once bitterly opposed Tilak at Surat because of his obstinacy and dictation that no one should join the War efforts. Gandhiji had written a letter to Manasukulal Raoji Bhai Mehta on August 17, 1918 that he did not believe in Tilak's politics of tit for tat. In another letter dated August 25, 1918 to Tilak, Gandhiji mentioned that he did not propose to attend the Congress which was by then bifurcated and the Moderates were going to meet separately. In this letter he had mentioned that his view was that the work of recruitment for war should be taken up and that the substance of the Montagu-Chelmsford's scheme should be accepted. Gandhiji did not attend the Moderates' Conference under Surendranath Banerjee either. According to Tilak, the Reforms Scheme was a good report with a useless scheme.

But the publication of the Rowlatt Report brought them nearer again. In June 1918 Tilak had written to Gandhiji: "When you get your fingers burnt in playing with this government, I am sure you will go ahead of me." The prophecy came very true. Gandhiji became an arch anarchist and moved for the throwing away of the British administration with greater zeal than Tilak at the later stage.

Although Tilak differed from Gandhiji's ideology, he was full of praise for the passive resistance or Satyagraha. Tilak had fully supported the Satyagraha Movement and from England had extended his support to it through his papers Kesari and Mahratta. On his
return from England, Tilak expressed his regret publicly that he could not join the Satyagraha campaign.

Tilak’s estimate of Gandhiji in 1918 is clear from what he wrote as preface to the biography of Gandhiji by Mrs Avantika Bai Gokhale who had worked with Gandhiji in Champaran (Bihar):

“In my opinion, not much trouble is necessary to find out the reasons why Mahatma Gandhi’s life should become worthy of being followed... few have been able to show that they are men of high character, which enables one to master the field of one’s activity or subjugate and control one’s announcements by reason of one’s high moral status. This is an outstanding characteristic of Mahatma Gandhi....”

“...Gandhiji devised the way of passive resistance ...This passive resistance, or Satyagraha as he terms it, is discovered by him and he has sanctified it by his penance....”

“...Although this spiritual power is not attainable by learning or intellect, a determined man can attain it by practice of penance and utter selflessness according to the Geeta, that the lives of great men and noble men are useful to build our character is due to this one who is naturally virtuous finds his tendencies strengthened by the study of the lives of such men. They are a powerful aid to those who are weak and feeble-minded. Gandhiji’s life is such a life and I heartily recommend that it should be studied from this point of view to build one’s mental strength and spiritual power.”

He passed away in the night preceding the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhiji.

The special session of the Congress at Calcutta September 1920 under the Presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai mourned Tilak’s death. Gandhiji noted about the loss of Tilak in his autobiography and said that if he were alive he would give his benedictions to him. “He always allowed me to believe that the ties between us were of the closest.” Gandhiji had also said that even if he had not given his blessings it would still have been a privilege and an education for him and in spite of difference of opinion their “ties were of the closest kind.” Gandhiji also paid a homage to Tilak by associating Tilak’s name with his Swaraj Fund of one crore of rupees. He referred to Tilak’s death in Young India dated August 4, 1920 and mentioned that,

“No man of our times had the hold on the masses that Mr Tilak had, the devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of his people. His word was law among thousands. A
giant among men has fallen... for us, he will go down to the generations yet unborn as a maker of modern India. They will never forget his memory as of a man who lived for them and died for them... Let us exert for the only Lokmanya of India an imperishable movement by weaving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country."

In 1921 someone sent an anonymous letter to Gandhiji praising him for toeing the Tilak line in fighting for India’s freedom and calling him at the same time an imposter for claiming that he was a disciple of Gokhale. Challenging that letter Gandhiji in Young India of July 13, 1921 refuted the charge in an editorial comment:

"I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of late Lokmanya. I admire him like millions of his countrymen for his indomitable will, his vast learning, his love of country and above all, the purity of his private life, he captivated most of the imagination of his people. He breathed into us the spirit of Swaraj. No one perhaps realised the evil of the existing system of Government as Mr Tilak did. And in all humility I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. But I am conscious that my method is not Mr Tilak’s method... But I sincerely think, that Mr Tilak did not disbelieve in my method. I enjoyed the privilege of his confidence. And his last word to me in the presence of several friends was, just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent method if the people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts. I knew no other method, I can only hope that when the final test comes, the country will be proved to have assimilated the method of non-violent non-cooperation. Nor am I unaware of my other limitations. I can lay no claim to scholarship. I have not his power of organisation, I have no compact disciplined party to lead, and having been an exile for twenty-three years, I cannot claim the experience that the Lokmanya had of India. Two things we had in common to the fullest measure—love of the country and the pursuit of Swaraj..."
B. G. Horniman

Gandhiji was himself a journalist of no mean order, though he conceded that he read very little of newspapers and journals. But, nevertheless, he was very keen that the profession of journalism should be kept unsullied. He had a great regard for a few contemporary journalists. Ramanand Chatterjee, editor, *Modern Review* of Calcutta, Kalinath Roy, editor of *Tribune* in Lahore and B.G. Horniman of Bombay were the three journalists for whom he fought very hard. The trio got into trouble for their fearless exposure of various measures of the British Government in India and they had incurred the displeasure of the Government in some way or the other. Gandhiji took up their cause and wrote incessantly and moved the Government for redress of their grievances.

Horniman was born in Essex in 1873. He came to India in 1906 after working in several newspapers in London. Till 1913 he worked on the staff of *The Statesman* and then he came over to Bombay to join *The Bombay Chronicle* in association with Sir Pheroze Mehta. As editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, Horniman rose to the pinnacle of his fame as a journalist and he fully identified himself with the cause of India’s freedom. When Gandhiji launched the great agitation against the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the Rowlatt Bill, Horniman gave him full support and incurred the ire of the British Government. Horniman was also the author of two books on Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. One was “Amritsar and Our Duty to India” and the other was “Agony of Amritsar” (in collaboration with Helen Norments).

Horniman was unceremoniously deported to England on April 26, 1919 for his independent views and political activities. Gandhiji described him as “a brave and generous Englishman, who had fearlessly exposed wrong he had seen and an ornament to his race.”

Before Horniman’s deportation Gandhiji was in Bombay and Horniman actively participated in the meetings addressed by Gandhiji. On April 6, 1919 Bombay presented the sight of a city in mourning on the occasion of the day of national humiliation, prayers and sorrow at the passing of the Rowlatt Bill and kept a 24 hours fast. There was a mammoth meeting at Chowpatty addressed by Gandhiji.
Although very ill, Horniman attended this meeting and walked with difficulty when the procession was taken out.

Several Satyagraha leaflets were written and published by Gandhiji, and Horniman figured in them very prominently. Satyagraha leaflet No. 8 published from Bombay on April 28, 1919 was on the occasion of Horniman’s deportation. There was a scathing criticism of the Government and Gandhiji advised:

“What greater honour can be paid to Horniman than by adopting honesty as our watchword in our mercantile transactions?”

Satyagraha leaflet No. 9 issued on the same day was also devoted to the matter arising out of Horniman’s deportation. In this it was mentioned:

What we expect to attain by acclamations in ordinary movements, we often gain by silence in Satyagraha... and I therefore beseech all not to be agitated because they see no outward demonstration over Mr Horniman’s deportation. I ask them to be patient and to have full faith that by going along the path of Satyagraha, we shall meet our brother all the sooner for it.”

On April 29, 1919 Gandhiji addressed a letter to Mr Crerar, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Judicial Department, and explained the very difficult situation that has arisen out of Horniman’s deportation and suspension of the publication of The Bombay Chronicle by reason of the censorship orders. Gandhiji described the deportation as totally unjustifiable and the censorship orders quite unnecessary after his deportation.

Gandhiji went on issuing Satyagraha leaflets and advocating Horniman’s cause. Satyagraha leaflets No. 11, No. 12, No. 13 were also about Mr Horniman.

Sometime later when Bombay again observed a peaceful hartal Gandhiji wrote on May 12, 1919 that the men of Bombay have done true honour to Horniman and demonstrated to the Government that they disapproved of his deportation. There is no doubt that but for the restraining influence of Gandhiji there would have been serious bloodshed in Bombay over the deportation of Horniman, owing to the very great popularity Horniman had gained.

Horniman’s deportation was discussed in England and Mr Montagu had tried to justify Horniman’s deportation while defending the Defence of India Act. Gandhiji’s observation on this was “His remarks about Mr Horniman are totally unjust and untrue.” He
wrote in *Young India* on July 7, 1919 about Montagu’s observations and mentioned that they were utter mis-statements.

Gandhiji’s feeling about the injustice to Horniman could be understood if it is mentioned that he particularly mentioned about the deportation of Horniman in his instructions for Satyagrahis on June 15, 1919.

But it has to be mentioned that in spite of all that Gandhiji did, Horniman’s deportation was not withdrawn.

While in England, Horniman did not sit idle. The unjust deportation did not dumb his spirit and love for India. He wrote a series of articles on India in some issues of *The Catholic Herald* of London. The articles set the river Thames on fire as it were and the Secretary of State for India wired India to consider the prohibition of entry of *The Catholic Herald* into India. The articles were subsequently reproduced in the *Bombay Chronicle* which was then under the editorship of Marmaduke Picktall. The Indian Government asked Bombay Government to carefully consider the prohibition of entry of *The Catholic Herald* into India by means of a notification under the Sea Customs Act, 1878 and to suggest preventing reproduction of the articles in India. It was thought that Mr Horniman sent the articles enclosed in private letters to the Editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*.

Government of India, Home Department, Political File No. 47 deals with the file regarding this matter. The file is in the National Archives of India. The Bombay Government held that a notification under the Sea Customs Act for exclusion of *The Catholic Herald* would not be effective as articles were probably addressed to private individuals enclosed in letters. India Government agreed with this view and also that a prohibitory order under the Defence of India rules on *The Bombay Chronicle* would be open to serious objection on political grounds. But Bombay Government was asked to examine if *The Bombay Chronicle* could be prosecuted for the articles. The Advocate-General, Mr D.N. Bahadurji did not advise the prosecution and the idea was dropped.

*The Catholic Herald*, London, on June 4, 1921 had made a special announcement before releasing Horniman’s articles. It mentioned:

“Mr B.G. Horniman, the first of whose articles on India’s self-determination will appear in our next issue, has had a remarkable career in that country. One of the few Englishmen,
during the history of the British rule, who have espoused the cause of Indian freedom. Mr Horniman, as editor of the Bombay Chronicle, and as a recognised leader of the Indian National Movement, has played a leading part during the past seven years in the great agitation for 'Swaraj' (self-rule) which has culminated in the adoption of Mahatma Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation which is now puzzling and alarming the British Government.

Mr Horniman was in India during the Martial Law Terror of 1919. Too formidable a critic and antagonist of the Government, he was summarily deported to England and is now not allowed to return to India.

He will deal with the failure of imperialism in India to oust the spirit of the people, defenceless against the weapons of modern warfare, and the results are likely to be achieved by the great movement of passive resistance, now in progress."

Gandhiji was in correspondence with Horniman when he was in England under deportation. Horniman also kept him informed of the trends in England. In a letter to Gandhiji on July 30, 1919, Horniman refers to Patel-Montagu interview when the Secretary of State for India had refused to repeal the Rowlatt Act but was ready to cancel the orders against Gandhiji under the Defence of India Act. In this letter Horniman mentioned that Mrs Annie Besant had done useful work in England. In another letter dated September 23, 1920 Horniman wrote to Gandhiji: "The more I think, the more convinced I become in my own mind of the wrongness and futility of all violence and the certainty that, if India remains true to the ideals of Satyagraha and Ahimsa, she will win the greatest victory for humanity that the world has seen in our time." At the end he wrote: "Non-cooperation must be carried out as a whole in principle and practice."

For sometime Horniman edited India from London.

Horniman did not know a defeat. In 1926 he returned to India in spite of the deportation order and settled down in Bombay. He joined the Indian National Herald in Bombay and edited it for 3 years. He later rejoined The Bombay Chronicle. From 1933 till his retirement in 1945, Horniman was the editor of The Bombay Sentinel. In 1944 the Golden Jubilee of Horniman's journalistic career was celebrated. Horniman died on October 16, 1948.
Bipin Chandra Pal

Politics is a very unstable deity. There have been very few Churchills who retained their stature even after being thrown out from a very responsible political assignment. Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) was one of the pioneers who fought and suffered for India’s independence. In the *Swadeshi* days of Bengal (1905-1908), he was a fire-spitting prophet. His words were literally followed by lakhs in Bengal and alongwith Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak the trio came to be known as “Lal-Bal-Pal”, a red-rag to the Britishers. A man of unshaken principles and modern outlook, he gave a shape to the political philosophy of India that had caught the imagination of the Indians from the Punjab to Cape Comorin. Once when he was acquitted in a political case there were celebrations from Amritsar to Madras. It was the same militant nationalist Bipin Chandra Pal that had changed his views in his later life and propagated them with equal zeal and sang the praise of the British Empire and wanted India to be linked to her permanently. He was thrown out and completely ignored when the tide of Non-Cooperation Movement caught India and Pal had to go round the offices of some Anglo-British press to sell his articles. He literally died unsung and unhonoured. There have been very few Indian nationalists who have had Pal’s tragedy.

Pal was a self-made man. He was highly intellectual. His college education was very poor and he could not even pass the First Arts Examination of Calcutta University. In spite of that he started his career as a headmaster of a High School in Cuttack. His grasp of various subjects was tremendous, his pen vitriolic and his speeches fiery.

Very soon he found himself in the vortex of politics and overnight became a political leader and ‘one of the mightiest prophets of nationalism perhaps the best and most original thinker in the country,’ in the words of Aurobindo Ghose. The Bengal partition move of the Government led to the great *Swadeshi* agitation and Aurobindo Ghose, Surendranath Banerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal were the foremost leaders who took up the challenge. One of the greatest orators of the country, Pal could keep spellbound thousands
of listeners without the help of a microphone. The system of political philosophy and the type of nationalism preached by Pal was based on a deep study of Hindu theology and drew its inspiration from the emancipation movement initiated by the Brahmo Samaj and other eclectic bodies, and the contradictions of British imperialism in the context of the Indian aspirations for freedom.

Journalism claimed Pal early and his articles in *New India*, *Sandhya* (in Bengali), *Bande Mataram* were erudite and preached a militant gospel which was often interpreted wrongly as the cult of the self-imposed sufferings, the bomb and the blood. Long before Gandhiji had used the words *Swaraj* or Passive Resistance, Pal had advocated a dynamic programme of Passive Resistance for attaining *Swaraj*. He even made a scheme of boycott which was closely followed by Gandhiji later. In the very first issue of *New India*, Pal wrote an article underlying the importance of solving the economic problem and initiating a system of good education based on discipline and religion.

In the first decade of the 20th century, Pal was a nightmare to the British administration in India. He was held to be one of the pillars of the Extremist School of Indian Politics. He had given a clear lead for the boycott of British goods and his passionate speeches did wonders in furthering the boycott movement. He was against the policy of eternal begging for crumbs of self-government from the British. A string of national schools had cropped up when students in thousands came out of the schools at the appeal of the Indian leaders in the wake of partition of Bengal. Pal was practically in demand in distant places of Bengal and beyond. He, alongwith a few others, had later isolated Surendranath Banerjee, the uncrowned king of Bengal and his political Guru, as the extremists including Pal wanted complete Independence or *Swaraj*. He was able to create an atmosphere in which the Provincial Governor, Fuller had to resign. The stormy petrel that he was, Pal successively quarrelled with the management of several newspapers where he worked including the *Independent* of Motilal Nehru. The fiasco of the Calcutta Congress of 1906 was due mainly to Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose.

He was imprisoned for having refused to depose as a witness in the famous *Bande Mataram* case where C. R. Das had defended Aurobindo Ghose. His courage in refusing to give evidence in a political case has very few equals in the world. The *Bande Mataram*
prosecution of Pal was calculated to break his back. Bipin Chandra's release on March 9, 1908, was widely celebrated throughout the country with jubilation, feeding of the poor and illuminations.

Introspection and study during his six months of jail gave him a spiritual slant and he discovered in the national movement the expression of the Divine. On August 20, 1908, he left for England. Before his departure Pal had earned a reputation which was taken to be unshakable as a great Indian patriot. His idea of winning the Swaraj was crystal clear when he observed in a speech at Madras:

"We shall so work in the country, so combine resources of the people, so organise the forces of the nation, so develop the instinct of freedom in the country, that by these means we shall—shall in the imperative—compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us."

His conception of Swaraj was for the entire people and not for any particular section and this was to be hammered out by "non-aggressive resistance within the limits of law." The imprisonment he had courted voluntarily by refusing to give evidence against Aurobindo Ghose in the Bande Mataram case had given him a halo of martyrdom. Bengal worshipped him and India honoured him for what he had done.

Pal's political philosophy and conception of Indian nationalism was well spelt out in his book "The Spirit of Indian Nationalism", published in London in 1910. He had observed:

"The Nationalist Movement had been preceded by a general religious and social revival in India. This revival came as a reaction against the earlier movements of religious and social revolt, raised admittedly under the influence of European thoughts and ideas. This revolt was the direct result of the application of the canons of the dominant rationalistic thought of Europe of the later eighteenth and the early nineteenth century to the social and religious life of India. It represented what may be called the outer movement of the modern Indian consciousness. It was soon followed by the necessary return movement. The movement which preceded the present Nationalist Movement, represented really the return of the national consciousness to itself. It was not really a conflict between the progressive and conservative elements of Indian society, as superficial observers have tried to make it out, but a conflict between aggressive European and progressive Indian culture. It was India's mental and moral protest against the intellectual and ethical domination of Europe. In some sense, it was really the reflex action of the growing appreciation of Eastern, and specially Hindu thoughts,
and ideals in Europe and America. Just as foreign Christian missions have very materially helped to develop the self-consciousness of the Christian nations, as civilisers of the world, and benefactors of humanity, even so the Hindu and Buddhistic missionary activities in Europe and America have revealed India's place in the evolution of modern world-culture. All these worked together to create a new pride of race; and in this pride of race was really born the new National Spirit in the country. By all these various means the old hypnotism was slowly breaking away. What was needed was only the bold declaration of the new political ideal to complete this work.

The Nationalist School came into being, as a new political party in India, with such a declaration. National Autonomy, absolutely free of British control, they declared, was their political ideal. It was a bold declaration, no doubt; nothing like it had been heard before in British Indian politics. It almost staggered both the Government and the people. But the mere desire for freedom could not be punished as criminal. The Nationalist leaders also took care, while making this declaration, to publicly announce that, though absolute freedom was their ultimate ideal, considering the state of the country, wisdom counselled the pursuit of the legitimate ideal of absolute freedom, through absolutely peaceful and lawful means. The Government was powerless to punish peaceful people simply because they avowed their desire to be free. But while it staggered the authorities, it set the minds of the people free from the moral and intellectual bondage of the old political agitations of the country. As in religion and social life, India had commenced to claim her right to determine her own course of evolution herself, in the light of her own past, untrammeled by overbearing foreign thoughts and ideals; so, in politics also, she claimed her legitimate right of self-control and self-determination, to work out her own problems in her own way, freed from the bondage of European economic or political philosophy. Not self-government, whether colonial or otherwise, which expressed the idea of political freedom in the term of European thought and experience, but SWARAJ was proclaimed as the new ideal.”

Bipin Chandra Pal had spoken of SWARAJ long before Gandhiji had spoken about it. His connotation of Swaraj was as follows:

“This term—SWARAJ—fully represents the spirit of Indian Nationalism. The identification of the individual with the universal, the recognition of the freedom of the individual, not in himself as standing apart from the whole of which the individual is a part, but in and through that whole only, this is the very soul and essence of the concept Swaraj. This freedom is possible of realisation by those only who recognise unity in diversity, who see that there is really One Life, One Mind, One Will, One
Spirit, fulfilling itself through diverse instruments and in diverse ways; and, above all, who recognise in this Unity of the Self, as it is called in the Vedanta—the cancellation of all conflicts and the absolute settlement of all disputes. Viewing life and all its relations and activities from this supremely spiritual standpoint, the Indian Nationalist recognises a spiritual reference as much in religion proper as in his social economy and political laws and institutions. Politics is, with him, part of his larger religion; it is a department of the science or philosophy of salvation. And, it is therefore, that the word which signifies the highest spiritual end represents also the highest political ideal.

"This is the real spirit of Indian Nationalism. It is an essentially religious spirit. Its end is the realisation of God-life in and through the activities of the social and the political life. That end is absolutely assured but whether it will be reached by peaceful means or not will be determined by the capacity of British statesmanship to work out the problem that faces it in India.

"The Nationalist leaders fully realise their responsibility. They know that they stand before the bar of history and humanity. They are fully aware that if, by short-sighted impatience, and recklessness on the one hand, or by equally short-sighted lack of courage and candour on the other, they were to needlessly prolong or embitter the struggle for political freedom in India, and thereby, increase its cost, they would justly receive the curses of their posterity; and they are anxious to avoid both. They are eager for a peaceful solution of the problem that faces the people and the Government in India at the present moment. The conditions of peaceful progress towards political freedom are present in India to an extent in which these have never been present, perhaps, in any other country struggling for national freedom. But the future of the movement hardly depends now on them. They are being denied access to the mind and heart of their people. They are being shut up in prison even without the frequently futile formalities of public trials. Their platforms have been practically proclaimed. The restraining influences under which an open and lawful propaganda have of necessity to work, are denied to them. And the unrest grow in secret. The exasperation of the people increases under bureaucratic repression. Faith in peaceful methods, which means faith in moral force more than in physical strength, is being slowly killed; and immature, impatient, irresponsible men, without any real appreciation of the culture of their country, or any intimate knowledge of the real character of their people, working in secret or from the safety of foreign lands, are trying to drive the movement beyond the limits of law and order. Like the earlier methods of political agitation, mis-called constitutional, these new methods of revolutionary propaganda are also imitative and European, without any reference to the life and culture of the people, and
having no inspiring message for them. But though this propaganda may not ennoble the multitudes, it may yet easily brutalise them, and thereby let loose the animal passions of the disorderly elements of society simultaneously upon the rulers and the ruled. This is the danger that threatens India in the immediate present. This is the present situation. It is not our own creation. It is not of our own seeking. We have always been anxious for peaceful, lawful, orderly evolution. But we desire freedom.”

Pal, however, did not want to do away with the constituted authority of Government or the State and wrote:

"Thenationalleaders have always freely recognised the legitimate authority of the present Government—however despotic it may be—to discharge the primary functions of the State in India as de facto rulers of the land. The authority is based upon the general acquiescence of the people in their rule, and as long as this acquiescence lasts it is not only a political, but an essentially moral authority. While recognising this authority of the present Government, the Nationalist leaders demand for the people freedom of opportunities for the exercise of their own primary rights, rights which no Governments create by statutes, but which are the real creators of Governments themselves. So long as a Government respects these primary rights of its subject, the people too, are bound to respect the primary right of their Government. But recent repressions in India have openly attacked these primary rights of the people, and it is these repressions that are entirely responsible for the appearance of revolutionary violence in a moment of lawful, self-reliant activities and peaceful passive resistance. The forces of revolutionary violence may, however, still be controlled by the leaders of the people. They may pass beyond control in a little while."

The lengthy quotation projects Pal fully.

There was a complete transformation of the radical political views of Pal while abroad. A few years in England transformed him completely. When he changed his struck to his reconsidered views till his death. He met abroad a large number of men that counted and lectured from various platforms. It is one of the tragedies in politics that he was transformed into a moderate of moderates who wanted India tied to the apron-strings of British Imperial Federation. That old Pal thundering for complete Independence was completely gone. Financial distress had haunted him even when he was in England and he had to accept money for his articles in the British papers that would have not approved of extremist views and lecture on taking money from sources that would not also brook a fire-eating Indian patriot. He has started some papers in England, India, Indian Sociologist and
Indian Student but they were all extremely moderate in tone and faded away on financial grounds. The metamorphosis was complete when he returned to his motherland. He was received with mixed feelings as his work in England had alienated most of his admirers and followers.

By 1920 Bipin Chandra Pal had become a moderate of the moderates. But there was a flash of the old Bipin Chandra Pal in 1920. Earlier Gandhiji had accepted to work the Montford Reforms while another section hotly opposed him. In the 1920 Congress Session Gandhiji moved the comprehensive Non-Cooperation Resolution in which he advocated surrender of titles, honorary offices, withdrawal of students, boycott of British goods, boycott of foreign goods, etc. He had also advocated the withdrawal of candidates for election to the Reform Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who might offer himself for election. Pal moved an amendment. His amendment suggested that the Prime Minister be asked to receive a Mission from India to lay before him the statement of India’s grievances coupled with the demand for immediate autonomy, and in case of his failure to receive the Mission or to replace the Reforms Act of 1919 by a measure of granting full autonomy to India, policy of such active non-cooperation be adopted as would leave no doubt in the minds of the Britishers that India could no longer be governed as a Dependency. The amendment further suggested that in the meantime the country should consider Gandhiji’s programme through a representative committee and carry on preparatory propaganda on that behalf. Pal was supported by Deshbandhu C.R. Das but Pal’s amendment was lost.

It appears that Gandhiji never forgot Pal’s amendment as he had often referred to this controversy in a number of letters and articles. He had not, however, been alienated from C.R. Das who had supported the amendment. Gandhiji had also differed from Pal over what was known as Afghan Bogey. Pal had pointed out that Afghanistan might have a design on India and the Indian Muslims. Gandhiji took good care to write several articles controverting Pal. But did Pal have a vision of Pakistan and is that why he was sceptical of the Muslims?

Soon after at Barisal in 1921 Bipin Chandra Pal, the erstwhile idol of the people, was completely hooted out when he spoke against
the programme of Non-Cooperation Movement sponsored by Gandhiji. The Father of the Bengali Swadesi Movement of 1905, the man who had a tremendous image like Aurobindo Ghose and C.R. Das, the prophet of Passive Resistance, the path-finder to Swaraj was thrown away unceremoniously by political India. His words: “I do not know magic but I know logic” at Barisal political conference-insinuating that Gandhiji did not have a logical programme literally blew him up.

The last eleven years of Pal’s life, up to 1932, were spent very unfortunately in poverty, isolation and misery. The change of tide overwhelmed the man and he literally died unsung and unhonoured. It was a tragedy that he and Gandhiji never came closer. Gandhiji who had paid tributes to many partiot with whom he had differed did not feel inclined to write about Bipin Chandra Pal although Gandhiji had substantially followed Pal’s footsteps in evolving his scheme of Passive Resistance and Swaraj in India. Pal had literally done a political harikiri but there is no reason why India should not be grateful to him.
Gandhiji did not probably have a more ruthless critic than Ambedkar. On August 14, 1931, on being invited, Ambedkar had seen Gandhiji at Manibhavan, Bombay. In the talk he had told Gandhiji that his charge against him and the Congress was that they cared more for strength than for principles and the Hindus or Gandhiji had not shown a change of heart so far as the untouchables and the depressed classes are concerned and that the latter had a homeland but were without it. They parted, both sides utterly grim when Gandhiji said he would oppose with all his strength the political separation of the untouchables from the Hindus.

Then they met in the Second Round Table Conference in London. Ambedkar, an untouchable Mahar by caste had plodded his way up through hardships, sufferings and insults. He had to eave a good job under the Maharaja of Baroda because of his caste although the Maharaja tried his best to fight against the caste prejudice against him. Ambedkar had been liberally helped by the Maharaja for his education. Ambedkar had devoted his life to the cause of the untouchables and thought he represented them in the Round Table Conference. But Gandhiji was there, the sole representative of the Congress which, according to him, comprised the Hindus including the untouchables and the Muslims of India. Ambedkar, the brainy politician and constitutionalist threw all his weight against Gandhiji and stood as a rock with his argument. He did not allow Gandhiji’s statement:

“The interests of the untouchables are as dear to the Congress as the interests of any other body or of any other individual throughout the length and breadth of India. Therefore, I would most strongly resist any further representation.”

Ambedkar’s reply was:

“With this declaration by Mr Gandhi, I know what Mr Gandhi would do in the Minorities Committee which was the main forum for the discussion of this question.”

The battle between Gandhiji and Ambedkar in the Minorities Committee was preceded by a talk between them brought about by Devadas Gandhi. Ambedkar laid his cards but could get as reported nothing from Gandhiji. This made Ambedkar more bitter and devastatingly precise on facts in the Committee. In the first meeting of the Minorities Committee on September 28, 1931, the Premier
spoke of arbitration as the delegates had failed to arrive at any agreed solution. Ambedkar spoke out: "I would like to make this matter absolutely plain at the start......whatever may be the representative character of Mr Gandhi or the Congress people, they certainly are not in a position to bind us—certainly not. I say that most emphatically in this meeting. : He was complimented by the Chairman, Mr MacDonald. "Dr Ambedkar's position has been made absolutely clear, in his usual splendid way. He has left no doubt at all about it."

Gandhiji had a week-long discussion with the Muslim leaders and failed to come to any agreed formula. Gandhiji on October 8, conceded the failure but put it to the incoherent character of the delegates who were not the elected representatives of the parties. Ambedkar would not take this lying down and retorted: "Whether I am a nominee or not, I fully represent the claims of my community. Let no man be under any mistaken impression as regards that... The Mahatma has been claiming that the Congress stands for the depressed classes, and that the Congress represents the depressed Classes more than I or my colleagues can do. To that claim I can only say that it is one of the many false claims which irresponsible people keep on making, although the persons concerned have been invariably denying them." He wrote: "Mr Gandhi is not only not playing the part of a friend of the depressed classes but he is not even playing the part of an honest foe." Ambedkar had foretold the failure of the Round Table Conference because he thought Gandhiji was diabolically playing one community against the other. The Conference failed and Gandhiji came back to India to be arrested.

In his book "What Congress and Gandhiji have done to the Untouchables," Ambedkar had observed regarding Gandhiji in the Round Table Conference:

"A worse person could not have been chosen to guide India's destiny. As a unifying force he was a failure... As a result of his successful compromise with the Government just before he came, Mr Gandhi treated the whole non-Congress delegation with contempt... He widened the breach. From the point of view of knowledge, Mr Gandhi proved himself to be a very ill-equipped person. On the many constitutional and communal questions with which the Conference was confronted, Mr Gandhi had many platitudes to utter but not views or suggestions of a constructive character to offer."

Dr Ambedkar did not know the wisdom of speaking the truth in a palliative manner.
The Communal Award given by the British Premier had proposed a political balkalization of India as it wanted to perpetuate divisions. The depressed classes were granted separate seats in the Provincial Assemblies and the right of double vote under which they were to elect their own representatives and to vote also in the general constituencies. Gandhi along with the other members of the Minorities Committee had signed a pledge authorising the Premier to settle the communal question. Ambedkar had refused to sign it. But Gandhi was not prepared for the bombshell and declared he would fast unto death as a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace. Whole of India was stirred up—leaders rushed to Poona. All eyes were turned to Dr Ambedkar as to what would be his attitude. Malaviya had great influence on Ambedkar. Ambedkar the man who had said, "Mahatmas have come and Mahatmas have gone, but the untouchables have remained untouchables" yielded to pressures, and saved Gandhi's life by accepting the Poona Pact. If he had refused to sign it there could not have been any pact. The agreement was signed on September 24, 1931 and Ambedkar signed it on behalf of the depressed classes.

But this was a mere truce and there was no change of heart on either side. Ambedkar went on organising the depressed classes throughout India and called on them to stand on their legs and be beware of the caste Hindus. He was slowly being drawn close to Buddhism, a creed he had adored from his young days. He named his house Rajagriha after Rajagriha area in Bihar where Lord Buddha usually resorted to in the rainy days. He was a devoted scholar and an adroit and learned speaker. The Press largely dominated by Congress Politics was bitter on him. But nothing daunted his spirit. At Maha Satyagraha Ambedkar consigned to the flames a copy of Manu Smriti the base of Hindu law as it reiterated predominance of the higher castes in society and law. Strange that the man who burnt Manu Smriti had to draft the Constitution of India and has gone down in history as the Modern Manu of India. The reconciliation with Gandhi at the Poona Pact did not last long. Ambedkar refused to oblige Gandhi by supporting Dr Subbaroyan's Temple Entry Bill as it underlined the existence of the depressed classes. He wanted complete annihilation of caste for the revival of the Hindu Society. He also came close to Sikhism and sent his man to Amritsar to study the Sikh creed closely. Gandhi opposed Ambedkar's theory of annihilation of caste by two articles "Dr Ambedkar's Indictment" reiterating that Varna was for the
ancestral calling and that Ambedkar's criteria would liquidate every religion. Gandhiji gave a list of Hindu saints as a proof of the greatness of Hinduism.

Ambedkar was not satisfied and ran down the mixture of politics and religion and mentioned the saints enumerated did nothing for the depressed classes. Ambedkar did not merely give a threat for a mass-conversion of the depressed classes to escape Hinduism. He meant it although later on he had said that the depressed classes in Pakistan should not seek a solution to their sufferings by conversion to the Muslim creed. He was of the opinion that the Caste Hindus in India and the Muslims in Pakistan were guilty of oppression but the Depressed Classes should not adopt defeatism by conversion.

Ambedkar's threat partially helped the depressed classes in entering the temples in the South and the Travancore States throwing open 1600 State-controlled temples. Through conferences all over, writings and discussions Ambedkar pushed on his cause of the revival of the depressed classes on an equal footing with the Caste Hindus. He became a power and almost a terror. But he won the admiration of many. His love for Sikhism and Christianity slowly melted away and again he turned to Buddhism. As a labour leader he showed tremendous organising skill and ran electioneering successfully in 1937. His work in the Bombay Assembly was confined to the amelioration of the labour and the depressed classes. Swami Sahajanand, the fiery labour leader of Bihar, who was a great factor in those days sought Ambedkar's advice in Bombay and was in close touch with him in 1938.

With the outbreak of the Second World War Ambedkar disagreed that England's difficulty was India's opportunity but he wanted the Government to fully trust the Indians and to prepare them for defending their own country. Several leaders including Ambedkar, Jayakar, Savarkar, Kelkar, Jamnadas, Chiman Lal Setalvad, Cowasji Jehangir and V.V. Chandavarkar issued a statement contradicting Gandhiji's claim that the Congress was an all-representative body and held that the Congress under Gandhiji was a fascist body and would prove a death-blow to India's democracy. The first meeting with Nehru and Ambedkar took place after this at the instance of Kher. Mahadev Desai was present and the talk was confined to the relinquishment of office by the Congress Ministry in Bombay. Ambedkar could no longer be ignored. In his speeches he made no
secret of his idea that the majority were denying liberty, equality and fraternity to the untouchables.

With the resignation of the Congress ministries politics in India ran in various channels. Subhas Bose turned out by the Congress caucus from the Presidencieship of the body was organising his party. He saw Ambedkar, Jinnah and Savarkar in Bombay on July 22, 1940. Ambedkar did not fall in with Bose's idea of fighting ultimately a War of Independence for India from outside India. Ambedkar denounced Gandhiji's individual civil disobedience. His "Thoughts on Pakistan" came out at the end of 1940 and the main thesis was that the Muslims are a nation and creation of Pakistan will not leave India weak. He wanted a total, timely and ordered exchange of population, Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India as had been done in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. At the same time Ambedkar lamented the anti-democratic spirit in Islam which engendered nothing but contempt for the non-Muslims. The book was a shock and Rajendra Prasad's "Undivided India" was a feeble reply and the author was himself an author of divided India a few months after. No one seemed to have seriously thought of Ambedkar's recipe in 1940. If that recipe had worked India and Pakistan might have been a better proposition now.

In June 1942 Ambedkar was taken to the Viceroy's Council and as such he had his share in putting down the Quit India Movement. In January 1943 in a speech at Poona Ambedkar compared Ranade with Gandhiji and Jinnah and held that it would be difficult to find two persons who would rival Gandhiji and Jinnah for their colossal egotism and to them personal ascendancy was the main objective. On Gandhiji's fast for 21 days when Aney, Modi and Sarkar resigned from the Executive Council Ambedkar refused to do so.

History moved very fast after Gandhiji's release on health grounds from the Aga Khan's Palace. Rajaji had already discussed a Pakistan Plan with Gandhiji in Aga Khan Palace and the idea was fostered with seriousness by the Congress leaders and Jinnah was approached. Ambedkar was still not reconciled and he lamented Gandhiji's lack of vision. Ambedkar did not join the Sapru Committee in evolving a solution. In the first week of January 1945 Ambedkar had prophesied that the Congress would be blown to pieces after Gandhiji's death while performing the inaugural ceremony of a paper, Hindu Herald.

Ambedkar came out with his proposal also of a united India with an appeal to the Muslims with proposed weightage to the
minority communities and he asked the Hindus to be assured with their relative majority. He did not give any representation to the Aboriginals for which he was severely criticised. His plan did not cut much ice. In 1945 his thesis "What Congress and Gandhiji have done to the Untouchables" came out where he said that Gandhism was an opium to lull the people into false beliefs and false security.

Then came the State Paper and the assembling of the Constituent Assembly. To Ambedkar fell the onerous task of drafting the Constitution of India. The man who was once despised by the Congress Party had to be given this great task. As T. T. Krishnamachari had spoken: "...So it happened ultimately that the burden of drafting the Constitution fell on Dr Ambedkar and I have no doubt that we are grateful to him for having achieved this task in a manner which is undoubtedly commendable." At some of the meetings of the Drafting Committee only Dr Ambedkar and his Secretary used to be present.

He renounced politics after this great task was over and embraced Buddhism. He spent the last few years of his life in furthering the message of Buddhism.
C. F. Andrews

C. F. Andrews was a dedicated soul who adopted India as his native land. He came to India as a Christian missionary, and a teacher at the St. Stephen's College, Delhi. Because of his outspokenness, love for Indian traditions, culture and poverty he came at crossheads with the Church dignitaries. He came in active touch with Gandhiji in the twenties of the present century. And became Gandhiji's friend, philosopher and adviser till his death. He changed the St. Stephen's College to the peaceful Santiniketan of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. He had to give up his clerical robes but not his Christian faith. He remained in Jesus and was one of the most faithful followers of Him.

Andrews was a born worker. He dedicated himself to work and kept himself fully occupied with work of multifarious type—scholastic, social, religious and political—and all this in spite of his feeble health. He was one of the greatest Indian nationalists and co-worker of Gandhiji and Tagore. He gave his life for India's social amelioration and political freedom.

There are not many instances in the world history where three men devoted to their beliefs and disciplines and often differing from one another were so closely knit as Gandhiji, Andrews and Tagore. When Gandhiji raised the storm of Non-Cooperation Movement, both Tagore and Andrews differed from him on various principles. Tagore did not approve of Gandhiji’s call to the students to leave schools and colleges, the burning of the foreign cloth or the indiscriminate manner in which Gandhiji was recruiting his followers. Tagore’s poetic mind was hurt seeing the outburst of violence and release of forces which he thought Gandhiji would not be able to control.

Gandhiji, despite his best efforts, could not bring round Tagore. Both of them agreed to differ. But that had not cast any barriers in their great relationship. Again and again Andrews worked as the link between Tagore and Gandhiji. Whenever Gandhiji needed Andrews for any political or social mission, the poet would willingly spare Andrews. If Tagore fell ill while Andrews was with Gandhiji
Andrews would be rushed back to Tagore. Andrews also differed from Gandhiji on various points. He did not approve of the bonfire of foreign cloth or the students' participation in politics. Andrews had reacted strongly against certain writings of Gandhiji on the Christian Missionaries and his fasts. He was of the considered opinion that Gandhiji was frittering himself away more by his political work and that he should do more work for the untouchables. Once he wrote to Gandhiji in 1933, as follows:

"Haven't you been trying to serve two masters—and if you have given your life as a hostage for the 'untouchability removal,' does not that mean entire concentration on that issue for the whole remainder of your life without throwing to the right hand or the left?"

Gandhiji fully utilised Andrews for multifarious humanitarian work in Malaysia, Fiji, South Africa, England and other countries abroad. Andrews had visited Champaran in Bihar in 1917 when Gandhiji was opposing the European Indigo Planters against enforced Indigo cultivation and had later worked as a link between Government which led to the withdrawal of the prosecution against Gandhiji in Champaran court. Andrews had been sent by Gandhiji and had visited Amritsar when the Akali Sikhs were fighting for their Gurudwaras (religious places) in 1918-1919, Vykom in Kerala in 1924 where the untouchables were fighting for the bare use of the roads leading to the Vykom temple that could be used by Muslims, Christians and even dogs but not the untouchables. Again Andrews played a definite role in Assam Tea Labour Unrest in 1921, which was followed by a wholesale strike by the employees of Assam-Bengal railway, probably the first gigantic labour strike in India. Andrews was flitting from Chandpur where hundreds of Tea labourers had been brutally assaulted by the military Gurkha Police and hundreds of them were dying of cholera and starvation, to Darjeeling, the Bengal Government Headquarters, for meeting the powers that be, to Calcutta for addressing public meetings and to raise funds and back again to Chandpur, Chittagong and other places, nursing the sick and bringing a ray of joy to their afflicted mind.

The God-fearing personality of Andrews had an inner core of steel too. He had the courage to stand up in the Calcutta Congress pandal dressed in European clothes and speak against the burning of foreign cloth, though he had by then started wearing Indian handloom textile. Again and again Andrews showed the
steel in him when he met the powers that be in Darjeeling, Delhi, Simla or at Whitehall in the course of his various negotiations for and on behalf of Gandhiji.

The letters that had passed between Andrews and the trio of Gandhiji, Tagore and Munshiram (later Swami Shraddhanand), some of which are published and many are still unpublished, show the stature of Andrews and his devotion to India. His large number of articles published in Modern Review, Civil and Military Gazette, Hindu and other periodicals full of love and sympathy for Indian problems, are getting lost. All his writings depict him to be one whose nature was over overflowing with love, who had laid his whole life, body, soul and spirit on the altar of his adopted country and who had borne praise and blame alike, the soul of honour and truth.

The poor, the lowly, the depressed, the oppressed, the afflicted, the weak, the students and the children were his first and foremost love. He loved the village and the villagers. He loved nature, solitude and books. He was not bothered if his clothes were not washed for months. He had not known whose rugs or sheets he was using. He would borrow a flask while going on tour and return without it. When asked he would wonder if he ever had a flask, and then recollect that he had given it to a lady on the train to keep milk for her child warm. He never actively joined the Non-Cooperation Movement. He did not give up his Christian faith, nor did he become a recluse in the laps of the Himalayas. He thought and thought of India and gave to India every drop of his blood.

It could be, however, said that he contributed his best for India’s freedom. In this respect Andrews was a militant but rational nationalist. He often disagreed with Gandhiji and thought him to be unnecessarily cautious and slow-going.

His spirit of nationalism was more militant than that of Gandhiji. On September 10, 1920 the Non-Cooperation Resolution was passed in the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress after the original resolution of Gandhiji had been turned down by the introduction of the adjectives “progressive and gradual.”

Still there was no clear call as to the shape of India’s demand. The upsurge was there, a wave of discontent was sweeping through the country but the leaders were themselves not sure of what they wanted. Earlier, Gandhiji had helped the war-efforts—Gandhiji,
Sarala Devi Chaudhurani and others were busy in recruiting army personnel. They openly gave out that Britain’s adversity should not be exploited for India’s efforts to help and reward India at the conclusion of the War.

On January 19, 1921 addressing a large meeting of the Calcutta students, C.F. Andrews advocated “Independence, complete and perfect, for India as against the soul-sapping White Supremacy.” It was for an Englishman, a Christian missionary to come out with a clear-cut statement as to the objective when the Indian leaders were thinking and thinking in terms of British Dominion etc. This theme of Andrews before the Calcutta students was repeated by him later from hundreds of platforms and in numerous articles of his published in India and abroad.

The attitude of Andrews to Gandhiji’s participation in war efforts could be seen in a letter written by Andrews to Gandhiji from Bolpur on February 20, 1920. He wrote:

“I had a letter from Gurudev,* 2 days ago. It had in it this terrible passage, which I had to acknowledge, was partly, if not wholly true. He wrote, “Not very long ago we said to our rulers—‘We are willing to sacrifice our principle and persuade our men to join in a battle about whose merit they had not the least notion, only in exchange, we shall claim your favour at the end of it. It was beautifully weak, it was sinful. And now we must acknowledge our responsibility to the extent of our late effort at recruiting—for turning our men into a mercenary horde, drenching the soil of Asia with brother’s blood for the sake of self-aggrandisement of a people wallowing in the mire of imperialism.’

That sentence hit me very hard indeed, and it hits you and Sarala Devi also. It hits me, because I did not stop you, but rather encouraged you at Delhi in May 1918, at that War Conference, when neither of us stood firm but allowed the Viceroy to twist us around the little finger. I have always felt that I had to do Prayaschitta** for that, and that your illness was in a great measure your own Prayaschitta which was sent to you and Sarala Devi’s punishment was that medal that she received. I know we were blind, but our blindness was almost wilful blindness. It was that very secret treaty with Italy which I showed, that was brought up again and again at the Peace Conference and led to the criminal treaties of Versailles and Svyres.”

The fond relationship that Andrews had with Gandhiji since 1913 when poet Tagore had sent Andrews to South Africa to help

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*Gurudev was Poet Tagore.

**Prayaschitta means penance.
Gandhiji at the most critical time of the Passive Resistance Struggle did not stand in the way to give a frank expression to their reaction.

In 1932 when Gandhiji had resolved to fast unto death, Andrews was very critical in a letter to Gandhiji and mentioned that he had to persuade himself that this was not a bid for suicide, particularly because his religious upbringing was such as to make any thought of suicide on his part impossible. Nor did he like the ultimate object of a fast of this type to force the issue. It is only when Gandhiji told him that he was following the dictates of his inner voice that Andrews was pacified.

Andrews had never been convinced of the need for the Khilafat agitation. He had written to Gandhiji on September 8, 1920 a very frank letter in which he mentioned:

"I feel certain that the Khilafat propaganda and its demands have been far too much 'pro-Turkish.' The Khilafat people have lamentably failed to understand the awakening of the Arab speaking peoples. These races—Persians, Syrians, Arabs—have always been the true thinkers of Islam, and after all (in the long run) it is thought that tells more than mere numbers or worldly power. Surely the Khilafat need not be tied for ever to Turkey. It has changed its position from time to time—one of the great difficulties is that a very large proportion of the Indian Mussulmans and Sunnies and the cleavage has come about, by which the Turks represent the Sunnies and the Persians (and in Part I believe the Arabs) represent the Shias. We do not want to 'take sides' in a wretched religious controversy which is centuries old."

Andrews deprecated the method of Gandhiji's insisting on vows. He clearly observed that Gandhiji could more usefully devote himself to the emancipation of the non-Brahmins, untouchables and the down-trodden. To this Gandhiji had replied that there could be no compartmentalism in him.

Andrews was also keen that the Congress should be able to bring the non-Brahmins and untouchables within its fold. He had mentioned:

"We must honestly and fairly and squarely face the non-Brahmin Movement and all that it implies. The great 70,000,000, Mussulmans have now been brought within the Congress, but what of the 70,000,000, or more non-Brahmins and untouchables and others? In spite of what you told me in Bombay,
which relieved my mind very much indeed, I feel that there is something anew which makes you shrink from really tackling this vital question."

In the same letter Andrews had clearly advanced the view that "self-government within the empire" was historically impossible for India.

As early as September 8, 1920, Andrews had posed a question to Gandhiji:

"Are we out and out against Capitalism in India? Or are we only out and out against Imperialism. Personally I am coming more and more to see that these two are one and the same things and that Capitalism is the ultimate driving force of all this Imperialistic aggression."

"Although an Englishman, Andrews had the courage to say that "economically and racially the English race (I am at last convinced and against every wish in my body and soul) cannot treat Indians equally: The religion of the 'White Race' has made that impossible. We have had the experience of the past and am afraid the experience of the present and future will be worse, not better. They will go on exploiting us as inferiors and treating us politically as inferiors. And I am afraid the great bulk of Christians will add the further insult of treating us religiously as inferiors. We cannot therefore go on talking in the old way of 'Within the empire.' We must claim unitedly independence as Egypt has claimed it. I do not think that India is any less ripe for this than Egypt. We have been living on 'make-beliefs' too long. We must face the naked facts."

In the same letter he had written to Gandhiji:

"I more and more believe that all these things you are aiming at—Swadeshi language, Swadeshi cloth, Swadeshi courts, Swadeshi schools etc. can only be attained by India herself, like Egypt, being placed 'outside the empire', with a friendly relation to England from without, not the standing of a 'Daughter State Within.'"

How prophetic were these words of Andrews decades back.

Andrews was a delightful letter-writer. Some of his letters to Gandhiji whom he always addressed "My dearest Mohan" are gems. We give below some extracts from his letters to Gandhiji.

S.S. Briton
Feb. 26, 1914
"But mentally I have been thinking much and long and I must write something in a book or magazine, for some of those are important. What has been exercising me most has been that very question of the organic development of religion. I see my way clearer as never before: and I want and expect to find something in the way of simplification, in this sphere, similar to that which Herbert Spencer and others discovered by means of the Evolution hypothesis in the physical sphere. I have not the slightest right, as a scholar and student, to attempt this, for my ignorance is colossal; but I have been in touch with life, and religion is not dry bones and skeletons; and so I may be able to scar this side to help with a new idea where thousands have been working. I am going to get hold of the professors like this—that from the very first dawn of history there were dim instincts with regard to all the fundamental facts of religion running through the whole human race witness to any persistent voice of conscience, in the instinct of a spirit world, in the worship of ancestors and in all the dim legends etc. But that which was merely latent in unexpressed in other races become marvelously doubtful and expressed in the two great races which possess religious genius—the Semitic and the Indo-Aryan. The mother source of inspiration was India, and from here the spiritual life radiated over the countless millions of the East and detached the West at different points. In the bosom of India lay also all those long memories and traditions of the past, a great reservoir of all the spiritual instinct of mankind, and she spread them like fertilising and life-giving waters with a lavished hand (you must not mind mixed metaphors!). Then there was the semitic line—much narrowness, much more specialised, much intenser in its very narrowness. It touched all those ultra-semitic and semi-semitic civiliation—Egypt, Babylon etc. It also touched the Western world and for 3 centuries had left the impact of Greece and later of Rome which had been profoundly affected also by the Zoroastrian thought of Ancient Persia. Then there came Christ: India the Mother had been stretching out her arms west-ward before......? Through a thousand unknown channels her beautiful life had been revealed as a dim vision to the West; her beautiful thoughts had been caught up by this earnest seeker after Truth and that (Plato I have no doubt had come in touch with them as also the write of the Fourth Gospel) and had already germinated. But Christ came and something far greater took place—he lived them in the very midst of that semitic—western world of distinctiveness of Christ separating from
utterly very Old Testament and St Paul comes from this Indian mother source. He was the child of the...and the saints of the Old Testament—he had their blood running in his veins. But, beside and beyond this, he had the inestimable spiritual heritage of India herself, the mother—not perhaps as fully, or, as wholly, as the Buddha for it was balanced in him by other qualities and inspirations but this was the new fact in the religious history of the world—then made the new step in advance which we are only slowly comprehending. He was the child of the East and West in one. The West has never understood this clearly. It has only taken its own side of him. The East has been revolted by the Western presentation. But there he stands and we of this generation can understand this.

"I wonder if in any way your thought goes with me along this route? To me it will mean a lonely pilgrimage, for it means giving up claims for the Christian position which every one in the West whom I know and love, from my father downward, could not conceive of loving. They will regard me as a heretic of the most dangerous kind, led away by my pro-Indian views and infatuations. But what I yearn to know is whether at all this has been the accumulating idea of the best Indian thought that I have been unconsciously imbibing, whether it does go far enough to meet your own line and that of others. Somehow the raising of the question here on this side—the Indian side—does not bring pain or the anticipation of pain as the thought of what it means to my father does. We have not yet learnt true tolerance in the West. In India I could feel that you would love me all the more, even if I did not reach your own position, provided only you are certain that I was struggling towards Truth and not shirking the task. But I want your criticism where you think I am right and where wrong. I could go on for pages writing about this, for my mind is quite full of it, but, I cannot now."

In another letter Andrews had given a beautiful picture of Gokhale to Gandhiji. An extract from the letter written from S. S. Caledonia is as follows:

"...I must tell you more about Mr Gokhale himself. The ten days I had with him were precious to me in a peculiar degree. I had never been so much with him or so near in spirit to him before. All my other times with him had been hurried and external. But now in his sick room, away from the world, he was able to give me (and delighted in giving me) his real self. And he wanted very eagerly to
know my real position, both religious and political. It seemed to take him away from his own anxieties and he was intensely in all I told him, I told him all—all my religious doubts and difficulties. He had seen how I had been charged with 'hearsay' in the English papers and was eager to know all about it. I was able to speak to him as freely as I spoke to you and I showed him some of my letters to Rabindranath. He was deeply interested in the last one—a copy of which I will enclose with this—though it is very rough and incomplete. He had studied the Buddhist movement and could see at once the point I made with reference to its effect on Christianity. Then we went on talking for some days on the relation of religion to his own political position. He maintained that it was with him religion—that his love for his Motherland, his vision, his absorption in her life and future was to him religion itself and made the Divine real to him. This I acknowledged with all my heart, for the 'Gokhale' I know and love today is far more deeply spiritual (even in face and outward look) than the 'Gokhale' I knew in 1906. What I noticed was that he loved to dwell on religion and to hear all my own thoughts about it. I think it meant far more to him than before. Then he would go on to implore me not to isolate myself or throw over the political, as inferior and secondary but to take it with my religion and make no divorce between the two. "We want" he said, "you man of religion within the political movement to keep it wholesome and sweet." Where I could not give in to him was in the matter of accepting Government service and working the Government machinery, through Indians who were patriots. He kept on saying that it was not the English Government but the Indian Government paid for by Indian money etc. I could only say that I had worked in a Government-aided institution for 10 years at St Stephen's Delhi and it was absurd to call the Government part of it 'Indian'—it was foreign through and through and produced semi-foreign people, not true Indian characters. Independence, I said, was the most vital of all factors, and only in independence could the living Indian character develop. He soon drove me into a corner by saying that this would imply the English immediately leaving the country and India was not ripe for that. I agreed. But I felt clear that it was no use working round and round in a vicious circle—producing semi-dependent Indians through entering the Government system and so perpetuating the present dependent position. Only outside the present system could independent character be formed. I told him that it was just this very point that was really at stake in a new form, in
our refusal to appear before the Commission in Natal, and that was why I at once was able to see your point of view and he could not. He laughed at that and said that he was still impenitent (and even after all explanation to him, Mohan, he could not see your point of view on that vital issue. Isn’t it strange? I had no fear at all about convincing him, but I could not! Lord Ampthill was much more convincable, though he too did not really see the point). Then he talked a great deal about you, saying he was afraid you were much more in sympathy with my point of view than his own and that this question of ‘independence’ would be a stumbling block to your actively taking your place in the Servants of India Society. I said I thought there were spheres where complete independence of Government would be quite possible, e.g. in restoring to Hinduism the Depressed Classes etc. But he did not seem to think so. He said to me, ‘Could you, with your present ideas, work in the Servants of India Society?’ And I could only answer in the negative—that I felt that everything turned on that one word ‘independence’. He then said to me that as far as he could see there was the need of three kinds of national work—that in connection with the foreign Government, that in independence of it, and that in opposition to it. And all were needed. I agreed and said that my whole instinct now was with number 2, not with number 1; but I quite saw that number 1 might be needed, only it was not the field that would form strong character, and it was spirit force alone I relied on to be the alternate emancipation of India.

“I wonder, Mohan, if I have been merely repeating myself. These talks with Mr Gokhale were by far the most important part of my visit and all the other things—the long interviews with the Colonial Secretary and the Under Secretary for India etc. are scarcely retained in my mind in comparison, while every word that Mr Gokhale said is cherished. I used merely to ‘pass the time’ each day till the hour came to be with Mr Gokhale, and then my whole soul used to wake-up. My heart went out to him so much in his bodily weakness and he was so genuinely, eagerly, glad to see me, and upbraided me if I was late and would not let me go a moment before I was obliged. You will understand, therefore, how I was drawn to him and lived only for the time when I should see him again on the morrow. When we parted at last, we embraced, and he said to me ‘that is true Indian fashion’—I wish I could have persuaded him to abandon this Commission and give himself the rest
and quiet he needs to get well. But nothing that I could say would convince him and he was quite obstinate about it. He regards his honour as an Indian at stake, to go on until he drops: and though I said everything that I could, on this point he would not move an inch. However, even yet the doctors may give him an order which he cannot disobey. What a wonderful man he is—so tender-hearted and kindly and compassionate, so full of love for the poor, so burning with passionate devotion for his motherland—and then so absolutely single-minded and unselfish and so adamant when his country's honour is at stake. I remember Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, telling me of the occasion when the Home Member at Simla had made some sneering witticism derogatory to Indian manhood in the Imperial Council and Mr Gokhale's face turned white with pain, and, he rose and replied and then buried his face in his hands overcome by the strain which had been almost intolerable. Sir Guy walked back with him afterwards (he was staying with Sir Guy) and he noticed Mr Gokhale's nervous tension and exhaustion and put him immediately to bed where he slept for hours and woke again, recovered and refreshed. 'We with our coarse natures,' Sir Guy said to me 'would have enjoyed the rough and tumble of controversy and laughed over it. But to him it was almost a crucifixion.'

'I do not wonder, now, Mohan, at your devotion to him. I can fully understand and in a great measure share it. The difference of point of view, somehow, does not seem to make any personal barrier. Here is one whose nature is overflowing with love, who has laid his whole life, body, soul and spirit on the altar of his country, who has borne praise and blame alike, the soul of honour and of truth. More points of view are as nothing in comparison with that—in comparison with the man himself—He told me of one incident in illustration of something I had said—how at the time of the Plague riots he had published some charges against Englishmen, passed on a correspondence and that he had been refused to cite the correspondence with names attached and so in consequence, as he could not prove it, had withdrawn the charge itself (I am not sure if I have put the facts right). He was disgraced and regarded as a traitor and insulted in the National Congress and his career ruined. Mr Ranade tried to intervene and Mr Gokhale (who was a young man then) heard him trying to explain his action away. 'I broke in,' Mr Gokhale said to me, 'and said if I had to act a thousand times I would do exactly the same thing! For what I did was truth'—I am afraid I have muddled the whole story but it was a glorious record
of truth at all costs and no compromise for the sake of personal gain. Mr Ranade said he had spoilt all by his intervention and the Congress turned against him far than ever; but he learnt a lesson he never forgot. 'And when', Mr Gokhale went on, 'it was just the reverse and all were praising me—when in Lahore the procession of welcome was so long and so overwhelming in its rejoicings that it took six hours to get from the house, all that time I was quite calm and unmoved.' I remembered the other day's and knew that this praise might pass away, just as the blame passed. And it was true.

"He is glad now that I am going to Gurudev. At first he was a little inclined to doubt it but now he is glad. He felt, at first, I think that it was only my own strong personal love and warmness of heart that was driving me. But when I told him that if Gurudev were to die—in that case I should regard the call to go there as doubly sacred and doubly an act of duty, then he became happy about it. I do feel now that, though his nature is reserved, he loves me deeply now with a personal love, and now, dearest Mohan, his love is a reward then thousand fold, too great to any difficulties and troubles, I may have been through. What a joy it all has been to me! And how richer my own life has become."

His last words to Gandhi on his death bed in a Calcutta hospital in 1942 were: "Mohan, Swaraj is coming—I feel Swaraj is coming."
C. R. Das

C. R. Das was born in 1870 in Calcutta with a silver spoon in his mouth in a family of Vikrampur, now in Bangla Desh, with an intellectual and cultural background. He went to England and sat for the I.C.S. examination but missed it by one position and was called to the Bar in 1893. There was a great impact of Vaishnavism and Brahmaism on the family and Das had fully imbibed the impact of both.

On his return to India he immediately plunged into his profession and became a prominent member of the Calcutta Bar. Very soon he found himself defending a number of very important political cases. He had defended Bipin Chandra Pal when Pal was prosecuted for refusing to give evidence in the case against Aurobindo Ghosh. As the lawyer for Aurobindo Ghosh, in the noted trial, Das became famous all over India. The long-stretched Alipore Bomb Case in which a number of young men were prosecuted for playing with fire and bomb was also defended by him. Some of his other wellknown cases were the Dum Paon Raj Succession Case, the Delhi Conspiracy Case of 1914, the Alipore Trunk Murder Case (1918), The Amrita Bazar Patrika Contempt Case (1918).

But law did not fully consume him. His books of poems in Bengali like Malancha, Mala, Sagar Sangeet, Antaravani, Kishore Kishori were very distinct contributions to Bengali literature and there can be no doubt that if Das had continued as a poet he would have won as much fame as Rabindranath Tagore did.

Das also edited a Bengali monthly, Narayana which had an individuality of its own. As a matter of fact Narayana immediately became the true exponent of the individuality of the Bengali literature. Das wanted the younger generation of Bengali writers to draw more from and develop the individuality of Bengal's culture and not to be swept away by the influence of the West.

By 1917 Das was drawn into the vortex of politics. Presiding over the Bengal Provincial Conference in Calcutta in 1917 he had underscored Bengal's role and had observed:
"The Bengalis have a mission of their own. They have their own valour, culture, literature, religion and practices. They have a history and a future before them." This theme had an echo in Lord Ronaldshay's book, *The Heart of Aryavarta* where it was mentioned: "Mr Das spoke indeed with all the ardour of a missionary. He smote in pieces the golden calf which he set up as symbolical of the ideals of Europe and with the fervour of a seer he promised the way to a promised land." Das had helped Annie Besant become President of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta Session in 1917 in the teeth of opposition from men like Surendra Nath Banerjee. The Calcutta Session of the Congress undermined the hold of the Moderates on the Congress and Banerjee was practically sent to political doldrums. It was an easy march for Das to become the acknowledged leader of Bengal and when Mr Montagu met him in India in 1917 Montagu thought Das to be "a most sensible fellow."

The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms did not excite any jubilation in Das while Surendra Nath Banerjee thought it was a 'satisfactory' report. The Congress was seized with the problem of giving a verdict on the report and Das played a very big hand in the Delhi Sessions of the Congress to get the resolution of the Moderates leaders of Bombay on the Montagu Chelmsford Report rejected. The Defence of India Act was already a challenge and internment had removed men like the Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others. This was followed by Rowlatt Bill in March 1919 which smoothened the way for Gandhiji to assume All-India leadership when he came out with his weapon of Satyagraha on April 6, 1919. Gandhiji's call for hartal and fasting by way of purification struck the inner religious core of C. R. Das. C. R. immediately found in Gandhiji an embodiment of spiritual force.

The subsequent events and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy sent a wave of horror throughout India. As a counter-blast to the Hunter Committee that was appointed by the Government to inquire into the Punjab disturbances the Congress appointed its own Committee to evaluate the situation. By the nomination of Chittranjan Das and Jawaharlal Nehru as members of the Committee the Congress showed their faith in the comparatively younger generation of intellectuals.

The Montford Reforms (The Indian Reforms Act) were passed on December 24, 1919. In 1919 the Congress met at Amritsar under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru. Das moved a resolution on the
reforms calling them ‘inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing’ and it was supported by the firebrands, Tilak and B.C. Pal. When the resolution came before the open session, Gandhiji desired that the word ‘disappointing’ should be dropped because in his view the reforms, though defective, could be accepted. A compromise was effected between the views of Gandhiji and Das. These adjectives kept adding that the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full responsible government and Montagu was thanked for his efforts in connection with the Reforms.

Gandhiji’s conciliatory attitude won a victory for him at Amritsar Congress Session. When the Congress Sub-Committee recommended boycott of educational institutions and law courts, Gandhiji added boycott of Councils in the Congress programme. Das was opposed to boycott of Councils from the very start because he wanted to make the Councils an instrument for the attainment of Swaraj.

In spite of his opposition, the Congress adopted the boycott programme tentatively till the annual session at Nagpur. Das felt worried but he continued to sell his idea to the public that his programme to capture the Councils was to embarrass the Government. The boycott of legislatures gave a free hand to the Moderates to enter the Councils and parade there as the chosen representatives of the people. Das wanted to expose the hollowness. Before the Nagpur Session met in December 1920, Maulana Mohammed Ali brought a compromise between the views of Gandhiji and Das, and the resolution drafted by Das and accepted by Gandhiji was moved by the former at the Nagpur session. It was followed by Das giving up his very lucrative practice in the law courts. This sacrifice of Das stirred the whole country with a new spirit of self-sacrifice. He became Deshbandhu, a political fakir and his residence became a political centre. He extensively toured round to win over the youth to the ideals of Swaraj and helped in founding national schools. When Subhas Bose came back from England, resigning from the I.C.S., he was appointed the Principal of the Bengal National College and put in charge of the Congress Publicity work. Das easily collected 1.5 million rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund which was the quota fixed for Bengal.

The year 1921 is a landmark in the country’s national struggle. In March 1921 at the Barisal Provincial Conference under the
presidentship of B.C. Pal, the main resolution on non-cooperation was moved by Das.

Events followed quickly like the visit of the Prince of Wales and the boycott, bonfire of foreign cloth at various points, riots and arrests of the leaders. Das was president-elect of the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in 1921, but as he was in jail, his address was read by Sarojini Naidu and Hakim Ajmal Khan acted as President in his absence.

Then came Gandhiji's proposal at the Ahmedabad Congress for the launching of a mass civil disobedience movement. But the Chauri-Chaura incident in February 1922 in the course of which some police personnel at Chauri-Chaura in Gorakhpore District were killed made Gandhiji withdraw the Bardoli Resolution for mass civil disobedience movement. Alongwith some other leaders Das also felt that Gandhiji should not have withdrawn at that psychological moment when the morale of the people was at a high pitch. The Congress movement was almost scuttled by the Government and Gandhiji himself was arrested in March 1922. Das was at that time in prison.

After his release Das presided over the United Provinces Political Conference at Dehradun and here he dwelt on the theme that Swaraj was 'for the masses, not for the classes.' Das said: "Reformed Councils are really a mask...I conceive it our clear duty to tear the mask off its face. To end these Councils will be the most effective boycott. It is possible to achieve this if we get a majority." Das wanted that the Councils should be entered into and then a deadlock be brought about.

In December 1922 at Gaya Congress as its President, Das elaborated on this theme. His resolution on Council Entry was thrown out and he along with Motilal Nehru and a few others resigned from the Congress and founded the Swaraj Party on January 1, 1923.

There was apparently a rift between Gandhiji and Das. The idea of Swaraj Party quickly caught the imagination of a very large section and for a time Gandhiji with his few No-Changer friends was left behind. But the political wisdom of Gandhiji led him to a compromise with the Swarajists. It was a climb down for Gandhiji and his school of thought when the AICC resolved that all Congressmen "should close their ranks and present a united front. It (the
Congress) directs that no propaganda be carried among the voters in furtherance of the Gaya resolution.” The programme of the Swarajists was fully endorsed in Delhi in 1923 and the ban on the Congressmen to enter the legislatures was formally removed.

Then followed a glorious and momentous chapter in the history of freedom struggle in India. In various provinces and particularly in Bengal and in the Central Government the Swaraj Party formed a powerful opposition. Government had to be carried on by the certificate power of the Viceroy. In Bengal three ministries in succession had to go out. Das who had by then come to be known as Deshbandhu easily captured the Calcutta Corporation in the name of the Congress and became its Mayor. Das had already become the uncrowned king of Bengal and one of the political stalwarts in India.

The Swaraj Party met at Lucknow in January 1924. Gandhiji had been released. A spate of communal disturbances had occurred. Gandhiji wanted again his boycott programme to come in force but this was resisted by Das and the other Swarajists. However, in the Unity Conference held in Calcutta to bring about peace between the two major communities it was decided to issue a joint statement in the name of Gandhiji, Deshbandhu Das and Motilal Nehru. The main features of this joint statement were the suspension of non-cooperation, emphasis on constructive work and the work in the Councils by the Swarajists on behalf of the Congress. This programme was endorsed at the AICC in Poona and Bombay on November 23, 24. This was a complete victory for the Swarajists and that paved a reconciliation between Gandhiji and Das. They met again as inseparable friends for the same cause in the Belgaum Congress.

There is no doubt that the austerities in food, drink and dress that Das had imposed on himself after taking up the Congress cause and the exacting work had brought about deterioration in his health. He was used to a very comfortable life and work at regular hours. While the mind sored the physique did not respond. Das had started falling ill off and on. At Bardoli Congress he fell ill and had to return to Calcutta where in 1925 the question of ministry formation for the provinces was discussed.

The organising ability and the political fervour that Das showed at this time was unparalleled and on March 23, 1925, with the salaries of Bengal Ministries being refused for the third time, the diarchy
ended in Bengal and it was not revived in his life time. He proved to Gandhiji, to India and the world that he was right when he had formulated the programme of entering the Councils to end them.

But the wine of success had not gone into his head. Although he had clearly defeated Gandhiji by working out his Swarajist programme, he addressed Gandhiji at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridabad (now in Bangla Desh) on May 2, 1925 as follows:

"Mahatmaji, it is my proud privilege to welcome you as the President of the Bengal Provincial Conference. I have been your follower from the beginning of the non-cooperation movement and I am still your follower and co-worker... It is impossible for India to do without your guidance today and at any time."

This loyalty to a vanquished political colleague, though his leader, is an example for the world.

It is another great trait of Deshbandhu Das that he realised that death was approaching. He had created a Trust for the purpose of education and medical aid to women, orphanage etc. His palatial house at Bhawanipore in Calcutta was converted into a hospital which was later named as Chittaranjan Seva Sadan. This institution along with the Cancer hospital forms one of the best hospitals in Bengal.

Das had gone to Darjeeling to recoup and Gandhiji visited him. At a house known as 'Step Aside' Gandhiji and Das passed a few days in peaceful communion. Soon after Gandhiji left, Das passed away on June 16, 1925. Gandhiji was touring in the interior of Bengal. He hurried to Calcutta to pay his homage to the mortal remains of his great colleague. In one of the condolence meetings Gandhiji was the only speaker. He ended his emotional speech by saying:

"The body that held Deshbandhu has perished, but his soul will never perish. Not only the soul, even the name of him who has served and sacrificed so much will remain immortal. His service and sacrifice were matchless. May his memory ever remain with us and may his example inspire us to noble effort. Everyone who follows his example to ever so little an extent will help to perpetuate his memory. May his soul rest in peace."

As a leader, Das stands out amongst the foremost in India. He had the gift of both the head and the heart and his leadership was not of that dogmatic type that insisted on unquestioned obedience. It was he who brought out the individuality of men like Subhas Chandra Bose, J.M. Sen Gupta, T.C. Goswami, Dr B.C. Roy and others. As a barrister he had come to know the pangs and hunger of people who yearned for India’s freedom. When he defended Aurobindo Ghosh without charging any fees he was an inspired counsel and some portions of his concluding address to the Court show that Das was as much spiritual in his mind as the client. He had prophesied about future India. As a writer and a poet he tried to catch the glimpse of divinity in man and in nature. In just one day this prince among the barristers became a political faqir. His purse was always open to the needy, the students and the political mendicants. He did not believe in the inner voice of conscience, nor did he believe in a stern Ashram life. We recall that when he was called to the rescue of the Assam Tea Labourers in 1921 and there was a rail and steamer strike he crossed the mighty Padma river in full spate in a small country boat risking his life. This river strikes terror even when not in spate and this one act of Deshbandhu shows his kind. As a political thinker he held that the foundation of a real democracy must be laid in small centres— not gradual decentralisation which implies a previous centralisation— but a gradual integration of autonomous small centres into one living harmonious whole. He wanted the growth of institutions and organisations which were really dynamic in their nature. He held that no government will be successful which does not rest on the individual. Das had a wonderful personality and by an osmotic process, as it were, he inspired his followers. Subhas Chandra Bose when he first met him immediately felt that he had found his political Guru.

Another great feature of Das was that he was more of a statesman than a politician. He looked to the past for inspiration but there was no blind faith in it; he looked into the present but only to find out the ways and means for the future; and he looked into the future with almost a prophetic vision. He never dreamt that wrong would triumph although he found that right was worsted quite often. It is one of the biggest tragedies that this prince of a man was cut out early when he had yet a lot to give.
C. Rajagopalachari

It was during the Rowlatt Bill agitation in the year 1919 that Gandhiji went to Madras at the invitation of Sjt. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to enlighten the people of the South about the dangerous implications of the black bill. The man behind the Madras invitation was C. Rajagopalachari, who played host to Gandhiji in Madras. C. R. had just shifted to Madras from Salem where he was a practising lawyer since 1900. A man of shy habits, C. R. preferred to remain in the background, but his brilliance and selfless character had greatly attracted Gandhiji's Private Secretary, Mahadev who advised Gandhiji to "cultivate this man". Gandhiji did so. Ultimately for quite some time C. R. became the "conscience keeper" of Gandhiji.

On the day the report of its notification in the gazette came, Gandhiji who was in Madras passed a sleepless night and dreamt that he should call for a general hartal as a protest against the Rowlatt Act. He disclosed it to C. R. in confidence and then afterwards consulted others. He gave this dream a shape by drafting an appeal to the country to observe April 6 as the day of general hartal, fast and prayer.

Gandhiji had influenced C. R. so much that we find him in the year 1920, addressing Gandhiji in a letter as "My dearest Master". At his call C. R. gave up his legal practice in 1921. He was also one of the signatories of the famous Manifesto of October 4, 1921 declaring that it was the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood. C.R. was in very close touch with Gandhiji when the Non-Cooperation Movement was in full swing as is evident from his letter to Gandhiji on December 9, 1921:

"On 4th instant the Provincial Congress Executive Committee met at Vellore.... Notices were served under Section 144 Cr. P. C. on me, Dr Rajan, E. R. Naicker and on Subramania Sastri prohibiting us from addressing any meeting at Vellore for 2 months. Such orders have been served on workers everywhere now. The situation is such that the only alternative is standstill or imprisonment by disobedience. The Executive favoured indi-
vidual disobedience and agreed that Ramaswami Naicker and I should disobey the order and it has been so notified. ...The meeting is announced to be on 14th instant. So unless I withdrew now, I must go to prison on that day. Probably earlier also, as I hear Government is just thinking of arresting me under Section 124A...”

In 1922 when Gandhiji withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement, the AICC appointed a Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee to re-assess the Satyagraha theories and practice in the form of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement. C.R. who was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress at that time, was one of the members of this Committee which toured India. The report of the Civil Disobedience Committee made the leaders introspect and there was a swing to capture the Legislative Councils and Local Bodies.

C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru preferred the Councils as the arena. But C. R., a confirmed no-changer was opposed to Council entry. At the Gaya Congress under the presidency of C. R. Das in 1922, his resolution of the boycott of the Councils was carried by a big majority. However, the differences between the two parties, Swarajists and no-changers, were soon patched up; and in the following year 1923, at the Cooranada Congress, it was C. Rajagopalachari who moved the compromise resolution permitting the Swarajists to enter Councils, the “the principle and policy of that boycott remained unaltered.”

During Gandhiji’s absence in Yeravda Jail, C. R. for sometime edited Young India. Prison-life had become a game to C. R. from the Civil Disobedience days. He was actively associated with the Vaikom Satyagraha and Temple Entry Movement in the South. In 1924 when he asked Gandhiji’s advice for himself to go to jail for Vaikom Satyagraha, Gandhiji advised him to “regulate the movement” and play the negotiator with the Dewan of Travancore.

By 1925, the Swaraj Party became the dominant wing of the Congress as reiterated by the AICC at Patna on September 22, 1925. The no-changers like C.R. and Rajendra Prasad began to devote themselves to the Constructive programme of the Congress, Hindu-Muslim unity, Eradication of Untouchability, Swadeshi and Prohibition. Gandhiji removed C. R. and Vallabhbhai’s names from the Working Committee in 1925. C. R’s reaction to Council-entry was partially conveyed to Gandhiji in a letter dated January 19, 1926:
“...I gave one whole precious week to this work of proselytising Srinivas Iyengar, Satyamurti, Ramaswami Iyengar and making them shed their suspicions and alarm about me. The quid pro quo is that we should help the Swarajists in this work of the Councils—a position you have entangled us all in yourself. But the more intimately I see them, the more clearly I see the logical end of their endeavours viz., accepting office after driving out other competitors in the field.”

In 1930 when Gandhiji addressed a letter to Lord Irwin on March 2, 1930 before starting the Salt Satyagraha, C. R. got a copy of that letter and wrote about his apprehensions to him:

“...They cannot let the conflagration grow on the ground that much salt cannot be made by you. It is not salt but disobedience that you are manufacturing.” In this letter he also gave his own plan of picketing of liquor shops and marching from Cape Comorin to a single picketing centre, gathering volunteers on the way. He asked Gandhiji’s advice whether he agrees with this plan or they should concentrate on Salt Satyagraha only. The same sense of a realist approach is seen in C. R’s letter dated September 24, 1931 to Gandhiji when he was in London attending R.T.C. sessions: “Unless we develop a new efficiency, honesty and public spirit, I don’t expect to be happier under Swaraj than under the British Government.”

Prophetic words!!

In 1932 C. R. was a very important negotiator at the time of Gandhiji’s epic fast against Macdonald’s Communal Award. He was instrumental in evolving the Yeravda Pact between the representatives of Hindu Conference and the representatives of the depressed classes. When in 1933 Gandhiji again started his three week fast starting from May 8, C. R. was critical of it and when at his request Gandhiji refused to undergo any medical examination before the fast, C. R. wrote: “You are then conceding nothing and claiming infallibility”. Gandhiji agreed for a medical examination.

In June 1933, Gandhiji and Rajaji came much nearer to each other by matrimonial alliance between Devdas, son of Gandhiji and Laxmi, C. R.’s daughter. It was an inter-communal marriage.

In 1934 Gandhiji suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement and on June 6, 1936, the Government of India lifted the ban on the Congress. After the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Councils became more important. In July 1937, the Congress at Wardha allowed the Congressmen to accept offices under the new
reforms. C. Rajagopalachari became the Premier of Madras and did a lot in scaling down rural indebtedness and in the field of prohibition.

When C. R. and the Congress Ministries came under fire at the AICC meeting in October 1937, Gandhiji defended Rajaji in these words:

"Healthy, well-informed, balanced criticism is the ozone of public life. A most democratic minister is likely to go wrong without ceaseless watch from the public. But the resolution moved at the AICC criticising the Congress ministers and still more the speeches, were wide off the mark. The critics had not cared to study the facts. They had not before them C. R.'s reply."

In similar language he defended C. R. in 1938 when some communist workers charged him for repression of the communists. But at the same time, he wrote on May 21, 1938 to C. R. asking him: "What will happen if the ban is lifted" and pointing that if they indulge in violence, they can be dealt with under common law. In the same year when Sir Radhakrishnan, the ex-President of India, drew Gandhiji's attention to anti-Hindi agitation in Madras, Gandhiji wrote to Rajaji that he should agree to Radhakrishnan's suggestion of introducing a Conscience Clause, exempting those children from learning Hindi whose parents stated in writing that they had a conscientious objection to their children learning Hindi; but at the same time wrote "you will do what appears to you to be best". In this letter of December 24, 1938 Gandhiji enquired about his move to separate Andhra as a province.

In 1939 at the Congress Session, in Tripura under Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhiji's leadership was challenged. C. R. stood as a rock behind Gandhiji. The Congress ministries resigned on ideological differences when India was forced to participate in the Second World War. After casting off the office C. R. again came to be Gandhiji's almost righthand man in the events that followed.

In 1940 the Congress Working Committee at its emergency meeting in Delhi on July 3, renewed its demand for an immediate declaration of full independence of India with a new proposal of a Provisional National Government at the Centre. The interpretation of C. R. and Azad of this new proposal was that the "defence" of the country meant participation of the Congress in
the war, if its terms were granted. Gandhiji supported the Delhi Resolution in these words:

"Rajaji was the framer of the resolution. He was as certain of his position as I was of mine. His persistency and courage and utter humility brought him converts. Sardar Patel was his greatest prize. He would not have even thought of bringing up his resolution, if I had chosen to prevent him. But I give my comrades the same credit for earnestness and self-confidence that I claim for myself. I had long known that we were drifting away from each other in our outlook upon the political problems that face us. He will not allow me to say that his is a departure from ahimsa. He claims that his very ahimsa has led him to the point which culminated in his resolution. He thinks that I suffer from obsession owing to too much brooding on ahimsa... I at once saw as clear as daylight that, if my position was not acceptable, Rajaji's was the only real alternative... I advised that Rajaji's resolution should be enforced... Rajaji's resolution represents the considered policy of the Congress."

While supporting the resolution he appealed to non-Congressmen, the Muslim League, the Princes and the British Government to agree to its terms. As events moved, Gandhiji regretted for pushing him forward with his resolution and commented editorially in Harijan of September 18, 1940:

"When passions have died, the critics will read Rajaji's offer in its proper light. It is wrong to misjudge a public worker and doubly so when he happens to be of Rajaji's calibre. Rajaji has lost nothing by the misjudgment. But a nation may easily harm itself by misjudging its true servants and denying itself their services."

C. R's resolution had no response from the British Government on the lines indicated in it. The August offer of the Viceroy only proposed an expanded Executive Council and no National Government. The Congress launched individual civil disobedience on October 17, 1940 and soon C. R. was behind the bars.

In 1942 after the Cripps Mission, C. R. again started his peace mission; and when Louis Fischer, an American journalist, asked Gandhiji for his opinion about the proposals of Rajaji, Gandhiji replied: "I do not know what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him. So I have given order that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know
what Rajaji proposes." And to Preston Grover, A. P. representative, he said that it was the fear of Japs that was goading C. R. to demand a national government. In 1942 C. R. resigned from the Congress owing to difference of opinion with the Congress Executive.

In the same year when in August the ‘Quit India’ movement was launched, C. R. wrote to Gandhiji: "The first need was the Hindu-Muslim agreement as to a national government to take over the power. Without that, the proposed campaign would only benefit the Japanese." In 1943 when the non-Congress leaders met in Bombay to find means to establish reconciliation between the government and the Congress, C. R. was one of the signatories of that appeal.

On April 23, 1942 Rajaji got the Congress members of the Madras Legislature recommend to the AICC that Congressmen should acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation in order to secure the installation of a national government to meet the present emergency. It was resented by the Congress leaders including Patel, and was rejected by the AICC at Allahabad within a week on April 29. Gandhiji also wrote to him ‘to sever’ his connection with the Congress and then carry on his campaign in support of the Muslim League’s campaign for separation.

To avoid conflict between the Congress and the Government, we find C. R. first knocking at the Government’s door for compromise, but when there was no response, he approached the Muslim League to reconcile its relations with the Congress in order to present a joint scheme before the British Government which had made the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement a condition precedent to the formation of a National Government. To meet this end C. R. evolved a four-point formula in 1944 to serve as the basis of Congress-Muslim League settlement. The formula was approved by Gandhiji in 1943 when he was a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace. But Jinnah was not satisfied with it. The formula was published on July 10, 1944. Its provisions were:

1. The Muslim League was to endorse the demand for independence for the transitional period;
2. At the end of the war, a commission would demarcate those contiguous areas in North-West and North-East India in which the Muslims were in an absolute majority,
and in those areas a plebiscite of all the inhabitants would decide whether or not they should be separated from Hindustan;

3. In the event of separation, agreements would be made for defence, commerce, communications and other essential purposes;

4. The terms should be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the government of India.

Jinnah was not satisfied with this formula and wanted Gandhiji to “join hands with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan.” Jinnah’s interpretation of the formula was “putting the cart before the horse,” for he believed that Britain would never transfer power to India.

To Gandhiji, the C. R. formula accepted the principle of self-determination and was a credit to him. C. R. rejoined the Congress in 1945.

In this context Gandhiji’s formula in his own hand to establish national form of government in line with the Muslim League’s Lahore resolution of 1940 was as follows:

“India is not regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many children of whom the Muslims living in the N. W. Zones i.e., Baluchistan, Sind, Frontier Province and the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements and similarly in parts of Assam and Bengal where they are in absolute majority desire to live in separation from the rest of India.

The desire should be vested in the following manner:

The areas should be demarcated by a joint committee appointed by the Congress, the League, and the wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult (male and female) population of the areas. If the vote is in favour of separation and the Joint Committee find that the separation is materially and economically feasible, capable of self-supporting, the areas should form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination. The treaty of separation excludes from its operation Defence, Foreign Affairs, Internal Communication, Customs which shall be common to the contracting parties. The Committee shall devise a formula for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two States. The Committee’s findings shall be binding on the two parties. The execution of the contemplated plan of
separation take shall place on India becoming free from foreign
domination. Immediately on the acceptance of these terms by
the Congress and the League the two shall decide upon common
course of action for ending British rule provided that the Congress
will be free to resort to direct action including civil disobedience
even if the League is not ready or is unwilling to resort to direct
action."

In 1946 when Gandhiji was returning from Madras to Wardha
after inaugurating the Constructive Workers Conference, someone
told him at Bezwada railway station that there was a belief in Andhra
Pradesh that he had gone to Madras to make C. R. a Premier.
Gandhiji said: "I had no hesitation in saying that Rajaji was by far
the best man for the purpose in the Southern Presidency and if I had
the disposal in my hands, I would call Rajaji to office."

The intimate but mutually respectful relationship of Gandhiji
and C.R. is very apparent from some of their correspondence. C.R.
wrote on June 12, 1920: "Words fail me altogether. I hope
you have pardoned me". On May 26, 1928 C.R. again wrote: "Your
letter has not helped me to attain the peace which you intended it
should do. I see your love and reasonableness. But peace must
come from within. As yet it is like a parched throat only causing
pain if you try to find moisture and swallow." The contexts are not
known.

On July 5, 1942 Gandhiji wrote:

"Mahadev was telling me how sad you were over my
obstinacy in not appreciating what was so plain to you. All that
I can say is there is no want of will about me. But I am built that
way. Once an idea possesses me I can't easily get rid of the
possession. I suppose you are of the same build. Therefore
there seems to be no escape but to suffer each other's limitations...
So long as you remain a member of the Assembly under the
Congress ticket which binds its members to carry out the policy...
laid down by the AICC you are bound to carry it out. If that is
not so it is your duty to resign the membership of the Assembly...
it will be most becoming of you to sever your connection with the
Congress and then carry on your campaign with all the zeal and
ability you are capable of."

Earlier on June 7, 1942 Gandhiji had, however, told C. R.:

"Nonsense... These differences mean nothing... I shall
no longer enter into a controversy with you... You should come
here for rest, jokes and in search of strength and joy."

On June 13, 1942 C. R. was told: "But you should try to
let me see my error which you see so clearly."
Though they "differed as poles asunder" (Gandhiji's words), Gandhiji confided in C. R. in the crucial days of 1942:

"Fear is writ large in our faces. Fear of doing wrong, fear of running into the imaginary enemy's trap is all a species of fear and dangerous at that. However you have to submit till you patiently convert your companions. They are the best material we have. And it is from that that we have to weave the national fabric."

Earlier once Gandhiji had asked C. R.: "Are we breaking up by the sheer weight of our own folly or worse? You must give yourself a moment's leisure and think out where we are drifting to?"

Neither of them would spare the other and thought so differently on various matters. In some of the letters C. R. scathingly analysed some of the Congress stalwarts in his inimitable words. Gandhiji also did strike him hard on many occasions. In the crucial days of the Gandhi-Jinnah dialogues C. R. was largely depended on by Gandhiji although Gandhiji did not always follow C. R.'s logic.

Gandhiji's relationship with C. R. does not appear to have become cool or detached, although very often C. R. had his own interpretation of Gandhiji's words and actions. On the question of partition C. R. probably had a clearer vision and firmer grip. C. Rajagopalachari had not unnecessarily strengthened Jinnah's hands as is often thought because as late as 1940, the then Viceroy had assured Jinnah, no steps will be taken without consulting him. After partition when there were riots in West Bengal with C. R. as the Governor and Gandhiji was in Calcutta because of the riots, C. R. did not see much point in Gandhiji's move and had told Gandhiji that by fasting he will not be able to restrain the hooligans.

The creative brain of C. R. was appreciated by Jawaharlal by offering him one key post after another since 1946. That brain still works brilliantly in spite of the weight of years. He is a statesman first and a statesman last and not a politician alone.

The world has very few parallels to C. R. as a statesman.
C. Sankaran Nair

Sir C. Sankaran Nair was a very colourful personality. In his life from 1857 to 1934 he had been a brilliant student, a successful advocate, a judge, a politician and a statesman, a President of the Indian National Congress, a Councillor in the Viceroy’s Cabinet, a Member of the Secretary of State’s Council, a writer, a thinker and a physical culturist. He was an admirer of Gandhiji with reservations and thought Gandhiji was much more successful in regions other than politics. He was called upon to bitterly criticise Gandhiji in a book “Gandhi and Anarchy”. This book, published in March 1922, had seen three editions by May 1923, at a time when Gandhiji’s star was at its zenith. His contribution to Indian politics was more as a constitutionalist. He was one of the men who could swing Montagu to come out with a better deal.

Nair had achieved quite early in his chequered career the highest distinction that India could have offered at that time, namely, the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. At a comparatively early age of 40 he presided over the Congress in 1897. Before that in his public life he was more of a social reformer. He was in close touch with the Congress at various places from 1887 onwards and had spoken on Volunteering, Military and Civil expenditure etc. in different sessions, but his forte was in the social reforms which he was carrying on as the Municipal Commissioner of Madras and the President of the Madras Social Reforms Association and a syndic of Madras University. Like Gandhiji he also came to the conclusion that proper social reforms in India were not possible unless there is a proper administrative set-up and the British Government in India did not offer that framework.

In his speech as the President of the Congress in 1897 he held the Government responsible for famines and the extreme poverty of the masses, condemned the high military expenditure and pleaded for equality of the Indians before the law and proper chances in the services without any restrictions. Surendra Nath Bannerji thought the speech was “a strong and masculine utterance worthy of the man and suited to the times.”
The fire of patriotism that he had did not die out by the subsequent high Government services of the Advocate General and then a permanent Judge of the Madras High Court, membership of the Viceroy’s Cabinet but burnt all the brighter. Sankaran was hardly a popular figure because of his personal equation. He had scrupulously kept up his principles and ideas whatever was his official position. As a member of the Executive Council he was extremely independent and often came in clash with Lord Chelmsford though he got on well with Lord Hardinge.

His contact with Gandhiji appears to have received a pungent start in 1916. The inaugural ceremony of the Benaras Hindu University held in February 1916 was presided over by Lord Hardinge. Sankaran Nair as the Member-in-charge of Education had attended the ceremony. Gandhiji made a sensational speech there condemning the show of wealth and jewellery by the Rajas and Maharajahs attending the function and the security measures for the Viceroy’s protection in contrast to the poverty of the people. He also said that he was an anarchist himself but he did not believe in the bomb cult. Mrs Annie Besant had tried to stop Gandhiji in his speech but Gandhiji was allowed to continue. Gandhiji gave an inkling of his mind and mentioned that “Britain will never be a party to giving self-government to a people who will not take it themselves. It can be surmised that Sankaran Nair’s reaction must have been of a mixed type. While appreciating Gandhiji’s burning patriotism he could not have liked the undertone of the defiance of law.

Sankaran Nair was largely instrumental in getting better suggestions from Edwin Montagu but he was clearly dissatisfied with the core of them. He was well-known to Montagu before Montagu’s appointment as Secretary of State for India. Montagu’s diary shows what an important factor Sankaran Nair was at that time and Montagu wanted to avoid differences with him. One of the entries was “Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer had warned me that it was absolutely necessary to get him on my side for Sankaran Nair wielded more influence than any other Indian. Nair also told me that he did not wish to be egotistical but anything he commended to the Indians that Indians would accept, if this was not done, nobody else would make them accepted. As I have heard this from all other sources I quite agree.” Sankaran Nair was of the opinion that the reforms proposed fell very much short of the target and had taken no account whatever of the Indian National Congress of the last thirty years.
Sankaran Nair’s separate minute contained among other issues a scathing criticism that the ICS had failed to govern the country effectively. This minute was given a proper consideration by the Joint Select Committee of both the Houses of Parliament. The Committee accepted some of the points in the dissenting minute.

Gandhiji welcomed the Montford reforms while Tilak, C. R. Das and others held that the Reforms Act was “inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing.” Sankaran knew the value of the Reforms and he had an open mind. Gandhiji thought the reforms were inaugurating ‘a new era’. Sankaran did not have this idea. The Montford Reforms were signed by the Government of India on March 15, 1919 and the Rowlatt Act was passed on March 18. Gandhiji was completely ignored as he had protested against the Rowlatt Bill. Soon after came the Jallianwala Bagh incident and Sankaran Nair resigned his very coveted and responsible assignment in the Viceroy’s Council. It was a momentous decision and a challenge. The resignation had a tremendous impact and the Martial Law was quickly terminated and a Royal Commission with Lord Hunter as the President was appointed to investigate the Punjab disturbances.

Soon after Nair was appointed a Member in the Council of the Secretary of State in London. It goes to Montagu’s credit that with all his deeds and ‘misdeeds’ according to the British diehards, Nair was appointed to that post. From that assignment Sankaran Nair did a lot of service to India and Gandhiji’s cause in condemning the Amritsar shootings. He was instrumental in getting wide publicity of the Amritsar massacre by the Military in “Westminster Gazette” which was followed by the Times and other papers. Nair as a Member of the Secretary of State’s Council could not get General Dyer and others condemned for the outrages in Punjab. But he had the independence of mind to write a minute giving vent to his feelings. He could, however, tilt the Cabinet to decide that the force employed by General Dyer was much in excess and had caused “lamentable and unnecessary loss of life and suffering.” The other burning question before the Secretary of State’s Council was the Khilafat agitation by Gandhiji and some Muslims. Nair did not see eye to eye with them in the Khilafat question. He took a more pragmatic approach and held that it was impossible for England to uphold the Caliphate and make over Arabia etc. to Turkey. Then came the Non-Co-operation Movement largely based on the Khilafat grievances of the Muslims but Nair could not endorse the Non-Co-
operation Movement. He abhorred the mixing up of religion with politics. His disciplined mind could not approve of the technique prescribed by Gandhiji. He resigned from the Secretary of State’s Council and came back to India in early 1921. He thought his venue of work should be India.

Soon after his return to India Sankaran Nair presided over a conference of political leaders in Bombay which was expected to lead to a Round Table Conference with the Viceroy in connection with the political situation in India and the release of the political prisoners. The meeting was initiated by Madan Mohan Malaviya and after Mr M.A. Jinnah had placed the draft proposals on behalf of the convenors. Gandhiji opened the discussion. Gandhiji came out with his terms after mentioning a lengthy list of events that had happened and said that the causes were to be removed otherwise a Round Table Conference would not lead to any result. Sankaran Nair could not reconcile himself with the propositions of Gandhiji which he thought were unpractical and impossible and he left the meeting. He also issued a statement denouncing the Civil Disobedience Movements. There was an unfortunate, acrimonious and avoidable controversy over his vacating the chair in which Gandhiji also took part. Gandhiji had referred to this matter in his letters to the Bombay Chronicle on January 17, 1922 and again on January 18, 1922 and in Navajivan on January 22, 1922. Gandhiji held the view that the speaker has no right to take part in the proceedings but has only to conduct the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure. The difference between a speaker and a President in a meeting of that type was extremely thin and one might find it difficult to reconcile to Gandhiji’s view. It appears that Sankaran Nair’s action had upset Gandhiji terribly and particularly Nair’s letter published by The Times of India on January 17, 1922 giving his reasons as to why he left the meeting. His arguments cannot be brushed aside lightly on the ground that he was ‘angry’ over Gandhiji’s stand. This was an unfortunate episode but the background is not in the meeting itself.

The parting of ways with Gandhiji was now complete. This astute administrator and constitutionalist had a jolt. The Malabar outrages, the Chauri-Chaura incident where some police constables were killed and a police station was burnt, the series of communal riots and other organised defiances of law made Sankaran Nair think deeply as to the logic behind Gandhiji’s movement. He pub-
lished his book "Gandhi and Anarchy" and bitterly criticised Gandhi ji's philosophy, the non-cooperation resolution, the Khilafat question and all other aspects of the movement and spotlighted very bravely how the movement had actually worked in the hands of the undisciplined mob. According to Nair, Gandhiji was "the strongest opponent for Indian Home Rule" and that the most severe check the movement had received was the adoption of the movement by the Indian National Congress at Gandhiji's instance. He had no hesitation to mention in the Preface of this book:

"Non-Cooperation as advocated by Mr Gandhi may be a weapon to be used when constitutional methods have failed to achieve our purpose. Non-violence and passive suffering will lead to bloodshed or be unfruitful to any satisfactory result. Moreover nothing shows the lack of statesmanship more than practically basing the claim for Swaraj upon the Punjab and the Khilafat grievances."

At another place:

"It was rightly realised by many, and the sequel has proved that they were right, that the path of the progress of the Gandhian movement fused with the Khilafat movement will be bloody. The claim for Indian Home Rule rests upon very different accounts. The Hindus have nothing to do with the Khilafat agitation. The Mohammadans themselves are not agreed as to the claims advanced on behalf of the Caliph."

Sankaran Nair thought that by applying his gospel of life to politics Gandhiji had shown himself "a babe" and his interference has been "generally mischievous." Nair deplored that a galaxy of ardent Congressmen and the Moderates were either silent or had been blindly following Gandhiji. He had no sympathy with Gandhiji's "emotional outbursts, fastings, penances, sanyasi waist cloth," which might carry away "the emotional masses, women and students." He thought that Gandhiji was utilising various forces current in the country and his personal traits of Ahimsa, support of the caste system, Khilafat demands etc. some of which were contradictory to each other and he would only lead the country to bloodshed and 'anarchy and also to the triumph of a reactionary policy, social, moral and economic.'

Sir Sankaran Nair gave extensive quotations from speeches and newspaper reports about a number of gruesome incidents in different parts of India. In the text itself he also gave quotations from Gandhiji's book 'Hind Swaraj' and made out that Gandhiji has not
changed his dogmatic views since 1908 when he published that book. Probably no other Indian statesman-scholar excepting B.R. Ambedkar has made a more bitter criticism of Gandhiji's work as Nair did.

Sankaran Nair, however, could not visualise the coming events and so his thesis that Gandhiji was a false prophet with a pair of clay feet and was leading the country into chaos and bloodshed only did not prove correct. But so far as sincerity of purpose is concerned there can be no doubt about it in Nair.

The book had a very unexpected sequel. Nair had observed "Before the Reforms, it was in the power of the Lieutenant Governor, a single individual, to commit the atrocities in the Punjab, as we only know too well." Sir Michael O'Dwyer who was the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab at that time instituted damage proceedings in the Kin's Bench Division in England to vindicate his reputation. Sankaran Nair pleaded justification and fair and bonafide comment. After a protracted hearing Sankaran Nair had to pay £ 500 as damages and the costs to the tune of £ 7000 as he refused to apologise and get off as the plaintiff had proposed after winning the damage suit. The case did indirectly a lot of good to India and Gandhiji's cause. Sankaran Nair suffered for his independent views and his bad luck was sympathised by the bulk of his countrymen.

Gandhiji had referred to his judgment in "Young India" on June 12, 1924 and observed that Sankaran Nair showed pluck in fighting a forlorn case and that the judge had showed bias from the very commencement. He referred again to this matter in Navajivan on July 20, 1924 and observed that "even if there had been an Indian judge in Sankaran Nair's case, he would have dealt similar injustice." In another article "Below the Belt" in "Young India" on August 7, 1924 Gandhiji had reiterated that "the judgment of the judge in Sankaran Nair's case was warped. I am morally certain that the judge was politically biased in favour of Sir Michael O'Dwyer."

Sankaran Nair's zeal to serve his country was unabated in spite of all this. He accepted the Chairmanship of an Indian Central Committee of six members to help the Royal Commission with Sir John Simon at its head to examine the working of the Montford Reforms and to suggest what further steps could be taken to advance self-government. This was in 1929. Later he was invited to take part in the Round Table Conferences in England but he refused it
on the ground that "I do not want to assist in the funeral of Indian Nationalism."

The differences between Gandhiji and Nair were over Gandhiji's methods and they persisted till death gathered Nair in 1934. As a shrewd statesman who had known the inside of the working of administration he had once exclaimed about Gandhiji: "Who but an imbecile would disclose his plan of operation to the enemy", regarding Gandhiji's statement that public debts would be repudiated by India on getting Swaraj.

Sankaran Nair was stubborn in many ways and never regretted his views. By his intellectual acumen, high incidence of patriotism and a virile pragmatic approach to life Sankaran Nair was a worthy contemporary of Gandhiji, though he was one of the bitterest critics and the paths of the two lay differently and far apart despite the object being the same.
Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Gandhiji’s introduction to the Indian National Congress was done in a very orthodox and unostentatious manner. The Congress Subjects Committee meeting in 1902 at its Calcutta Session was about to disperse. At the fag end Gopal Krishna Gokhale spoke: “Gandhi has a resolution on South Africa which we have to consider.” Gandhiji in his native dress had not attracted much attention before. When Gokhale spoke, the Congress stalwarts looked askance to Gandhiji. And most of them must not have thought much of him. The resolution was passed but Gandhiji did not create any particular impression as such, though his resolution was very sincere and spoke of what he had done in South Africa. This incident has been referred to by Gandhiji as follows:

“On the occasion of the Calcutta Congress Session in 1902 where I was present, I became fully conscious of my discipleship... I saw that Gokhale had not only not forgotten me but actually took me under his charge. Gokhale’s resolution was adopted by the Calcutta Congress in that year.”

Gandhiji had his political schooling under Gokhale since 1901 when he went to attend the Calcutta Session of the Congress and stayed with Gokhale. This contact has been described by Gandhiji in these words:

“In 1901 on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply ‘took me in hand’, and began to fashion me. He was concerned about how I spoke, dressed, walked and ate. My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field.”

Again it was during this stay in Calcutta with Gokhale that Gandhiji came to meet and know another great dedicated soul, Sir P. C. Roy, the great chemist and staunch nationalist who was a particular friend of Gokhale. Both Roy and Gandhiji were attracted to each other. As a matter of fact it was the particular privilege of Sir P. C. Roy to introduce Gandhiji for the first time to a Calcutta audience in a public meeting. Roy was devoted to research in Chemistry and constructive work, throughout his life. He spurned
his Knighthood like Rabindranath Tagore. When Gandhiji took leave of Gokhale from Calcutta to start an all India tour travelling in third class, both Sir P. C. Roy and Gokhale had come to the railway station to see him off. Gokhale gave him a tiffin box stuffed with food.

But this was not the first meeting of Gandhiji and Gokhale. They had met first in 1896 when Gandhiji had come to India to take back his family to South Africa in order to settle down there. In order to create public opinion in India on the plight of the Indians in South Africa he met most of the top leaders such as Sir Pheroze-shah Mehta, Lokmanaya Tilak, Gokhale and others. His first impression of these meetings has been penned by Gandhiji himself:

"After meeting Tilak next I met Gokhale. I found him on the Fergusson College grounds. He gave me an affectionate welcome, and his manner immediately won my heart. With him too this was my first meeting, and yet it seemed as though we were renewing an old friendship. Sir Pheroze-shah had seemed to me like the Himalayas, the Lokmanya like the ocean. But Gokhale was as the Ganges, we could have a refreshing bath in the holy water. The Himalayas was unscaleable, and one could not easily launch forth on the sea, but the Ganges invited one to its bosom. It was a joy to be on it with a boat and an oar. Gokhale closely examined me, as a schoolmaster would examine a candidate seeking admission to school."

This examination of Gandhiji by Gokhale was natural for Gandhiji admits that he was still a "raw youth" on the threshold of his political life with some bruises on his dark skin in skirmish with the people of white colour in Natal.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his "political guru" was at that time a man of established reputation, as a professor, editor and Congress leader. Gokhale was born on May 9, 1866 in the Ratnagiri district on the Western Coast of India. From the very start of his career, Gokhale was a follower of Ranade and regarded him as his 'Guru'. Ranade shaped Gokhale. It was at his behest that he accepted the editorship of Sudharak (1888) and its Quarterly published by the Poona Sarnayanik Sabha. He also edited Rashtra Sabha Samachar (1895). When Tilak resigned from the Deccan Education Society, Gokhale became its Secretary in 1891. He was known as the "rising star of the Deccan." He was well-known for his grasp of the economic prob-
lems of the country; and was selected to go to England in 1897 to give evidence before the Welby Commission. It was for his dedication to work and scholarship which earned him the membership of the Bombay Legislative Council (1899) and then of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1902. In the Budget speech of 1907 he urged complete abolition of salt duty and pleaded for free primary education and Constitutional reforms. He was always critical of the British Government's mounting civil and military expenditure. For his opposition, Sir Valentine Chirod and many Viceroy's called Gokhale the leader of His Majesty's opposition in India. In 1904 he was honoured with the title of C.I.E. and in the same year elected as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress over which he presided in 1905 at its Banaras Session.

The year 1905 has been regarded as the most glorious year of Gokhale's life. It was in this year on June 12 that he laid the foundation of the 'Servants of India Society' with the headquarters at Poona. The object of the Society was "to train men prepared to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit; and seek to promote by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people." Gokhale had laid seven vows for the members. Later Gandhiji also had laid down seven other vows for his Ashram inmates.

Gokhale who was an alert and articulate politician and took keen interest in the problems of Indians overseas specially the cause of the indentured Indians in South Africa under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He had initiated debates in the Legislative Council of India and moved a resolution in 1910 to prohibit the recruitment of the indentured labour for Natal. Gandhiji was always clamouring for the visit of Indian leaders to South Africa to study the grievances of the Indian immigrants. Gokhale was kept informed of the developments in South Africa by Gandhiji. In a letter to Gokhale on May 19, 1911 from Johannesburg he wrote:

"I have always refrained from inflicting letters on you, being personally aware of the many other calls upon your time... But I feel it is necessary for me to give you a review of the situation here, at periodic intervals. Whilst I naturally consider that without passive resistance during the four years nothing whatsoever could have been done, I am quite certain that the efforts made by the public in India under your guidance and Mr Polak's wonderful work there and Mr Ritch's in England have very materially hastened the end of our troubles; but we have to fight
such a stubborn enemy, that ceaseless watchfulness is absolutely necessary..."

In 1911 when Gokhale was in England and exciting reports of the passive resisters’ arrests and deportations were coming in, Gokhale conferred with Morley, the Secretary of State for India and planned to visit South Africa. When he cabled to this effect, Gandhiji felt very happy and chalked out a plan for his tour of South African principal towns. Gokhale landed at Cape Town on October 22, 1912; and after a tour of the principal towns as Cape Town, Kimberley, Johannesburg, Maritzburg and Pretoria, he left South Africa on November 17, 1912. During the tour he was given grand receptions. At the Kimberley reception, Gandhiji paid tribute to Gokhale and said that had Mr Gokhale been an Englishman he would have been occupying the position now held by Mr Asquith, and possibly had he been born in France he would have been the President of the French Republic. He hoped the result of this mission would be a better understanding between the Europeans and Indians residing in South Africa. At the Masonic Hall banquet, Johannesburg, Gokhale said about Gandhiji:

"India recognised in Mr Gandhi a great and illustrious son of whom she was proud beyond words, and he was sure that men of all races and creeds would recognise in him one of the most remarkable personalities of their time..."

During his tour of South Africa, when in Natal, Gokhale was a guest of Gandhiji and stayed at the Tolstoy Farm. Gandhiji worked as his Secretary. As there was no cot at the Farm, one was brought for the use of Gokhale who did not use it when he came to know that the other members of the Tolstoy Farm slept on the floor. Gokhale also had his bed spread on the floor. To Gandhiji "that whole night was a night of repentance."

Gandhiji and Kallenbach, a friend of Gandhiji who had given his land for Tolstoy Farm, accompanied Gokhale on his return journey as far as Zanzibar and during the voyage, Gokhale gave Gandhiji the pen-pictures of all the leading Indians and prepared Gandhiji for his work in India, as conceded by Gandhiji. He also asked Gandhiji to return to India within a year.

After the departure of Gokhale when the South African Government was found reluctant to repeal the Black Act and to abolish the £3 tax, as promised to Gokhale by General Botha, the Satyagraha struggle was renewed; and Gokhale was appraised of the situation
by a telegram which cost a hundred pounds. Gandhiji underlined
the fact that Gokhale’s visit to South Africa stiffened Indians’ resolu-
tion to renew the Satyagraha struggle which ended in a provisional
settlement in 1914 and embodied in the Indians Relief Bill. Thus
ended the great satyagraha struggle after eight years; and Gandhiji,
in company of Kasturba and Kallenbach, sailed for England on July
18, 1914—Gandhiji as desired by Gokhale, returned to London. He
saw Gokhale many times when he was suffering from Pleurisy while
Gokhale left for India as he could not stand the October fogs of
London.

When Gandhiji returned to India in 1915 and arrived in
Bombay on January 9, he said in a press interview that as advised
by Gokhale he would not express any opinion about Indian matters,
as he had been out of India so long; and that he had promised to
pass some time as an observer and a student. As desired by Gokhale
he went to see Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay who had
expressed his desire to meet Gandhiji. After the interview,
the Governor said ‘‘You may come to me whenever you like,
and you will see that my government do not wilfully do anything
wrong.’’ From Bombay, Gandhiji proceeded to Poona where
Gokhale summoned all the members of the ‘Servants of India Society’
to meet Gandhiji. Gokhale was keen to enroll Gandhiji as a
member of the ‘Servants of India Society’, but owing to a great diffe-
rence between his ideas and methods of work, and theirs, he turned
down Gandhiji’s request. Thus although very fond of Gandhiji,
Gokhale did what he thought was right. Gandhiji remarked that
‘‘this spiritual relationship was more precious than physical.’’ It
was at this get-together that Gandhiji expressed his desire to have an
Ashram in Gujarat to settle his Phoenix Ashramites who were then
staying at Tagore’s Shantiniketan. Gokhale cheerfully responded to
this request and promised finances for it, on the eve of Gandhiji’s
departure from Poona. Gokhale invited some selected friends to
meet him, but he could not attend that party as while coming to join
it, he fainted on the way outside the Society’s guest house and was
carried back to his residence.

From the Constitution of the ‘Servants of India Society’, we
find that its object was ‘‘to spiritualise public life.’’ Likewise from
the annals of the Congress, we find that since Gandhiji took its
leadership, he tried to instil the same spirit in the Congress organisa-
tion and produced political ‘Sanyasis’ who raised the political struggle
of India to a higher moral level and achieved freedom for the country. Explaining the attributes of the "spiritualisation", Gandhiji explains, it is to cultivate virtues like courage, truthfulness, patience, humility, a sense of justice, straightforwardness and perseverance and dedicate them to nation.

Gokhale was a great admirer of three Indian personalities: Ranade, Dadabhai and Gandhiji. He regarded Gandhiji as "the high watermark of Indian Humanity" and said:

"A purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on the earth. Mr Gandhi is one of those men who living an austerely simple life themselves and devoted to all the highest principles of love to their fellow-beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give a new vision."

Gandhiji was at Shantiniketan when he heard of Gokhale's death which occurred on February 19, 1915 in Poona; and on February 20 he spoke at the meeting held in Shantiniketan to mourn his death. He said:

"We should seek the company of those who have suffered and served and died. One such was Gokhale. He is dead, but his work is not dead, for his spirit lives. He was human from top to toe in all his dealings... copyt he zeal which he showed in all he took up, the love that was the love of his life, the turthfulness which guided every action and the thoroughness which was characteristic of all his work... I was in quest of a really truthfull hero in India and I found him in Gokhale... May God bless his soul."

But Gandhiji was not a blind admirer of Gokhale. It is mentioned in Lady Minto's diary that when Gandhiji met Lady Minto in 1931 at a party in London, Gandhiji had remarked to Lady Morley "The Minto-Morley Reforms have been our undoing. Had it not been for the separate electorates then established we should have settled our differences by now."

"You forget, Mr Gandhi," Lady Morley replied, "that the separate electorates were proposed by your leader and predecessor Mr Gokhale."

"Ah", said Mr Gandhi with a smile, "Gokhale was a good man, but even good men make mistakes."
Despite many differences in outlook Gokhale and Gandhiji had an affinity deeply spiritual, and both believed in politics with a moral base. Gokhale helped Gandhiji to shape in many ways and Gandhiji always had the deepest regard for his Political Guru. Politics in the hands of a dedicated man like Gokhale or Gandhiji is not a dirty game but a sacred mission.
Gopabandhu Das

Gopabandhu Das was commonly known as Utkalmoni, gem of Utkal (Orissa). Dr Prafulla Chandra Ray, a great Indian scientist, who had dedicated his life to Chemistry and social service and a friend of Gandhiji, had given this nick name to Gopabandhu. Das was born in 1877 in a small village of the Puri district in Orissa. After receiving early education in the village, he joined the Revenshaw College in Cuttack and did his law studies after graduation first at Cuttack and then in Calcutta. As a boy he led an austere life. From a very young age he had associated himself with Night Schools, relief in flood affected areas and other forms of social service. At that time the Oriyas (inhabitants of Orissa) were mostly engaged as cooks or coolies in Calcutta and there were very few educated Oriyas in Calcutta. Gopabandhu moved about in the lanes and bye-lanes of Calcutta and kept himself in touch with the Oriyas in a low ladder of society. He had started a Night School at Calcutta which still exists as Gopabandhu Night School. He also came in touch with some terrorists, but Gopabandhu was not enamoured of the terrorist movement.

As a student he took keen interest in a movement very dear to every Oriya. That was to bring about the amalgamation of the Oriya speaking tracts which were then lying scattered in the provinces of Bengal, Madras, Central Provinces and Berar. This had been taken up by the Utkal Union Conference or the Utkal Sammilini sponsored by Madhusudan Das fondly referred to as the Grand Old Man of Orissa. Later Madhusudan became a Minister in the Province of Bihar and Orissa, and was in charge of the Local Self Government. He resigned when the Government did not allow him to work in an honorary capacity. Madhusudan kept alive the movement for the unification of the Oriya speaking tracts. Gopabandhu threw himself heart and soul in this movement when he joined the Bar at Puri, a district town in Orissa. But Gopabandhu was of the view that the term Oriya should include the Bengalis, Marwaris and others who hailed from other provinces but had settled permanently in Orissa and had adopted Orissa as their home. There was a section in the Utkal Union Conference which was opposed to such a move.
Orissa was very backward at that time and public life was at a low ebb. A good chunk of Orissa was in the hands of the Feudatory chiefs. Somehow Madhusudan Das, who was an advocate in Cuttack and had been given the title of C.I.E., was not keen that Orissa should join the mainstream of Indian politics. *Utkal Dipika*, an Oriya journal had wide readership and it followed a very moderate policy. The only English newspaper in Orissa, at that time, was the *Star of Utkal*, a tri-weekly from Cuttack which was founded and edited by Khirod Chandra Roy Chaudhury, in 1903. Roy Chaudhury was once the Principal of Ravenshaw College. This paper had a more progressive tone and had once written that the people of other provinces who had permanently settled in Orissa should be called domiciled Oriyas. The editor was of independent views and for some articles of his he was called upon to deposit a security under the Press Act. This was in 1915. He stopped the Paper and wrote that “We would rather drown the Paper in the waters of Bay of Bengal than work with a alter round the neck.” The articles which were considered seditious then would cause amusement now.

It was at this juncture that young Gopabandhu Das actively joined politics. He had first chosen the career of an educationist. With the help of a few friends he started a school of the Ashram type at Sakhi Gopal, a small village midway between Cuttack and Puri. The school was on the pattern of the Deccan Education Society and the teachers, some of whom had brilliant Master’s degrees took only Rs 30 per month as their salary. It was a residential school and strict discipline was insisted on. This school became the nucleus of the neo-nationalism in Orissa at the instance of Gopabandhu Das. The editor of *Star of Utkal* had died in 1916 and Madhusudan Das was in his declining years. After his acceptance of a Ministership in the Province of Bihar and Orissa he had lost his popularity to a great extent. The vacuum was more than ably filled up by Gopabandhu Das.

Madhusudan Das had sent Gopabandhu to the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa. As a legislator, Gopabandhu made his first mark by his balanced speeches. The main theme that Gopabandhu spoke on was the “poverty of Orissa”, a land where floods, famines and cyclones were chronic. As a legislator he had a resolution passed for the unification of the Oriya speaking tracts. He had persuaded the Governor, Sir Edward Gait to visit the interior of famine ravaged Orissa to convince that the Commissioner’s report
was wrong. The Governor had publicly declared that Gopabandhu was right.

Gopabandhu started thinking against the spirit of parochialism which the Utkal Sammilini was following. He wanted that the Utkal Sammilini should merge in the Indian National Congress and was against the idea that one's own province should be developed but not as an integral part of India. Although an ardent supporter of the Utkal Sammilini Gopabandhu also attended the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. In a meeting of the Utkal Union Conference in 1918, while moving the main resolution dealing with the question of amalgamation of Oriya speaking tracts, Gopabandhu Das very strongly spoke on the subject and struck a distinct note that if there was no amalgamation of the Oriya speaking areas he would not have any further contact with the government.

As the President of the Sammilini in 1919 he struck on the note of a Common Indian Nationalism and wanted that the Sammilini should merge with the Congress. But he failed. Gopabandhu attended the special Congress sessions in Calcutta in 1920 where Gandhiji's programme of non-cooperation with Government was passed. Just before his departure for Calcutta, Gopabandhu had formed a District Congress Committee at Puri with himself as the President. Since then till his death he attended all the sessions of the Congress. Even in 1920 Gopabandhu had taken a lead in persuading Gandhiji to accept the issue of formation of linguistic provinces and a resolution to that effect was passed in the Nagpur session. On return from Nagpur Congress session in 1920, Gopabandhu organised the Orissa Provincial Congress Committee.

He had a magnetic influence on the youth of Orissa. He was wellknown throughout Orissa for his great work to the cause of Utkal Union Conference. When he gave the call there was a wonderful rally from Ravenshaw College and other educational institutions of Orissa. The first batch of students that joined Gopabandhu included men like Hare Krishna Mahtab, Nab Krishna Chaudhury, Raj Krishna Bose, Nityanand Kanungo, Pitamber Misra and others, many of whom had later become prominent Congressmen and held assignments as Ministers etc. The Sakhi Gopal School was converted into a National School. Many lawyers and government servants joined Gopabandhu and his meetings drew thousands of men and women. It was a treat to hear this dedicated man usually with bare feet and a mere 'chaddar' and 'dhoti' on him. His saintly appear-
ance with a beard and the pair of glowing eyes that he had and his sincerity captivated the imagination of Orissa. The backward Orissa in the course of one year became one of the foremost areas deep in Congress politics. Ashrams and National Schools grew overnight throughout the length and breadth of Orissa and thousands were arrested, tortured and imprisoned. Gopabandhu was ably helped in this mission of propagating Congress creed in Orissa by his Satyabadi friends and others like Bishwanath Das, Gopabandhu Chaudhury, Bhagirithi Mahapatra etc. For the first time a number of Oriya women came out of ‘Parda’ and joined the Congress movement.

Gandhiji was deeply attracted by Gopabandhu. He realised that the tempo of the movement that Orissa had gathered was due mainly to the leadership of Das. When Gopabandhu invited Gandhiji in the Nagpur Congress session to pay a visit to Orissa he gave his promise. Gandhiji came to Orissa for the first time and reached Cuttack on March 23, 1921.

Gandhiji took very keen interest in Orissa after he had met Gopabandhu. Earlier in 1916 Gandhiji had deputed Mr Amritlal Thakkar to work in the flood and famine affected parts of Orissa. Dinabandhu C.F. Andrews had also worked for this. Both of them had spoken to Gandhiji about the dedicated life of Gopabandhu and so he was not a stranger to Gandhiji.

Gandhiji wrote to Braja Sundar Das, Secretary Oriya Peoples Association on February 5, 1920 that he had received the literature on the need for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration and he was taking up the matter in Young India.

The distress in Orissa was the subject of several signed articles of Gandhiji in Young India of 1920 and 1921. On April 13, 1921 in an article he had written:

"I was prepared to see skeletons in Orissa but not to the extent I did. I had seen terrible pictures but the reality was too terrible...they were not one or two, but many, and yet they were not all. They were the ablest of the starving—those who were able to walk fairly long distances...I must close the Orissa impressions with the vivid memory of thousands of poor people who came to a public meeting at Sakhi Gopal and emptied their knots of pies and paisas."

Pandit Gopabandhu was in close touch with Gandhiji since he came to know him. On October 8, 1921 Das had written a long
letter to Gandhiji in which he mentioned that he had already been gagged in three districts of Orissa—Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam. He further mentioned that the authorities were collecting material to issue orders under section 144 Cr. Pr. Code to stop his visit to other districts. Das also referred to his pending prosecution as the editor of the Samaj for writing an article “Serious if True” regarding “a strong rumour which was given publicity with the object of having an enquiry made either by the Government authorities or the public, The rumour was of an alleged suicide of a woman in which two police constables were involved, but their name and address not given.” Das thought the idea was somehow to secure his conviction and gag the paper Samaj which was, “the only influential non-cooperation organ in Orissa.” Das continued “I am in a difficulty as to whether I should defend or not...if to defend wire “yes”, if not to defend “no”. To this Gandhiji wired: “Only file bold true statement, never mind consequence.” This case was tried by Suresh Chandra Bose, a Deputy Magistrate and ended in acquittal. Suresh was an elder brother of Subhash Chandra Bose. He took the view that as no constable was named in the article no one was defamed. An appeal against acquittal was made by the State in Patna High Court but failed. Bose had to suffer for this judgment and ultimately had to resign.

Gopabandhu was imprisoned several times. But his zeal to spread non-cooperation never abated. His name became a legend and Gandhiji came to regard him as one of his best followers. Gandhiji’s love for Gopabandhu and Orissa is seen in a letter dated September 18, 1926. In this letter Gandhiji advised Gopabandhu to concentrate relief work in a particular area and mentioned that relief work cannot be taken up in a scattered manner for various reasons. He ended by saying:

“Orissa haunts me like a nightmare. Such a splendid country and yet poverty-stricken? The workers good and so helpless. Do not wear away your constitution uselessly going about.”

Gopabandhu was in touch with Lala Lajpat Rai from 1918 onwards. Lajpat Rai had very considerably helped him with men and money in his relief work. Gopabandhu ultimately joined the ‘Servants of People Society’ founded by Lala Lajpat Rai and along with men like Lal Bahadur Shastri, Purushotam Das Tandon and others became an active worker of the organisation. Gopabandhu willed
away his Press, daily paper *Samaj* and other assets to the Society. This paper, *Samaj* is now a great force in Orissa under the editorship of Radha Nath Rath, a lifelong associate of Gopabandhu.

Gandhiji's next visit to Orissa was in 1934. Gopabandhu had then passed away but his impact was still evident. Gandhiji visited a number of places by rail, car and foot. He unveiled a bust of Gopabandhu on May 8, 1934 at Puri and in his address he referred to Gopabandhu's simplicity, truthfulness and courage. Gandhiji had also visited the Seva Sadan founded by Gopabandhu in 1925 at Sakhi Gopal. Gandhiji referred to him in almost every meeting he addressed.

Gopabandhu had all along been burning the candle at both the ends. His food was very austere and irregular. He worked very hard, physically and mentally, and never relaxed. His constant imprisonments also shattered his health. He became seriously ill and passed away on June 17, 1928. Just two hours before his death, in the presence of his son-in-law and his life-long friend Radha Nath Rath, he dictated his will in English, running to four pages, and all the time he was conscious that he was going to die soonafter.

Gopabandhu Das with his innate simplicity and wish to avoid public glare had purposely confined himself to Orissa and today there is practically no educated home in Orissa that does not know him. He created a band of devoted workers. He pulled out Orissa from the doldrums of "moderate" public life and put her in the mainstream of India's bid for freedom. He had great ideas about education, journalism and public life. He was a poet and a literary critic. Once he literally left his own son hovering between life and death and went to the flood-ravaged areas and said he had entrusted his son in the hands of God. He had an attractive personality and when he spoke there was a halo of glow and sincerity in his words. It was he who had brought Gandhiji to Orissa. It is a great pity that he died at a comparatively early age and much of the work he had started was left unfinished.

At his death Gandhiji wrote an article "A noble soul gone" in *Young India* on June 21, 1928. In the course of this he had written:

"Pandit Gopabandhu Das was one of the noblest among the sons of Orissa, the land of sorrows and tears. Gopabandhu Das had given his all to Orissa. I heard of him and his sterling character and steadfastness when Amrit Lal Thakkar was sent to Orissa in 1916 to distribute relief to the famine-stricken...He
gave up his practice and his membership of the Legislative Council during the non-cooperation days and never wavered. What was more for him was his dearest creation the Satyabadi School... His one ambition in life was to see dismembered Utkal united and happy... The country is poorer for the death of Pandit Gopabandhu Das. Though he is not in our midst in the flesh, he is in our midst in the spirit. Let that noble spirit guide the workers of Orissa, let his death result in a larger dedication to service, greater effort, greater self-effacement and greater unity among the scattered workers who are too few for our national requirements."
G. S. Khaparde

Born in 1854, Ganesh Srikrishna Khaparde had thrown himself in the vortex of Indian politics quite early from Amravati where he was a lawyer. He had a scholastic career followed by constructive work as the Chairman of Amravati District Board and of Berar Sarvajanik Sabha. He was also a Fellow of Allahabad University and a member of the Viceroy’s Legislative Council.

Khaparde was a lifelong friend and righthand man of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He also had training under M.G. Ranade. At the request of Ranade he had presided over the Indian Social Conference held at Nagpur in 1891.

Khaparde associated himself with the Indian National Congress quite early and took active part in some of the sessions. He spoke on the Public Services in the Congress session in 1889, on fixity of tenure of land in 1893, on Local Self-Government in 1898 and on the repressive measures in Bengal and the further expansion and reform of Legislative Council in 1905. He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress session at Amravati in 1897, with Sankaran Nair as the President. It was in this Congress session of 1897 that a demand was placed for the Indians in the Executive Council of Bombay and Madras.

In the 1905 Congress session Surendra Nath Banerjee had bitterly spoken on the evils of indirect election and pointed out that 70 million people of Bengal were represented by only ten members. At this Khaparde observed bluntly:

“I dislike partial election because it is a very peculiar double distillation process. I dislike nominations because whoever has got the nomination in his hand generally puts forward people who have obliged him or his own people.”

Khaparde’s diary shows the important role he and his nationalist friends played in Calcutta Congress of 1906. He wrote that “a Khaparde Conference was held of the delegates of our way of thinking.” The Nationalists wanted to make boycott a weapon for
the whole of India but the Moderates wanted Boycott only for Bengal. There were violent quarrels in the Subjects Committee. In Homi Mody’s words: “Pherozeshah and others were grossly insulted, and even the revered Dadabhai did not escape the shafts of ‘Extremists inductive. The wilder elements of the new Party shouted and raved, and finally headed by Bipin Chandra Pal and his lieutenant Khaparde, left the meeting in a body.” In the open session the boycott resolution was hotly debated on. Sri Aurobindo did not personally appear on the Congress platform in 1906 but his was a significant role in the Nationalist group. Khaparde really made his mark in Calcutta Congress.

In the 1907 Congress session at Lucknow, Tilak and Khaparde sat side by side with the moderate Rash Behari Ghosh and Surendra Nath Banerjee. This was a unique session because of the fraternisation of the Hindus and Muslims. The scheme of self-government was formed and the two warring wings of the Congress had united. People belonging to different schools of thought, like Raja of Mahmudabad, Mazar-ul-Haq, Abdul Rasul, Jinnah, Annie Besant, Gandhiji and Polak had attended the session. The Congress-League scheme passed by the Congress was immediately approved. Khaparde took an active part in this session and had a restraining influence on Tilak.

Khaparde belonged more to the school of Tilak and had a bit of Tilak’s fire in him. After functioning as the Chairman of the Reception Committee in the 13th Session of the Indian National Congress at Amravati, W. C. Banerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress, had predicted that Khaparde will very soon become the President of the Indian National Congress. This prophesy was, however, not fulfilled as Khaparde could not see eye to eye with Gandhiji as Gandhiji dominated the Congress.

Khaparde had first met Gandhiji in London in 1908 when he had gone there to place Tilak’s appeal before the Privy Council. Khaparde came in close touch with Gandhiji and Bipin Chandra Pal in London.

He got elected to the Imperial Legislative Council from C.P. and Berar, defeating Sir Manejki Dadabhoi. He showed his great mark in the Council and once The Times of India of Bombay remarked that he was “the only extreme member of the Council”. Khaparde came closer to Gandhiji by his patriotic work in the Imperial Legislative Council where he moved for the repeal of the Press Act
and had proposed many changes in the Arms Act. He had also proposed that the Rowlatt Report be kept in abeyance and that a committee of equal members of official Indians and non-official Indians be appointed to make thorough inquiries into the working of the Secret Police. Unfortunately, the resolution had only one man to support, the seconder. The Rowlatt Report was published in early 1919 and Sir William Vincent, Home member, piloted the Rowlatt Bill which became an Act. From this point Gandhiji took the reins of Indian politics in his hands.

Earlier Gandhiji had shown his great regard for Khaparde by personally attending a political conference at Belgaon in 1916 which was presided over by Khaparde. Tilak had also attended this conference and Gandhiji had intimate discussions with Tilak and Khaparde. Gandhiji presided over the conference held at Godhra in 1917 and both Tilak and Khaparde reciprocated by attending the conference. Khaparde had delivered a speech there in Gujarati to the great joy of the delegates.

In April 1918 Khaparde proposed in the War Conference that an assurance must come from the British Government that at the end of the war India will be granted Home Rule.

Gandhiji at first had not taken any part in this Conference as Tilak, Mrs Annie Besant, the then Congress President and the Ali Brothers had not been invited to the Conference. He had, however, subsequently attended the meeting after personal discussion with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. Gandhiji then supported the resolution on war effort. There was a personal attempt by the Viceroy to make Khaparde withdraw his Home Rule Resolution. The Viceroy had sent his car to Khaparde and brought him to the Viceregal lodge and tried hard to win him over. Khaparde did not yield. His firm attitude was extolled by Lokmanya Tilak in Kesari on April 30, 1918. This was the point from where Khaparde started moving away from Gandhiji because Gandhiji did not like his militant nationalism.

In 1919 the joint Parliamentary Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Selborne sat in England. A Congress deputation went to England to lay India’s claim before the British public. Khaparde was a member of the deputation together with Tilak, B.C. Pal, N.C. Kelkar, Vitalbhai Patel and Hasan Iman.

When Montagu’s Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in 1917, Mrs Besant fully supported Montagu. This was in
the wake of an acrimonious controversy between the Congress deputation and Annie Besant. Mrs Besant was also in London when she fully supported Montagu's Bill. Vitalbhai Patel, contradicted her. Khaparde in his usual penchant humour had described Annie Besant as "Putana Rakhashi". Annie Besant was furious at this.

Khaparde seriously differed from Gandhiji when on October 2, 1920 the All India Tilak Memorial Fund and Swarajya fund were floated by the AICC. But the resolution remained a dead letter for some time. Khaparde had published a short memorandum condemning the resolution as it diverted the energies of the Congress and observed:

"By avoiding contact with the de facto Government, it affords no training ground for acquiring the kind of political-mindedness and temper necessary to carry on a substantial struggle in a peaceful and yet firm and orderly manner. The N.C.O. as preached now may develop powers of endurance but cannot breed the energy and resourcefulness and practical wisdom necessary for a political struggle. The three boycotts at present recommended are futile and have not at all a distinct political aspect and on a tendency of the whole as evidenced in the proceedings for alteration of the creed of the All India Home Rule League, now named Swaraj Sabha would appear to be towards a return to autocracy and personal rule which is objectionable and against the spirit of the age though entrusted, to a highly developed and moral individual."

This document dated December 10, 1920 was published on the eve of the Nagpur Congress and it created a furore. By this forthright view, Khaparde became a persona-non-grata with Gandhiji and his group. In the Calcutta special session of the Congress in 1920, presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai the non-cooperation resolution was passed. The resolution was strongly opposed by Khaparde, Pal and others but they were overpowered. Khaparde had distinctly moved away from Gandhiji.

Khaparde passed away in 1938. Strangely enough, Gandhiji who had known Khaparde intimately did not write any obituary note on his death.
Jawaharlal Nehru

There have not been many instances of a pair so different temperamentally from one another as Gandhiji and Nehru. But they were tied to one another with indissoluble ties. Nehru made no pretence of the fact that Gandhiji was an ultra-orthodox faddist dreaming of bullock-carts *ashrams*, fasts, continence and acting to the dictates of the inner voice.” Nehru was also aware of the fact that Gandhiji was no constitutionalist, no statesman of a high order and that he had a far too limited knowledge of the world history. Nehru knew that Gandhiji was far too wedded to a few dogmas and a set of themes which were moulded according to his own interpretations and exigencies. Nehru had a deep regard for Gandhiji’s religious faith and he knew that whatever problems came to Gandhiji he gave a quick solution to it intuitively.

Nehru often wrote to Gandhiji about his differences with him regarding political ideas, fascism and dictatorship. When Nehru came nearer to Subhas Chandra Bose on grounds of socialism, Gandhiji put a wedge between Nehru and Subhas and the latter was isolated. The same Nehru when he became the Congress President and had the Independence Resolution passed, to his horror it was Gandhiji who wrote to Nehru disapproving of it. Nothing could have shocked Nehru more. Nehru hit back by writing a strong letter to Gandhiji in support of the resolution and pointed out that Gandhiji had approved of this although he was not present in the Subjects Committee and that he had merely given a seal to Gandhiji’s ideas. Nehru wanted to know Gandhiji’s reaction. To this famous letter of Nehru, Gandhiji replied that he had also noticed the differences between him and Nehru and often wondered if they could pull the vehicle together. He advised Nehru to come out and revolt openly and publish all the letters. There was no specific reply to the definite issues raised by Nehru but an invitation to go against him!! Nehru had a sharp brain and had imbibed the best of the East and the West and had the benefit of a deep range of study in different disciplines. He succumbed to the threat of Gandhiji and did not press the point further.
Was this a tragedy or was this God-ordained? Gandhiji frequently utilised Jawaharlal Nehru to his own use. It was for Nehru to have said how he felt on some occasions, but his reactions were not always recorded. In some of the letters it is quite clear that he argued against His Master’s Voice. When Subhas Chandra Bose decided to contest the Congress Presidency for the second time, Gandhiji and Nehru opposed the idea. When Subhas Chandra Bose had his victory and Gandhiji took it as his own defeat, Nehru also followed suit. This shows that for some reason or other, Jawaharlal Nehru could never afford to go against Gandhiji, though he did not suffer from a Gandhian charisma.

The explanation is not in the ties between the two political statesmen or between a Guru and his disciple but in an impersonal and undefinable strong and unfathomable relationship. Gandhiji had an uncanny idea of finding out who would be useful for him. People like Nariman, Khare, Subhas Chandra Bose and others had to part company because Gandhiji did not like them personally. The first meeting between Subhas and Gandhiji took place after the former’s return to India. It produced an allergy in Gandhiji which he could never shake off. Subhas himself wrote that he could feel that Gandhiji would not take him in, and had purposely asked him to see C. R. Das.

In 1919 during the unfortunate happenings at Amritsar and the Jallianwala Bagh days Gandhiji came in close contact with Moti Lal Nehru and Jawaharlal, a fully cultured and sophisticated young man brimming with brilliant ideas and schemes and full of knowledge. Nehru had just returned from Cambridge. Gandhiji immediately spotted that it was this young man who could deliver the goods and that he had to be won over. He immediately found out that if he could utilize Jawaharlal Nehru with his background, family traditions and personal equation he would have a much easier fight to win India’s Independence. Gandhiji was truly enamoured by Jawaharlal Nehru from the very first meeting and there could be no doubt that he immediately started taking a very genuine interest in Jawaharlal Nehru’s personal affairs, even in his briefs and the money that he was earning as a lawyer. He was deeply interested in the health of Kamla Nehru and later in their daughter Indira.

Was it to win Jawaharlal Nehru that he depended a lot on Moti Lal Nehru and gave him importance in every all-India affair? This drove out Shaukat Ali who wrote most vituperative and insul-
ting letters to Gandhiji. Again the importance given to Moti Lal Nehru had driven Lala Lajpat Rai and the famous C. R. Das to a great distance from Gandhiji. Das had been made a provincial leader with all his personal sacrifices, including giving up an income which Moti Lal Nehru probably had never earned. The disciples of C. R. Das, like Subhas Chandra Bose, Sarat Chandra Bose, T. C. Goswami and others could never excuse Gandhiji for this.

A study of the correspondence between Gandhiji and Moti Lal Nehru shows that Moti Lal Nehru never cringed to Gandhiji and often made his views clear in plain words. Once Gandhiji wrote to Moti Lal Nehru, sending him clipping from a paper that he had been given a dinner at Hotel Cecil in Simla where wine was served. Gandhiji asked Moti Lal if it was true and thought a leader of a movement and a prohibitionist should not have drunk wine openly. Moti Lal Nehru could not pocket this. He wrote back that his concurrence to many of the ideologies of Gandhiji were not due to the logic of Gandhiji but to his own personal reasons. Moti Lal wrote plainly that when he had joined Gandhiji he used to drink every evening for eleven months in a year and considered it healthy to do so. For one month he gave it up not to make himself a slave to drink. He had given up drinking and had stuck to it till, one chilly night when after a long drive he was frozen to death and on reaching home he drank whisky. Moti Lal Nehru also wrote that in the Coconada Congress he had visited the camp of the No-changers and saw whisky being drunk. Just not to embarrass the prohibitionists who were the No-changers Moti Lal himself wanted a drink and had it. He mentioned that the dinner at Cecil Hotel was given in his honour by T.C. Goswami of Calcutta. When drinks were offered he drank the toast and felt happy. Moti Lal said he abhorred the idea of drinking in secrecy particularly for a public man.

There was another memorable occasion when Moti Lal Nehru rose to his full stature and did not mind hitting back straight at his revered colleague whom he regarded dearly. The occasion was when at the village Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur District a few constables were killed and the police station was looted. Gandhiji had already declared that the Civil Disobedience Movement would be started by a certain date and all over the country the leaders had sponsored a great tempo of strength and calm and that there was a great awareness of the step. Gandhiji withdrew the movement because he thought the Chauri Chaura incident showed that the people were not
fully prepared for the non-violent civil disobedience. This act of Gandhiji drove many leaders into desperation. Lala Lajpat Rai bitterly wrote a letter which he circulated to all the members of the All India Congress Committee that they had entrusted their future to a man who did this sort of a thing. It was not the act of a commander to fly back if there was something amiss and that it was absolute political madness to think that the whole country from Kashmir to Cape Comorin would in a day become non-violent. Moti Lal Nehru also wrote similarly. He thought the action of a few villagers in the remote north of the Himalayas could not be taken as a criteria for deciding a momentous issue at the extreme south.

Moti Lal Nehru never played the second fiddle to Gandhiji. Gandhiji and Moti Lal Nehru were the best of colleagues, struggled and suffered together, had counselled together and quite often differed from each other. Moti Lal never gave up his personal equation.

The early letters between the father and the son showed that Moti Lal Nehru was trying to train a fiery horse. Again and again while at Cambridge Jawaharlal wrote to his father for Indian papers of nationalist views as he wanted to keep himself in touch with the current problems. The father wanted his son to come back with flying colours and settle down to a career of a lawyer. The son described his father as "immoderately moderate." Whenever the son just cabled for 'money', the father immediately sent the money and never questioned as to how it was spent. That understanding and trusting relationship always remained.

When Jawaharlal Nehru came back and settled down in Allahabad to practice and got a fees of Rs 500 in one case, Moti Lal Nehru complimented him by saying that he had started his career with Rs 5 as fees. Jawaharlal Nehru had started his practice seriously and had applied his mind to the briefs. He was taking keen interest in his work and was trying to cultivate his brother-lawyers and was respectful to their Lordships. He was devoting himself to the thick old law books and tried to burn the midnight oil over the briefs, probably much against his personal wishes. On one occasion after hearing Jawaharlal, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was very much impressed and he embraced Jawaharlal.

Mother India did not want Nehru to remain just a barrister. The dreadful Amritsar happenings in 1919 came in where hundreds were killed and thousands suffered abominable insults. This brought out the real Nehru who took up the challenge. He helped in the
subsequent Enquiry Committee that was set up. The Akali movement which was linked up with the abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha also stirred Nehru and he jumped into the fray and was arrested. The spell on Jawaharlal was broken. He had taken the plunge to link himself with the fight for the freedom of the country.

Since Nehru met Gandhiji for the first time in the Indian National Congress at Lucknow till January 30, 1948, when Gandhiji fell to the bullets of an assassin there was a very deep difference of approach to life and Indian problems between Nehru and Gandhi. Nehru’s was a pragmatic approach buttressed by a necessary knowledge of the world and experience of the basic sciences and enlivened by a fresh and vigorous outlook and a keen desire for eclecticism. Opposed to that was Gandhiji’s outlook fixed unshakably in Hindu religion and what he interpreted to be truth and a peculiar fad for what he called his “Inner Voice”. Gandhiji did not want to shut the doors and windows against the breeze from outside to come in but at the same time he was sure that he would not be swept off his feet. He emphasised the limitations of Western knowledge. This limited approach to absorb the best from outside had its natural reaction. Gandhiji was a bundle of contradictions to the world at large and to Nehru particularly. At the slightest pretext the world knew Gandhiji would go on fast to force issues as he wanted. Even his best friend and colleague C.F. Andrews told him that he was doing something unjustifiable by going on fasts and Gandhiji at once quietened him by saying that his “inner voice” had asked him to do it. The devout Christian that Andrews was he believed in divine inspiration and kept quiet. At one fast Rajaji wrote strongly to Gandhiji that he was improperly not allowing a medical examination and Gandhiji acceded to Rajaji’s request. Gandhiji had to submit himself to appendectomy which saved his life. He had to agree to a patched up Poona Pact and end his “Epic Fast” of 1932. The world heaved a sigh of relief, the British diehards had a smile up in their sleeves, but the signatories and particularly the arch-statesman Dr Ambedkar must have known that the Poona Pact might not be workable. The inner conscience of Gandhiji took him to the petty squabbles of Rajkot State where clearly he burnt his fingers and refused to respond to the request of Subhas Bose to come to Bengal to solve Bengal’s problems. Was it because he knew Bengal far too well? The “inner voice” of Gandhiji drove out Nariman, Khare and a few others from the Congress. But it is the selfsame “inner
voice" of Gandhiji that sponsored a letter from the Ali brothers which got their release from Jail while hundreds of others rotted in jail for repeating the same slogan for which the Ali Brothers had been imprisoned. In the name of discipline he had asked Rajaji to resign from the Central Assembly as he was going against the Congress mandate. Again in the name of the same discipline he had ignored many major issues. Nehru was more of a positivist and an agnostic. For him the concept of nationalism was religion and with him wish-force counted more than soul-force. We do not know the inner-thoughts and cross currents in the sub-conscious mind of Nehru at the doings of his Master. At the same time he could not revolt. He would chaff and fume but at the last moment agree to stand by Gandhiji. The link was not in any rationalism but in the impersonal intimate unfathomable ties both knew would not tear asunder whatever be the reason. When Nehru got the reins of the Government as the Prime Minister he could work out his mind a little more freely. Gandhiji felt sore and neglected about this.

Shall we once peep into Nehru's early contact with the Indian National Congress before Gandhiji stormed into the Congress? While in England, Nehru used to attend the meetings of the Majlis, an organisation of progressive Indian youth at the University. He had been fired by the speeches of Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal. He had learnt a lot from the Britishers. The Cambridge University has had much to do with the shaping of Jawaharlal's future political career. On his return to India in 1912, he attended the Bankipur Congress Session with his father who held a high position as a moderate politician. The moderates had received a rude shock in 1914 when the First World War broke out and even the moderate politicians were harassed and persecuted. The Defence of India Act was as bad as the Regulation III of 1818. Leading public workers like the Ali brothers and Annie Besant were arrested. Sir Abdul Rahim's note of dissent in 1917 to the General Report of the Public Services Commission further agitated the intelligentsia. Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement had already become very important and popular and her arrest gave a further boost to the Home Rule Movement. Moti Lal Nehru joined as President of the Allahabad branch of the Home Rule League and Jawaharlal Nehru as one of its Joint Secretaries. The father, however, could not keep long Jawaharlal solely under his political influence.

Jawaharlal had met Gandhiji first in the Lucknow Congress
of 1916. A halo had already gathered round Gandhiji because of his work for the Indians in South Africa. Earlier Jawaharlal had collected funds for Gandhiji in 1913 in response to Gokhale’s call. The later Champaran Satyagraha movement of Gandhiji, in 1917 for the amelioration of the rayats against the European indigo planters had also attracted young Jawaharlal and the popular Hindi Pratap paper used to feature the struggle very prominently. But Jawaharlal and Moti Lal had not rushed to Gandhiji’s help in this struggle. The call came as mentioned before in the Punjab disturbances of 1919 which brought Jawaharlal in closer contact with Gandhiji. He worked in the Congress Committee that was set up to enquire into the happenings. Young Jawaharlal was mightily interested in Gandhiji’s political insight and enthusiasm to stick to truth in the enquiry. He was also much impressed by the spirit of moderation that Gandhiji had shown in the enquiry.

Jawaharlal wanted to join the Satyagraha Sabha that Gandhiji planned against the Rowlatt Act but Moti Lal restrained him. Peculiarly enough Gandhiji also advised Jawaharlal not to join the Satyagraha Sabha. In 1920 when Jawaharlal was with his family at Mussourie and was served with a notice by the Government that he should have nothing to do with the Afghan delegates then staying at Mussourie, Jawaharlal refused to give any undertaking to the effect and left for Allahabad. Gandhiji again advised him to be moderate. The troubles of the peasants took Jawaharlal on a hectic tour round the district of Pratapgarh. The experiences of the tour left a lasting impression on him. The seed of future mass-leadership of Jawaharlal was laid in this tour of Pratapgarh, which facilitated his easy win in the elections. Here the influence of the father was more than that of Gandhiji.

Then came the Calcutta Congress of 1920. Moti Lal supported the Non-cooperation programme in the teeth of opposition from men like Malaviya, C. R. Das and Lala Lajpat Rai. After the Congress session was over Jawaharlal accompanied Gandhiji to the house of the veteran Calcutta editor of Amrita Bazar Patrika, Moti Lal Ghose and then to Tagore’s Shantiniketan.

From this point the father and Gandhiji both shared in shaping Jawaharlal and ultimately Gandhiji took him over, more or less, completely. Moti Lal gave up a very lucrative practice and the luxurious life of Anand Bhawan in Allahabad came to an end. The 30 courses in the daily menu were cut down. At this point, it will
be pertinent to recall Jawaharlal’s estimate of Gandhiji. He wrote:

“As for Gandhiji himself, he was a very difficult person to understand. Sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern. But we both thought that we knew him quite well enough to realize that he was a great and unique man and a glorious leader and having put our faith in him we gave him an almost blank cheque. For the time being at least.”

In the first phase of the non-cooperation movement both the father and the son were put in the same jail. This was Jawaharlal Nehru’s first imprisonment. It was while in jail that they were shocked to hear of Gandhiji’s withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhiji took particular care to write to Jawaharlal:

“...I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle. The movement had conscientiously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings.”

But this did not convince either the father or the son. Soon after the revolt came when Moti Lai Nehru, C. R. Das and others formed the Swarajist Party.

Jawaharlal was clearly in a dilemma. He did not understand many of Gandhiji’s moods and acts but he had come to like, love and revere the old man as much as his father. He could not possibly go against Gandhiji. Jawaharlal did not take any prominent part in the organisation of the Swarajist Party although his father was one of its founders. In September 1923, young Nehru attended the Special Congress session in Delhi where a compromise was effected between the Swarajists and the No-Changers. After the session he went to Nabha where he was arrested and handcuffed at Jaitu on September 21, 1923. He was released soonafter and expelled from the Nabha State. This incident of jumping into Nabha affair was purely at the instance of Gandhiji.

During the years 1924-25 Jawaharlal worked as the General Secretary of the AICC. In March 1926 he sailed for Europe with his ailing wife Kamla for medical treatment. In Europe he came in touch with some of the old Indian revolutionaries like Raja Mahendra Pratap, Madam Cama, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya and Shyamji Verma. It does not appear that Gandhiji was quite happy at it and he was more anxious that Nehru should cultivate Romain Rolland. In February 1927 Nehru attended the Congress of the
Nationalists at Brussels as a delegate of the Indian National Congress. Nehru denounced the British rule in India. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the League. In this European tour he visited Russia also. This European visit did a good deal to shape Jawaharlal's socialist political ideology.

Gandhiji was not very happy at the changes taking place in Nehru's ideology. Nehru was coming closer to Subhas Chandra Bose whom Gandhiji did not very much like. However, the turn came in the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress, with Dr Ansari as the President. The creed of the Congress was defined in a separate resolution and the goal as independence. This resolution was disliked by Gandhiji, particularly because of the enthusiasm of the ultra socialist—Jawaharlal. There was a clash of ideas between Gandhiji and Nehru. Gandhiji was shaping Nehru not only for the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress but as his political successor, and he thought that Nehru was slipping out of his hands. The letter of Nehru dated January 11, 1928 is an extremely important document. Nehru had made no secret that he felt many of Gandhiji's phrases as "Ram Raj" etc. were empty. Nehru wrote "I hope you will agree with me that it is not healthy politics for any organisation of supporting its own defined opinion on a public issue out of personal regard only." Nehru questioned if the spinning franchise had succeeded. He questioned if the boycott of foreign cloth and use of Khadi had succeeded. He wrote that despite failures Gandhiji would press them on the country and the Congress. He plainly told him that he thoroughly disagreed with most of his ideas, particularly in the Indian Home Rule Book. He wrote:

"...During the N.C.O. period you were supreme, you were in your elements and automatically you took the right step. But since you came out of the prison something seems to have gone wrong and you have been very obviously ill at ease. You will remember how within a few months or even weeks, you repeatedly changed your attitude—Juhu statement, the AICC meeting at Ahmedabad and most of us were left in utter bewilderment. Do you expect the Khadi Movement to spread rapidly and in geometric ratio and then some direct action in the political field might be indulged in? Several years and months have passed since this and the miracle has not happened. It was difficult to believe that it would happen but faith in your amazing capacity to bring forth the improbable kept us in an expecting mood but such faith for an irreligious person like me is a poor reed to cling but I am
beginning to think if we were to wait for freedom till Khadi became universal in India we shall have to wait till the Greek Kalends...

What then can be done of it if you say nothing? You only criticise and no helpful lead comes from you. You told us that if the country will not even take to Khadi how can we expect it to do anything more difficult or daring. I do not think the reasoning is correct. If the country does not go ahead politically by one method, surely it is upto our leaders to think for other additional methods.

Reading many of your articles in Young India, your autobiography, etc. I have felt how very different my ideologies were from yours and I have felt that you were very hasty in your judgment or rather having arrived at a certain conclusion you were over eager to justify them by any scrap of evidence that you might get. You misjudged greatly, I think, this civilization of the West and attached too great an importance to its many failings. You have stated somewhere that India has nothing to learn from the West and that she had reached the pinnacle of wisdom in the past. I certainly disagree with this view point and I neither think that the so called Ram Raj was very good in the past nor do I want it back.

You have strongly criticised the many obvious defects of industrialists and hardly paid any attention to its merits...You do not say a word against the semi-feudal zamindari system.

To these very precise charges Gandhiji had nothing more except to ask Jawaharlal to carry on an open warfare against him and if it were “to lose a bright, so able and so influenced as you have always been.”

A supreme moment in the political history of India came and was lost. Nehru wrote back that he should very much like to discuss many things with him and succumbed to the personal regards he had for Gandhiji. Who could say if Nehru had revolted India could not have won freedom even earlier and in a different way?

Another clash came in the wake of the All Parties Conference and the publication of Motilal Nehru’s report which was a reply to Berkenhead’s jibe against India to produce a Constitution for India. Nehru wrote bitterly to Gandhiji on February 23, 1928:

“Personally I have had enough of the All Parties Conference. I am thus, not at all desirous of attending the meeting in Delhi.”

Gandhiji wanted to pacify Jawaharlal and wrote:
"I cannot give you an adequate conception of my grief as I follow the Conference proceedings from day to day and read between the lines. What a miserable show we are putting up against the insolence of Lord Berkenhead and the crookedness of the Commissioners? I had not expected much from Sir John Simon but I was not at all prepared for his resorting to all the known tricks of Bureaucracy. However, you have to be patient... Do come as early as possible..."

Next, we find Gandhiji very keen to put the crown of the Presidentship of the Congress on the head of Jawaharlal. He had tried this for the earlier Calcutta Session of the Congress but he had to give it up at the strong opposition of Subhas Chandra Bose and J. M. Sen Gupta and the crown had to go to the father, Moti Lal. Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the Lahore Session of the Congress in December, 1929. Young Jawaharlal was not at all keen about it. On November 8, 1929 Gandhiji wrote to Jawaharlal who was keen to resign from the Congress Working Committee:

"You must not resign just now. I have not the time to argue out my point. All I know is that it will affect the national cause. There is no hurry and no principle is at stake. About the crown, no one else can wear it. It was never to be a crown of roses. Let it be thorns now."

Again the same type of exploitation of personal feelings!

At this point Jawaharlal had a psychological storm in his mind. His best friends wanted him to move more towards the Left but Gandhiji smelt the pressure and had made him sign the Delhi Manifesto welcoming Lord Irwin's statement promising Dominion Status to India. Nehru was bitterly criticised by Virendra Nath Chattopadhayaya, brother of Sarojini Naidu, an exile revolutionary in Berlin. On December 4, 1929 on behalf of the League against Imperialism and for National Independence he wrote:

"On the one hand you support the majority of the Working Committee in their acceptance of Dominion Status and on the other hand you support the majority of the workers in their demand for independence. Some step has to be taken to remove this discrepancy. Internationally your position will be quite untenable unless you do what great leaders have often done, namely, to admit a mistake and take the right line. If you do this today, withdraw your signature and make your position as President of the Congress an opportunity for breaking up the sham unity..."

Nehru was clearly swayed by Leftist sentiments when on the banks of the Ravi river in the Lahore Session, complete independence was declared to be the goal of India.
Soon after the celebration of the Independence Day on January 26, 1930, Gandhiji started the Salt Satyagraha. It is doubtful if Nehru was at first thrilled by the Salt Satyagraha of Gandhiji in 1930 although he had supported the move. Gandhiji kept Nehru well informed of his march through letters. Soon after Nehru was arrested when martial law had been declared in Sholapur and there were clashes between the public and the police at various places. While most of the leaders were in jail, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar started peace negotiations between the Government and the Congress and the talks ultimately led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931 and release of many leaders. The Second Round Table Conference was joined by Gandhiji and the end was a fiasco. Later Nehru realized the importance of Salt Satyagraha and its after-effects, and had written that the year 1930 was "a wonder year" and Gandhiji seemed to have changed the face of the country with his "magic touch."

On August 13, 1934 after Gandhiji had called off the Civil Disobedience Movement, Nehru wrote to Gandhiji:

"The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism triumphs."

Gandhiji was quick enough to write back:

"Let me assure you that you have not lost a comrade in me. I am the same as you knew me... I have the knack for knowing the need of the time. Of course, here comes in the difference of our emphasis on the method or the means which to me are just as important as the goal and in a sense more important in that we have some control over them whereas we have none over the goal if we lose control over the means."

In 1938 Nehru was thoroughly dissatisfied with the working of the Congress ministers in the provinces and wrote to Gandhiji:

"They are trying to adapt themselves far too much to the old order and trying to justify it. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position that we have built up with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the level of ordinary politicians."

After the resignation of the Congress Ministries in 1939 on the leaders issue of the British war aims and war efforts some of the Congress like C. R. tried to recreate an atmosphere of compromise and sponsored negotiations with the British Government. Jawaharlal on February 4, 1940 wrote to Gandhiji:
“There is too much misunderstanding on this issue of compromise and this misunderstanding is entirely to our disadvantage and to the advantage of the British imperialism which in the meanwhile is exploiting our resources for the war and even pretending to have a large amount of our good-will.”

It is quite well-known that Gandhiji did not like to exploit British misfortune to India’s good at the moment.

When Gandhiji started his individual Civil Disobedience movement in 1940 Vinoba Bhave was the first person chosen to offer Civil Disobedience and the second chosen man was Jawaharlal. In this connection on October 24, 1940 Gandhiji wrote to Nehru:

“...I know what strain you are bearing in giving me your loyalty. I prize it beyond measure. I hope it will be found to have been well placed for it is “Do or Die.” There is no turning back. Our cause is invulnerable. There is no giving in. Only I must be allowed to go my way in demonstrating the power of Non-Violence when it is unadulterated.”

After the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942 and when the leaders were released again, Gandhiji had pictured the future set-up of the country in a letter to Jawaharlal on October 5, 1945 in which he almost reiterated his ideas expressed decades back in the Hind Swaraj. He wrote:

“My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and be able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague nor cholera nor smallpox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour.”

To all this utopia of Gandhiji Nehru replied on October 9, 1945:

“It is 38 years since “Hind Swaraj” was written. The world has completely changed since then possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality.”

Nehru had started finding his self and did not hesitate to differ from Gandhiji very frankly.

From this point when Independence was in the offing, Jawaharlal Nehru differed and differed very fundamentally from Gandhiji. Jawaharlal had a clear and pragmatic approach to the great implications of the problem and he was a practical statesman. He knew
Gandhiji was trying to bend Jinnah by seeing him as many as eighteen times in one month and talking of Pakistan as a separate entity with certain common departments.

Gandhiji was toying with the idea of Pakistan and at the same time giving out that Pakistan could only come over his dead body. Gandhiji had already become a political enigma and a problem where practical politics was concerned. It was a supreme moment for Nehru and he very wisely decided to take the reins in his own hands. The practical man that Nehru was he could not see eye to eye with Gandhiji's utopia.

It is a well-known fact that Jawaharlal did not pay much attention to Gandhiji's note as to the duty of the, new Government after Nehru had taken charge of the Interim Government on September 2, 1946. In this document Gandhiji had repeated that special attention should be paid to his well-known fads of constructive programmes such as Khadi, removal of untouchability etc. Nehru was far too busy and he had completely brushed aside Gandhiji's unpractical directive. Gandhiji felt himself to be a lone figure when Independence was ushered in.

Till January 30, 1948 when Gandhiji fell to the bullets of an assassin, he had tried to interfere with the day-to-day administration of Jawaharlal Nehru despite which Nehru did not lose his deep regard for Gandhiji.

On his death Nehru mentioned in the unforgettable words:

"Friends and Comrades, the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere and I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him, the Father of the Nation is no more... We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him and that is a terrible blow not to me only but to millions and millions in this country. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented the living truth and the eternal man was with us with his eternal truth reminding us of the right path drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom."
K. B. Dutt

K. B. Dutt was born on June 21, 1861 in the Midnapur district of West Bengal. In his early youth, he ran away from home to go to England and qualify for the English Bar. In England he was a contemporary of Sir B. C. Mitter and Mr Byomkesh Chakrabarty—a galaxy of legal luminaries who worked for India in their own way. On his return K. B. started his practice in Midnapur District Court and became the Chairman of the Municipality. He married Amala, the third daughter of the late R. C. Dutt, I.C.S., the first Indian to become a Commissioner.

In his early years, he took part in Congress politics and was a valued collaborator of Surendranath Banerjea. He presided over the District Political Conference at Midnapur in 1907 and was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Provincial Political Conference of Midnapur in 1908. It was here that extremism in Bengal politics broke out and Surendranath was hooted down. Midnapur was in a way the cradle of nationalism in Bengal. This was due to the patriotic work of men like K.B. Dutt and others at the beginning of the century. When the Congress went in the hands of the more militant section, Dutt, Surendranath Banerjea, S. P. Sinha, came to be known as the Moderates. The contribution of the Moderates to the political advancement cannot be ignored. In his later years, Dutt differed from the political views of Gandhiji and kept himself aloof from any active Congress work. But he was always liberal with his purse for any Congress cause in Bihar where he had settled (in Patna). Dutt’s career as a lawyer was colourful and shows his patriotism for India, despite humiliation at the hands of the British.

He had a roaring practice in Midnapur. He shot up as the hero in Midnapur Bomb Case in 1908, which loomed large in the public eyes in some shape or the other for the next five years because of its peculiar vicissitudes. During this period K. B. was the hero of the grim battle between police vandalism and magisterial exuberance to crush the growth of the spirit of nationalism, truth and justice.
The poignancy of the case was that K. B. had been taken to be "arch-conspirator" in a conspiracy to kill the administrators by planting a bomb, as given out later by the Advocate-General in the Calcutta High Court. He was accused of misconduct as a Counsel and an attempt was made to force him out from the leading Defence Counsel's role to the witness box. Not only K. B. was fully exonerated but was paid great encomium in the highest judiciary in the country. Overnight the nationalist Press in the country had made K. B. the uncrowned king of Bengal, when he proved the Midnapur Bomb Case to be the result of a conspiracy between the District Magistrate and the Police Officers to fabricate evidence and the entire case of the prosecution to be a myth. He took the matter up and got compensation for the accused persons. It was a unique achievement half a century ago and a very great contribution to the growth of nationalism.

Midnapur district was in the forefront in the Swadeshi days and needed to be crushed. Bengal was horrified to learn that on August 28, 1908 a large number of highly respected people of Midnapur including leading lawyers, big Zamindars, Raja of Narajole, Editor of Medini Bandhav and others had been arrested. The arrest of K. B. Dutt was also expected but it is understood that this extreme step was not taken at the intervention of higher authorities.

The arrests were made on the basis of certain confessions of a few persons—Santosh, Surendra and others who made history by their false confessions. Mr Weston was the District Magistrate who thought that the British administration was cracking because of Midnapur.

The first arrests on August 28 were followed by arrests of a larger number of men.

K. B. appeared on August 31 before the Joint Magistrate of Midnapur for bail and from that day for full five years he was in the thickest of the fight for truth and justice. Bail was refused to the accused people, including Raja Narendra Lal Khan of Narajole. From the beginning K. B.'s contention was that the evidence was being fabricated.

As the Chairman of the Midnapur Municipality, K. B. wrote a letter to the Lt. Governor, Sir Andrew Fraser, two weeks before the raids on August 28 that some arrested persons were being tutored
to make confessions. K. B. wanted to place before the Government that "evidence implicating respectable and absolutely innocent persons is being fabricated."

The exchange of letters, however, did not produce any effect. Morshhead, Inspector-General of Police, and Plowden, Deputy Inspector-General were personally supervising the case and helping Weston in his unenviable task.

The Midnapur Bomb Case had eclipsed every other question in India. The prosecution against the Raja of Narajole and twenty-six others was sponsored with the full knowledge and sanction of Sir Andrew Fraser.

Moulvi Majahar-ul-Haque, Deputy Superintendent of Police in his first Information Report mentioned that in course of investigation of the Naraingarh Train Wrecking Case occurring on December 6, 1907, he had come to obtain "clues of the conspiracy by a secret society working at various places of Midnapur and elsewhere and having one of its objectives of assassinating by means of bombs and explosives and fire-arms." Chargesheet was submitted against a large number of people under various sections.

When the hearing commenced in September, 1908 K. B. was the leading Defence Counsel. The importance of the case was that even at that distant time the representative of the London Times used to present at the Court to cover the case. The case went on for months and came to the Calcutta High Court several times for bail and other matters during the pendency of the original case in Midnapur.

The cross examination of Mr Weston, District Magistrate, Capt. Weinman, Civil Surgeon, Jail Superintendent and the D.S.P. who had filed the F.I.R., Police Inspector Lal Mohan and others in the hands of K.B. had created a sensation.

The Statesman on October 30, 1908 referred to the answers given by Captain Weinman, Civil Surgeon, and Jail Superintendent and observed that his evidence was of a most amazing character and hoped "that in the interest of justice the Government will yet take effective steps to ensure that the treatment of the prisoners of Midnapur shall be in the strict accordance of the provision of the law."
It may be mentioned that the prosecution had sought to produce evidence that following the Partition of Bengal, Midnapur was the storm centre of great political agitation, attempts to further Swadeshi by criminal intimidation, and that Khudiram who was acquitted in a case at Midnapur was taken round the town in a carriage belonging to K. B. Dutt.

The defence was that the story of conspiracy and other evidences were a fabrication of the Police and the Magistracy, and that Mr Weston, District Magistrate, was a party to it. After a protracted struggle the case ended in acquittal for others but Santosh, Surendra and Jogibian were convicted. Both Surendra and Santosh had alleged that confessions had been extorted from them by intimidation and the conviction of the three persons was set aside by the Calcutta High Court.

Within a few days of their acquittal, the Local Government had directed Mr McPherson, Commissioner of Burdwan to hold a departmental enquiry into the case. The report was never published by the Government.

It should be noted that after the cross-examination of Captain Weinman, Civil Surgeon and Jail Superintendent by Mr Dutt, the Crown Counsel Mr Baxter suddenly threw up the brief and Mr S.P. Sinha (Lord afterwards) was appointed Counsel for the Crown. After sometime, Mr Sinha withdrew the case against all the accused persons, excepting the three who had made confessions.

Five damage suits were filed on behalf of Pyeri Mohan Das, accused and others at Midnapur. The cases were transferred to Calcutta High Court. They came up before Justice Fletcher commencing from August 7, 1911. The cases went on for eleven months and again K. B. was the leading Counsel for plaintiff.

The Political upheaval that was created by Justice Fletcher’s judgment giving damages to Pyeri Mohan could well be imagined. The judgment was featured throughout India and also found echo abroad. Justice Fletcher fully exonerated K. B. who was repeatedly described as “the arch-conspirator” and every attempt was made to push him out of the position of the Defence Counsel in the original case and bring him in the witness box.

Regarding this move Justice Fletcher observed that he could not conclude without referring to the serious imputation of unprofes-
sional conduct made against Mr Dutt and also because he had not gone into the witness box. He was fully satisfied with the reasons that Mr Dutt had given and found that there was nothing improper in Mr Dutt’s acting as the Defence Counsel for the plaintiff.

He regretted that this rule of professional conduct was not observed by the Counsel of the Defendants which meant the Advocate-General of Bengal and his colleagues.

Pyeri Mohan Das was awarded damage of Rs 1,000. He passed severe strictures on Mr Weston’s part in the conspiracy. The story of conspiracy was reiterated to be a concoction and the judgment was a complete vindication of K. B.’s stand from the beginning that false evidence was fabricated, prisoners were tutored to confess and arrests were made to crush the nationalist feelings.

The judgment figured in the Parliament when Mr Montague was heckled. Mr Byle queried who would pay the cost of the trial and Keir Hardy asked if the accused persons would retain their honours and promotions. Mr Swift McNeil wanted to know if the officials would retain their offices.

Mr Weston, D.S.P. Mazrul Haque, Lal Mohan Guha went in appeal at the instance of the local government against the judgment of Justice Fletcher. This suit was disposed off by Justice Woodroffe, Cox and Chatterjee. K. B. pleaded for full forty-four days and was opposed by Messrs Gerth, Dunne and Norton and others. Judgment was delivered on August 17, 1912. In a lengthy judgment Justice Woodroffe, after discussing various law points decreed the appeal and dismissed the suit. The curtain was at last dropped after lakhs of rupees had been allowed to be spent by the local government.

From 1908 to 1912 the Calcutta Press was featuring the Midnapur Bomb Case and its offshoots. There was no other subject more sensational or popular during those years. The Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta devoted pages to publish the reports. Telegrams from the Patrika Special Correspondent at Midnapur were a regular feature. The first editorial on the subject was published by on September 5, 1908, under the caption “Midnapur Turned Upside Down.” This was followed by a series of editorials from time to time. On September 8, 1908, Patrika’s editorial, “Midnapur Sensation” was a scathing and fearless analysis of how the Court of
Justice failed to give protection to the aggrieved people. On the very next day, September 9, 1908, came out another article "The Explosive Act and its terrible misuse." The article ended with:

"Justice and Humanity, therefore, demanded that the Judge should interfere and set right a gross wrong. But the Judge was deaf. May we hope that Sir A. Frazer will kindly interfere and see that the accused are released on bail."

On the same day Patrika reproduced an article on Midnapur from the Indian Daily News. On September 10, 1908, Patrika's editorial, "How the Midnapur imbroglio was brought about" mentioned that "Midnapur just now presents a unique spectacle, unparalleled almost in the annals of British rule in this country."

A series of other fearless and scathing editorials in the Patrika and other papers appeared from time to time and created a great stir in the public mind. Even The Statesman published several editorials, one appearing on September 15 and another on September 19, 1908 advocating that the long detention of a large number of men holding high respect in the district was a serious matter. The Statesman also deputed their independent correspondent to Midnapur. There were editorials in The Telegraph, The Times of India, Bengalee, Indian Daily News, The Englishman, The Empire, Capital, Mussalman, Comrade and other papers. Most of the Anglo-Indian papers called for an appeal against Justice Fletcher's judgment.

The Patrika alongwith the Capital and others suggested that the Government would be well advised to let the matter rest as an appeal would lead to no good result.

The failure of the attempt to implicate Mr Dutt formed the issue in a special editorial in the Bengalee on August 19, 1911 as "The Midnapore Suit and Counsel" in the case.

The Amrita Bazar Patrika followed up the appeal of the Crown before the Full Bench and published extensively the proceedings of the Court from day to day, the judgment and commented editorially on it. The Full Bench judgment was again featured in all the newspapers in English and other Indian languages. K. B. remained unmoved all through these five gruelling years and performed his duties with a missionary devotion and zeal, courage and ability which evolved the highest admiration of friends and honourable foes.
During his stay in Patna from 1919 to 1935 he was at the top of the Bar and commanded deep respect and affection of Bihar. On his death the Editor of the Searchlight, the leading paper in Bihar mentioned that his death is:

"widely mourned in Bihar where, more than his forensic gifts and legal eminence, his high character, professional ethics, sense of personal dignity and absolute freedom from provincial parochialism had won for him the unstinted respect of all who knew him. His demise represents the passing of an epoch. He was the last remnant of the band of veterans that included the late Lord Sinha whom it was impossible not to respect."

"But more than the Advocate and the Lawyer, he was in every sense of the term an example as a man, holding aloft a code of conduct so lofty and ennobling that one can but sigh in anguish over the obvious deterioration in public and personal life that one witnesses today. He was a man of honour. Honour was the test and the touchstone of his thought and action. His word was as good as his bond. Having his roots in the past but with no axe of ambition to grind, he was able to keep pace with time and remained and died a sympathetic supporter of the Congress of today. The writer, who had a rare privilege to enjoy his uniform kindness may now bear melancholy testimony to the ungrudging support he extended to the Congress, financially and otherwise, in the darkest hour of trial and tribulation. His patriotism was as deep and burning as his character was unsullied. Above all, he was one of the rare few who carried in his person the true greatness of Bengal and refused to have it tarnished by either the complex of arrogance or the stamp of narrow provincialism.""

A feeling reference about the death of Mr K. B. Dutt was made before the Patna High Court on May 26, 1941.

Mr S. N. Sahay, Bar-at-law, on behalf of the English Bar in the course of his address had mentioned:

"...Mr K. B. Dutt's strongest point was cross-examination. It was always a treat to watch him handle a witness. He would never intimidate or bully a witness, but yet he would never leave him until he got the answer he wanted."

"Great as he was as an Advocate, he was, in my opinion, even greater as a man. He was noted for his independence, fearlessness, nobility and kindness. He was always careful to see that his juniors were not unfairly treated by his clients. I am perhaps not disclosing any secret when I say that his love for the profession was so profound, and his sense of duty to-
wards his clients so great that he once actually refused the offer of a High Court Judgeship. He was loved and adored by every member of the Bar Association and, when some years back we gave a lunch to celebrate his golden jubilee such touching scenes of loyalty and devotion were seen as have never been witnessed in the Bar Association on any other occasion.”

Mr Justice Varma, on behalf of the Bench had referred to the great loss of the passing away of K. B. Dutt and mentioned:

“As an Advocate, he had very high ideals about the etiquette of the profession and I never saw him change his ideals in any case. He was a fearless Advocate, and those who saw him working in the Rohtas case, which is usually known as Dr Gaya Prasad’s case, could form some idea as to what he would have been in the prime of his life. As a private gentleman, he was sincere and affectionate. He never minced matters if he had to criticise his friends, for some of their follies, with the result that all those who came in contact with him could not help admiring him and at the same time loving him as a fellow human being.”

It is true K. B. Dutt never came very near Gandhiji, and did not agree with the Non-Cooperation Programme in all its details. But the spirit of patriotism that he had shown in fighting the British bureaucracy in Midnapur district had put Midnapur in the forefront of the bid for freedom and Gandhiji drew much of his strength in Bengal from the youngmen of Midnapur. He remained and died a very sympathetic supporter of the Congress in spite of differences of opinion. It is men like Dutt who had carried the message of the Congress in an unobtrusive manner and had always liberally helped the cause with mind and money.
Kasturba

Kasturba was born at Porbandar in 1969, the same year in which Gandhiji was born. There was nothing extraordinary about her childhood excepting that she came of a household full of love. She was married to Gandhiji when they were both 13 years old. Her playmate Gandhiji immediately became an exacting and jealous husband. The illiterate bride was not very willing to learn the alphabet from her husband. Gandhiji wanted to teach her and was able to break the ice but could not proceed very far. She learnt Gujarati and read the Bhagvat Gita which she almost memorised. But semi-literacy did not stand in the way to the expansion of her mind and formation of definite ideas about the norms of life. She would often make people read from books and the daily newspapers.

Her life was extraordinary and full of struggles. Gandhiji left for England to qualify for the Bar and soon after his return he again left for South Africa to try his luck as a firm’s retained lawyer to look after a case. Kasturba who had become mother in 1888 was being groomed because of this extraordinary life to be a true mother to a larger family. This was possible because she always lived in a joint family and learnt the lesson of discipline. She had to live with a husband who was most eccentric in his ways and possessed a very strong will. Gandhiji used to get angry as he was rather punctilious about many things. There were tiffs and once Gandhiji sent her away from the house. She went to her father’s house and lived there for some time but soon Gandhiji brought her back. This was before Gandhiji went to South Africa.

Kasturba followed Gandhiji to South Africa several years after. According to Gandhiji’s fad she and the children arrived in South Africa dressed like Parsees. Ba disliked wearing Parsee saree but she would not disobey her husband.

Nine years she spent in South Africa and went through various trials of life along with Gandhiji and other inmates of the
Phoenix Ashram. Gandhiji received many gifts of gold watches, gold chains, and rings and he wanted to return them. Ba did not agree. Her case was strong although Gandhiji would not accept her pleading. She said that she did not need all that nor did her sons but the girls who will come as daughters-in-law would need the gifts. Ba twitted Gandhiji that he could make Sadhus of his sons but the wives would not like that. She had even to return the gold necklace that had been given to her. The exacting husband had argued that she did not have a separate entity and that the necklace was given because of him.

The Phoenix Ashram was the beginning of Ba's life for the world beyond the family. She had to cater to all kinds of people and her manual labour from morning till night was enormous at the top of carrying out the behests of a husband who probably did not always realise how and for whom things were moving with a clock-wise precision. That was all due to Kasturba. Once Ba was seriously ill and non-vegetarian soup was prescribed and even Gandhiji agreed and argued that if he could give her anything to eat she ought to take it. Ba plainly refused and said she cared for her dharma more than her life. Ba had her first taste of jail life in South Africa and several times after in India.

Gandhiji's egoism was made out when in 1906 he took the vow of Brahmacharya without even consulting Kasturba. He did not think that it would cause any tribulation to his wife. Kasturba, however, saw in it nothing strange and it must have been a peculiar experience for her as she knew that her husband was not above the demands of the flesh. It is pertinent to think that Gandhiji came to a sort of sexual aversion when his father died while he was in company with his wife. It is this aversion that had created a certain amount of psychosis in Gandhiji. His attitude to women was very much influenced by this psychosis. In Gandhiji's own words:

"The shame, to which I have referred in a foregoing chapter, was this shame of my carnal desire even at the critical hour of my father's death which demanded wakeful service. It is a blot I have never been able to efface or forget, and I have always thought that although my devotion to my parents knew no bounds, and I would have given up anything for it, yet it was weighed and found unpardonably wanting, because my mind was at the same moment in the grip of lust. I have, therefore always regarded myself as a lustful, though a faithful husband,
It took me long to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it."

It may be recalled that earlier, while in England, Gandhiji was almost caught by an old lady who took great interest in Gandhiji and wanted him to marry a young lady. Gandhiji's love for his wife prompted him to write a long letter to the old lady mentioning that he was already married and that the old lady and the young English girl must know about it. That letter did not mortify the old lady and the three continued as friends. In this way in a remote sense it was Kasturba who prevented Gandhiji marrying the English girl.

South Africa saw the shy lawyer Gandhi changing into a political, social and humanitarian worker and Kasturba fully merged herself in Gandhiji's work. As a matter of fact if she had not herself been an almost incarnation of renunciation, Gandhiji could not have been successful in South Africa and later in India. In her silent and unostentatious ways Kasturba was the source of strength and inspiration to Gandhiji and once at least Gandhiji had admitted this when she said that she had been a wife, a friend, a mother and the bottle washer for him.

George Joseph, a Christian co-worker of Gandhiji used to remark quite often that Kasturba was a far greater example of sacrifice than Gandhiji and there is a world of truth in it. In Gandhiji's social work it was Kasturba who took the lead. In Gandhiji's first phase of struggle in India on the soil of Champaran District while Gandhiji was engaged in fighting the European Indigo Planters, Kasturba was implementing Gandhiji's scheme of social education. With the help of a few ladies including Arintaka Bai Gokhale and others, supported by a few dedicated men Kasturba used to go round the villages teaching principles of sanitation and hygiene to the Bihari villagers, clean up the heaps of refuse and wash the dirty places. Handicapped by education she could not take part in teaching the alphabets to the children in the schools that were started but there was no doubt that she could help in various other ways. She was appalled by the poverty when she found that many women had only one cloth to wear and that was the cause of their uncleanliness. She had an undaunted spirit and this was clearly seen when she even told the village women that they should not hesitate to take the law in their own hands if a European planter did misconduct himself with a village woman. At another time
the grass hut in which she and Soman had their schools was burnt down by the planters. She was much agitated and spoke that this type of vandalism must be stopped. To her credit a fire proof brick building sprang up on the spot.

But Kasturba was not merely a social worker. She had to run the common kitchen in the Ashramas of Gandhiji. She was a real mother to the inmates. When Gandhiji was incarcerated in 1922 Kasturba had issued a message to the country giving the people the three-fold programme of activities. Her message was as follows:

"My dear Countrymen and Countrywomen,

My dear husband has been sentenced today to six years simple imprisonment. While I cannot deny that this heavy sentence has to some extent told upon me, I have consoled myself with the thought that it is not beyond our powers to reduce that sentence and release him by our own exertions long before his term of imprisonment is over.

I have no doubt that, if India wakes up and seriously undertakes to carry out the constructive programme of the Congress, we shall succeed not only in releasing him, but also in solving to our satisfaction all the three issues for which we have been fighting and suffering for the last eighteen months or more.

The remedy, therefore, lies with us. If we fail the fault will be ours. I, therefore, appeal to all men and women who feel for me and have regard for my husband to wholeheartedly concentrate on the constructive programme and make it a success.

Among all the items of the programme, he laid the greatest emphasis on the spinning wheel and khaddar. Our success in these will not only solve the economic problem of India in relation to the masses, but also free us from our political bondage. India’s first answer, then, to Mr. Gandhi’s conviction should be that:

(a) All men and women give up their foreign cloth and adopt khaddar and persuade others to do so.
(b) All women make it a religious duty to spin and produce yarn everyday and persuade others to do so.
(c) All merchants cease trading in foreign piecegoods."

But Kasturba was essentially Ba which means ‘mother’. She was a mother not only to Gandhiji but to the whole nation and Gandhiji realised her greatness when he said:
"We have come to a reasonable understanding that I should have all the honours and she should have all the drudgery."

As the Head of the Women Section of Satyagraha Ashram she was imprisoned a number of times. She was one of the first to lead the Rajkot struggle of 1939. This lady of 70 years was arrested as a result and put in solitary confinement in the interior of Rajkot. She did not know any rest and she followed Gandhiji as a prisoner to the Aga Khan's Palace in Poona. She passed away on February 22, 1944.
Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

India was fortunate in having a number of brilliant and fearless journalists like Surendranath Banerjea, Motilal Ghosh, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Balgangadhar Tilak, Ramanand Chaterjee, Kali Nath Roy and others. They were all highly educated and helped considerably India's bid for freedom.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar (1859-1923) was in Government service for some years before taking to law. He picked up a good practice at Coimbatore but soon shifted to Madras. The Hindu was founded as a weekly newspaper in Madras in 1878. From 1895 to 1905 K. R. acted as the Legal Adviser of The Hindu and afterwards when it went into liquidation, he brought the project. From 1905 till his death in 1923 Kasturi Ranga Iyengar played a very important role in Indian politics as Editor of The Hindu, a staunch Congressman and devoted patriot.

Iyengar had been associated with the Indian National Congress from its very inception. As long as he was at Coimbatore he was a member of the Coimbatore District Congress Committee. In 1887 he took an active part in the third session of the Indian National Congress held in Madras. During the Non-Cooperation Movement, Iyengar was Gandhiji's chief supporter in Madras, though on various fundamental matters he differed from Gandhiji and did not hesitate to publicise them. The political awakening of the South was largely due to the contribution of The Hindu and K. R. Iyengar.

Iyengar had a broad catholicity of mind and provincialism never ran in his veins. The partition of Bengal led to the Swadeshi agitation and this was fully supported by Iyengar. As a matter of fact he saw in it the hand of Providence to pull India out of stupor and "to unite the classes with the masses, and to inspire them with a new sense of nationality and devotion to the motherland." When the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was floated at Tuticorin in 1906 by Chidambram Pillai, a great nationalist, K. R. gave the project his full support. When G. Subramania Iyer, another veteran editor and two others were prosecuted for sedition, Kasturi Ranga
and *The Hindu* took up the cause against the prosecution and for his fearless writings the government first thought of prosecuting Iyengar too but on legal advice dropped the matter. Iyengar gave evidence before the Islington Commission in 1913 and wanted a complete separation of Judicial and Executive functions among other requirements. Iyengar also gave strong support to Mrs Besant’s Home Rule Movement, though in the beginning he was not readily enamoured of Mrs Besant’s work.

There can be no gainsaying that the South had been largely prepared for Gandhiji’s mission through the efforts of K. R. He fully supported the Congress-League Scheme in 1916 and when Montagu visited Madras, Iyengar gave a memorandum in which he indicated a list of bureaucratic misdemeanours and underscored the need for a thorough change in the administration. The Rowlatt Committee was given a scathing analysis and condemnation by K. R. In 1918 he went to England and visited the battlefields on the Western fronts.

Events moved rapidly after the Rowlatt Bills were put on the Statute Book. Gandhiji took up the challenge and suggested passive resistance by the public and the leaders of the country. Gandhiji arrived in Madras on March 17, 1919, on the invitation of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as President of the Anti-Rowlatt Committee of Madras. The public meeting in Triplicane Beach on March 18 was addressed by Gandhiji with K. R. in the chair. When Gandhiji recommended that April 6 should be observed as a day of protest against the Rowlatt Act, K. R. gave his full support. On April 13, 1919 the new year day in Hindu Calendar, a large public meeting in the enclosure in Jallianwala Bagh was organised. Here General Dyer, the Military Commander in Amritsar, ordered the troops to shoot on the crowd within two minutes of ordering the crowd to disperse. Hundreds were killed and injured. Gandhiji found the situation in the Punjab so serious that he called off his plan for Satyagraha. K. R. was one of the six leading editors of the country who wanted the Punjab Government to allow C. F. Andrews as their man to go and see the condition of the Punjab with special reference to the administration of martial law as no non-official account of existing state of affairs was available. Not only the appeal was not heeded to but Mr Andrews was served with a prohibitory order preventing his entry into the Punjab. Andrews defied this and courted arrest.
The unsympathetic attitude of the Government to the Punjab tragedy shocked the people in all parts of India. Men like Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Sir J. C. Bose relinquished their Knighthood. A number of members of the Imperial Legislative Council resigned. Sir Sankaran Nair also resigned from the Viceroy’s Council.

Gandhi had, as mentioned before, depended on K. R. from the beginning of his campaign in the South. On April 3, 1919, he sent a wire to K. R. in which he said:

“Just arrived having missed connection at Secunderabad. Considering proposal regarding meeting in Delhi. Hope Delhi tragedy will make satyagrahis steel their hearts and waiverers reconsider their position. I have not a shadow of doubt that by remaining true to our pledge we shall not only secure withdrawal of Rowlatt Legislation but we shall kill the spirit of terror lying behind”.

On January 14, 1920 Gandhi wrote in Young India, referring to the various groups in the Congress Party, namely, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar’s Party in the Extremist’s Group and also the Parties of C.R. Das and Lokmanya Tilak.

In the Subjects Committee meeting at Ahmedabad Gandhi had to face a storm. There was Pandit Malaviya’s proposition urging the Congress Party to support his desire for a Round Table Conference on reasonable terms and to delete from the main resolution the particular clause which advised aggressive Civil Disobedience. Gandhi saw that this proposition was rejected by an overwhelming majority. Gandhi had opened the proceedings and informed the House that the Madras members including Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Satyamurti had been pressing upon him the desirability of the passing of a Resolution in reply to the Viceroy’s Calcutta speech, emphatically pronouncing on the part of the Congress that the destinies of India were not in the hands of British Parliament but in the hands of the Congress and that the British Parliament could merely ratify the wishes of the people of India. Gandhi also referred to the fact that Pandit Malaviya and Mr Jinnah were pressing that the Congress should definitely state its position with regards to the suggestion for a Round Table Conference. Gandhi was opposed to making any declaration “upon the mere hope of catching a straw—there was nothing in the Viceregal
pronouncement to show that the Congress is called upon to make any response."

Particular reference must be made to the meeting at Trichinopoly on August, 17, 1920 where K. R. and Gandhiji had met as protagonists of the same case but with friendly differences. Gandhiji had particularly referred in his speech to his differences with K. R. who had also spoken in the meeting. Iyengar had mentioned that Gandhiji should have waited for the Congress mandate on Non-Cooperation. Referring to this Gandhiji said that it was impossible "because the Mussalmans had and still have a duty, irrespective of the Hindus, to perform in reference to their own religion. It was impossible for them to wait for any mandate, save the mandate of their own religion, in a matter that vitally concerned the honour of Islam." Gandhiji had also referred to K. R's idea that it was best to seek election to the Assembly and fight the battle on the floor of the Council Hall. Gandhiji spoke:

"We have done it for the last 35 years, but I venture to suggest to you and to him, with all due respect, that it is not Non-Cooperation and it is not half as successful as Non-Cooperation can be. You cannot go to a class of people with a view to convince them by any fight—call it even obstruction—who have got a settled conviction and a settled policy to follow. It is in medical language an incompatible mixture out of which you can gain nothing, but if you totally boycott the Councils, you create a public opinion in the country with reference to Khilafat wrong and the Punjab wrong, which feeling will become totally irresistible..."

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar also objected to the suspension of practice by the lawyers. Gandhiji tried to meet this objection by saying:

"Milk is good in itself, but it becomes absolutely poison immediately a little bit of arsenic is added to it. Law Courts are similarly good when justice is distilled through them on behalf of a sovereign power which wants to do justice to its people...."

Regarding K.R.'s objection to the plan of boycotting Government schools, "Gandhiji said: "I can only say what I have said with reference to the lawyers."

In his speech at Mangalore on August 19, 1920, Gandhiji reminded his audience that Kasturi Ranga had fully supported the..."
renunciation of titles. In *Young India* on August 25, 1920 there was a signed article of Gandhiji on "Boycott of goods versus N.C.O. programme". Here Gandhiji referred to K. R. and discussed K.R.'s prescription of boycott of foreign goods in place of other items. All this shows that after Kasturi Ranga's active participation in the deliberations of the Amritsar Congress, where the Congress had adopted several suggestions of K. R., he was acknowledged to be one of the top leaders and Gandhiji fully appraised his particular value. K. R. had given a frank opinion about Gandhiji's programme. He also wrote:

"Mr Gandhi's programme of Non-Cooperation is based upon the fact that it will be enough if a few individuals who believe in its efficacy follow it. My standpoint is entirely different, viz. that even a moderate form of Non-Cooperation, if it is refused over the whole country on a large scale, would bring such a moral pressure on the Government as to redress our grievances... I consider the movement should be a national one, must be spread on as large a scale as possible and must permeate to all classes of people. That will, no doubt, take time and the steps should be introduced one after another. There must be room given for one stage of Non-Cooperation to have full operation before we go to the next... Sufficient time should be given for each stage of Non-Cooperation in order to see the effect of it on the Government. If one step proves futile, then of course we can go on to the next stage."

It is to be recalled that the Madras Provincial Congress Committee fully supported K. R. by approving the policy of Non-Cooperation but voted against Gandhiji's programme. Gandhiji had to go quite a long way to keep K.R. with him. At one stage K. R. resigned from the executive positions in the Congress as he was of the view that Congressmen should seek election to the Councils to stop undesirable elements getting in. His idea was to use the Council Chamber as an arena for Non-Cooperation. Gandhiji saw that K. R. did not press for the acceptance of his resignation. In the Calcutta Congress K. R. had supported a Resolution on Non-Cooperation and had said:

"I give my whole-hearted support to this Resolution, and I hope that all those who are interested in the unity of the Indian people and in the attainment of Swaraj will cordially support it and endeavour to carry it out by all means in their power."

This support went a long way and Jitendra Lal Banerjea of Bengal particularly mentioned that when K. R. and *The Hindu*
support the movement in Madras there cannot by any road block to the tide of Non-Cooperation.

In various ways, apart from writing forcefully in the columns of *The Hindu*, K. R. helped Gandhiji. He was the Treasurer of the Madras Tilak Swaraj Fund and a tireless worker and organiser to raise funds for the Congress. He associated himself with labour disputes and social reforms. He was much perturbed when Sir C. Sankaran Nair withdrew from the All Parties Leaders Conference at Bombay and later came out with his book "Gandhi and Anarchy". A lifelong friend of Sir Sankaran Nair, K. R. did not hesitate to give vent to his feelings that Sir Sankaran Nair thereby has done the country a very great disservice. K. R. worked as a member of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee and this work affected his poor health. But even then from his sick-bed he would work for Gandhiji and the country. He passed away in 1923.

While unveiling his portrait four years after his death, Gandhiji paid a great tribute to him as a reformer and as a journalist, with a style of his own and a man who disdained ostentation.
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, better known as Frontier Gandhi, was born in 1890 at village Utmanzai in District Peshawar, now in Pakistan. A typical pathan with a towering figure, broad forehead, deep eyes, a prominent nose and a well chiselled face as a whole proclaims the sturdy character of this man. His stature literally wears the inner steel in him. Born in aristocratic family in a Frontier Khan tribe he had his early schooling in Aligarh. While at Aligarh he was drawn towards Maulana Abul Kalam Azad through his inspiring writings in his paper Al-Hilal. The Aligarh environment gave Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan a mental make up which bloomed later in his dedication to the service of his own countrymen.

As is usual with the educated pathans, it was almost decided that he would join the army. But an incident that he saw made him decide against choosing the military career. He saw a senior Indian Military Officer being insulted by a British officer of inferior rank.

His aristocratic birth and comparative affluence did not deter him from choosing the simple austere life for himself. He was drawn towards Gandhiji in 1919. He had attended a big political meeting at his village and as a penalty was put behind bars along with his father. This only whipped him up. He met Gandhiji for the first time at the Khilafat Conference in Delhi in early 1920. And also in 1920 he attended the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress. From then on he took a leading part in the Khilafat question. Gandhiji had fully supported the Khilafat movement and had been touring with Maulana (Shaukat Ali and Maulana Muhammad Ali throughout the length and breadth of India. Along with the bulk of the Muslims, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also thought that a grievous insult had been meted out to the Muslims by the Treaty according to which the Sultan of Turkey was made a figure-head. Back home in 1921 he was again in prison and this time the charge was that he had started national schools and national centres. The prison life made Ghaffar Khan a
seasoned non-violent soldier. When transferred to a prison in Punjab he came in contact with the Hindu and the Sikh political prisoners. He utilised the prison-life to learn the lessons of Gita and Granthi Sahib.

Ghaffar Khan attended the Congress sessions and the Khilafat Conference in Calcutta in 1928 and had an opportunity to come in closer touch in the Gandhi.

In March 1931 Ghaffar Khan met Gandhiji at the Karachi Congress. This was followed by his personal visit to Bardoli Ashram of Gandhiji in June 1931. The two discovered each other and the relationship that was struck convinced Gandhiji that the sturdy pathan was a true votary of non-violence. Gandhiji's constructive programme and his creed of truth and non-violence had their influence on Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s political aims and plans. He went back to his environment and raised volunteers known as Khudai Khidmadgars or Servants of God. These volunteers were also known as Red Shirts owing to the uniform they wore and they were pledged to the creed of non-violence in thought, word and deed. Ghaffar Khan drilled them and put them under stern discipline and utilised them for humanitarian work. The move was very much misunderstood and the British Government took offence and thought that the Khudai Khidmadgars were revolutionaries who believed in violence. Gandhiji took keen interest in the humanitarian centres that had been opened by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He sent his emissaries from time to time to teach them spinning. Gandhiji was fully confident that Khan Ghaffar Khan never led any violent movement and he was assured in this belief by the reports of his emissaries who were trusted men and women.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s entry in his province of North West Frontier was banned in 1934 and he came to Wardha Ashram of Gandhiji to stay as an inmate. It was this stay at Wardha that brought the two Gandhis nearer to each other. In the evening prayers Gandhiji often asked the Khan to recite passages from the Quran. In 1938 Gandhiji toured the North West Frontier Province to inculcate the gospel of Ahimsa and Ghaffar Khan accompanied him. Both remained at Sardaryab Centre for some time. At the request of Ghaffar Khan, Gandhiji sent Mira Ben (Miss Margrate Slade) and then Bibi Amtus Salam to help Ghaffar Khan in his social work. These women did a lot of work among the women folk of that orthodox Muslim tract.
Ghaffar Khan had completely allied himself to Gandhiji. In 1940 when Gandhiji opposed the Congress offer of conditional cooperation with the British war effort and left the Congress, Ghaffar Khan sided with Gandhiji and resigned from the Congress Working Committee. Again in the same year when the British Government spurned the Poona offer and the Congress resolved to launch Civil Disobedience Movement under Gandhiji’s leadership, Ghaffar Khan was by his side to lead the campaign. In the Quit India movement of 1942, Frontier Gandhi was in the thick of the struggle for the freedom of India and courted imprisonment.

In 1945 after release from jail Ghaffar Khan spent some time with Gandhiji in Bombay.

In 1946-47 when there was an ugly communal outburst in some portions of India, Ghaffar Khan was as much perturbed as Gandhiji was. At Gandhiji’s advice Ghaffar Khan came to Bihar and toured in Bhagalpur and Monghyr districts visiting the riot affected villages and busied in rehabilitating the displaced persons. In the course of this tour Ghaffar Khan had spoken at Monghyr:

“I believe, India is inhabited by one single nation—Hindus and Muslims included. There are provinces where Hindus are in a hopeless minority as there are places where Muslims are similarly situated. If what has happened is repeated at other places and the majority community tried to crush and kill the minority then surely the fate of the nation is sealed and we are doomed to eternal slavery.”

He was deeply moved by the madness of the communal riots in Bihar and observed:

“My heart weeps to see our homes set on fire by ourselves.”

He had to cut short his tour of Bihar which lasted three and a half months as a district in his province was engulfed in the fire of communal frenzy.

The sturdy pathan was clearly against the partition of India and till the last he thought that there would be no partition of India and no creation of Pakistan. He was disillusioned and it has been said he was literally thrown to the wolves when he went back to his home in Pakistan. Ghaffar Khan’s dream of an independent and well-built unit of Pakhtoon area was also shattered. Gandhiji tried his best through Mountbatten and Jinnah to have at least some of the ideas of the Frontier Gandhi regarding the Pakhtoon area but
he failed. Gandhi was a sad man when he failed in this attempt and had remarked:

"Badshah Khan is a prodigy... For such a person there can be no defeat. I am sure he will shrink from no sacrifice... but will die serving the Pathans with his last breath."

On July 30, 1947 Gandhiji left for Kashmir and the Frontier Gandhi returned to his province where he and his Khudai Khidmadians refused to participate in the referendum manipulated by Sir Olaf Caroe and the Muslim League. The parting words of the Frontier Gandhi when he left India were:

"Mahatmaji has shown us the true path. Long after we are no more, the coming generation of Hindus will remember him as an Avatar...... May God spare him for long to give us inspiration and strength to fight for truth and justice to the last."

This was the last meeting of the two Gandhis.

In the first week of September 1947, the Pathan representative organisations met at Sardaryab and adopted the resolution defining the boundaries of Pakhtoonistan. At this time Ghaffar Khan declared:

"I have been working for the establishment of Pathanistan all my life. It was for the purpose of achieving unity among the Pathans that Khudai Khidmadians organisation was started in 1929. My path is clear. I will not forsake it even if I stand alone in the world."

In this mission Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his friends appear to have had Gandhiji’s good wishes. Gandhi was deeply interested in the progress of Khudai Khidmadgar movement in the North West Frontier Province. He had made a minute study into the question as to whether Ghaffar Khan was wedded to the creed of non-violence or not both by personal visits and also through reports of his trusted emissaries. Gandhiji was fully satisfied about their creed and he noted at one place in 1946 that:

"It was a great pleasure for me to learn that they proved their worth when at a considerable risk to themselves they ran to the assistance of their Sikh brethren in their distress...Ever-since 1920 my one ambition has been to wean the Pathan from his reputed blood-thirstiness and bravery falsely associated with it. I know that the dangerous generalisation has been made of utterly insufficient data. The fault of a relatively true Pathan has been attributed to the whole tribe. He has been also accused
of charging unmentionable heavy rate of interest and enforcing payment thereof, not in a court of law, but at the point of the sword. I know honest and gentle Pathans who consider in beneath their dignity to hurt anybody or to make money by unlawful means. I want gentleness and honesty to be the common heritage of all Pathans. I want every Pathan to have the highest form of bravery which only can be obtained through prolonged culture and true non-violence. I have not met a single Pathan who has questioned the fact that the daring that the provision of arms gave has been responsible for blood feuds handed down from family to family till at last the family has become extinguished or the other and more degrading fact that such Pathans become guilty of cowering before his superior in wielding arms. I hope that in my attempt to wean Pathans from these vices I shall receive the assistance of every one who is a lover of the Pathan and who would want him, become a model citizen not merely of India but of the world.”

So far as Ghaffar Khan is concerned he has stuck to what he had written to Gandhiji as late as in 1931:

“But so far God has been merciful, all that I have done and I am doing is simply to serve God and His creatures and that is perhaps why the efforts so far have been successful”

This he wrote at a time when there was repression going on and the Khudai Khidmadgars were being put in prison. Ghaffar Khan also mentioned:

“The Government have started severe repression against the Khudai Khidmadgars. They raid the offices and beat them there. In Hijro Public House they assaulted people while they were lying under cots. The Khudai Khidmadgars are being clapped into jails and refused interviews with anybody. They are being caned too. Section 144 has been promulgated almost throughout the province, but we are trying to put up with all these ordeals in patience. This is how the Government are observing the Truce.”

Years of jail in Pakistan has not crushed the inner spirit of Ghaffar Khan. Now he is living almost as an exile in Afghanistan and looks beyond the frontiers to India and is seeking India’s help for implementing the dream of Paktoonistan.

He came to India again on 15th October 1969 to attend the Gandhi Centenary Celebrations. He observed a three day’s fast to give vent to his feelings on the outbreak of communalism in India. There was a very bad type of communal orgy in Gujarat just before he came and the Muslims in particular were killed. Ghaffar Khan went to some places where he spoke on how Gandhiji was being forgotten.
Lala Lajpat Rai

Born on January 28, 1865 in a village of Ferozepore district in the Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai was a seasoned political worker and a dedicated patriot long before Gandhiji became wellknown in India. As a young man, Lala Lajpat Rai drew inspiration from men like Mazzini, Garibaldi, Shivaji, Dayanand and Raja Rammohun Roy. He was first an enthusiastic member of the Brahmo Samaj and then he joined the Arya Samaj. A versatile writer, an erudite scholar and a forceful speaker, Lajpat Rai made his mark even before he was thirty. He was a staunch Hindu but he was not dogmatic. He threw himself heart and soul in the cause of the Indians in South Africa, the famine-struck people of the Punjab and various other humanitarian causes.

He was a Congress supporter since 1888. One of the great features of the Congress Session in Allahabad in 1888 was the circulation of his open letters to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University. An admirer of Sir Syed Ahmed, he could not swallow his preaching that the Hindu and the Muslim interests were separate. Lajpat Rai was so ardent in his love for India that he poohpoohed the Congress stalwarts of those days and described them as "holiday patriots". In 1893 Congress Session at Lahore, Lajpat Rai had met Bal Gangadhar Tilak and both came closer because of their militant spirit which they wanted to inject into the moribund Indian politics of the day. He founded a newspaper, The Panjabi in 1904 and utilised it as his mouthpiece. In 1905 he was chosen as a Congress delegate to go to England with Gopal Krishna Gokhale to plead India's cause before the British public on the eve of a general election there. Finding that their mission will not help much to the cause of India, Lajpat Rai made contacts with some of the British socialist leaders like Ramsay MacDonald and others and this contact led to good results years after. The Bengal partition and the agitation in the Swadeshi days put Lajpat Rai in the forefront and he was vociferous in his condemnation of the British bureaucracy. He created an explosive situation in the Punjab where the political upsurge of Bengal had spilled over.
Lajpat Rai took up the cause of the poor Rayat in connection with the Punjab Colonisation Bill and there were riots in Lahore and Rawalpindi. For all this Lajpat Rai was deported to Mandalay in Burma on May 7, 1907, under Regulation III of 1818 which provided for deportation without any trial. He got his release six months after and vindicated his position by winning defamation cases against the two papers Englishman and the Daily Express which had described him as an arch-seditionist and revolutionary.

The deportation put the crown of sacrifice to this dedicated patriot. Lajpat Rai had become disappointed with the moderation of the Congress stalwarts. In 1913 he was again chosen a delegate by the Congress to go to England to represent the Congress viewpoint on the reforms in India. From May 1914 to February 1920 Lajpat Rai was abroad and the Government was not happy about him. He also thought it was hazardous to return to India.

Lajpat Rai also went to America where he did a good deal of propaganda on behalf of India. He founded the Indian Home Rule League of America in 1917.

Lajpat Rai had been watching Gandhiji from abroad. In one of his letters to Gandhiji from the United States in 1919 he deprecated terrorism and applauded Gandhiji’s “high souled patriotism” and underlined the importance of the implementation of the economic programme. He wrote in this letter:

“I am therefore in full sympathy with the general spirit of your propaganda. I may be unable to sign the full pledge of Satyagraha but if and when I return to India I shall sign the ‘pure Swadeshi vow’.”

Like Gandhiji he also felt that work should start from below and that the peasants and the labourers should be brought into the picture. Lajpat Rai mentioned in this letter:

“The thing to be immediately done is to organise the country for economic purposes starting with the peasants and the labourers. We must start from the bottom. The top people will take care of themselves. I want more of economic action, not at the cost of political talk, but in addition to it and as a necessary fulcrum for it. The nation must be fed on truth and not on catch phrases.”

Gandhi fully reciprocated Lajpat Rai’s feelings and referred to him in his editorial column of Young India on November 13, 1919.
Lajpat Rai arrived in Bombay on February 20, 1920 as a great hero and he was given a series of receptions. In one of the meetings he said:

"But in certain other respects, let me tell you, take it from me, that they are the most servile people on the face of the globe. Why? Few amongst them can speak the truth......Where in the world shall we find another man equal in spirit, self sacrifice and righteousness, equal to Mahatma Gandhi? We may or may not agree with his views, we may or may not follow but I challenge the whole world to produce another man like Mahatma Gandhi."

On his return, Lala Lajpat Rai found that Gandhiji had already made his mark in the field of Indian politics. As Lajpat Rai agreed with many of Gandhiji's ideas and had great regard for him as a man, he decided to join Gandhiji in his non-cooperation movement. Lajpat Rai's accession to the Congress fold was a very great achievement for Gandhiji and Lajpat Rai came to be known as the lion of the Punjab. Lajpat Rai was already the accredited leader of the Punjab before he had gone abroad and so when he joined Gandhiji the non-cooperation movement spread like wild fire in the Punjab. Punjab was already extremely bitter because of the Jalianwalla Bagh incident which had drawn Gandhiji into the vortex of Indian politics. Lajpat Rai was made the President of the special session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta which was summoned particularly to decide about the Punjab and Khilafat affairs. Lajpat Rai maintained his neutrality as the President at the Calcutta Congress and made no secret of the fact that he was opposed to Gandhiji's move for withdrawing students from educational institutions. There was bitter opposition to Gandhiji but ultimately Gandhiji triumphed and the non-cooperation movement was adopted by the Congress. The next annual session at Nagpur saw Lajpat Rai throwing himself whole-heartedly into the non-cooperation movement. He travelled far and wide in India and his eloquence brought hundreds to the fold of the Congress. In 1921 he was arrested under the Seditious Meetings Act when the Congress declared war against the repressive policy of the Government by launching mass civil disobedience movement in Bardoli Taluka of Gujarat. There was great political consciousness throughout India at this time and an awareness of the problem of India's freedom. Unfortunately in February 1922 there occurred the Chauri-Chaura incident. This incident had a stunning effect on Gandhiji and he cancelled the mass campaign.
Opinions differ as to whether this was a wise move on Gandhiji's part. For this move Gandhiji had been bitterly criticised by some of his best co-workers like C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Lajpat Rai. Lala Lajpat Rai was all fire and circulated a long letter to all the members of the Working Committee. This letter showed that Lajpat Rai bitterly resented this move of Gandhiji. In the course of a letter he had written:

"...... Spiritually, socially and even politically the country certainly stands much higher than it did before March 1919. Never before in the experience of living men did a leader so successfully and unfailingly appreciate the genius of his people and felt their pulse as Mahatma Gandhi has done in the course of the last three years.......I have no hesitation in saying not only that he is the greatest Indian living but that he is one of the greatest of men of all ages, all times and all countries. Yet that is exactly the reason why we have to swallow the bitter pill of ignominious defeat today, because, say what we may, we have been defeated and that too very badly. Our defeat is in proportion to the greatness of our leader. Several times and in several matters, in the course of the last eighteen months, we surrendered our better judgments to his decision. A political leader is like a general, and no general can afford to be chicken-hearted. A general can denounce, degrade, even shoot such of his soldiers and subordinates as do not follow his directions and obey his orders, but he has no right to throw down arms and admit his defeat involving the capture of his army by the enemy, simply because a few out of millions have disregarded his wishes. Leaders of political campaign for freedom cannot afford to wear their hearts on their sleeves...... Bardoli resolutions are a proof of his bravery not of his cowardice, but they have conclusively established that there can be no campaign of civil disobedience under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership...."

There is no doubt that Lajpat Rai never recovered from the shock of this move which he thought had let them down badly. He lost much of his confidence in Gandhiji's leadership and never made a secret of it. Soon after in March 1922 Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment which resulted in a vacuum in the political life of the country. Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and others had planned to sponsor the Swaraj Party and fight for the freedom of the country through the legislatures. Gandhi's no-council entry move was not liked by these leaders who had a very large following in the country. Lajpat Rai was contacted and he agreed to join this party. The Swaraj Party made a great impact in the
Provincial and in the Imperial Legislatures. Lajpat Rai, however, moved away from the core of the Swaraj Party and formed his own Independent Congress Party which followed the policy of Responsive Cooperation. For all practical purposes his party cooperated with the Swaraj Party.

The declaration that Simon Commission will visit India was held in ridicule by these politicians with advanced views in India and it was Lajpat Rai who moved the resolution in the Central Assembly for the boycott of the Simon Commission. True to his creed, Lajpat Rai led the procession in Lahore which was organised to boycott the Simon Commission on October 30, 1928. The procession was sought to be broken up and Lajpat Rai who was one of the persons leading the procession received lathi blows on his chest at the hands of the police. As a result, he passed away on November 17, 1928.

A study of the letters that had passed between Gandhiji and Lajpat Rai between the years 1919 and 1928 clearly indicate that Lajpat Rai had great regard for Gandhiji as a spiritual and a political leader but he did not surrender his own individual judgment. In various matters he had his difference of opinion and Lajpat Rai was candid enough to let Gandhiji know his views. The famous circular letter that he had issued to the members of the Congress Working Committee in February 1922 clearly shows Lajpat Rai’s strength of mind. He was very helpful in collecting money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and from a letter of his on July 6, 1921 we find that Punjab’s contribution amounted to nine lakhs and that he was still sanguine of raising more money. In 1924 there were some reports that the Congress would be cooperating with the Government and at that time Lajpat Rai was clearly against cooperating with the administration. On May 7, 1924 he wrote to Gandhiji for clarification if the report was correct. After the Kohat riots in 1924 Lajpat Rai took upon himself the onerous task of correcting Gandhiji’s conception of the cause and effect of the tragedy. Lajpat Rai wrote very strongly that the responsibility and barbarity of the Kohat outrages rested elsewhere than what Gandhiji thought.

Lajpat Rai had the milk of human kindness in him to its full. In 1929 he got himself interested in the relief work in Orissa that was ravaged by floods and famine. He raised money and men and carried out the relief operations in full cooperation with the local Congress
leader Pt. Gopabandhu Das. He kept Gandhiji closely informed about the activities of the relief workers. Lajpat Rai did not spare himself in this work and in a letter on February 1, 1926 he wrote to Gandhiji: "... In my judgment it was wrong to keep funds in our hands and not spend before we issue a fresh appeal".

Lajpat Rai was not a blind believer in spinning and khadi. There is some correspondence to show that there was a difference of opinion. In a letter dated May 7, 1928 he wrote to Gandhiji:

"I am very sorry if I said anything in my letter to give you reason to understand that I wanted to patronise your movement. That was the farthest from my mind. I am anxious to join hands with you in a spirit of humility and service without making any fuss about it. I am not in correspondence with any person who may be interested in criticising the economies of khadar. What I meant was any criticism which might appear in the Press. I saw enough of un-approachability in Madras to make me disgusted with it."

Gandhi's reply dated May 12, 1928 shows the high regard Gandhiji had for Lajpat Rai. The letter is as follows:

"Please do not think that I used the term 'patronising' in any offensive sense. Let me reiterate what I have said and want to say. I want you not as a distant admirer of Khadi and Khadi Movement. I want you to throw yourself heart and soul into it with a full conviction just as you have thrown yourself into untouchability movement. You are not satisfied with merely recounting the merits of removal, but you are devoting your great energy to the eradication of the evil. And so I want you not to wait for the hostile criticism that may appear in the press, but to ask those who are likely to be hostile critics to let you have their views, unless of course a second and serious reading of the literature especially of Gregg's book has made your criticism unshakable. I know that your health cannot permit you to engage in a hurricane tour. But you know what I want, and that you can give me only if you have an immovable heart conviction."

Lalaji acknowledged this letter in these words on May 19, 1928:

"I do not propose to write to any one who may be a hostile critic of khadi. I intend to work and you shall judge me not by my words but by my work. In the meantime I propose to learn spinning and do what I can in my own way without blowing any trumpets."
Like Gandhiji, Lajpat Rai’s interests were not confined to the political field alone. He had devoted himself to the cause of removing untouchability and had founded the All India Achut Uddhar Sabha for the removal of untouchability and the emancipation of the depressed classes. He founded the Servants of the People Society and the Tilak School of Politics.

In his obituary note on Lajpat Rai Gandhiji wrote:

"Lalaji means an institution. From his youth he made the country’s service his religion and his patriotism was no narrow creed. He loved his country because he loved the world. His nationalism was internationalism. Hence his hold on European mind. He claimed a large circle of friends in Europe and America. They loved him because they knew him.

His activities were multifarious. He was an ardent social and religious reformer. Like many of us, he became a politician because his zeal for social and religious reform demanded participation in politics.

He observed at an early stage of his public career that not much reform of the type he wanted was possible until the country was freed from foreign domination. It appeared to him as to most of us a poison corrupting every department of life. It is impossible to think of a single public movement in which Lalaji was not to be found. His love of service was insatiable. He founded educational institutions. He befriended the suppressed classes. Poverty where found claimed his attention. He surrounded youngmen with extraordinary affection. No young man applied to him in vain for help.

In the political field he was indispensable. He was fearless in the expression of his views. He suffered for it when suffering had not become customary or fashionable. His life was an open book. His extreme frankness often embarrassed his friends if it also confounded his critics. But he was incorrigible.

With all difference to my Mussalman friends, I assert that he was not an enemy of Islam. His desire to strengthen and purify Hinduism must not be confounded with the hatred of Mussalmans or Islam. He was sincerely desirous of promoting and achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. He wanted not Hindu Raj. But he passionately wanted Indian Raj. He wanted all who called themselves Indians to have absolute equality. I wish that Lalaji’s death would teach us to trust one another and we could easily do this if we could but shed tears.

There will be, as there must be, a demand for national memorial. In my humble opinion no memorial can be complete without a definite determination to achieve freedom for which he
lived and died so nobly. Let us recall what has after all provided to be his last will. He has bequeathed to the younger generation the task of vindicating India’s freedom and honour. Will they prove worthy of the trust he reposed in them?

Nor may we forget the Servants of the Peoples Society which he founded for the promotion of many activities all designed for the advancement of the country. His ambition in respect of the Society was very high. He wanted a number of young men all over India to join in common cause. The Society is an infant, not many years old. He had hardly time enough to consolidate this great work of his. It is a national trust requiring the nation’s care and attention.”
Lord Mountbatten

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy and Governor-General of India arrived on March 22, 1947, and was sworn in the next day.

For about three months prior to this he was being briefed for the incumbency and he was fully aware of the tangled problem that he had to meet. The situation in India had become "complex and intractible" because of the failure of the Cabinet Mission proposals and the forceful upsurge among the Muslims for a separate Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission proposals had been accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League and were going to be implemented when Jawaharlal Nehru made the observation that they were going in without any commitments. The elusive and shrewd Jinnah interpreted this to be resiling from the accepted position and would not lend his hand in working out the Cabinet Mission proposals. Mr Atlee had given Lord Mountbatten the hitherto unknown powers of the Viceroy, viz., to make his own decisions in India and the Secretary of State would have to accept and support them.

Lord Mountbatten's suave manners and captivating smiles were fully buttressed by Lady Mountbatten's charming hospitality and bearings. It was almost a providential Vini, Vidi, Vici for Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten won over Nehru easily as there was a very large common area of statesmanship, pragmatism and sharp intelligence in both of them. Mountbatten's firm resolution that a decision had to be reached and implemented between March and June 1947, was a great lever to the members of the different parties. The inner bickerings between political leaders quickly started melting. Mountbatten was determined to win over Nehru, Patel and Gandhiji on one side and Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan on the other. It was a singular stroke of statesmanship almost unrivalled in the history of the world that Mountbatten was fully successful in taming this motley group and almost made each of them eat out of his hands.

Mountbatten did not resort to magic but he was surely a great adept in appreciating the reflexes and the psychological personal equation of each of the main actors. He exploited them fully.
Before he came to India he had done a tremendous amount of homework with all that had gone before. He discussed with Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Atlee and others but he had not made any commitments to them. He showed wonderful adaptability.

Nehru had thrown away the first Independence plan drawn up by Mountbatten but the same plan was redrafted by V. P. Menon, Reforms Commissioner, and Nehru yielded as "this would mean a much earlier transfer of power." That was the magician's secret—a transfer of power much earlier than what the most optimistic Indian had ever expected, be he a Hindu or a Muslim. The top political leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League were completely bowled over by this suggestion. The idea that power would be in their hands pallsied the brain and each one of the leaders got prepared to pay the price for the bargain, viz., the creation of independent Pakistan and India.

There was only one man among the top leaders who opposed the division of India tooth and nail to the last and that was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was overruled although he had steered the Congress boat successfully as the President for a number of years earlier. Patel was extremely keen that the impasse that had been created in the Government by the cute steps of the Finance Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, almost paralysing every good proposal from the Congress Ministers, be solved. Patel would not give up his Home portfolio but he had not bargained for the troubles. Gandhiji had then almost renegated whatever be the reasons. He had, unwittingly, raised the political stature of Jinnah by prolonged consultations. Jinnah had thrown it back on Gandhiji that he could speak for the Hindus only and the Muslim League alone will speak for the Muslims. The Qaide-Azam negotiations also failed. Qaide-Azam had become a dictator.

Among the Civil Services throughout India a wall had been raised between the Hindus and the Muslims. Certain newspapers were on the tables of almost every Muslim Government employee and these papers were only spitted out venom. The Hindu Mahasabha was another force and their leader, Shayma Prasad Mukerjee, and others were at loggershead with Jawaharlal Nehru and most other Congress leaders.

These trends and many others must have been studied by Mountbatten very carefully. He knew that if he could win over the
Congress stalwarts it would be easy to win over Jinnah by pin-pointing the concessions and recessions made by the Congress leaders. He also knew that once he could put the Congress and Muslim League in his pocket, Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh and other problems would fall in a disarray and melt away.

C. Rajagopalachari had already fallen for the scheme of Pakistan before Mountbatten came and that was a very great factor. One and the first interview with Mountbatten and Gandhiji was sold to the idea of Pakistan. Abul Kalam Azad in his India Wins Freedom mentioned that just before the interview Gandhiji had been parleying on Pakistan. Did Gandhiji? About this Mountbatten himself said, "For Gandhi the transfer of power was the culmination of his life's work?" This is a partial truth. It was very easy for Mountbatten to win over Gandhiji because he had already won over Jawaharlal and throughout his life Gandhiji always yielded to Jawaharlal and vice-versa despite occasional bitter differences. Patel fell in by the line very easily as the very earthy and practical Patel saw that the fulfilment of the long drawn struggle was in the offing whatever be the immediate consequences. With the Congress leaders following him in a line it was not difficult for Mountbatten to bring over Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. Mountbatten, however, did not know how intractable Jinnah was and he had a sample of it when Jinnah refused to have Mountbatten as the Governor-General of Pakistan. Mountbatten's wish in the matter was expressed but turned down.

Lord Mountbatten was in much more constant touch, in this negotiating period, with Gandhiji than what public knew. He fully exploited Gandhiji's two-pronged influences, spiritual and political.

Lord Mountbatten himself mentions, "the drama itself was to be played in two Acts. Act I from March-August 1947 saw Nehru as Prime Minister of the interim Government in which he was the primary figure with whom I had to deal in handling the day-to-day business. At the same time he had to prepare for his role in Act II as the Head and Centre of affairs in the successor Government over which we were negotiating."

When it suited Mountbatten he appears to have fully put Gandhiji on the shelf and concentrated on Nehru and vice versa. The very close personal relations that were built up between Lord Mountbatten and Nehru was the real backdrop of the drama. In
hammering out the plan for the transfer of power, V. P. Menon, a man who had risen from the position of a stenographer was invaluable. Menon’s close association with Patel was a psychological factor that Mountbatten fully utilised. At first Jinnah violently objected to a “moth-eaten Pakistan.” But Jinnah was a shrewd negotiator—when he found that he could not get more, he agreed to a Pakistan with two wings thrown wide apart and also took over the legacy of far-reaching problems. With Jinnah also the idea of getting Pakistan with full power at a much earlier date had weighed tremendously. Mountbatten was wise enough not to leave things to drift in London but followed up his proposals by personally visiting London with V. P. Menon. Even the British Cabinet was bewildered as Mountbatten had already fixed a tentative date for Independence to be ushered in India and Pakistan.

Mountbatten came back to Delhi on May 30 and called a meeting of the leaders in June. He gave copies of the new plan to each of the leaders to study, discuss with others and to give their reactions by midnight in writing. Jinnah saw Mountbatten personally that night and said that the Council of the All India Muslim League alone could constitutionally decide the issue but he did not prevent an announcement of the plan the following day. Mountbatten had completely mesmerised these leaders, though they had an inkling of the bloodbath in the offing.

Did Mountbatten try to contact Gandhiji on that fateful day of June 2, 1947? It does not appear that he did. The wise statesman Mountbatten knew that with Gandhiji’s political successor Nehru along with him he need not worry about Gandhiji at that crucial moment.

Mountbatten knew full well that there would be different and divergent pulls in different sections among the main political groups. He had set up two “Shadow Cabinets” one for each future dominion but with their break down he quickly set up a Partition Council of Leaders. The Civil Servant and the Army were divided on communal lines. The poison tree was firmly implanted.

Redcliffe was asked to settle the boundary lines between the two dominions. Redcliffe wanted more time but Mountbatten wanted to strike while the iron was still hot and exacted “a superlative job” from Radcliffe which did not satisfy either party. Later
Mountbatten had the Kashmir Problem referred to the UNO. The fruits of the poison tree we are still tasting.

As the Governor-General of India, Mountbatten kept up his fond relations with Gandhiji. On his own statement Gandhiji spoke to Mountbatten to help him bring about a reconciliation between Nehru and Sardar Patel.

Years after Gandhiji’s death Lord Mountbatten visited the Gandhi Museum and Library at Rajghat in early 1967 and had written in the visitors book that he had the great privilege of calling Gandhiji as his friend.
M. A. Ansari

Dr M. A. Ansari was born on December 15, 1880 at Ghazipur. He had his education in Banaras and got his medical degree from Madras University. The Nizam of Hyderabad gave him monetary help to go to England for further studies in medicine. After getting his degree he became a House Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital in London. In those days it was a distinct privilege for an Indian doctor to get a job in a British hospital. He came back to Delhi and started his practice. With excellent manners and a good background Dr Ansari made his mark within a few years both as a Doctor and as a leading figure in the elite of Delhi.

The Balkan war broke out in 1912. The attack of the Balkan powers on Turkey gave a shock to India and particularly to the Muslim section. Delhi became the storm centre for a sympathetic anti-British agitation for Turkey. Funds were collected and sent to the Red Crescent Society in Turkey. Another storm centre was at Aligarh. Dr Ziauddin, the Vice-Chancellor, tried his best to avoid the agitation. One Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, the President of the Students’ Union and a good speaker had graduated from Aligarh and joined the Comrade paper of Maulana Mohammad Ali as its Manager. After some time he rejoined Aligarh College to do his M.A. and Law. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui was actively associated with the agitation to help Turkey.

Maulana Mohammad Ali transferred his Comrade from Calcutta to Delhi. He made an appeal to the Muslims, particularly through his Comrade to contribute to a fund so that a medical mission could be organised and sent to Turkey to help the wounded. It was made known that Dr M. A. Ansari will lead the Mission. Money was raised for a Medical Mission consisting of a few male nurses. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Shoib Qureshi, Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman and a few others joined the Mission. Dr Ansari led the Mission and they sailed by the Italian liner ‘Sardinia’. On the ship Dr Ansari gave lectures on First Aid. The Mission did good work and was divided into two sections. After working at different places for some time
the Mission was stationed at Istambul. Mohammad Ali kept up the agitation in India.

Maulana Mohammad Ali and Dr Ansari were fired with the zeal to help the Turks and had with the help of a few other Muslims sponsored the Khilafat movement. The Muslims in India took the dismemberment of Turkey because of the Treaty of Sevres as a calamity. One section of the educated Muslims even toyed with the idea of getting help from the tribal areas of Baluchistan by way of arms and ammunition. Mohammad Ali went on writing scathing articles in Comrade and enlisted the sympathy of the Maulanas of Deoband and other Muslim religious centres. At this time Dr Ansari, Maulana Mohammad Ali, his brother Shaukat Ali and Hakim Ajmal Khan were very closely knit and had through friends and sympathisers great hold practically all over North India. The Muslims fully justified Turkish action in joining Germany. Secret funds were collected and messages were sent to Afghanistan and Arabia to canvass opinion against the British. It was pathetically realised that very little could be done in India during the war to fight the British unless the Germans attacked India with the help of the King of Afghanistan. Mohammad Ali with his scholastic career abroad, brilliant ability to write and lecture and service in Baroda was commonly accepted as a leader. With Mohammad Ali’s influence his brother Shaukat Ali who was a Deputy Magistrate also joined the Khilafat movement after giving up his job. The British Government in India had kept a close watch on this Muslim revivalism and quickly clamped into prison Shaukat Ali and a few others. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, an erudite scholar and a Muslim was interned in Ranchi.

Dr Ansari with his suave manners and medical skill had his own following and was a great factor in the early days of the Khilafat movement. The Ali Brothers and Dr Ansari had come to think very highly of Gandhiji particularly because of his constant reiteration in meetings that politics cannot be divorced from religion. This was a new message for India and the Muslims feeling deep for Turkey wanted to take Gandhiji’s help to mount up the Khilafat cause. An approach was made to Gandhiji who readily agreed to take up the cause of the Khilafat first because he sincerely believed that Turkey had been wronged by the dismemberment of the Caliphate and that the Muslims in India had a genuine cause
for feeling very sore. Secondly, Gandhiji thought that by helping
the Khilafat movement he would be able to forge Hindu-Muslim
unity which was so dear to him and without which he always said
no independence for India could be won. Gandhiji’s taking up the
Khilafat movement was not appreciated by many. It is this Khilafat
problem that brought Dr M. A. Ansari, Maulana Mohammad Ali,
Shaukat Ali and quite a few other aristocratic and cultured Muslims
to Gandhiji’s camp. A meeting of the Muslim League was held in
Delhi in 1918 to thrash out the entire Khilafat question. Dr Ansari
was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The problem before
the Muslims was great as the Allied victory had been achieved on
November 11, 1918. The sessions of the Muslim League was presided
over by Fazulul Haq. Dr Ansari moved the resolution for the
protection of the Khilafat. The Congress sessions at Delhi in 1918
was presided over by Pt Madan Mohan Malviyaji and Hakim Ajmal
Khan was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Con-
gress sessions.

Strong forces had already started working to bring the Hindus
and Muslims on one and the same platform. After the Nagpur
Congress Session the Ali brothers went to Aligarh to request the
Trustees to stop taking Government grant. They found a stiff
opposition in Dr Ziauddin. Gandhiji also visited Aligarh and there
was a great agitation among the students to leave the institution
which was being kept up with the help from the Government. About
100 students came out of the Aligarh University and a new university
called ‘Jamia Millia’ was started in a rented bungalow outside the
Aligarh University. Maulana Mohammad Ali laid the foundation of
the Jamia Millia and came to be known as the Sheikh of Jamia Millia.
Dr Alam became the first Principal. The Jamia Millia at Aligarh
faced great financial troubles and was almost destined to extinction.
After some time with Dr Ansari as the Sheikh the Jamia started
running smoothly with the services of a few young Muslims who had
brilliant foreign qualifications and were quite happy to lead a life of
penury with small monthly allowance which often used to be in
arrears. Three of them particularly dedicated themselves to the
Jamia Millia. They are Dr Zakir Hussain, the late President of
India, Maulana Mujib and Dr Abid. After some time the Jamia
Millia had to be shifted to Delhi because of financial troubles
again and was lodged in a house of Hakim Ajmal Khan.
It was Hakim Ajmal Khan who supported the Jamia Millia
financially and the Millia became a nucleus for creating a large number of true and dedicated Muslim workers. Hakim Ajmal Khan was at that time the Zamindar of almost the entire area from Nizamuddin to Okhla in Delhi and he gave lands and house at Okhla for the shifting of Jamia Millia and the institution still exists there. Gandhiji took a great interest in Jamia Millia and sent his son Devdas for training there. He raised money for the Jamia and after Hakim Ajmal Khan’s death, Gandhiji actively supported the Ajmal Khan Memorial Fund which was utilised for improving the Jamia. At that time the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress came to be treated as sister bodies and many Muslims were members of both the organisations.

Dr Ansari presided over the Madras Session in 1927. This was a momentous session. To give effect to the main resolution in the Madras Session, an All Parties Conference was summoned in Delhi in February 1928. In May 1928 a meeting of the Conference was held in Bombay and this was also presided over by Dr Ansari. A committee was formed with Pandit Moti Lal Nehru as the Chairman to report its recommendations. This was the first blueprint of the Indians as to the future shape of India.

The question of the reservation of seats for the majority in the Punjab and Bengal was the moot issue. Dr Ansari was not one of the members of the Committee but he used to be invited alongwith Jawaharlal Nehru to attend the deliberations. One group led by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Shoib Qureshi wanted a weighted reservation of seats for the Muslims, but Dr Ansari was opposed to it. The report known as the Nehru Report was accepted by the All India Congress Committee on November 5, 1928. But there were great repercussions. Shaukat Ali and Shoib Qureshi issued a statement against the decision of the acceptance of the joint electorate without reservation of seats of the minority, which had been accepted by the Muslim representatives from the Punjab and Sikhs. Shaukat Ali wrote a few bitter letters to Gandhiji, attacking particularly Moti Lal Nehru and even alleging that Gandhiji was in Nehru’s pocket.

Letters preserved in the Archives recall how the relationship of Dr Ansari and Gandhiji developed over the years. Gandhiji had his full sympathy with the question of the Caliphate but as requested by Dr Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan after their visit to Syria, he
would not write to the League of Nations about the plight of the Syrians in the hands of the Mandatory Powers. Gandhiji wrote back: "If we had any power behind us, I would immediately send the cable suggested by you. Do save me from having to advertise our importance." Referring to this later Gandhiji wrote in Young India: "Relief of Syria lies through India. And if we cannot appreciate our greatness let us confess our littleness and say nothing."

When the Non-Cooperation Movement was launched Ansari had written a letter on April 1, 1920 giving a preliminary analysis to Gandhiji about the situation as he read. In this letter Ansari clearly pointed out to Gandhiji that he could not expect much response from the landed aristocracy, title holders and the higher government officials. He wrote that Hakim Ajmal Khan will not cooperate with the Government but was hesitant to go to Jail for health reasons and besides he did not want to upset his project of establishing the Ayurvedic-Tibbia College. Regarding his joining the movement, Dr Ansari candidly wrote:

"I have done so not only because you advocated (though I must admit that is a factor which has governed my decision) but because nothing else can be done (Jehad or violence of any kind being out of question). M. H. Kidwai is almost of the same opinion as myself and is willing to sign the manifesto. I believe Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Abdul Bari and Mr Shaukat Ali are also willing to sign the manifesto and work wholeheartedly with you. Mr Hasarat Mohani, Dr Saifuddin Kichlew would also be with us, so far as I could gather from their conversation in Delhi."

Dr Ansari discussed the pros and cons of the proposed movement and as to where Gandhiji could get support and where he would not. After doing this he observed:

"Our forecast is therefore very depressing but to the best of our knowledge, it represents the real state of the peoples condition....... Hakim Saheb has particularly emphasised the fact that he wants to know your opinion particularly in relation to the fact regarding the decision about Khilafat. He realises that any Movement even if partially successful, though insufficient to affect the Khilafat question would help the country in other ways, but there is no need to start a Movement for the general awakening of the country at this particular time......... Please let me know your final decision as early as you can conveniently do so........."
It goes very great way to show how Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr Ansari regarded Gandhiji that they fully joined him in spite of their forecast.

Dr Ansari always exercised a moderating influence on Gandhiji. It will not be much of an exaggeration to observe that it was practically through Dr Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan that Gandhiji could get into the inner enclave of the orthodox and cultured Muslims of Delhi and through them of Northern India. The Ali Brothers, Kichlew, Shoiib Qureshi, Sherwani, Kidwai etc. all practically lined up with Gandhiji because they could not go against Hakim Saheb or Ansari. It is they two again who brought the Muslim divines of Delhi, Deoband and other places to Gandhiji’s circle. The restraining influence of Ansari and Ajmal Khan also helped Gandhiji a good deal in tiding over the onslaught of Aga Khan and others and particularly when the Ali Brothers broke away from him. Ansari and Ajmal Khan stood by Gandhiji to the last, and helped him in retaining the confidence of a large section of the Muslims in spite of the unfortunate killings during Moplah and Kohat riots. The strain on Dr Ansari was great on certain occasions and it speaks all the more about the greatness of the man and his unalloyed loyalty to Gandhiji. In 1927 Ansari was going to be the President of the Congress. He issued a statement in which he had underlined that the Congress organisation should control the Congress legislators. Motilal Nehru who was the Chairman of the Swaraj Party and the leader in the Central Assembly objected and there was a certain amount of unfortunate correspondence between Gandhiji, Ansari and Motilal Nehru. Gandhiji did not approve of Ansari’s statement. Ansari gave a spirited reply. He wrote to Gandhiji on August 12, 1927:

“All that I have asked the Councillors to do is to unite and to confess to themselves that they are cooperating in the Councils and not non-cooperating. Surely even a political booby like myself may hazard such an opinion about the great pillars of statesmanship and high politics if their selfishness and egotism blinds them to the most elementary principles of politics that the precious little they can gain through the Councils can be gained by composing their quarrels and sinking their differences........ I feel that this statement should be placed before the public for its consideration and criticism and that I should only accept to lead the Congress if my views are acceptable to the majority of my fellow Congressmen.”
Gandhiji wrote back on August 26, 1927 that although he did not like the statement he recognised the force behind it, and said:

"But I feel equally that if you are to make a herculean effort for bringing about unity you have to forget Council politics, adopt an attitude of absolute neutrality and act merely as an impartial Chairman regulating proceedings of the Congress, All India Congress Committee, and the Working Committee, but not guiding or shaping the political programme."

Dr Ansari obviously did not very much agree to this. In spite of Moti Lal Nehru's request to Gandhiji that Dr Ansari should withdraw this statement or Dr Ansari should not be made the President of the Congress, Gandhiji did not want to change the presidency and Ansari did preside over the Congress. As a matter of fact, Gandhiji wrote in Young India earlier that there was "no one on the national horizon to challenge Ansari's election" and had appealed to the provinces to recommend unanimously his name for the highest honour that was the gift of the national assembly. After writing this Gandhiji could not possibly agree to upset his election.

Another big strain on Dr Ansari's nerves came in 1929 when the All Parties Muslims Conference met in Delhi with Aga Khan. By this time some of the previous Muslim adherents of Gandhiji had defected. On January 10, 1929 Dr Ansari wrote a letter to Gandhiji in which he mentioned:

"Distressed with the doings at the All Parties Muslim Conference in Delhi......... But the utterances and actions of those Muslims who have professed nationalism all their lives and who still profess it, is beyond my understanding. Those of us, Musalmans, who have remained in the Congress fold and those Muslim Leaguers who have shown a bias towards Nehru Report have been threatened a campaign of merciless exposure until we are completely discredited in the eyes of the Indian people, particularly Muslims."

In another letter on February 10, 1930 Ansari mentioned to Gandhiji:

"I am feeling very unhappy over the things that are happening......... I am able to say from personal knowledge that many stalwarts of our ranks are now lagging behind. The demonstrations of 26th January are not correct indications of their true spirit and should not mislead us into forming an incorrect estimate of the support that we may receive from them. It is one thing to join the procession but it is quite another to face
hardships and to withstand repression when time comes for real action. May I, therefore, suggest that it is not safe to base any future programme of work on wrong calculations, for such an act may result in failure and disappointment."

We also note the political wisdom of Dr Ansari when on September 10, 1931 he wrote a long letter to Gandhiji advising him about policy regarding the Indian States. He spelt out the conditions on which the Working Committee would agree to the Indian States coming into the Federation, and suggested that some assurances should also be given by the Congress regarding the future position and status of the Indian princes. Ansari was emphatic that it was just as necessary for Gandhiji to have the princes with him as the Hindu-Muslim unity in order to talk with authority to the British Cabinet. This letter was written just before Gandhiji went to attend the Second Round Table Conference.

Another meeting-point between Gandhiji and Dr Ansari was the Jamia Millia and Dr Zakir Hussain was frequently the medium. On August 26, 1298 Ansari wrote:

"The affairs of the Jamia however have reached a crisis ... I have sent Dr Zakir Hussain to come and see you in this connection."

On January 10, 1929 he again wrote:

"I do not know whether Dr Zakir Hussain was able to see you in Delhi. I am afraid, unless the money is collected for the Jamia and handed over to the Committee formed, it would be a constant source of delay and inconvenience as in the past year."

Dr Ansari played a very great role in the deliberations of the Nehru Committee as a result of the All Parties Conference. In a letter Ansari informed Gandhiji:

"When I reached Allahabad, there was a deadlock. The Sikhs would have no reservation of seats at all, anywhere, neither for the majority nor the minority. The Mahasabha people would allow reservations for the minorities but none for the majorities. The Congress and the Muslim proposal was for a reservation of seats both for the majorities and the minorities. I tried, in private discussions, with different people to come to a common formula. We at last arrived at a solution which was acceptable to all. The solution was...........This was acceptable almost to everybody; but Shoib would not agree to it and so the matter was postponed...... I know that this proposal would meet with sufficient opposition both from the Hindus and Muslims. But if we succeed in getting unanimous recommendations from our Committee we might reasonably hope to bring about a public opinion to agree to it."
Regarding the Nehru Report, Gandhiji was eloquent about Ansari’s role. Gandhiji had written:

“The honours for the happy result must, however, be shared with Pandit Nehru by Dr Ansari. He used his unrivalled influence with the Musalmans in disarming the opposition. Hindus could not resist his transparent honesty and equally transparent nationalism.”

Ansari’s love and regard for Gandhiji was clearly shown when on May 3, 1933 on the eve of Gandhiji’s fast for communal harmony, Ansari had sent a touching wire in which he mentioned:

“Old friend, fellow workers, medical men, shocked by your grave decision. My differences with you on moral issue persist. I do not ask you to give up decision but consider you unfit to bear strain. I want you promise to break your fast if and when medical attendants regard your life in danger.”

To this Gandhi replied:

“You are man of faith. I want you believe me when I say this fast is not of my will. It is God’s preemptory command. Therefore, he will be my invisible medical attendant and if this attendance does not save me what will even you a good physician and descendent of those who helped the Prophet in hour of his need do. Love. Gandhi.”

Here is a clear case of spirit talking to spirit.

There was another case when Ansari was devastatingly clear to Gandhiji and told him that there was a feeling among the people that Gandhiji had lost his faith in Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhiji referred to it in the editorial columns of Young India of December 1, 1928:

“My interest and faith in Hindu-Muslim unity and unity among all remain as strong as ever. My method of approach has changed......... I am out of tune with the present temper of both the communities. From their own standpoint they are perhaps entitled to say that my method has failed......... For me there is no hope save through truth and non-violence. I know that they will triumph when everything else has failed. Whether therefore I am in the minority of one or I have majority, I must go along the course that God seems to have shown me. Today non-violence as a mere policy is a broken read. It answers well as a policy when there are no active forces working against it in your own camp. But when you have to reckon with those who believe in violence as a creed to be enforced under given circumstances the experience of non-violence breaks down. There is the time for the out and out believer in non-violence to test his
creed........... I am not sorry for having thrown in my lot with the Muslims in the hour of their need. I should do so again if the occasion arose. But though we have common cause we have not common methods today......... Since the Kohat riots we have not been able to agree as to the reading of the facts. But friendship that insists upon agreement on all matters is not worth the name. Friendship to be real must ever sustain the weight of honest differences however sharp they may be........."

This pathetic but candid statement of Gandhiji was in the context of the fact that the Ali Brothers had almost deserted him.

When Gandhiji went to the Second Round Table Conference he wanted to take Dr Ansari as a Nationalist Muslim but he was not able to persuade the Government to agree to this.

This intense hunger for unity was another common point between Dr Ansari and Gandhiji. Commenting on Ansari's presidential speech at the Congress session in Madras, Gandhiji underlined that if any single person could bring about unity it was certainly Dr Ansari.

No wonder that on the passing away of Dr Ansari in 1936, Gandhiji wrote a touching obituary note in Young India under the caption "A great friend gone" and in the course of this he wrote:

"For he was essentially a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity with Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan. Dr Ansari never wavered in his faith even when it was put to a severe test. He was an orthodox Musalman proud of his descent from the helpers of the Prophet when the letter was most in need of help. His very staunchness and his intimate knowledge of Islam made Dr Ansari a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no exaggeration to say that he had at least as many Hindu as he had Musalman friends."

Dr Ansari's greatest point was his ability to get to the point with a quick and telling thrust. His colleagues were rather weary of his plain-speaking and sharp intellect and not quite sure just what lies behind the gloss of a highly cultured man with a complex arising out of his oriental and occidental contexts. In closed door negotiating conference Dr Ansari marvelled and he could do a wonderful "give and take" in such discourses. He was a tough and shrewd bargainer but he was always for a compromise and the middle path. A first rate thinker, it is a great pity that Gandhiji was deprived of his wisdom when the negotiations for Pakistan had commenced.
Madan Mohan Malaviya

Like Gandhiji Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946) also did not want to be blown off his feet, though he did not shut his windows to let the breeze from outside come in.

A very orthodox Hindu, steeped into religious injunctions he abjured untouchability as a curse on Hinduism and always treated Dr Ambedkar as his own son. A believer in the *shastric* injunctions he introduced late marriages in his own family. He did not hesitate to go to London to attend the Round Table Conference, though he cooked his own food and observed *Prayas chitta* (penance) on return.

That was Malaviya. His political ideas were so firm that there is, probably, no other peer to him in his loyalty to the Congress as an institution. He attended almost all the Congress sessions from 1886 till his death. At the same time he often differed from the views accepted and propagated by the Congress. But he could never think of segregating himself from the mother institution. When the Congress was captured in the first decade of this century by the extremists led by *Lal-Bal-Pal* and others, Malaviya had the courage to appreciate their viewpoints but preferred to remain with the old guards like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. Malaviya hailed Gandhiji as the leader and threw himself in the fight for the wrongs done to the Punjab.

But he did not agree in toto with Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation items, particularly the boycott of Councils. A member of the Supreme Council and the Legislative Assembly, he fought vehemently against this item. He was happy when the Swaraj Party was formed by Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and others. He disapproved again the Swaraj Party's programme of 'wrecking from within' and he led his own Nationalist Party. He endorsed Gandhiji's move for Hindu-Muslim Unity and even the Khilafat cause but he was horrified at the Moplah and other communal outbursts and the sufferings of the Hindus. He wanted the Hindus to unite. The Hindu Mahasabha movement had in him a great supporter. The image that he had
would be appreciated from the fact that in spite of his divergent views no man compelled larger admiration and regard. On any platform, Malaviya would be heard with rapt attention and reverence. In his life he had given scores of examples of his courage to express his conviction. In the 1912 Congress Session he roundly condemned the Delhi outrage. An Orientalist, the founder of the Hindu University, a Hindu scholar and one of the founders of the Hindu Mahasabha, he refused to speak in Hindi in the 1917 Congress Session when he spoke on the immediate implementation of the Congress-League Scheme of Reforms. He had said:

"Much as I should like to address you in my own language, I feel it would not be right to disregard the request that comes from a large number of those who come from provinces where unfortunately to our regret, the Hindi or the Urdu language has not been sufficiently cultivated."

Gandhiji’s work had been much smoothened by Malaviyaji from before. An ardent supporter of Swadeshi since his days as a young lawyer in Allahabad in 1881, he promoted cottage industries. At the same time he wanted factories for the spread of skilled knowledge and solving the unemployment problem. In 1906 Congress Session, Malaviya spoke strongly on Boycott and Swadeshi. In 1908 he hailed the Morley Despatch regarding reforms as satisfactory. Later as a member of the Holland Commission he toured all over India and studied the industrial problems. His minute of dissent advocating a strong tariff policy to protect Indian projects had won Gandhiji’s admiration, though Gandhiji thought at one time ‘Industrialise and Perish.’ An exacting parliamentarian, he was a Constitutionalist and differed from Gandhiji’s destructive theories and negative creed of breaking the law. He believed in the British democratic principles and liberalism. In the 1889 Congress he had spoken on the changes in rules and practice of the House of Commons regarding the Indian Budget. In 1894 Congress his theme was the reform of the Legislative Council. He gave a very learned speech on Welby Commission on Indian expenditure in 1897 Congress. In 1904 he spoke on the representation of the Indians in the House of Commons, India Council and Indian Legislature. In 1909, in course of his Presidential address, Malaviya urged for a system of free and general elementary education for, agricultural and industrial improvement and also for inculcating the habits of prud-
ence, self-help and self-respect. He also pleaded for the spread of technical and industrial education. Gandhiji would often write to him seeking his advice and good wishes. Malaviya always reciprocated. Malaviya’s dream took a shape in the Hindu University when the temple bells sanctified the morning hours, followed by the hub in the colleges of oriental learning, engineering, technical and commercial institutions. He was not a believer in active Ashram philosophy and renunciation although he had the Gita principles personified in him.

Like Gandhiji, he started early as a social worker. Gandhiji followed Malaviya’s example of working as a volunteer in plague and famine stricken areas. Malaviya fully supported Gandhiji’s fight against untouchability in the South. He was Gandhiji’s valued counsellor in the Second Round Table Conference. As a matter of fact he agreed “to cross the seas” against his conservative ideas only because Gandhiji was very keen about him and the elder brother agreed to help the younger brother with whom he was inextricably tied although poles apart in many ways.

Soft spoken precise on facts and very clear in expression, he was a brilliant speaker. At least four times he was elected President of the Congress. He was not a believer in breaking the law but when the time came he did so and courted imprisonment several times. Once the conviction came to him, he was indomitable. He scathingly criticised the repressive measures in Bengal in 1905 Congress Sessions. He vehemently protested against the condition of the Indians in Colonies in the Congress Session of 1912.

Ramsay Macdonald giving his Communal award as the President of the Round Table Conference was not prepared for the thunder from Malaviya. The Congress, by a majority vote, would neither accept it nor reject it. Malaviya and Aney condemned the award outright as positively injurious to the interests of the Hindus. He was one of the engineers of the Poona Pact later and saved thereby Gandhiji’s life. He could do it as he had a great influence on Dr Ambedkar.

Gandhiji secured Malaviya’s blessings when Malaviya resigned his membership of the Supreme Legislative Council in 1918, in
protest against the Rowlatt Act. That bond persisted till Malaviya’s death in 1946, though there were severe stresses and pulls. Their target was the same. Their methods of work often differed but there was no personal misunderstanding, not to speak of vendetta. That mellow matured comradeship in spite of differences of opinion is an example to the posterity.
Mira Ben

Miracles do still come up in mysterious ways. An aristocratic young English lady, Miss Madeline Slade, daughter of a British Admiral whose father once lived in India enjoying a very high military office was drawn towards Romain Rolland. She had read Jean Christophe and had a great unrresistable urge to meet the writer. She learnt French to read the book and to meet the author. She wrote to Romain Rolland that she wanted to see him and was invited to tea. The first meeting was rather of a 'halting nature. But in the second meeting this young girl and the great old savant struck a closer unity of heart. The barricades of language, age and disparity of thoughts did not matter. They talked as if they had always known each other. Romain Rolland advised her to travel and spoke of Austria and other places. Then he mentioned India in connection with a small book he had written named Mahatma Gandhi and that it was still in the press. Miss Slade told him that she had never heard of Gandhi. Romain Rolland told her who he was and added "He is another Christ."

The book, when published, fascinated her. She heard the call—she knew that she must go and live with this strange little man called Gandhiji and satisfy herself in doing his work. There was no way out and she immediately booked a berth. Then she remembered that Gandhiji was a hard task-master and without a proper training she should not go to his Ashram. For full one year she prepared herself by living an austere life, eating vegetarian food and sleeping on the ground. The parents never interfered with her decision. They knew that she was meant for higher things than marrying in the high society and lead the comfortable life of a rich English woman. With trepidation of heart she wrote to Gandhiji that she wanted to come to India and that Romain Rolland’s book was the eye-opener. She also wrote that for full one year she had been preparing herself for Gandhiji’s work. The reply came not too quickly. Was this also providential? Was it a deliberate act on Gandhiji’s part to test the sincerity of the aspirant? Gandhiji replied that after one years’ test if she still wants to come, she will probably be right in coming to India.
Miss Slade came to Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram and the first work assigned to her was to clean the latrine. The daughter of an aristocratic father holding a very high military position, clad in khadi and cleaning the lavatory, did not stir a single leaf of the ashram or the ashramites. After that began the gruelling period of training and Miss Slade, now called Mira Ben (sister), was deeply fixed in Gandhiji. But Gandhiji thought that she should not lose her individuality and that she should develop her own entity by having a variety of experiences so that the seeker after truth could turn every one of them to good account. She was sent to different ashrams where she underwent varied experiences. It is at this stage that she was undergoing a transition of soul that she got the following letter from Romain Rolland:

Villeneuve
December 17, 1925

My dear daughter,

How happy we have been with all your letters which tell of your great joy, superior to your expectations—joy to have found the Master of goodness, of love and of Truth—joy to have entered at last on the good and just way for which you have hunted so long and where your energies will best deploy themselves.

You remember the word which embodies wisdom in the third Act of Parsifal: "Dieven" (to serve). But in Parsifal it appears to be above all the mission of the woman and it is—which ought to be......your......lot. Every being conscious of his responsibilities feels himself joined to other things, and endeavours to serve them with the best that is in him. Of all the paths of service that of the Mahatma is one of the straightest and most illuminous. It leads to the peace of the soul. May you taste of it. When you have gathered it, distribute to us a few pieces of the delicious fruit.

Do not forget the light of Europe upon the roads of Asia. Make those around you enjoy it. Take and give!

I can see you out there, in the morning before dawn, on the nocturnal roads around Sabarmati, by the side of the Mahatma, singing to yourself the divine melody of the Hymn of Joy. There, it would be not out of its element.

I do not know how to thank you and enough for the trouble that you took in noting down for us in detail all the days of your voyage. To us they are and will remain a unique testi-
mony of your March to the Star.....of this new pilgrimage of the Shepherds, who go towards the Torch of the Orient.

We are keeping fairly well.....kept up by incessant occupation and the passion of work, which is as necessary to me as the air which I breathe. Long since I should have fallen by the way, if the creative fire and the mission of work had not carried me on!

Tell the Mahatma how much I thank him for the letter which he has written to me, in spite of his immense activity, and how much I rejoice to know of his being near to you, and of your being near him! In this old Europe so full of genius, but at the moment covered as it were with a cloud — in my beloved land of France, where still there blossom so many souls, simple and pure, courageous and charming, but who live apart leaving the government of the world and the guidance of nation to the worst I fight, alone, without the hope of saving those who do not wish to be saved. But I sow for the future the corn that will when we shall be no more. The grain does not come from me: I have searched it out through all the world. The most beautiful is that which my bird Spirit has brought back from the Orient the grain of the Great Soul......which itself has gathered grain from the Sacred Books of Asia (and we have recognised there, mixed with Hinduism, the Saviour of the Gospel. All the seeds of life come from the same divine granary).

We are a handful of religious souls in Europe who thank the Mahatma for rendering to us the good pure corn separated from the tares.

My daughter it will now be for you to bless us. You are giving of yourself for us, and you are at the source of benedic-tions. Will you ask once of your great friend and Master to offer up with you a brief and silent prayer for us, for our peace, for the salvation, of ours, so that we may know to the last how to be vanquished without bending.

Mira, I embrace you. A happy Christmas and New Year from the lands of snow and the cradle of the Epiphany.

Your friend
Romain Rolland

But could she win the hermitage within for which she came to Gandhiji? Could she share her bread of peace of mind with Romain Rolland and others?

Intensely devoted to Gandhiji and his work, she went to the different corners of India founding Ashrams, and devoting herself to
Seva-dharma (service to others). She was very fond of outdoor life and birds, animals and trees. At one place her friend was a toad and his family. Her favourite pony would walk up and share her chapati (bread). She tried to find the hermitage within as Gandhiji wanted her to do in prayer, in service to mankind and to the animal world. She had regular correspondence with Gandhiji who wrote to her that probably he would have to retire to her Ashram. Fondly, she dreamt of it.

She had served Gandhiji as best as she could by prayers and by personal services. She was the silent supporter of Gandhiji in his period of stress and strain in the Round Table Conference days in London, looking after his food and drink and helping him to keep to his engagements. The best part of her life with Gandhiji was when she was also a co-prisoner with him, Kasturba, Sarojini Naidu, Sushila Nayyar and others. She shared the intense sorrow of Gandhiji in the death of Mahadev Desai and then Kasturba at Agra Khan Palace turned into a prison.

But destiny had not willed that she could have Gandhiji in her Ashram. Gandhiji was in a dejected mood when he wrote that sad letter to Mira Ben. The thick shadow of Pakistan had spread over India and Gandhiji had to agree to the partition of India. Gandhiji felt forlorn and shelved. He devoted himself to the rehabilitation problem.

While fulfilling her evening duty in the Ashram in the lap of the Kumayun hills, a jeep-load of men came tearing through the road and told her that Gandhiji had fallen to the bullets of a man in Delhi. Mira was stunned. Others asked her to accompany them to Delhi to be present at the cremation. She remembered that Gandhiji had once written to her that whatever might happen to him she should continue her work. The dazed devotee of Gandhiji said she would not go to Delhi.

She continued working in India for sometime more. But the Star that was guiding her through darkness as gleam of light was gone. The longdrawn-out crucifixion of Gandhiji's immortal soul was over and to Mira Ben the yesterdays were years away. But she took solace in Gandhiji's letters. In one from Noakhali in Bengal where Gandhiji had gone to give hope to the uprooted humanity he had written to her;
“If I succeed in emptying myself utterly, God will possess me. Then I know that everything will come true, but it is a serious question when I shall have reduced myself to zero”.

Rabindranath Tagore had written to her on January 20, 1929 that human life has two aspect—one is the discipline of truth and the other is the fulness or expression. Inner misery and outer-aimlessness again possessed Mira Ben and she left India for other lands in quest of the hermitage within.
Mohammad Ali

In 1913 Mr G. K. Chesterton presided over a meeting in the Essex Hall and Mohammad Ali, who was then in England, was called upon to speak. Other speakers had spoken on Gandhiji’s philosophy. At that time Gandhiji was leading the Satyagraha Movement in South Africa. Mohammad Ali said:

"Please understand one thing about that - whether it is his philosophy or Tolstoy’s, Jesus Christ’s or mine, it is the universal human philosophy”.

That was Mohammad Ali as a youth. That fire burnt in him till he died but there was a peculiar trait in his nationalism. Mohammad Ali’s conception of nationalism was based on a mediæval theocratic conception that the unit of the State was not the politically-minded citizen but the religious community. A militant nationalist he had thundered in the first Round Table Conference in 1930 that he would not return to India if she continued to be a slave country and his desire was fulfilled. He died soon after the Conference and was buried in Jerusalem.

Like Aurobindo Ghose and Subhãs Bose, he had a brilliant student career both in India and abroad. They were lucratively employed but spurned service and dedicated themselves to the country. In 1920 he came under the influence of Gandhiji.

It is true that Mohammad Ali was first a Khilafatist and then a Congressman but as long as he remained in the Congress he was a great follower of Gandhiji. When he disassociated himself from the Congress and Gandhiji he was equally devastating in his views. In the middle of January 1920, Mohammad Ali issued a manifesto to the country and wanted the Viceroy to receive a deputation of the Khilafatists and make amends. When he got no reply, Mohammad Ali led the Khilafat Movement. Along with the other sponsors of the Khilafat movement they turned to Gandhiji as he had been speaking that religion could not be divorced from politics. Gandhiji readily joined the Khilafat cause. He also thought this would bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.
The year 1921 marked a triumph for both Mohammad Ali and Gandhiji. The AIC'C meeting in Bombay at the end of July 1921 endorsed:

"The right of a citizen to leave Civil or Military service and the right to appeal to every soldier or civilian to sever his connection with a government that had forfeited the confidence and support of a vast majority of the population of India".

The All India Khilafat Conference was held in Karachi on July 8, with Mohammad Ali as the president. He gave a forthright speech and the Conference passed a resolution declaring it "unlawful for any faithful Muslim to serve from that day in the Army or help or acquiesce in their recruitment". This speech was repeated on October 16, 1921 from thousands of platforms in India as instructed by the Congress High Command. The Ali Brothers and some of their colleagues were prosecuted and convicted. Gandhiji fully supported Mohammad Ali and repeated himself the speech and wrote vehemently in support. Soon after Gandhiji himself was prosecuted and sentenced to jail.

Mohammad Ali with his wife toured throughout India in the cause of the Khilafat and the Congress. He was often with Gandhiji in his Khilafat tours. He was elected president of the Congress session at Cocanada in 1923. In his presidential speech he had bitterly criticized Sir Sayed Ahmed for his narrow Muslim policy. The Cocanada Congress Session saw a bitter controversy over the Council entry question, but the question was shelved temporarily. Mohammad Ali endorsed his plea for "United Faiths of India" and referred to the work he was doing through his paper Comrade since the first decade of the century. He had described his paper as "comrade of all and partisan of none". He compared Gandhiji to Jesus and said:

"Self-purification through suffering; and moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline as the condition precedent of Swaraj—this was Mahatma's creed and conviction; and those of us who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad have seen what a remarkable and what a rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large masses of mankind".

He had observed:
“Let us go back to Nagpur, and with trust in our Maker and a prayer addressed to Him to give us courage, fortitude, perseverance and wisdom, begin the great work once more that our great leader has outlined for us. If only we do not prove unworthy of Him we shall win back our lost liberty and it will not be as a prayer for success, but as the declaration, the announcement of victory won, that we shall then raise the old, old cry - MAHATMA GANDHIJI KI JAI.

“The only consideration which could justify this favour was that, although my association with the Congress was recent, it was coupled with my association with one of the very greatest, if also one of the latest Congressmen, one whom all eyes search in vain in this Pandal today. Ever since I first attended a session of the Congress as a delegate in 1919, his had been the one dominating personality. More than ever we need our great chief, Mahatma Gandhi, today; and if God has willed that in his place one of his humblest followers, though not the least loving among them, should assist you in your deliberations, I can only feel what the Arab poet felt when he wistfully wrote:

The death of great ones made us great:

“But although the man who was most responsible for Mahatma Gandhi’s incarceration hoped that by burying him alive, as he called it, he would kill the spirit that the Mahatma had infused into the nation, I feel certain that it lives just as surely as the Mahatma lives himself. Relying on God’s assistance, and on your own kind indulgence, which, I think, I may with confidence bespeak, I invoke that spirit today, in the hope that with its aid I may prove not altogether unworthy of the high office to which your suffrage has all too generously called me.

“Friends, the only one who can lead you is the one who had led you at Amritsar, at Calcutta, at Nagpur and at Ahmedabad, though each session of the Congress had its own elected President. Our General is today a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, and none can fill the void that his absence from our midst has caused. As for myself, I am but a comrade whom your loving kindness has called out from the ranks, and I plead for its continuance not only during the discussions of this session, but also throughout the year in which I am required by your constitution to assist you as your President.”

Regarding his theme of United Faiths of India he had in his presidential speech observed:

“I had been convinced that here in this country of hundreds of millions of human beings, intensely attached to religion, and yet infinitely split up into communities, sects and denomi-
nations, Providence had created for us the mission of solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis, which was nothing less than a Federation of Faiths! As early as in 1904, when I had been only two years in India after my return from Oxford, I had given to this idea a clear, if still somewhat hesitating expression, in an address delivered at Ahmedabad on the "Proposed Mahomedan University." "Unless some new force"—this is what I had said on that occasion—"unless some new force, other than the misleading unity of opposition, unites this vast continent of India, it will either remain a geographical misnomer, or what I think it will ultimately do, become a Federation of Religions." I had noted the strength of the centrifugal force of Indian communities; I have got huge bunches of telegrams that came from Bengal, still more from Mr Das, and still more from the Punjab. I still feel that there are strong centrifugal forces in India. And yet hope and faith and the deep yearning for freedom had even then made me realise the latent centripetal force of Indian unity. The lines of cleavage were too deeply marked to permit a unity other than federal; and yet, as I had observed in the address from which I have already quoted, the cleavage was not territorial or racial in character, but religious. For more than twenty years I have dreamed the dream of a federation, grander, nobler and infinitely more spiritual than the United States of America, and today when many a political Cassandra prophesies a return to the bad old days of Hindu-Muslim dissensions I still dream that old dream of "United Faiths of India."

Some of the correspondence that had passed between Gandhiji and Mohammad Ali shows the warm relationship that existed between them at one time. From Sasoon Hospital, Bombay. Gandhiji wrote to him on February 7, 1924:

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

... I send you as President of the Congress a few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden release. Though I know very little of the present situation in the country I know sufficient to enable me to see that, perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing today. It is clear that without unity between Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of Swaraj is idle. This unity which I fondly believed, in 1922, had been nearly achieved has, so far as Hindus and Mussalmans are concerned, I observe suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanksgiving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid unity between the communi-
ties? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest-cure. When I heard in the jail of the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans in certain places, my heart sank within me. The rest I am advised to have will be no rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilize it in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realize our own weakness and approach Him and He will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but I know that, even if one of us will cease to fear, we shall cease to quarrel. Nay, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

I am,

Your sincere Brother,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji was given the present of a cow by Mohammad Ali on the breaking of his fast. This letter was written by Gandhiji on October 8, 1924 from Delhi:

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You are more than a brother to me. I have seen the cow. My bed was lifted to enable me to see her. What love that has prompted the act! May the bond between you twins and me fructify into an indissoluble bond between Hindus and Mussalmans for the good of our respective faiths, for the good of humanity. Yes, God is great. He can work wonders.

Yours ever,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji signed the letter in Urdu.

What led Mohammad Ali to separate from Gandhiji and the Congress? This is a great question which has always remained unanswered. It is true that the communal riots in Delhi and a number of places and the worst of all at Kohat alienated the Ali Brothers to a great extent. But Mohammad Ali was never as bitter as his brother Shaukat Ali was at the report of the All-Parties Conference. His enthusiasm for the Congress started waning and by 1930 he completely dissociated himself from the Congress and
threw away the influence of Gandhiji. This happened in spite of the very best attempts on the part of Gandhiji to retain the comradeship with Mohammad Ali. Gandhiji never lost his faith or love in Mohammad Ali even when he had completely separated from the Congress.

Even when Maulana Mohammad Ali said; "As a Muslim, I regard the beliefs of an adulterous Muslim as superior to the beliefs of Gandhi whose doing is the noblest", Gandhiji tried to explain his point. The words were a shaft to a large section of the Hindus and Muslim alike. There was a great furor in the Press over the words. In Navjivan (Gujarati) of April 27, 1924 Gandhiji wrote that the words have no personal reflection and "there is a brotherly relation between him and me. Prompted by that he praises me in season and out of season". Gandhiji till then refused to believe that the Ali Brothers were drifting away.

It is well known that Mohammad Ali alongwith a few other Muslims wooed Gandhiji to join the Khilafat Movement because they found in Gandhiji a man who did not hesitate to mix politics with religion. Gandhiji also felt deeply the wrong done to the Indian Muslims by the dismemberment of Caliphate after the termination of the Second World War despitel the promise of the British Premier. Gandhiji thought that if the Muslims could be won over, the Hindu-Muslim Unity would be forged and independence of India would be easier to obtain. As a matter of fact the charge against Gandhiji entreated by many was that his was pro-Muslim leanings. Somewhere there was a big lacuna between them, though in his tours he often said that he was in the pocket of the Big Brothers. The ties snapped in ten years. After Mohammad Ali’s death, Shaukat Ali also broke away from Gandhiji. Shaukat Ali accused Gandhiji of communal feelings and being in the pockets of Motilal Nehru. The Nehru report after the All-Parties Conference was vehemently criticised by the Ali Brothers.

Presiding over a public meeting in Bombay in 1930 Mohammad Ali was brutally plain-speaking but not very precise on the facts. He said:

"Mr Gandhi is working under the influence of communalist Hindu Mahasabha. He is fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and the subversion of Muslims. He has never consulted the Muslim India on the question of starting Civil Disobedience Movement. He wants to triumphantly pass over the head of the
Muslim India. We have not broken any pledge, pact or treaty. We are not traitors of India. The Musalmans have been oppressed and persecuted by the excesses of the Hindu majority in the last 10 years. But Mr Gandhi never tried to improve matters or condemn Hindu terrorism against Muslims. He never denounced the movements of 
shudti and sangathan which openly and clearly aimed at annihilation of Muslims and Islam in India. He repudiated and broke the Madras Hindu-Muslim agreement. Now we have no option but to follow the Quranic teaching, namely, if you fear treachery and pledge-breaking then throw the treaty on her face. Allah does not approve the action of traitors and pledge-breakers."

It is with this spirit of strong antagonism that he attended the Round Table Conference in 1930. No wonder he was so bitter at that Conference. He mentioned in the Conference:

"Under the proposed regime of the Nehru scheme of Mr Gandhi the government street criers will announce the new dual sovereignty of India by declaring the formula, Khalq Khuda Ki, Mulk British Ka, Hukam Mahasabha Ka (the people belong to God, country belongs to the British and the command is of the Hindu Mahasabha)."

He was very clear about his mind and mentioned:

"I have a culture, a polity, an outlook on life—a complete synthesis which is Islam. Where God commands I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second and a Muslim last and nothing but a Muslim. If you ask me to enter into a Nation by leaving that synthesis, that polity, that ethics, I will not it."

In the course of his speech at the Round Table Conference he had earlier declared:

"It is a wrong conception of religion that you have, if you exclude politics from it. It is not dogma, it is not ritual. Religion to my mind means the interpretation of life."

In his last letter to the British Prime Minister from his sickbed in London he had given his final view of the problem of India as follows:

"The real problem before us is to give full power to Muslims in such provinces as those in which they are in a majority, whether large or small, and protection to them in such provinces as those in which they are in minority, and in order to be absolutely fair to the Hindu community also precisely the same thing must be done with the Hindus."

This in other words is the essence of Pakistan which was reiterated afterwards.
But no one can challenge Mohammad Ali’s patriotism. In the Round Table Conference he had said:

“If we return without the birth of a new Dominion then you will find outside not within, the British Commonwealth, a free United States of India and something more, United Faiths... I do not believe in the attainment of Dominion Status. I am committed to completein dependence.”

Regarding the communal quarrels he had said that Britain’s wrong teaching of history in the Indian schools was the cause of communal quarrels.

It cannot be believed that Gandhiji did not know him. Gandhiji tried a dangerous experiment to win him over and failed miserably. That was a tragedy and a Himalayan blunder. But there can be no doubt about the Maulana’s love of freedom for India and his fearlessness. He did not know the polish of language or the intricacies of a constitutional struggle. He had said:

“No body wins in a battle if there is a will to kill. You must have the will to die before you have the will to kill. In India we have not the power to kill. But the moment we develop the will to die, number will tell. 320,000,000 of people cannot be killed...we must have in us the will to die for the birth of India as a free and united nation. And this we are fast developing. When this has been fully developed what can you do?”

Through his paper Comrade, lectures and writings he did give India a great contribution in the bid for freedom but he united the Muslims more than the Hindus and after working for the idea of a Hindu-Muslim unity he laid the seeds of Pakistan.
Mohammad Ali Jinnah

A study of the Jinnah papers, the literature that has grown around Jinnah and Pakistan give the impression that essentially an introvert and a narcissist with an insatiable craze for going to the top, Jinnah was given a raw deal as a Congressman. He was only utilised and exploited and thrown away when not needed. He had been an ardent Congressman who was taken to be the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. A statesman like Gokhale had seen in him a front-rank born leader. According to Sarojini Naidu he had.

"a naive and eager humanity, an intuition quick and tender as a woman's, a humour gay and winning as a child's—pre-eminently rational and practical, discreet and dispassionate in his estimate and acceptance of life, the obvious sanity and serenity of his worldly wisdom effectually disguised, a shy and splendid idealism which is the very essence of the man."

His narcissism and introvertism had thrown a cloak over his core of steel that would not bend although lashed by the furies of circumstances. His domestic life was not very happy. He married late in life and after a short period of bliss the couple separated. His sister Fatima Jinnah sacrificed her life for her brother and looked after him. The brother and the sister together weathered many phases in life—sometimes oblivion, occasional excitement, years of hard thinking and work, careful planning, cautious journeys in India and abroad, parleys with the Muslim Leagues, giving up the Congress, planned interviews where Gandhi and Sapru could cut no ice and then frenzied advocacy for Pakistan. A quiet man who once denounced communal representation and who said he was proud of being a Congressman and an Indian blazed as the champion of the two nations theory in India and advocated partition as an inescapable solution and the creation of the Pakistan, the toy-dream of a few Cambridge Muslim scholars as the panacea for the Muslims here. An ardent Congressite who was not given his proper honour in the inner Congress coterie and who had to say at the Howrah station platform to a friend "This is the parting of the ways" He had to leave India for a while and settled down in England to start as a lawyer. But he was waiting, keeping himself abreast
with the thought-currents in India and in the right moment he came back to India at the call of Liaqat Ali Khan and others. The Muslim League crowned him. The man who could hardly speak Urdu and seldom donned a Sherwani and Pyjama in the public overnight became the Messiah of the Muslims. The immaculately dressed Jinnah with his fine tapering thin fingers which he soaped and washed many times a day (narcissism?) was thundering on the hundred platforms and his fingers gesticulating with confidence and warning the millions of Muslims. He had his desolate days, exploited and neglected by the Congress. He had now his other days when he literally dictated his terms, had Gandhiji in his paw and played with him as a cat does to a mouse through eighteen interviews in one month and yet Gandhiji could not fathom him not to speak of winning him over. The Viceroy was reduced to another pawn in the game. With adroit statesmanship he put his men in the Interim Ministry and tore into shambles the schemes of the Congress ministers, including Nehru and Vallabh Bhai Patel. The Cabinet Mission proposals had to go and independent Pakistan and India were created through bloodshed, riots, arson and loot. Did Jinnah look for his revenge for all the ignominy poured on him? Did he not outclass Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel and others? Mountbatten was put on the shelf when he wanted to be the Governor General of Pakistan. Gandhiji called him "Quaid-E-Azam" in his parleys prior to the partition of India. Once only years before as a Congressite Jinnah had used the word ‘Mahatma’ about Gandhiji. In the later parleys he always addressed him as “Mr Gandhi” and would not listen to him but only as a leader of the Hindus. Nemesis works out through mysterious ways but with Jinnah he was clearly given a raw deal which he nursed secretly and gave it back when the time came.

The metamorphosed Jinnah spoke and wrote in the following strain:

“India of modern conception with its so-called present geographical unity is entirely the creation of the British who hold it as one administrative unit by a system of bureaucratic government whose ultimate sanction is the sword and not the will or the sanction of the people behind the government so established. This position is very much exploited by the Hindu Congress and another Hindu organisation, the Hindu Mahasabha. India is a vast sub-continent. It is neither a country nor a nation. It is composed of nationalities and races, but the two major nations are the Muslims and the Hindus. Talk of Indian unity as one central
constitutional government of this vast sub-continent is simply a myth.

"The difference in India between the two major nations, the Hindus and the Muslims, are a thousand times greater when compared with the continent of Europe. In fact the diversity of its races, religions, cultures and languages has no parallel in any other part of the world; but fortunately the Muslim homelands, are in the North Western and Eastern zones of the sub-continent where they are in a solid majority with a population of nearly 70 millions and they desire that these parts should be separated from the rest of India and constituted into independent sovereign states. The Muslims stand unequivocally for their own freedom and independence and also that of Hindus and the Hindu India in the sub-continent of India, whereas the Hindu machinations and all proposals and schemes suggested by them are intended and calculated to bring a hundred million Muslims under the subjugation and hegemony of the Hindu Raj over the entire sub-continent of India which means that Muslims shall be merely transferring their bondage of slavery from the British Raj to the Hindu Raj."

Shall we look back into Jinnah as a Congressman? From 1906 to 1920 Jinnah was actively associated with the Indian National Congress. He had observed several times that he received his political training under Dadabhai Naoroji whom he first met in England and later worked as his Secretary for fourteen years. Jinnah also had the greatest admiration for Surendranath Banerjee and G.K. Gokhale and often referred to Gokhale as "a practical politician". Gokhale also had very high regard for Jinnah and had said "he has true stuff in him and that freedom from all sectarian projects will make him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity" and Jinnah reciprocated that it was his "one ambition to become the Muslim Gokhale."

Jinnah took an active part in the Congress sessions in 1908, 1910, 1913 and 1917. Law was his exacting mistress and he came to the top of a legal practice after a gruelling time for a few years and his legal engagements kept him so busy that he could not attend all the Congress sessions.

In 1910 it was Jinnah who spoke in the Congress disapproving the scheme of communal representation in local bodies. As a member of a Congress team he sailed for England in April 1913. Gokhale was in the team.

During this sojourn in England there was pressure on Jinnah from Maulana Mohammad Ali and Syed Wazir Hasan who were in
England at the same time to join the Muslim League. The point was pressed on him that the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League had the same objective then and there was no harm for a Congressman to join the Muslim League. Previously Jinnah had scrupulously kept himself away from the Muslim League. Jinnah agreed. Now Jinnah insisted on a sort of solemn covenant that membership of the Muslim League and espousing the muslim interest would not be taken as a mark of disloyalty to the Indian National Congress to which "his life was dedicated." Jinnah and Gokhale returned to India together and both attended the meeting of the Congress at Karachi. Jinnah’s decision to join the Muslim League was not only justified but applauded by the Congress in one of the resolutions.

The Council of India Bill was to be discussed in the House of Lords’ on May 25, 1914 and Jinnah was one of the members of the Congress deputation to England to plead the views of the Congress. No better man could probably have been selected for this purpose. Jinnah had well ventilated the views of the Congress to many knowledgeable persons and Members of the Parliament in England, including Sir William Wedderburn who was twice President of the Congress. Jinnah demanded that the salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed on the ‘English estimates’. Another important demand made was the composition of the Council of India. Jinnah proposed that one-third of the Council, which should have a minimum of 9 members, should consist of Indians, elected by those Indians who themselves had been elected by the people to serve on the Imperial Legislative Council in India.

Regarding the other British Members of the Council of India nominated by the Secretary of State, Jinnah’s demand was that half their number should be "men of merit unconnected with Indian Administration.” Some of the members of the Parliament had taken interest in Jinnah’s demands but the question of India was relegated to a second place owing to the troubles in Ulster which had broken out and the Parliament was more concerned with Ireland. The Council of India Bill was read in the House of Lords but the concessions defined in the Bill were very disappointing. On June 3, 1914 Jinnah came out with his views in the Times. He opened the subject by observing:
"India is perhaps the only member of the British Empire without any real representation, and the only civilised country in the world that has no system of representative government."

The Bill was postponed after the second reading as it was thought that the Bill was inopportunely and not very suited to the requirements of the Indians. Jinnah returned to India empty-handed and disappointed but he had the satisfaction of an able representation of the Congress views.

It was Jinnah who defended Lok Manya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the famous Kesari Case in Bombay High Court. In 1910 he was elected member of the Imperial Legislative Council. In the very first meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council held in Calcutta on January 25, 1910 Jinnah made his mark and showed his independence by crossing swords with no less a person than the Viceroy, Lord Minto in a debate regarding the condition of Indians in South Africa. In the course of his speech Jinnah had observed:

"If I may say at the outset, it is most painful question—a question which has roused the feelings of all classes in this country to the highest pitch of indignation and horror at the harsh and cruel treatment that is meted out to Indians in South Africa."

The Viceroy called Jinnah to order for using the word 'cruel' but Jinnah could not be suppressed. He continued:

"Well, my Lord, I should feel inclined to use much stronger language, but I am fully aware of the constitution of this Council, and I do not wish to trespass for one single moment; but I do say this, that the treatment that is meted out to Indians is the harshest which can possibly be imagined, and, as I said before, the feeling in this country is unanimous."

Jinnah the Congressman, did great work for India in the Imperial Legislative Council. In 1912 the Muslim League met and Jinnah attended the meeting. He spoke for changing the League's constitution so that the League could line up with the policy of the Congress, and both the organisations work together for the welfare of the nation. As an astute lawyer Jinnah took part in debates on Police Administration, Indian Extradition Bill, Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Mussalman Wakf Validating Bill in the different Congress sessions.

In accordance with the Resolution XVIII passed in 1913 at the Karachi Congress he was selected member of the deputation along
with Bhupendranath Basu and Lajpat Rai and went to London on the eve of the First World War. It was mainly on his initiative that the Congress and the Muslim League held their session in Bombay in 1915 and paved the way for the formation of Hindu-Muslim *entente*. The scheme of reform formulated by the League and the Congress was to be placed before the British authorities in London and for this purpose a small deputation consisting of Jinnah, Srinivasa Shastri, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Wazir Husain was sent in 1917. Jinnah took pride in being a nationalist and a Congressman. In giving evidence before the Parliamentary Select Committee in 1919 he was asked whether he spoke really as an Indian nationalist and he had emphatically replied: "I do". The next question put to him by Major Ormzby-Gore was: That is to say that at the earliest possible moment you wish to do away in political life with any distinction between Mohammedan and Hindu? Jinnah replied: "Yes", Nothing will please me more than when that day comes." Jinnah was commonly described as "Ambassador of Unity which people had" conferred on him.

He left the Congress on September 30, 1921 when he was convinced that the Congress was going the wrong way with Gandhiji at its helm. When Jinnah came back to India he plunged into a hectic programme with hard-hitting speeches against the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha and in organising the Muslim of India.

In his appeal for the observance of the Deliverance Day issued from Bombay on December 2, 1939 he wanted the Muslims all over India to observe Friday, December 22, as the Day of Deliverance and thanks-giving as a mark of relief as the Congress regime had at last ceased to function. There could not have been a greater indictment on the work of the Congress Ministries who according to Jinnah:

"have done their best to flout the Muslim League opinion to destroy Muslim culture and have interfered with their religious and social life, and trampled upon their economic and political rights, that in matters of difference and disputes the Congress Ministries invariably have sided with, supported and advanced the cause of the Hindus in total disregard and to the approach of the Muslim interest."

In his letter dated January 1, 1940, to Gandhiji he referred to the Deliverance Day and mentioned:
“I have no illusions in the matter and let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities; Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations. Today you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself when asked what your motive in life was, the thing that leads us to do what we do, whether it was religious or social, or political, said purely religious...

“Events are moving fast; a campaign of polemics or your weekly discourse in the Harijan on metaphysics, philosophy and ethics, or your peculiar doctrines regarding Khaddar, Ahimsa and spinning are not going to win India’s freedom. Action and statesmanship alone will help us in our forward march. I believe that you might still rise to your stature in the service of our land and make your proper contribution towards leading India to contentment and happiness.”

The presidential speech delivered extempore by Jinnah at the Madras Session of the All India Muslim League in April 1941 was a memorable one. Before this Jinnah had been made the butt-end of a series of attacks from the Press and the Congress leaders. Jinnah was sore and disillusioned about the Congress leaders at that time. In this meeting he spelt out very clearly the goal, the ideology and the policy of the Muslim League. Every word of what he said, however, bitter it might have been, was what he meant. There was absolutely no sentimentality or verbosity. He spoke with a wonderful degree of confidence in himself. He knew that the audience of about a lakh of Muslims supported him. He was content that his words would be followed with great attention by the millions of Muslims in India and will always have an effect on the world.

Regarding the goal of the Muslim League he said:

“We want the establishment of completely independent States in the North-West and Eastern zones of India with full control finally of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications, Customs, Currency, Exchange, etc. We do not want in any circumstances a constitution of an All-India character with one government at the centre. We will never agree to that. If we once agree to that, let me tell you, the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence. We shall never be tributaries of any power or any government at the centre so far as the North-West and Eastern zones of our free national home-lands are concerned.”

Jinnah was clear in his mind. He said:
“the leadership of Hindu India has been fooled... I say to the Hindu leadership, you have lost the last shred of statesmanship if you do not realise yet that the British Government know it — that Muslim India will never submit to an all-India constitution and one central government.”

Regarding the minorities he observed that safeguards for minorities must be provided for, wherever there are minorities.

Jinnah spelt out that the ideology of the League was based on the fundamental principle that Muslim India was an independent nationality. He said:

“We are determined and let there be no mistake about it, to establish the status of an independent nation and an independent State in this sub-continent.”

He made no secret of his mind that the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-India Hindu League, the Liberal Federation, etc. were all one and nothing less than a solid body of Hindus behind it.

He warned the British Government to stop their policy of appeasement towards the Hindus who were bent upon frustrating the war effort.

In June 1941 Jinnah gave a speech at Ootacamund in which he clearly prophesied “the time is not far distant when Pakistan will be adopted by every Indian in spite of false and misleading propaganda against it.” Jinnah went to repeating his thesis from every platform and in the press.

Jinnah’s Id message to Muslim India in October 1941 was of the same type. At the Muslim University Union of Aligarh he gave a speech on November 2, 1941 which ended up with the words:

“Mr Gandhi said in 1939 that Muslim League was out to sell itself to the highest bidder. It is a most reprehensible lie. We are not going to budge an inch from the position we have taken.”

The All India Muslim Students Federation at Nagpur on December 26, 1941 was addressed by Jinnah in which he had underlined that there was going to be no surrender on the part of the Muslim League. He bitterly criticized Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji, Rajagopalachari and the Hindu Mahasabha. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was described by Jinnah as “most subtle and plausible and therefore all the more treacherous.” He asked Muslims to maintain “complete unity and solidarity.”
Jinnah was touring far and wide in India from 1941 and was able to catch the ears and heart of the Muslims wherever he went. In Bengal the Provincial Muslim League Conference was held in Seraj Ganj (now in Bangla Desh) on February 15, 1942 and he roundly condemned Fazlul Haq, a Muslim League Premier of Bengal. In his peroration he asked the Muslims of Bengal to prepare themselves. He assured them that victory would be won.

The Pakistan Day was celebrated all over India on March 23, 1942. In Delhi a procession preceded a mammoth public meeting at Urdu Park with Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan presiding. Jinnah addressed the meeting. He was clear about the solution which was to conduce Pakistan.

Regarding Gandhiji’s statement that unity and Hindu-Muslim settlement could only come after the achievement of India’s independence Jinnah said that Gandhiji had “thereby thrown off the cloak that he had worn for the last 22 years. He tried in a consummate manner to fool the Muslims but at last he had shown himself in his true colours.”

1942 was a momentous year for the Muslim League and the indomitable Jinnah had already become the idol of the Muslim League-minded Muslims. He severely criticised the Congress approach to Cripp’s proposals. He fully exploited the theme of the response of the Muslims to the cause of British allies. His Id message in 1942 was a call to the Muslims “to stand solid by our goal of Pakistan... either we achieve Pakistan or we perish.” Jinnah described himself as an annual reporter when he addressed the Muslim University Union at Aligarh on November 2, 1942. He knew that the Muslim youths must be fired with imagination and resolve to work for Pakistan and he made no secret of his idea:

Mr Gandhi’s sole aim is the revival of Hindu India and establishment of Hindu Raj over the whole of Indian continent as the sole legal heirs and representatives of the British Raj, and that the Muslims should go under and be brought under their yoke.”

Regarding Gandhiji’s rejection of the Cripps’ proposal Jinnah thought that if once the Congress accepted the principle of separation, Mr Gandhi would have to yield on the question of procedure. He had a fling at Quit India slogan. He ended up by saying:
"If you want to live and uphold all that is dear to you, the precious heritage of Islam, take your vow now and begin to work, work, and work and organise the Muslim League. That is your ultimate sanction and that is the ultimate weapon which you can forge. Further, there is a wonderful change in Muslim India. Team-work, selflessness, cooperation, help and service if you cultivate these qualities no power on earth can suppress you."

His message on Pakistan Day, March 23, 1943, was based on great optimism. He said:

"We have created a solidarity of opinion, a union of mind and thought. Let us concentrate on the uplift of our people for their educational, political, economic, social and moral well-being. Let us cooperate with and give all help to our leaders to work for our collective good. Let us make our organisation stronger and put it on a thorough efficient footing. In all this, the final sanction and censure rests with and upon the verdict of our people. We, the Muslims, must rely mainly upon our inherent qualities, our own natural potentialities, our own internal solidarity and our own united will to face the future.

"I particularly appeal to our intellelgentia and Muslim students to come forward and rise to the occasion. Train yourselves, equip yourselves for the task that lies before us. The final victory depends upon you and is within our grasp. You have performed wonders in the past. You are still capable of repeating the history. You are not lacking in the great qualities and virtues in comparison with the other nations. Only you have to be fully conscious of that fact and to act with courage, faith and unity."

Jinnah’s extempore presidential address at the 30th session of the All India Muslim League delivered on April 24, 1943 at Delhi showed at least a very clear assessment of the leaders who differed from him, both Muslim and non-Muslim. He again paid a great tribute to Gokhale and Dadabhai Naoroji. He traced the history of Hindu nationalism and gave quotations from Bipin Chandra Pal and the changes after Mr Gandhi’s advent. He wanted the Hindu leaders “give up this pose.” He condemned “Nehru’s double role.” He flayed civil disobedience and he traced the origin of Pakistan. Jinnah spoke with a prophetic vision and absolute confidence in himself. He traced the entry of “Mr Gandhi” on the horizon and how slowly he spread his tentacles into the Congress organisation and worked “under the influence of the communalist Hindu Mahasabha” and referred to Mohammad Ali’s speech in 1930 in Bombay.
Jinnah spoke disparagingly of Gandhiji’s work in the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress and how he scuttled the move to give justice to the scheduled castes and backward communities.

From now onwards Jinnah was criss-crossing the Indian horizon with one and one objective alone—creation of Pakistan. Gandhiji, Subhas Bose, Jawahar Lal, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mirza Ismail, Jayakar and others tried and failed to cope with him. The unfortunate communal troubles, the dissension between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress helped him tremendously. British diplomacy had put the top Congress leaders in and out of prison according to their reading of the situation but stood still and almost bowed to Jinnah’s whims and helped him indirectly. Jinnah’s grand moment came when the coalition Central Ministry was made a mince-pie by the Finance Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and the other Muslim League Ministers. The top Congress leaders realised there was no way out of a partition of India. Mountbatten adroitly played his hands and gave a dateline. To Gandhiji it was the summation of his dream. To Nehru and Vallabh Bhai Patel it was an inescapable solution. To Jinnah it was a triumph. India was partitioned. Jinnah left India in a plane on a memorable morning to preside over Pakistan’s creation ceremony—no eyes of his were dimmed with tears and no quivering of the lips. A solemn and determined man, he was scanning the office files all the way. The man who had slogged for years for the Congress and was never even given the Presidentship saw to the split of India and a defeat for the Congress which was committed to undivided India at one time.
Motilal Nehru

Motilal Nehru was born at Agra on May 6, 1861. His father, Ganga Dhar Nehru who was Kotwal of Delhi died young and Motilal was brought up by his uncles. His early education was in a Mohammedan Maktab where Arabic and Persian culture had its deep influence. He learnt English language only in his early teens. He got his university education at Muir Central College, Allahabad and passed the High Court Vakil’s examination in the year 1883 and topped the list.

He started practice as a Vakil at Kanpur in 1883 but soon shifted to Allahabad. He was keen to shine in his profession of law. As an advocate he was brilliant and he had a thorough grip on the facts of the case and law points involved. He was extremely good in cross-examination. Jawaharlal Nehru had observed that he was “a slave to his jealous mistress—the law”.

He attended several Congress sessions from 1888, but did not take any active part. He attended the sessions of 1903 with his son Jawaharlal, a boy of fourteen years. But he was “immoderately moderate” in political views, as observed by Jawaharlal. Law was then his first love and the discipline of the mind he acquired as a lawyer made him a constitutionalist. But the political currents and the way the British Government in India conducted itself made him slowly shed his moderate views.

He was sworn in as a member of the United Provinces Legislative Council on February 7, 1910 and remained a member upto the year 1919. He initiated “walk-out” in the Councils as a protest against the arbitrary action of the Government. He joined Mrs Besant’s Home Rule movement and in June 1917, he was elected president of the U. P. Branch of the Home Rule League. He presided over the Special Provincial Conference in 1918. His indictment of the repressive policy of the Government at the Conference irritated the Anglo-Indian paper of Allahabad, the Pioneer which nicknamed Motilal as the “Brigadier-General of the Home Rule League.” The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in 1919 made Motilal give up his moderate views altogether.
Motilal started a paper *The Independent* on February 5, 1919. In the first issue of *The Independent* Motilal wrote:

"The Independent has come into existence to lay bare the soul of the nation of a people ripening into nationhood, of communities merging into a people of individuals growing into a Community..."

The paper had to close down in 1923 owing to financial difficulties.

The ‘immoderately moderate’ politician was changing rapidly. He was one of the signatories of the statement along with Gandhiji made by the AICC on April 20 and 21, 1919, challenging the government’s repressive policies in the Punjab, Delhi and Bombay and demanding a public inquiry into the events. This was sent to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. The Hunter Committee was set up to make an inquiry into the Punjab happenings. The Congress participated in some of its sittings, but afterwards it appointed a Committee of its own on November 14, 1919 with Gandhiji as a member. Motilal was President of this Committee but when he was elected President of the ensuing session of the Indian National Congress at Amritsar for that year, he ceased to be its president.

This Non-Official Committee on the Punjab Disturbances brought Motilal “in close personal contact” with Gandhiji who had interpreted his participation in Congress Session at Amritsar as “Congress Initiation”. In September 1920 the Congress held its special session at Calcutta to discuss Gandhiji’s resolution on Non-Cooperation. It was at the request of Motilal and Vijayaraghavachariar that the demand for Swaraj was included in the resolution.

The Non-Cooperation Movement caught the Government unawares as the whole country was affected. The schools and colleges became empty; lawyers with princely incomes boycotted the Courts; and men and women filled the jails. Motilal and Jawaharlal were arrested on December 6, 1921. The Government was at its wits end. But the break came in 1922. The Chauri-Chaura incident in which some police constables were killed by a frenzied mob made Gandhiji recall the Civil Disobedience Movement on February 11, 1922 as he was convinced that the movement will not remain non-violent. This unilateral decision of Gandhiji was severely criticised by Congress leaders. Motilal wrote:
“Why should a town at the foot of the Himalayas be penalised if a village at Cape Camorin failed to observe non-violence?”

Gandhiji was locked up at Yeravda Jail and there was a lull in the Congress Camp.

The suspension of the non-cooperation movement left a vacuum in Indian politics. The vacuum was filled by Motilal, C. R. Das and others. It was a political move that those very leaders, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru, who condemned the reforms at the Amritsar Congress, came forward to have effective control of the existing machinery and system of government. They formed the Swarajist Party. In 1923 elections they wiped out the Liberals who were very critical of the Congress Party. This Party secured a comfortable position in the Central Legislative Assembly; and in the Provincial Legislative Councils of C. P., U. P., Bombay and Bengal. Gandhiji was at first opposed to the entry into the Councils but later he yielded and even permitted the members of the Spinners’ Association to contest the elective bodies. Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das were the two outstanding leaders in the Swarajist Party.

Motilal was elected unopposed to the Central Legislature from seven cities of the United Provinces. He became the leader of the Swaraj Party in the Central Assembly. His power of debate, knowledge of parliamentary procedure and accommodating attitude towards other political parties in the Assembly made him a formidable opponent of the Government which ruled mostly through the arbitrary use of the Viceroy’s Powers of certification. On November 11, 1924 when the Viceroy announced the appointment of the Simon Commission, Motilal was in England and his first reaction to the announcement was negative.

He interpreted it as an ‘eyewash’. In the Central Assembly a resolution was moved for the boycott of the all-White Commission, but Motilal proposed that if equal number of Indians were appointed to the Commission by His Majesty the King, Indians would cooperate. In the heat of this controversy, the Government of India came forward with the Public Safety Bill which was criticised by Motilal as directed against the “Indian nationalism and the Indian National Congress”. Motilal’s censure motion against the Government regarding the treatment of the under-trials in the Lahore Conspiracy Case which resulted in the death of Mr Jatin Das, was
adopted by the House with a majority of votes defeating the Government. From the floor of India's Parliament his moves and speeches demonstrated to the world how deep and widespread was India's discontent.

When in 1927, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, challenged India to produce an agreed constitution, he on behalf of the Congress summoned an All Parties Conference, considered and drew up the Nehru Report on December 22, 1928. Though it was not taken up by the Conference, it was adopted by the Congress. While presenting the Report to the Conference, Motilal said:

"We claim... that having regard to the various interests of the Communities, the rights of the minority and the majority and having profited by the experience of the past, the recommendation that we have made are recommendations which are likely to bring about the complete unity and harmony between the parties."

The Report was commended by Gandhiji who remarked:

"I venture to suggest that the report satisfies all reasonable aspirations and is quite capable of standing on its own merits."

In 1928 he was again made the President of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. The Nehru Report was already there as a landmark of his constitutional contribution and his handling of the Council's work in the legislatures had put Motilal Nehru in the position of an All-India leader next to Gandhiji. Gandhiji had kept aloof from the All-Party Conference which discussed Nehru Report. When someone asked Gandhiji why he has again entered the arena, Gandhiji replied:

"It was love for my dear comrade Pandit Motilal when he said to me, you areinstrumental in putting this crown of thorns upon my head you will now have to come and see how many bruises that crown of thorns causes to my head and you will come and share some of these bruises."

At the initiative of Gandhiji the Congress in 1928 passed a resolution adopting the Nehru Report on the condition that, if by December 31, 1929, Domination Status was not conceded to India by the Government, the Congress would demand complete Independence. The Lahore Session of the Congress under Jawaharlal Nehru on December 31, 1929 declared for complete independence pointing
that the Nehru Scheme of Dominion Status had lapsed. It also called upon the Central and Provincial legislatures to resign and opt for Civil Disobedience. In response to Congress command Motilal resigned and joined the Civil Disobedience Movement appealing to all Congressmen "to rally under the standard of Gandhiji". He also offered his palatial "Anand Bhawan" to the Congress. It was renamed "Swaraj Bhawan". Gandhiji launched Salt Satyagraha and the country underwent the ordeal of blood and iron chains. The Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested on April 14 and his father a few weeks later.

At Motilal's instance, a 'Resolution of Remembrance' was repeated at thousands of meetings on January 31, 1931 in spite of police vigilance. Motilal was sick in Naini Central Jail and was released after ten weeks of imprisonment. He took part in another peace move initiated by Sapru and Jayakar and journeyed to Poona but to no use. He had been in a very poor health, the political life had affected him and he expired in Lucknow on February 4, 1931.

Commenting on his death, Gandhiji said:

"Pandit Motilal's death means to me more even than to the brave widow whose sorrow it is my privilege during these days to share. I take the blow as an additional test of my faith in God's greatness and goodness. Panditji has died a true warrior's death. It is therefore well with him. He lives more amply and more truly by dying. I pray to God that he may endow me with greater consecration to the service of the cause for which alone life is worth living in these days of purification through sacrifice and suffering".

Although a colleague of Gandhiji, Motilal maintained his independence of mind all through and often crossed swords with Gandhiji. Motilal's letter from Arrah dated February 27, 1920 is very illuminating:

"As for the formulation of Gandhiji's political views, much as I respect him, I am not prepared to accept them simply because they come from him. I have already warned Das that we must be prepared for a big tussle. Gandhiji's going to Delhi for a talk with Shastri, his constant association and general agreement with Malaviya are no good omens for our party. Neither are they very good omens for Gandhiji himself. There is such a thing as trusting too much to one's popularity. Mrs Besant is paying for it, and others have done the same. It will be a great grief to me if Gandhiji follows suit. As at present situated I have no right to quarrel with anybody for his political views
much less with persons of eminence of Gandhiji and Malaviya but I cannot shut my eyes to the manner in which the country is shaping itself. Any attempt to compromise with the authorities or the Moderates is bound to result in disaster by whomsoever made. This is my reading of the situation."

Then follows another letter on June 16, 1920 to Jawaharlal which reads:

"I think Malaviya and I should now make up our minds about the council elections. I think he should go to the Assembly and I to the Local Council... It will be too late to do anything if we sit tight till the Special Congress has met. As far as I can see, it is not likely that the Congress as a Congress will bind itself to non-cooperation. It is too big an organisation for this. The most that happens is that it will approve the principle and leave members to follow their own inclinations."

Within a fortnight follows another letter dated July 5, 1920 to Jawaharlal:

"...So far as your following the request of Gandhiji is concerned, there is nothing to be said. That is more or less a matter of sentiment of a kind which does not enter into my composition. On the merits of the question, however, I am by no means sure that even Gandhiji will stick to his programme to the bitter end. Left to himself, he certainly would. But this is a matter in which he has to depend upon others and those others will sooner or later drop off. There can be no manner of doubt as to this. The question is a very difficult one and I am free to confess that I have arrived at no definite conclusion. My sympathies are all for the principle of non-cooperation, but I am by no means sure as to the form which it should take in practice. As at present advised, I agree with Gandhiji to boycott the Councils generally throughout India. I am inclined to think that it will give the cause immense strength without sacrificing the principle of non-cooperation, to get out people to return to us and then refuse to sit in the Council or to obstruct its business. However, all I wish to say at present is that no final decision should be arrived at by any of us till further developments appear."

An incident in June 1924 when Motilal took part at the Hotel Cecil Dinner in Simla where wine was served was featured sarcastically in the Leader of Allahabad. There was correspondence between Gandhiji and Motilal on this subject. Here are some relevant extracts from Gandhiji's letter to Motilal dated on July 3, 1924:
"... I have nothing to say to your return to wine-drinking, if you have. But, if the report is to be relied upon, I cannot but be grieved that you lead the antiliquor campaign, should publicly drink it and, what is worse, chaff at teetotalism..."

A postscript to this letter ran as follows:

"I know that if a man drinks privately, he may drink publicly too. A public man, however, may not drink publicly, if he is likely to offend. I distinguish between private drinking and secret drinking."

Motilal was very bitter on the issues raised by Gandhiji. He showed this letter to his other Swarajist colleagues Das and Jayakar who interpreted it as a very 'cruel criticism'. Motilal gave a frank reply. Here are some extracts:

"I have made clear to you from time to time that my agreement with you on several items of your programme is not based on the identical grounds upon which you rely and, if I have come to the same conclusion, as you have, it is on purely political or economic and sometimes also moral grounds, having no reference whatever to the religious beliefs of any section of the Congress. My religion is my country, and I am prepared to serve it honestly and truthfully with all my heart and soul through thick and thin according to my own lights, unaffected by all the religious dogmas in the world...

"Before and after I joined the N. C. O. Movement, I was a believer in moderate drinking by those who had full control on themselves...... In fact, during the 40 years preceding 1921, I had seldom missed my evening drink for 11 months in the year...... I have so far never taken any active part in the anti-drink campaign, but when it was begun by others in right earnest at your bidding, I felt it was only right for me who was in the general movement, to give up even the harmless stimulant I had allowed myself after the day's hard work for years pass The moment this feeling came upon me, all alcoholic drinks became a thing of the past and for nearly three years I never thought of them...

"At the December session when we were at Cacanada...... to come suddenly upon a party of No-Changers, who shall be nameless, and found them drinking "in private", I immediately called for a glass and poured out some for myself, more to ease the situation than to satisfy my own desire. After this, I did not observe strict abstinence... Then came the two dinners at Simla... I could have abstained from wine if I had so wished, but I regarded it as hypocrisy of the meanest kind to
pose as teetotaller, which I was not...This is the whole story and I am not in the least ashamed of it......To me it is clear that deceiving men by keeping up false appearances is worse than offending them......I must also respectfully differ from the distinction you draw between "Private drinking and secret drinking". In my humble opinion, it is a distinction without a difference.

...... I simply cannot bring myself to yield to the puritanism affected in Congress circles... For me, life would not be worth living if every word one utters has always to be weighed in stoic scales".

Prior to 1924, there was another incident in 1921 which made Motilal Nehru criticise Gandhiji for "political bungling". It so happened that when Lord Reading and Gandhiji met at the initiative of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to discuss India’s political future, the N C O Movement and Ali Brothers' violent speeches were discussed. As the outcome of this interview, the Ali brothers came out with ‘an apology’ at the suggestion of Gandhiji and their prosecution was suspended. Regarding this ‘apology’ from Almora on June 3, 1921 Motilal wrote to Gandhiji:

"The statement of the Ali Brothers taken by itself and read without reference to what had preceded and followed it is a manly enough document... and we have the indisputable fact that the leader of the N. C. O. movement has been in treaty with the Government of India and has secured the suspension of the prosecution of the Ali Brothers by inducing them to give a public apology and an undertaking......Indeed it seems to me that the whole principle of non-cooperation has been given away.

...In a body of co-workers you cannot make distinction between man and man and the humblest of them is entitled to the same protection at the hands of the leaders as the most prominent. Scores, if not hundreds, of our men have willingly gone to jail for using language far less strong than that indulged in by Ali Brothers. Some at least of these could easily have been saved by giving a similar apology and undertaking and yet it never occurred to anyone to advise them to do so....

I think the time has come when the leaders should welcome the opportunity to suffer and stoutly decline all offers of escape..."
M. N. Roy

M. N. Roy was born on February 6, 1893 in a Bengal village. His real name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. He received his higher education in Calcutta. Bankim Chandra Chatterji’s famous novel *Anand Math* which has given inspiration to so many youths in India, led Roy also to the revolutionary path and he became the righthand man of Jatin Mukherji who was active in organising an armed revolt against the Britishers in India. The victory of Japan over Russia in 1904 and the Partition of Bengal inflamed the Bengal youths. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 led the young revolutionists, who had already some contact with Germany, to think in terms of importing arms and organise an armed revolt in India. On behalf of the revolutionary elements in the country, M.N. Roy was sent to Java as the contact man. He managed to get foreign financial aid but not arms. In 1915 he again visited Java on a clandestine mission and from there proceeded to Japan and China. The failure in this mission made him leave for USA in 1915, disguised as an Indian Christian by the name of Martin. He stayed in San Francisco for some time and then moved to Stanford University where there was a cell of patriotic Indian. It was here that he had opted the name of Manabendra Nath Roy to avoid suspicion and arrests as he was wanted by the Indian police. From New York he went to Germany to work with the Berlin Indian Independence Committee. His plan miscarried owing to the First World War. His activities made him suspect in the eyes of the American Government which had Joined Britain against Germany. Roy escaped to Mexico.

Mexico brought a metamorphosis in his life. The young revolutionary became a deep thinker. To him national independence was not the panacea for all the ills of any country. He tried to find solution for the evils common to all countries.

He was in close contact with the thinkers and socialist leaders in America and Mexico. He contributed a series of articles on India in *El Puéblo* which suggested the subversion of the feudal-patriarchal order and formed the base of the British foreign rule in India. These articles made him popular in the socialist circles of
Mexico. He was invited to attend a meeting of the executive committee of the Mexican Socialist Party. He helped in organising the socialist forces there and gave it an international slant. His work got him elected as the General Secretary and on his initiative a communist wing was established in Mexico, the first of its kind outside Russia. The activities on the socialist front brought him in touch with Michael Boidrin who was a Russian agent sent to organise a Communist party in Mexico for the Communist International. At his suggestion, Roy was invited to Russia where he was asked to serve on the colonial commission of the second congress of the Communist International. There he had the stature to debate with Lenin on some vital points in Marxism. He was selected a member of the General Asiatic Bureau for planting Communism in India.

In 1922 he volunteered to go to Berlin and popularise the theory and practice of Communism among the Indian nationalist revolutionaries already there. The same year he published a book entitled "India in Transition" in which he expressed his apprehensions of a compromise between the Indian bourgeois and the Imperial bourgeoisie and also started the publication of an English periodical named Advance Guard. The year 1922 also saw his rise in the hierarchy of the Communist party for he was named a member of the Presidium of the Comintern. He wanted the Communist Party of India to have an independent status and not as a subordinate to the Communist party of Great Britain. This move was not liked by the British Communists. The subsequent tug of war between Stalin and Trotsky led to new facets which ultimately led to his expulsion from the Comintern in 1928.

After the break with the Comintern, Roy returned to India in December 1930 with a forged passport as Dr Mahmud. He collected a few of the leading Communists and attended the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in March 1931 at the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru. It is controversial if the resolution on Fundamental Rights in Karachi Congress was Roy's homework. In July 1931 he was arrested as an absconder in the old Cawnpore Conspiracy case. He was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment which was reduced to six years on appeal. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru argued his case in appeal.

He was released from jail on November 20, 1936 and he at once joined the Indian National Congress. In his Congress Pre-
sidential address at Faizpur, Jawaharlal Nehru welcomed his "release from a long and a most distressing period in prison. Roy wanted to convert the Congress to a dynamic body with socialistic aims. In his view the Congress was in conservative hands, he schemed to effect a cohesion between the leftists and bourgeois to effect a bourgeois democratic revolution and subvert the feudal social order. The organ to preach his views was the weekly, Independent India founded in 1937 and later renamed the Radical Humanist. He founded the League of Radical Congressmen within the Indian National Congress in June 1939. In 1940 he fought the election for the Congress President-ship of the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress. He was defeated by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who got 1864 votes as against Roy's poor 183. Azad was Gandhiji's man; and it was difficult for any congressman to be elected President of the Congress unless he was in the good books of Gandhiji. Roy was persona non grata with Gandhiji. He was regarded as a man by himself who had "for the diseases of the body politic an aetiology, a pathology and a code of therapeutics all his own" in the words of one of the inner circles of Gandhiji.

In 1939 soon after the formation of his League of Radical Congressmen the Second World War broke out. Roy and his party regarded it a very wrong policy for the Congress not to help the Government of India in its war effort.

M. N. Roy very soon found that he was a misfit in the set-up of the Congress where Gandhiji, whether officially in or out of the Congress, was the dictator. He wanted the conservative policy of Gandhiji to go and wanted an alliance of the Leftists with the Congressmen. His group fought hard but failed even to enlist the cooperation of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. When the Second World War began he wanted India to support the then India Government in helping the war efforts and not to follow an isolated policy and condemned the withdrawal of the Ministries. On November 7, 1939 he wrote to Gandhiji about the futility of the policy he followed and about his leadership in the Congress, discipline and non-violence. He wrote:

"From the very beginning I was of the opinion that it would have been not only honourable and dignified but politically useful for the Congress to adopt the policy originally recommended by you, I mean the policy which has been called unconditional co-operation. Since then, you have clearly defined
what that policy would exactly mean. It would be moral support for the professed war aims of England, while there would be no active co-operation nor any active resistance. The attitude could be more correctly defined as that of benevolent neutrality...

"The present policy of the Congress practically amounts the neutrality, to some extent. But I am of the opinion that it was not necessary to have the Congress ministries resigned at this stage. I expressed that opinion in my letter to the Congress President. In the same letter I explained how, remaining in office, Congressmen would not be necessarily obliged to co-operation willingly and actively in warlike preparations. I also pointed out how, on the contrary, the Congress ministries could serve the very useful purpose of defending the maximum possible civil liberties against the operation of the Defence of India Act. By taking up the attitude of neutrality insofar as armed hostilities or warlike preparations are concerned, the Congress would not find itself in the present deadlock, and could go ahead with that work of securing the freedom of India under whatever protection the congress ministries could offer. Launching upon the alternative policy of getting involved in an interminable controversy with the British Government which can never be expected to give a positive reply to the Congress demand for the recognition of India as an independent nation, the working committee is being driven in the direction of a struggle for which, you are so decidedly of the opinion, the country is not prepared. This is not only an anomalous but a dangerous position. It could have been avoided, if the Working Committee acted according to your original advice even if they would not be influenced by the opinion of modest Congressmen like myself....

"I must confess that I have been rather perplexed by your insistence on tracing the root of every evil to the absence of living faith in non-violence in thought, word and deed...It is not a practical proposition. An ideal cannot be realised before the pre-condition therefor created...My ideal is the establishment of a social order in which human beings will be free from the present limitations to their progress in every department of life. In one word, that ideal is called socialism...The alarming signs of the Congress weakening are to be detected on all sides, the danger is not to be found in the honestly critical attitude of tried fighters for freedom like myself, but in the spirit of intolerance and dogmatism spreading throughout the country on your authority...

"I have spoken frankly with a heavy heart. I have made rather disagreeable and even bitter experience since I returned to this country with no other object than to place my services at the disposal of the great organisation leading our struggle for
freedom. I have been looked upon with suspicion, treated as an outcaste, although I have the poor satisfaction of seeing some of my modest contributions going home, often much too belated and indirectly. I have spoken frankly because I am speaking to a seeker of truth. Truth is not always beautiful, nor is the beautiful always true. Our country is passing through very fateful moments of its history. Today its future is in the hands of the Congress."

Gandhiji replied in an article, "Politics Vs. Morals" in Harijan of November 18, 1939; and observed:

"The congress has a double function. It is a democratic organisation in peace time. It becomes a non-violent army in war time. In its second capacity it has no voting power. Its will is expressed by its General whoever he may be. Every unit has to tender him willing obedience in thought, word and deed. Yes, even in thought, since the fight is non-violent."

This reply could hardly satisfy Roy who was a life-long opponent of fascism. He saw fascism in Gandhiji's dictatorial policy in the Congress and finally broke off from National Congress in 1940 and formed his independent Radical Democratic Party. He became a bitter critic of the Congress and Gandhiji and would even support a bourgeois rule under the British than a National Government under Gandhiji and the Congress. He retained his regard for Gandhiji although he abhorred 'stupidly following' him.

His estimate of Gandhiji was summarised by him as follows:

"In my opinion, Gandhiji will go down in history neither as a prophet nor as a saviour of the masses, but as their political awakener. Gandhiji's exalted place in political history of contemporary India is created by the masses.... I do not share the view that our struggle for freedom ever since 1920 is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. On the contrary, "Mahatma Gandhi" is a creation of the Indian masses. It is a remarkable historical phenomenon. Every realistic student of history must appreciate the role of Mahatma Gandhi as such, unless they would allow emotionalism to mislead them into wilful misinterpretation of history. Why did the Indian masses hail Mahatma Gandhi as their liberator while many other men had been in the field before him trying for the honour? The reason is that he could speak in a language understood by the masses. But unfortunately, the understanding of the masses of our country is still on a very low level. One had to stoop to that level in order to raise it higher. To have the courage to do so, is a token of greatness. Generally, one feels to have paid the greatest homage to Gandhiji, when he
is given the credit of mobilizing the masses in the struggle for freedom. One does not know that the greater homage would be to regard and respect Gandhiji as the embodiment of the primitive blind, spontaneous spirit of revolt of the Indian masses. His politics has been characterized by the immaturity, defects and deficiency of the source of the urge behind it. One can be only as great as himself. To ascribe to him any greater greatness, is to worship the God of your own creation—the kind of God who is sure to disappoint you any moment by showing his clay feet. I am not such a stupid worshipper. Therefore, I claim to appreciate the real greatness of Gandhiji....

"The doctrine of non-violence represented an effort to introduce morality in political practice. But in the Mahatma, the politician often got the better of the moralist. Personally he may never have deviated from his principles, or faith, as he preferred to call it. Yet, he allowed, or condoned compromise in the political practice and personal conduct of his followers. Even that he did not do willingly. His codes of morality appeared so very dogmatic to others that they often could not observe them without surrendering judgment....

"...The Mahatma wanted to purify politics; that can be done only by raising political practice above the vulgar level of a scramble for power. But for this, nationalist India today would not be intoxicated with the idea of having a strong army—an idea which logically spells the danger of war. In the atmosphere of this intoxication, it is blasphemous to pledge unswerving loyalty to the message of non-violence and peace preached by the Mahatma....

"The Mahatma's place of honour in history will not be that of a patron-saint of nationalism which, in power, is bound to go against the moral and humanist essence of his message. He will be remembered for having vaguely visualized a humanist idea, while still groping in the twilight of mediaevalism. Primarily a religious man he set before his followers high ideals which could not possibly be attained unless the human spirit broke out of the charmed circle of the religious mode of thought. Therefore, like all other religious prophets of morality, peace and human brotherhood, the Mahatma was destined to fail in his mission. Communal harmony is not possible in the mediaeval atmosphere of religious orthodoxy and fanaticism. The ideal of individual liberty is precluded by nationalism, which is a totalitarian cult. In the absence of individual freedom, humanism is an unattainable idea. The inspiring vision of a peaceful human brotherhood is bound to be eclipsed by the ambition of making the nation great, prosperous and powerful. It would be idle to pledge loyalty to the message of the Mahatma unless it meant
realization of its contradictions and an intelligent resolve to place
the moral and humanist core of his teaching above the carnal
cult of nationalism and power-politics. Otherwise, the Mahatma
will have worn the crown of martyrdom in vain.”

Roy dissolved his Radical Democratic Party in 1948 “when it
appeared that Party Politics was incompatible with the Philosophy of
Radical Humanism.” After that Roy did not belong to any politi-
cal organisation and sponsored the Indian Renaissance movement
from his headquarters in Dehradun. He passed away in 1954.

Roy’s great statesmanship was seen in December 1944 when he
published a draft constitution of Free India in which he outlined
the political structure of a radical democratic society. His plan for
economic development of India after the war where the guiding
principles were production for use as against production for profit,
and priority to agricultural development as against over-emphasis on
heavy industries was another masterly document. His “Letters to
Mahatma” and “Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism” published
in 1940 show the working of his scholastic and socialist mind.

It will be a mistake to think that Roy’s life after his break up
with Gandhiji was a failure because of frustration. Rather it showed
he had the courage of going alone with his ideas; and passage
of time and trend of current events show that Roy was not a
visionary but had his feet firmly planted in Indian soil.
M. R. Jayakar

M. R. Jayakar belonged to the group of Madan Mohan Malaviya, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Mirza Ismail, Lord S. P. Sinha etc., that had provided the link of mediation between Gandhiji on one hand and the British Government in India and in London and the non-Congress public in India on the other. The Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931 is one of the achievements of some men of party.

Born in Bombay in 1873 Jayakar was brought up in the environment of scholastic studies, religiosity and sobriety. Deeply imbued in Hinduism, he early joined the school of Moderate Politics of Dr Annie Besant in the Home Rule League. He joined the Bar in 1905 when the Swadeshi Movement due to the partition of Bengal was a major political factor. Young Jayakar attended the political trials of Tilak for his articles in Kesari.

In 1915 he attended the Congress sessions in Bombay with S.P. Sinha and the Muslim League sessions with Mahzr-ul-Huq as the respective presidents. He followed the Congress politics closely but kept himself aloof. At the Nasik Political Conference in 1917, presided over by Srinivas Shastri he supported the resolution adopted by the Indian National Congress on Reforms leading to Self-Government and said: “Whether we have become fit for Self-Government or not should be decided by the enlightened political opinion of the country. Liberty alone could prepare a people for the enjoyment of liberty”. Jayakar was an advocate of “an alliance between social and political reform.”

Montagu’s announcement on August 20, 1917 promising Self-Government by stages followed by Montagu’s visit to India in 1918 were landmarks in India’s political evolution. The Poona District Conference at Lonavala was held with Jayakar as the President. Jayakar himself noted that this Conference “was an exquisite assertion of the political tenets of Maharashtra professed since the days of Ranade, Tilak and Gokhale.”

Montagu’s report on April 22, 1918 started the chain-reaction. One group advocated its total rejection while another group wanted
to work on it and improve it further. In the special session of the Indian National Congress in 1918 Jayakar was one of the speakers on the main resolution concerning the Reform scheme moved by Malaviya. Jayakar observed:

"India is a big School, England and the Government of India are school masters and India will be put in classes, so that year after year (it may be 5 or 10, 15 or 20) periodical examinations will be conducted and promotion made according to India's fitness, of which, to quote the words of the Montagu's announcement the British people and the Indian Government will be the sole judges."

At this time Jayakar was a follower of Annie Besant. He was a member of the Home Rule League deputation led by Mrs Besant that waited upon the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford and the Secretary of State Montagu in November 1918.

Events moved fast from then and Jayakar was more drawn towards Gandhiji. Horniman's deportation in 1919 brought them nearer as Gandhiji had taken up though unsuccessfully Horniman's cause. Horniman's paper *The Bombay Chronicle* was revived with Jayakar as the Chairman of the Board of Directors in the same year.

The very regrettable events in the Punjab before and after the imposition of Martial Law ruffled Jayakar and when requested he gladly became one of the members of the Congress Punjab Enquiry Committee. Along with Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das he also struck a close relationship with Gandhiji through the working of their Committee.

Earlier Jayakar met Gandhiji and took part in the proposal whether Gandhiji should be the President of the Bombay branch of the Home Rule League. Jayakar followed the line of thought of Gokhale about Gandhiji and opposed Gandhiji's admission to the membership of the Home Rule League. He addressed a letter to Gandhiji on the subject and referred to his pet theories "which many of us may be inclined to regard as fantastic fads." Gandhiji replied to Jayakar and said he was disturbed by his description of some of his theories as "fads". Gandhiji mentioned that the only fad "would be a common language for India, to be found in one of the vernaculars of the country, and the gospel of Swadeshi." When Jayakar went to Lahore to help the Enquiry Committee in December 1919,
Gandhiji greeted him and said "so you are our new recruit but you will have to work very hard."

During the deliberations of the Punjab Enquiry Committee, Jayakar was particularly impressed with Gandhiji's stern logic to remove the chaff from the kernel. The Congress report on the Punjab disturbances was drawn up with Jayakar's help. Jayakar's impressions of Gandhiji were published in the Bombay Marathi daily The Indu Prakash of March 29, 1920.

In July 1921, Gandhiji came to Poona in connection with Tilak anniversary and visited Jayakar who was then ill. Jayakar gave a sum of Rs 25,000 to Gandhiji which was diverted to Motilal Nehru's Independent paper, then in financial difficulties. Jayakar was a lone supporter of Gandhiji when the Maharashtrians as a class did not like Gandhiji supporting the Khilafat Movement.

In 1921 Gandhiji gave his ultimatum to the Viceroy, Lord Reading and liquidated the efforts of Malaviya Conference with which Jayakar was very closely associated. Jayakar wrote to Gandhiji on February 1, 1922 and mentioned that:

"judged by the high test to which you often mercilessly subject your utterances, this memorable document, which you have written to the Viceroy, is sadly deficient. Heaven alone knows what its consequences will be. You know my strong sentiments against Mass Civil Disobedience.... I cannot help shuddering at the prospect of the misery and suffering which we may thus be able to eventually save."

On February 6, 1922 Gandhiji explained in a letter to Jayakar his reasons for sending the ultimatum to the Vicerory and mentioned:

"I did not understand that it was not right even to write to the Vicerory."

On February 5, 1922 the Chauri-Chaura incident occurred and Gandhiji withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement for which he was bitterly criticised. Jayakar's help Gandhiji sought when many of his colleagues turned against him because of the calling off of Civil Disobedience Movement. On March 2, 1922 Gandhiji wrote to Jayakar:

"I am anxious to enlist your full co-operation.... I would like you not to be involved in the effort to bring about a Round Table Conference which is a futile effort at the present time."
In his reply on March 7, 1922 Jayakar wrote:

"I agree that the Round Table Conference’s idea is futile. My Committee (Malaviya Conference) also takes nearly the same view and we shall probably dissolve ourselves in a week or two... I recognise, however, that under adverse circumstances you did your best, and are even now trying to soften the consequences of the Delhi addendum by issuing a clear recommendation to the Provincial Congress Committee for the present, even individual Civil Disobedience. In your attempt to do this men like me will give you their complete co-operation... When you advised some time ago, that courting arrests and imprisonment was a means in itself of effecting our salvation you assumed, I imagine, that this Government had a sense of remorse, generosity, and fellow feeling... These sentiments......do not exist in the present system. I, therefore, fully appreciate your present opposition to the Civil Disobedience, whether individual or mass. The line between the two was never very clear and was always liable to be obliterated in times of turmoil as present events have proved."

To this letter Gandhiji’s reply was on March 10, 1922 just before his arrest, and it mentioned that he had not lost faith in the responsiveness to sacrifice.

Later in 1924 Jayakar as a member of the Depressed Classes Mission sought Gandhiji’s help in assisting the Harijans build their own temples, schools and hotels in Bombay. A number of letters were exchanged. The last one to Jayakar in this connection was dated June 21, 1924 in which Gandhiji wrote:

"You may let our friends use my letter to you. In this connection I do not want to lose touch with you. My sole reliance on the cleanliness of this work is on you..."

Jayakar continued his conciliatory work for Gandhiji in the later years, particularly when Gandhiji used to be in jail. Great was his work along with Sapru and others in a silent and unobtrusive manner. Their non-alignment with the Congress and Gandhiji gave them a stature and they often struck a line of rapprochement when the dark clouds were ominous.

Jayakar never idolised Gandhiji and he often referred to Gokhale’s observations about Gandhiji given to him in Amritsar in 1919:

"Remember, that on occasions when the passions of the people have to be raised to greater heights of emotion and sacrifice or to be brought into close vision of high ideals, Gandhi is an
admirable leader... But be careful that India does not trust him on occasions where delicate negotiations have to be carried on with care and caution and where restraint and tact will make for success...."

Jayakar was a staunch Hindu. He did not like Gandhiji's vain attempt to espouse Khilafat cause. Later in his life he was more allied to the Responsivists and often condemned particular phases of the negative policy of Non-Cooperation. He believed in Gandhiji's transparent honesty of purpose and political genius but he did not think much of Gandhiji as a statesman with a pragmatic approach. Gandhiji was fully aware of Jayakar's estimate of him but that cemented their relationship of regard and reciprocity all the more.

Independent India should not forget the services of men like Jayakar who had often pulled the Congress out of the morass.
Muriel Lester

The year was 1934. Gandhiji was touring the earthquake ravaged districts of Bihar. There was an unprecedented earthquake which caused death of thousands and ruined several towns of the countryside. Along with Gandhiji moved two English ladies devoted to him and paying minute attention to the details of relief and rehabilitation work. They were Muriel Lester and Agatha Harrison. People in Bihar still remember the soft-spoken demure lady Muriel Lester working without any break for giving relief to the people.

Muriel Lester’s contact with Gandhiji had started much earlier. She had read Romain Rolland’s ‘Mahatma Gandhi’ in 1923 and wanted to be in touch with Gandhiji. She wrote to Gandhiji expressing her desire and she was invited to visit Sabarmati Ashram. She arrived in October 1925 when the Ashram was busy observing Gandhiji’s birthday. She was ushered into Gandhiji’s presence in his small bed-cum-sitting room where he would lie on a wooden bench and meet visitors who would either squat or sit on a small stool. As Muriel Lester found it difficult to squat on the floor owing to her dress Gandhiji put her at ease by offering a low stool. Then the conversation started and Muriel Lester vellied forth a series of questions regarding war without violence, sanitation work for villages, khadi spinning and allied topics. This was their first meeting but it led to further meetings and she became a tower of strength to Gandhiji for propagating his cause in England.

Muriel Lester along with her sister founded Kingsley Community Hall in East End and this institution served a great purpose in bringing the high and the low together. According to Miss Lester: ‘Our ideals and our aspirations at Kingsley Hall have much in common with those of Mr Gandhi’s Ashram.’ The institution had arrangements for religious service, lectures, entertainments, reading room etc. There were tiny rooms called cells for the inmates. Miss Lester had once written to Gandhiji to suggest the name of some Indian to lay the foundation stone of Kingsley Hall. Gandhiji had suggested
Jawaharlal Nehru's name and had mentioned: Jawaharlal is the truest man I know in India."

When Gandhiji went to attend the Second Round Table Conference in England in 1931 there were invitations for him to stay in the aristocratic quarters but Gandhiji decided to stay at Kingsley Hall and four cells were set apart for Gandhiji. He deeply appreciated the kindness of Muriel Lester and others and observed that he was able to live at Kingsley Hall exactly as in India and that his stay confirmed that at bottom there was neither East nor West. It was from Kingsley Hall that Gandhiji had given a talk to America on the radio on Sunday, September 13, 1931 at 6.30 P.M.

As hostess of Gandhiji Muriel Lester was superb and punctilious. She looked after Gandhiji's food and saw that he could observe his habits without any inconvenience. She had the onerous duty of controlling the crowd to see him either at the prayer meeting or elsewhere. Muriel Lester has put her thoughts of those days by writing a book "Entertaining Gandhi". Regarding this book Gandhiji wrote back to Muriel from Yervada Central Prison on March 2, 1933:

"Those who do not want to know anything about your having entertained a funny little man cannot be blamed for not wanting your book."

Muriel Lester took up the propagation of prohibition in England entirely on the initiative of Gandhiji. There are a large number of her letters written in 1927 that show that she was working as the mouthpiece of Gandhiji, lecturing to the people of England on the aims and objectives of prohibition in India. She sent a draft resolution to be adopted in the meetings and wanted Gandhiji's opinion about it. Gandhiji described her draft resolution as vague and sent his own draft to put up before the open meeting running as follows:

"In the opinion of this meeting it is wrong for the people of this country to be a part to the maintenance of the liquor traffic in India and that therefore it was wrong on the part of the Government to have made the liquor revenue of India a 'transferred' (Provincial) subject and consequently a principal source of revenue on which the spending departments of education and development have to depend, thereby rendering it practically impossible for the Ministers responsible for these departments to undertake a policy of prohibition. In the opinion of this meeting the Government of India should have retained the liquor revenue
as a central subject and carried out a policy of complete prohibition, the loss of revenue thus sustained being made up for by retrenchment in the evergrowing and largely unnecessary military expenditure. This meeting therefore calls upon the Government to take the steps necessary to enforce the wish expressed in this resolution.”

Miss Lester kept Gandhiji informed about the various temperance meetings that had been held at different places and that the resolution drafted by him was adopted.

In 1938 Muriel Lester joined the Indian Fellowship of Reconciliation and with the outbreak of the Second World War, she undertook a South African tour and founded F.O.R. groups at various stations. In 1941 she was interned at Trinidad for four months by the order of the British Government. She was deported to Britain and spent several days in Holloway Jail.

Luckily for us Muriel Lester had left a detailed chronicle of Gandhiji’s visits to various parts of Europe—France, Italy, Switzerland etc. and meeting persons like Romain Rolland, Pierre Ceresole, Mussolini etc. Her later book “Gandhi’s Signature” came out in 1949 when Gandhiji had passed away. One can appreciate how she had felt at the death of Gandhiji. This book was written more in tune with the spirit speaking to spirit. Gandhiji’s ties with Muriel Lester could well be understood by this extract of Gandhiji’s letter before his memorable fast:

“This is to ask you to support me during the forthcoming ordeal. By the time it is in your hands I shall be half way through but when spirit speaks to spirit it is a case of asking and receiving in the same breath.”

Once Gandhi had told her:

“I make no decision except after prayer. I have no strength of my own at all. All my strength comes from God. A boy could knock me over with a blow of his fist. I have no strength at all. It is a continual miracle to me. If the whole world were to deny God, I should be His sole witness.”

This great fellow traveller of Gandhiji passed away on February 11, 1968 and till her death she continued taking deep interest in India.

Posterity is indebted to Muriel Lester for a graphic description of day-to-day life of Gandhiji in London. We read in her book
how Gandhiji was eating away oranges and grapes when the time fixed for giving the broadcast from London to America was fast approaching. Muriel Lester gave a five minutes broadcast to introduce Gandhiji. Downstairs there was an actual trial of physical strength among unauthorised reporters, sight-seers, busy-bodies and nobodies. Inside the room there were a number of authorised pressmen with a grimness about them and engineers who had already linked up that room of Kingsley Hall with the Broadcasting Station over the Atlantic. But all-unperturbed Gandhiji went on with his fruits and entered absolutely at the nick of the fixed hour. Gandhiji’s innocent low-voiced query: “Do I talk into this thing”, pointing to the microphone which was duly recorded in California to the mirth of thousands.

Muriel recorded some of the interesting interviews Gandhiji gave in an extremely interesting manner. Someone asked: “Mr Gandhi, if sorrow makes for character, doesn’t it prove that nations need war?” Gandhi answered: “That is a false doctrine. Sorrow and suffering make for character if they are voluntarily borne, but not, if they are imposed. Now the result of non-violent war would be indeed brilliant for all concerned, but in war’s experience in the past it is very clear that they lead soon and inevitably to grossness and cruelty.” The man was not satisfied and wanted to know if anything could prevent another war. Straight came the answer: “I think the success of my experiment during 1906 to 1931 can. You may say that I am living in a fool’s paradise. Perhaps I am. There may be some flaw in it but I cannot see one.”

Muriel Lester described Gandhiji’s guests in an interesting manner. Some of them were H. N. Brailsford, the politician, Yeats Brown, the author, Charles Chaplin, the actor and Bernard Shaw, the playwright. Then there were the unknown men and women which included some blind men, musicians and again the busybodies and nobodies. Gandhiji’s birthday party was celebrated in simplicity. The children of East End pooled their resources and presented a few rag-dolls and teddy-bears to Gandhiji. Gandhiji treasured them and carried them to India. He was almost immediately imprisoned after his return to India, but he did not forget to write a sweet note to the children from the prison.

A faithful chronicler, she has given us descriptions of much that had happened to Gandhiji in France, Switzerland and Italy.
In one of the meetings in Switzerland Gandhiji told the assembled bodies that the women of India rose wonderfully to join the war of non-violence and that if Europe will drink in the lesson of non-violence it will do so through its women.

Peculiarly enough just when this lady of dedication was being tossed by mental tension because of her refusal to give contribution to the war effort in the Second Great War, she came across a volume of Gandhiji's *Young India*, and then Romain Rolland's book on Gandhiji. The reaction has been described by her:

"How familiar were some of the discoveries described! Tolstoy's book, 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' had worked a revolution in Gandhi's life as well as in some of ours. What we called Voluntary Poverty was given pride of place in his programme under the name of Non-Theft. Prayer was the power on which he wholly relied. And how clear was his testimony that action and prayer must go together and action must be direct. No academic theory or carefully worded resolution in abstract nouns was worth taking time over. Truth telling must be practised without regard for the sensitive susceptibilities of our self-esteem. It can be drastic, almost ruthless, so long as there is no malice, no personal sting, no scorn, no sarcasm in it. How infinitely boring and unreal do the tortuous politeness of various Committees and Conferences appear after the straightforward bluntness of Gandhi's methods!"

She translated the sense of reaction into a reality in her life.
Rabindra Nath Tagore

A great episode the like of which is seldom repeated in world’s history took place at Yervada jail on September 26, 1932. There was a small gathering round the bed of Gandhiji which included poet Rabindranath Tagore and a few others. The occasion was that Gandhiji who had gone on an epic fast in protest against Prime Minister Macdonald’s Communal Award was going to break his fast. Soon after Gandhiji returned from the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, ending in a dismal failure, he was imprisoned. In the Round Table Conference Gandhiji had declared that he would not accept a communal vivisection of India further disintegrating the country’s unity and that he would resist it with a fast unto death. Ramsay Mcdonald, the British Prime Minister, had apparently thought light of Gandhiji’s declaration and he gave the Award. True to his word, Gandhiji undertook a fast and just before he was entering into the fast he had written a letter to Tagore in which he mentioned:

“This early morning 3 o’clock of Tuesday, I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. I look forward to a firm opinion from you one way or the other. But you have refused to criticise. Though it can now only be during my fast, I will yet prize your criticism, if your heart condemns my action. I am not too proud to make an open confession of my blunder, whatever the cost of confession, if I find myself in error. If your heart approves of the action I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear.”

After he had written this he got a wire from the poet and Gandhiji added a postscript to the letter:

“Just as I was handing this to the Superintendent, I got your loving and magnificent wire. It will sustain me in the midst of the storm I am about to enter.”

The poet sent a lengthy wire which ran as follows:

“It is well-worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India’s unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot antici-
pate what effect it may have upon our rulers who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self offering to the conscience of her own countrymen will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."

The world was anxiously watching the rapid deterioration of the frail body of Gandhiji. Just before the crisis the British Government relented and certain changes were made in Macdonald's Award. Gandhiji was satisfied and decided to break the fast. On hearing this news the poet hurried to the jail. Tagore sang a hymn composed by him. A leper co-prisoner Parachure read some Sanskrit hymns. The fast was broken. The world heaved a sigh of relief.

The next day there was a public meeting and Tagore described Gandhiji's life as a constant call to humanity for service and self-dedication.

The bond between Gandhiji and Tagore had been forged much earlier and C. F. Andrews, a dedicated Englishman who came to India first as a missionary teacher and then moved on to Tagore's Shantiniketan helped greatly. Andrews was the golden link between Gandhiji and Tagore. In 1914 Andrews went to South Africa at the request of G. K. Gokhale particularly to iron out the differences between the South African Government and the Indian leaders. It is there that Andrews spoke on Tagore at the City Hall of Cape Town. Gandhiji cabled Andrews' speech to Gokhale and desired that it should be given extensive publicity.

Even before Gandhiji and Tagore had met a mutual regard existed amongst them. Tagore accommodated some of the inmates of Gandhiji's Phoenix Ashram at Shantiniketan, a gesture which Gandhiji never forgot. Soon after his return to India from South Africa, Gandhiji visited Shantiniketan on February 17, 1915. The poet was running an Ashram institution at Shantiniketan. He was not present when Gandhiji visited. In the speech at Shantiniketan Gandhiji said:

"Though Rabindranath, the Gurudev is not present here yet we feel his presence in our hearts.... Indeed, through her ancient culture India will establish friendly relations with the Eastern and Western worlds."
Gandhiji and Tagore met in March 1915 at Shantiniketan. Gandhiji stayed with the poet for six days and the image of Shantiniketan Gandhiji imbibed remained with him till his death. Gandhiji helped Shantiniketan later financially when the institution was in financial need and helped it grow into a Visvabharti for the spread of international brotherhood and rural reconstruction. In 1917 Gandhiji paid a great tribute to Tagore’s poetry when he spoke at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference at Broach. Gandhiji wanted the people of Gujarat to make donations to Visvabharti. He said: “this great poet is a priceless gem of India. No one can deny that his poetry is full of spiritual wisdom, ethical ideas and other noble elements.”

In 1919 Gandhiji launched his Satyagraha Movement. The background was supplied by the Rowlatt Act and the consequences. Gandhiji was keen to have Tagore’s blessings in this mighty movement. He had the poet contacted through Andrews. On April 12, 1919 Tagore wrote to Gandhiji as follows:—

“I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for heroes and not for men led by impulses of the moment.... I have always felt and said accordingly that the great gift of freedom can never come to a people through charity. We must win it before we can own it. And India’s opportunity for winning it will come to her when she can prove that she is morally superior to the people who rule her by the right of conquest.... And you have come to your motherland in the time of her need to remind her of her mission and to lead her in the true path of conquest, to purge her present day politics of its feebleness which imagines that it has gained its purpose when it starts in the borrowed feathers of diplomatic dishonesty.”

What the poet meant was that a movement of this type could only be run by handpicked men. The disruptive forces came quickly in the wake of the movement and disturbances broke out at many places. But when the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy took place the poet renounced his knighthood with a letter dated May 20, 1919 to Lord Chelmsford. While differing from Gandhiji, the poet was at one with him and in his letter of renunciation of the knighthood he mentioned:

“The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to be shorn of all special distinction, and be by the side of those of my countrymen who for their so called
insignificance are liable to suffer degradation, not fit for human beings."

The Non-cooperation Movement was started by Gandhiji without the poet’s blessings despite a keen desire. Tagore’s mind revolted against the item of the boycott of schools by students and the burning of foreign cloth. There was well-publicised controversy between the two over the boycott of the educational institutions by the students. Tagore had written:

"It is in the fitness of things that Mahatma Gandhi, frail in body and devoid of material resources, should call up the immense power of the meek that has been lying waiting in the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India.... The idea of non-cooperation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education but to non-education. It has at its back a fierce joy of annihilation which at its best is asceticism, and at its worst is that orgy of frightfulness in which a human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of normal life finds a disinterested delight in an un-meaning devastation as has been shown in the last war.... What is needed is the establishment of harmony between the physical and spiritual nature of man.... My prayer is, let India stand for cooperation of all peoples of the world... Our present struggle to alienate our thought and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide."

With all his regard for the poet, Gandhiji could not accept Tagore’s argument. In Young India dated June 1, 1921 Gandhiji replied in an article with the caption “The Poet’s Anxiety.” Gandhiji observed:

"Non-cooperation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil.... non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.... This deliberate refusal to cooperate is like the necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows.... Non-cooperation is intended to give the very meaning to patriotism that the poet is yearning after. An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and good-will to a groaning world."

The two had apparently agreed to differ. In 1930 when the Salt Satyagraha Movement was started by Gandhiji, Tagore was in England and he bemoaned in a letter to the Manchester Guardian the cruel operation on the inoffensive people while in another letter to the Spectator he referred to Gandhiji’s “new technique of revolution.”
In 1931 Tagore celebrated his 70th birthday. On this occasion Gandhiji had written:

"In common with thousands of his countrymen, I owe much to one who by his poetic genius and singular purity of life has raised India in the estimation of the world."

Tagore was visibly touched when Gandhiji aligned himself completely with the sufferings of the untouchables and wanted them to have accessibility to the temples and the right to offer worship there. Earlier Gandhiji had fought for the rights of untouchables to use the roads leading to the temple at Vykom in Travancore. At that time he did not raise the question of the rights of untouchables to pray at the temples. In 1932 this question became prominent when Gandhiji pressed the second phase of the fight and the untouchables wanted to get into Gurvayyur Temple for the purpose of worshipping. Then again Gandhiji threatened to go on fast with K. Kelappan. Tagore had written a loving letter to the Zamorin of Calicut and wanted him to give the right to the untouchables so that Gandhiji's life could be saved.

The thick dark clouds on the Indian sky that followed immediately after the failure of the Second Round Table Conference had also filled the poet with serious misgivings and he was torn with the aftermath of the bureaucratic repression. In his address to the staff and students of Shantiniketan and Sriniketan in 1932, Tagore had said:

"Today there are thousands in India, confined in prisons indefinitely and without trial, inhumanly treated, and there can be no doubt that not only are they a heavy burden upon the government but they permanently lower its dignity. The contemptuous vindictiveness ruthlessly pursued against prisoners whether political or belonging to other classes reveals the primitive barbarism lurking in the dark recesses of civilisation, perpetually burdening it with hard problems and tainting its soul."

Tagore did not spare the Indians regarding the burden of untouchability in the Hindu society and in the same address he said:

"We on our part in India have banished a considerable number of our own people into a narrow enclosure of insult branding with the sign of permanent degradation. A dungeon does not solely consist of brick and mortar confinement, but setting narrow limits to man's self-respect is a moral poison more
cruel for victims than the physical one and more demoralising for those who encourage it passively or with pious fervour."

But the personal equation of Tagore was not swept away by his love and regard for Gandhiji. Although Tagore had been personally present and sang a hymn from his *Gitanjali* when Gandhiji broke his epic fast the poet's mind and political consciousness revolted against the Poona Pact (1932) that Gandhiji committed himself to. Tagore wrote and spoke vehemently against the Poona Pact and mentioned that the Pact was certainly not in the interest of Bengal. On July 15, 1936 Tagore presided over the huge meeting in Calcutta and protested against the injustice done to Bengal Hindus under the Communal Award. The popular and scholastic monthly *Modern Review*, edited by Sri Ramanand Chatterjee of Calcutta threw open its columns for articles against Gandhiji's Poona Pact. Gandhiji wrote to both Sri Ramanand Chatterjee and to Tagore suggesting that a meeting of the principal parties could still be convened and the Pact reconsidered and altered to undo the wrong and added: "I would strain every nerve to see that the error was rectified."

History has shown that the Poona Pact had brought in its wake a lot of mischief and added to the political troubles in India.

On another occasion also Tagore had vehemently protested against Gandhiji's observation. On January 15, 1934 a serious earthquake rocked Bihar. Gandhiji who was then touring the country in the cause of the Harijans and trying his best to eradicate untouchability came out with a strange statement that the earthquake disaster was "a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins...for me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign."

Gandhiji was severely criticised by quite a few including Tagore who wrote:

"...What is truly tragic about it is the fact that the kind of argument that Mahatma Gandhi used by exploiting an event of cosmic disturbance far better soothes the psychology of his opponents than his own, and it would not have surprised me if they had taken this opportunity of holding him and his followers responsible for the visitation of divine anger."

Gandhiji replied in the following vent:
“...With me the connection between cosmic phenomenon and human behaviour is a living faith that draws me nearer to God, humbles me and makes me readier for facing him.”

It may be mentioned that Gandhiji’s argument did not convince some of the Harijan leaders as well. Jawaharlal Nehru was completely on the side of Tagore in this controversy.

Tagore also openly reacted against Gandhiji’s ideology that restraint is by far the best method of birth control. Margaret Sanger, the famous American worker on birth control had seen Gandhiji and failed to convince him that restraint can never be a practical remedy to birth control. Gandhiji had stuck to his guns and wrote an article on the dialogue. To this Tagore’s reaction was:

“To wait till the moral sense of man becomes a great deal more powerful than it is now and till then to allow countless generations of children to suffer privations and untimely deaths for no fault of their own, is a great social injustice which should not be tolerated.”

By 1935 Tagore’s health had much deteriorated and he was worried over the financial condition of the great institution of Shantiniketan. Tagore planned to go out on a mission to raise money for the Institution. In this connection Gandhiji wrote to him on October 13, 1935:

“...It is unthinkable that you should have to undertake another begging mission at your age. The necessary funds must come to you without your having to stir out of Shantiniketan”.

Gandhiji followed this up by raising in March 1936 a sum of Rs 60,000 and sent it to Tagore. It was an anonymous donation.

On September 19, 1937 Tagore had written to Gandhiji:

“The first thing which welcomed me into the world of life after the period of stupor I passed through was your message of affectionate anxiety and it was fully worth the cause of sufferings which were unremitting in their long persistence.”

In February 1940 Gandhiji and Kasturba visited Shantiniketan. In the public reception that was given, Tagore observed:

“We accept you as our own as one belonging to all humanity.”
In his reply Gandhiji observed:

"Even though I call this visit a pilgrimage... I am no stranger here. I feel as if I have come to my home.... I have received Gurdev’s blessings and my heart is full to the brim with joy."

Just when Gandhiji was leaving Shantiniketan, Tagore put a letter in his hands and Gandhiji read the letter while in the train. Tagore had written:

"Accept this institution under your protection giving it an assurance of prominence if you consider it to be a national asset. Visvabhatti is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life’s best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation."

In reply Gandhiji wrote:

"Who am I to take this Institution under my protection? It carries God’s protection, because it is the creation of an eminent soul. It is not a show thing. Gurudev himself is international because he is truly national. Therefore all his creation is international, and Visvabhatti is the best of all. I have no doubt whatsoever for Gurudev deserves to be relieved of all anxiety about its future so far as the financial part is concerned. In my reply to his touching appeal I have promised all the assistance I am capable of rendering."

Visvabhatti had its sustained interest to Gandhiji till he passed away. He was once offered the Chancellorship of Visvabhatti but he had hesitated and thought that he could be of better help without being an office bearer. He was happy when Abanindra Nath Tagore, the great painter, was taken as the Chancellor.

No flame burns for ever. Rabindranath Tagore passed away on August 7, 1941 in Calcutta. The death of Tagore made Gandhiji write:

"Gurudev’s soul is immortal and he lives though dead. Gurudev longed to serve the world through India and breathed his last while doing so. His experiment is unfinished. His mortal remains are no more but his soul is immortal like ours. Taking in this sense none perishes or dies. None is born. Gurudev lives significantly. His tendencies were universal, mostly heavenly, through which he will be immortal. Shantiniketan, Sriniketan and Visvabhatti—all these are manifestations of his action. They were his soul for which Deenabandhu Andrews left this world followed by Gurudev. Our true homage should
be the manning of these institutions which he is watching from wherever he may be."

This obituary homage of Gandhiji for Tagore is complimentary to what he had written for C. F. Andrews after his fast in 1932. He wrote:

"That little fast brought me many undreamt of treasures. Gurudev was the richest find. If some one had said 'Fast to find Gurudev' I should have done it without a second thought. I was dying to find a corner in his heart. Thank God, I found it through the fast."

These two seers, Tagore and Gandhiji had their points of resemblance along with their ideological differences. Tagore was pre-eminently a poet but his other facets were as important. His love for humanity, his fervid patriotism, his deep religiosity were at par with those in Gandhiji. But his conception of Art being integral with the life of his people, he was more of a visionary prophet. Throughout his activities, whether in the field of creative literature, or in organising an institution like Viswabharati, or in his lecture tours throughout India and abroad, Tagore would come back to the ever-recurring refrain of the entire Indian culture in which he saw unity and the fulfilment of the human soul. Tagore abhorred any destructive idea unless it was absolutely necessary. He did not keep himself confined to Bengali culture, although he was basically a son of Bengal. He did not want 'deliverance' as the goal of life. As a patriot he had the internationalist in him, but politics and political controversy had no particular fancy for him. Deeply sensitive in mind and fully conscious of the indignities India was suffering from, Tagore did not make that consciousness an obsession with him. He did not take part in the day-to-day politics but when the time would come at the crucial moment, Tagore would come out with his say. Once a sincere Congressman—with him the cult of Swadeshi was a creed in the days of the partition of Bengal. The Tagore family lost a fortune by running a Swadeshi Steamship Company in the Swadeshi days.

Tagore did not enter the world of Gandhiji fully. He did not see much in the spinning wheel and failed to see how the spinning wheel could bring India nearer to Independence. To this criticism of the Charkha, Gandhiji once wrote:

"The world easily finds a place of honour for the magician who produces new and dazzling things."
Tagore, although a poet, saw the relevance of the revival of cottage industries and the need for better agriculture as one of the requirements for India’s prosperity. There both Tagore and Gandhiji met, but Tagore gave us the institution of Sri Niketan for developing agriculture. He sent his son abroad for training in scientific agriculture. Gandhiji stuck to the spinning wheel for the mental and moral discipline of one’s mind and also to strike at foreign textile trade.

If Gandhiji had also specially underlined agriculture probably India would have been a better land today.

Politics played more obviously with Gandhiji but not so with Tagore. Tagore looked at the misery of the mankind and from there he passed on to a vision of God as the guide of the poor. His poetic imagination and beatific vision did not find a place in Gandhiji’s mind who thought more of the material sequence of events, and a world of objective reality which the poet did not have. As someone has said, Tagore was the man of the soul-word, while Gandhiji stands for the soul-deed. Both were firm as rock in their love for humanity and faith in God. Both had decided that if no one else would come to his help, he would have to go alone. Both had a belief that God shapes the destiny but they had chalked out their different paths which ran parallel to each other and crossed each other occasionally. The discovery of the greatness of the other man was mutual and the sense of appreciation was so high that their occasional differences never became prominent.

Gandhiji was more of a religious pioneer than probably Tagore was. Gandhiji was first a social reformer and then came his other facets. His feet were more firmly implanted in earthy matters and his mind did not soar high like the poet’s. It is because of his zest for social reforms that Gandhiji was drawn towards politics. Truth and non-violence were the two torches he kept alive throughout his life and firmly believed in the dictates of his ‘Inner Voice’. Tagore never claimed it, although he had it. The contributions of these two contemporaries to the world generally and to India particularly are of a nature that will last the onslaught of ages.
Rajendra Prasad

Rajendra Prasad was one of the few men who had the closest contact with Gandhiji for more than thirty years. A devoted follower of Gandhiji probably he was the only one who never differed with him on anything. When there was any simmering of doubt he had it thrashed out, but invariably he followed the master. True, on occasions he had suppressed his individual will due to a sort of charisma, but he was one who projected Gandhiji by thoughts and deeds.

Born in an ordinary cultivating family in the district of Saran in Bihar, Rajendra Prasad had his early schooling first in Chapra and then in Calcutta. With a religious background in the family he had his first lesson from a Muslim Divine who began the first day of his education in the name of Allah and offerings were made to Him. In his biography he records the great influence of Khirod Chandra Roy Chaudhury, the Headmaster of the Chapra Zila School and Rasiklal Roy an assistant teacher. They discovered his talent and helped him in his brilliant school career. He came to Calcutta for college studies as an unknown rustic boy but soon attracted the attention of professors like Dr P.K. Roy, Sir P.C. Roy, Sir J. C. Bose and Mr H. Percival. In the stormy days of the Swadeshi agitation of 1905-1907 he was considerably influenced by politicians like Surendra Nath Banerji, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Krishna Kumar Mitra and others. His gentle nature and approach to life found no response in the cult of violence which overtook Bengal and through Bengal other parts of India. He passed both the M. A. and the Law examinations from Calcutta. Gopal Krishna Gokhale invited him to join the Servants of India Society but due to family objections he had to give up the idea. He started his legal practice in Calcutta with almost none to back him. He built up his own practice and attracted the attention of men like Asutosh Mukherjee, Judge of the High Court who offered him the post of a Professor of Law and Dr Rash Behari Ghosh, one of the leading members of the Bar. When the Patna High Court was started in 1916, Prasad came to Patna. The fifteen years
in Calcutta shaped the man during which time he closely followed the current events. In Patna he built up a lucrative practice quickly and it is a fact that he could have been a High Court judge within a couple of years. He was not a great orator but as an advocate he was erudite, deep and painstaking.

Rajendra Prasad’s contact with the Indian National Congress started as a volunteer in 1906 in the Calcutta Session. Dadabhai Naoroji as President gave the slogan of Swaraj and observed: “Indians would not rest till they have achieved their political rights.” Rajendra Prasad followed the speeches of Sarojini Naidu who was already the Bulbul-e-Hind (the Nightingale of India), Madan Mohan Malaviya and M. A. Jinnah. He saw the bitterness between the extremists and the moderates within the Congress and tried to comprehend the ideas of Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Surendra Nath Banerji, and Lala Lajpat Rai in his mind. The future President of the Congress and India was absorbing ideas but did not take any active part. He joined the Congress only after the completion of his studies in 1911 and was elected a member of the A. I. C. C.

The turning point in him came in 1916 at Lucknow Congress when he saw Gandhiji. Gandhiji had already attracted a good deal of attention because of his work in South Africa but he could make very little impact on this session of the Congress. At this session some delegates from Bihar asked Gandhiji to take up the cause of the indigo cultivators of Champaran District who were suffering from various atrocities at the hands of the European planters. Gandhiji refused to take any step until he was personally convinced of the grievances. A lawyer from Darbhanga, Braj Kishore Prasad moved a resolution about the grievances of the kisans. Unknown to the thousands in the Congress the spiritual contact between the master and the disciple was made in an undemonstrative manner. Soon after on April 7, 1917, Gandhiji came to Patna and straight away went to the house of Rajendra Prasad who was absent from the town. Gandhiji’s ways fell flat on Rajendra Prasad’s servant who showed him a well to pull water for himself and have his wash. The next day Gandhiji contacted Mazrul Huq, a Bar-at-law whom he had met in London. Mazrul Haq advised Gandhiji to go to Muzaffarpur, the headquarters of the Tirhut Division where most of the indigo lands were. Gandhiji went to Muzaffarpur where he was the guest of J. B. Kriplani and N. R. Malkani who were professors
in the Government College. Rajendra Prasad and Braj Kishore Prasad met Gandhiji the next day in Muzaffarpur.

Gandhiji's first struggle in India began on the soil of Bihar. He was asked by the authorities not to meddle but he persisted. He went to Motihari, the headquarter town of Champaran District where the atrocities of the European indigo planters were at their worst. History was being made and a number of men from outside and from within Bihar rallied round Gandhiji. Very soon he was asked by the Magistrate to show cause why action should not be taken against him. He attended the court of Mr George Chandra, the Sub Divisional Magistrate and read out a statement which was a shock to the British bureaucracy as he refused to leave Bihar since he claimed the right to stay and look into the grievances. The court precincts were filled with thousands of persons and the authorities were bewildered at the stand taken. Good sense, however, prevailed and the case was withdrawn. An Enquiry Committee was constituted by the Government and Gandhiji was one of the members to enquire into the grievances. Gandhiji had a great deal of help from Rajendra Prasad and a few others from Bihar for this work. The grievances of about 80,000 tenants from 850 villages were recorded under the guidance of Rajendra Prasad. The report was signed on October 3, 1917. The compulsory cultivation of indigo on the portion of the land, known as Sarabeshi and payment of one hundred and one taxes known as abwabs were held illegal. The first struggle of Gandhiji ended in victory. Champaran was the springboard for the future independence of India as the technique of Satyagraha was processed and practised successfully there.

But Rajendra Prasad and his friends failed in another attempt of Gandhiji and that was to bring about a social reconstruction of the backward villages in Bihar. A number of schools where literacy was combined with handicrafts were started but they died soon after Gandhiji left. In this work a number of women like Kasturba, Avantika Bai Gokhale and others took a leading part in moving among the village women and exhorted them to shed fear-complex and insanitary habits. But Rajendra Prasad had the lesson of his life when Gandhiji removed the domestic servants and Kasturba took up the charge of the common kitchen and simple food had to be shared by all without any restriction of caste and creed. Rajendra Prasad was a casteist till that time. He had the baptismal at the hands of Gandhiji in his first struggle in India.
The lesson learnt was borne faithfully by Prasad till he was gathered by death. In 1953 when the writer presented a copy of his book, "Gandhiji's First Struggle in India" to Rajendra Prasad, as the President of India, tears welled out of his eyes and he gave out a lot of reminiscences and said that Bapu had made him through Champaran Struggle.

Thenceforth Rajendra Prasad was always by Gandhiji in practically all the steps taken by him. In the various vicissitudes of the Congress Gandhiji could always count on Rajendra Prasad for support. Quite often Gandhiji had to meet with stern opposition in the Congress Committee and many of his moves were held to be suicidal. A number of his close followers had differed from him on vital issues but Prasad never deserted him. Prasad had to rush to Poona in January 1924 when there was an operation. Again Prasad was with Gandhiji when he held the historic discussion with the Viceroy before joining the Round Table Conference. Rajendra Prasad was one of the very few followers of Gandhiji who had taken up the constructive work in a genuine spirit of sacrifice. The common idea was that Rajendra Prasad was more ear-marked for that type of work but that opinion was found to be futile when he made a successful President of the Constituent Assembly. On the Council entry question Prasad has strong opinions against it and his heart was in constructive work. But when Council entry was decided on, Prasad did not alter and gave his contribution in making the scheme a success. In 1934 when the great Bihar Earthquake had created a havoc, Prasad was released from jail in shattered health but he immediately took up the Chairmanship of the Central Relief Committee and worked wonders. His mild personality and spirit of rectitude made him work in complete collaboration with W. B. Brett I. C. S., a thoroughgoing British bureaucrat who was the Chief Secretary in Bihar in charge of the official Relief Committees. There was never a clash between the official Committee for Relief with the Non-official Committee.

The visits of the Simon Commission to different places had meant demonstrative protests and lathi charges by police. In Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others had received severe injuries from mounted policemen. At Lahore, Lajpat Rai was beaten so severely that he succumbed to the injuries a few days later. But in Patna there was a peaceful demonstration without any untoward incident. In a very cold winter morning the Simon Commission
arrived in Patna and there were about 30,000 persons at the station to voice their protests as against a party of 200 officials and their chaprasis. The I. G. of Police had made a personal request to Prasad to keep the demonstration peaceful and Prasad had rallied to the occasion. Later when Subhash Bose broke away from the Congress, Prasad not only supported Gandhiji but showed that behind his genial personality there was a steel frame of discipline and loyalty.

Rajendra Prasad was a chronic patient of asthma and the frequent innings in the jail shattered his health. He had his share of police beating at Bihpur in the Bhagalpur District. He would often refuse special treatment in the jail. He had also, like Gandhiji, utilised his prison confinement by the study of religious literature, writing out his autobiography and compiling a book of articles written by Gandhiji.

Rajendra Prasad had been President of the Congress thrice. He had to deal with many thorny problems. In his second term he looked into complaints against the Congress Ministries in Orissa and the Central Provinces. Once he had to pull up Pandit Malviya in the Subjects Committee. On being asked by Gandhiji as to how he could do it, Prasad replied that it was not Rajendra Prasad who did it but the Congress President. In 1942 he was arrested in Patna and was lodged in the Bankipore Jail and thousands followed him up to the jail gates.

While he was the Food Minister he was compelled to take over as the Congress President for the third time. He had to deal with Gandhiji’s last fast and the wave of communalism that had broken out. When Gandhiji passed away on January 30, 1948, Prasad observed: “Gandhiji could not have died more beautifully than he did.” In his broadcast he mentioned “the real time for renunciation is now when you have got something to sacrifice.”

The idea of a Constituent Assembly had been discussed by Gandhiji and others since 1922. At the Congress Session of 1934 under the Presidentship of Rajendra Prasad a resolution had been passed demanding that the Constitution of India should be framed by a Constituent Assembly composed of the representatives of the people. This was reiterated nineteen months later at the Lucknow Session. Gifted with a judicial mind and an erudite scholar, Rajendra Prasad was preeminently suited for being chosen as the President of
the Constituent Assembly. When he took the chair he said: "You will accept that whatever I do here will be done in a spirit of service to you all." He maintained a neutral attitude but handled the proceedings in a firm and sympathetic manner. He was unanimously elected as the interim President of the Indian Republic. This was followed by his formal election as the President of the Indian Republic in May 1952 and his re-election as President came in May 1957. It is interesting to note that he was opposed for the chair of the interim President by his old friend K. T. Shah who had told Prasad: "if you had not stood for a party I would not have opposed you." Prasad received 2896 votes out of a total 3486 votes cast.

Rajendra Prasad combined in him the throbs of the old and the new India. Rooted deeply in Indian tradition and culture, he never suffered from a closed mind. He always used to bring dignity and logic in his speeches. He was "Rajen Babu" to the whole of India. An eminent writer both in English and Hindi, he had his contribution to the literary world as well. In his tours abroad he did a lot to raise the stature of India. He was Gandhiji's first teacher of Hindi in Champaran while evidence of the tenants was being recorded in Hindi.

He was that type of a man whose value would increase with the passage of time. His foresight could be seen when he suggested in a letter to Gandhiji on August 2, 1924 that he should not think of leaving the Congress and if the Congress did not follow his advice he could start another organisation to carry out his programme. Dr Rajendra Prasad had rightly observed:

"His life of service, sufferings and sacrifice for our country will be a great inspiration for generations to come".
Romain Rolland

Gandhiji and Romain Rolland met for the first time at Romain Rolland's house in Switzerland on December 5, 1931. Gandhiji's stay there was spread over a week. There was a strange but deep spiritual communion between the two great intellectual savants who did not know each other's language. Romain Rolland's sister mostly acted as the interpreter and there was no hitch in understanding each other. The mutual interest and deep regard between Gandhiji and Romain Rolland had started much earlier.

In 1923 Romain Rolland published his book on Gandhi in French. The book was translated into English in India in 1924. There has been a later translation of the book in 1948. Romain Rolland was a pioneer in projecting Gandhiji in the West. He felt that nothing was more false than to call Gandhiji's campaign a movement of passive resistance. Gandhiji to him was one of the most heroic incarnations of a man who resists and the soul of his movement is active resistance—resistance which finds an outlet, not in violence, but in the active force of love, faith and sacrifice. This three-fold energy was Satyagraha of Gandhiji as Roman Rolland interpreted.

According to Romain Rolland:

"Gandhi had called upon the great shadows, the forces of the past, plunged in moral lethargy, and at the sound of his voice they came to life. In him they found themselves. Gandhi is more than a word; he is an example. He incarnates the spirit of his people."

Romain Rolland saw the principle of Ahimsa (non-violence) inscribed in the spirit of India for more than 2000 years and that Gandhiji had merely transfused heroic blood into it.

This book of Romain Rolland had inspired Miss Madelaine Slade and Miss Muriel Lester to seek light directly from Gandhiji. When Miss Slade met Romain Rolland before she had even heard of Gandhiji, Romain Rolland told her to her query as to who Gandhiji was: "Gandhi is another Christ." Romain Rolland wanted Gandhij
to baptise a conference of the Christian youths at Helsingors and in this connection wrote to Miss Slade on September 26, 1926:

"The fact, more unexpected, but indisputable, is that at the present, the action, the life and faith of Gandhi have been the strongest stimulant of European Christianity. Neither you nor Gandhi could have expected it; and it was scarcely the goal for which the Mahatma was searching. But great actions have unexpected repercussions and often their effect equals or surpasses in importance the effect which had been expected and wished by the man of God. Because, after all, it is not he who acts, it is by his means, God. The fact is that Young Christian Europe has seen in Gandhi the purest Christian (without knowing it) of today—the man, who over and above all the priests and pastors resumes the direct tradition with the spirit of the gospel.

...And whatever may be his personal faith in Hinduism—the most ardent fire, the most divine of all faith, the eternal is that which feels in common with all, and not that which differentiates. God is in the centre of the Bush. And he who hears Him speak, and repeats what He says, speaks for all."

Romain Rolland thought Gandhiji could, to some extent, solve the social crisis through which Europe and Christianity were passing. In a letter to Gandhiji dated April 16, 1928 he wrote:

"You should come to Europe to put yourself in touch with the European youth which have need of your aid, your counsel and your light. And it is necessary—in any case (whether you come or do not come)—and that is indispensable that you should fix in an absolutely clear, precise and definite manner for the world which listens to you, your faith on the question of war and of non-acceptance”.

He wanted Gandhi to play the role of “direct intermediary between the eternal forces.” He rounded off the letter by saying:

"I know my moral inferiority. I am not worthy to touch your feet. But I know the anxiety and the doubts which beset the best of Europe. I transmit her voice."

In a letter dated February 14, 1928 Gandhiji wrote to Romain Rolland:

"I do want to reach perfection. I recognise my limitations, and the recognition is becoming clearer day after day. Who knows in how many cases I must be guilty of hardness of heart, and I should not be surprised if you have noticed want of charity in my writings in more places than one. I can only tell you that the lapses are there in spite of my prayerful effort to the contrary. I suppose it was not without reason that the early Christians
considered Satan to be not merely the evil principle but evil incarnate. He seems to dominate us in every walk of life and man's mission is to overthrow him from power."

In this very letter Gandhiji reminded Romain Rolland again regarding his participation in the Great War by referring to him in his autobiography.

But Romain Rolland was not at all impressed by Gandhiji's arguments about his participation in the war of 1914. Romain Rolland in a letter dated March 3, 1928 to Gandhiji observed that his sister had read to him his Young India of February 10, and he was not impressed with the arguments. In a very moving manner Romain Rolland mentioned that he could

"accept and even approve of the man who believing in the sanctity of the country, of the nation, and in the unavoidable necessity of War taking part in the war... I understand also that the men who do not believe in the nation, and who have a horror of war, but have no means of escaping it, expect by getting themselves shot and, who have not got the moral force, or sufficient moral strength, to seek the sacrifice which will disgrace them in the eyes of the mass of their fellow citizens—may give way and let themselves be enrolled. I pity them, I suffer with them, I have not the right to reproach them. Each one must act according to his strength."

But Romain Rolland could not make out how Gandhiji could participate in a war as he was a man of great courage and of absolute faith and who condemns without compromise human murder, "the war of nations."

One by one Romain Rolland examines the three alternatives Gandhiji had postulated. The first alternative was that the citizens (by free-will or accepted force) of the British Empire, benefiting from its protection hoping to obtain from it Home Rule within the Empire. Romain Rolland shuddered at this and mentioned:

"you feel yourself called upon to participate in her trials, in her injustices, as well as in her sufferings—to look on at her crimes; and you think that from evil, heroically accepted, good can come forth: viz: the recognition by the Empire of the independence of your country (people) who then master of itself will be able to influence the Empire in its turn, by the pure force of the spirit, by the law of Justice and Humanity, Ahimsa... my friend, allow me to say it to you, not without severity: An independence obtained at that price at the price of participation in the bloody sacrifices of thousands of men, would be a crime be-
fore God. And India, for centuries would carry the blood of that crime upon her forehead. The blood would cry against her before God."

The second argument was: "the boycott of the War and the Empire which you judge (very rightly) to be unrealisable. Individual Civil Disobedience bringing with it the suffering of imprisonment." In this connection Romain Rolland wrote:

"You only mention it without stopping to consider it—why? I do not understand. It seems to me to be the only alternative of the three which would be morally acceptable, if not adequate... Why then not have recourse to it at the hour of the ‘greatest crime’: that devouring of the peoples by one another, pushed to butchery by their evil shepherds? I do not understand—and that which tortures me is that an example of yours, could be, will be certainly used, by the masters of politics as a sanction and acquiescence in the most detestable of their heinous offences; the enrolment in their war of sordid interest of the unhappy masses of humanity, of Asia, of Africa, which they exploit and which they use as a substance less precious than the flesh of Europe, for nourishing their machine-guns and cannon."

To this letter of Romain Rolland dated March 7, 1928 Gandhiji had apparently replied but the copy of the reply is not readily available. On receiving Gandhiji’s letter of March 30, Romain Rolland again wrote on April 16, 1928 which follows the previous letter. In this letter Romain Rolland apologised if he was very severe in his expressions and thought Gandhi was hesitating to come abroad partially because of that letter.

After apologising Romain Rolland wrote:

"I am not, like you, a man whose inner force realises itself in action although my action may be always faithful to my thought. But the essence of my life is in my thought. True thought, free thought is my imperious need, my vital necessity and the role which has been assigned to me. The nearer I approach to my individual end, the more I feel myself filled with God. And I realise Him most especially in the beautiful and the true. I know that He is far beyond, but there I touch Him, I taste Him I breathe His breath."

Romain Rolland wanted Gandhiji to go abroad and even if he did not, wanted Gandhiji to "fix in an absolutely clear, precise and definite manner, for the world which listens to you, your faith on the question of War and of non-acceptance." Rolland continued:
"We are both fairly old and our health is shaking; we may disappear any day. We should leave to the youth of the world, which will have to carry the terrible load of the coming half century, a precise testament which may serve them as a rule of conduct. I see appalling trials mounting up over them. There is no longer for me the slightest doubt that an era of destruction is in preparation, an epoch of crushing wars by the side of which all wars of the past will appear as child's play—the chemical war which will annihilate populations. What moral shield shall we offer to those who have got to face the monster, from which we shall have escaped? What immediate reply to the murderous sphinx who waits not? What word of command?"

He warned Gandhiji against equivocation and regretfully mentions that the gospels contained too many passages which without being contradictory at the bottom were so in form and which were being exploited by interested persons. Very bitterly he wrote:

"In the last war one has seen in all countries, hypocrites, fanatics—statesmen like Lloyd George, bishops and pastors, false devout, and—the worst, true devout—authorising themselves with such and such words from the New Testament for proving war, vengeance and holy assassination."

Romain Rolland discussed in this very letter the problem of the problems facing the pacifists who needed guidance. He asked Gandhiji not to think of the war of 1914 but asked him: "as the direct intermediary between the eternal forces and the present and to give a guideline." He ended up by saying:

"Dear friend, I make may excuses for always talking to you with this freedom. I know my moral inferiority. I am not worthy to touch your feet. But I know the anxiety and the doubts which besiege the best Europe. I transmit her voice."

But Gandhiji decided not to go to Europe in 1928. He felt as he mentioned to C.F. Andrews in a letter April 22, 1928:

"There was no call for me to go in answer to the various invitations, but I felt that if Rolland considers it worthwhile my going to meet him in furtherance of the common cause, I would go and incidentally respond to the invitations from Europe."

The relationship between Gandhiji and Romain Rolland had apparently gone on ripening through Mira Ben or Miss Margrate Slade. In a letter written in French to Miss Margrate Slade on September 26, 1926 translated by Mira Ben herself we find the great nearness of spirit and the common area of communion between the
two great Savants. According to Romain Rolland the life and the faith of Gandhiji had been the strongest stimulation for European Christianity. Romain Rolland observed that young Christian Europe had seen in Gandhiji the purest Christian (without knowing it) of today—the man who, over and above all the priests and pastors, resumes the direct tradition with the spirit of the gospel.

Gandhiji's stay at Villeneuve in the two little villas of Romain Rolland was crowded with programme both within the house and outside. As Muriel Lester puts it:

"We fiddled M. Romain Rolland's two little villas and over-flowed into the hotel by the lake side and wherever we went groups of children or villagers or visitors seem to be waiting—to sing, to play the violin: to give him flowers or to ask him questions... The village children kept serenading their honoured guest whenever they got the chance, and that was fairly often. A fiddler used to stand half way up the stairs of the villa and make music while he ate his breakfast. The village male voice choir sang their tuneful best for him. Once or twice we have the perfect joy of hearing M. Rolland interpreting the Beethoven at the piano."

M. Rolland was an invalid and could only receive guests upstairs in his bedroom. The communion between the two was a song of elation, intellectual feast and joy. There were rows and rows of books and fine studies of the heads of Goethe, Beethoven, Tolstoy, Gorky, Gandhiji, Tagore and Einstein. On the day of silence the host put many queries and the guest answered them on bits of paper. The central theme was the social and moral crisis in Europe. Gandhiji emphatically underlined that his method was "empiric" and his conclusions were based on personal experience. He emphatically held out that non-violence could save Europe.

On December 10 Romain Rolland and Gandhiji discussed "Truth is God." When Romain Rolland said that this dictum lacked one important attribute of God—joy, and stressed the pain of searching for Truth and God, Gandhiji in the course of the talk accepted the formula that art brought joy and was good but opposed to reproduction of external things to achieve Truth and Art. In his opinion God was "an eternal principle" and "only living things bring joy to the soul and elevate the soul."

The question of war and non-participation was frequently discussed. Regarding the danger of another war Gandhiji observed:
"If one nation possessed the heroism to submit without answering violence, it would be the most effective lesson. But for this, an absolute faith is necessary."

It could be recalled that it is this firm belief of Gandhiji that led him to advocate in 1940 that no resistance need be offered to Hitler and his famous appeal "To every Briton" was addressed. Again when Japan was pounding at the door of India, Gandhiji wanted the British administration in India to quit.

On the last day of their meeting, December 11, 1931, Gandhiji was interviewed by the Editor of "Proletarian Revolution." Gandhiji accepted that labour was a great force, if organised; but he was opposed to the dictatorship of labour. On that day at the request of Gandhiji, Beethoven's fifth symphony was played by Romain Rolland. This was followed by Romain Rolland playing "The Elysian Fields" of Gluck. One can imagine the companionship that flowed out of Romain Rolland's fingers. They parted with a heavy heart and Gandhiji left for Rome.

In the course of his stay at Villeneuve, Gandhiji paid short visits to Geneva and Lausanne and also some unscheduled visits to the quiet rural side. A public reception was given to him at Lausanne where he was referred to as modelling his life according to the dictates of the Sermon on the Mount. At another meeting of the conscientious objectors to the War, Gandhiji was asked: "Why you regard God as Truth?" Gandhiji replied: "When you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love." Words of cheer, peace and solace to a hungry passion-led world.

In this meeting Gandhiji was asked about the means he has adopted for vindicating India's independence. He replied:

"Now most nations are on the brink of insolvency, a direct result of war. There is material bankruptcy and moral bankruptcy. We are too near as yet to measure its frightful consequences. Nor is the evil confined to the boundaries of Europe. It has travelled to Asia. Everything seems to be topsyturvy. A message of hope seems to be coming over from India. India is trying to regain her liberty by means of Non-violence and Truth. For 11 years she has been endeavouring to follow this means. Tens of thousands of men and women have taken part in this pacific movement. If millions of people can regain liberty without shedding a drop of blood, it will be a great lesson
for the whole world. You have been trying to discover a moral equivalent for war. Perhaps India’s method is that.

“It is too early yet to say anything with perfect confidence, but my plea to you is to study the situation there. Study it, if you like, as a prejudiced, biased friend, but study it with criticism as students. Study it with utter impartiality. If at the end you find it is honest, then, but not till then, throw yourself into the movement. You can help to mould public opinion in Europe and in the world until it becomes an irresistible force. This method of non-violence depends on public opinion, it speaks for suffering people everywhere.”

In this meeting Gandhiji specially addressed the women and referred to the splendid response the Indian women had given by manufacturing contraband salt, picketing foreign cloth and liquor shops, marching to jails and sustaining lathi blows. He particularly referred to that section of women in India which had come out, tearing down the purdah and worked for the nation. He said:

“I really believe that if Europe will drink in the lesson of Non-violence it will do so through its women. The beauty of non-violent war is that women can play some part in it as men. In a violent war the women have no such privilege, but the Indian women played a more effective part in our last non-violent war than the men.”

Gandhiji was 62 and Romain Rolland 65 years of age when they parted after their personal talks. Gandhiji lived another two decades and preached his creed of Non-violence and passed through many phases. Romain Rolland passed away in 1944. Both Gandhiji and Romain Rolland, pacifists as they were, saw Europe plunged into another war. In spite of all that they did they both saw the horrors of war which they had mentally pictured.

Romain Rolland continued his great interest in Gandhiji. In 1933 when Gandhiji started his great fast on May 8, in the cause of the Harijans, Romain Rolland wrote a historic letter to him which could be given in extenso. He wrote:

“We are with you in these grave days when your life is once again at stake. We send forth our fervent prayers that the hardness of heart of those of your people who obstruct the great work of national reparation to the untouchables gives way; that they should tremble to assume before history the execrable responsibility of having caused your death. They will, in the memory of all men of the future, always carry the mark on their forehead.
"But permit me to attach to your sacrifice a larger meaning yet than that for the cause of the untouchables. In these tragic times, when the whole world is given over to the most atrocious violence—on the eve of the world wars which in their amplitude and cruelty will overshadow all those of the past—when the whole of humanity is divided between the oppressors and the oppressed—and when the latter, ground down by the sufferings and injustices, as if made drunk by the violence which make martyrs of them see before them no help except in violence—your immolation before the Goddess of Justice, who is all love and without violence, acquires a universal and sacred value like the Cross.

If the Cross has not—alas—saved the world, it has shown the world the way to save itself: it has illumined with its light the night of millions of unfortunates."

One can only imagine as to how Romain Rolland would have felt and what he would have written if he was alive in 1948 when Gandhiji fell to the bullets of an assassin.
S. Satyamurti

"May I ask what they have made of the defence of this country?" thundered Satyamurti, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Congress party in the Central Assembly on November 11, 1940 in connection with the mid-year Finance Bill. He continued:

"Do you know, Sir, they have disarmed the whole nation, emasculated the whole people so much that the firing of time guns at 4' clock startles people, that we cannot look at a formation of bombers, try to seek shelter, and that the booming of guns makes us feel that we are nearly dead. That is what you have made of the Defence of this country. Is this country being defended at all, and are our people being rendered capable of defending themselves? Our people are doubtless branded with the seal of inferiority upon us till we are held up to contempt and today we are in the position that we cannot defend ourselves except as humble slaves. I, therefore, say, having mismanaged the affairs of this country for 200 years, in God's name, get out. We shall make something of the defence of this country. We are 400 million. Out of the talents of these people we shall produce men who can defend the country and who can even save you. You cannot save us."

Satyamurti was a born orator, a finished parliamentarian and an excellent political strategist. A staunch follower of Gandhiji, he had to fight hard to make the Congress give up its policy of boycott of the legislatures. In this he had differed from his Master. But Satyamurti had the full confidence of Gandhiji from the day he entered the Congress to March 27, 1943 when he passed away.

Satyamurti was born in a middle-class Brahmin family on August 19, 1887 at Thirumayam in Pudu Kotta State in Madras. His father was a lawyer and Satyamurti had chosen the same profession for himself. But very soon he began to participate in politics and his oratory, reasoning and intelligence quickly brought him the honour of being one of the top leaders in the South. He came very early under Gandhiji's influence and joined the non-cooperation movement. He suffered imprisonment four times and it was the prison life that shattered his health. His last imprisonment was on August 11, 1942 when he was clamped under Defence of India
Rules on his way back to Madras after attending the sessions of the All India Congress Committee at Bombay. He was first taken to Vellore jail and then transferred to Amraoti. His health was shattered and he had to be brought back to Madras where he was admitted to the General Hospital. He died in the hospital after several months of illness.

Young Satyamurti first made his mark by crossing swords with the veteran Mrs Annie Besant on the question of her technique of getting Home Rule for India. The venue of the conference was at Conjeeveram, presided over by Sarojini Naidu. Annie Besant was at that time at the top of her political career in India and many eyebrows were raised when Satyamurti took his stand against this veteran leader. Very soon he made his reputation as a keen debater and a parliamentarian. Gandhiji was quick to recognize Satyamurti’s talents. Satyamurti entered the Madras City Council in 1926 and was chosen Alderman and became the Mayor. He was a member of the Syndicate of the Madras University for a number of years and had a big role in establishing the Annamalai University. Gandhiji knew his worth and that is why Satyamurti along with few others continued to enjoy Gandhiji’s confidence although he apparently broke away for a short time from him and joined the Swaraj Party.

Satyamurti was a seasoned Congressman when he along with C. R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and others sponsored the Swaraj Party within the Congress. He went to Great Britain twice as a member of the Congress deputation, once in 1919 and then again on behalf of the Swaraj Party in 1925. He was imprisoned for the first time in 1931 in connection with the Satyagraha movement.

Satyamurti had shown his mettle in the general elections of 1937. It was he who shaped and guided the electioneering campaign in Madras. He was also at the top of his form when he won the battle of office acceptance. His loyalty was apparent when after winning the point of office acceptance he withdrew from the election in favour of Mr C. Rajagopalachari.

It is wellknown that Gandhiji was not enamoured of office acceptance. But when men like Satyamurti and others won the battle of office acceptance, Gandhiji wrote in the Harijan on September 4, 1937 under the caption, "My meaning of office acceptance": 
"I detect in the Act a profound distrust of the nation's capacity to rule itself, running through every section, and an inevitable desire to perpetuate British rule, but at the same time a bold experiment of wooing the masses to the British side and failing that, a resignation to their will to reject British domination. The Congress has gone into the conversion of these missionaries. And I have not a shadow of doubt that if the Congress is true, to the spirit of non-violence, non-cooperation and self-purification, it will succeed in its mission."

Gandhiji's verdict was translated into action by men like Satyamurti in the Central Assembly who were steeped in parliamentary procedure and constitutionalism, but followed a first-class political strategy. The fight within the Councils and Assemblies was vigorously pursued in a planned and disciplined manner and the Government particularly at the Centre was practically reduced for some time to rule by the Certificate Power of the Viceroy and Ordinances. Satyamurti came to the Central Assembly after defeating a talented person like A. Ramaswami Muddaliar and fully justified his election as the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislature. There are numerous speeches of Satyamurti where he had reached a highwater mark in oratory with calculating logic and precise facts. Satyamurti could have earned a very rich dividend if he had not forsaken his legal profession. Politics had claimed him and he faithfully worked as a member of the Madras Legislative Council from 1923-1930 and a member of the Central Legislative Assembly from 1935. In between these years he was imprisoned in 1931, 1932, 1941 and in 1942.

It has been mentioned that Satyamurti enjoyed the confidence of Gandhiji. When Gandhiji was in England in connection with Round Table Conference, Satyamurti sent Gandhiji a valuable despatch as to his views on questions of Defence, Indian States etc. After Gandhiji returned empty-handed from Round Table Conference Satyamurti wrote a long letter to him on December 28, 1931. In course of the letter he mentioned:

"On the general political situation, I desire only to tell you that the opinion of friends here and of myself is that, unless there is a possibility of getting at least limited control over Army and Finance, subject only to agreed transitional safeguards, further co-operation with the Round Table Conference may lead to nothing. On this matter, you are the best judge. But if, after considering every relevant point of view, you come to the conclusion that we should non-cooperate with the further stages
of the Round Table Conference, I feel that a passive attitude will be disastrous. We must then start some kind of fight specifically for Swaraj. While the situation in Bengal, the United Provinces and certainly in the North-West Frontier Province calls for immediate action on our part, I am anxious that the action we take on an all-India scale, should be specifically a Swaraj fight, whatever form individual Provinces may give to the fight, having regard to local conditions.

"The time and the method of the fight will depend not only on ourselves, but also upon the Government, to a large extent. But, to the extent to which time is available for us, I am anxious that steps should be taken to bring about Hindu-Moslem understanding, at least between the Hindus and Nationalist Muslims and that attempts should also be made to bring the Depressed Classes, within the fold of the Congress, as much as we can. I commend these two suggestions to your earnest attention.

"There is a danger also that Liberals and some other non-Congress politicians may co-operate with the Round Table Conference Committees, although there is no prospect of transfer of control over the Army or Finance. We should stir public opinion in the country to such a pitch, that we shall make it impossible for them to go no co-operating, under those circumstances. I have no doubt this will also receive your attention."

At the end of the letter Satyamurti mentioned:

"I need hardly assure you, MahatmaJI, that whatever the future programme of work may be, my humble services are at your disposal."

In another letter on July 13, 1933, Satyamurti wrote to Gandhiji:

"I write this to remove one possible misunderstanding. I am not in favour of the continuance of the present Civil Disobedience campaign, in any form, or under any limitations, unless we are compelled, in order to achieve a position for the Congress to live and work within the limits of the law, as it stands today to renounce our faith in Civil Disobedience or abandon it for all times. That was the impression I gathered from you last night. But now from my talk with my friends, who are in a position to know, I understand the Government cannot possibly ask for any such thing. Do you not think so? If you agree, I suggest the Congress should call off the present campaign without any reference to our future intentions. That will give us what we want now. I think that you will agree on careful consideration that this is the best course for us to follow now.

"It will also save the Congress from the embarrassing position of having to let you conduct the movement on your own
responsibility. If it is inevitable that you should continue the campaign, this is the best solution. But in view of what I have said above, will you not once more consider the advisability of calling off the movement for the present.”

These two letters show Satyamurti as an astute political strategist with a deep maturity of practical wisdom.

On October 19, 1938 Satyamurti wrote a letter to Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji’s Secretary, which showed also the incidence of confidence he enjoyed with Gandhiji. In this letter he mentioned that he was absolutely convinced that if Mahatmaji expressed his opinion clearly in the matter, C. Rajagopalachari would be persuaded to accept the Presidentship of the Congress. He also mentioned that Jawaharlal Nehru was against his continuance as the President by re-election, and that is why he was making this suggestion.

Satyamurti’s death in 1943 was a very distinct loss to the Congress and a personal bereavement to Gandhiji. In him India had a Parliamentarian with the dialectical skill of Fox, clear perception and freshness of Burke and the thunder of William Pitt. In the thirties Satyamurti was a mighty force and a political wizard in Gandhiji’s camp. Satyamurti’s wit was sparkling. Once in the Central Assembly he was pulled up for saying that half the members were fools. He bowed to the chair and with great solemnity wanted to be excused and said, half the members were not fools and sat off.
Sachchidananda Sinha

The great Constituent Assembly for drawing up the Constitution of Free India met for the first time in New Delhi on December 9, 1946. This was a momentous event and on this historic occasion the example of such events elsewhere were followed. The oldest member of the Constituent Assembly was Mr Sachchidananda Sinha, Bar-at-Law of Patna. He was asked to preside over the meeting on the first day. Later Dr Rajendra Prasad, who ultimately became the first President of the Indian Republic, was unanimously elected as the President of the Assembly.

Sinha was born in 1871 and had a long and chequered career before he was made a Member of the Constituent Assembly. He was one of the old guards who had taken active part in Congress politics and was also called upon to fill up responsible posts in the Bihar Government. He was liberal-minded, generous and very popular with the public and at the same time the Government could not ignore him. Sinha was chosen President of the Bihar Provincial Conference held at Bhagalpur in 1909. He was the Secretary of the Reception Committee in 1912 session of the Congress. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Patna University from 1936-1944. He was the founder-editor of Hindustan Review, one of the foremost cultural journals in India which ran for many years. He was the Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and also its President for some time.

Born with silver spoon in mouth, he had married a rich heiress. Sinha’s generosity was quite well known throughout India. He established in Patna the largest library in Bihar, which is now the Central Library of Bihar Government. He was one of the founders of once a Congress Paper, the Searchlight, an English daily in Patna.

In 1888 Sachchidananda Sinha, in his teens, attended the Congress sessions as a visitor. He was intimately associated with the Congresses from 1896 to 1919. He had to give up active association with the Congress when he became an Executive Councillor in the Government of Bihar and Orissa in 1921.
In 1899 he was one of the principal speakers at the 15th session of the Congress at Lucknow and spoke on the separation of the Executive and the Judiciary functions, "a subject worn threadbare but necessarily brought up for the 15th time" as observed by Annie Besant. Sinha reverted to the same subject at the next Congress session in Lahore in 1900. In the course of a speech he observed:

"The Government must rest upon the affection of the people, and that could only be secured by conferring upon them the boon of justice, not the justice which we enjoy today, half milk and half water, adulterated justice, but real and righteous British justice."

In 1902 Sinha and G. Subramaniam Iyer protested that the President of the Congress should be chosen only after consulting the Provincial Committees. This he did when the Reception Committee had elected Surendranath Banerjee as the President, without consulting any Provincial Committees.

At the 17th session of the Congress, the subject of Police Reform was discussed by him. The subject of Police administration was his special forte, and curiously enough later as an Executive Councillor in Bihar and Orissa Government he had much to do with the police. In 1902, while speaking on the Police Reforms, he referred to the inadequacy of the representation of experienced Indians on the Police Commission which was appointed during Lord Curzon's time. Referring to the two non officials on the Commission, Sinha observed with his familiar repartee "one was a C. I. E. always speaking to please Englishmen and the other a Maharaja as yet untried." It is peculiar that Sinha was one of the exceptions who as a Member of the Executive Council of Provincial Government did not get a title. It is commonly believed that the then British administration did not believe in his loyalty although he could not be ignored.

At the 20th session of the Congress, Sinha supported a resolution that a deputation should be sent to England on the eve of the general elections of 1905. At the same session he also moved a resolution that Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Henry Cotton and Mr John Jardine should be elected to the Parliament. Dadabhai Naoroji was the Grand Old Man of the Congress and was also wellknown abroad. Sir Henry Cotton as the Chief Commissioner of Assam was responsible for removing many of the injustices that were being
meted out to the labour in the Assam tea plantations and suffered for this benevolent work at the hands of the Government. In the Congress session of the 1905, Sinha spoke on the Police reforms and the obnoxious partition of Bengal. Regarding Police reforms, he pointed out how the Police Commission disappointed the Indians as it had constituted a special Police Service from which Indians were to be excluded.

When the Congress had a split between the Extremists and the Moderates, Sachchidananda sided with the Moderates and was a tower of strength to Surendranath Banerji and his school, He was actively associated with the first Moderate Congress in 1908. In the 1910 Congress he spoke on the subject of Advocates and Vakils. He said that they should be eligible for Law membership in the Viceroy’s Executive Council. Although a prominent member of the English Bar, Sinha pointed out that the restriction between the English Bar and the Vakils was irksome and should be done away with. In 1911, when the Congress met in Calcutta, he pleaded for an Executive Council for the United Provinces. His speech on the India Council reform in 1912 showed his maturity of thought. He was fittingly chosen as one of the delegates to England in 1914. The other members of the deputation were Messrs Bhupendranath Basu, M. A. Jinnah, Samarth, Mazrul Huq, B. N. Sharma and Lala Lajpat Rai. In the Madras Congress, Sinha and the other members were thanked for the good work they did. In 1916, with C. Sankaran Nair as the Member of Education in the Viceroy’s Council, the Patna University Bill was mooted and Sachchidananda Sinha took an active part in the discussions. This was very pertinent as later he became the Vice-Chancellor of the same University.

Sachchidananda Sinha was essentially a believer in constitutional agitation for obtaining reforms and further advancement in India’s freedom. His legal training and the very many responsible positions that he had held gave him an excellent outlook and he did not encourage open violation of Law. But at the same time he was a great believer in Indian Nationalism. As an Executive Councillor in the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Sinha fought many a secret battle with his European colleagues. As a matter of fact, it is an open secret that but for his independent spirit and love for Indian nationalism he would have been knighted before he left the position of an Executive Councillor. His association with Indian freedom
movement was deep and he had himself written an article on the subject in his journal *Hindustan Review*. He was in active correspondence throughout his life with all the men in India who counted and many abroad. It is very unfortunate that Sinha never cared to preserve his papers. Had he done so, the correspondence would have been a rich archive for research today.

Sinha’s regard for Gandhiji was very deep, though he often differed on various issues. He had been much criticized in his days because as an Executive Councillor in the province of Bihar and Orissa from 1921-26 he took responsibility along with his colleagues for many repressive measures, against the Congressmen. But the Congressmen of Bihar who counted like Maulana Mazrul Huq, Rajendra Prasad and others knew fully well that although an Executive Councillor, his full sympathies were with the main Congress ideology of getting ‘Swaraj’ for India. It is also well known that he had been instrumental in not getting Gandhiji arrested on certain occasions while touring Bihar. He was also able to thwart some of the extreme measures that had been thought of by the Bihar Government. The Congress organisation in Bihar could always depend on him for financial help.

The Congress owes much to a few men of Sinha’s type. They were holding responsible Government jobs. Sinha was a liberal and a Moderate and he belonged more to the school of Surendranath Banerji and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru he was an excellent mediator and many of the intimate Congress problems used to be taken to him whether he was an Executive Councillor or a Vice-Chancellor or Barrister of the Patna High Court. The Sadaqat Ashram, the Congress Headquarters of Bihar in Patna and the *Searchlight*, the English daily which for decades had espoused the cause of the Congress, owed much to the liberality of Sinha. Popularly known as Sinha Sahib, his house was always thrown open and used to be visited by a large number of visitors every day. His table was well known and almost every night there used to be some self-invited guests to dinner. Normally people who stayed back till dinner used to share his hospitality. He had a certain trait of patriarchal patronage in him which often was misunderstood by some but it had a genuine core of sincerity and sympathy.

He used to observe that Gandhiji was able to push India into
the world politics and it was because of this that India could obtain independence much quicker than what had been anticipated. Although a strict constitutionalist, he admired Gandhiji's great idealism and the services he had done to India in fields other than politics. That Sinha was deeply moved at the partition of India would be seen from copies of three letters that he had received, one from Sir Mirza Ismail and two from Sir Thomas Rutherford. It will be recalled that Sir Mirza Ismail's help was sought by Gandhiji also when he was carrying on parleys with Jinnah and Sir Mirza was one of the most liberal-minded Muslims in India at that time. Sir Thomas Rutherford was the Governor of Bihar for a number of years. Here are the letters:

From
Sir Mirza Ismail
Camp No. 1, Ashoka Road,
New Delhi
4th June, 1947

I have virtually ceased to be the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. The official announcement of my relief will come any day.

Is it not an awful tragedy, the division of India? As a nationalist, I deplore it. As a Mussalman I regard it as disastrous. From the Hindu point of view, however, it is not so bad as it is from the Muslim point of view. I am afraid Mr Jinnah has done the greatest disservice to his community as the future will show. I expect there will be reaction against him before long, when the community has begun to open its eyes and see what the practical results of establishment of this so-called Muslim State are going to be.

From
Sir Thomas Rutherford,
ex-Governor of Bihar

Melbourne (Victoria)
Australia
13.5.1947

I am interested to see that some sort of partition is likely to be agreed on as a deplorable method of getting communal peace. I am sorry and regard Jinnah and his supporters among the worst servants of India.

From
Thomas Rutherford

1.9.1947

I agree with you about the fatal division of India. Jinnah was given far too much consideration earlier partly, I think, because His Majesty's Government had an exaggerated idea of the interest taken by the Middle East Muslims in their Indian co-religionists. When they look upon the Agha Khan as a man
of high political influence and knowledge, the India office is capable of anything.

In his learned inaugural address from the chair of the first day’s Constituent Assembly, Sinha discussed certain aspects of the Constituent Assembly and particularly referred to the American Constitutional system. He also referred to the first definite reference to a Constituent Assembly in a statement of Gandhiji in 1922. Gandhiji had written:

“Swaraj will not be a free gift of the British Parliament. It will be a declaration of India’s full self-expression, expressed through an Act of Parliament. But it will be merely a courteous rectification of the declared wish of the people of India. The rectification will be a treaty to which Britain will be a party. The British Parliament, when the settlement comes, will ratify the wishes of the people of India as expressed through the freely chosen representatives.”

Sinha further observed that the demand made by Mahatma Gandhi for a Constituent Assembly, composed of the “freely chosen representatives” of the people of India, was affirmed, from time to time, by various public bodies and political leaders, but it was not till May 1934 that the Swaraj Party which was then formed at Ranchi (in Bihar), formulated a scheme in which the following resolution was included:

“This Conference claims for India the right of self-determination, and the only method of applying that principle is to overcome a Constituent Assembly, representative of all sections of the Indian people, to frame an acceptable Constitution.”

The policy embodied in this resolution was approved by the All India Congress Committee, which met at Patna, the capital of Bihar a few days later in May 1934; and it was thus that the scheme of a Constituent Assembly for framing the Indian Constitution was officially adopted by the Indian National Congress.

The above resolution was confirmed at the Session of the Congress held at Faizpur in December 1936. The confirming resolution declared that:

“The Congress stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people, as a whole, and the government is under their effective control. Such a State can only come into existence through a Constituent
Assembly having the power to determine finally the Constitution of the country.”

In November 1939, the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution which declared that:

“Recognition of India’s independence and the right of her people to frame their Constitution through a Constituent Assembly is essential.”

I may add that in the resolution from which I have quoted above (these adopted at the Congress Working Committee of November 1939) it was declared that the Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage. Since the Congress gave a lead on the subject in 1934, the idea of a Constituent Assembly had come to prevail largely as an article of faith in almost all the politically-minded classes in the country.

But until the adoption of the resolution on Pakistan, in March 1940, by the Muslim League, that political organisation had not favoured the idea of a Constituent Assembly as a proper and suitable method for framing a Constitution for this country. After the adoption of that resolution, however, the attitude of the Muslim League seems to have undergone change in favour of the idea of a Constituent Assembly—one for the areas claimed by the League for a separate Muslim State and the other for the rest of India. Thus it may be stated that the idea of a Constituent Assembly, as the only direct means for the framing of a Constitution in this country, came to be entertained and accepted by the two major political parties in 1940, with this difference that while the Congress desired one Constituent Assembly for India, as a whole, the Muslim League wanted two Constituent Assemblies, in accordance with its demand for two separate States in the country. Anyway, whether one or two, the idea of a Constituent Assembly, being the proper method for the framing of a Constitution had clearly dawned by that time on public consciousness in the country, and it was with reference to that great mental upheaval that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared:

“It means a nation on the move, fashioning for itself a new Government of its own making, through their elected representatives.”

“It remains to add that the conception of a Constituent Assembly as the most appropriate method for framing the Constitution of India had also found favour with the members of the
Sapru Committee in the report of which issued last year (1945), formulated a definite scheme for the composition of a Constituent Assembly. We are meeting, however, in this Assembly today, under the scheme propounded by the British Cabinet Mission, which, though differing from the suggestions made on the subject by the Congress, the League, and other political organisations, had devised a scheme which though not by all, had been accepted by many political parties, and also by large sections of the politically-minded classes in the country, but also by those not belonging to any political party, as one well worth giving a trial, with a view to end the political deadlock which had obtained for now many years past, and frustrated our aims and aspirations. I have no desire to go further into the merits of the British Cabinet Mission's Scheme as that might lead me to trespass on controversial ground, which I have no desire to traverse on the present occasion. I am aware that some parts of the scheme, propounded by the British Cabinet Mission, have been the subject of acute controversies between some of the political parties amongst us, and I do not want, therefore, to rush in where even political angels might well fear to tread.

"Hon’ble Members, I fear I have trespassed long on your patience, and should now bring my remarks to a close. My only justification for having detained you so long is the uniqueness of this great and memorable occasion in the history of India, the enthusiasm with which this Constituent Assembly had been welcomed by large classes of people in this country, the keen interest which matters relating to it had evoked amongst various communities and the prospect which it holds out for the final settlement of the problem of all problems, and the issue of all issues, namely, the political independence of India, and her economic freedom. I wish your labours success, and invoke Divine blessings that your proceedings may be marked not only by good sense, public spirit, and genuine patriotism, but also by wisdom, toleration, justice, and fairness to all; and above all with a vision which may restore India to her pristine glory, and give her a place of honour and equality amongst the great nations of the world. Let us not forget to justify the pride of the great Indian poet, Iqbal, and his faith in the immortality of the destiny of our great, historic and ancient country, when he summed up in these beautiful lines:

Yunan-o-Misr-o-Rome Sab mitgaye jahan se,
Baqi abhi talak hai nam-o-nishan hamara.
Kuch bat hai Ke hasti miti nahin hamari,
Sadion raha hai dushman daur-e-zaman hamara.

"It means : Greece, Egypt, and Rome, have all disappeared from the surface of the Earth; but the name and fame of
India, our country has survived the ravages of Time and the cataclysms of ages. Surely, surely, there is an eternal element in us which had frustrated all attempts at our obliteration, in spite of the fact that the heavens themselves had rolled and revolved for centuries, and centuries, in a spirit of hostility and enmity towards us. When there is no vision the people perish."

This extensive quotation will show Sinha’s range of study and vision. Sinha passed away in 1950.
Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu, once called, the Nightingale of India and India's unofficial Peace Ambassador, met Gandhiji for the first time as a social worker in London in 1914 at the Lyceum, a Lady's club which had volunteered to make clothes for the soldiers in the First World War. As a volunteer of the Indian Ambulance Corps when Gandhiji visited their centre, Sarojini gave him a heap of clothes which had been cut to pattern and asked him to get them all sewn up.

Sarojini in her early thirties and a friend of Gokhale was keen to get acquainted with Gandhiji. When she learnt that he was stopping in England on his way to India from Africa, she went to see him in Kensington. She saw a small man with a shaven head, seated on the floor on a blanket and eating a squashed and messy meal. She burst into laughter. Gandhiji responded with a grin saying: "Ah, you must be Madam Naidu, come in and share my meal." "No! thanks", she answered, "what an abominable mess it is." That was the beginning of a warm relationship which lasted till Gandhiji pre-deceased her. They talked for some time. She left Gandhiji realising the truth of Gokhale's estimate that Gandhiji could make heroes out of clay.

Born on February 13, 1869 in a Bengali family at Hyderabad (Deccan) she was given a slant of Western education with the background of Muslim culture. Sarojini's father, Dr Aghore Nath Chattopadhaya, was an eminent Professor of Chemistry and Principal of Nizam's College at Hyderabad. He was a nationalist and had to suffer for his political leanings. Sarojini passed her Matriculation examination at the age of twelve and stood first among the candidates from Madras Presidency. At seventeen she went to England and graduated from King's College and went to Cambridge. On her return she married Dr Govindarajalu Naidu.

At the age of thirteen she wrote Lady Of The Lake in 1300 lines. Some of her brilliant poems in her teens were published in an English weekly of Cuttack, The Star Of Utkal. When in England, Edmund Gosse, a notable critic of poetry "showed her the way to
the Golden Threshold of Poetry.” Her first volume of poetry in 1905 Golden Threshold created a stir and Gosse remarked that “her spirit although it employs the English language as its vehicle has no other tie with the West.”

She maintained her reputation as a poet through her other volumes of poetry, The Bird Of Time, The Feather of The Dawn and The Broken Wing. Indian themes were her forte in poetry.

At the call of politics she gave up writing poems.

She had brilliant and scintillating imagination, bubbling humour and a pragmatic approach to solve tangled problems. The human touch she had shown in her poetry continued even when she gave up writing poetry. She knew to crack a joke at her own cost. She never lost an opportunity to pull other people’s leg, particularly Gandhiji.

In December 1904 she attended the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress. Ramabai Ranade’s appeal to women to throw off the shackles of somnolence and social backwardness touched her inner core. A brilliant reciter, she recited a patriotic poem Ode To India in the Congress session. She was drawn to the Women’s Movement in India and retained her interest in this to the last. Sarojini was one of the pioneers of the Woman Emancipation Movement in India. She was a member of the enlightened Brahma Samaj and her parents had initiated the move in her.

She spoke in the Congress sessions on different topics in different years. She spoke very feelingly at the Calcutta Session in 1906 at the height of Swadeshi Movement. She spoke on a different theme in the Theistic Conference same year in Calcutta. In 1916 she spoke in the Congress on the Arms Act and Self-Government for India. In 1917 Sarojini vehemently advocated the immediate implementation of the Congress-League Scheme on Reforms in the Congress.

She gladly put aside her literary and domestic activities and literally plunged in the bid for India’s Independence. She never spared herself although she started suffering from heart troubles quite early. She was in Bombay for some years and was very close to Jinnah and Umar Sobani. Both were ardent Congressmen then. Sobani was ‘a prince among men’, as she described him in a letter to Gandhiji after Sobani’s death. There was a warm friendship of mutual admiration between her and Jinnah but when the time came
she put aside her personal feelings and opposed Jinnah in the political arena. Gandhiji had completely influenced her and by 1917 she was one of the chief confidants of Gandhiji.

An impassioned public speaker, she was an invaluable asset to Gandhiji in the Congress Movement. Elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1925, she particularly concentrated on Bengal which had been left very much poorer by the death of C R. Das. In some of her frank and touching letters from Bengal to Gandhiji while on tour as the President of the Congress, she deplored the backwash that had spread over Bengal after the death of C. R. Das. She took a prominent part in the struggle for the removal of untouchability. Gandhiji relied on her judgment and often commissioned her for different tasks. In all the phases of Gandhiji’s Congress Movement she stood as a rock beside him and courted imprisonment a number of times. She attended the Round Table Conference and made her mark in the various political meetings abroad. Her flawless English, grasp of the subject, oratory interlinked with brilliant flashes of wit and humour and the human approach won her applause and warm admiration wherever she spoke. She had sterling independence of mind and never stooped to conquer. She was a co-prisoner with Gandhiji in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona and was a great comfort to Gandhiji when Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji’s Secretary and Kasturba passed away while prisoners there. She brought warmth and cheer to the co-prisoners. She even induced Kasturba to play carrom and would purposely lose the game to cheer her up.

She was not an Ashramite believing in austerities. She loved good food, attractive dress, good company if possible and both light and serious talk. One of her crack jokes to Gandhiji was that he did not know how much the country had to spend to keep him poor. With a broken health and bad heart she was toiling in India’s political and social work till independence came in 1947. She was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh and passed away in 1949. Gandhiji’s death and the consequences of Pakistan weighed heavily on her. She died with a broken spirit and her later poems are tinged with frustration of the unattainable quest of spirit. She was unfortunately, in very poor health in the last few years of her life.

As a Congressite she normally followed Gandhiji and did not often go against him. But she did not mind speaking her mind openly, if she differed from him.
The great bond that existed between the two is fully illustrated in the beautiful letters she wrote to Gandhiji. In one letter she wrote describing herself as the "Wandering Singer writing to the Spinner-Stay-at-Home." Her long letters in poetic language and beautiful calligraphy, gushing with feelings was in great contrast to Gandhiji's prosaic and precise but loving letters of a few lines to her. Gandhiji fully reciprocated her feelings when she wrote once from the boat journey to England on June 14, 1919:

"The further I go away from India, the more my heart is there... I should love to have been there with you through every stage of the battle and to have shared every difficulty and danger... I carry your benediction with me as a talisman."

In another letter while touring the villages of Bengal on July 20, 1926 she wrote:

"Always on my wandering mission of peace I feel your spirit journeys with me to the little green villages."

On December 16, 1928 from abroad she confided in Gandhiji:

"Wherever they hear that I know you, my value goes up a hundredfold apparently and instantly."

Sarojini Naidu literally consecrated her talent, her songs, her speeches, her thought, her charm and her life to the motherland.
Srikrishna Sinha

After a remarkable political career in Bihar for about forty years, Srikrishna Sinha, who was Chief Minister for twenty-four years, passed away. He was a leader from his student days. He combined in him the dynamic oratory of Surendra Nath Banerjee, the dazzling personality of Subhas Chandra Bose, the political philosophy of Bal-Gangadhar Tilak and the political far-sight of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Left to himself, if politics had not claimed him, he would have been probably one of the profoundest scholars, thinkers, and writers in India. Even in the midst of his exacting duties as the Chief Minister he found time to study deeply. He bought hundreds of books every month not for decorating his library but to study them. He was never without a book. Left alone in his room, he enjoyed most with books piled beside him.

A prince among men, Srikrishna was not a recluse. He loved life and with abundant human touch devoted it to the benefit of others. He loved good food, flowers and children. His love for students was deep. He was a statesman of the first order and knew how to carry the services with him. He was a loving patron of the services but his love did not warp his judgment. The Sub-divisional Magistrate of Begusarai in Monghyr district had given him a stiff sentence of imprisonment as a Congressman. He had come to see him with trepidation of heart when Sinha first became the Chief Minister in 1936. Sinha accosted him and said: “So we meet again.” The officer faltered: “Yes, Sir, but in very different circumstances.” Sinha got up and embraced the officer and gave a hearty laugh. That was Srikrishna Sinha all over and it is this trait that at once gave him their unflinching loyalty and efficiency.

Srikrishna Sinha had shown his pre-eminence even as a young boy. The annual session of the Political Conference held at Bhagalpur in 1901 was attended by him as a young boy. Then came the Swadeshi Movement which had its root in the partition of Bengal in 1905. Monghyr district, Sinha’s field of activity, was quickly drawn into the whirlpool of agitation. Surendra Nath
Banerjee visited Monghyr in 1906 and gave the slogan for the boycott of foreign goods and the exclusive use of Swadeshi stuff. The Swadeshi Movement was actively supported by a number of elders of Monghyr and it attracted a band of students. Sinha was one of them.

Young Srikrishna came in contact with the revolutionaries of Bengal and took a vow touching the water of the Ganga that he would, forever, serve his country. From 1910 he started organising the student community of Bihar and quickly attained a popular position. He once thought of joining the Servants of India Society but gave up the idea. He did not want to be tied down to any particular institution. While studying in Calcutta, he took active part in establishing the Bihar Students' Federation along with Dr Rajendra Prasad and others. When Surendra Nath Banerjee was released from jail and carried in a phaeton by some young men, Srikrishna Sinha was one of them. Very fondly in his after life he used to refer to this episode. In 1921 he published a weekly, named Desh Sevak. He was the life and soul of the annual session of the Students' Federation at Monghyr in 1913 which was presided over by Dr Rajendra Prasad. In 1917 he ran the annual session of the Bihar Provincial Political Conference at Monghyr under the presidentship of Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain Khan. He also took an active part in the defunct People's Association at Monghyr.

The year 1917 was an important landmark for Bihar. Bihar was caught in the aftermath of Champaran Satyagraha which was the field for Gandhiji's first struggle in India and the Home Rule Movement of Annie Besant. The militant politics of Bal Gangadhar Tilak also found a good ground there. Bihar became the cockpit of politics in India at that time. History was made when Mahatma Gandhi sponsored the Satyagraha Movement in 1919, followed by the Khilafat Movement. The Biharis in thousands joined Gandhiji under the leadership of Sinha and a few others. Srikrishna gave up the Bar and toured on foot, ekka (horse-drawn carriage), rail and country-boats throughout Bihar. It was Bihar that first passed the the resolution of Non-Cooperation at the Provincial Conference held at Bhagalpur in August 1920. In September 1920 the Congress session at Calcutta passed the resolution endorsing Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation Movement. From the beginning of the movement, Srikrishna Sinha was at its forefront in Bihar. Along with Shah
Muhammad Zubair, Tajeshwar Prasad and others he established the District Congress Committee at Monghyr. Srikishna was ably helped by Anugraha Narain Sinha, Mazrul Huq, Dr Mahmud and others.

The later story is well known. Srikishna Sinha was arrested and imprisoned off and on and spent about eight years in prison. In September 1924, he was elected to the Provincial Legislative Assembly and his position as a political leader was quickly recognised when he was elected leader of the opposition. No one who has had the fortune of attending the Legislative Assembly of those years or who has heard him at political meetings would ever forget his dignified great oratory based on sincerity, reason and religious fervour. The Provincial Political Conference held at Monghyr in 1929, which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel attended was a great event in the history of Bihar. The Congress decided to observe Independence Day on January 26, 1930 and this sent a wave of enthusiasm throughout Bihar and the natural consequences at the hands of the bureaucracy followed. Later the same year he organised the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Salt Satyagraha.

On April 20, Sinha started making salt at Garhpara village and was arrested. On April 23, he was awarded three months' R. I. but the spark he had ignited could not be quenched. The fear-complex of the people of Bihar was completely liquidated under his guidance. Monghyr, his home district, was in the forefront. The Governor of Bihar visited Monghyr on January 15, 1932 and this was preceded by a mass arrest of the leaders. In spite of this, on January 26, 1932 an unauthorised procession of about 10,000 people was taken out at Monghyr. The work he did in Monghyr spread throughout the province.

Under the Act of 1935 elections were held and Srikrishna Sinha returned from Monghyr. He was elected to lead the Ministry as Chief Minister. In September 1939 he resigned when the Congress Ministries resigned on the war issue and ushered another phase of struggle for freedom. In March 1940 the Congress held a session at Ramgarh in Hazaribag district and it decided to start Satyagraha against the War Policy. Permission was given only to confirmed supporters of the Congress to offer individual Satyagraha; Srikishna Sinha became the first Satyagrahi. He offered Satyagraha at the lawn in Bankipur (Patna) and was immediately arrested. Then came
the 1942 Movement. He was arrested and jailed. Towards the end of 1943 the movement abated. In 1944 Srikrishna was released. In the spell between 1944 and the beginning of 1946, Srikrishna Sinha was reorganising the Congress offices throughout Bihar. At the beginning of 1946, elections were held and he was returned to the Legislature and again elected the leader and the Chief Minister to take up the reins of administration. In the next election also he was elected leader and continued to function as the Chief Minister.

Srikrishna Sinha had drawn deep from books of philosophy, poetry and criticism. He was a great admirer of Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath. His adaptability, blend of ideas and high culture were epitomised in two institutions in Bihar, the Srikrishna Seva Sadan at Monghyr and the Rabindra Bhawan at Patna. He donated about twenty thousand books to the first institution and but for him the Rabindra Bhawan would not have been established in Patna. From the very beginning of his career, Srikrishna Sinha had appealed to the people to base their enthusiasm on a religious and cultural basis and his magnanimity of heart made him stern in religion and life.

Srikrishna was a true Congressman and was a close follower of Gandhiji. He liked Gandhiji and thought that politics must have its basis in religious fervour and a high moral standard. There were occasions, however, when he had the courage to differ from Gandhiji in administrative matters. When communalism broke out in Bihar, he had to oppose a probe by the Central authorities which Gandhiji wanted. He thought this would be a reflection on his administration and he could not command the same respect from his officers. Srikrishna Sinha did not want to leave Bihar, his land of birth and so he remained a provincial leader all his life. He was much above parochial thoughts and along with Dr B. C. Roy, the Chief Minister of Bengal, sponsored the scheme of a Zonal State of Bengal and Bihar. This made him very unpopular in Bihar and the idea had to be given up.

His life was simple and noble and fully consecrated to the service of the people.
Sri Narayana Guru

Sri Narayana Guru was an outstanding landmark in the social and religious history of the South, particularly in Kerala.

Essentially a Sanyasin whose aim in life was to preach one God, one religion and one caste, his role was, indeed, very onerous and Himalayan when one recalls that he was himself an Ezhava, an untouchable in the eyes of the orthodox Hindus of the South.

The South has been much more of a citadel of Hindu orthodoxy and convention than the North. Whether due to the frequent invasions and a more rapid infiltration of different peoples with different cultures in the North or any other region, Hinduism in Northern India has always been more eclectic and broad-based. Saints and religious leaders from the lower castes of the Hindus in different ages have not been uncommon in the North. There has even been a confluence of Hinduism and Islam in some of the creed and religious orders. Muslim Dervishes and Pirs have been almost deified and have been worshipped by the Hindus. The preachings of the Sikh Gurus, Kabir, Dadu, Ramdas, have brought solace and religious inspiration to both the Hindus and the Muslims. The various Darghas and Sharifs of the Muslims, the Kadam Rasuls still attract both the Hindus and the Muslims to give their offerings. Akbar's Din-e-Ilaahi creed was a bold humanitarian move based on both Islam and Hinduism. While doing away with casteism and idol worship, Raja Rammohun Roy preached theism of the Upanishads and founded the Brahma Samaj with advanced ideas of society and women emancipation. One does not hear much of a confluence of ideas of different religions in the South. Even in the fold of the Hindus the higher castes carefully shunned the lower castes.

As a result the temples of the South had become the religious shrines for the high-caste Hindus only. These temples were a taboo for the lower castes. The castes who were untouchables according to the orthodox Brahmans, Kshatriyas or Sudras could not even enter the temples, not to speak of offerings and prayers. The higher
caste-hierarchy with the Nambudiripad Brahmins at the top stopped with the Nairs. At some places the untouchables could not even go by the roads approaching the temples. Vaikom temple in Kerala was an instance. The four roads leading to the four gates of the temple could not be used by the untouchables beyond a certain point which was about 100 yards away from the temple itself. The Christians and the Muslims could pass by these roads, carry liquor or beef, even dogs and other animals could pass by them but no untouchable could. But the moment the untouchables were converted to Christianity or the Muslim creed the taboo vanished.

The picture of the treatment of the untouchables comprising the Ezhavas, the Thias, the Pulayas, the Parayyas and others in Kerala and Malabar at the beginning of the twentieth century was gruesome and cruel. Untouchability had been corrupted into unapproachability. The idea was that if the thendal castes (untouchables) or the Avarnas (those who are outside the pale of Varnas) would go near a temple or a high-caste man, the temple and the high-caste Hindu would be polluted. The Ezhavas numbered more than a million. They were rich, educated and highly cultured. The Pulayas who were more than three lakhs were the agricultural labourers and without whom a Savarna (inside the pale) Hindu could not get his land ploughed. The Parayyas whose strength was also about three lakhs were the manual workers and there home-made articles were used in the temples or by the temple-goers but they could not go anywhere near the temples. The Shanars or toddy-tappers, numerically very large, formed an integral component in the economy of the region, as otherwise no jaggery could be made or coconuts could be brought down. The area Vaikom was in an Indian-administered territory which comprised practically the whole of Travancore. The tragedy was the Maharajas of Travancore were extremely benevolent, kind and conscientious rulers. But they were the prisoners of convention and superstitions that had conglomerated and passed as religion. The Travancore Maharaja called himself Padmanabha Dasa, the Servant of the Padmanabha deity whose temple is at Trivandrum. He would spend hours in worship, distribute thousands in charity but if he would meet an European it must be before 9 a.m. so that he could have a purificatory bath. An Avarna boy could not study with a Savarna boy. The Avarnas would have to keep themselves away from the Nambudiripad Brahmins on the road. The Avarnas had their separate wells, water pools, schools and even shops.
This was Kerala where Sri Narayana Guru was born and brought up. For his legacy he had the unenviable stories of the Shanar riots of 1858 to quell which Dewan Madhava Rao had to move the Police and the Army. The riots were on the question whether the Shanar women had the right to cover the upper parts of their bodies or not. After prolonged negotiation the Dewan conceded this right with the restriction "that they do not imitate the same mode of dress that appertains to the higher castes." For Sri Narayana Guru's environs the position was yet nauseating. If an untouchable girl accidentally came across the high-caste men she had to show her obeisance by uncovering her breasts!!

Sri Narayana Guru threw himself against all this. His creed of one God, one religion and one caste quickly spread throughout Kerala and Malabar areas. From his headquarters at Varkalai in Quilon District (where his Samadhi is now a place of pilgrimage) he moved often to the distant corners and preached. He got thousands and thousands of ardent followers. The discourses were simple and logical. He chose quite a few charming spots in Kerala, the land where nature had lavishly showered herself and built sepaerate temples for the Ezhavas and other untouchables. He would, when asked, say they were for the Gods, for the untouchables!! He was greatly helped in his great mission by the Ezhavas who were rich businessmen. The great Malayalam poet, Kumaran Asan materially contributed to the mission of Sri Narayana Guru by his forcible, simple and popular poems. The Organisation with Sri Narayana Guru at its head came to be known as SNDP Yogam.

This organisation came to be a great force in the second decade of the twentieth century. Sri Narayana Guru by his preachings and Kumaran Asan by his poems, made a great impact on the thousands of men and women of both higher and lower caste Hindus. The spirit of restiveness as an outcome was quite apparent. In 1917 a public meeting of the Avarnas was held in Quilon when C. Raman Pillai, a retired High Court Judge moved for the opening of all State temples to the Avarnas. This was great advance for Kerala. T. K. Madhavan, another leader of Ezhavas and a follower of Sri Narayana Guru carried the idea to the Sree Mulam Popular Assembly at Trivandrum. The reply of the Dewan on behalf of the Government was that as the matter relates to religion there could be no interference. Unfortunately this reply might have suited the British Government but not a Hindu Government which had to look to the
interest of the lowliest of the Hindu subjects. The undaunted T. K. Madhavan again raised the question in the Assembly in 1921 and the Dewan repeated the same reply.

But events moved fast. There was no militant tempo in Sri Narayana Guru. But his gentle persuasiveness, his tours, the material help given to the cause by a number of Ezhavas brought in a wave of unrest throughout Travancore. Protest meetings were held at various places where the rights of the untouchables to the use of the road, entry to the temples and the removal of their numerous injustices were fully discussed. There was a huge meeting at Alleppey presided over by one Dr Palpu, a doctor with British qualifications, but who could not get a job in Travancore because he was an untouchable. In this meeting there was a talk that as the Maharaja of Travancore and his Government were not sympathetic and would not bend, the Ezhavas and other untouchables as a body should become Christians on the next birthday of the Maharaja. But the poet, Kumaran Aasan and others strongly opposed it and gave out that they must remain within the Hindu fold and fight for their rights. The impact of Sri Narayana Guru was also being felt by the Savarna Hindus and a section of the younger generation even among the Brahmins came closer to the Guru’s fold.

The matter of the untouchability and unapproachability was discussed in the Cocomanda Congress Sessions in 1923 and the Congress convened the Kerala Untouchability Committee with Sri K.P. Kesava Menon, Editor of the Malayalam daily Matru Bhoomi as the Chairman. This Committee toured throughout Kerala and Malabar for about a month and discovered that Vaikom in Kottayam District would be an ideal place for offering a Satyagraha to fight for the rights of the untouchables. It has to be mentioned that at that time there was no question of entering the temple itself or claiming the equal right of worship. Some of Sri Narayana Guru’s followers were in the vanguard of this move.

The Vaikom Satyagraha was led by K. P. Kesava Menon, Kurur Nambudiripad, T. K. Madhavan, K. Kelappan, Chata Kutty Nair, George Joseph, S. M. Naicker and others. The volunteers would step beyond the prohibited zone and court arrest. The leaders were in active touch with Gandhiji who had actually been consulted before it was sponsored. It was due to mainly Gandhiji that the movement remained strictly non-violent.
The movement started in March 1924 and lasted for several months. For months Vaikom was the main coverage of the papers in English and the languages. C. F. Andrews, Mannath K. Padmanabhan Pillai, the leader of Nair Service Society, C. Rajagopalachari, Srinivasa Iyengar and a host of others visited Vaikom and addressed meetings. Gandhiji met Sri Narayana Guru. He had spent a few days at Vaikom Satyagraha Ashram (the site was given by Sri Narayana Guru) and addressed meetings but he refused to visit the temple. During the Vaikom Satyagraha a huge meeting of the followers of Sri Narayana Guru (SNDP Yogam) was held at Vaikom. The Akali Sikhs from the Punjab under Sardar Labh Singh ran a free kitchen for months and fed the volunteers and the delegates of the SNDP Conference at Vaikom. The volunteers were manhandled and even lime was put into the eyes of some of them. All the front rank leaders mentioned were imprisoned but treated well by the prison authorities. Chatha Kutty Nair fasted for the cause but at Gandhiji's instruction the fast was broken. Some of the Malayali Nambudiripads and the Kshatriyas also lent their support to the movement. The Vaikom Satyagraha was a success. The roads leading to the temple at Vaikom were thrown open to all sections of the Hindus.

This was only the beginning. The struggle continued for years. A Temple Entry Committee was constituted and had its deliberations and gave the report in 1934. The Guruvayur temple in Cochin became a storm centre and K. Kelappan resolved to fast unto death. Gandhiji also wanted to do it but later the fast resolution was withdrawn. Gandhiji guided the temple-entry movement as a prisoner in Yervada Jail in 1932. A number of leaders toured throughout Kerala. The old guards of the Vaikom Satyagraha were again the foremost, ably helped by some younger men like G. Ramachandran and others. On November 3, 1936 the All Kerala Temple Entry Conference forced on Dewan Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and submitted a Memorandum praying for an immediate and unreserved temple entry for Harijans, signed by 50,522 savarnas of Travancore. Sri Narayana Guru's mission was, in a way, fulfilled. On November 12, 1936 by a Proclamation the Travancore Government decided that "there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government."
No colossal movement can be run to success by one man alone. Sri Narayana Guru had surely paved the way for the removal of untouchability and unapproachability by his propagation of "one God, one religion and one caste." Gandhiji learnt a lot from Sri Narayana Guru's teachings and utilised the Guru's contributions for fighting untouchability in the South.
Srinivasa Sastri

Sastri was born ten days before Gandhiji and had pre-deceased Gandhiji on April 17, 1946.

He was an intellectual giant, a seasoned practical politician who believed in evolution. He was meant more for the intellectual elite and shone there. Gandhiji was more revolutionary and he was probably more at ease with the masses and loved pulling down things and reconstructing them. Gandhiji and Sastri had the highest regard for each other and agreed to differ on various fundamental issues. Gandhiji wanted Sastri’s help whenever he thought he should ask for it and Gandhiji got it. While going to observe his epic fast in 1932 Gandhiji wrote to Sastri seeking his goodwill. Although Sastri was only a few days older, Gandhiji gave him proper regard as an elder brother and also addressed him as such. Sastri also reciprocated. From almost his death bed Sastri pleaded with Gandhiji to go and attend the Peace Conference and give his contribution. Both had shaped India’s destiny in different ways but with a common aim. Here were two great savants at poles apart ideologically but with unbreakable links of regard and love.

Both of them had one and the same Guru Jivan Gokhale. Gandhiji described Sastri as a “fellow disciple” and observed:

“I was to have the honour of being Gokhale’s successor but I found in Sastri a worthy usurper to whom I made a willing surrender. I had and have no gifts which Gokhale had and Sastri has in luxurious abundance.”

But it was again Sastri who saw that Gandhiji’s application for the membership of the Servants of India Society was turned down in 1915. In one of his speeches Sastri made his position clear as to why Gandhiji was not taken as a member of the Servants of India Society. He said:

“We saw deep differences between him and us and felt, though none could have given clear expression to it, that his political evolution would take him further from us. Still our hearts trembled as well as grieved when we told him that it was best for both of us to remain apart and pursue our several courses. The event has vindicated our decision.”
Obviously Sastri, like Annie Besant, found an unpredictable element in Gandhiji. In a letter to his brother on January 10, 1915 Sastri had written:

“If he drops his anarchic views and takes ours he joins the Servants of India Society. If not he eschews politics and becomes an exclusively social worker.”

Sastri’s personal equation and political schooling were different. He had been brought up in different environments—academic institutions, the Servants of India Society, Legislative Halls, Conferences and high level discussions. Sastri was at his best in selected enlightened circles. Gandhiji was probably more at ease with the masses and could mix equally with the rebel crowd and the political and social elite. Gandhiji had rubbed shoulders in his lifetime with high and low, giants and dwarfs, intellectuals and loafers. Sastri was a good oarsman for calm waters while Gandhiji could row a boat better in turbulent waters. Sastri loved the calm sea and the gentle breeze, political evolution and gradual emancipation. Gandhiji shone better after raising a storm and rushing to and fro as a stormy petrel. Sastri was more timid in approach, being a practical and a seasoned politician. Gandhiji was absolutely sure of himself and did not mind being amusingly contradictory at times in his approach to a problem. It was the self-same Gandhiji who had pulled students out from schools and colleges when he launched the non-cooperation movement and asked them decades after not to dabble in active politics.

The two friends had different types of heritage. Sastri was born a poor Brahmin and struggled his way through the world. Gandhiji was a Bania, a fact of which he often made a joke at himself and born with silver spoon. Sastri rose gradually from a school teacher to the position of a Privy Councillor. After a few years of political schooling in an unassuming manner, Gandhiji suddenly caught the world unawares by his struggle for the Indians in South Africa. Thereafter Gandhiji’s was a move from one glory to another. Even before he came back to India he had already earned the epithet of Mahatma and he allowed the use of this epithet and has even used it himself in some letters. Sastri believed in India’s political emancipation through constitutional methods, Legislative Chambers, high level political discussions and all that. Gandhiji took politics to the agricultural labour, factory hands and the rebel
crowd. He wanted the mass revolution and not a constitutional slow evolution through cooperation with the British. In a way one may say that while Sastri was for evolution, Gandhiji was for revolution. Sastri was all for extending India’s cooperation to the British. His achievements covered membership of the Imperial Legislative Council, membership of the Imperial Conference in London, freedom of the City of London, membership of a delegate to the League of Nations, Geneva, Leadership of the Indian Delegation, limitation of the Armaments Conference, Washington, membership of the Round Table Conferences in London, etc. He was the First Agent to the Government of India in South Africa and had led the deputation to East Africa and Malaya. In India he had been fully appreciated and was one of the finished orators India had seen. In the intellectual domain Sastri was unique and his contribution to the education world has been very considerable.

While Sastri forged his way into the world by commonly accepted norms, Gandhiji made his way often by uncommon norms. Both had their base in religious fervour and believed in God but both had shaped differently. Gandhiji was more at ease in carrying on struggles in an orthodox manner and by his quaint methods.

Gandhiji and Sastri met for the first time on January 9, 1915. But they were familiar with each other since at least 1912 when Gokhale visited South Africa and Gandhiji was working as the Public Relations man for Gokhale. In a letter dated November 3, 1912 Gandhiji acquainted Sastri with Gokhale’s activities in South Africa. In various ways Gandhiji worked for Srinivasa Sastri and so did Sastri for Gandhiji.

On the night of January 12, 1924 just before Gandhiji was going to be operated upon, Sastri wanted from him a message but Gandhiji was reluctant. Sastri mentioned that a message purporting to be his had already been issued by Mohammad Ali. From almost the operation table Gandhiji dictated a note and Mohammad Ali had to contradict the wrong statement. It was Sastri again who gave the news of Gandhiji’s successful operation to the world.

Gandhiji was instrumental in getting Sastri the assignment as Agent of the Government of India in South Africa in 1927. Gandhiji paid a high encomium to Sastri by writing an article in Young India where he mentioned:
"But he has yielded to the pressure of friends, specially, when it was urged upon him that he alone could successfully inaugurate the working of the Agreement in bringing about which he played not an inconsiderable part.... Srinivasa Sastri had by his eloquence, transparent sincerity, sweet reasonableness and extreme earnestness won the esteem and respect of the Union Government and the Europeans in South Africa during the short time that he was there as a member of the Habibullah Deputation. I know how nervously anxious our countrymen in South Africa were that he should become the First Agent. It was impossible for Srinivasa Sastri whom God has endowed with a generous nature not to respond to such a unanimous call from South Africa."

Sastri did not approve much of Gandhiji's strategy in the political field. The political development in India often strained relationship between Sastri and Gandhiji but the relationship was never broken. In 1924 under the pressure of the Swarajist Party, the constitutional work through the legislatures was approved by Gandhiji who advised the no-changers in the Congress rank to devote themselves to Khadi, National Schools, Hindu-Muslim Unity problem and other constructive work. Sastri was most unhappy. He thought that it was a dubious policy that the two wings of the Congress should be kept separate and be deliberately put to war with each other. When Sarojini Naidu asked him to attend the meeting of All Parties at Sabarmati, Sastri wrote:

"I am desirous like others of a common understanding among political parties and of a re-union under the wings of the National Congress. But I wish that our reconciliation should be based on simple and intelligible agreements; and being a man of peace, I am not attracted to the idea of re-entering the Congress as a disaffected minority with prospect of conducting internecine struggle of indefinite duration for the purpose of becoming the majority."

He was very critical of Gandhiji's fad for Khadi, village work and Hindu-Muslim unity. Regarding Khadi he had pronounced:

"It is an illegitimate imposition in an organisation purporting to comprehend all progressive politicians."

Regarding Hindu-Muslim unity at the time of Kohat riots when Gandhiji did not openly condemn the Muslims for the atrocities against the Hindus and Lala Lajpat Rai did, Sastri defended Lala Lajpat Rai by writing:
“Really speaking, in Gandhiji’s Utopia where no one thinks ill of another nor does ill to another, where hardness, conflict, oppression and the like are unknown, courage and cowardice will have no existence.”

Regarding the Congress attitude to the Muslims Sastri had once written to Sivaswami Aiyar:

“We have inherited from the old Congress Constitution a clause giving to minorities a practical veto over what they may choose to regard as affecting their social or religious institution. This cannot but lead to the enthronement of the Mohammedan Community in a position of indisputable advantage.”

Sastri was one of the few who did not like the way the Nehrus were influencing Gandhiji. It is well known that the relationship between Sastri and Jawaharlal Nehru was not very cordial. When the Independence Resolution was adopted by the Congress in Lahore in 1929, Sastri bemoaned to Sivaswami Aiyar by writing:

“Gandhiji is opening his mouth wider and wider. No party or group in England can satisfy him. Is Jawaharlal going to swallow Gandhiji? No doubt in my mind that Gandhi will feel perfectly happy in that event.”

Gandhiji knew Sastri and literally pleaded to him by writing:

“I do hope you are not over-angry with me for my doings in Lahore. I have but followed the inner voice.”

Sastri fully visualised the consequences of passing the Independence Resolution and the Salt Satyagraha and Dandi March. He appealed to Gandhiji and others to stop all this. He was not heeded to. But later Sastri did come forward and played tactfully the role of a peacemaker. Sastri’s contribution to the truce between Gandhiji and the British Government in India which ultimately led to Gandhiji’s participation in the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931 was very great. Lord Irwin thanked Sastri for Gandhi-Irwin pact.

But Sastri was not happy at the role that Gandhiji played as a sole delegate of the Congress in the Second Round Table Conference in London. Sastri made no secret of:

“The utter incapacity of Congress and Gandhi for real constructive work.”

He described Gandhiji’s work there as another “Himalayan blunder” and advised him to explore every possible avenue of peace before going back to Civil Disobedience.”
Then followed the dark days of vindictive repression with Gandhiji and practically all the Congress leaders in prison. Lord Willingdon was ruthless in putting down Civil Disobedience. The peace loving Sastri could not restrain himself. He took up the matter with the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald and put himself in touch with Lord Willingdon. Sastri was working behind the scenes and it was through his instrumentality that Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Irwin were contacted and then Lord Willingdon. As a result of this move particularly by Srinivasa Sastri, whose ideology differed so deep from Gandhiji, that Gandhiji was released.

But tussle broke out again between the government and the Congress and this time Sastri wrote a very plain letter to Gandhiji:

"Behind and beyond your present tussle with Government lies the future of the country. How can Congress best secure that future? Your answer is clear. But another answer is taking shape in peoples' minds. It is that Civil Disobedience, both mass and individual, must be given up. A new policy, aiming at constructive national good in legislation, finance and administration all around has long been overdue and must be tried, over and above what is now called the constructive programme of the Congress.... In this sore strait, the county looks to you to play a greater part than you have ever played. (Pardon me: what I mean is the greater part of the county as I figure out the parties). Save your individual conscience, pursue civil disobedience, seek the goal and embarrass Government as you like but leave Congress free to evolve a new programme. It simply cannot do so, while it has to give authority and countenance to individual disobedience."

Gandhiji replied to this letter on September 9, 1933 and wrote:

"The fact is that I do not want power. I look upon it as a privileged service. The moment I feel that I can get out of it to the benefit of the Congress, I will not fail. However, you may depend upon me that I shall strain every nerve to adopt your advice. A great deal will depend upon Jawaharlal."

Sastri's advice had some weight on Gandhiji. Gandhiji declared in 1934 that he was retiring from the Congress and going to devote himself to village uplift programme and Harijan work. But the way Gandhiji wanted to work did not impress Sastri. Sastri saw in the village uplift programme a move "to turn ploughshares into sabres." He wrote back to Gandhiji in reply to a letter of his
that the village industries problem was in nature and extent far more difficult and baffling than the attainment of Swaraj. Sastri wrote plainly:

"You appear to be opening the first campaign of an endless and quixotic war against the modern civilisation."

The differences in their approach to political problems had continued practically till Sastri died. Sastri never approved of Gandhiji fasts and once wrote:

"I will not pretend for a moment that I approve of your fast.... You appear to me to be confounded by anxious thought."

Gandhiji once wrote to Sastri:

"You know my regard for you. Though we are as poles asunder, or seem to be, in mental outlook at so many points our hearts are one."

From 1934 to 1939, we find Congress working through the Legislatures brought in by the Government of India Act, 1935. In 1939 when the Second World War broke out, the Congress Party quitted the Legislatures on the ground that they were not consulted in the declaration of war and again started its agitational approach.

Regarding Gandhiji's attitude, Sastri wrote to Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji's private secretary, on September 22, 1939 as follows:

"In fact, as I have more than once pointed out to my friends, their non-violence is embodied in the Biblical text ‘Resist not Evil’, while Gandhi’s teaching may be summed up as ‘Resist Evil, but passively and non-violently’. The distinction is real and visible, in the formulation of consequences. In the not improbable event of India being a theatre of war, is Gandhi prepared to advise his countrymen to bare their breasts to the enemy’s swords? A little while ago, I would have pledged my word he would do so, but I am not confident any more."

This comment provoked Gandhiji to refute the charge in the Harijan of September 30, 1939.

Gandhiji's offer of non-violent cooperation in the war-effort, if the British Government agreed to India's demand of independence, was rejected by the Congress Working Committee which recommended C.R's formula of an all-out cooperation. Gandhiji resigned
from the Congress on this issue but recommended the proposal to the Government. Sastri was critical of this "double standard" of Gandhiji and observed: "Partial abandonment of non-violence is abandonment. How can you have struck with it?" In his opinion Rajaji's resolution or formula was foredoomed being coupled with the Independence demand. What Sastri wanted was that the Congress, being the strongest party, should "grasp at every opportunity of acquiring power and using it for the protection of the people," when the enemy in Japan was knocking at the very gate of India. The keynote of Sastri's political faith was "peaceful existence is prior to independence." He was also very keen to guard against the internal disorder which were being disturbed by private militias as Khaksars.

With the arrival of new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, Sastri was again the mediator. He wrote letters to Gandhiji, Wavell and Amery, the Secretary of State for India and desired them to have a new look at events in India. He wrote to Gandhiji:

"The people of India, for whom you have slaved these thirty years as no one had done, lie prostrate in the deadly grasp of hunger, destitution and stark despair. Their trust in you, however, is the same; if possible, tenderer and purer for your sufferings and sorrows.... Dear Brother, an opportunity has come, the like of which never was and never will be for generations. At the ensuing Peace Conference, which may meet sooner than most people expect, the afflicted nations will seek ardently for brave and honoured advocates of justice, equality and brotherhood, without distinction of race, colour or religion, you must be there—who, if not you? War must be banished for ever from the Earth."

In 1944 it became known that Gandhiji agreed to the partition of India at the initiative of Rajaji. To Sastri it was a "sell out" of India by Gandhiji. His analysis of these moves was that Gandhiji wanted to "re-establish himself" after losing the Quit-India battle against the British rule in India. He again beseeched Mahatmaji in a letter on June 17, 1944, "to attend the demands of the world's peace. India's cause and yours may—who knows—be best served that way." In Sastri's estimate Gandhiji's role in the world was the supreme service of peace.

On October 24, 1945, Sastri issued a statement along with other nationalist leaders opposing India's partition, which declared:
“No measure and no rapprochement could have been so fatal to the unity of India as the Congress resolution bearing on the right of self-determination for the federating units and the even more regrettable negotiations which took place a year ago between Mr Gandhi and the spokesman of the Muslim League.”

From almost his deathbed, Sastri wrote a letter on February 18, 1946 in which he mentioned:

“The Punjab and Bengal would be ruined and blast your memory if you gave them up. Do not let any part of India go out and become independent. It is bound to be a lasting enemy and a blistering sore to India.”

When Pakistan was decided on, Sastri mentioned in a letter that Gandhiji had sold India because he hated the British although Gandhiji would not use the word hate.

Sastri fell ill and was admitted to Madras General Hospital on January 22, 1946. Gandhiji called on him in the hospital. Sastri held Gandhiji’s hands and asked him to attend the Peace Conference. Gandhiji advised him not to excite himself and discuss politics. Gandhiji saw Sastri in the hospital thrice.

When Sastri passed away on April 17, 1946 Gandhiji commented in the following words:

“Death has removed not only from us but from the world one of India’s best sons. That he loved India passionately everyone who knew him could see. When I saw him last in Madras, he could talk of nothing but India and her culture, for which he lived and died. I am sure he had no thought of himself even when he seemed to be on his death-bed. His Sanskrit learning was as great as, if not greater than, his English. I must not permit myself to say more save this that, though we differed in politics, our hearts were one, and I could never think that his patriotism was less than that of the tallest patriot. Sastri, the man lives, though his body is reduced to ashes.”

Poles asunder, there was a deep bond between Sastri and Gandhiji and the deep affinity underneath never got tarnished by the difference in ideologies.
Subhas Chandra Bose

After a brilliant scholastic career in Cuttack and Calcutta which was marked by a certain amount of tumult, Subhas Chandra Bose went to England and competed in the I.C.S. examination in 1920, standing fourth in order of merit. The heaven-born service had no charm for him and he came back to India in 1921 to take a plunge in the struggle for freedom.

Bose met Gandhiji in Bombay. Love at first sight may not be always true but mutual allergy at first meeting is possible. Bose has himself written that the meeting somehow did not hit and neither took to each other. This mutual allergy was a national tragedy.

As asked Bose reported himself to C. R. Das in Calcutta and he at once found a political guide he was pining for. From 1921 to 1925 Bose was the righthand man of C. R. Das, organising the Congress Party, looking after relief operations in North Bengal, working as the Chief Executive Officer in Calcutta Corporation, editing Forward, an English daily, stabilising the Swaraj Party and developing a dynamic personality which quickly placed him on the all India canvas as a born fighter, a man of steel but with an extremely soft heart.

Like a ball of fire, Subhas had crisscrossed the Indian sky as long as he was here and then he became a legend abroad fighting for India’s cause according to his concept. That blaze of glory continued till he faded away. The world has few examples of Bose’s combination of idealism, dedication and realism.

It was his ideology that brought him a rift first and a chasm afterwards with Gandhiji. Bose always had his very high regard for Gandhiji as a man, as is clearly evident from his broadcasts from abroad on Gandhiji’s birthday and Kasturba’s death and in his many exhortations to the Indian people to revolt and to await the arrival of his National Army. Bose thought very poorly of Gandhiji as a politician and a statesman. Bose did not believe in Gandhiji’s creed of non-violence. “Give me blood and I will give you independence”, Bose thundered from abroad. This conviction
grew in him while he was a Congressman in India and contradicted Gandhiji’s teaching of fighting for independence through a non-violent war. It is said very bitterly and sincerely that Bose used to crack a joke that Gandhiji was more surrounded “by cranks and crooks.” He fundamentally differed from Gandhiji when he thought that Britain’s worry in Second World War was India’s opportunity. While in India he did not preach the cult of violence, although he was in close touch with many revolutionaries who believed in the cult of blood and bomb. It was after he had staged a most dramatic exit from India while a prisoner in Calcutta that he openly came out with a clear cut solution and that was—there must be revolution brought in India by arms. For this he had been to Germany, Japan, Burma and other countries not as a beggar but as a fighter and he could organise a force that had marched up to the Indian soil through various misfortunes. He completely out-maneuvered the Congress and his voice and exhortations were listened to with rapt attention by the bulk of the Indians and the Britishers, and the Congress was practically put on the shelf for the time being.

Subhas was earlier released from Burma jail in 1927. Jawaharlal Nehru also returned from Russia full of advanced socialist ideas verging on communism. They joined hands and formed a Leftist group within the Congress under the name “Independence League”. Subhas-Jawahar leadership immediately alienated the Congress old guards, including Gandhiji as the youth all over India flocked under its banner. Bose made his mind clear in a speech in the All-India Youth Conference in Calcutta decrying Gandhian philosophy:

“...A feeling and impression that modernism is bad, large scale production is an evil, wants should not be increased and the standard of living should not be raised... that the soul is so important that physical culture and military training can be ignored.”

He further said:

“Mystics would always hold an honoured place in India but it is not their lead we shall have to follow if we are to create a new India, at once free, happy and great...we have to live in the present.”

Subhas somehow also felt and had a grudge against Gandhiji that C. R. Das was being kept in Bengal while Gandhiji had pushed up Motilal Nehru more. As a disciplined soldier, Das sacrificed
his legal practice and his life to Gandhiji and he completely kept Subhas in check. On the death of Das, Bose had moaned: "Oh! friend of the nation in this hour of trial and tribulation India hath need of thee." But with this homage Bose fully asserted himself and showed the mettle he was made of when there was an open clash with Gandhiji about the holding of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress in 1928. In spite of Gandhiji's protests Bose could yield only to a point consistent with his personal convictions and dignity but refused to compromise himself with an abject surrender against his principle. The differences between Subhas and Gandhiji were being crystallised.

The Calcutta Session in December 1928 was going to be a momentous event. The All-Parties Conference had previously met and their blueprint had been receiving a mixed reception in spite of the best efforts of Gandhiji and others. Bengal wanted Motilal Nehru to be the President of the Congress. But both Gandhiji and Motilal had decided that the crown should go to Jawaharlal. Gandhiji had already confirmed openly that he wanted Jawaharlal and was of the opinion:

"I thoroughly agree that we should give place to younger men. And amongst them, there is no one even to equal Jawaharlal."

This was a shattering news to Bengal which was very keenly yearning for Motilal. While J. M. Sen Gupta wrote strongly to Gandhiji to influence Motilal to accept the Presidentship, it was typical of Subhas to send a wire to Gandhiji:

"Bengal unanimous in favour of Motilal Presidentship. Kindly recommend him otherwise pray remain neutral."

Motilal was also addressed by Subhas on July 13, 1928, in the course of which Subhas mentioned:

"The situation in the country today is such and the year 1929 will be such a momentous one in the history of our country, that we can think of no one else who can rise to the occasion. At a time when we are passing through a serious crisis, may we not hope that you will respond to the nation's call."

To this letter Motilal wrote on July 19, 1928, a long joint letter to J. M. Sen Gupta and Subhas. He said:

"The reason why I recommend Jawaharlal was that among the younger set I believe he was likely to command the confidence of the majority. This has since been proved to be true, as is
evidenced by the fact that he and I are being mentioned almost in the same breath. Mahatmaji wired to say that he agreed with me and was recommending Jawahar in *Young India*...

Gandhiji appreciated the forceful viewpoint of Subhas. He wrote to him on July 18, 1928 that he had fully shared the views of Motilal in not accepting the honour and he had already prepared an article in *Young India* recommending Jawahar but he was cancelling the article and that he would say nothing about the election in the pages of that journal or elsewhere unless Bengali friends would let him do so. But when Motilal forwarded the letter of Subhas to Gandhiji the latter wired to Motilal to wear the crown especially for Bengal’s sake. Motilal wired to Gandhiji that he bowed to the decision. Gandhiji fully realised that Subhas was not so easy to be won.

Subhas-Jawahar group representing the leftists and the old guards representing the rightists, measured their strength at the annual session of the Congress in 1928. The Subhas-Gandhi differences broke out clearly in this session. Gandhiji personally moved the main resolution of the Congress but it was opposed both by Subhas and Jawaharlal. When division was called for it was found that Subhas-Jawaharlal amendment secured 45% of the votes. The Subhas-Jawaharlal group caused alarm to the old guards surrounding Gandhiji. Gandhiji thought of winning back Jawaharlal by making him the President of the Congress.

Gandhiji made young Jawaharlal the President of the Congress in 1929. He always had a great soft corner for the Nehru family and he wanted Jawaharlal to be the President in 1928. But the Subhas group took this as a move to break Subhas-Jawaharlal alliance. The result, however, worked out at that. Jawaharlal went over more to Gandhiji, particularly when he found a cold reception for his ultra-modern ideas borrowed from the West, particularly Russia. The President did not pull on with the majority of the Working Committee. Jawaharlal offered his resignation but Gandhiji persuaded him to continue. Gandhiji said:

“Who can excel him in the love of the country? He is rash and impetuous, some say. This quality is an additional qualification at the present moment... He is undoubtedly an extremist, thinking far ahead of his surroundings but he is humble enough and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point.”
Subhas never forgot this surrender of Jawaharlal to Gandhiji.

Later Subhas came in conflict with J. M. Sen Gupta who had succeeded Das. In spite of repeated requests, Gandhiji did not assert himself. In a letter dated December 17, 1929, Bose laid his cards squarely on the table and wanted Gandhiji's intervention to resolve Sen Gupta-Bose differences.

Apologising that he did not like the domestic affair to be given undue importance he referred to the campaign of calumny against him even when in jail. But Gandhiji did not relent and the differences continued. Dr Aney's probe in 1931 did not satisfy any party.

After continuous arrests and imprisonments Subhas had a forced stay in Europe from 1933 to 1936 and during this period he studied, contacted and pondered over the world problems and India's foreign relations. This helped him to have clear cut ideas as to his future action.

On his return in 1936 he was imprisoned under Regulation III of 1818; but was released in March 1937. In 1938 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress and presided at Haripura Congress. His Haripura address gave a clear ultimatum to the British Empire which was then "at one of the crossroads of history." Describing the British Empire as 'hybrid phenomenon in politics', he pinpointed that Great Britain must become a socialist state and colonialism must be liquidated. He was clearly of the opinion that in the interplay of world forces at that time when Britain could hardly call herself the mistress of the seas, India was much stronger than she had ever been before. He gave a blueprint of the ways to get "Poorna Swaraj". This historic address at that particular time when Office acceptance had permeated the Congress was a bolt from the blue to many. Subhas had very clear views of both sides of Office acceptance For the first time in India's history he underlined the importance of phased planning for India.

As President of the Congress, Bose created more flutter and did not try to hide his allergy to many of Gandhiji's ideas about how Swaraj was to be won. He held that the adoption of village-life and what he took to be a watery type of politics and negation of scientific methods of production would only help to perpetuate the conditions of servitude of the people. In a speech at the Indian Science News Association, Calcutta, on August 21, 1938 Bose clearly
stated that the national reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and scientists and that far-reaching cooperation between science and politics was absolutely necessary, if India was to take its place with the advanced countries of the world. He proceeded as follows:

"The movement for Indian emancipation has reached a stage when Swaraj is no longer a dream.... We are within sight of power.... We want first and foremost aid of science...."

"Though I do not rule out cottage industries and though I hold that every attempt should be made to preserve and also revive cottage industries wherever possible, I maintain that economic planning for India should mean largely planning for industrialisation of India."

This was almost an open defiance of Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian politics. The same strain was continued in his President's speech at Haripura in February 1938:

"The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities, would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population.

"Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the 'have-nots' who will benefit at the expense of the 'haves' and the Indian masses have to be classified among the 'have-nots'."

He further said:

"Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land. To solve the economic problem, agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-control will be indispensable. Last but not the least, the state will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and appropriation."

Bose was the first leader who held that a comprehensive economic planning was necessary for India.

The dynamic personality of Subhas Bose and his pronounced socialistic views were viewed with a good deal of alarm by some of the ultra rightists like Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari and others. The core of the Congress was dominated by them and Gandhiji and to them Subhas was very much of a stormy petrel. It may be mentioned that Jawaharlal with his ultra-socialistic
views had been considerably tamed down when he was made President of the Congress in 1929 and for the second time in 1935. The Subhasites commonly held that Gandhiji thought that he would be able to tame Subhas as he had done in the case of Jawahar. During the first term of Bose as a Congress President he was brooked by this core of the Congressmen who were absolutely wedded to whatever Gandhiji said. It may also be mentioned that during his prolonged stay at Vienna the convalescing Subhas had come in very close contact with Vithalbhai Patel and Vithalbhai had been captivated by the personality and idealism of Bose. Vithalbhai had put a lakh of rupees in his will for Subhas Bose for his political work. Vithalbhai’s brother Vallabhbhai Patel, however, fought on some loophole of the will and saw that Bose did not get that money. Vallabhbhai was no friend to Subhas and was known to be the strong man behind Gandhiji. Bose clearly attempted during his first year of the Congress Presidency to pull out the Congress from what he thought was Gandhian obscurantism and fascism. He also thought that the capitalists had got a grip on the Congress and his idea was to free the Congress from the hold of the capitalists and to lead it towards socialism.

Hitherto for several years it was Gandhiji who used to nominate President of the Congress and his nominee would be elected unanimously. When Bose’s first term of Presidency was about to expire, Gandhiji selected Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya as the next President. Bose decided to contest the election and this created a great flutter. Bose thought that the President’s election should also be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes

“so that the contest may help the clarification of issues and give a clear indication of the working of the public mind. The election contest in these circumstances may not be an undesirable thing.”

Several provinces had nominated Bose without his knowledge or consent and Bose saw no reason as to why he should not stand for the election. Sardar Patel and others actively worked against Bose. On January 28, on the eve of the Presidential election Subhas Bose published a statement in the course of which he mentioned:

“It now appears that some important members of the Working Committee, for reasons which it is difficult to comprehend, did not approve of the idea. It cannot be doubted that my
re-election would have been virtually unanimous if they had not sent a mandate to vote against me. It now appears that they would have rather anybody else than my humble self.

"Do they object to me because I would not be a tool in their hands or do they object to me because of my ideas and principles?

"It is too much for a group within the Working Committee to claim that they will dictate the selection of the President every time. If we are to have a proper election by the delegates and not nomination by a group within the Working Committee, then it is essential that the delegates should have a free and unfettered choice.

"If this freedom is not guaranteed to them, then the constitution of the Congress will cease to be a democratic one. It is no use having a democratic constitution for the Congress, if the delegates do not have the freedom to think and vote as they like."

The election results were announced on the next day January 29, and Bose defeated Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya by more than 2000 votes. Two days later Gandhiji issued a statement in the course of which he observed:

"Mr Subhas Bose has achieved a decisive victory over his opponent Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya. I must confess that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re-election for reasons into which I need not go.... Nevertheless, I am glad of his victory; and since I was instrumental in inducing Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate the defeat is more mine than his.... Congress is fast becoming a corrupt organisation of bogus members. I have no doubt that many of the delegates who have been elected on the strength of the bogus voters would be unseated on scrutiny...." After all, Subhas Babu is not an enemy of the country...."

Gandhiji also issued a general instruction that those who could not keep pace with Bose’s policy and programme should come out of the Congress.

The subsequent developments were ominous. Twelve out of the fifteen members of the Working Committee including Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Dr Rajendra Prasad and others resigned their positions in the Working Committee. The Congress Session was held at Tripuri in March 1939 and Gandhiji did not attend the Congress Session. The old guards of the Congress who did not see eye to eye with Bose imposed terms on him as regards the formation of his Working Committee. Bose thought that Jawaharlal
had inflicted on him the biggest harm and in a letter to his nephew, Bose mentioned:

"If he had been with us we would have had a majority. Even his neutrality would have probably given us a majority. But he was with the Old Guards at Tripuri. His open propaganda against me has done me more harm than the activities of the 12 stalwarts."

Several times Bose wrote to Gandhiji for a frank talk but to no effect. A stalemate had been reached and Subhas ultimately resigned from the Presidentship of the Congress. This gave rise to very mixed feelings—jubilation in one camp and utter frustration mixed with resentment in the other. Rabindranath Tagore wrote to Subhas:

"The dignity and forbearance which you have shown in the midst of a most aggravating situation has won my admiration and confidence in your leadership. The same perfect decorum has still to be maintained by Bengal for the sake of her own self-respect and thereby to help to turn your apparent defeat into a permanent victory."

The Bose-Gandhiji correspondence shows that both had agreed to differ on ideological grounds. Subhas made no secret of the fact that he thought Gandhiji was old-fashioned, orthodox and probably autocratic. Gandhiji saw in Subhas a transparent honesty of purpose and dynamism which was rather impetuous but he would not trust Subhas. Subhas had written to Gandhiji again and again that Gandhiji alone could "command the confidence of both parties by taking up a truly non-partisan attitude" and could "save the Congress and restore national unity." He mentioned that "he had the mentality of a boxer, i.e. to shake hands smilingly when the boxing bout is over and take the result in a sporting spirit." He even offered to step aside if Gandhiji's felt that the Congress would be able to fight better with another President or if there should be a Working Committee of Gandhiji's choice. Gandhiji thought that Subhas should have his own composite Committee and that he smelt violence in the air he breathed. Gandhiji, however, assured Subhas that in spite of sharp differences of opinion "I am quite sure that our private relations will not suffer in the least." The Bose-Gandhiji correspondence that has been made available is a painful reading but this throws a very considerable light on the working of the mind of Subhas. It is quite clear that Gandhiji worked for the ousting of Subhas from the
Congress and Gandhiji’s coterie fully supported Gandhiji. Subhas was practically driven to resign the Presidentship of the Congress.

Free from the trappings of the Presidentship of the Congress Subhas showed a rare leadership by organising the Forward Bloc throughout India and his tours in 1940 showed dynamism and a spirit of give and take which he thought he had not found in Gandhiji and a group of old guards in the Congress. It was the same Subhas who in 1922 had vehemently criticised Gandhiji for calling off Civil Disobedience because of Chauri-Chaura incident as a “national calamity.” From Haripura Congress there was a blazing continuity of one overwhelming purpose and that was not to lose the opportunity at the eve of the World War and after the breaking out of the World War to win India’s freedom. This view of Subhas was not shared by Gandhiji or Nehru.

Subhas Bose was expelled from the Congress and the expulsion order was also passed against his elder brother, Sarat Chandra Bose for some alleged acts of indiscipline.

Bose was very soon imprisoned and there is no doubt that the continuous jail life brought in him a spiritual upheaval. In a letter written from the jail he mentioned:

“In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish—but ideas, ideals and dreams do not. One individual may die for an idea—but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas and dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next. No idea has ever fulfilled itself in this world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice.

“To my countrymen I say—Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give life if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against inequity no matter what the cost may be.”

In another letter written to his brother Sarat Bose he observed:

“The more I think of Congress politics, the more convinced I feel that in future we should devote more energy and time to fighting the High Command. If power goes into the hands of such mean, vindictive and unscrupulous persons when Swaraj is won, what will happen to the country? If we don’t fight them now, we shall not be able to prevent power passing into their hands. Another reason why we should fight them now is
that they have no idea of national reconstruction. Gandhism will land Free India in a ditch—if free India is sought to be rebuilt on Gandhian non-violent principles, India will then be offering a standing invitation to all predatory powers...."

Bose had become extremely critical of the Congress. In another letter from the jail dated October 24, 1940 he mentioned:

"The latest phase of Gandhism with its sanctimonious hypocrisy...its outrage on democracy and its queer and un-understandable formula for political ills...is sickening to a degree. One is forced to wonder which is a greater menace to India's political future—the British bureaucracy or Gandhian hierarchy."

In a manner it may be said that this was Bose's last pronouncement on the Congress as he disappeared from India in the middle of January 1941.

Bose who had been kept a security prisoner in his brother's house in Calcutta slipped out of India. Trekking to Afghanistan he reached Kabul and with the help of a foreign embassy he went abroad. The latter part of Bose's life was almost a legend. He went through various vicissitudes and ably organised a national army in South East Asia to fight along the Japanese against the British Imperialism. Bose had no sympathy at all for the Allies like Gandhiji. He had taken a great plunge and his enviable exploits did have a tremendous impact at hastening India's independence. Bose's voice through foreign radio was listened to by lakhs in India and the progress of the march of Bose's Liberation Army was followed closely. There can be no doubt that the work of Subhas abroad and the marching of his soldiers to Indian soil indirectly hastened India's freedom.

It will be pertinent to refer to some of Bose's broadcasts from abroad so far as his relationship with Gandhiji is concerned. In his message to Gandhiji after the death of Kasturba, Bose addressed Gandhiji as "Father of our Nation" and wanted his blessings and good wishes in his "holy war of India's liberation." He had ended his broadcast by saying:

"This armed struggle will go on until the Britisher is thrown out of India and until our tricolour national flag proudly flies over the Viceroy's House in New India."

In another broadcast on Gandhiji's birthday, Bose made an estimation of the place of Gandhiji in the history of India's struggle
for independence. Conceding that Gandhiji had firmly planted "our foot on the straight road to liberty", Bose observed that one thing was lacking and that was an army of liberation. He referred to Gandhiji's observation in the Nagpur Session of the Congress in December 1920 that: "If India had his sword today, she would have drawn the sword." Bose mentioned that they have now built up a new army and this army of liberation was determined to set foot on Indian soil to liberate the whole of India from the British yoke. He was prophetic in his vision. The I.N.A. trial nailed the coffin of British administration in India. The name of Subhas was on the lips of every Indian during the I.N.A. trial at the Red Fort in Delhi.

After the reported death of Subhas Bose, Gandhiji had written to Amrit Kaur that Subhas was a great patriot but "much misguided." Gandhiji apparently was not fully convinced at the very great sacrifice of Subhas.

Did Gandhiji change his views? Did he after all the differences with Subhas realise the great importance of his contribution towards India's independence? It is a mystery that in his Assam tour in January 1946 Gandhiji said at several meetings that Subhas was alive and he would have written to him if he knew his address. The mystery of this observation remains unsolved.
Surendranath Banerjee

Born in 1848 and plunging into political career from 1875, Surendranath was already a leading figure in India when Gandhiji came back from South Africa in 1915. Gandhiji himself mentioned that “I was a babe when Sir Dinsha Wacha and Surendranath Banerjee were among the accepted leaders of public opinion in India.” Banerjee started a stormy career in 1873 when he was discharged from the Indian Civil Service on flimsy grounds. He was refused enrolment in the English Bar for the same reason. From 1875 he plunged into social and educational work in Bengal. He first chose teaching as his profession to which he was devoted till 1912 and combined it with a political career. He was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council in February 1913.

On July 26, 1876 along with a few friends he formed the Indian Association which was the pre-cursor to the Indian National Congress in 1885. Excepting two Sessions he attended every sitting of the Annual Congress till 1917 when he broke away from the Congress. Through his popular English daily, Bengalee he strongly advocated public causes. In 1883 he suffered imprisonment for two months for contempt of court because of an article in the Bengalee. He was one of the early pioneers to foster the sense of a broad-based Indian nationalism and spirit to flout the authority within constitutional ways if necessary. Gandhiji observed that Surendranath was, “if not the originator, certainly one of the originators of the National Congress.”

Banerjee was the idol and the uncrowned king of Bengal during the Swadeshi agitation of Bengal in 1907 and devoted himself to unsettle the settled facts of partition of Bengal into two. He achieved his object. Surendranath’s fame had already spread throughout India and he was chosen to go to England to popularise the cause of the Congress in the Eighties and Nineties of the last century. He did his work of propagating the cause of the Congress abroad extremely well.

Banerjee presided over two sessions of the Indian National Congress at Poona (1895) and Ahmedabad (1902) and in both the
sessions he advocated cooperation with the British Administration, an agitation through constitutional means to win proper rights and spread of education. All through his life he had a policy of cooperation and assimilation and frankly disliked non-cooperation and isolation as perilsome and suicidal. Banerjee preceded Gandhi, in arousing national consciousness and dispelling fear for the authority. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were introduced he was frankly for accepting and to utilise them for further gains. When the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy occurred and the Rowlatt Bills were enacted there was a split in the Congress camp between the Extremists and the Moderates. This was the reason why Banerjee broke his life-long relations with the Congress and along with a few friends sponsored the Moderate Party in Bengal. Tilak, and later C. R. Das espoused the cause of the Extremists and it was Das who saw to the political eclipse of Banerjee. Later Banerjee accepted the ministership in Bengal and that was practically the end of Surendranath who had come to be known as ‘Surrender Not’ to India and a terror to the British diehards.

There were several affinities between Banerjee and Gandhi. Both started their career with full faith in British justice and sportsmanship. Both helped in recruitment in the fighting forces when war broke out. Both believed in constitutional methods. Both at one time had asked the students to leave their educational institutions and take to agitational politics. In the Swadeshi days Surendranath evolved a vow which used to be taken at public meetings by thousands of people. In a similar manner Gandhi also prescribed a Satyagraha vow. But Gandhi was disillusioned after some time and gave up his faith in British justice and fighting through constitutional ways. At a later stage both were of the opinion that the participation of the students in active politics should be strictly limited. In his autobiography, Gandhi has written:

“Hardly ever I know anybody to cherish such loyalty as I did to the British Constitution. I can see now that my love of truth was at the root of this loyalty. It has never been possible for me to simulate loyalty or, for that matter, any other virtue. The National Anthem used to be sung at every meeting that I attended in Natal. I then felt that I must also join in the singing, not that I was unaware of the defects in British Rule, but I thought that it was on the whole acceptable. In those days I believed the British Rule was on the whole beneficial to the ruled.”
These words stand in comparison with Banerjee’s:

“I have preached patriotism coupled with orderly progress. I have preached self-government within the Empire as our goal and constitutional and lawful methods as the only means for its attainment.”

As President of the 11th Congress at Poona in 1895 Banerjee said:

“It is not severance that we look forward to, but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions—that is what we aim at.”

Again in 1902 he reiterated as President of the 18th Sessions of the Congress in Ahmedabad:

“We have no higher aspirations than that we should be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing States of which England is the august mother. We recognize that the journey towards the destined goal must necessarily be slow and that the blessed consummation can only be attained after prolonged preparation and laborious apprenticeship.”

In 1909 as the only member of the Indian Press as distinguished from the Anglo-Indian Press at the Imperial Press Conference when Lord Cromer attacked the Indian Press for spreading anarchy in India, Surendranath had retorted:

“Anarchism, if I may say so without offence, is not of the East but of the West. It is a noxious growth which has been transplanted from the West.”

At Manchester when the toast was proposed to the Imperial Press, Banerjee said:

“India in the enjoyment of the blessings of self-government, India prosperous, contented and happy, will be the most valuable asset of the Empire.”

That was Surendranath Banerjee all through his life. Annie Besant, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath belonged more or less to one group.

Surendranath did not believe in mixing up religion with politics. He thought that Gandhiji was advocating a dangerous non-cooperation movement which would lead to isolation and chaos. He had no faith in Gandhiji’s formula of Charkha. He did not believe that any mass movement where the constituted authority was to be openly flouted, could give us independence. To him British ties with India
were providential; and in spite of all the sufferings he had at the hands of the British administrators, Banerjee could not shake off his faith in the sense of British fairplay and constitutional agitation. The fire that Banerjee had in the Swadeshi days was very much dimmed in his years of decline and he even lost an election in Bengal to young Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy who was set up by C. R. Das against him. In spite of this Banerjee was not undaunted and his autobiography, “A Nation in Making” sang a swan song where his faith in his creed was prominent.

Surendranath’s association with Gandhiji was cordial in spite of their political differences when Gandhiji had shot up. Gandhiji came to India from South Africa in 1896 and met Surendranath Banerjee in Calcutta to win his sympathy for Indian settlers in Africa. Banerjee gave him a patient hearing although he did not go much out of his way and mentioned:

“I am afraid people will not take interest in your work. As you know our difficulties are by no means few. But you must try as best as you can.”

In 1901, Gandhiji attended the Calcutta National Congress and spoke on the problems of Indians in South Africa. In 1902 it was under Surendranath’s presidency that the Congress adopted the resolution on the Indians in South Africa. This resolution mentioned that:

“The Congress fervently prays that the Government of India will be pleased to take the necessary practical steps to secure a just, equitable and liberal treatment of Indian settlers in South Africa.”

In 1907 Surendranath sent a cable to Gandhiji in South Africa from the Congress camp at Surat: “Our sympathies and support. Courage.” Incidentally it was at Surat Congress that Surendranath found a clear split in the Congress camp. The Extremist Group wanted Bal Gangadhar Tilak to be the President of the Congress as against Rash Bihari Ghosh, as proposed by Surendranath, leader of the Moderate Group. The meeting was disturbed and some one went so far as to the extent of throwing a shoe at Surendranath which grazed Banerjee’s cheek and struck Phiroze Shah Mehta. The Bengal delegates walked out of the meeting and recorded a vote of confidence in Banerjee and adopted the creed of the Congress for Self Government within the Empire as the goal. Later, better counsels prevailed and there was a patched up unity at the Lucknow
Congress in 1916. Here at a joint conference of the Hindu and the Muslim leaders a scheme of constitutional reforms was formulated under the Presidency of Surendranath Banerjee. But this patched up unity disintegrated within a couple of years when C. R. Das sided with the Extremists and won over young Bengal.

In 1918 both the parties wanted Gandhiji’s cooperation. Gandhiji gave a negative reply to Tilak and refused to attend the Congress Session at Bombay. To Banerjee who had sent a telegram Gandhiji wrote in August 1918:

“I have your telegram redirected from Ahmedabad where I am at present engaged in recruiting. A visit to Calcutta means at least a week simply in going and coming back. If I am to do my work at all satisfactorily, it is impossible for me to absent myself for such a long time, and at the present moment I dare not do so, for I have just heard from the Government that they have acceded to my proposal to open a training depot in Gujarat and to form a Gujarat Company, you will agree that I cannot leave this work.

“But even if I could have come, I do not know that I would have rendered much assistance. I hold strong and probably peculiar views not shared by many of the leaders. I implicitly believe that if we were to devote our attention exclusively to recruiting we should gain full responsible Government in a year’s time, if not sooner. And instead of allowing our utterly ignorant countrymen to enlist *nolens volens*, we should get an army of Home Rulers who would be willing soldiers with the knowledge that they will be soldiering for the sake of the country. I do not at the same time believe that we should declare our opinion about the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme in unequivocal terms; we should fix the minimum of our demands and seek to enforce them at all costs. I consider the Scheme to be good in its conception. It requires much modification. We should have no difficulty in arriving at a unanimous conclusion. I should like a party in the country that would be simply pledged to these two propositions, helping the Government on the one hand in the prosecution of the war, and enforcing the national demand on the other.

“I do not believe that at a critical moment like this we should be satisfied with a patched-up truce between the so-called moderates, each giving up a little in favour of the other. I should like a clear enunciation of the policy of each group or party and naturally those who by the intrinsic merit of their case and ceaseless agitation make themselves a power in the land will carry the day before the House of Commons.”
When the Montford Reforms were suggested in the month of July of the same year, Gandhiji steered a middle path. But later he sided more with C. R. Das and the Extremist Group in the Congress and almost forced Banerjee to go into political wilderness with his moderate following. When Gandhiji sponsored a nationwide agitation against the Rowlatt Bills he mentioned in a speech at Madras on March 18, 1919 as follows:

"Some of our countrymen, including those who are the best of the leaders, have uttered a note of warning, and even gone so far as to say that this Satyagraha movement is against the best interests of the country. I have naturally the highest regard for them and their opinion. I have worked under some of them. I was a babe when Sir Dinsha Wacha and Surendranath Banerjee were among the accepted leaders of public opinion in India... It is not, therefore, without the greatest grief and much searching of heart, that I have to place myself in opposition to their wishes."

Banerjee clearly disapproved Gandhiji's Satyagraha aspect of the movement. In his paper *Bengalee*, which was a powerful English daily, he criticised Gandhiji for various aspects of the Non-cooperation Movement. But for some causes of Gandhiji like the Assam Tea Labour Unrest, *Bengalee* gave a whole hearted support. The *Bengalee* published a series of editorials supporting the tea labour of Assam and their economic stagnation.

Banerjee had written:

"We have heard a great deal about the Non-cooperation Movement. Today the vernacular press is far more widespread in its influence than it was at the time of Swadeshi movement; and the vernacular press in its utterances distinctly leans towards Non-cooperation. But the truth cannot be gainsaid that Non-cooperation is nowhere as compared to the influence that Swadeshism exercised over our homes and our domestic life. Non-cooperation, even in its strongest centres (and they are not many in Bengal) is not a social force, such as Swadeshism was in the days of its power and influence. There are innumerable villages in Bengal where the Charkha and Khaddar are unknown. I wish it were otherwise; but the truth must be stated. An industrial movement linked with political controversy may receive a momentary impulse which may send it far forward, but in the long run it suffers by such association. An industry must be conducted on business lines; and business considerations must, in the long run, guide and dominate its course and progress. Capital, organization and expert knowledge, these constitute the basic foundations of an industrial enterprise. A patriotic impulse will
certainly help it; but only for a time. and will cease to be operative when normal conditions are restored. As far as the great leaders were concerned non-cooperation had its roots in an intense and consuming love of country, coupled with hatred of the British Government and all associated with it in the administration of the country. But as regards the non-cooperating masses, hatred of the British Government, its officials and Englishmen in general, was the inspiring impulse. And when a sentiment is firmly rooted in the public mind it grows and expands. And from a hatred of the Government to that of the political and religious opponents and of other castes and creeds, the transition was rapid and irresistible. Mr Gandhi is my authority for it. He said that 'it was apparent that non-cooperation could not in the present state of things be presented by the nation as a national programme' for said he 'they were non-cooperating amongst themselves by carrying on a programme of hatred and violence amongst themselves. 'It is this sentiment of hatred fostered amongst the masses, directed in the first instance against the British Government; and then by a natural process of growth, to be extended to all others who worshipped in a different temple, culminating in those communal and caste feuds that have darkened our recent history. I cannot help thinking that these leaders were playing with fire, and they have intensified a feeling already latent, that its development has been attended with disastrous results. Of course, we all admire the supreme solicitude and the earnest efforts of Mr Gandhi to secure Hindu-Muslim unity. But in judging of the communal strifes, which we all deplore, let us not, for the sake of historical justice, forget the part non-cooperation movement had in fostering and promoting it.' (A Nation in the Making, Chapter XX).

But Gandhiji had the deepest regard for Banerjee's contribution to the revolution of Indian nationalism; and at his death on August 6, 1925 he had written:

"The death of Sir Surendranath Banerjee removes from Indian political life one who had left upon it the deep impress of his own personality. What though with new ideals and new hopes within recent times he receded into the background? Our present is the result of our past. Ideals and aspirations of the present day would have been impossible without the invaluable work done by the pioneers like Sir Surendra. Time was when the student world idolized him, when his advice was considered indispensable in all national deliberations, and his eloquence held audience spellbound. It is impossible to recall the stirring events of the partition days in Bengal and not to think with gratitude and pride Sir Surendranath’s matchless services in connection with it. It was then that Sir Surendranath justly earned from his grateful countrymen the title of ‘Surrender-not’.

During
the blackest period of the time of partition Sir Surendranath never wavered, never lost hope. He threw himself into the agitation with all his might. His enthusiasm infected the whole of Bengal. His determination to unsettle the ‘settled fact’ was unshaken. He gave us the necessary training in courage and resolution. He taught us not to fear authority. His work in the Education Department was no less valuable than in the political. Through the Ripon College thousands of young men came under his direct influence and received their liberal education. His regular habits gave him health, vigour, and what may be called for India a long life. He retained his mental faculties unimpaired upto the last moment. He required a courage of no small order to resume in his seventy-seventh year the editorship of his paper the Bengalee. Indeed he was so confident of his mental vigour and physical capacity, that he said to me, when I had the privilege of meeting him at Barrackpore two months ago, that he expected to live till 91 years, after which he would not wish to live as he would not retain his mental vigour long thereafter. But fate had decided otherwise. They snatched him way from us without notice. For nobody had expected so sudden a death. Upto the early hours of the morning of Thursday the 6th instant he betrayed no sign of dissolution. But though he is no longer with us in the body his services to the country will never be forgotten. He will ever be remembered as one of the makers of modern India.” (Young India, August 13, 1925).
Tej Bahadur Sapru

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was born on December 8, 1875 at Aligarh and died on January 21, 1959. He had a brilliant scholastic career in India and started his legal practice at Moradabad but soon shifted to Allahabad. He picked up a lucrative practice and was often in demand in other provinces. He had an aristocratic bearing, was affable and enjoyed life. He had an excellent table and loved meeting people.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was essentially a constitutional lawyer and a statesman. In political field he had a great regard for Gandhiji but could not bring himself round to appreciate, by and large, Gandhiji’s techniques for attaining India’s independence. He did not like the religio-political trend of Gandhiji. The sponsoring of Non-cooperation Movement with the citation of a number of demands and requirements had distinctly upset him and when the Civil Disobedience Movement with defiance of law was launched by Gandhiji, he was definitely intrigued and annoyed. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru did valuable work in the Reforms Committee and thought that by working the Reforms and not by alienating the ties with the British, India would ultimately gain. Many a time he bitterly differed from Gandhiji but the mutual esteem never faded. His services were always there as a peace-maker and Gandhiji had often drawn on him for that purpose. It is well known that many a time when the Congress Movement got boggled, Sir Tej Bahadur was approached and he intervened between the Congress leaders and the government. With an ardent patriotism, Sir Tej Bahadur remained a liberal and a moderate till the end of his life but his help to the Congress was immense. He did not suppress his views when he thought that Gandhiji was wrong in his political moves. It was due to Sapru and Jayakar’s strenuous efforts that the Gandhi-Irwin pact in 1930-31 was possible. The document dated August 15, 1930 and signed at Yervada Jail by Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Jairamdas Daulat Ram, Vallabhbhai Patel, Syed Mahmud and Jawaharlal Nehru is an eloquent testimony to their efforts.
In 1940 when Muslim League-Congress controversy became complicated, acrimonious and vituperative, Sir Tej stepped in to bridge the gulf, if possible. He was approached by Gandhiji who had at one time written to him that in spite of his many dialogues with Jinnah he had failed to understand him and felt Jinnah deliberately did not disclose his mind. Sapru was in frequent correspondence with Jinnah.

In his letter dated February 6, 1941, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had written to Mr Jinnah:

"Although I have not been taking active part in politics of the country for the last few years, the old interest still survives, and I followed fairly closely the trend of recent events. These have only tended to confirm me in my belief that the supreme necessity of the hour is a settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims or, to put it in terms of party politics, between the Congress and the Hindu Sabha and the Muslim League. It is my misfortune that owing to some very strong convictions I have found it impossible to join either of the first two, and for obvious reasons I could not be a member of the organisation of which you are the President, and yet I feel that so long as the three big organised bodies of public opinion in India remain in their present state of relationship to each other the future of this country cannot be by any means bright."

Sir Tej Bahadur mentioned in the same letter that speeches on public platforms nor statements and interviews given by leaders could really help the situation but heart to heart conversations might possibly lead to some satisfactory results. He suggested that Jinnah should meet Gandhiji and then the process of private talks could be extended to others.

Mr Jinnah promptly replied of February 10, 1941, that he was always ready and "willing to see Mr Gandhi or any other Hindu leader on behalf of the Hindu community" and added "he was ready to do what he could to help the solution of Hindu-Muslim problem."

His intervention was unsuccessful. Soon after the dead end came the No-Party Leaders’ Conference presided over by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. This did not satisfy any of the party leaders but Sir Tej had done his best. Jinnah’s statement about the Conference was issued on May 4, 1941 "and he thought this was "a flanking movement" to secure Hindu nomination at the centre under another name. To him the deliberations of the Conference clearly indicated that they were designed to meet the demands of Gandhiji, the
Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha in total disregard of the opposition of the Muslim League. Jinnah's lengthy statement on Sapru Conference was circulated to all branches of the League in May 1941. But Sapru's attempt forced Jinnah to come out with a very clear exposition of the Muslim League ideology and demand. As President of the Muslim League sessions in Madras in 1941, Jinnah claimed that Hindu leadership had miserably failed and that "Muslim India will never submit to an all-India constitution and one Central Government." He unequivocally spelt out that the ideology of the League was based on the fundamental principle that "Muslim India was an independent nationality." Said he also: "We are determined, and let there be no mistake about it, to establish the status of an independent nation and an independent State in this sub-continent." He warned the British Government also. He made no secret of his mind that the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-India Hindu League the Liberal Federation etc. were all one and nothing less than a solid body of Hindus behind it. This categorical statement of Jinnah was largely due to Sapru's unsuccessful attempt for a reconciliation between Gandhiji and Jinnah. The cards were definitely put on the table.

Sapru's patriotism and yearning for India's freedom was very clearly demonstrated when earlier at the first plenary session of the Round Table Conference he observed:

"India wants and is determined to achieve a status of equality—equality with the other free members of the British Commonwealth, an equality which will give it a government not merely responsive but responsible to the popular voice. For the period of transition, if it was inevitable, provide as many safeguards as you like, so long as these safeguards do not destroy the vital principle, and then go ahead with courage and with faith."

As Law member in the Viceroy's Cabinet Sir Sapru had a large share in effecting a salutary change in the Repressive Acts. As Law member he attended the Imperial Conference and crossed swords with General Smuts over the issue of Rights of Citizenship within the British Commonwealth of Nations. The immediate provocation was the treatment meted out to Indian nationals in South Africa. Sir Tej struck a high dignity when he said that while he was happy to be a member of the family he could not reconcile himself to being lodged in 'His Majesty's Stables'.
Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had a charming but complex personality. His stature as a politician, a lawyer and a man was very great. He was very deeply regarded by the Congress and other parties. No single party could ever treat him with indifference and almost all the leaders of every party visited his Darbar for guidance. He never led the nation but he was a real scout that explored and his was the sober and mature voice that brought warring parties together. He shone when a deadlock was referred to him. Non-Congressmen like Jayakar, Sapru, Lord Sinha, Sir Mirza Ismail have been the path-finders whenever there was a mist and a confusion. Their services to India cannot be forgotten.

Sapru's was an emphatic voice that rang clear for the boycott of the Simon Commission. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact could be brought about mainly because of the silent homework done by Sapru. When he attended the First Round Table Conference in London he described himself as "a traitor to his country" as he represented probably his own self alone. He never suffered from a swollen head. When Jawaharlal made his first public speech at Allahabad, Sapru was so happy that he embraced and kissed Jawaharlal on the dais. As mentioned, he believed in some of the ideologies of the Congress but did not always approve of the technique adopted to work out the ideology. Often he was able to do for the Congress what he might not have been able to bring about from within the organisation. His disciplined background of varied experience of men and matters made him an ideal peace-maker. He was regarded by the government as a person safe and sound and amenable to reason. The Congress would swear by him in secret. The Hindu Mahasabha and Jinnah regarded him deeply. He gave his unstinted services to the Nehru Committee which produced the Nehru Report—the first blue-print for India's constitution. He produced the Sapru Report and gallantly defended the accused persons in the Indian National Army. He always had the confidence of Gandhiji and fully reciprocated his regard for him. He was along with Gandhiji very firm on Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability. In 1946 Sapru wrote to a friend:

"...It is a matter of deep regret to me that on account of my physical afflictions I have not been able to make any contribution even though I know that as a non-Congressman I had no locus-standi. I must, however, say that the manner in which the situation has been handled by Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana
Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel has exceeded my expectations. They have shown that when the occasion requires they can be good statesmen and good diplomats."

The Sapru Correspondence recently deposited at the National Library, Calcutta by Sapru’s successors throw a considerable light on the role of Sir Tej and his relationship with Gandhiji. Some of the letters are quoted below:

From Gandhiji to Sapru

Nothing from your pen I can possibly disregard. If I had the English faith in a round table conference when British authority reigns supreme, I would accept your proposal. I am not the fit person for such a task. But if you have faith and you call it, I shall be at your service. You at least will acquit me of haste or pride. I have seen nothing impossible of acceptance in my or, rather now, the Congress demand.

From Gandhiji to Sapru 16.2.1941

I thank you for two letters.

I need not now discuss the points raised by you. Q. A. Jinnah’s letter confirms my fear. He would see me if I go on behalf of the Hindu Community. This I cannot do. I do not represent the Hindu Community. I am not even a member of the Hindu Mahasabha. But you may not now get out of the situation. You must not mind my warnings. I suggest your writing to Q. A. that his position is unsound, if you agree with me. If you do not, you should strive with me and persuade me that I should go on behalf of the Hindu Community.

From Sapru to Gandhiji 3rd August, 1942

I have thought over the whole situation carefully and I have come to the conclusion that it would be most unfortunate in the larger and permanent interest of the country if you were to start the Civil Disobedience Movement. Howsoever short and swift it might be it is bound to lead to much greater differences among our own countrymen that exist at present and these differences may at times be translated into violent action. The effect of internal strife will be still further advertised and this is bound to have an adverse effect on us. My suggestion, therefore, is that for the repetition of your demand it is not necessary that you should couple it with the threat of Civil Disobedience.

I still stick to my original proposal of a round table conference and do not see the advantage of demanding a
declaration from the United Nations. How is that going to be enforced and in whose favour? That is precisely the question which will be raised either now or when the time comes for delivering the goods. A settlement arrived at by us stands on a different footing. The whole question is whether we can arrive at a settlement among ourselves. I think you should make a public and persistent effort to arrive at such a settlement and not dismiss the idea merely because you feel that there can be no such settlement so long as the British are here. I am not saying for a moment that the British are free from blame in regard to the communal situation. My own belief is that a great part of responsibility for that must be taken by Mr Amery. I have said so publicly. Nevertheless we must take things as they are. I fully realise that Mr Jinnah’s attitude is very provocative. I have read his criticism on your statement and even though I do not agree with you or the Congress view in several respects I see no justification for attributing these vile and mean motives to you, which he has done, but in the larger interest of the country I am confident that you will not take any personal attacks into account. My own belief is that if you issue an appeal to the country over your signature that will arouse a great deal of enthusiasm in the country. If Mr Jinnah or the Muslims or other parties do not make a response, the responsibility will be theirs. I am not excluding the possibility that the conference may not succeed but merely because of that possibility I should give up the idea or refuse to make one further attempt to restore peace in the country by mutual agreement, which is in my opinion much better than a peace arranged for us by China or America. This is my earnest appeal to you. I may tell you that if you will take the initiative in calling a round table conference I am quite prepared (provided you think it necessary) to append my signature to the invitation. Indeed you yourself can append signature to the invitation.

From Gandhiji to Sapru

4.8.1942

I have your kind letter. On the question of C. D. we have differed from the very commencement years ago. Yet its mere mention has brought new hope to the people and set the world athinking. Nevertheless you may depend upon my doing all I can to avert the crises, if by milder measures I can possibly reach the same result. But I have no faith in my capacity to shoulder the burden you would put upon me.
Tolstoy

Tolstoy was born in 1828 and was already ripe in age and maturity of thoughts when Gandhiji had met him through letters. Tolstoy had gone through various phases of life and his rich and varied experiences somewhat explain the originality and distinctiveness of his talent. His remarkable gifts of psychological analysis and insight into human nature are also partially shaped by all that he had gone through.

Tolstoy’s attitude towards the autocracy as a whole had attracted Gandhiji. Tolstoy was controlled by certain abstract moral and religious principles. Even when he wrote folk stories, his pen was dipped into the ink of religious humility and non-resistance to evil. In his last years Tolstoy was more disgusted with his life and it was practically at this time that Gandhiji had come in contact with him.

Tolstoy was probably the first intellectual savant who developed the thesis of non-violence in a systematic manner. Another common ground of meeting between Tolstoy and Gandhiji was in the theory of Bread Labour. Both of them preached that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands. Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount” had a deep spiritual significance for both Tolstoy and Gandhiji.

Tolstoy was about 80 years of age when Gandhiji built up the Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg. The name of the farm shows the regard with which Gandhiji held Tolstoy.

When Gandhiji was a student in England, Tolstoy had become a legend. He mentions in his autobiography:

“‘Three Moderns have left a deep impress on my life, and captivated me: Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book ‘The Kingdom of God is Within You’ and Ruskin by his ‘Unto this Last’.”

Whilst in South Africa, Gandhiji studied some of Tolstoy’s works. The way Gandhiji built up the Tolstoy Farm, and conducted himself as the eldest brother there and in his work as a pacifist and resister to evil, we find a very clear impact of Tolstoy on him.
Regarding Tolstoy’s ‘Kingdom of God is Within You’ he also mentions:

“Tolstoy’s *Kingdom of God is Within You* overwhelmed me. It left an abiding impression on me. Before the independent thinking, profound morality and the truthfulness of this book, all the books given me by Mr Coates seem to pale into insignificance.”

Tolstoy’s creed of “resist not evil and non-violence” had gone deep into Gandhiji’s mind.

Gandhiji’s work on the lines of Satyagraha in South Africa was clearly influenced by Tolstoy. In his book “Satyagraha in South Africa”, he paid a tribute to Tolstoy. He discussed therein the question of the origin of the idea of passive resistance to the work of the Quakers, of the Non-conformists, the Suffragettes. As has been observed in many such cases, Gandhiji found the deviation from strict non-violence. He accepted Christ’s case as the purest form of Satyagraha. In that connection Gandhiji paid a tribute to Tolstoy’s Russia and the illustration of the Bukhobors as a rare example of passive resistance.

Gandhiji’s *Indian Home Rule* was published in 1909. This book had originally been published as *Hind Swaraj* in Gujarati. This book was read by Tolstoy and in the last two years of his life (1909-1910). Tolstoy closely followed Gandhi’s career. A few letters were exchanged between the two and they show the deep regard that Tolstoy had for Gandhi who was younger to him by decades. Gandhiji presented a copy of his Indian Home Rule to Tolstoy for his opinion. Both loved each other for their deep faith in humanity and non-violence.

The first letter from Gandhiji to Tolstoy was written from London on October 1, 1909. In the course of this letter Gandhiji gave an account of what was happening in the Transvaal area in South Africa in the past three years so far as the Indian population was concerned. Gandhiji explained his mission in England and mentioned that he went there with a friend to see the Imperial Authorities and to place before them the position with a view to seek redress. In the course of this letter he mentioned:

“Together with a friend, I have come here to see the Imperial authorities and to place before them the position, with a view to seeking redress. Passive resisters have recognised that they should have nothing to do with pleading with the
Government, but the deputation has come at the instance of the weaker members of the community, and it therefore represents their weakness rather than their strength. But in the course of my observation here, I have felt that if a general competition for an essay on the Ethics and Efficacy of Passive Resistance were invited, it would popularise the movement and make people think. A friend has raised the question of morality in connection with the proposed competition. He thinks that such an invitation would be inconsistent with the true spirit of passive resistance, and that it would amount to buying opinion. May I ask you to favour me with your opinion on the subject of morality? And if you consider that there is nothing wrong in inviting contributions, I would ask you also to give me the names of those whom I should specially approach to write upon the subject."

Tolstoy’s reply was dated October 7, 1909 in which he observed:

“May God help all our dear brothers and co-workers in the Transvaal. This fight between gentleness and brutality, between humility and love on one side, and conceit and violence on the other, makes itself ever more strongly felt here to us also—especially in the sharp conflicts between religions and the laws of the State—expressed by the conscientious objection to rendemilitary service. Such objections are taking place very frequently.”

In another letter dated November 10, 1909 Gandhiji sent Tolstoy a book on him by Doke and again requested for his help in any manner to popularise his movement in South Africa, if he thought it was justified. Tolstoy appreciated Doke’s book and in a letter dated May 8, 1910 mentioned that he had a chance to know and understand Gandhiji better through that book.

On August 15, 1910 from Johannesburg, Gandhiji again wrote to Tolstoy and expressed his gratitude for Tolstoy’s mind by reading Gandhiji’s articles on non-resistance in the Indian Opinion. In the course of this letter Tolstoy mentioned:

“The more I live—and specially now that I am approaching death, the more I feel inclined to express to others the feelings which so strongly move my being, and which, according to my opinion, are of great importance. That is, what one calls non-resistance, is in reality nothing else but the discipline of love undeformed by false interpretation. Love is the aspiration for communion and solidarity with other souls, and that aspiration always liberates the source of noble activities. That love is the supreme and unique law of human life, which everyone feels
in the depth of one’s soul. We find it manifested most clearly in the soul of the infants. Man feels it so long as he is not blinded by the false doctrines of the world.

“That law of love has been promulgated by all the philosophies: Indian, Chinese, Hebrew, Greek and Roman. I think that it had been most clearly expressed by Christ, who said that in that law is contained both the law and the Prophets. But he has done more; anticipating the deformation to which that law is exposed, he indicated directly the danger of such deformation which is natural to people who live only for worldly interests. The danger consists precisely in permitting one’s self to defend those interests by violence; that is to say, as he has expressed, returning blow by blows, and taking back by force things that have been taken from us, and so forth. Christ knew also, just as all reasonable human beings must know, that the employment of violence is incompatible with love, which is the fundamental law of life. He knew that, once violence is admitted, doesn’t matter in even a single case, the law of love is thereby rendered futile. That is to say that the law of love ceases to exist. The whole Christian civilisation, so brilliant in the exterior, has grown up on this misunderstanding, and this flagrant and strange contradiction, sometimes conscious and mostly unconscious.”

The last paragraph of the letter runs as follows:

“Between the confession of Christianity, even under the perverted form in which it appears amongst us Christian peoples, and the simultaneous recognition of the necessity of armies and of the preparation for killing on an ever increasing scale, there exists a contradiction so flagrant and crying that sooner or later probably very soon, it must invariably manifest itself in utter nakedness; and it will lead us either to renounce the Christian religion, and to maintain the governmental power or to renounce the existence of the army and all the forms of violence which the state supports and which are more or less necessary to sustain its power. That contradiction is felt by all the governments by your British Government as well as by our Russian Government; and therefore, by the spirit of conservatism natural to these governments, the opposition is persecuted, as we find in Russia as well as in the articles of your journal, more than any other anti-governmental activity. The governments know from which direction comes the principal danger and try to defend themselves with a great zeal in that trial not merely to preserve their interests but actually to fight for their very existence.”

Thus in various ways Gandhiji was shaped by Tolstoy. Both were essentially deeply religious and both appreciated that God could be realised in one’s own soul. Neither of them rejected their religious base in their work in the political field. Their achieve-
ments are because of their religious conviction and their image is also due to their religious beliefs. Both refused to be compartmentalised. As a novelist or an essayist Tolstoy was essentially the same religious man and so was Gandhiji whether he was working for the untouchables or slogging for the independence of India. Neither of them was cowed down by the frightful immediate consequences and both were prepared to wade through toil and tears, sufferings and joys. None of them believed that the religious creed they followed was the last word and both appreciated that much of extraneous dirt had settled down on their traditional religious creed. In this way although intensely religious both of them released reactionary ecclesiastical forces. Both paid homage to the people who had played with fire and got themselves burnt. Tolstoy deeply appreciated the courage and fortitude of those who struggled against the Tsarist autocracy but he had disapproved of their struggle to seize power. In a similar manner Gandhiji paid a high premium to the revolutionaries who had even used bombs to kill the political opponents but at the same time he condemned the element of violence. He tried his best to save Bhagat Singh, the Indian revolutionary, from the gallows. When he failed and Bhagat Singh was hanged he paid his homage to Bhagat Singh’s daring and idealism in the open sessions of the Congress but also openly denounced the spirit of violence in him. When Swami Shradhanand, a Hindu leader was killed by a Muslim assassin, Gandhiji called the assassin his brother and said that the real murderers were those who released ideas which had prompted the man to kill Swami Shradhanand.

Both Tolstoy and Gandhiji struggled for perfectibility and both spent their last days in a certain amount of misery and isolation. But that does not diminish their image in any manner. Both the savants insisted that each individual and each country should try to put his own house in order and for this the men need inner purification and have reduced themselves to zero and be an instrument in the hands of God. Again and again Gandhiji said, God is not Truth but Truth is God.

Tolstoy through his stories advocated the creed of bread labour. He was himself a carpenter, a ploughman and bootmaker. Did Gandhiji not in a similar manner clean the lavatory, wash his clothes, spin and do other chores? Both lived a life of Ahimsa and Swadeshi and both had risked their unshakable faith in Ahimsa and Swadeshi.
Even in their allergy to industrialism both had a common ground. Of course in this both of them had failed in their preachings as they possibly could not put back the hands of the clock. Gandhiji fondly dreamt of something like a federation of Village Republics, self-sufficient and self-contained with little policing and the military personnel. Gandhiji pleaded to every Briton not to fight Hitler but to have the supreme courage to allow Hitler run over their country but not run over their soul. Tolstoy was also clear about his ideas regarding the immorality of European Imperialism. Both had seen how their idealism had failed to bring about concrete results.

In their day to day life, in their teachings and even in their failures Tolstoy and Gandhiji were very close to each other in spite of the difference of age of about four decades.
Vallabhbhai Patel

It is sardonic truth that for a long time Gandhian Congress did very little intensive thinking on the shape of democracy that was aimed at. In the pre-Gandhian Congress days there used to be discussions on different facets of a democratic set-up of the government such as separation of the Executive and the Judiciary, the imbalance in showing favour to the Europeans while dispensing justice, freedom of the Press, unfettered recruitment of Indians for higher ranks in the administration, withdrawal of repressive laws and the like. Generally speaking, the pre-Gandhian Congress was still engaged in developing the idea underlying the words of W. C. Bonnerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress in 1885:

“Our desire to be governed according to the ideas of Govt. prevalent in Europe is in no way incompatible with our thorough loyalty to the British Government. All we ask is that the basis of the Government shall be widened, and that the people shall have their proper and legitimate share in it.”

Gandhiji brought in a sort of revolution in the Congress by taking politics from the educated and the elite to the people at large, and created an upsurge which, probably, was far too sudden and forceful. All the energies of the top Congressmen were mostly directed in giving a leadership to the forces that were let loose. Mixing up religion with politics was also new to India. All this explains why Gandhiji and his top followers could hardly devote much time simultaneously to an intellectual exercise as to the shape of democracy that they were aiming at. Gandhiji spoke to the masses and there was a very small percentage of educated people in the masses. He took his political dogmas to the people at large who were very inadequately equipped to appreciate their import. He could not and did not always spell out clearly his political mission either.

Gandhiji cannot be blamed for not being able to give clear-cut ideas of what he understood as democracy. His earlier book published in 1906 “Hind Swaraj” had utopian ideas which could not be worked out in the present world. From time to time, it is true,
he was advocating various ideas of what the set-up of democracy should be. Some of them were impracticable but his disciples would not say so. Most of Gandhiji’s first set of devoted disciples followed him with a charisma and that was a handicap to serious critical thinking, study and creative intellectual contribution.

But there were a few of the top Congressmen among Gandhiji’s contemporaries who did a certain amount of serious thinking as to the form of democracy India should have. One of them was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It is pity that Vallabhbhai, as a political thinker, has not been studied yet. He has been more studied as a political worker. Although wedged in between Gandhiji and Jawaharlal he shines very prominently. Vallabhbhai Patel was a great commoner, and had an unusual degree of the sixth sense, a seldom-erring instinct for the popular sentiment. He could always define how far and how fast he could go without losing touch with the majority. Patel was more earthy and in spite of his staunch loyalty to Gandhiji. He never mixed up God and religion with politics. To him religion and God had a separate place and were personal to the individual. He differed from Gandhiji as he believed that the people could err grievously in the heat of excitement leading to passion. He would trust the people on fundamental issues and could offer them encouraging leadership and be one of them in working out an objective. But he never expected the impossible from them. This practical slant of his mind was in contrast to Gandhiji’s infinite faith in the masses which often led to disaster, like the Chauri Chaura incident and the suspension of the Movement. This practical bent of Patel’s mind is seen in a very remarkable manner when Independence was ushered in. The very unfortunate killings which immediately followed and particularly when the two-way exodus took place he was immensely disturbed but he seldom gave vent to his feelings and calmly tried to do what could possibly be done under the circumstances. He was already prepared for the worst although he hoped for the best.

A pragmatist, he was a keen political strategist. He did not indulge in visions drawn on an intense faith in humanism or dependence from extraneous circumstances beyond his reach. Because of his earlier career when he had to struggle hard to make a foothold as a student and then as a lawyer and because of his extensive knowledge of the working of the human mind, as one of the sharpest
criminal lawyers in India, he knew the limitations of such dreams. He did not believe in preaching socialism *ad nauseam*. In a speech in Calcutta on June 2, 1948 he said:

"Unlike many who indulge in the parrot cry of socialism, I have no property of my own. Before you talk of socialism you must ask yourself how much wealth you have created by your labour. If you have created nothing, the parrot would have flown and the cage would be empty. By experience, I am convinced that what is necessary for us is to learn how to produce more wealth and then to produce wealth and thereafter to think what to do with it. What the country needs is not the parrot cry of socialism but unity and strength."

He did not believe in wholesale liquidation of landlords. Although he had liquidated the Feudatory States in India, he did it later more because of the compelling circumstances and in an attempt to make India a homogeneous entity. Earlier in 1931 he was mainly instrumental in getting some resolutions passed in the Working Committee of the Congress on September 10, to brief Gandhiji for his attendance in the Second Round Table Conference in London. The ninth Resolution referred to the Indian States and at that time there was no question of integrating them, though the unity of India was held to be supreme. This shows he did not have a closed mind in political problems.

He also knew that the industrialists and the private enterprises must co-exist. It was a favourite repetition of his, "We should learn to walk before we attempt to run." On May 14, 1950 at Ernakulam he said:

"You want levelling of wealth, but where is the wealth to be levelled? Do you want distribution of poverty? We have not gained freedom for distribution of poverty. We have to create wealth first."

It is Sardar Patel who had the guts to speak in Calcutta on January 3, 1948:

"I have been blamed that I am a friend of Rajas, Capitalists and Zamindars.... I have been frequently telling the capitalists which way their duty lies. But I cannot succumb to the prevalent fashion of posing as leaders, or attempting to gain leadership by abusing princes, capitalists and others without rhyme or reason."

Like Gandhiji, he wanted to change the mentality of the rich and not the wholesale liquidation of rich people. He thought that
with the change in their mentality the surplus wealth could be utilised for the good of the country. As a corollary of this belief Patel did not want wholesale nationalization of industries. He was opposed to nationalization excepting in some key industries. In a speech in Bombay on his 75th birthday he said:

"Nationalization is worthwhile only if the Government can manage the industries efficiently. But this is difficult. We have neither the men nor the resources even to run our administration. We have had to make our civil servants available to the States and still they are not being run as efficiently as they should be. Let those who have the knowledge and experience manage the industries and increase the country’s wealth."

He differed from Gandhiji and did not think industrializing meant the way to destruction. With him village industries had their separate place.

He was particularly good to the administrative services but at the same time was one of the strictest disciplinarians. He gave the Services his trust but did not keep his eyes shut. With him there was no particular favourite and that is why he could carry the same Services with him after Independence was ushered in.

With him the achievement of the object was an obsession. It is, however, wrong to say that he differed from Gandhiji as to the nature of the means to achieve the end. Repeatedly, Gandhiji used to say that the means were as important as the end and the means must also be clean and honourable to attain the objective. Patel was of a more practical bend. While he did not encourage a dishonourable means to attain a good objective like Napoleon, he did not mind turning the blind eye occasionally if he knew this was necessary. Out of the 23 Feudatory States in Orissa 22 had agreed to merge. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was in Orissa for this objective. V.P. Menon, the Governor was trying his very best to persuade the 23rd Feudatory State also to agree to the merger. The Raja was rather obstinate. Menon asked the Inspector General of Police, Mr Pearman to march to the State. This was done with Sardar Patel’s knowledge. The Raja was nervous and quickly agreed to throw in his lot with the other 22 Rajas. News was flashed that all the 23 Feudatory States in Orissa have agreed to sign the merger.

But tales were carried to Gandhiji that there was some compulsion to obtain the merger from the 23rd Feudatory State. Gandhiji
sent for Patel and wanted to know if the allegation was true. Patel just told Gandhiji that he was concerned only with the merger and was told that all the States have agreed. Gandhiji sent for V. P. Menon and Menon saw him on his day of silence. Gandhiji put the question on a slip of paper to Menon. Menon was equal to the task. He wrote back that since all the 22 States had agreed and if the 23rd State was left by itself the consequences would have been serious and in view of the great objective even if the I. G. of Police had been asked to march (he did not actually march) there was no harm. Gandhiji nodded and the matter was closed.

Patel would take an absorbing interest in a matter if he was interested; if not, he would be supremely indifferent to it.

It is well known that when Gandhiji first visited Gujarat Club sometime after his return from South Africa and gave a lecture on his ideas the Sardar was busy playing Bridge in another room of the Club and did not even bother to attend Gandhiji's speech. He was just not interested in Gandhiji at that time and ignored him. At the top of criminal practice playing Bridge was his favourite pastime in the evenings. Sometime later Gandhiji was made President of the Club and Patel was the Secretary. They came to know each other well. It was then in 1918 that he came under the spell of Gandhiji.

This spell continued for about two decades. Patel was one of the loyalists to Gandhiji, to the extent that Choudhry Khaliquzzaman has not hesitated to observe in his book "Pathway to Pakistan" that Patel was a "Yesman" to Gandhiji, and so he did not have much faith in Patel! When the Non-cooperation Movement was sponsored, Patel threw himself in the movement. The consequences of the Rowlatt Act were disastrous. In Ahmedabad there was a general strike of the mill workers and on April 6, 1918 there was a huge procession led by Patel and a public meeting was held on the sands of Sabarmati river. Thereby, Patel cast his lot entirely with Gandhiji. He defied the Act and sold the proscribed Gandhiji's "Hind Swaraj" and "Sarvodya". It was Patel who published the daily bulletins successfully at his house and widely circulated "Satyagraha Patrika", in contravention of the Press Law.

The Non-Cooperation Resolution was adopted at the special session of the Congress in 1920. The Congress session at Ahmedabad honoured Patel as the elected Chairman of the Reception Committee
but before the Congress met, the President-elect C. R. Das was not released from jail. The Presidential speech was read out by Hakim Ajmal Khan. Patel’s speech was very brief and he thought that although Swaraj was not won within a year, the repressive policy launched by the Government was a clear sign of the approach of Swaraj. Then came the Chauri-Chaura incident on February 8, 1922 which isolated Gandhiji from most of the top leaders for a time. But Patel did not waver in his loyalty.

After the historic trial and imprisonment of Gandhiji in 1922, the leadership of the Congress fell on Patel and the way he reorganised Gujarat was marvellous. The next Congress session at Gaya with C. R. Das as the President saw the split between the Changers and the No-changers. While C. R. Das and a few others decided to steer a separate boat, Patel stuck to Gandhiji. The constructive work of Gandhiji would have flopped in his absence if Sardar was not there. But apart from the constructive work Patel could be militant when repression was let loose and because of him the flag agitation in Nagpur was successfully brought to an end.

The Bardoli struggle in 1928 was crowned with success for the people because of the great fight under the leadership of Patel. Gandhiji was all praise for the great deed done.

Patel’s loyalty to Gandhiji was very categorically indicated when in the Calcutta Session of the Congress Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose had gone back on their agreement on the Subjects Committee regarding the question of choice between Dominion status and Independence. The resolution demanding Dominion status was approved by the Congress and Gandhiji felt isolated but Patel fully shared Gandhiji’s views. Patel immediately plunged into the work of preparing the people for the coming struggle as he fully appreciated that the ultimatum of the Congress was bound to be thrown to the wind by the British Government and Satyagraha would have to be undertaken. Soon after Patel was imprisoned. He could not join the Dandi March but immediately on his release he plunged into the struggle and was elected President of the Congress Session at Karachi.

This was a momentous session. Gandhiji had tried his very best with Lord Irwin to get a reprieve for Bhagat Singh and he was told that this could not be granted. When Gandhiji alighted at the
railway station with Patel they met a crowd with black flags. In spite of the great schism the Gandhian Pact had been substantially accepted and the concluding address of Patel was to the effect that the time for the real fight was coming very soon.

Lord Irwin was succeeded on April 18, 1931 by Lord Willingdon and immediately there was a change in the atmosphere. Lord Irwin's sympathetic and human attitude was given a go by. In England also the Labour Government was replaced by a Coalition Government with the Conservatives holding a decisive position and the Naked Fakir found himself in jail, immediately after coming back from the Second Round Table Conference which ended in fiasco. Patel gave unstinted support to Gandhiji all this time.

Some of the letters of Gandhiji to Patel will be of some interest in the context of what has been mentioned. On September 16, 1924 Gandhiji wrote to Patel that with his heart of a lion he should not be perturbed by his decision to undergo a fast for 21 days for the Hindu-Muslim unity. The letters of Gandhiji to Patel during the historic Bardoli struggle speak of the great regard and love that Gandhiji had for Patel. He wrote on June 3, 1928:

"The battle in Bardoli is going on very well. Long live the Sardar to fight many a good fight."

On October 26, 1931, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Patel from a sitting of the Federal Committee of the Round Table Conference. In this letter he mentioned:

"The deliberations of the Conference will be over in the middle of November. I have been invited to visit almost all the countries on the continent and wish to see them all. If I am able to go there it is likely to be serviceable to our cause. You please see all friends and wire your decision to me. If you agree that I should go, I shall be away from home for a month longer so that I can be back only in January.... No matter what happens here, if at home you find that you should offer a fight, offer it by all means."

The master wanted an order from the disciple whether he should tour abroad or not.

Gandhiji shared his personal troubles with Patel to the full and that shows their relationship. In a letter in July 1933 he had written:

"Please do not give way to worry on account of doctors' reports and the long period of convalescence. His will be done.
I had expected to be on my feet in three weeks, but that was not to be. However, there is no ground for anxiety. It will take sometime for me to get well; that is all. And no wonder, as you know, I am in my 64th year. Rest assure that I am happy.”

In a similar vein on August 24, 1933 he wrote to Patel:

“Not that I am too feeble to write with my own hand, but today at any rate I am dictating this letter. You must be reading newspapers and so are probably aware of recent events. It seems as if they occurred as in a dream. But we must accept in thankfulness everything that God has in store for us. ‘One step enough for me.’ So we shall be careful of nothing. But this time I somehow do not see my way clear before me. In Yervada prison I was thinking all the while as I had never expected that you would be removed to Nasik the day before I was taken there. We remember you every day on various occasions and keenly felt our inability to consult you on the questions that arose.”

Gandhiji was arrested on August 2 and taken to Yervada prison where Patel was already a prisoner. Gandhiji had eagerly looked forward to meeting Patel as a co-prisoner. But the Government removed Patel to Nasik prison the previous day, and Gandhiji was much disappointed.

Study of Patel’s biography and papers suggest that from 1936 Patel came on his own. Not that he did not have the greatest admiration and regard for Gandhiji, but the sense of reality that pervaded with the changing circumstances convinced Patel that there must be a more realistic approach to the problems of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru on return from Europe was soaked with Socialism and wanted to induct his ideas of socialism in the Congress. Nehru even almost dictated his terms on being President of the Congress. Patel saw that Nehru could not get support either in the Working Committee or in the AICC. He took the stand that the Congress President had no dictatorial powers and “the Congress does not part with its wide powers by electing an individual, no matter who he is.” This was his approach to the stormy days when Subhas Bose raised his standard of revolt against Gandhiji. He did not take Bose’s move as a defeat for Gandhiji but as the defeat of a sound principle and put his strength against Bose. The same realistic approach made him defeat a move at Haripura Congress that the Congress should extend its activities to the Princely States. He would allow only Praja Mandals to be set up. When the Congress ministries
were formed in 1937 it was Patel’s stature that struck the tune in the Congress ministries. He started differing from Gandhiji from this point as he did not have Gandhiji’s mellowness and solicitude for particular persons. Patel would not allow any Chief Minister over-reach himself and this started whirlpools of murmurs that snow-balled. But Patel as Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee did not care for all that. He took the odium on himself for the disciplinary action against Dr Khare, Chief Minister of Central Provinces. He bore the frontal attack of Subhas at Tripuri Congress in 1939. With the formation of the Forward Block by Bose the core of the Congress under Gandhiji was reduced. But for Patel it is doubtful if Gandhiji’s supremacy over the Congress once again could have been re-established. This he did not because of charisma but because of firm conviction. Patel’s speech when the Quit India Resolution was passed struck a sombre note. The arrest of the leaders followed. The consequences when the Government took drastic measures were surely far in excess of what the leaders had bargained for.

But the later events followed quickly. The communal holocaust, the revolt of the Indian Naval rating brought out the statesman in Patel. In the subsequent parleys over the partition of the country, Patel took an important part and did never try to absolve himself from his share. He did concede in the Constituent Assembly:

"I agreed to partition as a last resort, when we should have lost all. Five Muslim League members had established themselves as Ministers of the Interim Government with the sole object of partitioning the country.... We decided that partition should be agreed upon the terms that Punjab and Bengal should be partitioned.... Mr Jinnah did not want a truncated Pakistan but he had to swallow it. I made a further condition that in two months’ time power should be transferred and an Act should be passed by Parliament during that time, guaranteeing that Britain would not interfere with the question of the Indian States. We will deal with that question.... Let paramountcy be dead.

Patel had no hesitation to concede his share in partition of India just as a doctor would not hesitate to amputate a diseased and incurable part of the body. Some people have tried to make out that the partition was forced on Gandhiji. This is not correct. There are letters of Gandhiji to show he was agreeable to accept
partition under certain conditions, and particularly after the Britishers would quit India.

It is true that there are some letters that had passed between Gandhiji and Patel in the years 1945-48 which show that Patel had taken a firm line to administer and was not as malleable as Gandhiji. It should not be forgotten that Patel never mixed up his “inner voice” or personal convictions with the larger issues of the State. Gandhiji wrote to Patel to convene a Committee of Enquiry to look into the communal outburst in Bihar in 1946 but Patel did not set up one. Nehru stood by Patel at this moment. Even Gandhiji’s threat “I shall be compelled to fast unto death” did not convince Patel that there should an enquiry. In the same letter on November 5, 1946, Gandhiji affectionately wrote to Patel:

“Whatever happens, my advice always be that all of you should go on doing your own work. You should not spend a single moment on speculations about my death. You should discard anxiety and leave me in the hands of God.”

One has to concede that Gandhiji was not directly concerned with the practical side of the administration. He saw for himself that many of his ideas of there being no Police, no Army, Ministers on small pay etc., were not accepted in any of the provinces or at the Centre. People flocked to Gandhiji if they had to ventilate their grievances and Gandhiji was, on December 30, 1946, led to write to Patel that his speeches were inflammatory and he was teaching the people to meet violence with violence. Gandhiji even mentioned that he had heard that Patel wanted to hold on to the office and missed no opportunity to hit the Muslim League. Patel, indomitable as he was and because the story was taken to Gandhiji, was a canard and gave a spirited reply, and said that when the Viceroy wanted him to surrender his portfolio he had offered his resignation. He also pointed out that:

“It is my habit to tell people very unpalatable truths.... Confidential reports which the Government of Bengal and the Governor are sending regarding your continued stay in Bengal are very bad. They wish to push you out from there.”

In another letter he pointed out to Gandhiji that the Bihar Governor and the Viceroy did not want to have a Commission in Bihar to enquire into the disturbances and pointed out the futility of a prolonged Commission set up in Calcutta. It was unfortunate that there should be this cloud of misunderstanding between Gandhiji
and Patel, one who had stood by him in the thick of fight, when even trusted colleagues had revolted. It is a tragedy that on January 30, 1948 a little before Gandhiji fell to the bullets, Patel had a heart to heart talk with him. It is believed that Patel told Gandhiji that he wanted to resign from the Cabinet and Gandhiji prevented him from doing so. Does that show a wall of aloofness?

Patel bore the burden of administration although his health was fast failing and he passed away on December 15, 1950 in Bombay. In his last public pronouncement on November 9, 1950 he condemned the Chinese infiltration into Tibet and had drawn a dark picture as to the outcome of Chinese action in Tibet. How prophetic he was!
Zakir Husain

Born in a cultured family, Dr Zakir Husain by nature was simple and deeply religious. His family descended from a clan of the proud and chivalrous Afridi Pathans who had come and settled at Qaimgunj, a small town in Uttar Pradesh. His grandfather had moved to Aurangabad, Deccan, where Zakir Husain was born in 1897. He was only eight years old when his father Fida Husain, a practising lawyer died in 1905 at Hyderabad. His mother decided to return to their ancestral home in Uttar Pradesh.

The first school which Zakir Sahib joined was the Islamia High School at Etawah. While at school he took interest in the cause of the Muslims who were involved in the Tripoli War. He collected money for the Muslims involved. At this school he was greatly influenced by the religious life of his Headmaster, Syed Alatf Hussain and by the personality of a Muslim ascetic, Sufi Hasan Shah.

In 1913 Zakir Husain joined the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. He was an active student of the College and was Vice-President of the Students’ Union. He passed his B. A. with Honours in 1918 and joined M. A. and Law classes, but owing to the political upheaval in the country in 1919, could not prolong his studies. Gandhiji visited M. A. O. College in 1920. The Non-Cooperation Movement of Gandhiji had its impact on the M. A. O. College too. A section of the students at Aligarh, under Zakir Husain’s leadership, decided to boycott the M. A. O. College, as the institution refused to give up the grant from the Government ; and started a national college of their own at Aligarh. Copies of the resolution adopted by the students meeting were sent to Gandhiji and other Muslim leaders such as Dr Ansari and Ajmal Khan.

This national school known as the Jamia Millia inaugurated at the mosque of Aligarh College by a Muslim divine had Hakim Ajmal Khan as its first Chancellor and Maulana Mohammed Ali, its first Vice-Chancellor. On March 17,1925 the institution was shifted from Aligarh to Delhi because of financial difficulties. Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr Ansari, who were financially supporting the institution, wanted this shift.
These changes came in when Zakir Husain was abroad studying at the Berlin University where he stayed from 1922 to 1926. Zakir Sahib kept himself in touch with the political changes in India under Gandhiji’s leadership. In 1924 he contributed an article on Gandhiji for a Swedish paper. He wrote a book on Gandhiji with another author, Alfred Ehrentreich, entitled “Die Botschaft Des Mahatma Gandhi.” On his return Zakir Sahib rejoined the Jamia Millia which was shifted to Okhla near New Delhi.

After Hakim Sahib’s death in December 1927, the Jamia came to serious troubles over money. In the year 1928, the Jamia Millia seems to have passed through a severe financial crisis, as is clear from the letters exchanged between Dr Zakir Husain and Gandhiji. Zakir Husain wrote to Gandhiji about the finances of the Jamia saying:

“I am reluctant, but I feel I should tell you that we have not made any payments to our staff after October. My colleagues don’t harass me. But this adds to my trouble.”

In another letter which Zakir Husain sent on February 4, 1928 to Gandhiji, he showed great anxiety and sought Gandhiji’s assistance. At this time Gandhiji was also actively helping to raise money for Ajmal Memorial Fund, which was to be diverted to perpetuate the Jamia as a memorial to Hakim Ajmal Khan.

There is a letter of Gandhiji to Zakir Husain dated May 23, 1928 which made Zakir Husain realise the virtue of self-help and made him start the National Education Society to run the Jamia. Gandhiji addressed Zakir as “My dear Friend” and wrote:

“I have your letter which I prize for its absolute frankness. I would personally have preferred a declaration of emphatic non-cooperation, but I am not prepared to advise you to abandon the institution because you have a milder declaration. After all, it is not the declaration that so much matters as action when the testing time comes. The fate of the institution will depend ultimately not upon the trustees but upon the professors who are giving their all to it.

“I know your pecuniary difficulties. I am helpless. I discussed the thing with Dr Ansari in Bombay and he told me that he hoped to send you some money from Bombay. I could not ask Jamnalalji to send you further advance unless everything was in order.”

To make up the financial difficulties in the running of the Jamia, Zakir Sahib’s determination and example made other lecturers and students live a life of austerity and dedication, and work on much reduced salaries. After consulting his colleagues and the
Foundation Committee, he laid the foundation of the Anjuman-e-Talime Milli (National Education Society) which was to take over the Jamia; and its teachers were to run it. Dr Ansari became its President, Dr Zakir Husain its Secretary and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj the Treasurer. Its objective was to spread education among the masses, the Muslims in particular. It was not to ask for any help from the Government until the country attained independence. He also helped in starting another institution called Hamdard-e-Jamia. He felt so much enamoured with the mission of the teachers and educationists that he did not like any diversion from the pursuit of education. When in 1930 he found some members of the staff of Jamia participating in the Dandi March of Gandhiji, he called upon them to seek permission from the authorities of the Jamia first and then take up political work.

Since the South African days, Gandhiji had made experiments on education. With him literacy was necessary but he did not attach that importance to literary education as most of the educationists did. Gandhiji was also a firm believer and propagator of the Bread-Labour theme. With him no one had the normal right to consume food and live unless he contributed in some shape to the material good. A man must earn his bread and is entitled to the satisfaction of his basic needs and a little more perhaps. The rich and the capitalists to him were the trustees of the wealth or resources for others.

With these views Gandhiji thought that even when a student, one must lay his hands on some productive work and should be able to plough or grow vegetables or do some earth-work. His idea was that a student should be self-supporting when learning and should not be depending on his elders for his upkeep. Manual training was a must with a student, according to Gandhiji. He had tried these ideas in his Ashram at Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm, in the Press and elsewhere. He tried to push on these ideas in Champaran district in Bihar when he opened some school in the interior of the Champaran district.

With the Congress capturing the ministries in the provinces in 1937 Gandhiji thought a great opportunity had come to make a breakthrough in the educational world. He called an Educational Conference at Wardha on October 22, 1937 and presided over it. He put his scheme of education before the Conference and said:
"I want the whole process of education to be imparted through some handicraft industry."

Gandhiji's proposals were:

"(1) Primary education extending over a period of seven years or longer, and covering all the subjects up to the matriculation standard, except English, plus a vocation used as the vehicle for drawing out the minds of boys and girls in all departments of knowledge should take the place of what passes today under the name of primary, middle and high school education. (2) Such education, taken as a whole, can and must be self-supporting; in fact, self-support is the acid test of its reality."

When these proposals were under discussion, Dr Zakir Husain pointed out that there was nothing new in his scheme which is called the Project Method in America and the Complex method in Russia; and said that the paucity of trained teachers will be its main hindrance. He also opposed placing too much emphasis on the self-supporting aspect of education; and warned:

"Leaders may become slave drivers and exploit the labour of the poor boys. If this happens, takli would prove worse than the books and we shall be laying the foundation of hidden slavery in our country."

The Education Conference appointed a Committee on October 23, with Zakir Husain as the Chairman to formulate a scheme of basic education on the lines drawn by the Conference.

The report of the Zakir Husain Committee was published on December 2, 1937. There was much controversy, not on the merit of the scheme but on political considerations. The Committee produced its report in record time and spent less than four hundred rupees for the work. The main features of the scheme were embodied in the following resolutions:

1. That in the opinion of this Conference free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nationwide scale.

2. That the medium of instruction be the mother-tongue.

3. That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manned and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the Central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.
That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers. The basic principle of the Wardha Scheme of Education was underlined by Zakir Husain’s report. It mentioned "...In India the nation has adopted non-violence, as the method of peace, for achieving all-round freedom. Our children will therefore need to be taught the superiority of non-violence over violence"; and the syllabus drawn by the Committee had all the ideals of Gandhiji in practical shape, coordination between precept and practice.

In 1938 the Haripura Congress adopted a resolution on national education and authorised Dr Zakir Husain and E. Aryanayakam to draw a programme of basic national education and recommend it for acceptance to those who were in control of State or private education. In 1939 the Second World War broke and the Congress Ministries, which were expected to implement the Wardha Scheme, went out of office. Dr Zakir Husain often pointed out that owing to paucity of trained teachers, the scheme was likely to fail and pin-pointed that too much emphasis should not be given to the self-supporting aspect of education. Many intellectuals and educationists could not understand why Gandhiji interpreted education as manual training devoid of spiritual aspiration and literary values. At a meeting of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh in 1947, Dr Zakir Husain pointed out that the Congress which had officially baptised the National Education programme never explained the educational policy to its Ministers.

Dr Zakir Husain’s association with the Jamia and Gandhiji’s Wardha Scheme established his reputation. He was attached to many educational commissions and organisations, as the University Education Commission, University Grants Commission, the UNESCO, and the World University Service. He delivered addresses at the convocations of many Universities in India and abroad. He made a classical remark on the Indian political condition when he said at Kashi Vidyapith Convocation address:

"I wish that there was more education in our politics and less politics in our education."

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Jamia Millia on November 17, 1946 he observed:

"The Jamia should be a model of Islamic life. If ever a non-Muslim wished to know Islam correctly, he should be able to acquire that knowledge from Jamia."
In 1948, Dr Zakir Husain became the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh University. He drew Rs 95 per month when he left Jamia in 1948 to join the Aligarh University. It was the unanimous decision of the administrative body of the Aligarh University, as its financial affairs and educational policy was in chaos. Most of its teaching staff had opted for Pakistan and deserted the University. It was Dr Husain’s genial personality that again drew some of the capable teachers in the service of the University. Owing to his efforts, the Government of India increased its grant from Rs 3,00,000 to Rs 12,50,000.

In 1952, he was sworn in as a member of the Rajya Sabha. From 1957 to 1962 he served as the Governor of Bihar and from 1962 to 1967 he had the honour to guide the sessions of the Rajya Sabha as Vice President of India. Dr Radhakrishnan as President and Dr Zakir Husain as Vice President formed a good team of a philosopher and an educationist, guiding the destinies of the country. Both had their initial training within the portals of the university and had their grass-roots in the field of education, mixing with the flower of the nation at the University campus. In 1967 Presidential election which was held on May 6, he polled 4,71,244 first preference votes as against 3,63,971 secured by his rival K. Subba Rao, ex-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. It was his election which also proved the secular character of the Indian politics securing the votes of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Parsi voters who man the legislatures. When he was sworn in as President of India on May 13, 1967 he said:

"It is part of our national temperament, an inheritance from the great leader of our liberation movement, Mahatma Gandhi, that power should be used only for moral purposes."

He died in full harness as the third President of India on May 3, 1969.

In the valedictory address at the Nehru Round Table organised by UNESCO in New Delhi on September 29, 1966, Dr Zakir Husain drew a pen picture of India’s political life. He said:

"He (Nehru) has left behind the memory of a free life well lived, a life full of activity and refinement. He had left behind a climate of dedicated endeavour and moral aspiration. May it be given to us to grow each in his own way in that climate and make it an enduring feature of our world situation."
He was a well-travelled man and had visited Europe, USA and the Middle East as an emissary of goodwill on behalf of India. He combined in him the best of the East and the West and exuded gentlemanliness and humility. A true Gandhian, he was not unresponsive to new urges and requirements. He had imbibed some of the traits of his master, Gandhiji.
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