

A Unique Freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi and India's struggle for Swaraj

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ABSTRACT: *Gandhi attracted millions of people with diverse backgrounds to his movement over an extended period. In spite of the wide attention given to Gandhi's life, teaching, and movements, there are few critical works, most of the literature examines the uniqueness of Gandhi, his life and his indomitable faith in the ultimate success and universal acceptance of non-violence, his optimism, his denunciation of Materialistic Social, Economic, and political consequences, describing the like and happenings around Gandhi. But rather than critically examining Gandhi's writings and his role in Indian politics they describe his life and environment Gandhi's approach to the grim and gave struggle for freedom of India by Non-violent, non-cooperation, as ideal was "Sarvodaya", "Welfare of All" which connoted a Co-operative federation of village republics such a society was a unity in diversity. The other group known as the no changers argued the civil disobedience was the sole means of paralyzing Government and winning "Swaraj" Naturally, his preference was for the masses whom he wanted to train as soldiers for the impending war against the imperial congress also realised that without the support of Gandhi and his cohorts from the villages, the British Government could not be made to yield to the people's will congress, was divided into two factions. One group led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru; which came to be called the pro-changers, considered unfavourable for civil disobedience and was attracted by the opportunities for political propaganda which the reformed councils offered.*

KEYWORDS: *Gandhi, Swaraj, Khilafat, Government, India, Civil Disobedience Movement*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The history of India after the First World War in the history of a sustained and ultimately successful struggle for "swaraj" under the capable and inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The war had been fought by the allies for the principle of self-determination and to make the world safe for democracy. Indians who had shed their blood to achieve this object demanded home rule. The British people could not resist this legitimate demand any longer. They felt the necessity of making further concessions to the Indian administration. On 20th August, 1917 A.D. Lord Montague declared in the British parliament its policy were to let Indians participate in the day-to-day management of their affairs so that they could put up the art of administration.

To give practical shape to this policy the British Government sent Montague to India to discuss constitutional changes and other improvements with the Government of India and submit a report to the parliament. In 1917 A.D. he came to India and travelled all over the country with Lord Chelmsford, then the viceroy of India discussed and took into consideration various plans put forward by the different political parties of India and submitted a report which is known as the "Montague declared" in the British parliament its policy were to let Indians participate in the day-to-day management of their affairs, so that they could put up the art of administration. To give practical shape to this policy, the British Government sent Montague to India to discuss constitutional changes and other improvements with the Government of India and submit a report to the parliament. In 1917 A.D. he came to India travelled all over the country with Lord Chelmsford, then the viceroy of India discussed and took into consideration various plans put forward by the different political parties of India and submitted a report which is known as the "Montague Chelmsford report". Based on this report, a bill was introduced in the parliament which after certain changes became an act in 1919 A.D. with the unanimous vote of parliament.

The act of 1919 A.D. was based on the idea that the old irresponsible autocratic rule was to be replaced in gradual stages by responsible Government. By virtue of this act Indians were given certain rights in the provincial Government. The act of 1919 A.D. gave many rights to the municipalities and to various local institutions. In which elected members had a majority and their chairman could only be a non-official. All the politicians of national parties considered the reforms of 1919 A.D. to be inadequate and disappointing. The Indian National Congress was divided into groups on the questions of the reforms. Moderates favored the

reforms and left the Congress. They laid the foundation of a new institution which came to be known as the "National Liberal Federation".

The congress boycotted the legislative council and started a movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

MAHATMA GANDHI ASSUMES LEADERSHIP

The "Rowlatt Act" came like a sudden blow, to the people of India, promised an extension of democracy during the war, the Government's step appeared to be a cruel joke. It was like a hungry man being offered stones. Instead of democratic progress had come further restriction of civil liberties people felt humiliated and were filled with anger, unrest spread in the country and a powerful agitation against the act arose. During this agitation, a new leader, Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi, took command of the Nationalist Movement. The third and the decisive phase of Indian Nationalism now begun.

Mahatma Gandhi combined in his person the cultures of the East and the West at their best. He was a Saint, a Reformer, a Politician, a Statesman, an Idealist, a Revolutionary, a Great Organizer, and a mass leader who had a deep insight into the working of human mind. The first part of his active life was spent in South Africa where he first enunciated and practiced his doctrine of "Satyagraha". He came to India in 1915 A.D and adopted G.K. Gokhale as his "political guru". He cooperated with the British Indian Government during the Great War. He genuinely believed in the advantages to India of a political connection with Britain. It was the events and developments in India immediately after the war that turned Mahatma Gandhi from a collaborator of the British to one of its most resourceful opponents. After the war was over the Indian National Congress demanded that the principle of self-determination be applied to India. The British Government gave instead the "Rowlat Acts".

THE ROWLATT ACTS

While trying to appease Indians, the Government of India was ready with repression. Throughout the war, repression of Nationalists had continued, the terrorists and revolutionaries had been hunted down, hanged, and imprisoned; many other nationalists such as Abdul Kalam Azad had also been kept behind the bars. The Government now decided to arm itself with more far-reaching powers, which went against the accepted principles of the rule of law to be able to suppress those nationalists who would refuse to be satisfied with the official's reforms. In March 1919 it passed the "Rowlatt Act" even though every single Indian member of the Central Legislative Council opposed it. Three of them, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Maz Har-ul-huq resigned their membership of the council. This Act authorized the government to imprison any person without trial and conviction in a court of law, The Act would thus also enable the government to suspend the right of habeas corpus which had been the foundation of Civil Liberties in Britain.

As early as 1917 A.D a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Rowlatt was appointed by the government of India to report on the nature and extent of the revolutionary which might deal with it in peace time when the wartime measure of the Defense of India Act would be withdrawn. The committee recommended two kinds of special legislation. These were embodied into two bills and in the teeth of popular opposition passed into Act. The object of the "Rowlatt Acts" was to permanently invest the government of India with powers to repress the Nationalist Movement, authorize the Government to imprison a suspected person without trial and to substitute summary for ordinary legal trial. Mahatma Gandhi received a great shock when "Hartal" or strike on 6th march 1919 A.D. In protest against the Acts, and the response to this call was tremendous and incredible. This was followed by riots in Gujarat, Punjab, and many other places. Rowlatt Act was passed in March, 1919 A.D. It was passed for three years. The Act provided that,

- Executive officers will have the power to make arbitrary arrests
- It provided for the trial of revolutionary offenses by a special court
- The court was to meet on camera.
- The court was to disregard the Indian Evidence Act
- No appeal against the decision of the court was permissible.
- The provincial government authorized to demand security from suspected persons, search their premises, and arrest them without warrants

CHAMPARAN SATYAGRAHA

Gandhi's first great experiment in Satyagraha came in 1917 in Champaran, a district in Bihar. The peasantry on the indigo plantations in the district was excessively oppressed by the European planters. They were compelled to grow indigo on at least 3/20th of their land and to sell it at prices fixed by planters. Similar conditions had prevailed earlier in Bengal, but as a result of a major uprising during 1859-61 the peasants there had won their freedom from the indigo planters

Having heard of Gandhi's campaigns in South Africa, several peasants of Champaran invited him to come and help them. Gandhi, accompanied by Babu Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar-ul-hug, J.B Kripalani, and Mahadev Desai, reached Champaran in 1917 and began to conduct a detailed inquiry into the condition of the peasantry. The infuriated district officials ordered him to leave Champaran, but he defied the order and was willing to face trial and imprisonment, This forced the Government to cancel its earlier order to appoint a committee of inquiry on which Gandhi served as a member ultimately, the disabilities from which the peasantry was suffering was reduced and Gandhi had won his first battle of Civil disobedience in India. He also had a glimpse into the naked poverty in which the peasants of India lived.

THE KHILAFAT AND NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1919-1924)

"Khilafat Movement" was a Pan-Islamic movement influenced by Indian Nationalism. The Ottoman Emperor Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) had launched a pan-Islamic program to use his position as the sultan – "Khalifa" of the global Muslim Community with a view saving his disintegrating empire from foreign attacks and to crush the nationalistic democratic movement. A new stream came in to the Nationalist movement with the 'Khilafat Movement'. We have seen earlier that the younger generation of educated Muslims and a section of traditional Divines and Theologians had been growing more and more radical and nationalist. The grand for common political action by Hindus and Muslims had already been prepared by the Lucknow Pact. The nationalist agitation against the "Rowlatt Act" has touched all the Indian people alike and brought Hindus and Muslims together in political agitation.

The "Khilafat Movement" which concerned Turkey had really nothing to do with the Muslims of India as well except for the fact that they were also of Islamic origin for that matter it is not necessary that two European nations like England and Germany should consider themselves alien merely because they both were Christians. In fact the two were ranged against each other in the war. Similarly; the problem of Turkey, despite the religious affinity had no concern for Indian Muslims.

These sentiments intensified early in the Twentieth century with the revocation. In 1911 of the 1950 partition of Bengal, the Italian (1911) and Balkan (1911-1912) attacks on Turkey, and Great Britain's participation in the First World War (1914 -1918) against Turkey . The defeat of Turkey in the First World War led to the division of territories under the Treaty of Sevres. 10 August 1920 among European powers causing apprehensions in India over the Khalif's custodianship of the Holy places of Islam.

For example, as if to declare before the world the principle of Hindu Muslim Unity in political action swami Shradh Anand, a staunch Arya Samaj leader was asked by the Muslims to preach from the pulpit of the Juma Masjid at Delhi while Dr. Kitchiu, a Muslim was given the keys of the golden temple the Sikh shrine at Amritsar. At Amritsar such political unity had been brought about by governmental repression Hindus and Muslims were handcuffed together, made to crawl together, and drink water together, when ordinarily a Hindu would not drink water from the hands of a Muslim. In this atmosphere, the nationalist trend among the Muslims took the form of the Khilafat agitation. The politically conscious Muslims were critical of the treatment meted out to the Ottoman Empire by Britain and its allies who had partitioned it and taken away Thrace from Turkey proper. This violated the earlier pledge of the British premier. Lloyd George declares "Nor fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race." The Muslims also felt that the position of the sultan of Turkey, who was also regarded by many as the Caliph or the religious head of the Muslims, should not be undermined. A 'Khilafat Committee' was soon formed under the leadership of the Ali brothers Moulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani, and a country-wide agitation was organized.

The 'first Khilafat conference' was held in Delhi on 23 November 1919, Mahatma Gandhi attended it. He took the initiative in calling upon the Muslims to start a non-cooperation movement. Hindus attended the 'Delhi Khilafat conference'. In another meeting at Allahabad Tej Bhadar Sapru, Motilal Nehru and Annie Besant took part. Mahatma Gandhi was included in the executive committee which was formed on 9 June 1920. Gandhi met Moulana Abul Kalam Azad for the first time in connection with the Khilafat Movement. Azad was born into a family which came from Herat. His father migrated to Mecca and settled there. Soon after birth his father came to Calcutta and stayed on there. Thus, the Maulana spent his childhood days in Calcutta. From there he traveled all over the Muslim world visiting various countries like Persia, Egypt, and Turkey. On coming back, he wrote about the British oppression in these countries in the Al Hilal and Albalagh two papers which he started. He faced prosecution under the press act, and when the First World War broke out, he was interned and released when the war ended. Gandhi approached several Muslim leaders to seek their support for the 'Khilafat Movement' but they did not share his enthusiasm and gave some excuse or the other. Maulavi Abdul Bari said that Gandhi's scheme raised fundamental issues and could give no reply till he had "meditated and sought divine guidance" Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali and Shaukat Ali said they would wait till Maulana Abdul Bari gave his decision. Moulana Azad, however readily agreed to Gandhi's proposal.

“Gandhi turned to me I said without a moment's hesitation that I fully accepted the program, if people wanted to help Turkey, there was no alternative to the program sketched by Gandhi”.

So keen was Gandhi for leading this Muslim movement that he was prepared even to compromise on non-co-operation non-violent nature, He observed “Muslims have special koranic obligations in which Hindus may or may not join. They, therefore, themselves have the right, in the event of the failure of non-co-operation cum non-violence, to enforce justice to resort to all such methods as may be enjoined by the Islamic scriptures. I venture heartily to associate myself with this resolution.

Then there was the unfortunate Mappila Rebellion and Mappila were devout Muslims who were fishermen and agriculturalists. The fanaticism let loose by the Ali brothers assisted by Mahatma Gandhi, roused them to an unbridled fray. They declared a crusade to resurrect the caliphate. In the course of it many Europeans and several Hindus who were thriving as landowners and moneylenders were murdered by Hindu Islam. The rising was suppressed by the British, resulting in the massacre of many people. On 8 July 1921 a Khilafat conference was held at Karachi, the following were some of the resolutions passed.

This meeting of the "all India Khilafat conference “declares allegiance of the Muslim population to his majesty the Sultan of Turkey, the commander of the faithful, and assures him that they would not rest content until they had secured complete fulfillment of the Khilafat demands.

- This meeting of the All India Khilafat conference declares that so long as the demands of the Indian Muslims regarding the integrity of the Khilafat and the preservation of the sanctity of Jazirat-ul-A and other Arab and the holy place which are based upon their religious canons are not fulfilled, neither shall they rest in peace nor shall they leave it to the enemies of Islam, that the entire provinces of Thrace and Smyrna shall form the indissoluble components of the territories of the Turkish sultan as they used to before the war and in no part of them shall Muslim tolerate the influence and interference of Greek or any other power.
- This meeting of the all-India Khilafat conference heartily congratulates Ghaz Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Angora Government upon their magnificent victories and the success of their most desperate endeavors in upholding the laws of Islam and this meeting prays to Almighty God that they may soon succeed in expelling the whole of the armies of the foreign government from every nook and corner of the Turkish empire.
- This meeting of the all-India Khilafat conference calls upon all provincial, District, and village committees to put forth their last efforts to enlist a Crore of Khilafat members and collect forty Lakhs.
- Of rupees to relieve the distress in Smyrna and aid the Muhajirin Relief Fund. The Khilafat agitation had made an important contribution to the non-cooperation movement. It had brought urban Muslims into the nationalist movement and had been, thus responsible in part for the feeling of nationalist enthusiasm and exhilaration that prevailed in the country in those days. Some Historians have criticized it for having mixed politics with religion. As a result, they say religious consciousness spread to politics, and the force of communalism was strengthened. At the same time, it should also be kept in view that the Khilafat agitation represented a much wider feeling of Muslims than their concern for the caliph. It was in reality an aspect of the general spread of anti-imperialist feeling Among the Muslims.

It may be noted at this stage that even though the non-co-operation and the civil.

The disobedience Movement had failed, the national movement had strengthened in more than one-way Nationalist sentiments and the national movement had now reached the remote corners of the land. The Indian people lost their sense of fear the brute strength of British power in India no longer frightened them They had gained tremendous self-confidence and self-esteem, which no defeats and retreats could shake this was expressed by Gandhiji when he declared that “the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years”.

THE SWARAJISTS

Disintegration and disorganization set in after the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement Enthusiasm evaporated and disillusionment and discouragement prevailed in the ranks of the Congress party moreover serious differences arose among the leaders. A fresh lead was now given by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru who advocated a new line of political activity under the changed conditions. They said that nationalists should end the boycott of the legislative councils, enter them, obstruct their working according to official plans, expose their weaknesses, and use them to arouse public enthusiasm. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr . Ansar, Barbes, Rajendra Prasad, and others known as “no-changers”, opposed council entry. They warned that legislative politics would weaken nationalist favor and create rivalries among the leaders. They, therefore, continued to emphasize the constructive program of spinning, temperance, Hindu Muslim unity, and removal of Untouchability. In December 1922, Das and Motilal Nehru formed the “Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party” with Das as president and Motilal Nehru as one of the secretaries. The new party was to function as a group within the Congress. It accepted the congress program except in one respect it would take part in council elections.

The Swarajists and the “no-changes” were in fierce political controversy-even Gandhiji who had been released on 5th February 1924 on grounds of health, failed in his efforts to unite them but on his advice the two

groups agreed to remain in the congress through there would work in their separate ways. Even though the Swarajists had little time for preparations they did very well in the election of November 1923. They won 42 seats in the Central Legislative Assembly with the cooperation of other Indian Groups they repeatedly outvoted the Government in the Central Assembly and in several of the provincial councils. In March 1925, they succeeded in electing Vallabhai Patel, a leading Nationalist leader, as the president of a central Legislative Assembly. However, they failed to change the policies of the authoritarian Government of India and found it necessary to walk out of the Central Assembly in March 1926. At the same time the "no-changers" were also not successful in this respect. Both groups failed to check the spreading political not meanwhile the nationalist movement and the Swarajists suffered another grievous blow in the death of Dinabandhu Das in June 1925. As the Non-Cooperation Movement petered out and the people felt frustrated, communalism reared its ugly head the communal element took advantage, of the situation to propagate their views and after 1923 the country was repeatedly plunged into communal riots. The Muslim League and the "Hindu Mahasabha", which was founded in December 1917 once again became active. The result was that the growing feeling that all people were Indian first received a setback Even the Swarajist party, whose main Leaders, Motilal Nehru and Das were staunch nationalists, was split by communalism. A group known as "responsivity", offered cooperation to the Government so that the so-called Hindu interests might be safeguarded. They accused Motilal Nehru of letting down Hindus, of being anti-Hindu, of favoring cow slaughter, and of eating Beef, The Muslim communalists were no less active in fighting for leaves and fishes office. Gandhiji, who had repeatedly asserted that "Hindu – Muslim unity must be our creed for all time and under all circumstances" tried to intervene and improve the situation. In September 1924, he went on a 21-day fast at Delhi in Moulana Mohammed Ali's house to do penance for the inhumanity revealed in the communal riots. But his effort was of little avail.

The situation in the country was dark, indeed, there was general political apathy, Gandhi was living in retirement, the Swarajists were split, and communalism was flourishing Gandhi wrote in May 1927, "My only hope lies in prayer and answer to prayer." But behind the scenes, forces of national upsurge had been growing when in November 1927 the announcement of the formation of the Simon commission came, India again emerged out of darkness and entered a new era of political struggle.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

The other problem that was still worse was the crack in March 1924, The Khilafat movement had been deprived of its raised etre surprisingly by the action of the National Assembly of Turkey itself. For some time, that is between 1922 and 1924, the Khilafates of India enthused by the success of Mustafa Kamala applauded his decision to separate the office of the Caliph from that of the Sultan by depriving it of temporal power, but when the office of Khilafat was abolished, they were disappointed and perplexed some of them in this predicament identified themselves with the Congress, but others became divided into different groups. "One received the old tradition of clinging to the British Raj with redoubled satisfaction. Others adopted attitudes of varying degrees of Criticism towards the congress. The resentment of some led them into a course wholly opposed to the goal of national unity. Then fresh interest was awakened in the Muslim League which had been moribund since 1918. A meeting of the League was held at Lahore in 1924 under the championship of Jinnah.

The disintegrated State of polities offered an opportunity for the British to reestablish their old relation with the Muslims and bring them back into the Loyalists' fold. The means the Government employed to oppose the movement was to organize a counter-proclaim through the agency of the loyal elements and to establish a man Sabhas. Reading's publication early in March 1922 of his telegram to the secretary of state pleading the cause of the Turks was a step in the direction. The telegram to Montagu explained the urgency of publication. The publication of this document had a great effect on Muslim opinion. The non-cooperation movement was in consequence considerably weakened since many even of the most violent Khalifates began to believe that there was more to be gained by adhering to the hitter to infructuous schemes of Mr. Gandhi.

The result was that atavistic tendencies asserted themselves old feelings of rivalry, Jealousy, and fear sprang up again to poison the relations between the two communities. The old decisions are based on complaints. The old decisions based upon complaints like cow-slaughter and music before the mosque were raked up and new causes of disagreement like Shuddhi or Tabling and Sangathan or Tanzim were added.

Jawaharlal points out in his autobiography It is possible, however, that this sudden bottling up of a great movement contributed to a tragic development in the country. The suppressed violence had to find a way out, and in the following years, this perhaps aggravated communal trouble.

Khaliq Uzzaman agreed with this opinion. He wrote " It would not be a for fetched contusion that fissiparous tendencies in the Hindu and Muslim sections of the people thereafter found an opportunity to develop in the enforced quiet and self-imposed restraint raising fears and doubt the capacity of India to win freedom through civil disobedience.

GANDHIJI'S THREE-POINT PROGRAMME

Gandhiji therefore, devoted the next few years to work on the three-point programme – Khadi, Hindu-Muslim Unity, and Removal of Untouchability. This entailed enlarging the Army of voluntary workers, expanding the organization to cover the whole country with all its villages and towns, training and disciplining the volunteer corps, and raising funds. To strengthen relations between the educated urban class and the rural masses he endeavored to modify the rules of the congress regarding the conditions of membership at the same time he made heroic efforts to dispel misunderstandings between the Hindu and Muslim communities and to uplift the oppressed and don-trodden scheduled caste.

In Gandhiji's view spinning on the wheel was the pivot of the entire plan. It was the master key with which the lock on the door to Swaraj could be opened. Neither ridicule, misunderstanding, nor opposition could hope his faith in charkha, and he bent all his energy towards its popularization and in explaining its virtue both by example and precept.

Gandhiji started the campaign for Khadi work in the Belgaum Congress session over which he was President in December 1924. As the president he dwelt mainly on two topics in his address [1] maintenance of the unity of the congress and suspending non-cooperation, and [2] Khaddar. To commit congressmen to its cause he persuaded the congress to after its franchise by making the spinning of 2000 yards of yarn per month a qualification instead of the payment of your annas a year.

Go through your districts and spread the message of Khaddar, the message of Hindu-Muslim unity, the message of anti-untouchability, and take up in hand the youth of the country and make them the real soldiers of Swaraj.

GANDHI ACCEPTS THE SWARAJISTS

Gandhi always wanted to dominate Congress. It was this attitude of his which was galling to other stalwarts yet somehow he was a pied piper who charmed all of them to follow him. That forms the puzzling aspect of his personality leaders of so high a standing as C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru Jawaharlal Nehru and others were sometimes bitter against him. Yet his very presence made them meek and humble. After seeing the popularity and the strength it is better to admit them into his fold. The Government of Bengal promulgated the Criminal Law Amendment ordinance in 1929 with the Central Government's concurrence. Many prominent Swarajists including Subash Chandra Bose, Satyendra Mitra, A.B Roy, S. M . Ghosh, and H.K. Chakravati, were arrested under it. The Ordinance was almost on the lines of the Rowlatt Act. Gandhi condemned it in young India and referred to Dass 'Burning Patriotism and Great Sacrifices" That was after he had undertaken 21 day fast for self-purification after the Kohat riots. At the Calcutta conference of congress leaders and eventually, at the Belgaum congress, the Gandhian Congress and the Swarajists, came together.

Thus Gandhi stayed a complete reversal of his views expressed before, that council entry was inconsistent with non-cooperation. The Swarajists have proved their worth, and Gandhi presided over a session of the congress which had declared the giving up of the Non-cooperation programme, and sent several protest letters. Gandhi at once came out with a frank admission that the country was not prepared for non-cooperation. But at the same time, he expressed the hope that "non-cooperation" and civil disobedience were bat different branches of the free called Satyagraha... I believe that India will come on its own shortly. And the path would be civil disobedience. In a way, he also admitted that the boycott had failed to affect Offices, Courts educational institutions, and so forth. Only the Adjouring of foreign cloth would continue. He also compromised on machinery, when he has erstwhile denounced so vehemently. As we have seen, Gandhi was concerned about "Swaraj" within a year when he started his non-cooperation movement. But now he wasn't so optimistic about it. And he began thinking of dominion status instead of 'Poorna Swaraj' or 'The better mind of the world' he observed a desire to day, not absolute independent states warring against one another, but a federation of friendly independent states' when the All-India Congress committee met a Patna on 20 September 1925, Gandhi fore out the no-changers and asked them to have their separate organization.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE SWARAJISTS

The ultimate aim of the Swarajists was the same as that of the Gandhis that is to win "Swarajin" which meant Dominion status within the British Empire. But their method was different. They had no faith in civil disobedience. They wanted to take part in the election to infuse enthusiasm and carry the message of Nationalism to the masses. They wanted to capture seats in the legislatures to prove their strength with the mass end to wreck the citadel of bureaucracy from within. This was considered necessary to prevent undesirable persons from capturing seats in the Legislatures and this lent a show of popular support to the government by co-operating with, as the Liberates had done. "Instruction" to the Government was their keynote. Their immediate objective was to make the Montford Reforms unworkable. They stood for "Mending or ending" the Act of 1919 A.D.

The swarajists wanted to destroy the then prevailing constitutional structure to build a new and better one, on its ruing. They brought Government machinery to a standstill. They refused participation in all government bodies and functions. This was the destructive side of the programme of swarajists. There was also a constructive side in the Legislative, they wanted to pass a resolution containing constructive proposals for further constitutional advancement and laws necessary for the growth of a healthy national life. They also stood for giving wholehearted support to the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi.

SUCCESS AND WORK OF THE SWARAJISTS

In the general elections of 1923 A.D., the Swaraj ists returned at the top of the poll and the Liberals were almost wiped off. The Swarajists won a clear majority in C.P. and a dominant position in Bengal and the Central Legislative Assembly. In Up and Bombay, the influence of the swarajists was great and, at times decisive.

Pandit Motilal Nehru was the leader of the Swarajists party in the Legislative Assembly of India. The party won 45 seats out of 145, thus it was the largest party in the Assembly. Because of the able leadership of PanditMontilal Nehru, the party was able to enlist the support of the Nationalists and some independents, and thus, commanded a working majority. As early as February 8, 1924 A.D, Pandit Nehru was successful in getting passed by the Assembly, an overwhelming majority, in which all the elected members voted for the motion a resolution, 'that steps should be taken to have the India Act, 1919 A.D. revised to establish for responsible Government in India. But this resolution was rejected by the British Government. This made the Swarajists and other national leaders stiffen their policy of obstruction. A series of defeats were thus inflicted on the Government.

SWARAJISTS DRIFT TOWARDS CO-OPERATION

C.R. Das died in 1925 A.D. which weakened the swarajists party. In the provinces, where the party was not in a majority, continuous obstruction was futile if not impossible. In the Legislative Assembly, the Nationalist party, which was led by P.T Madan Mohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, and to the conclusion that indiscriminate opposition of the Government to a standstill. Even in C.P. and Bengal, the king 's Government was still going on. Mahatma Gandhi and his orthodox followers remained irreconcilable to the principles of the Swarajists. In his last days, even C.R. Das had begun to realize the futility of obstruction. The Government, on its part, left no stone unturned to bring the Swarajists around to a policy of co-operation.

All this led to a "gradual watering down of the original policy of the Swarajists of undiluted opposition." An important section of the party fairly began to advocate the advantages of the policy of responsive co-operation, instead of the policy of outright obstruction. Thus, there was a split in the rank of the swarajist. In 1924 A.D. the Swarajists accepted seats on the steel protection committee. In 1925, Motilal Nehru accepted membership of the "keen committee" which was appointed to inquire into the possibility of a more rapidly Indian zing of the Army. Rot set in after the death of C.R. Das. In 1925 A.D. V.J. Patel, who was a leading Swarajist, allowed himself to be elected as the speaker of the Central Assembly, S.B. Tamble, another prominent Swarajist of C.P. became an Executive Councilor in C.P. Motilal Nehru threatened severe disciplinary action against those, who were deviating from the mandate of the party, which drove some important members of the party into an open revolt. All these desertions weekend the party. In the elections of 1926 A.D., nobody talked of carrying out the policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent" obstruction against the Government, and "the wreckers had lost much of their fire".

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