

BRITISH SAVAGERY IN INDIA

PART I

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

CHAPTER I

THE RULES OF THE COMPANY

The beginning of the British Rule in India under the East India Company is regarded from the famous battle of Plassey in 1757. It is from this very time that the feelings of absolute dissatisfaction and resentment against the British were progressively increasing in the hearts of the Indians. These are well known facts that how from Clive to Dalhousie the promises and signed treaties with numerous Indian Princes were violated and their states were annexed in the British territory, how the old home industries and handicrafts were ruined thus lakhs of the Indians were deprived of their livelihood; how helpless begums and queens were looted and humiliated in their own palaces, how the zamindaries of numerous zamindars were forfeited, how lakhs of Indian agriculturists were deprived of their lands, hearths and homes. Due to all these facts both Indian Princes and the people were dis-satisfied and opposed to the British Rule in India.

Dalhousie pursued this policy rather vigorously. His prohibition of the right of adoption to the Princes and the kings, which naturally resulted into annexation of several states with the Company territory, excited the wrath of the kings, princes, and zamindars against the British treatment towards them. The British Officers were forcing the Indians

on horseback in their front to get down and walk. religious and social customs were dishonoured. a hospital was opened at Saharanpur (U. P.) where all patients without any regard for sex, sect or creed, and even for Purdah ladies were forced to go there and Indian indigenous physicians (Vaidyas and Hakims) were prohibited to see or treat any patient. The most exciting were the British desires and efforts of converting Indians to the Faith of Christianity and of its propagation among the Indian Military. The above allegations are amply borne out by the following quotations :

1. "Upon the extermination of a native state an Englishman takes the place of sovereign under the name of Commissioner; three or four of his associates displace as many

dozen of native official aristocracy, while some hundreds of our troops take the place of the many thousands that every native chief supports. The little court disappears, trade languishes, the capital decays, the people are impoverished, the Englishman flourishes, and, acts like a sponge, drawing up riches from the banks of the Ganges and squeezing them down upon the banks of the Thames"—A PLEA FOR THE PRINCES OF INDIA, by John Sullivan, Member of the Madras Council P. 67.

"Surely the natives of India must be less than men if their feelings could not be moved under such circumstances in favour of the victims of annexation and against the annexer. Surely there was not a woman whom such annexations did not tend to make our enemy, not a child whom they did not tend to train up in hatred to the FIRANGEE RULE—Ludlow's Thoughts on the policy of the crown pp. 35, 36.

2. "Providence has entrusted the extensive Empire of Hindustan to England in order that the Banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the other. Every one must exert all his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing the grand work of making all India Christian"—Mr. Mangles, Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company in the House of Commons 1857.

"Whatever misfortunes come on us, as long as our Empire in India continues, so long let us not forget that our chief work is the propagation of Christianity in the land. Until Hindostan, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya, embraces the religion of Christ and until it condemns the Hindoo and the Moslem religions, our efforts must continue persistently. For this work, we must make all the efforts we can and use all the power and all the authority in our hands.

—Rev. Kennedy M. A.

3. "At the beginning of the present year (1857) a great many colonels in the Indian Army were detected in a task not less monstrous and arduous than that of Christianizing it. It has afterwards transpired that some of these earnest worthies.....entered the army; not as a means of subsistence, not as the theatre of exertion most congenial to their temperament but solely, and wholly for the purpose of conversion. The army was specially selected, as in times of peace it affords the utmost leisure to both the soldiers and commanders. And as there heathens may be found in great abundance on all sides without the trouble and expense, and other etceteras, or scampering from village to village.....they began preaching and distributing tracts and translations among the Hindoo and Mohamedan officers and soldiers. In the begin-

ing they were tolerated, sometimes with disgust and sometimes with indifference. When, however the thing continued, when the evangelizing endeavours became more serious and troublesome day by day the Sepoys of either persuasion felt alarmedIn the meantime the "Missionary Colonels" and "Padre Lieutenants" as the curious militarys were called were not inactive. Emboldened by the toleration of the sepoy they grew more violent than ever. They were warmer in their exhortations to the unbelievers to substitute the worship of the one true God in his son Jesus, or the thirty three millions of their hideous dieties Mohammed and Rama, hitherto were so beings, turned sublime imposters and unmitigated black-guards. By and by the proselytizing colonels tempted the sepoy to Christianity with bribes and offered promotions and other rewards to converts. They unblushingly used their influence as officers, promised to make every Sepoy that forsook his religion a Havildar, every Havildar, a Subedar Major and so on: Great discontent was consequence "

— Causes of the Indian Revolt.

By a Hindoo of Bengal

Dated, Calcutta the 18th Aug., 1857

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CHAPTER II

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

The immediate pretext which caused the out-break of the war of Independence of 1857, just 100 years after the company rule, was the use of cow's fat and lard in the cartridges which were then newly introduced for the use of Indian soldiers. These new type of cartridges were to be cut, not by hands, but by teeth. The character and significance of the war of 1857 is expressed by the English Historians themselves as can be seen in the following quotations:—

"The fact was that throughout the greater part of the northern and north-western provinces of the Indian peninsula, there was a rebellion of the native races against the English power. . . . The quarrel about the greased cartridges was but the chance spark flung in among all the combustible material..... a national religious war !"

History of our own Times, by Justin
Mc Carthy, Vol. III.

"But, in fact, the greased cartridge was merely the match that exploded the mine which had, owing to a variety of causes, been for a long time preparing." —Medley's A year's Campaigning in India from March 1857 to March 1858.

In most of the places of U.P., Delhi and Bihar the Indians successfully suppressed the British authority and hoisted the green coloured flag of freedom. The rest of India also did not remain untouched or silent but more or less efforts to end the British Rule were made throughout India. Notorious to help and side with the British were the Sikh and Gurkha soldiers. All other Indian soldiers under the Leadership of the Indian Kings, Nawabs fought many a battle successfully against the British armies. The Civil administration was run very thoroughly and efficiently. Although a number of the British officers and men were killed or murdered yet the lives of the British women and children were protected and saved except one or two instances which were done in a rage by the soldiers but not under orders from any one of the responsible Revolutionary Leaders. On the contrary the story of the British tyranny and revenge is so long horrid and lurid that scarcity of space forbids its detailed narration.

The various ways of torturing, flogging, hanging and killing of men, women, and children were widely adopted. The villages were set to fire freely and innocent villagers were burnt alive. Those who tried to escape were either shot dead or thrown back in the flames. To substantiate the above statements some authentic quotations are given below :—

"We set fire to a large village which was full of them. We surrounded them and when they came rushing out of the flames, we shot them."

Charles Ball's Indian Mutiny, Vol. I pp. 243-44.

"It is better not to write anything about General Neill's revenge."

"Soldiers and civilians alike were holding Bloody Assizes, slaying Natives without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. Afterwards the thirst of blood grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor General of India in Council that the aged women and children, are sacrificed, as well as those guilty of rebellion. They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages, perhaps now and then accidentally shot, Englishmen did not hesitate to boast or to record their boasting in writing, that they had spared no one, and that peppering away at niggers was very pleasant pastime, enjoyed amazingly. And it has been stated, in a book patronised by official authorities that 'for three months eight dead carts daily went their rounds from sunrise to sun-set to take down the corpses which hung at the cross roads and market places' and that six thousand beings had been thus 'summarily disposed off and launched into eternity'— . An Englishman

is almost suffocated with indignation when he reads that Mr. Chambers or Miss Jennings was necked to death by a dusky ruffian, but in Native histories or history being wanting, in Native legends and traditions, it may be recorded against our people, that mothers, wives and children, with less familiar names, fell miserable victims to the first swoop of English vengeance." Keye's History of Sepoy War Vol. II.

"One trip I enjoyed amazingly, we got on board a steamer with a gun, while the Sikhs and the fusiliers march up to the city. We steamed up throwing shots right and left till we got up to the bad places when we went on the shore and peppered away with our guns, my old double barrel bringing down several niggers. So thirsty for vengeance I was. We fired the places right and left and the flames shot up to the heavens as they spread fanned by the breeze, showing that the day of vengeance had fallen on the treacherous villains. Everyday, we had expeditions to burn and destroy disaffected villages and we have taken our revenge... ..We have the power of life in our hands and, I assure you, we spare not. The condemned culprit is placed under a tree; with a rope round his neck, on the top of carriage, and when it is pulled off he swings." Charles Ball's Indian Mutiny Vol. I. p. 257.

"Old men had done us no harm; helpless women, with suckling infants at their breast, felt the weight of our vengeance no less than the vilest malefactors." Holme's Sepoy War pp. 229-30.

"... ..and I know that at Allahabad there were far too whole-sale executions.....And afterwards Neill did things almost more than the massacre, putting to death with deliberate torture, in a way that has never been proved against the natives." Sir George Cambell, Provincial Civil Commissioner in the Mutiny, as quoted in the other side of the Medal by Edward Thompson p. 81.

As regards the mal-treatment of the British ladies specially by Nana Saheb, about which many false and fantastic rumours were current is proved to be absolutely concocted and untrue. One quotation here will suffice

"The elementary passions of manhood were inflamed by the stories, happily not true, of the wholesale dishonour and barbarous mutilation of women. As a matter of fact, no indignities, other than that of the compulsory corn grinding, were put upon the English ladies. There were no outrages in the common acceptation of the term, upon women. No English women, were stripped or dishonoured or purposely mutilated."

How 150 soldiers of the 55th Indian army in Hoti Mardan- (Frontier Province) were killed is described in Narrative of the Indian Revolts" as below :—

"Of the prisoners of the 55th army more awful example was made. They were tried, condemned and every third man was selected to be blown away from guns."

The horrid scene of this tragedy is described by an English officer who was an eye witness to it as below :—

"That parade was a strange scene. There were about nine thousand men on parade,The troops were drawn up on three sides of a square, the fourth side being occupied by ten guns. The first ten of the prisoners were then lashed to the guns, the artillery officer waved his sword, you heard the roar of the guns, and above the smoke you saw legs, arms, and heads, flying in all directions. There were four of these salvos, and at each a sort of buzz went through the whole mass of the troops, a sort of murmur of horror. Since that time we have had execution parades once or twice a week, and such is the force of habit we now think little of them."

Narrative of the Indian Revolt,
Page 36.

How in Peshawar and in its neighbouring places the revolutionaries or those suspected of revolution were tortured and killed is described by a historian as below :—

"Though I have plenty of letters with me describing the terrible and cruel tortures committed by our officers, I do not write a word about it, so that this subject should be no longer before the world".

Kaye's Sepoy War, book vi. chap. iv.

The atrocities committed by the British soldiers during their march from Ambala to Delhi were no less brutal than those of General Neil. On the way numerous innocent pedestrians were killed, merely on suspicion of their association with Delhi Revolutionaries. Besides to revive the lost British prestige, in hundreds of villages, thousands of innocent villagers were severely tortured to death, their hair from their heads were snatched one by one, their bodies were speared and ultimately before death beef was forcibly thrust through the spears in their mouths. After such terrible tortures they were hanged to deaths.

How on their march from Allahabad to Cawnpore the British armies, under General Havelock and Major Renaud, treated the people is described by an English Historian, Sir Charles Dilke, in his book Greater Britain as below:—

".....letters which reached home in 1857, in which an officer in high command during the march upon Cawnpore,

reported, 'good bag today, polished off rebels,' it being borne in mind that the 'rebels' thus hanged or blown from guns were not taken in arms but villagers apprehended 'on suspicion'. During this march atrocities were committed in the burning of villages and massacre of innocent inhabitants at which Mohammad Tuglak himself would have stood ashamed, How General Havelock behaved after entering Cawnpore is written by Charles Ball as follows:—

"General Havelock began to wreak a terrible vengeance for the death of Sir Hugh Wheeler. Batch upon batch of natives mounted the scaffold. The calmness of mind and nobility of demeanour which some of the revolutionaries showed at the time of death was such as would do credit to those who martyred themselves for devotion to a principle."

Charles Ball's Indian Mutiny, vol. I, p. 388.

First the British and Sikh soldiers were ordered to plunder the city and then the business of hanging was started. The most insulting was the event of forcing the Brahmins to lick with their tongues a blood-stained spot which was suspected to be tainted with the blood of the English ladies, alleged to have been murdered by Revolutionaries. The object of this heinous act is described by one English Historian as below:—

"I know that the act of touching Feringhi blood and washing it with a sweeper's broom degrades a high caste Hindoo from his religion. Not only this but I make them do it because I know it. We could not wreak a true revenge unless we trample all their religious instincts under foot, before we hang them, so that they may not have the satisfaction of dying as Hindoos,".... .Ibid.

Some outrages which were committed after the siege of Delhi by the soldiers of the company may also be mentioned.

"After the siege was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply heart-rending. A wholesale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend and foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadirshah!"

Lord Elphinstone wrote the above in his letter to Lord Lawrence.

Again Lord Montgomery Martin writes :—

"All the city people found within the walls, when our troops entered, were bayoneted on the spot; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose, when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty persons were hiding. These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed."

How Hindus and Muslims before being put to death were defiled writes Russell :—

"... ..sewing Mohammedans in pig-skins, smearing them with pork-fat before execution and burning their bodies, and forcing Hindus to defile themselves."

Forbes-Mitchell in his *Reminiscences* writes the Muslim Nawab of Farrukhabad was rubbed with laud on his whole body before he was hanged.

Out of the numerous instances of the cruel-tortures inflicted on the people before killing them which are narrated in his book by Russell only one we give below :—

"Some of the Sepoys were still alive and they were mercifully killed ; but one of their number was dragged out to the sandy plain outside the house ; he was pulled by his legs to a convenient place, where he was held down, pricked in the face and body by the bayonets of some of the soldiery, while others collected fuel for a small pyre, and when everything was ready—the man was roasted alive. These were Englishmen, and more than one officer saw it ; no one offered to interfere ! The horrors of this infernal cruelty were aggravated by the attempt of the miserable wretch to escape when half burnt to death. By a sudden effort he leaped away and, with flesh of his body hanging from his bones, ran for a few yards where he was caught, brought back, put on the fire again, and held there by bayonets, till his remains were consumed."

On the otherhand the Indian revolutionary leaders were not only considerate but kind and liberal in their treatment towards the British. Its testimony is found from various writings of the British themselves. Here only one quotation will suffice. Forrest writes that the Leaders of Oudh through a statement ordered their followers, "Mind that your movement may not be blemished by the murders of women and children." Quite contrary to it what deeds were performed by General Neil, Cooper, Havelock and Hudson about whom Lord Canning himself said in his council on the 24th December 1857 :—

"Not only small and big culprits but even such persons whose guilt was extremely doubtful were hanged without any discrimination. Generally villages were burnt and plundered. Like this guilty and innocent men and women, young and old, all were punished without any distinction."

CHAPTER III

DIVIDE AND RULE

After 1857 majority of the English statesmen began to realise very strongly that the crushing of the feelings of

nationalism in the hearts of the Indians and not letting them be revived again was necessary for the existence of the British Empire in India. For this, propagation of Christianity and of English Education were sought as the means:—

William Edwards, who was in the service of the company during the days of the revolution of 1857 and subsequently was the judge of the Agra High Court, expressed:—

“ We are, and ever must be, regarded as foreign invaders and conquerors, our best safeguard is in the evangelization of the country;—Christian settlements scattered about the country would be as towers of strength for many years to come, for they must be loyal as long as the mass of the people remain either idolaters or Mohammedans. But in the strange circumstances of India the effort of converting people to Christianity neither could be pursued for long nor could it be openly adopted as a part of the Government policy. The crux of the British policy of the Indian administration has been “Divide and Rule.” It is confirmed by numerous documentary evidence. We give below some such authentic extracts:—

“ Divide et impera should be the motto of our Indian administration, whether political, civil, or military.” *Carnatus in the Asiatic Journal, May 1821.*

“ . . . the prejudices of sects and religions by which we have hitherto kept the country—Mussalmans against Hindoos, and so on;” Major-General Sir Lionel Smith, K.C.B., before the Enquiry Committee of 1831.

It was experienced during the Revolution of 1857, that Hindus and Muslims jointly opposed and fought against the company rule and the revolutionary armies were led under common leadership. There was no feeling of Hindu and Muslim as against each other. Hence the British laid very great stress on the policy of playing Hindus and Muslims against each other.

In between 1858-1884, the Musalman was a suspect crowd. He was hunted, harassed and crushed all along the line. It was about this time, or, to be particular in 1884, that the Indian National Congress was founded largely under Government patronage. Its early themes were absolutely innocuous. But they later tended to be slightly critical of Government policies. Besides, the Hindu who had so far been the “favourite wife,” was taking a leading part in its deliberations. And the Muslim too was gravitating towards the Congress. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the father of Muslim revivalism, and Muslim leaders like Allama Shibli Namani, Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, the Hon'ble Mir Humayun Jah, divines like Mulana Rashid Ahmad Gangoli, Maulvi Lutfullah of

Aligarh, Mulla Mohammed Murad of Muzaffarnagar, in short, the elite of the then Muslim intelligentsia, advocated a common programme with the Hindus. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was enamoured of the Bengali Hindus of his time. He often said that they were the only section of the people of India of whom "we could legitimately be proud" and it was due to them that "ideals of liberty and nationalism could progress in our country."

These tendencies were deemed disturbing and demanded a reversing of the gear. Hence it was resolved that hereafter it was the Muslim who should be the "favourite wife". The idea was to prevent Hindu-Muslim fusion and the evolution of a common Indian nationhood. Divide et impera is as old as imperialism itself. But the one man who set the ball rolling in India was Mr. Beck, the English Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. Mr. Beck, tried hard to wean Sir Syed from the Congress. He opened before the latter vistas of Anglo-Muslim rapprochement. The old man fell for the bait. Mr. Beck took the editorial control of the Institute Gazette which Sir Syed had been conducting for years, and reversed its policy. The Institute Gazette, thereafter, began to call the demands of the Congress as "Anti-Muslim". This started a controversy with the Bengal Press, which attacked Sir Syed, believing him to be the author of the articles appearing in the Gazette.

In 1889, Charles Bradlaugh introduced a Bill in Parliament with the object of introducing democracy in India. Mr. Beck was alarmed. He prepared, on behalf of Indian Muslims, a memorial wherein he opposed the Bill on the plea that the introduction of democracy was unsuitable to India, which was not a single nation. He obtained 20,735 signatures to the memorial for which purpose he made full use of his students.

Three years later, i. e. in 1893, he helped to found a Muslim organisation, the Mahommedan Anglo Oriental Defence Association, whose objects were (1) to acquaint Englishmen in general and the Government in particular with the views of the Muslim community and to protect the political rights of the Muslims; (2) to support measures that would strengthen British Rule in India; (3) to spread feelings of loyalty among the people; and (4) to prevent the spread of political agitation among the Muslims, Mr. Beck was the Secretary. The Association strongly resisted the Congress opposition to the forward policy in the N. W. F. Province.

Mr. Beck, not satisfied with what he had been doing in India, wrote an article in an English journal wherein he observed that "the past few years have witnessed the growth of two agitations in India, one, the Indian National Congress;

the other the movement against cow-slaughter. The former is directed against the English, the latter against the Muslims. It is imperative for the Muslims and the British to unite with a view to fighting these agitators and prevent the introduction of a democratic form of Government unsuited as it is to the needs and genius of the country. We, therefore, advocate loyalty to the Government and Anglo-Muslim collaboration."

So, "the unsuitability of the Indian genius, for democratic forms of Government," made much use of lately is the discovery of an English pedagogue. Mr. Beck dominated Muslim politics for seven years. Throughout he worked mostly behind the cover of Sir Syed.

Mr. Beck died in 1899 and was followed by Mr. Theodore Morrison. In 1905, Mr. Morrison was followed by Mr. Archbold.

These were the times when the Minto-Morley Reforms were in the air. Mr. Archbold wrote a letter to Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk on August 10, 1906 wherein he advocated the idea of a deputation to the Viceroy and elaborated its entire details. In his letter he said :

"Colonel Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary of his Excellency the Viceroy informs me that his Excellency is agreeable to receive the Muslim deputation. He advises that a formal letter requesting permission to wait on his Excellency be sent to him. In this connection I would like to make a few suggestions. The formal letter should be sent with the signatures of some representative Musalmans. The deputation should consist of the representatives of all the provinces. The third point to be considered is the text of the address. I would here suggest that we begin with a solemn expression of loyalty. The Government decision to take a step in the direction of self-Government should be appreciated. But our apprehension should be expressed that the principle of election, if introduced would prove detrimental to the interest of the Muslim minority. It should respectfully be suggested that nomination or representation by religion be introduced to meet Muslim opinion. Personally, I think it will be wise of the Muslims to support nomination as the time to experiment with elections has not yet come. In election it will be very difficult for the Muslims to secure their due share. But in all these views I must be in the back-ground. They Must come from you.

I can prepare for you the draft of the address or revise it. Please remember that if we want to organise a powerful movement in the short time at our disposal we must expedite matters."

After the Viceroy was satisfied that the proposed deputation will in no way be critical of the Government he permitted

it to wait upon him. H. H. the Aga Khan headed it. The address "on behalf of the Muslims of India" is believed to have been drafted by Mr. Archbold, and what a masterly reply Lord Minto gave!

"The pith of your address, as I understand it," summed up Lord Minto, "is a claim that any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality or a District Board or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Muslim community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies, as now constituted, cannot be expected to return a Muslim candidate, and if by any chance they did so, it would only be at the sacrifice of such candidate's views to those of a majority opposed to his community, whom he would in no way represent; and you justly claim that your proposition should be estimated not on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of the community and the services it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you."

Communal electorates were incorporated into the Morley-Minto Reforms with great haste and, as expected, played the thin end of the wedge that was to widen the gulf between Hindus and Muslims. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in his "Awakening of India" has observed that "It was officialdom which was responsible for the demand as well as the actual introduction of separate electorates." Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State for India, was for joint electorates with reservation of seats. He later declared that it was the Viceroy who first started the Muslim hare with his early speech about their extra claim.

Thus the communal feelings of the Hindus and Muslims, so very dextrously created by the British Government in India, have helped the Government to strengthen their hold on India and are today being exploited to represent communal differences and disharmony. It is now evident that it is the British Policy which is responsible for all communal differences and strifes among Hindus and Muslims.

To sum up this knotty problem we quote below Gandhiji himself. He replying a press correspondent on Hindu-Muslim Unity in June 1942, said:—

"Time is a merciless enemy, if it is also a merciful friend and healer. I claim to be amongst the oldest lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity and I remain one even today. I have been asking myself why every whole-hearted attempt made by all including myself to reach unity has failed, and failed so completely that I have entirely fallen from grace and am described by some Muslim papers as the greatest enemy of

Islam in India. It is a phenomenon I can only account for by the fact that the third power, even without deliberately wishing it, will not allow real unity to take place. Therefore, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the two communities will come together almost immediately after the British power comes to a final end in India. If independence is the immediate goal of the Congress and the League then, without needing to come to any terms, all will fight together to be free from bondage."

CHAPTER IV

PUNJAB MARTIAL LAW AND OTHER EVENTS.

Early in 1919 the two Rowlett Bills made their appearance. One was a temporary measure intended to deal with the situation arising from the expiry of the defence of India Act. It was framed to enable anarchical offences to be tried expeditiously by a special court of three High Court judges with no right to appeal in areas where offences of a revolutionary character were prevalent. Besides the Government was given wide powers under it to deal with revolutionary crimes. The second bill was meant to cause permanent change in the law of the land. The possession of seditious document with the intention to publish or circulate it, was to be made punishable with imprisonment. The first was passed in the third week of March 1919 while the second was dropped. Gandhiji notified his intention of meeting the situation with Satyagrah campaign, if the Rowlett recommendations were embodied into bills. Hence Gandhiji inaugurated his movement. The 30th of March 1919 was fixed to be a day of Hartal, a day of fasting, prayer and penance and for public meetings all over India. The date was changed to 6th April but as the change was not notified in Delhi in time, so procession and Hartal were held in Delhi and the Government resorted to shooting there. At the Delhi Railway station a scuffle arose ending in shooting causing five deaths and a score or so of casualties. The demonstrations on 6th April were held on a country wide scale.

Hindu-Muslim unity was the watchword of processions indicated both by cries and by banners. Hindu leaders had actually been allowed to preach from the pulpit of a mosque.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was determined to prevent the contamination of the Punjab by the spread of the Congress movement, and it was a tussle between him and the Congress as to whether the Congress which was invited to Amritsar in 1919, should be held in the Punjab. Dr. Kitchlew, an advocate, and Dr. Satyapal, a medical practitioner, who were organising

the Congress, were sent for by the District Magistrate of Amritsar to his house one fine morning (10-4-1919) and were spirited away to some unknown place. The report soon spread far and wide, and crowds of people gathered together and wanted to meet the District Magistrate to ask for their whereabouts. They were prevented by military pickets posted at the level crossing, between the city and the Civil Lines, from marching to the Civil Lines, and of course the story of the never failing brick-bat now comes in. The crowd was fired upon, and there were several casualties with one or two deaths. The crowd turned back into the city carrying their victims in procession, and on their way set fire to the National Bank buildings and killed its European manager. Altogether the mob violence was responsible for the deaths of five Englishmen and for the destruction by fire of a Bank, a Railway goods-shed and some other public buildings. Naturally, the officers of the place took umbrage at the events and vowed red-vengeance. The town was made over by the Civil to the Military authorities on the 10th April on the initiative of local officials and in anticipation of sanction from the higher authorities. The behaviour of the masses was not less reprehensible at Gujranwala and Kasur.

At Gujranwala and Kasur there was serious violence. At the latter place, on April 12th, crowds did considerable damage to the railway station, burnt a small oil shed, damaged signal and telegraph wires, attacked a train in which were some Europeans and beat two soldiers to death, a branch post-office was looted, the main post-office burnt, the Munsiff's Court set on fire, and other damage done. That is the official version summarised. The popular version alleges previous provocation of the crowd.

At Gujranwala, on April 14th, crowds surrounded and stoned a train, burnt a small railway bridge and fired another railway bridge where a calf had been killed by the police, as alleged, and hung up on the bridge as an insult to Hindus, to whom the cow is sacred. The telegraph-office and railway station were subsequently set on fire, as well as the Dak Bungalow, Kutcheri (Collector's office), a church, a school, and a railway shed.

These were the chief incidents. There were minor outbreaks elsewhere in smaller places, such as stoning of trains, cutting of wires, and setting fire to railway stations.

In the meantime there were sporadic outbreaks of violence in different part of the country. In Lahore shootings and reprisals took place. Bad news came from far off Calcutta. Hearing of the trouble in the Punjab, and on the invitation of Dr. Satyapal and Swami Shradhananda, Gandhi started

for Delhi on the 8th April. On his way however he was served with an order not to enter the Punjab or Delhi, and on his refusal to obey the order he was arrested and turned back from a way-side railway station, Palwal, by a special train to Bombay on the 10 April.

The news of the arrest created disturbances in Ahmedabad where some English and Indian officers were killed. Viramgam and Nadiad were also the scenes of some trouble on the 12th April. In Calcutta likewise, the result of the disturbances was that five or six men were killed and twelve others were wounded due to firing. Gandhi after reaching Bombay helped in calming the populace and proceeded to Ahmedabad where his presence was helpful in restoring quiet. On account of these disturbances, he issued a statement suspending Satyagrah.

While matters stood thus, tragic events were fast developing in Amritsar. It may be noted that Martial Law was not declared as yet on the 13th April, though as the Government Report admits, de facto Martial Law was in force since the 10th April. As a matter of fact, Martial Law was formally proclaimed in Lahore and Amritsar on the 15th April and shortly after in two or three other districts. On the 13th April, which was the Hindu New Year's Day, a large public meeting was advertised and held in the Jallianwala Bagh, which is an open ground in the midst of the city enclosed with walls which form the boundaries of houses overlooking it. It has a bottleneck that forms the only entrance to it, and so narrow that a carriage cannot pass through it. When twenty thousand people,—men, women, and children,—gathered at the Bagh, General Dyer entered the place at the head of a force composed of 100 Indian troops and 50 British, while one Hansraj was lecturing to the audience, and gave orders forthwith to fire. His own version as given later before the Hunter Commission was that he ordered the people to disperse and then fired, but he admitted that he fired within two or three minutes of the order. In any case, it was obvious that 20,000 people could not disperse in two or three minutes especially through that narrow outlet, and when 1,600 rounds were fired, and the firing stopped only when the ammunition had run out, the casualties were, even according to Government's version, about 400 dead, while the wounded were estimated at between a thousand and two. The firing was done by the Indian troops, behind whom were placed the British troops, all on an elevated platform in the Bagh. The greater tragedy really was that the dead and dying were left to suffer the whole night without water to drink, or medical attendance or aid of any character. Dyer's

contension—as it came out later—was that “the city having passed under the Military, he had tom-tommed in the morning that no gatherings would be permitted and as the people openly defied him, he wanted to teach them a lesson so that they might not laugh at him. He would have fired, and fired longer, he said, if he had the required ammunition. He had only fired 1,600 rounds because his ammunition had run out.” “As a matter of fact,” he said, “he had taken an armoured car but found that the passage to the Bagh would not admit it, and so he left it behind.”

General Dyer's regime witnessed some unthinkable punishments. The water supply and the electric supply of Amritsar were cut off. Public flogging was common. But the ‘crawling order’ surpassed the rest of his achievements. A missionary lady doctor named Miss Sherwood had been attacked while she was cycling in a lane by the people and every one passing through the lane was ordered to crawl with belly to the ground. And all who lived in the street had to obey this order, despite the fact that Miss Sherwood was protected in that very lane by decent citizens. The incident became an object of merriment and joking at the hand of Quarter-Master-General Hudson in the Imperial Legislative Council.

The issue of third class tickets on the railway was prohibited, which involved a general suspension of travelling by the Indian public. More than two persons were prohibited from marching on side-walks or pavements. Bicycles, “other than those owned by Europeans,” were commandeered. People who had closed their shops were forced to open them, under severe penalties. Prices of commodities were fixed by military officers, carts were commandeered. A public platform for whippings was erected near the fort, and a number of triangles for floggings were erected in various parts of the city.

Let us now give some figures of the cases dealt with by the Tribunal at Amritsar. On major charges 298 people were put before the Martial Law Commissioners, who tried cases unfettered by the ordinary recognised rules of procedure or laws of evidence. Of these 218 were convicted, 51 were sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 79 for seven years, 10 for five years, 13 for three years and 11 for lesser periods. This does not take account of the cases dealt with summarily by military officers, numbering 60 persons, of whom 50 were convicted, and 105 persons convicted under Martial Law by Civil Magistrates.

In answer to a question by Justice Rankin, a Member of

the Hunter Committee who asked, "Excuse me putting it in this way, General, but was it not a form of frightfulness?" General Dyer replied :

"No, It was not. It was a horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful thing, I thought that I should shoot well and shoot strong, so that I or anybody else, should not have to shoot again. I think it is quite possible I could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but they would have come back again and laughed, and I should have made what I consider to be a fool of myself."

And General Dyer's action was immediately approved by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in a telegram sent to him with Sir Michael's approval : "Your action correct, Lieutenant Governor approves."

All these facts are admissions made by General Dyer before the Hunter Commission in the early part of 1920. The full facts however were quite unknown for a year after the event, even the bare news being unknown at the time, and for months together later. The censoring of news was so strict and the ingress and egress of people to and from the Punjab was so rigidly regulated, that the All-India Congress Committee learnt, in any detail, the news of the Amritsar tragedy only when it was broken to it in July 1919 in Calcutta (at one of its meetings held at the Law Association chamber), not only with bated breath and in whispering tones but with the charge that it should be kept strictly confidential. The tragedy of the Punjab was not confined only to Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, Kasur and other places shared the scenes of confusion and carnage and the gruesome details of the events and the atrocities, the barbarities and inhuman acts perpetrated by Col. Johnson, Bosworth-Smith, Col. O'Brien and other officers, both Civil and Military, are really blood-curdling.

According to the official Report contained in the White paper issued to Parliament, the administration of Martial Law was 'more intensive' in Lahore than elsewhere.* The Curfew order, of course, was immediately put in force and people out after 8 P. M. were liable to be shot, flogged, fined, or imprisoned or otherwise punished. Those whose shops were closed were ordered to open them; the alternatives were either being shot or have the shops publicly opened and their contents distributed free to the public.

"Lawyers' agents and touts" were ordered to be registered and forbidden to leave the city without permit. Occupiers of premises on whose walls Martial Law notices were posted

* This and the succeeding accounts are taken from Amritsar, by B. G. Horniman

were ordered to protect them and were liable to punishment if in any way they were defaced or torn, although they could not stay out at night to watch them. More than two persons abreast were not allowed on the side-walks. Students of colleges were ordered to report themselves four times a day to the military authorities at varying places of assembly. Langars or public food kitchens, which had been opened by philanthropic persons for the feeding of those who could not purchase food were ordered to be closed; motor cars and motor bicycles belonging to Indians were ordered to be delivered up to the military authorities and were handed over to officials for their use. Electric punkas and other electric fittings belonging to Indians were commandeered and stripped from the houses for the use of British soldiers. Public conveyances were ordered to report themselves daily at places a considerable distance from the city. There was one case of an elderly man who was caught tending his cow outside his shop door in a side lane after 8 p. m. He was seized and flogged for the breach of the Curfew order. Drivers of tongas (hackney carriages) had participated in the hartal. To teach them a lesson, 300 tongas were commandeered. Of those who were permitted to ply for hire, orders to report themselves at certain times at places distant from the busy parts of the city, and their detention at the pleasure of the military officials concerned, effectually destroyed their chances of a day's earnings. Colonel Johnson admitted that many of his orders were directed against the educated and professional classes, lawyers etc. He considered they were the classes from which the political agitators were drawn. Professional men and other residents on whose premises Martial Law orders were posted had to set servants to watch them lest they should be torn or defaced, perhaps by a police agent; one such case was detected. When they applied for permits for such guardians of the placards to be out after 8 p. m., they were told they could have passes for this purpose for themselves but not for their servants. Students, boys of 16 to 20, were the objects of special attention. The students of several colleges in Lahore, which is a large University town, were ordered to report themselves four times daily at a place, in one case four miles distant from their college. In the burning sun of Lahore in April, the hottest time of the year, when the temperature is often over 108 in the shade, these youths had to walk 19 miles daily. Some of them fainted by the wayside. Colonel Johnson thought it did them good, it kept them out of mischief. A Martial Law notice was torn from one of the walls of one college. The whole professional staff, including the

principal, were arrested, and marched under military escort to the fort where they were kept in military custody for three days. They were given "a corner in the fort" for their accommodations and allowed to sleep on the roof. The closing of the langars or public kitchens which had been opened by philanthropic persons, was explained by Colonel Johnson on the ground that they were used for seditious propaganda. Under cross examination he could produce no justification for this assertion. He had no evidence and could not say who gave him the information.

The headman (a person of high status in the village) was tied to a tree and publicly flogged for his own punishment and the edification of the village. There was apparently no court or pretence of judicial procedure, summary or otherwise. There was only summary flogging.

Colonel Johnson, however, was quite pleased with what he did in this respect, and the Europeans of Lahore entertained him at a farewell dinner and lauded him as the protector of the poor—the poor people who suffered a six week's agony under his rule. Colonel O'Brien who administered Martial Law in Gujranwala, Captain Doveton who had charge of Kasur, and Mr. Bosworth Smith, a Civilian officer who was in command at Sheikhpura, particularly distinguished themselves.

Regarding the bombing at Gujranwala, the public are asked to believe that this promiscuous dropping of bombs and the firing of altogether 235 rounds of a machine-gun, apparently at close quarters, into crowds of people, resulted in the killing of nine and wounding of only about sixteen people.

Colonel O'Brien in his evidence before the Committee said the crowd was fired on "wherever found". This was referring to the aeroplanes. Once it was "found" by an aeroplane in charge of Lieut. Dodkins R.A.R. in the form of twenty peasants in a field. Lieut. Dodkins said, he machine-gunned them till they fled. He saw another party in front of a house being addressed by a man, so he dropped a bomb on them because he "had no doubt in his mind that they were not a marriage or funeral party." Major Carbey R.A.F. was the gentleman who bombed a party of people because he thought they were rioters going or coming from the city. Major Carbey's state of mind may be gathered from some further extracts from the report of his evidence.

"The crowd was running away and he fired to disperse them. As the crowd dispersed, he fired the machine-gun into the village itself. He supposed some shots hit the houses. He could make no discrimination between the innocent and

the guilty. He was at a height of 200 feet and could see perfectly what he was doing. His object was not accomplished by the dropping of bombs alone."

"The firing was not intended to do damage alone. It was in the interests of the villagers themselves. By killing a few, he thought he would prevent the people from collecting again. This had a moral effect."

"After that he went over the city, dropping bombs, and fired at the people who were trying to get away."

Gujranwala, Kasur, and Sheikhupura, like Amritsar and Lahore, had their Curfew order, prohibition of travelling for Indians, floggings public and private, wholesale arrests and punishments by Summary Courts and Special Tribunals

Colonel O'Brien was responsible for an order that when Indians met British officers they must salute, alight from their carriages, or dismount if they were riding or driving, and lower their umbrellas if they were carrying any. This order Colonel O'Brien told the Committee, "was good by way of bringing home to the people that they had new masters." People were whipped, lined, and otherwise punished for disobedience of this monstrous order. He was responsible for the arrest of numbers of people, who were kept in gaol for as long as six weeks without being brought to trial. In one case a number of leading citizens were summarily arrested, put in a goods-truck, where they were huddled together after being marched several miles in the burning sun, some of them half-clad, and sent by train to Lahore. They were refused permission to answer the calls of nature, and were kept in the truck in these conditions for about forty-four hours. Their horrible plight hardly needs description. As they were marched through the streets, an ever-growing crowd of prisoners,—for Colonel O'Brien went on making arrests indiscriminately as he proceeded,—they were handcuffed and chained together. Hindus and Muslims were chained together. This was regarded by the populace as a jibe at Hindu-Muslim unity. Colonel O'Brien said it was accidental. As an example of the spirit of the whole proceeding, it may be mentioned that one of the victims, an elderly citizen, was a noted benefactor of the town, who gave a lakh of rupees (£ 10,000) to found the King George School in commemoration of the King's visit, and had contributed largely to War Relief Fund and War Loans.

Another example of Colonel O'Brien's method is the arrest of an elderly farmer, as a hostage for his two sons, whom he was unable to produce. Colonel O'Brien ordered this man's property to be confiscated, and issued a warning that anybody attempting to help him with his crops would be

shot. He admitted the man had committed no offence himself, but "he did not say where his sons were."

These are only incidents in Colonel O'Brien's lengthy record. Two hundred persons were convicted by Summary Courts, and received sentences of whipping, or from one month up to two years' imprisonment. The Commission convicted 149 people, of whom 22 were sentenced to death, 108 to transportation for life, and others to sentences varying from ten years downwards. Colonel O'Brien's final achievement was to rush a large batch of cases through in about twenty-four hours, when he heard that Martial Law was to terminate the next day. The people concerned were given little opportunity of defending themselves, and cases fixed for some days ahead were rushed into the Court post-haste, so anxious was Colonel O'Brien that none should escape his justice by reason of the lapse of Martial Law.

Captain Doveton was in a sort of independent command in the Kasur sub-division, the headquarters of which is the fairly large town of Kasur. At this place a public gallows was erected for hangings, though apparently it was never used, and was taken down by order of the superior authorities. It was there, however, for some days to the terror of the inhabitants. A large public cage was also erected near the railway station, designed to accommodate 150 persons, and here suspects were incarcerated before the public gaze. The whole male population of the town was paraded for identification.

Floggings took place in public, and photographic records of these disgusting incidents are in existence, showing that the victims were stripped naked to the knees, and tied to telegraph poles or triangles. Publicity was not casual, or accidental, but designed. A sort of levee of the 'Bad characters' of the town was held for the purpose by Captain Doveton's order, and on at least one occasion prostitutes were brought to witness the floggings. Just as Colonel Johnson had his 'one regrettable incident,' when a wedding party was flogged, this flogging in the presence of prostitutes was the one thing which seemed to excite Captain Doveton's shame when he was taxed with it, while giving evidence before the Hunter Committee. His explanation was that he had ordered the Sub-Inspector of Police to round up the bad characters, and bring them to witness the floggings, but was 'horrified' when he saw these women there. But he could not send them away because he was unable to find an escort for them. So they remained to witness the floggings.

Captain Doveton was a prolific inventor of 'minor punishments.' His sole object in inventing minor punishments, he

told the Committee, was to make things, "as mild as circumstances would permit." Offenders against Martial Law were set to work at loading and unloading goods waggons in the station yard. He instituted a system of making people touch the ground with their foreheads,a sort of variation of Colonel Dyer's crawling order.

Mr. Bosworth-Smith was a civilian officer who administered Martial Law in the sub-division of Sheikhpura. He admitted that Martial Law was not 'essential', but he thought it was 'desirable' and keeping it on was 'a good thing.' He tried all the cases in his area, and, as elsewhere, sentences of flogging were inflicted, which were carried out at the rising of the Court. He tried 477 persons between May 6 and May 20.

An order was issued by the military authorities compelling schoolboys to parade three times a day to salute the flag. The order applied to the infant classes and children of five and six years of age were included. It is actually alleged that there were fatal cases of sun-stroke resulting from this, and it is admitted that children fainted from undue exposure to the sun. It is alleged too, that in some instances the boys were made to repeat: "I have committed no offence. I will not commit any offence. I repent, I repent, I repent."

"Major Smith, Administrator of Martial Law in Gujranwala, Gujrat, and Lyallpur, was asked by Sit Chimanlal Setalvad whether the order was enforced in all places in his area and whether it applied to all classes including infant-classes. The Major replied that it applied to all places in his area where there were troops, and that even infant-class boys of the ages of five and six were required to attend the parade, but the little boys were exempted from the evening parade.

Colonel O'Brien, in his evidence, said that "one day when he was at Wazirabad, he saw a boy fainting during his march to the flag, and wrote to the military authorities." He did not know if the next day this duty was increased from two to three times. Questioned, if it was so done, would it not be hard on the boys, Colonel O'Brien said, 'No'.

Thus Indian manhood and womanhood were humiliated and insulted to such an extent that human blood begins to boil.

CHAPTER V

SALT SATYAGRAH MOVEMENT 1930-31

The N. C. O. Movement of 1920 was stopped by Gandhiji at a moment when it was heading towards a mass movement and Gandhiji feared some violent outbursts as its consequence. But the great movement inaugurated in 1930 was in a nature of a mass movement from its very start.

The Government also started with its strong repressive

policy from the very beginning. The short account of which we give below :—

On 26th January 1930 the Independence Day celebrations were a great success, being held all over the country. Arrests were going on briskly in India for one reason or another. In the Meerut Case, of the 32 accused, all but one were committed to trial in the sessions. In Calcutta, Subash Chandra Bose and eleven others were convicted and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment. In obedience to the Congress mandate, 172 members of the Legislatures had resigned by February, 1930. The Working Committee met at Sabarmati on the 14th, 15th and 16th February. The cardinal resolution of the sitting was the one relating to Civil Disobedience. The resolution authorised Gandhi and his followers in faith, to start Civil Disobedience. This was generalized later by the All-India Congress Committee, that met shortly after at Ahmedabad, into a campaign of Civil Disobedience. Shortly after this meeting, the atmosphere was surcharged with salt.

There was no privacy about the plans. But they were not clear-cut either. They would unfold themselves, much as the path on a misty morning reveals itself to a fast-moving motor car, almost from yard to yard. The Satyagrahi carries a searchlight on his forehead. It shows the way for the next step. The present Salt Satyagraha was to evolve thus. Gandhi would go and pick up salt in some salt area. Others should not.

In the event of mass action, the lawyers were to give up their courts and the students to give up their studies.

Gandhi's plans have all along been revealed to him by his own instinct, not evolved by the cold, calculating logic of the mind. His inner voice is his mentor and monitor, his friend, philosopher and guide. It was thus that he condensed the progress of centuries in a decade. As is usual with him, he sent a letter to Lord Irwin. Lord Irwin's answer to the letter of Gandhi,—which people and the Press described as an ultimatum,—came back quick and was unequivocal. His Excellency expressed his regret that Mr. Gandhi should have been "contemplating a course of action which was clearly bound to involve violation of the Law and danger to the public peace." Gandhi's rejoinder to this was characteristic of him. "On bended knees," he wrote, "I asked for bread and received a stone instead. The English Nation responds only to force, and I am not surprised by the Viceregal reply. The only public peace the Nation knows is the peace of the public prison. India is a vast prison-house. I repudiate this (British) Law and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of compulsory peace that is choking the heart of the Nation for want of free vent."

Gandhi's march had thus become inevitable. Vallabhbhai went before his master, to prime up the villagers for the coming ordeals. It did not take long for Government to strike the first blow. When Vallabhbhai was moving in advance as Gandhi's forerunner, Government saw in him John the Baptist that was the forerunner of Jesus, nineteen hundred years ago, and forthwith they laid hands on him in the first week of March at Ras and sentenced him to three months' imprisonment. With his arrest and conviction, the whole of Gujarat rose to a man against Government. 75,000 people gathered on the sands of Sabarmati and passed the following resolution :—

"We the citizens of Ahmedabad, determine hereby that we shall go the same path where Vallabhbhai has gone, and we shall attain full Independence while attempting to do so. Without achieving freedom for our country, we shall not rest in peace, nor will we give Government peace. We solemnly declare that India's emancipation lies in truth and non-violence."

Gandhi began his march on 12.3.1930 to Dandi, accompanied by his seventy-nine 'padacharees.' Crowds gathered everywhere to witness the march and pay homage to the great deliverer. Gandhi said, "The British rule in India has brought about moral, material, cultural and spiritual ruination of this great country. I regard this rule as a curse. I am out to destroy this system of Government. I have sung the tune of 'God Save the King' and have taught others to sing it. I was a believer in the politics of petitions, deputations, and friendly negotiations. But all these have gone to dogs. I know that these are not the ways to bring this Government round. Sedition has become my religion. Ours is a non-violent battle. We are not out to kill any body but it is our dharma to see that the curse of this Government is blotted out."

Gandhiji's march lasted 24 days, and all along he was emphasising how the march was a pilgrimage the merit of which lay in keeping the body and soul together and not in fighting and feasting. He was constantly turning the torch inward.

Gandhi reached Dandi on the morning of the 5th April. Shrimati Sarojini Devi had also gone there to see him. Soon after the morning prayers, Gandhi and his volunteers proceeded to break the Salt Law by picking up the salt lying on the sea-shore. Immediately after breaking the Salt Law, Gandhi issued the following Press statement :—

"Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the Salt Law has been committed, it is now open to any one who

would take the risk of prosecution under the Salt Law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes, and wherever it is convenient. My advice is that workers should everywhere manufacture salt."

The country was ablaze from end to end, being permitted to start Salt Satyagraha as from the 6th April. Huge public meetings were held in all big cities, the audience running up to six figures. The events at Karachi, Shiroda, Ratnagiri, Patna, Peshawar, Calcutta, Madras and Sholapur, constituted a new experience and bore witness to the violence that lay behind this civilized Government. In Peshawar, the military firing resulted in many deaths. In Madras there was firing too.

Referring to the Karachi tragedy Gandhi wrote:—

"Brave young Dattatraya who is said to have known nothing of Satyagraha and, being an athlete, had merely gone to assist in keeping order, received a fatal bullet wound. Meghraj Revachand, 18 years old, has also succumbed to a bullet wound. Thus did seven men, including Jairamdas, receive bullet wounds."

Writing under the title 'Black Regime', Gandhi reviewed the events and said: "If Government neither arrest nor declare salt free, they will find people marching to be shot rather than be tortured."

The Bengal Ordinance was renewed on April 23, and the Viceroy promulgated on the 27th April another Ordinance reviving the powers of the Press Act of 1910, with certain amendments.

Gandhi then drafted his second letter to Viceroy and had also announced his intention of raiding the salt works of Dharsana and Chharsada. Then came the time for the arrest of Gandhi, and it was not until Gandhi was actually removed to Yeravada on the morning of the 5th, that it was known that his arrest had taken place.

It was ten minutes past one in the night when Gandhi was placed in a motor lorry accompanied by policemen. He was then taken to Borivli near Bombay by train and thence by motor car to Yeravada prison.

Gandhi's arrest was followed by spontaneous demonstrations of sympathy from one end of the country to the other. It was the signal for a voluntary and complete hartal in Bombay, Calcutta and several other places. The day after the arrest the hartal was even more widespread. In Bombay, a huge procession was taken out, and a public meeting in the evening had to be addressed from several different platforms. About 40 out of the 80 mills had to be inactive, because over 50,000 men had come out in protest. The workmen of the

G. I. P. and the B. B. & C. I. Workshops also came out and joined the hartal. The cloth merchants decided on a six days' hartal to indicate their disapproval of the arrest. In Poona, where Gandhiji was interned, the hartal was complete. Resignations from honorary offices and from the services were announced at frequent intervals. Troubles were brewing at one or two places, though on the whole the country had imbibed Gandhiji's teachings rather astonishingly. The disturbances in Sholapur resulting in the burning of six Police Chaukis led to Police firing in which 25 were killed and about a hundred wounded. In Calcutta though the hartal was peaceful in the city, there were disturbances at Howrah where the Police opened fire at Panchanantala to disperse a crowd. Under Section 144, all assemblies of more than five were prohibited. But Gandhiji's arrest had a world-wide interest.

Mr. Abbas Tyabji who took up Gandhiji's place as leader of the Salt Satyagrahis was arrested on the 12th April. Arrests, lathi-charges and repression went on as usual. Batches of volunteers raided the salt depot and used to be beaten with lathis by the Police and many of them suffered severe injuries.

On hearing of Mr. Tyabji's arrest Shrimati Sarojini Devi hurried to Dharsana, in fulfilment of her promise to Gandhiji, and continued to direct the raid. She and her batch of volunteers were formally arrested on 16th morning, taken out of the Police cordon and then released. Batches of volunteers rushed later towards the salt depot. They were beaten and chased out. Same evening over 220 volunteers were arrested by the Police on a charge of being members of an unlawful assembly and were detained in the segregation camp at Dharsana.

Later, a large number of volunteers, congregated on the Wadala Salt Works (19th morning). The 'raid' was frustrated by the prompt action of the Police, who, armed with revolvers, arrested over 400 of the Satyagrahis.

More salt raids took place. A mass raid at Dharsana took place on the 21st of May, when 2,500 volunteers from all parts of Gujarat took part in it. They were led by Imam Saheb, the 62 year old colleague of Gandhiji in South Africa. The volunteers commenced the raid early in the morning and as they attacked the salt heaps at different places the Police charged them with lathis (bamboo sticks) and beat them back.

Thousands witnessed the spectacle. After this had gone on for two hours, the leaders, Messrs. Imam Saheb, Pyarelal and Manilal Gandhi were arrested, and later Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also. The total number of injured volunteers on that

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day was 290. One injured volunteer, Mr. Bhailalbhaj Dajabhai, died, as also Babu Hule from Maharashtra, from the effects of the injuries. The Police with the help of the Military, then practically isolated Dharsana and Untadi by blocking the main road leading to these places and preventing any car or pedestrian from going along it. All the volunteers who were camping at Untadi were taken to some unknown destination and later released.

Two batches of volunteers numbering about 200 were led on the 3rd June from Untadi camp to raid the Dharsana Salt Depots. Both were held up by the Police who, when the crowd entered the prohibited area, charged them with lathis. The injured men were taken to the camp hospital.

Wadala Raids: a succession of raids were also made on the Wadala Salt Depot. On the 22nd, 188 volunteers were arrested and taken to Worli. On the 25th, 100 volunteers were accompanied by a huge crowd of 2,000 spectators. The Police charged them with lathis injuring 17, and later arrested 115. The rest with the crowd got off with the salt. Again a raid was made in the afternoon when 18 more were injured. On the 26th, 65 volunteers were afield and 43 of them were arrested. The rest with the crowd got off with salt. An official Press Note stated that the disturbances that had so far taken place, had been caused largely by the sight-seers who were, unlike the volunteers, not disciplined. The Note warned the public to keep away from Wadala while the raids were in progress.

But the most demonstrative raid was to come off on the 1st June for which the War Council was diligently preparing. On the morning of the 1st nearly 15,000 volunteers and non-volunteers participated in the great mass action at Wadala.

Successive batches marched up to the Port Trust level-crossing and the swelled crowd were held up there by the Police cordon. Soon the raiders, among whom were women and children, broke through the cordon, splashed through slime and mud, and ran over the pans. Congress raiders numbering about 150 were slightly injured. The raiders were repulsed by the Police who were acting under the immediate supervision of the Home Member.

Serious troubles ending in two Police charges and the calling out of the Military to cope with the situation occurred at the Worli Detention Camp on the 3rd June, when about four thousand under-trial Wadala 'Raiders' were involved in a brush with the Police, resulting in about ninety casualties, twenty-five of them being serious.

But the way in which the raiders were dealt with by the Police caused considerable public indignation and protest,

On-lookers were aghast at the gruesome spectacle. Mr. Hussain, ex. Judge, Small Causes Court, Bombay, Mr. K. Natarajan, and Mr. G. K. Devadhar, President, Servants of India Society, who personally watched the Dharsana raid, issued a statement in which they said :—

"They saw with their own eyes that after Satyagrahis were driven out of the Salt boundary, mounted European Sowars rode at full gallop with lathis in their hands beating people between the spot where Satyagrahis had reached for raid and the village itself. They actually galloped full speed through the streets of the village, scattering men, women and children. Villagers ran into bye-lanes and closed themselves in houses. But if, by accident, they were unable to escape, they were beaten with lathis."

Mr. Webb Miller, writing to the New Freeman expressed abhorrence of the sights at Dharsana:—

"In eighteen years of reporting in twenty-two countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharsana. Sometimes the scenes were so painful that I had to turn away momentarily. One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. It seemed they were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's non-violence creed."

Both in 1930 and 1932 the Sanikatta salt stores in Karnataka under Government Guard were raided by a mass consisting of 10,000 to 15,000 people, and the quantity of salt taken away on each occasion amounted to thousands of maunds.

Mr. George Slocombe, the representative of the Daily Herald, London, was also an eye-witness to some of the Salt raids:—

"I watched the events from an observation post on one of the rocky hills which ring in Wadala. It was humiliating for an Englishman to stand among the silent, friendly, but deeply moved crowd of volunteers and sympathisers and watch the representatives of the country's administration engaged in this ludicrous, embarrassing business."

The time is past when the progress of events could be described in any circumstantial detail. Lord Irwin began to tighten the screw. At first he would not allow Gandhi to be arrested. Gandhi's march infected the whole Nation. There were marches everywhere. His call to the women of the country brought them into the arena by thousands. They proved a huge big complication to Government. Picketing liquor shops and foreign cloth shops was taken charge of by them, and the Police became powerless until their chivalry

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succumbed to their despotism. Not to arrest Gandhi was to leave him free to tap hidden and unthought of resources. He had a magic wand in his hands, one waving of which brought men and money. He had to be arrested but the time was not yet, for Gandhi arrested would mean the whole Nation arrested. On the 14th of April, Jawaharlal had been arrested and convicted, and that meant the arrest of the Congress. It was only a transference from the larger jail to a smaller jail. Ordinances were passed prohibiting picketing, preaching of non-payment of taxes, and social boycott. Numerous skirmishes were waged round the hoisting of the national flag. Punishments soon became severe. Fines were added to imprisonment. Then came the lathi charges. People could hardly believe that the Police were being drilled with lathis and all the exercises cap-a-pie were being practised to charge the Satyagrahis. It was not a threat or a suspicion. It was a grim reality—this lathi charge. Meetings were ordered to be dispersed under the ruling Law of the land, and dispersal was effected under the inexorable blows of the lathis. Salt sections were coupled with the Penal Code and sentences were made as long as possible. Even the best and the biggest men were given "C" Class treatment in jail and set to inhuman labour.

The 'A' class was there only nominally. The 'B' class was given in a niggardly spirit.

The All-India Working Committee of the Congress was declared unlawful and Pandit Motilal Nehru was arrested on the 30th June, 1930, and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment. To continue the story of repression, we have only to state that its intensity grew with the boycott of Foreign cloth movement. The volunteer organisation in Bombay was thorough going. Women came into the movement, and with their orange robes and delicate frames, won the hearts of the people by the very gentleness of their picketing. When a shop-keeper would not seal his goods, his wife would be brought as a picket. In Bombay, public meetings were prohibited as elsewhere in the country and the people would not obey the orders. We have the testimony of Mr. Brailsford, who had toured the country during the movement, to the brutality of the treatment accorded to the people. He wrote in the course of an article in the Manchester Guardian on 12th January 1931:—

"The charges which responsible Indian leaders make against the Police range in space and time over vast areas which defy investigation. Everywhere one heard complaints about the brutality of the Police in dispersing prohibited meetings. If such meetings had always or usually been

tolerated, there would have been no disorder, and the audiences would soon have grown bored. As it was, especially in Bombay, the policy of rough dispersal moved the whole city to anger; to face the lathi charges became a point of honour, and in a spirit of martyrdom, volunteers went out in hundreds to be beaten. They gave a display of disciplined, passive courage. Again and again, I heard descriptions by Europeans of the beating of slight and perfectly passive youths by burly constables which made me almost physically sick. I should not care to repeat the comments of a French lady who saw one of these scenes.

"That the Police, even under English officers, often meant to inflict physical punishment for disaffection. I could not doubt. At Calcutta some students, witnessing from a balcony of the University the brutal beating of participants in a peaceful procession shouted 'cowards.' Two hours later, the Police returned rushed, into the University under an English officer, invaded the class-room, and beat the students indiscriminately as they sat at their desks, till the walls were spattered with blood. The University made an official protest, but no punishment followed. I heard details of this affair from professor whose repute in the European scientific world stands high. An Indian Judge of the High Court whose students-son had been beaten spoke with a vehemence which I wish some members of the Government could have heard. A similar affair occurred at Lahore where the Police, again under an English Officer, invaded a college and beat not only students in the class but the professor also. The excuse in this case was that some students belonging, I was assured, to another college had been 'peaceful pickets' in the street. At Contai, in Bengal, five villagers were pushed into a tank and drowned during the dispersal of a crowd which seems to have been harmless. At Meerut, I met a leading lawyer who was the chief speaker at a dispersed meeting. While under arrest he was beaten, and in this position, a policeman shot him at close range, so that his arm had to be amputated. The importance of such affairs (and I might mention many more) was psychological. They helped to discredit the Government during the critical time when the masses were hesitating whether they should unreservedly support Congress. The privations (of which I saw something) suffered by the main body ('C' class) of the political prisoners in jail had the same effect.

"Of Police brutality in the villages of Gujarat, I had ample evidence, for I spent five days, touring them. The legal repression to begin with, was sufficiently harsh. The peasants, almost to a man, in the Bardoli and Kaira districts

were refusing,—from a mixture of motives, personal devotion to Gandhi, desire for Swaraj, and economic distress due to the terrific fall in agricultural prices to pay the land tax. The reply is to confiscate their fields, buffaloes, irrigation pumps, etc., and these are sold at nominal prices, so that for a tax of Rs. 40 or so, a man may lose his all. Further, the usual date of collection was anticipated by three months so that peasants who had already paid the two instalments due for 1930 were required last October to pay the instalment normally due in January, 1931. All this may have been just legal, but it was provocatively severe. On top of it came physical terrorism. The Police armed with rifles and lathis, made a practice of surrounding the disaffected villages and beating the peasants indiscriminately with the lathi or the butt-end of a rifle. I have forty-five narratives given to me personally by the victims, and in all but two cases, I saw their wounds, and bruises (one girl was too modest to show them). Some of these cases were serious; one man had a broken arm, another a thumb-joint cut to the bone, while bodies covered with marks. Other cases which I could not verify were in a distant hospital. The motive was sometimes to extort the tax,—and occasionally it was paid after a beating and the seizure of a buffalo, though, by the normal reckoning, was not yet due. I have the statement of several men who themselves were not tax-payers, but were compelled after a beating, to pay an absent neighbour's tax. In other numerous instances the motive was apparently simply to terrorise a 'disaffected' village, for no attempt was made to get the tax. The national flags in one village were torn down from trees and houses, together with the Congress placards, and eight peasants beaten, apparently because their houses were near these symbols. In two cases, a man was beaten till he removed his Gandhi cap. In another instance, a man was beaten (twelve lathi blows) till he saluted the Police seven times. A frequent Police joke was to say, "Do you want Swaraj? Then, here it is," and down would come the lathi. Worst of all, the Indian officials (both civilian and Police officers) were engaged in an effort to rouse the Pariahs, classed in the census as a 'criminal tribe' against the yeoman class (Pattidars). There was direct incitement to beat them, to refuse to pay debts, even to burn their houses. For this, I had the evidence of five Bariahs in different villages. To these people the lands of the small owners were offered at one or two rupees an acre. This was much what the worse type of Russian Communist official did when the party was stirring up class war in the villages.

" 'This' you may say, 'is ex parte evidence.' But I took

such precautions as I could. I gave all my evidence to the higher officials. The Commissioner went with me to one 'sample' village, saw the peasants' injuries, and questioned them. I have not the right to anticipate his mature conclusion, but on the spot he expressed doubts only about one case out of nine (the modest girl). Moreover, I met two of the local Indian officials, and had a chance of observing their ways; one of them in my presence perpetrated an act of wanton physical brutality. Finally, I saw the cage in which he kept his untried prisoners at Borsad. It was an open den, of the zoo type, with iron bars, and measured about thirty feet square. In it, day and night, lived eighteen politicals, and one of them had spent six weeks in it, without books or works. From this crowded cage, the prisoners were let out only once a day, and only for three quarters of an hour, to wash and visit the latrines. Ought I to have been sceptical, when one of them told me that he and two others had been beaten in gaol? Beating belonged to the same medieval century as this prison.

"May I, in conclusion, touch on the bearing that all this has on the good work of the R.T.C.? English public opinion, carefully screened by Censors and Editors from any perception of what is happening in India, forgets that the great mass of the population is not in a normal state of mind. It has been roused to a high pitch of sustained exaltation, it has been goaded, gentle though it is, to anger, it doubts our sincerity, and, above all, it is passionately devoted to its imprisoned leaders; I gravely fear that in this mood it may not study the proposed Constitution with the favourable attention it deserves. So long, indeed, as Gandhi is in prison, I doubt whether the main body of his movement will abandon, or even slacken, its resistance. The one chance lies in an act of generosity which will proclaim a new era. May one hope that the completion of the sketch of the Constitution, and its acceptance at Westminster will be heralded by a general amnesty? Failing the most tactful handling during the next six months, India may have to start her career of freedom with the repression of Indian by Indians. We ought to know more of the history of this painful year; she should be helped to forget it."

To make a long story short, it only requires to be mentioned that every Province and part of India bore its share of sufferings in the national struggle.

We shall conclude this harrowing tale of woes with an account relating to the heroism of the women of Borsad, on the 21st January 1931, to celebrate one of those periodical events which sprung up in the movement. The Police were

determined to counter the demonstration. The women had placed large pots of water to quench their thirst, at different places. The first thing done by the Police was to break these pots. The women were dispersed by force and the specific allegation was made that, when the ladies were thrown down, the policemen trod upon their chests with their boots. This was almost the last act of Police hooliganism. On the 26th January, a notification was issued releasing unconditionally Gandhi and 26 of his colleagues, in order to make it possible for them to conduct negotiations for a truce.

Thus silent sufferings of the people not only morally and virtually triumphed over brutal British force but gave it once a defeat which is historical in its far-reaching consequences and significance.

CHAPTER VI

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT 1932

As a result of the movement of 1930-31, Government of India, through the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, was forced to have truce-pact with the Congress on 4th March, 1931. But his successor Lord Wellingdon from the very start of his viceroyalty of India, was anxious and bent upon terminating truce with the Congress and wanted to crush it once for all. To help him in his design there was enough of the reactionary element in India.

In fact when Gandhiji and Lord Irwin came to an understanding between themselves, those of the reactionary element in India which did not like this alliance immediately gathered forces and organised themselves into a united force to defeat the Indian Nationalists. It was in Simla, at the Headquarters of the Indian Government, that a part of this conspiracy was hatched.

The Government offensive commenced on the 4th January, 1932. Every Congress organization and every allied organization was banned, and Congress-men whether they did any overt act or not in defiance of the Law or the Ordinances, which came to be spoken of as the Lawless Law, were got hold of, arrested and sentenced. While Government began where they had left, the Congress had to begin it all over-again. The Lathi-charge of Government was a later development in the first movement (1930). In 1932, it was the first friend that greeted the Satyagrahis. Gandhi was intending to go to the Talukas in Gujrat which had borne the burnt of the struggle in 1930, but before he could do so, he and his trusted lieutenant Vallabhbhai were both arrested and spirited

away as State prisoners in the small hours of the 4th January, 1932.

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had already led the van. The rest of the Indian politicians led the rear. The Satyagrahis came forward in their thousands. In 1921 they were thirty thousand in number and that was considered a big number. In 1930-31, within a short interval of ten months, ninety thousand men, women and children were convicted and sentenced. No one knows how many were beaten, but the number can not be less than 3 or 4 times the number imprisoned. People were either beaten down into paralysis of all activity, or simply tired down by a 'cat and mouse' policy. The old game of beating prisoners was renewed. Office secrets were asked to be divulged. "Where are your papers, your books, and your lists of subscriptions and volunteers?" That was the demand of Government and young men were harassed and unutterable things were said, unspeakable punishments were planned and executed. Imagine an advocate of the High Court being subjected to the torture of his hair being plucked out one by one as a mark of Police displeasure at his not giving out his name and address.

New occasions called for new Ordinances. The United Provinces Emergency Powers Ordinance which was issued on the 14th of December, 1931, authorised the Local Government to impose collective fines on the inhabitants of a particular area which could be recovered as Land Revenue. The three Ordinances relating to the North-West Frontier Province were issued on the 24th of December, 1931. One of them ran on the lines of the U. P. Ordinance and provided against non-payment of liabilities. The other two were known as N.W.F.P. Emergency Powers Ordinance and the N. W. F. P. Unlawful Association Ordinance.

On the 4th of January, four new Ordinances were issued known as (1) the Emergency Powers Ordinance, (2) Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, (3) Unlawful Association Ordinance and (4) Prevention of Molestation and Boycott Ordinance.

The events of 1932-33 ran on much the same lines as those of 1930-31. Only, the fight was more intensive and more determined. The repression was ever so much more ruthless and the suffering was ever so much more deep.

The Government offensive started with the arrest of Gandhi and the President of the Congress, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the early hours of the 4th of January. The above mentioned Ordinances of 1932 were issued the same morning and extended to several Provinces. Within the next few days, they were applied to practically the whole country. Many Provincial and subordinate Committees, Ashrams, National

Schools and other National institutions were declared unlawful, and their houses, furniture and funds and other moveables seized. Most of the leading Congressmen in the country were suddenly clapped into jails. The Congress organisation was thus apparently left without leaders, without funds, and even without any local habitation. The Congressmen who had been left behind were not, in spite of this sudden and determined swoop, without resources.

Everyone took up the work wherever he happened to be. The Working Committee had decided that vacancies on it, unlike in 1930, be not filled up and Sardar Vallabhbhai, anticipating his own arrest, had made out a list of several persons who would act in his place during his absence one after another. The Working Committee had transferred all its powers to the President, and the President in his turn transferred them to his successors who, in their turn, could nominate their own successors with similar powers. In the Provinces also, wherever it was possible, the whole power of the organisation was delegated to one person and similarly these powers percolated to a series of individuals exercising the rights of a Congress Committee in Districts, Thanas, Talukas and even villages. It was these individuals who came to be popularly known as 'Dictators.'

One of the difficulties which faced the organisers of any Civil Disobedience campaign related to the laws which could be selected for disobedience. It is evident that any law and every law may not be disobeyed. The ordinances with their wide ramifications solved this difficulty for the Congress. In the different Provinces different items were selected, while there were certain items prescribed from time to time by the Acting President of the Congress. Thus, picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops and of British goods was an item common to all Provinces. In the United Provinces on a pretty large scale, and in a portion of Bengal non-payment of rent was an important item. In places in Bihar and Bengal, payment of Chaukidari tax was withheld. In the Central Provinces and the Berar, Karnatak and some places in U. P., the Madras presidency and Bihar, Forest Laws were disobeyed. Salt Laws were defied in many places by manufacture, collection, or sale of illicit salt. Meetings and proceedings were of course prohibited and were held in spite of such prohibition. At an early stage of the struggle, a favourite item of the programme was the observance of what came to be known as special days. These were in connection with special events or individuals, or for special purposes, e. g. Gandhi Day, Motilal Day, Frontier Day, Martyrs Day, Flag Day and a number of other days.

As already stated, the Government had taken possession of Congress offices and Ashrams. Attempts were made in many places to get back symbolical possession of these places in Government hands, thus disobeying the Ordinance which made entry into those places a trespass. These attempts came to be known as 'raids'. Under the Ordinances the service of any press was not available to the Congress. This deficiency was made up by the issue of unauthorised bulletins leaflets, news-sheets, reports etc., which were typed, cyclostyled, duplicated, or even printed, but without the names of the press or the printers as required by law, some under the names of non-existent Presses and persons. It is remarkable that in spite of Police vigilance these news-sheets and bulletins were issued regularly and continued to furnish information to the country, as a whole, of all that was happening. The service of the Post Office and the Telegraph was denied to the Congress, and it established its own system of carrying its post not only from place to place in a Province but also from the All-India Office to the Provinces. Sometimes the volunteers carrying these postal articles were detected and naturally arrested or otherwise dealt with. This system which had really been started towards the latter part of the movement of 1930 was almost perfected in 1932. The Government were unable to locate even the offices of the A. I. C. C. or the Provincial Committees, from whence not only the bulletins but also instructions for the carrying on of the movement emanated, and when once either an office or an individual conducting it was located and put out of action, another sprang up and carried on the work. Another item which created much enthusiasm among the people and caused not a little embarrassment to the Police, was the holding of a session of the Congress followed by a series of conference in the Provinces and districts all over the country. In some places an attempt was made to interfere with the regular working of the Railways by the volunteers pulling the alarm signal in Railway trains and bringing them to a stop. An attempt was even made to make the Railway working difficult by large number of people boarding trains without tickets, simply to cause loss to the managements, but these found no encouragement from responsible quarters and were stopped.

The Boycott took a most intensive form and special items were selected for concentrated work. Thus in some places separate weeks were devoted to intensive propaganda for boycott of foreign cloth, or British medicines, British Banks, Insurance Companies, foreign sugar, kerosine oil, and British goods generally.

It is not to be supposed that Government after arresting the leaders would become quiet and mild. All the powers referred to in the Ordinances were used. But there were certain forms of repression which even the Ordinances, drastic as they were, did not sanction or contemplate. Needless to say that arrests were made in large numbers but they were made with discrimination, the total number of convictions being anything not less than a lakh. It soon became apparent that, in spite of camp jails and temporary jails being opened, the numbers that offered themselves for arrest could not all be accommodated. It was therefore necessary to make a selection, and only those who were supposed to possess some organising capacity or were prominently associated with the congress organisation were ordinarily imprisoned. Nor was it an easy matter to deal with them in Prison. More than ninety-five per-cent of the persons convicted were placed in the 'C' Class. There was a very small sprinkling of congressmen placed in the 'B' class, while the 'A' class was maintained only in name in several places and very sparingly granted in others.

The conditions of prison life were also not such as to be easily tolerated by a class of persons well brought up and having their own ideas about them. All this very often brought them into conflict with prison authorities, which resulted in the imposition of various kinds of jail penalties sanctioned by the rules and not unoften in beatings and other kinds of torture which can easily be practised within prison walls where there is no fear of detection. One particularly atrocious case of assault and beating for refusal to submit to the humiliating condition of sitting in a particular posture led to the prosecution and conviction of a jailor and his assistant and some others in Nasik Jail, but lathi-charges on Civil Disobedience prisoners were not uncommon. The conditions of life in the temporary jails, with their tin-sheds which gave protection neither against the heat of May and June nor the cold of December and January, with their over-crowding and consequent insanitary conditions, were quite intolerable. There were, no doubt, some jails where the treatment was tolerably fair but that was rather the exception than the rule. Some of the permanent jails also were no better. It was reported that the Health of the Political prisoners in many of the jails, particularly in camp jails was far from satisfactory. Dysentery was common in all the seasons, while the rains and cold weather brought pneumonia and serious lung trouble to not a few. Many died as prisoners. The conditions in the permanent jails in some places were not much better. The treatment depended

naturally on the character and temper of the immediate jail officials, and these, with some notable exceptions here and there, were neither considerate nor even fair.

The Police had early taken to device of dispersing crowds and processions by lathi-charge. There was hardly an important place in any Province where the movement showed signs of life which did not experience these lathi-charges. In many places, the injuries caused were serious and the number of those injured large. It was a practice with the crowds to collect together to see what was happening where some Satyagrahis were marching in procession, holding a meeting, carrying on what is called a 'raid' or engaged in picketing, and when the lathi-charge was made, no discrimination was made between those who had assembled as sight-seers and those who had gone with the set purpose of disobeying the law. It was not unoften that the sight-seers were the victims of these lathi-charges and Satyagrahis were arrested and otherwise dealt with. Satyagrahis, too, had their share of these assaults, not only in a crowd where they were mixed up with other people but within the quieter and less exciting environments of a Police lock-up or a prison cell. It was commonly reported that in many places unmentionable atrocities and tortures were perpetrated, the variety and the cruelty of which varied with the intelligence, resourcefulness and callousness of the particular officers concerned. Even women and boys and children were not spared. The Government had discovered that while the Satyagrahis were prepared for prison, beating and torture, and many of them even to be shot, there were many who would succumb if an attack was made on their property. Accordingly heavy fines were imposed on conviction. Sometimes they rose to five figures. Three and four figures were common enough. Where non-payment of Revenue, rent or taxes was resorted to, for realisation of such dues and taxes and for realisation of fines, the properties of not only the defaulters and the convicts but also the property of joint families and sometimes of relatives were attached and sold. This by itself would be nothing if, as a result of such attachment and sale, properties of much value were not sold off virtually for a song. Besides the legally correct form of distress and attachment, what really mattered even more was the extra-legal and the illegal harassment and loss amounting in not a few cases to wanton loot and waste. Not only were moveables like furniture, household utensils, jewellery and even cattle and standing crop attached and sold and some times destroyed, but the very lands and homesteads were not spared. There are many in Gujrat, the U.P., and Karnatak

who are landless even to-day and whose suffering was entirely voluntary, in the sense that they refused to pay what they could easily have paid if sufferings were none-the-less imposed upon them, because, they need not have been deprived of all that they lost. The agriculturists of Gujrat who joined in the non-payment of Revenue and rent campaign went through sufferings which it is impossible to describe, but they did not bend. There were many places where extra police were posted as a punitive measure and their cost realised from the inhabitants. From four or five places only in Bihar where such extra police were posted in the Province, no less than four lakhs and seventy thousand was realised as punitive tax. The terror and havoc created by the posting of additional force was so great in parts of the district of Midnapur in Bengal that the bulk of the Hindu population of two Thanas in the District actually evacuated their homes and shifted to the neighbouring areas in the midst of indescribable suffering resulting in the death of women.

Besides such Punitive Tax, collective fines were also imposed on many localities and the inhabitants were made to pay them. In several places in the country, firing was resorted to and many persons killed and many more injured. In this respect the N.W.F.P. suffered the severest losses in killed and injured.

Thus the atrocities of the Government were progressively increasing since 1857 with the application of Newer, more drastic and more tyrannical methods for the suppression of the peoples' desires and efforts to be free. But it should not be ignored that once the battle of freedom is begun, it can never end unless it is won.
