Chapter One

THE EARLY BACKGROUND, 1885-1916
Before the birth of the Indian National Congress there were a few political associations in India, but only one of them, the Indian Association of Calcutta, can claim (1) an all-India character. Most of these associations including the Indian Association afterwards joined the Congress. Even the Congress was started as a national movement rather than a political party. It met for the first time in Bombay in December, 1885, "without any Constitution or rules to guide (2) its deliberations" end with no clearly expressed political objective. But blessings of British rule were recognized and loyalty to the British connection was professed by all early Congressmen. They had great faith in the sense of justice and fairplay of the British people. The salient feature of the attitude of the first Congressmen towards the British Empire was, that they concerned themselves,

(1) Notable associations were the British Indian Association of Bengal, the Poona Sarvejank Sabha, the Madras Mahajana Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association, and the Indian Association of Calcutta, founded in 1851, 1872, 1884, January 1885, and July 1876 respectively. The continuance of the connection between England and India was the fundamental principle of these associations. While the first four were more or less provincial bodies, the fifth developed an all-India character and established its branches all over Bengal and in North India up to Lahore. For further information about the Indian Association, see Jogesh Chandra Boral, History of the Indian Association, 1876-1918 (Calcutta, 1953).

(2) H.V. R.B Kumar, Development of the Congress Constitution (New Delhi, AICC, 1929).
almost exclusively, with the relation of India and the
British rulers. At first they took little interest in the
other parts of the Empire. Moreover, there was not yet
available any notion of a 'Commonwealth' in which 'membership'
might be attained. The concept of Dominion Status had not
arrived and the emerging place of self-governing colonies was
quite unclear.

The Origin and the First Congressmen

The official historian of the Congress, Dr. B. Pattabhi
Sitaramayya, has stated that "It is shrouded in mystery as to
who originated this idea of an All-India Congress." In
popular opinion Mr. Allen Octavian Hume, a Britisher, is
regarded as 'the Father of the Congress', but Sareendra Nath
Benerjea equally, if not more, contributed to the birth of
the Indian National Congress. Long before the Congress
S.N. Benerjea had been thinking and working in the direction
of an all-India political organization. Indeed, 'men' and

(3) See U.K. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth
Affairs, Vol. I: Problems of Nationality, 1918-1922 (London,

(4) B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, The History of the Indian
National Congress, 1885-1955 (Madras: the Working Committee

(5) Mr. A.O. Hume, a Scot, was a member of the Indian
Civil Service and served India in various capacities. He
retired from the service in 1932. He was the General Secretary
of the Congress for about 20 years. For further information,
'materials' were ready for a national organisation before the birth of the Congress, and S.M. Banerjoe, no doubt, had (6) a great hand in it. Though Mr. Hume took the initiative, he was not alone in founding the Congress. At a public meeting in Allahabad on 29 April 1885, Hume modestly disclaimed his own single authorship of the idea of the Congress, and said

(6) Mr. S.M. Banerjoe with the assistance of some other Bengalese leaders established the Indian Association on 26 July 1876, with the idea 'that the Association was to be the centre of an all-India movement'. He undertook a special lecturing tour in Northem (1877) and Western and Southern India (1878). It was 'the first successful attempt of its kind at uniting India on a political basis' and H.C. Henry (later Sir Henry) Cotton, a contemporary, in his book 'New India' characterises it as 'the seed of the Indian National Congress'. In the early eighteenies of the last century, Mr. Banerjoe in the columns of his paper 'Bengalee' propagated the idea of a representative assembly of all-India character meeting annually, formulating, and giving expression to the just aspirations of the Indian people and welding them into a political and social whole, so that India might, under the aegis of British rule, take her due rank in the scale of nations.

Under his dynamic leadership two National Conferences were held at Calcutta, the first on (26-29) December 1885, and the 2nd on (25-27) December 1885, just on the eve of 1st session of the Congress at Bombay. The programmes of these Conferences were practically the same as that of the 1st Congress. Resolutions adopted by the 1st Congress were on the basis of the resolutions passed in these Conferences. And Mr. Banerjoe in his autobiography, 'A Nation in Making', writes that he supplied the proceedings of the 1st Conference to Mr. K.D. Trivedi at Telegaon of Bombay at the latter's request. For those and other political activities many people regard him as 'the Grand Father of the Congress'. "No is the Father of our political consciousness", said Sir C.N. Chandra Thevar, an ex-President of the Congress. For further information, see: Bagal, n. 1; Sarvendra Nath Banerjoe, A Nation In Making: Being the reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life (London, 2nd impression, 1926); Bipin Chandra Pal, Memorials of My Life and Times: In the days of My Youth, 1857-1884 (Calcutta, 1852); Atulchandra Gupta, ed., Studies in the Bengali Renaissance (Calcutta, 1925); Anvika Charan Hazarika, Indian National Movement (Madras, 1915); C.P. Andrews and C. Haddorff, The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India (London, 1955); and Joges. C. Bose, Sarvendra Nath Banerjoe: A Snap-Shot (Dacca, 1953).
that "it was the outcome of the labours of a body of cultured men mostly born natives of India who ..., banded themselves together to labour silently for the good of India." Certainly he had advice and blessings from the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and consultation and co-operation of some other Englishmen and Indian leaders.

Several versions of the origin of the Congress have been given by scholars, and there is complete unanimity that the Congress was a response to conditions and developments in India. Towards the end of Lord Lytton's rule, the seventies of the last century, there was great discontent and unrest among the people of India. Mr. Hume "watched and


(8) "Indeed, in initiating the national movement, Mr. Hume", says Sir W. Wedderburn, "took counsel with the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin; and whereas he was himself disposed to begin his reform propaganda on the social side, it was apparently by Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organization, as the matter first to be dealt with." Wedderburn, n. 5, 59-60.

(9) The story of the origin of the Congress is familiar from such accounts as: Sitaramayya, n. 4; Wedderburn, n. 5; Mazumdar, n. 6; Andrews and Mookerjee, n. 6; Annie Besant, How India Wrought for Freedom: The Story of the National Congress told from official records (Madras, 1915); and Audi Alteram Partem: Being Two Letters on certain Aspects of the Indian National Congress Movement / Sir A. Colvin to A.O. Hume, 8 October 1888; and A.O. Hume to Sir A. Colvin, 13 October 1888 (Calcutta, Central Press Co., n.d.).
studied the situation ... and became convinced that some definite action was called for to counter-act the growing unrest." And having considered the problem fully from all sides he "resolved to open a safety valve for this unrest and the Congress was such an outlet."

Although the informal character of the Congress in its early days makes it difficult to speak with definiteness about a coherently formulated policy, there is ample evidence that its first leaders sought no more than greater opportunities of associating the Indian people with the British administration of the country the continuation of which was not questioned. This is as true of those Englishmen such as Hume (and later Wedderburn) who were leading participants in the movement as it is of the prominent Indians such as Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Phirozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji.

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(10) Mazumdar, n. 6, 49.

(11) Sitaramayya, n. 4, 11.

(12) Sir William Wedderburn, like Hume, was a member of the Indian Civil Service, retired from the service in 1887. He was the Chairman of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress since its inception (July 1889) and retained that position to the end of his life (January 1913). He presided over the Congress in 1889, and 1910. For further information, see S.K. Ratcliffe, Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement (London, 1928).

(13) For the Indian patriarchs of the Congress, their political views and services to the Congress, see Sitaramayya, n. 4, 128-95.
Mr. Hume saw the new movement as a "safety valve" whose establishment would help to secure "the future maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire" and "the consolidation of the union between England and India." Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, the first President of the Congress, affirmed that the Congress was based on the principle "that British rule should be permanent and abiding in India." At the 1st Congress he declared that "All that they desired was, that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it." But he emphasized that it should be done "without any strain on the connection which exists between Great Britain and this country." Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, described the Congress as "another stone in the foundation of the stability" of the British Government in India, and exclaimed: "... we are loyal to the backbone ... and that

(14) A.C. Hume to Sir Auckland Colvin, 13 October 1888, Audi Alteram Partem, n. 9, 21.

(15) Wedderburn, n. 5, 47.

(16) From Mr. Bonnerjee's 'Introduction' to Mr. Natesan's 'Indian Politics' (1897). See INC (A & R), Pt. III, Page A.


we do not want to subvert British rule." He believed that the "highest patriotism and best interests" of the Indian people lay in "the continuance of British rule." Pherozeshah Mehta, a loyalist among loyalists, went so far as to declare that "If by loyalty is meant a keen solicitude for the safety and permanency of the Empire ... then we are certainly more loyal than Anglo-Indians ...." We ask for ... reforms" in the administration of the country, he said, because "we are sincerely convinced that these reforms are necessary and essential for securing the stability and permanency of the (22) British Rule." Surendra Nath Banerjea pleaded "for liberty not inconsistent with the British connection but (23) tending to consolidate it." His ideal was to "work ... with unwavering loyalty to the British connection," for he believed

(19) Presidential Address. INC, Report of the 2nd Session, Calcutta, 1886, 52 and 53 respectively.


(22) Speech at the Elphinstone Institute, Bombay, 18 December 1886. Pherozeshah Mehta, Some Unpublished and later Speeches and Writings (J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, ed., Bombay, 1918) 50.

(23) Speech at the Oxford Union, 1890. Banerjea, n. 6, 117.
that "political freedom" could be achieved not "by the supersession of British rule in India, but by broadening its basis, liberalizing its spirit, ennobling its character, and placing it upon the unchangeable foundations of a nation's affections." Budruddin Tyabji agreed with Dadabhaji Naoroji (25) in declaring that they were "loyal to the backbone." These sentiments were expressed with equal clarity by other Congress leaders also. For quite a long period the praise of the British and the expression of loyalty to the Throne and for permanency of the Empire was the regular feature of the Congress sessions, and its first resolution was always the presentation of its sincere and respectful loyalty to the British Throne. When these men spoke of the British Empire, it was primarily the British Empire in India that they had in mind.

Nevertheless, closing years of the last century were also the years when talk began to be heard of 'Imperial Federation' and Indian leaders showed some growing awareness


(26) Even in the eighties of the 19th century the desire for some sort of closer imperial union was in the air. The Imperial Federation League was founded in 1884. The term Imperial Federation was used very loosely in the discussions of this period. It was freely applied to any scheme of government which aimed at preserving the unity of the Empire.

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of a wider connection than that between Britain and India alone. Already in 1895, S.N. Banerjea spoke of their aim as being "not severance ... but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions." Later, in 1902, he used phrases which indicate even more clearly the influence of 'federation' proposals: "... our permanent incorporation into the great confederacy of the British Empire"; and, again, "We have no higher aspiration than that

But despite all the enthusiasm and propaganda of the League the cause of Imperial Federation made little real headway. And in the deliberations of the first Colonial Conference (1887) federation was expressly ruled out as not ripe for discussion. The Colonies were unwilling to surrender themselves to a federation, and desired something more in the nature of an intimate 'alliance'. The League broke up finally in 1893, but the ideal survived the League. Joseph Chamberlain, who was the Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1903, was a convert to it. He was a firm believer in the possibility and desirability of Imperial Federation. He gave a new life and vigour to the federation idea. At the Colonial Conference of 1897 he pleaded that a step should be taken in the direction of Imperial Federation and suggested an Imperial Council. The proposal was rejected by the Colonial Premiers. But the Boer War (1899-1902) blotted out the disappointment of 1897, and in 1902 Chamberlain was more hopeful. At the Colonial Conference of 1902 he pleaded for a 'real Council of the Empire' leading up to the 'political federation of the Empire' which, he said, was "within the limits of possibility." But again none of the Premiers except Richard Sedden of New Zealand approved it. Finally dropped by Chamberlain, the council idea in a modified form was later taken up by Lord Milner and his school of young imperialists. To further this cause, they founded in 1910 The Round Table, a quarterly journal devoted to imperial affairs. For further information, see H. Duncan Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations: A Study of its past and future development' (London, 1920) 55-71 and 100-111.


(28) Presidential Address. INC, Report of the 18th Session, Ahmedabad, 1902, 64.
we should be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing States, of which England is the august mother."

Such expressions, while significant, were nevertheless not common; the main preoccupation of the Congress was with the character of British rule in India without reference to any wider context. And even regarding British rule Congress leaders had no consciousness of any ultimate political ideal for India. The ideal of 'Self-Government' was almost unknown to the Congress.

Home Rule is scarcely the word (said Dadabhai to a representative of Pearson's Weekly); we don't want anything in the least like what the Irish want. Our movement at present is only to obtain for Indians admission to the Legislative Councils as elected representatives and a fair share in the Civil Services. (31)

The first constitution of the Congress, adopted at the close of the last century (1899), defined its object to be "to promote by constitutional means the interests and the

(29) Ibid., 63.

(30) Mr. S.N. Banerjea, it seems, had conceived the ideal of some sort of 'Self-Government' even in the eighties of the 19th century. He described India's goal as 'representative Government' in 1879, 'Imperial Self-Government' in 1882, and 'Self-Government' in 1886. See "Babu Shriarendra Nath Banerjea," The Indian Review (Madras), 9 (October 1908) 769; and Besant, n. 9, 26.

well-being of the people of the Indian Empire." The Congress formulated only a number of specific demands for redress of individual grievances and for isolated reforms. "It timidly avoided all thought of the future", commented Bipin Chandra Pal.

Birth of a New Spirit and Search for an Ideal

The new century introduced a fresh note in the nationalist movement. The international as well as the internal situation in India was, mainly, responsible for bringing about a change in attitudes of many Indians. The defeat of Italy in the Abyssinian War (1896), the reverses in the Boer War suffered by mighty Britain, and the rise of Japan in the East and her victory over Russia (1905) contributed to a psychological change in the Indian mind. The idea of 'invincibility' and 'superiority' of the West was almost shattered. The successful boycott of foreign goods

(32) The constitution was passed, after several previous attempts to do so, at the Lucknow Congress in 1889.
Raj Kumar, p. 2, 6.

(33) Bipin Chandra Pal, Nationality And Empire: A Running Study of some current Indian Problems (Calcutta, 1916) 144.

(34) On the Japanese victory over Russia an Indian newspaper, Hitavadi (Calcutta), commented: "It has hitherto a fixed belief in the East that the Western Powers were unconquerable. In the war in Manchuria, Japan has proved to the East the hollowness of this belief."
Home Department, Bengal Reports on Native Papers, 1905, 411, National Archives, New Delhi.
by the Chinese, the struggle of the Russian masses against the all powerful Tzar, and the Irish struggle for independence (35) against the British gave further inspiration to the Indian people. The prevalence of famine conditions and widespread plague followed by a policy of stern repression and terror by the Indian Government created a favourable climate in the country for spreading of national consciousness and the rise of anti-Western feelings among the Indian people. In such circumstances, when the people were showing increasing signs of self-consciousness, Lord Curzon's attempt to suppress the growing national consciousness, his unsympathetic and reactionary policy and finally, in the face of great opposition, his partition of Bengal (1905) "broke the back of loyal India (36) and roused a new spirit in the Nation."

From these and other various causes a great change had come over India in the early years of the present century.

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(35) Some Indians think that "the doctrine of passive resistance ... adopted as a political programme by Arthur Griffith in 1900, the further development of it by the organization known as Sinn Fein founded in 1905" had a great impact on Indian Nationalists. They say that "there is some evidence to show that there was a close contact between the nationalist and revolutionary movements in India and Ireland."
Gupta, n. 6, 201-2.

Titelk's "'No rent' campaign, during the severe famine in 1896, was borrowed from the Irish Land League," writes Valentine Chirol, India (London, 1926, 4th impression, 1950) 101.

(36) Sitaramayya, n. 4, 111. A section of the Indian Muslims was, however, happy over the partition of Bengal.
The old faith of the Indian people in British justice and fairplay received a great shock at the hands of Lord Curzon. Many people began to doubt the blessings of the British rule and an 'advanced' section among them, popularly known as (37) Extremists or Nationalists, questioned the very basis of British rule in India. The Moderates themselves may rarely have changed their opinions radically but they were now joined by new recruits to political activity, and the latter had little confidence in either the goals or the methods of (38) the former. A "new generation and a new temper very different (39) from its founders! had invaded the Congress." Loyalty, unlike the early Congressmen, was not the keynote of these Nationalists. Men like Bipin Chandra Pal frankly and openly ridiculed

(37) There were now two groups in the Congress, known as Moderates and Extremists in the language then in vogue. The 'advanced' group, mostly young men, were called Extremists or Nationalists, sometimes the group was referred to as the New Party or the New Movement. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai were prominent leaders of this group.

The 'liberal' group, mostly early Congressmen, were called Moderates or Liberals. Phrozeshah Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjee, D.E. Wacha, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose were among the top leaders of this group. Dadabhai Naoroji, though a liberal by temperament, was greatly respected by both the groups. He was quite old and lived in England. It was believed that he belonged to neither group.

(38) Nationalists characterized constitutional agitation of the Moderates as 'Political Mendicancy' or 'begging'. The Nationalists believed that 'self-help and self-sacrifice' and not 'agitation' was a test of true patriotism. They preached 'passive resistance'.

(39) Chirol, n. 35, 105.
the Moderates for their loyalty to British rule: "... when we proclaim our so-called loyalty to the British Government here or to the British throne in England - we utter a lie, though only a white lie." Nationalists were little interested in "reforms", their demand was for "Re-form". They demanded a declaration of India's ultimate ideal from the Congress, and 'autonomy' was the true ideal, they thought. And as a result of this Nationalist challenge the emphasis of the Congress began to shift from specific demands and isolated reforms to the fundamental question of India's ultimate ideal.

Dadabhai Naoroji realized that the future could not be a continuance of the past. He suggested "self-government under British paramountcy" as the ideal for India and earnestly pressed upon the Indian people "to claim unceasingly their birth-right ... of self-government." Even the Moderates felt the pressure to demand something more than mere Indian association with British rule. Sir Henry Cotton at the 20th Congress sought to combine the attainment of autonomous self-government with continued adherence to the British Empire,


(41) Ibid., 55(b).

for he believed that "Autonomy is the keynote of England's true relations with her great Colonies" and that this was "the keynote also of India's destiny....the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing Colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain." Gopal Krishna Gokhale's Servants of India Society, founded in 1906, had as its aim (44) the achievement of "Self-Government within the Empire", and this, Gokhale pleaded, should be "the goal of the Congress", because he believed that "our destinies are now linked with those of England" and, therefore, "whatever advance we seek must be within Empire itself." And subsequently, the extension of "the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies" to India was adopted as its goal (45) by the Congress in 1906. The President of the Session, Dadabhai Naoroji, defined it as "Self-Government" or Swaraj (46) like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." Though


(47) Presidential Address. Ibid., 21.
Dadabhai Naoroji, like Gokhale, wanted 'self-government within the Empire', his definition at the Calcutta Congress (1906) was quite unclear. It was a nebulous phrase, perhaps, intentionally used to reconcile both the groups of the Congress. Differences quickly developed over the meanings of the Congress objective and methods of attaining it. Moderates like Gokhale firmly believed that the aspiration of the Indian people "to be in their own country what other peoples are in theirs" and to see India "take her proper place among the great nations of the world, politically .... can, in its essence and its reality, be realized within this [British] Empire"; and the reason of this optimism was the inspiration they got from developments in other parts of the Empire: "The cases of the French in Canada and the Boers in South Africa showed that there is room in the Empire for a self-respecting India."

(48) The phrase 'the United Kingdom or the Colonies' was legally not correct, because 'Colonies' were, in no way, equal to the United Kingdom in 1906. The word 'Swaraj' made the objective still more ambiguous.

(49) While the Moderates emphasized on the phrase 'self-government like that of the Colonies', the Nationalists emphasized on 'Swaraj' and the phrase 'Self-government like that of the United Kingdom' and generally meant thereby 'Independence'. For the views of the extreme wing of the Nationalist Party, see Pal, n. 40, 149-79.

Nationalists did not share this optimism. They could not see how self-government could possibly be compatible with any kind of association with the Empire. "Colonial Self-Government" seemed to be something very far short of "complete and international autonomy." They did not accept the Moderates' view that independence was impossible and so an impracticable ideal. Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, in a series of five lectures in Madras in 1907, tried to expose the hollowness of the ideal of colonial self-government and advocated the ideal of complete independence outside the British Empire. He explained that "self-government within the Empire ... would mean ... either no real self-government for us or no real overlordship for England", and that neither India would be satisfied with a shadowy self-government nor England with a shadowy overlordship. "And, therefore, no compromise is possible under such conditions between self-government in India and the overlordship of England." He thought that England would not willingly concede real self-government to India because that would adversely affect England's position in the Empire.

(51) Aurobindo Ghose's article in Bande Mataram (Calcutta), 8 December 1907. See Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought, 1893-1908 (Calcutta, 1968) 175.

(52) Public Speech. Pal, n. 40, 162.
If India, with her immense natural resources, with her teeming population, with her labouring millions ... has real self-government within the Empire ... as Australia has, as Canada has, as England has herself today ... the Empire would cease to be British. It would be an Indian Empire, and the alliance between England and India would be absolutely an unequal alliance. ... that would exactly be the relation as co-partners in a co-British or anti-British Empire of the future. (53)

And, therefore, if England were forced to concede real self-government to the Indian people, he said, she would prefer to have us like the Japanese as an ally, and no longer as a co-partner.

Because we are bound to be the pre-dominant partner in this imperial firm. Therefore, no sane English politician or publicist (he argued) can ever contemplate with seriousness the possibility of a self-governing India, like the self-governing Colonies, forming a vital and organic part of the British Empire.

And "therefore", Mr. Pal concluded, "this ideal of self-government within the Empire ... is a more impracticable thing than even our ideal of Swaraj."

Aurobindo Ghose pleaded not "to acquiesce in an ideal of colonial self-government." Men like Pal and Ghose could

(53) Ibid., 165-6.

The words underlined are not in the text of the speech as printed in Pal, n. 40, they do, however, appear in the text cited in Valentine Chipli, Indian Unrest (London, 1910) 14.

(54) Pal, n. 40, 166 and 167 respectively.

(55) Article in Bande Mataram, 11 December 1907. See Mukherjee and Mukherjee, n. 51, 181.
see, not unnaturally, no Commonwealth in the Empire of the early 20th century. Others like B.C. Tilak were perhaps less hostile; Tilak at least seems to have been less preoccupied with a complete breakway from the Empire than with equality between the black and the white and the methods by which immediate political advance could be gained. In the Kooard he explained: "The Congress is not interested in the breakdown of the British Empire. The discrimination between the black and the white ... should cease so that the black might feel for the Empire what the white feels." Again in 1907, he explained the aim of his party to Mr. Henry O. Hovinon, correspondent of the [Manchester Guardian]:

It is not by our purpose but by our methods only that our party has earned the name of Extremist. Certainly, there is a very small party (57) which talks about abolishing the British rule at once and completely. That does not concern us; it is much too far in the future. Unorganised, disarmed and still disunited, we should not have a chance of checking the British suzerainty .... Our object is to obtain eventually a large share in the administration of our country. Our remote ideal is a confederacy of Indian provinces possessing colonial self-Government, with all imperial questions set apart for the Central Government in England. (55)


(57) Revolutionary and anarchists. After the partition of Bengal revolutionaries' activities increased in Bengal.

(58) About the methods Mr. Tilak said: "The immediate question for us is how we are to bring pressure on this bureaucracy, in which we have no effective representation .... It is"
But none of the Nationalists was happy about the
Moderates' insistence to describe the goal as merely the
attainment of "Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the
self-governing members of the British Empire" and making its

only in our answer to this question that we differ from the
so-called Moderates. They still hope to influence public
opinion in England by sending deputations ... and pleading
the justice of our cause ... we Extremists have determined
on other methods. It is a matter of temperament and the
younger men are with us. Our motto is 'Self-reliance, not
Mendicancy.'

Henry W. Nevins, New Spirit in India (London,

But there are persons who hold a different view.
They believe that Tilak was not in favour of self-government
within the Empire, but advocated complete independence. One
of his biographers, Mr. D.V. Tahmankar, says: "More than once
he [Tilak] himself had construed Swaraj or self-government
as complete independence - an independent sovereign republic
of India ...." - D.V. Tahmankar, Lokmanya Tilak (London, 1956)
152. At the Nationalist Conference at Poona on 24 December
1907 he is reported to have said: "... the Nationalists want
Independence [and not] self-government on Colonial lines." -
Bombay, Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement
in India, Vol. II, 1885-1920 (Bombay, 1953) 145.

The fact seems to be that Tilak himself was quite
willing to accept self-government within the Empire, but in
order to please the extreme wing of his party he sometimes
talked of complete independence. In personal interviews with
the author Dr. R.P. Paranjoya and Tilak's two grandsons -
J.S. Tilak and G.V. Ketkar (daughter's son) - supported the
view that B.G. Tilak did not want to break away from the
Empire. Sir Valentine Chirol, a contemporary and an adversary
of B.G. Tilak, also has accepted this view. See Chirol, n. 53.

(59) This was the form used by the Convention of the
Moderates at Surat after the split in the Congress. Acceptance
of this creed in writing was made on the condition for entry
in the Convention. Bombay, n. 55, 55.
acceptance essential to the membership of the Congress. This issue was an important factor in the great split of 1907 at Surat which drove the Extremists out of the Congress and into the bitterness of the wilderness for nearly 9 years. The Moderates in control asserted their views in the first Article of the new Congress Constitution:

The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration....

(60) Before the actual split, the deletion of the adjective 'self-governing' and the insertion of the word 'ultimate' to describe the Congress goal - changes made in Gokhale's draft constitution - naturally only made matters worse. Nationalists refused to sign the creed and went out of the Convention and the Congress. Lajpat Rai signed the creed, joined the Convention and remained in the Congress. Bipin Chandra Pal was not present at the Surat Congress. And according to his biographers, G.P. Pradhan and A.K. Bhagwat, Mr. Tilak was willing to sign the creed and join the Convention, but Aurobindo Ghose opposed it, and so the Nationalists including Tilak went out of the Congress. For further information on Surat split, see ibid., 145-76; or Mazumdar, n. 6, Appendix B.

(61) And the Article II says: "Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in the Article I of this Constitution...."

Raj Kumar, n. 2, 14-15.

The Constitution was adopted at the meeting of the Convention Committee at Allahabad on the 18th and 19th of April 1908, and was accepted by the Congress in December 1908 at its Madras Session.
If loyalty and trust in the British connection led the dominant section of Congress in the years before 1916 to believe that "no higher aim" than self-government within the British Empire could be placed before India by any "sensible, practical patriot and statesman," the same features were even more prominent in the Muslim League. The origins of the idea of such a movement are well known. The Partition of Bengal had given encouragement to Muslim energies and the prospect of constitutional reforms (revealed by Lord Morley) acted as an incentive and a challenge to organize. Failure to do so might mean that Muslim interests would be overlooked and rejected.


(63) On the origins of the Muslim League, see: Home Department Public Proceedings, B, August 1902, No. 45, National Archives, New Delhi; Mohammad Noman, Muslim India: Rise and Growth of the All India Muslim League (Allahabad, 1942); Lal Bahadur, The Muslim League: Its History, Activities and Achievements (Agra, 1954); and Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims: A Political History, 1858-1947 (Bombay, 1969).

(64) In introducing the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, in August 1906, Mr. John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, talked of appointing a committee for exploring the possibility of reforms in the Indian administration. And the extension of the representative element in the Council was to be one of the reforms, he said. For the text of his speech, see John Morley, Speeches on Indian Affairs (Madras, n.d.) 1-34.

(65) "Nobody can dispute," says Noman, "that if Simla deputation had not been organised and as a consequence of it the Muslim League had not come into existence the interest of the Muslims would have been always at the mercy of those who would have never cared to represent them."

Noman, n. 63, 96.
The leaders of Muslim opinion appealed to the authorities for recognition and encouragement and found a ready reception, substantially for the reason that the authorities were not at all unwilling to see the development of a body which might offset growing nationalist pressures or at least prevent the recruitment of the Muslims into such a movement. It is a matter for little wonder, therefore, that the Muslim League protests of loyalty were loud and insistent. And naturally the first objective of the All India Muslim League, founded on 30 December 1906 at Dacca, was declared to be "To promote, among Muslims of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government ..."

From the beginning the Muslim League was 'loyalist' of a higher variety than the one found in the Congress before 1900. They spoke frankly of the desirability of continuing British rule rather than any kind of self-government. Their chief spokesmen, His Highness the Aga Khan, declared: "... that neither now [in 1907] nor in the perceptible future is Swaraj possible of attainment"; and even if it were possible

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(67) Even the protection and advancement of "the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India" occupied the second place in the objectives of the Muslim League. Home Department Public Proceedings, A., February 1907, Nos. 71-74, p. 7.

The 'objectives' resolved at the Dacca meeting were subsequently confirmed by the Muslim League and were finally embodied in its constitution.
it was undesirable because he believed that only British rule "can preserve us from internal anarchy and unsympathetic foreign domination"; and therefore he asked Indian Muslims to bend all their "energies to making that rule strong in its hold upon the imagination and affection of the people of India." Nawab Vigar-ul-Mulk, one of the founders of the League, advised Indian Muslims to "consider themselves as a British army ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the British Crown" and to regard loyalty to "the British rule" as their "national duty." Mr. Ameer Ali, President of the London Branch of the Muslim League, believed that the British rule "is a vital necessity" for India. "If the British were ... to withdraw from India," he wrote, "either anarchy or another foreign domination" would be the fate of India. These sentiments of loyalty were expressed also by other leaders of the League.

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(68) Agha Khan to the President of Deccan Muslim League, 1908, The Indian Review, 9 (October 1908) 808. His Highness the Agha Khan was the leader of the famous 'Simla Deputation' and was, subsequently, elected as the Permanent President of the Muslim League.

(69) Speech on the aims and objects of the Muslim League at a students' gathering, Aligarh, 1907. Tufail Ahmad, Mussalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil, 363-4, cited in Ram Gopal, n. 63, 101-2. Nawab Mushtaq Husain Vigar-ul-Mulk convened and presided over the famous Dacca meeting of the 30th December 1906.

(70) Ameer Ali, "The Unrest in India - its meaning," The Nineteenth Century and After (London), 61 (June 1907) 875.
One of the reasons of their loyalty and opposition to self-government was, it seems, that they saw British rule not simply as a generally beneficent influence but as the only safeguard against Hindu domination. Fear of British might is regarded by many as another reason of their loyalty to the British. But whatever be the reasons, "the loyalty of the League to the British Crown was an undisputed fact." And many people criticized Muslim Leaguers "as allies, as Mamelukes" of the British regime.

By accepting 'separate electorate' for Muslims in the Morley-Minto Reforms (1909), the British pleased the League and could maintain their confidence, but this happy friendship between the two could not have a smooth sailing for long. The first obstacle was the annulment of the Partition of Bengal (December 1911). The Congress rejoiced over it. But the League felt as if it were betrayed; the foundation of its

(71) "God forbid, if the British rule disappears from India, Hindus will lord over it; and we will be in constant danger of our life, property and honour. The only way for the Muslims to escape this danger is to help in the continuance of the British rule," said Nawab Vigar-ul-Mulk. Ahmed, n. 69, 365-4, cited in Ram Gopal, n. 63, 101.

(72) See Lal Bahadur, n. 63, 67.

(73) Noman, n. 63, 115.

(74) The Modern Review (Calcutta), 1 (June 1907) 587. (Also cited in Lal Bahadur, n. 65, 56.)

'Mamelukes' means slaves.
loyalty could not remain unshaken. Despite the shock its leaders still held the view: "The 'Swaraj' of the Congress is fatal to the Mussalmans. The disappearance of the British Government from or even any decrease of its influence in India would be a calamity for us." But the annulment was not the only unhappy thing to them. The war between Italy and Turkey, events in Persia, the Balkan War, the question of the proposed Muslim University and the refusal of the Secretary of State for India to receive a deputation of the League (Mr. Mohamed Ali and Mr. Wazir Hassan) created feelings of bitterness against the British in the Muslim mind. Under the stress of these and other causes Indian Mussalmans were, then, moving "away from the traditional loyalty to the British." The Muslim League leaders began to think of 'self-government', and after long considerations the attainment "under the aegis of..."

(75) After the announcement of the modification of the partition of Bengal, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk declared: "So far as the Mussalmans are concerned ... this re-union is generally disliked." He explained that "Loyalty is an attribute and not the thing itself. It must have something else for its foundation and cannot evidently remain unshaken while the foundation receives a shock."

The Aligarh Institute Gazette, 10 January 1912, 7 and 86 respectively, cited in Lal Bahadur, n. 63, 68 and 87 respectively.


(77) See: The Indian Review, 15 (October 1912) 833-7; also Noman, n. 63, 124-32.

(78) Noman, n. 63, 129.
the British Crown of a system of self-government suitable to India" was adopted as one of its aims by the All India Muslim League in March 1913; it was, however, made subject to the promotion and maintenance of "loyalty towards the British Crown," which still continued to be the first objective of the League. And thus, the objective of 'self-government' does not mean disloyalty to the British. In December 1913, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla unequivocally declared that "there is not even the shadow of disloyalty or sedition amongst the Mussulmans of India," and reiterated that the policy of the Muslim League "towards the British Government should be one of unswerving loyalty."

THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE RAPPROCHEMENT AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The Rapprochement

After the Surat split and the adoption of a new constitution embodying colonial self-government as its creed,

(79) Resolution, 6th League Session, Lucknow, March 1913. An amendment to substitute "self-government on colonial lines" for "self-government suitable to India," moved by Mr. Mazzhar-ul-Haque and supported by Mr. M.A. Jinnah, was lost, and the resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority. The Bombay Chronicle, 24 March 1913, 8.

(80) Presidential Address, 7th League Session, Agra, December 1913. The Indian Review, 15 (January 1914) 47 and 41 respectively.
the Congress passed into hands of the Moderates. And the leaders of the Nationalists being out of politics and the Morley-Minto Reforms being introduced in 1909, there was a lull in Congress activities. Subsequently Lord Hardinge's conciliatory policy, his support for Provincial Autonomy and finally the modification of the Partition of Bengal restored Congress' faith in British justice and fairplay. Praise of the British and emphasis on the British connection of the variety found in pre-1900 began to be heard again in the Congress sessions. Surendra Nath Banerjea expressed the buoyant hope that India would form "part and parcel of the self-governing states of a great, free and federated Empire, rejoicing in our indissoluble connection with England and in the enjoyment of the inestimable blessing of new-born freedom." Amvika Charan

(81) Lala Lajpat Rai signed the 'creed' at Surat (1907) and joined the Moderates. Lokamanya Tilak, soon after, was sentenced to six years imprisonment for sedition and sent to Mandalay in 1908. Bipin Chandra Pal, after his release from jail, went to England in 1908 and remained there for 5 years. And during his stay in England he gave up extremist politics and became a strong supporter of the British connection. Aurobindo Ghose was forced into exile and settled in French Pondicherry in 1910.

(82) The Viceroy Lord Hardinge, in his Despatch of 25 August 1911. to the Secretary of State for India, recommended, inter alia, 'Provincial Autonomy' and the modification of the Partition of Bengal. For the text of the Despatch, see Panchanandas Mukherji, comp. & ed., Indian Constitutional Documents, 1600-1918 (Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1918) 1, 453-66.

(83) Speech on the resolution thanking the Government for annulling the Partition of Bengal. INC, Report of the 26th Session, Calcutta, 1911, 41.
Mazumdar saw "every heart in India ... beating in unison
with reverence and devotion to the British Throne and over-
flowing with revived confidence and gratitude towards British
statesmanship..."

Men like R.N. Mudholkar regarded British
rule as "a Providential dispensation, destined to constitute
the material, moral and political elevation" of India.
Thus, after the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, the
Congress was moving nearer to and the Muslim League away from
the Government and, soon after, both met half-way.

While the Muslim community was feeling unhappy over the
Government policy and the international situation, Congress' sympathy with Turkey in her misfortune produced a remarkable
effect on the League. And as a result of these and other
factors the attitude of the League leaders towards the Congress
changed and "a consciousness dawned upon them for the cultivation of a speedy friendliness with it." The adoption of 'self-
government under the aegis of the British Crown' by the League
as its goal narrowed still further the gulf between the two.
And by the end of 1918, the League, it seems, became conscious
that the political future of the country depended on the

(84) Ibid., 45.

(86) Mudholkar's Presidential Address. INC, Report of
the 27th Session, Bankipur, 1912, 14.

(86) Lal Bahadur, n. 63, 89.
harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities (87)
in the country. The Congress warmly appreciated this change
in the League's attitude and heartily welcomed the idea of
making "every endeavour to find a modus operandi for joint
and concerted action on all questions of national good." No
doubt there were still differences between the Congress and
the League on the questions of variety and content of 'self-
(88)
government' that they had adopted as their goal, but there
was complete unanimity that the self-governing India shall
remain within the Empire. With this unanimity in their
outlook top leaders of both parties started negotiations to

(87) The President of the 7th Session of the League,
Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, made a conciliatory speech. He
referred to the Hindu community as the elder brother and
advised the Muslims to extend brotherly affection and sincere
regard towards the elder brother. Resolution was also passed
to this effect. See The Indian Review, 15 (January 1914) 41-2.

(88) Resolution, 28th Session, Karachi, 1913. INC (A & R),
Pt. II, 159.

(89) While the President of the 6th Session of the
League (March 1913), Mr. Muhammad Shafi, condemned the ideal
of colonial self-government as "inadmissible as well as
politically unsound", the President of the 7th Session (December
1913), Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, preferred it as a "clear and
definite" ideal, and the League's ideal of "self-government
suitable to India" seemed to him "vague and indefinite." See
The Bombay Chronicle, 24 March 1913, 8; and 51 December 1913, 8
respectively. The President of the 28th Congress (December
1913), Nawab Syed Mohammed, pointed out that the term colonial
form of Government was "sufficiently elastic" and held that
both the ideal of the Congress and the League were "identical",
and there was no "substantial difference in them, but only a
difference of language." See INC, Report of the 28th Session,
Karachi, 1913, 37.
arrive at some agreement on the type of self-government for India. The first step towards an effective rapprochement was, however, not taken until December 1915 when the Congress and the League simultaneously held their sessions in Bombay and resolved to frame a scheme of reforms, with mutual consultation, to be put up jointly before the Government. Subsequently, a reform scheme firmly based on the principle of 'self-government within the Empire', and popularly known as the Congress-League Scheme, was jointly prepared. And having received the final approval of the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League in December 1916, the Scheme became the common demand of the Indian people.

The War and the Home Rule Movement

In 1914, when the Congress and the League were striving for political unity in their demands, and both firmly loyal to the British, the war broke out in Europe. India true to her devotion to the British connection stood up as one man in defence of the Empire and contributed loyally towards its costs in man and money. It was the greatest proof of her

(90) Alike the Congress and the League passed resolutions for framing a scheme of reforms with mutual consultations. For the text of the resolution, see The Indian Review, 17 (January 1916) 65.

(91) For the text of the Congress-League Scheme, see Sitaramayya, n. 4, Appendix II.
"loyalty and devotion to the Throne." Both the Congress and the League unequivocally expressed their genuine loyalty to the British connection. The Congress, in 1914, unanimously conveyed to the British people "its profound devotion to the Throne, its unswerving allegiance to the British connection, and its firm resolve to stand by the Empire, at all hazards and at all costs," and it reassured the King-Emperor of its 'deep loyalty' and 'unswerving allegiance to the British connection' in 1915 and 1916. Throughout the war, Congress remained firm in its steadfast devotion to the British Throne. The Muslim League also, despite the fact that Turkey was in the Opposition Camp in the war, stood firm in its loyalty. On 4 November 1914, by expressing "the deep-rooted loyalty and sincere devotion of the Mussalmans of India to the British Crown" and, further, assuring the Government "that the participation of Turkey in the present war does not and cannot


(94) Loyalty resolutions, identical to the one passed in 1914, were adopted at the 30th Session (1915) and 31st Session (1916). For the text of the resolutions, see ibid., Pt. II, 172 and 173 respectively.
affect that loyalty and devotion in the least degree", the League made its attitude quite clear. And like the Congress, it repeated the assurance of its loyal adhesion to the Imperial cause and remained true to its loyalty throughout the war.

But loyalty to the British connection was, no longer, the only keynote of the Congress and the League. The war united them in their demand for "self-government" and in their "dissatisfaction with the prevailing political conditions in India." Though colonial self-government had been the ideal of the Congress since 1906, the war gave a new urgency, and leaders like Bhupendra Nath Basu asked the Indian people to throw away their lethargy and bind their "waist-cloth on and head forward to" that goal. The Congress asked the British Government that "the time has arrived to introduce further

(95) On 3 November 1914 an Anglo-French squadron bombarded the Dardanelles, and the next day the Council of the AIML passed a resolution expressing its loyalty to the British. Public meetings of Muslims were held throughout the country "to express unswerving loyalty to the British Throne."

The Bombay Chronicle, 5 November 1914, 7-8.

(96) Loyalty resolution was passed by the League at the 8th Session (1915) and 9th Session (1916). See ibid., 1 January 1916, 10; and 1 January 1917, 7, respectively.

(97) Lajpat Rai, n. 92, 49.

and substantial measures of reform towards the attainment" (99) of that goal. After the entry of Mrs. Annie Besant into Indian politics and the release of Mr. Tilak in 1914, the demand for self-government became very powerful. They organized the Home Rule movement for making the ideal of Home Rule for India more popular and its acceptance by the British Government. Ex-Nationalists like B.C. Pal, and many Congress and League leaders like M.A. Jinnah, joined the movement. The movement (100) was started outside but as an auxiliary to the Congress. It became, however, a part and parcel of the Congress in December 1916 when Tilak and other Nationalists rejoined the Congress. The fathers of the Home Rule movement made it perfectly clear that they wanted self-government, which they called Home Rule, within the Empire. The Congress creed of colonial self-government was fully accepted by the Home Rulers. Thus,

(99) Resolution. Ibid., 115.

(100) Mrs. Besant was the first to popularize the cry of 'Home Rule'. She was not satisfied with the tardy way in which Congress affairs were progressing. The formation of a 'Home Rule for India League' was discussed in 1915 but was put off to see if the Congress of the year would take up work directly for Self-Government. Her efforts for the re-entry of the Nationalists in the Congress having failed at the Bombay Session (1915), the first Home Rule League was formed by Lekamanya Tilak in Maharashtra on 25 April 1916. Mrs. Besant organized an Auxiliary Home Rule League in London on 12 June 1916. In India her Home Rule League was founded in Madras on 1 September 1916. And to distinguish hers from that of Tilak, Mrs. Besant christened the latter the All-India Home Rule League in 1917. For further information, see Sitaramayya, n. 4, 212-4.
there was complete unanimity on India's connection with the British Empire among all the three organizations - the Congress, the League and the Home Rule Movement. Not only the Moderates like Basu, Gokhale, and S.P. Sinha in the Congress, but also Home Rulers and Nationalists like Mrs. Besant, Tilek, and B.C. Pal advocated the cause of India's connection with the Empire. For propagating the ideal of self-government Mrs. Besant started a daily, New India, and a weekly, the Commonweal. Mrs. Besant was a sincere advocate of "Self-Government for India - to use the Congress phrase, 'Self-Government on Colonial lines'", for she believed that "the world's good lies in the close union on equal terms of India and Great Britain." Bipin Chandra Pal, champion of complete independence in 1905-7, was now one of the greatest advocates of India's connection with the Empire. He started a monthly journal in English, the Hindu Review, in 1913 and "The continuance of the British connection through the gradual building up of a federal constitution for the present ... British Empire" was declared to be one of the objects of the journal. In January 1916, he wrote:

If God were to appear before me with the gift of absolute but isolated sovereign independence for India in his right hand, and of an equal co-partnership with Great Britain and her Colonies

(101) New India (Madras), 5 August (evening) 1914, 6.
(102) Gupta, n. 6, 571.
in the present association called the British Empire, in his left hand, I would unhesitatingly say, 'Father, give us the gift in your left hand'. (103)

Mr. Pal discarded the ideal of complete independence because, now, he believed that "The empire-idea is a higher social generalization than the nation-idea", and that, like the family and the tribal relations, "the imperial relation is also an organic relation." But he pleaded for the reconstruction of the British Empire into a real federation in which India shall be an equal co-partner with Great Britain. In the context of political forces working in the world, he said:

... the salvation of the Empire, the salvation of India, the salvation of humanity, depends upon first, the preservation of the British connection with India, second, the building up of a powerful federation in which India shall be a partner and an equal partner with other partners in the British empire, and thirdly, conceding to India all the rights that will make India a power and not a weakness of the Empire to which she belongs. (105)

(103) Mr. Pal expressed this view in 1911 on the eve of his return from England to India. He reiterated it in January 1916.


(105) Ibid., 50.

Mr. Pal thought that political forces were concentrating in three directions and after the war there would likely to be a 'federation of the white races', a 'federation of yellow races', and, perhaps, a 'federation of the Islamic peoples' also. For further information, see Ibid., 47-50.
Mr. Tilak, soon after his release in June 1914, assured the British Government that, like the Irish Home-Rulers, they were trying in India "for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government" and, further, he asked the Indian people "to support and assist His Majesty's Government" in the war. Through his public speeches and writings on 'Home Rule', during the subsequent years, Tilak made it perfectly clear that he and his Home Rule movement "never meant to subvert the British sovereignty .... [and] never entertained the idea of severing the British connection." He categorically declared, "We are thoroughly loyal to ... His Majesty's empire." The Muslim League also pressed the demand of self-government. Mr. NA扎har-ul-Haque, while admitting that the union between India and England was for good of both and that "we cannot do without the comradeship and guidance of England for a long time to come," emphatically declared that India could not be contented unless and until she "has got a national Government and is governed for the greatest good of the Indian people."

(106) Tilak's open letter to His Majesty the King and His Government, 27 August 1914. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches (Madras, Ganesh, enlarged edition, 1919) 392 and 393 respectively.

(107) Speech on the loyalty resolution at the Provincial Conference at Belgaum, April 1916. Ibid., 406.

(108) AML, Presidential Address by NA扎har-ul-Haque, 1915 Session, Bombay, 11 and 16 respectively.
Thus, it can safely be said that while none was happy with the prevailing political conditions in India, self-government within the Empire was acceptable to all. "Even those who stand for complete independence would be glad to have self-government within the Empire," commented Lajpat Rai, "if that were promised in the near future." Swaraj, Self-Government and Home Rule were, now, synonymous terms in Indian politics; all the three meant Colonial Self-Government or Self-Government within the British Empire.

Demand for Equal Partnership in the Empire

The war not only gave an impetus to India's demands for self-government, it also made her leaders more conscious about developments in the Empire outside India. India's participation, along with self-governing Dominions of the Empire, in the war had a great psychological effect on the Indian mind. With 'obligations' must go 'rights' and 'status', that became the demand of India. India, contributing so much

(109) Lajpat Rai, n. 92, 187.

(110) Unlike 1907, now, there was no controversy on the interpretation of 'Swaraj'. The leader of the Nationalists, Mr. Tilak, accepted that "It is all the same in three different names." Leaders of the Muslim League also used the word as synonymous. For speeches of the Congress and the League leaders on 'Self-Government' resolution at Lucknow Sessions, 1916, see The Indian Review, 18 (January 1917) 25-45.
to the defence of the Empire, had no status in it; that position should not remain unchanged, that was the demand of the Indian people. "The ideal that we must pursue, and which the Congress has set before itself," declared Bhupendra Nath Basu, "is that of co-ordination and comradeship, of a joint partnership on equal terms." The Congress pleaded for "the recognition of India as a component part of a federated Empire, in the full and the free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status."

The idea of readjustment of the Empire was in the air, not only in India, but all the world over. The heart of the Empire was set upon it. And there was a widespread feeling in India that Dominions would be associated with Britain in ruling over India. The idea was quite repulsive to India; her leaders raised a strong voice against it and demanded equal partnership and representation with the Dominions in the Empire. In September 1915, on the motion of Mr. Muhammad Shafi,


(112) Resolution. Ibid., 98.

(113) The war gave an impetus to the idea of Imperial Federation, and co-operation between the Dominions and Britain in the war raised hopes that a constitutional convention to be assembled afterwards would effect consolidation in some form. Specially Mr. Lielan Curiis and his friends were actively propagating the idea.
an unanimous demand was made in the Imperial Legislative Council that "India should, in future, be officially represented in the Imperial Conference." Surendra Nath Banerjea wanted that "the representation should be popular and not an official one." The Congress endorsed the demand, but urged that "the persons selected to take part in the Conference on behalf of India should be two members at least to be elected by the elected members of the Imperial Council." And again, the nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council in their memorandum of Reforms of October 1916, demanded that India "should no longer occupy a position of subordination but one of comradeship" and further "In any scheme of Imperial Federation, India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of

(114) The Bombay Chronicle, 23 September 1915, 8. Mr. Shafi was a leader of the Muslim League and presided over its 6th Session, Lucknow, 1913. The resolution was supported among others by S.N. Banerjea, M.M. Malaviya, C.H. Setalvad, Raja Kusalpal Singh and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, and was accepted by the Council and the Viceroy.

(115) Speech in support of Shafi's resolution. Ibid., 9.

the Self-Governing Dominions."

By the end of 1916, the demand for India's equal partnership with that of Dominions in the Empire became quite important. 'Equal partnership' was being regarded as an essential part of the 'Self-Government within the Empire' by the Indian leaders. The ideal of 'Self-Government' alone could no longer satisfy them. The Home Rulers like Mrs. Besant and B.C. Pal had been emphasizing 'equal partnership' since the beginning of the war. Now it became a common demand of the Indian people. It was embodied in the Congress-League Scheme, and strongly emphasized by the leaders of both the Congress and the League. The Congress President, Babu Amrika Charen Mazumdar, declared that India "must be freely admitted into the partnership and given a free constitution like that of the self-governing dominions and a fair representation in the federal council along with the colonies." Mr. M.A. Jinnah

(117) The Memorandum submitted to H.E. the Viceroy by nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council with regard to post-war reforms. See Sitaramayya, n. 4; Appendix I, iii and v respectively.

In all there were 27 non-official members, of whom two were Anglo-Indians, who were not consulted for obvious reasons, and three were away. Three Indians refused to sign. Most of the signatories were Congressmen and Muslim Leaguers. D.E. Wacha, Bhupendra Nath Basu, M.M. Malaviya, Taj Bahadur Sapru, Mazhar-ul-Haque, Ibrahim Rahimtulla, Mohamed Ali Mohamed and M.A. Jinnah were among them.

strongly declared that India "wishes no longer to continue
as the subject race or ... 'the trusty dependent', but claims
(119)
to be an equal partner with other members of the Empire." He
made it perfectly clear that India would never allow herself
to be ruled and to be governed by the colonies and said that
"With the restoration of peace ... India will have to be
granted her birthright as a free, responsible and equal member
(120)
of the British Empire."

Now the Congress unanimously requested His Majesty
the King-Emperor for "a proclamation announcing that it is the
aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government
on India at an early date" and demanded that "a definite step
should be taken towards self-government" by granting the reform
contained in the Congress-League Scheme, and that "in the
re-construction of the Empire India shall be lifted from the
position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the
(121)
Empire with the self-governing Dominions." This was demanded
(122)
by the League also. And thus, at the close of 1916, with the

(119) Presidential Address, Bombay Provincial Conference,
Ahmedabad, 21 October 1916. The Indian Review, 17 (November
1916) 796.

(120) Presidential Address, 9th League Session, Lucknow,
1916. The Bombay Chronicle, 1 January 1917, 6.

(121) Resolution. INC, Report of the 51st Session,

(122) Similar resolution was passed by the League at its
9th Session, Lucknow, 1916. See The Bombay Chronicle, 1 January
1917, 7.
re-entry of the Nationalists in the Congress and their whole-hearted support for the Congress-League Scheme, and the rapprochement between the united Congress and the League, there was complete unanimity in all ranks. All were pleading for 'Self-Government' and 'equal partnership with Dominions' in the British Empire.

That is the story of the early phases of the Congress and the League. The Congress was started with the initiative and co-operation of Englishmen and it modestly aimed at the Indianization and association of Indians with the administration of the country. The maintenance of the British rule was, however, its main objective. The early Congressmen had firm faith in the justice and fairplay of the British people, and the loyalty to the British connection was the keynote of the Congress. In the beginning of the 20th century, however, world events and the policy of Lord Curzon, specially the partition of Bengal, aroused a new feeling of independence in the country, and a section in the Congress, called Extremists, began to demand independence. The Moderates wanted only self-government within the Empire. Both views could not be reconciled and the Extremists had to leave the Congress after the Surat split in 1907.

Having seen the growing political consciousness in the country, the British encouraged the Muslims to organize the All India Muslim League with 'Loyalty to the British.
Government' as its primary objective. The Morley-Minto Reforms, Lord Hardinge's conciliatory policy and the annulment of the Partition of Bengal made the position of the Moderates strong in the Congress. But the annulment and the subsequent policy of the Government displeased the Indian Muslims and consequently the League adopted 'Self-government under the aegis of the British Crown' as one of its objectives in 1913. This made the rapprochement between the Congress and the League possible.

The war gave further impetus to the Indian nationalism and both, the Congress and the League, while reaffirming their loyalty to the British Empire, demanded 'a definite step towards self-government' and 'equal partnership with Dominions' in the Empire.