Chapter V

The Partition Riot

Political riots are a perennial menace to social order and public tranquility. It would not only strain the relation between the rulers and the ruled, but also cause irreparable loss of life and damage to property. In India, political agitations, accompanied by disturbance assumed dangerous proportions during the freedom movement. By means of continuous propaganda the Indian Nationalists exposed the real nature of the British rule highlighting the evils springing from British Raj. Their untiring endeavours for securing political rights, concessions and privileges, fostered a sense of patriotism in the people. The various political agitations sponsored by them constituted a glorious chapter in India’s struggle for independence.

The British hardly identified themselves with the Indians. Consequently, they followed a policy of racial discrimination against the latter. Neither in the government service nor in the administration, adequate representation was given even to educated Indians. Almost all the responsible positions in the government were reserved for the British. Because of this policy the natives were segregated from holding high
offices\textsuperscript{1} and even looked down upon with contempt by the British. Economically, the British mercantile policy gave a death-blow to Indian industries, particularly the traditional industries.\textsuperscript{2} The taxes on Indian products were exorbitant and oppressive. Some laws were not only discriminatory but also directed to wound the national consciousness of the people.\textsuperscript{3} Those who protested against British authority were subjected to harsh treatment or even physical torture. Every policy of the British was calculated to strengthen their political authority in India.

The harsh treatment of the people created resentment all over the country. As a result, political riots of varying dimensions occurred in both urban and rural India. Generally, such riots were directed against a particular government policy or decision. At times, economic issues were also involved. Scarcity and high prices of food-grains also led to political unrests. Occasionally, social injustice also resulted in political riots. Sometimes, a minor issue could develop into a major political issue and cause an unhappy stir. Emotional current, bitterness and discontent were at the root of every political riot. Political riots tended to last longer than any other kind of riots, and spread to new areas owing to the speedy circulation of news and rumors.

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\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
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5.1. The Indian National Congress

The work of the Indian National Congress ever since its origin in 1885 had been pioneering. By 1887, the Congress bore every appearance of having become a permanent National Institution.\(^4\) It was merely giving expression to the interests and aspirations of the educated middle class but gradually it adopted truly national character and represented the interests of the vast masses of the people engaged in agricultural operations.\(^5\) By providing a wider national outlook, the Congress succeeded in rousing feelings against the British Raj. Primarily an anti-imperialist movement, it succeeded in creating public opinion both in India and in England in favour of its demands. The task of politicizing, activising and mobilizing the Indian masses was accepted by the Congress from the beginning, but was systematically undertaken after 1918.\(^6\) The Congress movement attracted millions from all classes, "and it was equally representative where creeds, sects and castes were convened".\(^7\) It was the only forum of the Indian people in their fight against colonialism and imperialism. Already during

\(^4\) Report of the proceedings of the Third Indian National Congress, December, 1887, p. 2.
the last quarter of the 19th century, the founding fathers of the national
movement had worked out a clear understanding of the various modes of
colonial surplus extraction or exploitations. Its various policies directed
towards the general interests of the masses, gave Congress the
characteristics of a people's movement.

5.2. Methods of Early Congress

During the first phase of the national movement, the middle-class
was weak and its political activity naturally lacked plan and unity. The
ey early congressmen were staunch believers in liberalism and moderate
intelligentsia. Their method was one of speeches and resolutions, appeals
and prayers, deputations and petitions. During this period, there was no
revolutionary zeal in their activities. They had practically isolated
themselves from the masses. Consequently, the masses, as a whole, played
a passive role during this period. They demanded few concessions of
which very few were granted. As Lajapat Rai later wrote: “After more than
20 years of futile agitations for concessions and redressal of grievances
they had received stones”, The critics of the economic policies of the
government, like R.C. Dutt, Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Watcha,

8 Bipin Chandra, op.cit., p. 6.
9 Tara Chand, History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol. II, New Delhi, (nd),
p. 527.
10 Bipin Chandra, Freedom Struggle, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 76-77.
contented that the Indian poverty and deplorable economic condition of the masses were due to the British policy of exploitation of India.

5.3. Extremist Politics in Congress

The failure of the moderate nationalists political mendicancy led to the birth of extremism in the Indian political and national life. It developed as an ideology in the early 1890s. Extremism as a socio-religious and politico-economic movement in India may be broadly defined as an active, militant and self-reliant philosophy of life as well as a programme for action based upon the cultural tradition of the country.\(^\text{11}\)

The extremists drew their inspiration from India’s past heritage. Extremism originated with Bankim Chandra, Vivekananda and Dayananda for its ideology in a qualified way but not for its political heredity.\(^\text{12}\) They identified the motherland as ‘Bharatmats’, Bankim Chandra’s stress on Sri Krishna’s dharmarajya. Tilak’s commentary of the Gita, Lajpat Rai’s life of Sri Krishna, and Aurobindo’s writings instilled national consciousness in the Indian mind. Bankim Chandra was a severe critic of the moderate policies of the Congress. According to Tilak and Vivekananda, Hinduism and Hindudharma or Hindutva was the unifying factor in Indian society.

\(^\text{11}\) Vajpeyi, The Extremist Movement in India, Allahabad, 1974, p. 111.
\(^\text{12}\) Atmals Tripati, Extremist Challenge, India between 1890 and 1910, New Delhi, 1967, p. 46.
They based their arguments on the revival of Hinduism and Hindu ideas as an initial step towards the creation of Indian nation. They used religious symbols and religious festivals to infuse religious emotionalism among the younger groups of the Indian National Congress who were sharp critics of the Congress. In this way the Ganapati festival, Shivaji festival and Durga or Kali, were their heroic models in their fight against the foreign rulers. The new identity discovered by the Hindus was further heightened by Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal who also gave a colour to the national liberation movement. As a result, a new group of energetic young men emerged and crystallized within the Congress at the end of the 19th century. It was a major leap forward. Women, students, urban, rural mass for the first time involved in politics. Next decade saw the congress of all major political trends of the sentiment. From conservative moderation to political extremism; from terrorism to impatient socialism, from petitioning and public speeches to passive resistance and boycott had it origin in the movement broke through in science and industry.

The extremists denounced constitutional methods of agitation and advocated direct action against the foreign rulers. Their object was to wind up and not ameliorate the British rule in India. To them, British rule was a curse rather than a boon to the country. They had no sympathy for the moderate policy of prayers, petitions and agitations. According to them
British interests in India were mainly devoted to the safeguarding of their commercial and other interests at the cost of the Indian economy.

5.4. Partition of Bengal

In the meanwhile Lord Curzon, the Viceroy planned to partition Bengal. Bengal was a huge and unyielding province containing a population of 78 millions yielding revenue of 11 crores a year. Bengali, Oriya and Hindi were the common dialects. Lt. Governor in council at Calcutta planned to dethrone Calcutta as the nerve centre of all activities in 1903. Though the territorial distribution had been made before, it came to be realized in 1905. The province of Bengal with its capital at Calcutta and Eastern Bengal and Assam with a population of 31 million with its capital at Dacca were divided. When questioned by the people the authors of the partition explained that it was made for administrative necessity and convenience.

Ignoring the Indian condition which prevailed then, Curzon partitioned Bengal, a measure which triggered off extremism in the national movement. The proposal became publicly known. Immediate spontaneous protests were conducted. During the first month 500 protest meetings were conducted in Bengal, 50,000 copies of pamphlets

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distributed, numerous petitions powerful press campaigns were conducted. It was calculated to drive a wedge into the national unity in Bengal and create perpetual tension between the Hindus and the Muslims. Risely, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, said on 6th December 1904, “Bengal united is power, Bengal divided, will pull several different ways.”

Bengal did not take this measure lying down. The reaction of the people was violent and expeditious. An agitation of unparalleled bitterness was started in both provinces and especially in the eastern Bengal. The Indian National Congress strongly protested against the partition, and demanded its revocation. The Congress at its twenty first session at Benaras, presided by Gokhale recorded its emphatic protest against the partition and appealed to the government to reverse or modify the arrangement. Public meetings and discussions were held by the Congress throughout the country. Several public bodies of Assam and Bengal were unanimous in their protest against the partition. The Indian press, mostly owned by the Hindus, a large number of Anglo-Indian newspapers, and

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17 The Indian Review, Partition and Repression, Vol. XII, Jan-Dec. 1911, p. 276.
some British newspapers also condemned the partition. The Swadesamitran wrote that the primary aim of the partition was to axe off the unity of Bengal.\textsuperscript{18}

The partition of Bengal took the Indians by surprise. The cause of Bengal was made the cause of India.\textsuperscript{19} It led to an agitation of an unprecedented nature and created a deep sense of nationalism among the Indians. By this time, there was also a change in the attitude of the congress towards the British, by which Indian unrest was aroused to new heights.

The Indian nationalists clearly saw the design behind the partition and condemned it unanimously.\textsuperscript{20} The anti-partition movement evoked unparalleled protest finding concrete expression in the Swadeshi and Boycott movement. The banner of the Swadeshi movement was first hoisted on 7\textsuperscript{th} August 1905 at a meeting in the Town Hall of Calcutta. The day the partition was effected, 16\textsuperscript{th} October 1905, was declared a day of mourning and fasting throughout the country. People fasted, no fire lit at kitchen. There was total hartal in Calcutta. Processions paraded through

\textsuperscript{18} MNNR, Swadesamitran, 6.7.1905.
\textsuperscript{19} Johari, J.C., History of the Indian National Congress (1885-1947), New Delhi, p. 13.
the street singing Bande Mataram. Memorials were addressed to the Viceroy. A petition signed by 60,000 people to intervene and prevent the partition of Bengal was of no use. The song specially composed to suit the occasion was sung by a huge crowd parading in the streets. The agitation took out procession reciting Bande Mataram. The ceremony of Raksha Bandan was observed. Ananda Mohan Bose laid the foundation of a Federation Hall to vindicate the unity of Bengal. The Bengal leaders were not contented with demonstrations but also conducted protest meetings and passed resolutions and prayed for the leaders for the grievances. They resolved to plunge into a more effective and direct political action. As a result the Swadeshi Movement was born. In spite of all the efforts of the government the agitation continued. Though the agitation did not die down its impact in the national politics was serious.\(^{21}\)

5.5. The Swadeshi Movement

The Swadeshi movement, which commenced in 1905, had its genesis in the anti-partition movement. It became a powerful instrument in the hands of the Indian nationalists in 1906, “Be Indian, buy only Indian

\(^{21}\) The annulment of the partition on December 1911, coupled with creation of the province of Bihar and Orissa shows the weakness of the argument that Division of Bengal was necessary in 1905 on administrative grounds. Curzon wrote to the Secretary of State: “My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist to a peaceful demise”. S. Sthyanathaier, Political and Cultural History of India, Vol. III, pp. 529-530.
goods" was heard everywhere. Swadeshi and Boycott were merely two sides of the same coin. Swadeshi was the positive feature and Boycott the negative feature of the same notion. The idea of Swadeshi or 'of one's own country' was one of the noblest conceptions that have ever stirred the hearts of human. Swadeshi, according to the new nationalists, was a political and economic weapon aimed at the use of home-made goods to achieve the industrial and general economic development of the country. “The Swadeshi Movement”, wrote Surendranath, “was in spirit a protectionist movement”.

Economically, the Swadeshi ideal was that the people should use Swadeshi goods and reject foreign goods. Politically the public by the pecuniary loss they would suffer by the boycott of British goods.” It was meant to stir the militant spirit of the people against the British and to put an economic pressure on them. The boycott movement not only included boycott of British manufactured goods, but also renunciation of government

22 Dr. Ma Po. (M.P) Sivagnanam, History of Freedom Movement in Tamilnadu (Vidutali Póril Tamilakam), (Translated by Dr. K. Chellappan), p. 95.
24 "Breathes there the man with soul so dead
who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land."
jobs, titles, councils and officialized education. It developed into an idea of non-cooperation with the British in every field, and the object aimed at was a political regeneration of the country, with the distant goal of absolute freedom looking large before the eyes of the more advanced section.26

The Indian National Congress accorded its cordial support to the Swadeshi movement and called upon the people of the country to labour for its success by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of industries capable of development in the country and respond to the efforts of the Indian products by giving preference, wherever possible, to Indian products, over imported commodities, even at a sacrifices.27 In 1906, at Calcutta, the Congress adopted resolutions on Swadeshi Boycott and National Education. Since then, the Congress accepted Swaraj as its goal and identified itself with the Swadeshi movement. The new slogans of Swadeshi, boycott and national education also began to enchant the people. Consequently, Swadeshi and boycott pledges were taken by large numbers of people all over the country, and they began to refrain from the purchase of the foreign goods. The Congress regarded the boycott of British goods was essential for stimulating the Swadeshi industry. Numerous mass

meetings, processions and protests were held all over India by the Congress in which the message of boycott was preached.\(^{28}\) Bande Mataram was taken as the slogan of the movement. It was a faith, which was very strong and has enthroned itself in the hearts and lives of the younger generation.\(^{29}\) Consequently, during the stormy days of the anti-partition movement in Bengal, its appeal was instantaneous.\(^{30}\) Along with Swadeshi and boycott, education also received considerable momentum in the country, as the means to the great end swaraj. In the meanwhile, the press in India started the propaganda work favouring Swadeshi Movement.

5.6. Swadeshi Propaganda

Tilak's brilliant writings in his paper Kesari inspired and infused courage in the hearts of the youth. He trained people physically and mentally. District Conferences both in the Tamil and Telugu speaking areas of the Madras presidency were conducted and they stimulated political interest among the people. Noticing and suspecting political interests, the government arrested nine persons and prosecuted under Section 124-A and 183-A of the Indian Penal Code. They were Chidambaram Arya, G.

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\(^{29}\) MNNR, The Vijaya, 25 October 1909.
Subramonia Iyer, G. Harisarvathanu Rao, Adi Narayana Rao, Srinivasa Iyengar, Krishna Iyer and Lekshminarayana.\(^\text{31}\)

The Nationalist press re-acted sharply to the arrest of the leaders and declared that all the happenings and arrest were the mistakes committed by the local British authorities. They asserted that repression could not solve the problem. The press viewed the same with a different angle.\(^\text{32}\) Papers such as The Madras Star, Kerala Patrika, Desabhimani, and the Hindunation criticized the action of the District Magistrate and police officials. They extended their wholehearted support to the Swadeshi Movement.\(^\text{33}\) H. Srinivasa Iyengar was prosecuted for publishing seditious articles in India.

The newspapers represented the most important tool for day-to-day nationalist agitation and propaganda. Periodicals also made a vital contribution by providing a forum for debates on non fundamental and permanent issues concerning political and social sphere. The press in India, was growing very fast. The freedom of press established in 1882, had brought about a great change in India’s political thinking. Several of the newly established papers had become violent in criticizing the British and

\(^{31}\) G.O. No. 44, Judicial (Confidential) Department, 12 January, 1909.

\(^{32}\) MNNR, The Indian Patriot, 18 March 1908, p. 47.

\(^{33}\) G.O. No. 7103, Judicial (Confidential) Department, 11 August, 1905.
their activities in India. Viewing the growth very seriously one British administrator wrote to Morley as follows: "I am afraid, we must consider seriously how to deal with the native papers, for in many cases the utterances of the newspapers are outrageous". The vernacular weeklies also notably contributed to the spread of the Swadeshi spirit.

The support and encouragement given to the Swadeshi Movement by the Indian press fostered the spirit of Nationalism among the people. The Swadeshimitrnan encouraged the people to attend public meetings of the Swadeshi Movement advocates.

Akasavani advised the Indians that, “Swadeshism is your starvation. Swadeshim your heaven you hear from all sides the divine words (message) that it is only by your swadeshism that you would attain your ancient civilization, wealth and greatness. Therefore do not abandon your good attempts, pursue your swadeshism with more perseverance, understand that it is your duty”.

The Swadeshi objects of the extremists attracted popular support in Tinnevelly district. The people were very much perturbed with

35 Swadeshimitrnan started that public meeting would be held in the Pachayappar College campus for propagating Swadeshi Movement. So all citizens were requested to attend the meeting without fail. Swadeshimitrnan, 16 February, 1906, MNNR., p. 54.
36 MNNR, 21 June 1909, p. 70.
the existing legislative measures favouring the Europeans. National calamities like famine and plague also aggravated their hatred against the British. The partition of Bengal at the same time quickened the process of emotional integration.37 A memorial submitted to the Secretary of State in July 1905 recalled that “not less than 500 protest meetings were held in East Bengal alone within a period of two months”.

The National Co-operative Society of Bombay sent one of its members to the Tinnevelly district to deliver lectures on the swadeshi movement.39 On 10 September 1905, a Swadeshi meeting was held in Madras, attended by about thousand students from various colleges.40 The swadeshi movement in Tinnevelly district received another fillip in August 1906 when G. Subramania Iyer visited Tuticorin to preside over the swadeshi anniversary meeting.41 Bepin Chandra Pal, when he toured throughout the Presidency during April-May 1907, delivered fierce speeches at Kakinada, Rajamundry, Masulipatnam and Madras.42 The Mysore Star reported that Bipin Chandra Pal had lectures in Madras on

37 Home Political (A) Proceedings, June 1909, File No. 95, p. 4.
38 Sumith Sarkar, op.cit., p. 276.
39 Home Political (A) Proceedings, June 1908, File No. 95, p. 4.
41 Home Political (A) Proceedings, June 1908, File No. 95, p. 4.
42 Venkatesan, G., op.cit., p. 159.
‘Swadeshism, Boycott and Swaraj’. Frequently meetings were held at different places to preach the doctrine of ‘boycott’. The contribution of the student was by no means small. Bahuranakanta Ray, a Japanese trained mining engineer with his student followers patrolled the street to take each home, the message of the ‘boycott’.

In Bengal it was stressed that every individual would make it a point not to purchase foreign articles. The people spared no chance to popularize and make the Swadeshi Movement a success. Stirred by patriotic fervour many songs and poems were sung by groups in the streets. Basing the Congress resolution on the Swadeshi at the Calcutta session in 1905, the blaze of Swadeshi fire widely spread from town to town, village to village and from house to house rapidly. During the propaganda tour in the Tinnevelly District, on 9 January 1908, he delivered several lectures on the importance of swadeshi.

“Our nation is like a tree” wrote Tilak in Kesari, of which the original trunk was Swaraj and the branches were Swadeshi and Boycott. The anti-partition movement also brought open differences between the

43 MNNR, Mysore Star, 20 May 1907, p. 186.
44 DUA, R.P., The Impact of Russo-Japanese War on Indian Politics, Delhi, 1905, p. 4.
45 Ambika Sharma, Mazumdar, Swadeshi Movement – A Symposium, p. 133.
46 Home Political (A) Proceedings, June 1908, File No. 95, p. 6.
moderates and the extremists. Surendranath Banerjee opined, boycott a special way for fighting an immediate injustice. On the eve of partition a new weapon of agitation was commenced to use home made goods. Tilak, leader of the extremists pointed out in 1906 that a handful of men from Britain could not rule India without the help of Indians. Tilak brought forward a resolution in the Congress Session of 1906 for the boycott of English goods, picketing the arrack and toddy shops and for practicing the policy of non-cooperation. The development of Swadeshi industries in fact stimulated the indigenous machinery and even certain varieties of cotton yarn. Gradually boycott was done in case of Manchester piece goods, Liverpool salt and foreign sugar. The list also included footwear, cigarettes, enameled goods and foreign liquor.

Swadesamitran observed that boycott movement was an attempt to revive native industries. The same paper also urged the people to use the articles manufactured in India. It appealed the people of Tamilnadu to support the movement and to take steps for the spread of Swadeshi feelings. Further, it observed that Swadeshi articles available in India

47 Bipin Chandra, et al., op.cit., p. 91.
50 Sumith Sarkar, op.cit., p. 137.
51 MNNR, Swadesamitran, 26 August 1905, p. 99.
should be purchased, which were produced by the Indians.\textsuperscript{52} The college and school students observed the Swadeshi movement in the most practical manner. Best students were encouraged to take up industrial pursuit instead of crowding into law and government service.\textsuperscript{53} In South India, a large number of peasants and labourers were educated to the level to understand day to day political and social problems.\textsuperscript{54}

The boycott had gradually affected the British interests. Those people having important trade connections with England got alarmed. This made the pro-British papers to advise the government that boycott must not be allowed, as it will surely ruin British connection with India more than an armed revolution.\textsuperscript{55} Boycott and swadeshi movements had enthusiastic advocates in Madras. T.M. Nair, an eminent leader viewed “the swadeshi and boycott movements as a weapon of a weak nation against a strong nation”. Subramonia Iyer moved that a store be established for exhibition and sale of articles of indigenous industry and also that a bureau of industrial information be opened.\textsuperscript{56} Boycott programme thus had touched

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\item \textsuperscript{52} MNNR, Swadeshi, 24 March 1906, p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Annie Besant, The Birth of New India, Madras, 1917, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Naidu, C.H.M., Nationalism in South India, its Economic and Social Background 1885-1918, Delhi, 1986, p. 106.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Dua, R.P., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Sukhbir Choudary, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 305.
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so deeply the patriotic feelings of the Indians, and the latter recognized that with Swadeshi is bound up the growth of national strength.

The Government felt that the police in Calcutta might also get infected with the Swadeshi view. The boycott programme was to put an end to the economic exploitation over the Indians. It comprised of abjuring of English cloth and English speech, resignation of honorary posts under the Government and seats in Councils and social boycott of persons purchasing foreign articles. Pledges were taken in public meetings to abstain from the use of foreign goods. Patients refused to take foreign medicines. Manchester made clothes and foreign cigarettes were burnt in public. There was an idea to open a new swadeshi or indigenous institution to train the youths of the nation. There was great depression in Lancashire that about 540 mills stopped and the weekly loss in wages was about 3,30,000. The success of passive resistance at Tuticorin gained encouragement. Dr. Miller, a prominent missionary supported the Swadeshi movement and said that its beneficial effects should be felt on the economic and social conditions of South India.

57 Sukhbir Choudary, op.cit., p. 305.
59 MNNR, India, 27 February 1909, p. 146.
60 Aurobindo, Bande Matharam, Early Political Writings, Pondicherry, 1973, p. 742.
journalist wrote that the swadeshi goods movement was very strong in Madras.  

The Swadeshi movement induced the Indians of all classes to give preference to native articles to those of foreign made. This type of constant exercise and practice of Swadeshism made the people to contribute to their country and help to knit close the ties of sympathy between persons of different localities and different communities through the country. Bipin Chandra Pal and Tilak constantly induced the people through fervent speeches. They boycotted the foreign made goods and articles and burnt the foreign made cloth at Marina beach. On the other side, the government encouraged swadeshi factories of a genuine kind. It welcomed the investment of native industries because in the words of Governor Lawely, "Swadeshi is a great idea because it depended on the progress of India as a nation in the paths of useful knowledge, industry and co-operation." The swadeshi movement was more or less a patriotic attempt to improve the industrial position of the country by the revival of decaying industries. The new industries got facilities in the country. So far as South

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62 Sukhbir Choudary, op.cit., p. 305.
63 Gokuldos Prakash, Swadeshi Movement – A Symposium, p. 103.
65 Speeches Delivered by His Excellency the Hon’ble Sir Arthur Lawley, Madras, 1912, p. 157.
India was concerned the most striking evidence was the success of national movement.\textsuperscript{66} The movement was blended with economic and political motives and became a necessity. It was justified on moral and legal grounds because the people were trying to do for themselves what the government ought to have done years and years.

For the success of “Swadeshi” the Congress gave the movement a political character. The ‘boycott’ was the “last resort” of the Indians. In brief the swadeshi marked the beginning of a provincial form of protest where the ‘boycott’ was used as “a political weapon”. The boycott was to do away with the foreign goods in general and the British goods in particular. The local needs were to be met by greater use of Swadeshi goods. It was in other words to infuse more and more self-reliance on which depended the success of the movement.\textsuperscript{67} Due to the propaganda of newspapers and the tireless work of the leaders the Swadeshi Movement spread to the other parts of India including the Madras Presidency.

5.7. The spread of the Movement

The Swadeshi movement which sprang from the opposition to the partition of Bengal was at first purely a local affair. It very soon moved


\textsuperscript{67} Dua, R.P., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 5.
from Bengal to Bombay, Punjab, Madras and other parts of the country and acquired an all-India character which it never lost till India won her independence. The movement received the spontaneous support of the Hindus, Muslims, the rich and the poor urban and the rural population alike. Numerous public meetings, demonstrations, processions and hartals were organized all over the country, in which resolutions were adopted endorsing the Swadeshi and boycott principles. At these meetings people took pledges to boycott foreign goods in favour of everything Indian. During these occasions, burning of foreign goods was greeted with shouts of Bande Mataram. Very soon, all the national-minded newspapers began to popularize the Swadeshi movement. The leaders of the movement like Tilak, Pal. Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo and others attached great value to Bande Mataram (Hail mother) the war cry of the movement and conducted country-wide tours to preach and popularize the ideal of the Swadeshi movement. Through their inflammatory speeches they made an ardent effort to enlist the sympathy and support of all classes of people. Thus the movement began to spread to the other parts of the country. Meanwhile the students jumped into the movement.

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69 Dr. Vajpaye, J.N., op.cit., p.98.
5.8. The role of the students

The student community played a conspicuous part in the Swadeshi movement from the very beginning. Their youthful enthusiasm was fired by the speeches of the leaders, and they jumped into the fray with alacrity, not being restrained by fear of consequences and careful calculation of the pros and cons which would have chilled the ardour of older and more experienced men. The course of student agitation underwent tremendous changes under the impact of the Swadeshi and boycott movement. "The march of students from moderate liberation to revolutionary nationalism, from the demand for better facilities to appear for the highest British examination to the demand for the very abolition of that system, from job hunting, to jail breaking, from His Majesty’s obedient servant to rebels, is as heroic, as the history of the Indian National Congress". All over the country, students held protest meetings, picketing operations and processions, and were willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of India. They enthusiastically participated in public meetings, processions, bonfire of foreign clothes, picketing, lecturing and singing of patriotic songs. They collected English made cloth, English text books, foreign salt and

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70 Majumdar, R.C., op.cit., p. 60.
72 Sankaran Nair, V., Swadeshi Movement, The Beginning of Student Unrest in South India, Delhi, 1985, p. 20.
sugar, and destroyed them in public. They picketed shops so that they might not buy articles or cloth. The active participation of students in the national movement very much alarmed the government. The boycott and the consequent picketings of shops by students and school boys led inevitably to frequent disturbances. Consequently, repressive measures were adopted by the government against the students participating in the national upsurge. In spite of such measures, the students, the chief propagandist and pillar of the movement continued to play a prominent role in the Swadeshi movement.

5.9. Repressive Measures

Originally, the Swadeshi and boycott movement was meant to operate in Bengal only. Gradually, when it took a formidable form and acquired an all-India character, the government adopted a policy of extensive and intensive repression of the movement. The whole atmosphere kept pace with the intensity of the upheaval. Public meetings, political associations, processions and demonstrations were banned by the government, and those who took part in the meetings were harassed and

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punished. Police lathi charged the picketers and demonstrators, whether they were peaceful or riotous. The shouting of Bande mataram on streets and public places was declared illegal. Anyone who dared to shout bande Mataram on the street ran the risk of being arrested or severely man-handled by the police.\textsuperscript{76} Several Swadeshi leaders, editors, propagandists and organizers were arrested and imprisoned without any trial, on flimsy charges. Several newspapers were brought under rigorous press laws. Another measure was to set the loyal Muslims against the Hindus. Punitive tax was imposed on those who supported and sympathized with the movement.

As the students constituted the bulk of the volunteers and picketers they also became the targets of governmental repression. In their efforts to de-link the student community from the political agitation, the government formulated measures for the educational department for dealing with political agitations involving teachers and students in schools and colleges, under the pretext of protecting educational institutions from political danger.\textsuperscript{77} Accordingly, the government issued confidential circulars forbidding the students to associate themselves with the Swadeshi movement or any political demonstrations. Those schools and colleges,

\textsuperscript{76} Arun Chandra Guhen, \textit{First Spark of Revolution, The Early Phase of India's Struggle for Independence}, 1900-1920, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{77} Sankaran Nair, V., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 20.
whose students disobeyed the order, were threatened with severe
disciplinary actions. A large number of student demonstrators were lathi-
charged and arrested under one pretext or another. But these repressive
measures only strengthened the grim determination of the people to achieve
the independence of the country from foreign yoke.

5.10. The Contribution of the Swadeshi Movement

The Swadeshi Movement with its multi-faceted programme and
activity was able to draw for the first time large sections of society into
active participation in modern nationalist politics and still large sections
into the ambit of modern political ideas.\textsuperscript{78} The greatest contribution of the
movement was that it gave a great impetus to the National Movement. It
developed into a mighty political weapon in the hands of the nationalists
and opened the gates of the nationalist movement to millions of people all
over India. It taught the people the real motive of the British government
of India and instilled in them a desire for independence and self-
government. Boycott promoted the Indian made goods. This positive
aspect ultimately crystallized into the idea of Swadeshi, the use of goods
and things, of one’s own country.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{78} Bipin Chandra, \textit{et al.}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 131.

The movement had a devastating effect on British trade interests in India. While some of the business firms of the British were on the brink of closure, some others conducted very little business in India. On the other hand it gave tremendous fillip to India’s indigenous industries. It made significant contribution to the building up of traditional industries which in turn helped in the improvement of the industrial economy of India.\(^0\) Many textile mills, soap and match factories, handloom weaving concerns, national banks and insurance companies were opened.\(^1\) National schools that came up in the wake of the movement in some localities began to eulogize Indian culture and civilization, and awakened the pride of the Indians of their past glory. It exerted and influenced on the peasants and to some extent awakened their interest in public life.\(^2\) It revitalized every aspect of national life and developed patriotic fervour all over India. Thus, the Swadeshi movement may be compared to a tiny brook, which gradually widened itself by receiving affluents and tributaries and became a mighty torrent of nationalism before it merged itself into the broad stream of India’s national struggle for freedom.\(^3\)

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\(^0\) Balan, K., *India’s Freedom Struggle and National Integration*, p. 29.
\(^3\) Majumdar, R.C., *op.cit.*, p. xv.
The Swadeshi and boycott movement, in which a large number of moderate leaders also actively participated, ended in revolutionary terrorism. Revolutionary terrorism had its origin in the repression of the Swadeshi movement which forced a section of the young Indians to resort to revolutionary terrorism as the only possible means to attain their desired goal. Terrorists of revolutionaries, who formed the central wing of the extremists, was an inseparable part of the Indian national movement during the first two decades of the 20th century. They believed that an armed resistance would drive the British out of the Indian soil. However, the revolutionary trend was branded as terrorist and anarchical in official records.

Thinking Indians were not agreed on the use of violence against the British, which the Indian revolutionaries advocated and carried out. Both sympathizers and adversaries of terrorism had based their opinion more on more grounds or sentiments rather than on logical reasoning. That terrorism was against the genius of Indian culture was difficult to accept. There were various instances in Hindu tradition which gave normative justification to the use of violence for the restoration of proper dharma or to maintain and preserve the established social order. The principle involved in terrorism, namely, getting, end of political enemies by murder, it enjoined in Kautilya’s Arthasasthra, and the Mahabharata is replete with
concrete instance of this kind. During the colonial period, the British authorities used violence as a means to preserve public order. And during the independence movement it was used in order to attain political ends. Revolutionary terrorism was directly or indirectly supported by leaders such as Aurobindo Ghosh, Aswini Kumar Datta, P.C. Roy, Lajpat Rai, B.G. Tilak and C.R. Das.

Terrorism is generally understood as the method, or the theory behind the method, whereby an organized group or a party seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence. Terrorism is also defined as deliberate acts and activities aiming at the disruption and destruction of political processes and political institutions in an organized society including kidnapping, arson and murder of private and public leaders. The major factors that stimulated the adoption of political terrorism in India were; cultural rivalism, western education, Indian press, economic discontent, impoverishment of India, administrative inefficiency and corruption, disillusionment about the methods of the liberals. Lord Curzon’s rigorous imperialist policies, discontent of educated Indians, repressive policies of the British administration, etc. Their programme

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84 Majumdar, R.C., op.cit., Vol. XI, Struggle for Freedom, p. 231.
86 Ibid., p. 4.
included political assassinations, generally, of unpopular officials, hoping thereby to strike terror in the bureaucracy and break its will. Armed dacoities, mass uprisings, strikes and hartals, fomenting of mutinies in the army, guerilla warfare and agrarian riots, they believed, would drive the British out of India. At the head of the national movement in this phase stood leaders like Lal, Bal and Pal, while at the other end stood leaders and cadres of the revolutionary trend like Aurobindo Ghosh and Kshudirm Bose revolutionaries had a large number of sympathizers all over the country due to their fearless spirit of defiance and resistance against the British.

The Government unleashed expressive measures to put down revolutionary activities, and many of the leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Between November 1907 and August 1910 a series of repressive legislative measures were passed by the government which seriously curtailed the ordinary rights of the citizens. The Sedition meeting Act of 1907, the Expressive Substance Act of 1908, The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908, The Newspaper Act of 1908, The Public Meeting Act and the Indian Press Act of 1910, were passed by which the government stifled public life. Deportation without trial and confiscation

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88 Adhikari, G., Development of Ideology of the National Revolutionaries, Challenge – a Saga of India’s Struggle for Freedom.
of private property became very frequent. As a result there was temporary
respite to the revolutionary terrorism in India. During this time, the
movement spread from the North to the South, where the teachings of local
had great impact and brought many leaders to the movement. It created a
new phase of freedom movement especially the creation of Swadeshi
Navigation Company. The press too worked in favour of the formation of
Swadeshi Bank and Swadeshi Stores and all these culminated in the
Swadeshi Riot and Tinnevelly and Coral Mill strike at Tuticorin. Thus the
contribution of Swadeshi Movement enabled the people of the south to
realize the reason for the failure of their industries.