Chapter One

INTRODUCTION: EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN INTEREST IN INDIA
Historical links between America and India may be traced to 1492 when, in the pursuit of the wealth of India, America was discovered. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese dominated the trade with the East. In 1600, however, Britain loomed large on the horizon when Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to the East India Company to trade in the East. This was closely followed by the establishment, in 1607, of a trading post at Jamestown in Virginia, by another group of Englishmen. Thus the beginnings of the British domination of North America and India were contemporaneous and might be traced to the same motive, i.e., trade in newer and still newer territories.

The East India Company eventually became the master of India. It also played an important role in the evolution of political history of North America. It brought consignments of tea to Boston which were dumped into the sea by some Americans. This aggravated the quarrel between the "mother" country and her colony, ultimately leading to the independence of the latter and the founding of the United States of America. The British, curiously, chose to appoint Lord Cornwallis, defeated in the War of Independence in America, as the Governor-General of India. (1)

1 For the effort of the British Government to help the East India Company out of a situation of bankruptcy and its link with the tea-incident in Boston, see Sir George Otto Trevelyan, The American Revolution (London, 1899), part 1, pp. 148-52.
Early Interest in Trade

Independent America did not take long to develop some interest in India. The War of Independence came to a close on 3 September 1783 and only a little more than a year later, i.e., on the day after Christmas in 1784, the United States of Philadelphia, appeared in Pondicherry. This was the first American ship to appear in the Indian waters. And in June 1785, the Hydra was the first American ship to reach the Hooghly.

Some wellwishers had warned the East India Company against allowing the Americans to mix up with the Indians and trade with them. (2) Yet the Company adopted a policy of friendly tolerance towards the American ships at their Indian ports. This was primarily because the trade was so small and, prior to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1792-93, was ancillary to the China trade. Moreover, the Pitt Cabinet in England "were anxious not to add another irritant to those already complicating Anglo-American relations." (3) In 1794, the Jay Treaty between England and the USA gave a legal basis to the Indo-American commerce and put the American ships on par with those belonging to British subjects with respect to import duties levied at British Indian ports. Though there were ebbs in Indo-American trade, especially during the war between England and America during 1812-14, yet on the whole, America's trade with India continued to grow until the Civil War, when disruption of the American shipping services had the effect of terminating it for a time at least.


3 Ibid., p. 240.
First Consular Relations

The newly established Republic of the United States of America took early steps towards protecting its trading interest in India. In November 1792, President Washington commissioned Benjamin Joy of Boston as the first American "Consul at Calcutta and other ports and places on the Coasts of India in Asia." (4) Joy reached Calcutta in April 1794. The Governor-General, however, did not admit him as "a Consul entitled to privileges" in view of lack of instructions from England. He permitted him to reside in Calcutta only as "a Commercial Agent, subject to the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction of this country." (5) Joy did not remain in India for long; he resigned his post in January 1796. In 1796 and, again, in 1801 successors were appointed, but it is doubtful whether they joined their posts. (6) In October 1838, P. S. Parker was appointed American Consul in Bombay. He arrived there in mid-1839, but he, too, had to face the same difficulty which Joy had faced earlier. Pending receipt of instructions from England,


5 J. H. Harrington to Benjamin Joy, 21 April 1794, ibid., p. 225. For unpleasantness on the part of the British authorities with the presence of the United States Government representatives in India solely for the purpose of trade promotion also, see Hugh Butler, Assistant Commercial Attaché, United States Embassy (London), to C.P. Hopkins, Assistant Director, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 31 August 1927, Out-going Cables, Foreign Service Division, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, National Archives, Washington D. C., U.S.A.

6 See Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia (New York, 1922), p. 29.
the Government of Bombay permitted him to act only as a Commercial Agent of the United States. (7) Next American Consul in Calcutta was James B. Higginson who joined his post in 1843. But, according to Earl Robert Schmidt, until 1847, when Charles Huffnagle was recognized by the East India Company as Consul for the United States, the appointed or honorary American Consuls lived in India only at the sufferance of the officials of the Company. (8)

**Interest of the Missionaries**

American missionaries were another channel of early contact between the USA and India. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was established in 1810 and the "first organized attempt of the Christian Church of America to reach and to redeem the heathen world was directed towards the land of the Vedas." (9) The first American missionaries arrived in India in 1812. But they were not permitted by the East India Company to reside in Calcutta. With a heavy heart some of them turned towards Bombay. There too they were forbidden to land. They made a solemn appeal to the Governor of Bombay whereupon immediate execution of

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7 L. R. Reid, Acting Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay (Political Department), to P. S. Parker, 9 August 1839, Despatches from United States Consuls in Bombay, vol. 1 (12 October 1838 - 16 November 1857), General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington D.C., U.S.A.


their deportation was deferred. (10) Fortunately for them, a new charter was granted to the East India Company in 1813 in which it was insisted that the Christian missionary be permitted to do his work in India unmolested. This enabled the American missionaries to start their work on a permanent footing. The American Mahratta Mission was established in 1815 and Bombay, Ahmednagar, and Sholapur became its principal centres of work. In those early days, the American missionaries were mainly interested in establishing religious schools and publishing religious literature in Indian languages. In 1838, the East India Company offered to the American Presbyterian Mission Board a grant for a college at Allahabad and, thus, the Ewing Christian College came into being there. Many more such colleges were established subsequently, for example, the American College at Madura and the Forman Christian College at Lahore. By 1910, the number of American missionary societies working in India rose to forty and that of the American missionaries to about eighteen hundred. (11)

The American missionaries in India used to send their reports to their parent organizations in the USA. Many of them eventually were published in the religious or non-religious magazines there. They delivered lectures on India when they returned to their country either for good or for a short stay.


They also published books giving their impressions of India. These reports, articles, books, or lectures constituted the main sources of information on India available to the Americans during those times. They created the image of India in their minds.

The Early Image of India

Most of these missionaries described the Indian people as deeply conservative who deified all that was old and traditional, the *sumnum bonum* of their life being to resemble their ancestors. Their poverty and wretchedness was due to their "blind improvidence, reckless expenditure and unwillingness to shake off impoverishing customs". The missionaries praised the British rule in India, especially the British achievements in establishing peace and order in the country, in giving fair and impartial justice to all, in laying irrigation systems and railways, and in giving the Indians a taste of free institutions for the first time in their long history. They also vouchsafed for the "warm and deep loyalty" of India towards the British. (12)

But this was not the only image of India and the British Government that was being given to the Americans. There were persons — both missionary and lay — who spoke appreciatively of the Indian people and civilization and ill of the British

12 Jones, n. 9, pp. 17, 19, 53. J.R. Campbell, one of the earlier missionaries, talked of "the deplorable ignorance and stubborn prejudices of the Hindus... their entire absence of all correct principles, and finally their moral degradation." He accused the Hindus of being lifetime liars. See Schmidt, n. 8, p. 33. For a survey of the attitudes of American missionaries towards the Hindus in the period 1800-1870, see Pathak, n. 10, chapter IV, pp. 77-89.
administration. (13) F. de W. Ward, an American missionary in South India, tried to dispel the impression that Indians were semi-barbarous and illiterate through his book India and the Hindoos, published in 1850. (14) A writer in the New Englander lamented that the story of the East India Company's conquests of India was a "sad development of human nature, over which modern civilization and our common Christianity may ... mourn." (15) Such critics maintained that the people of India had been "despoiled" of their lands and liberty by the British. (16) Moreover, the New York Daily Tribune published in 1853 and, again, in 1857-58, a good number of letters on India written by Karl Marx. In these letters Marx described the ruthless exploitation of India by Britain as also the oppressive treatment that was meted out to the Indians during and after the Indian revolt of 1857. (17) Subsequently, Brooks Adams, the renowned American author, highlighted the plunder of India after the battle of Plassey (1757) as one of the major factors promoting capital formation and industrial revolution in England. "Possibly since

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13 For changes in the attitudes of American missionaries towards the Hindus in the period 1870-1910, see Pathak, n. 10, chapter IX, pp. 220-36.


17 For the text of the letters, see K. Marx and F. Engels, On Colonialism (Moscow, n.d.), pp. 23-33, 117-69, 175-86.
the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder," he wrote. (18)

**Influence of Indian Philosophy**

In the nineteenth century, Indian philosophical thinking made some impact on the Transcendental Movement in the USA. Ralph Waldo Emerson was the prophet of this movement and his writings show influences of the ancient Indian scriptures on his mind. His great friend, Henry David Thoreau, once said that "the pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred stream of the Ganges." (19) In fact, Emerson's famous poem, *Brahma*, seems to have borrowed considerably from the great Hindu classic, *Bhagavadgita*. (20) Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a further direct religious and philosophical contact came through Swami Vivekananda who attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and made an impressive speech on the basic tenets of Hindu philosophy and culture. (21)

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, Americans had developed interest in three important fields in India: (1) commerce, (2) missionary work, and (3) religious and intellectual thinking.

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Contacts in all the three areas had taken shape and their effect on those Americans who began to evince some interest in India was twofold: they made them receptive to the arguments given in favour of the British rule in India and at the same time made them responsive to the pleas of the Indian nationalists. The twentieth-century saw a continuous struggle between these two attitudes for the dominance of one over the other.

**America's Imperialist Adventure**

With the War with Spain in 1898, the USA launched upon a new career in international politics. High priests of "the new manifest destiny" like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Albert J. Beveridge left no stone unturned in convincing the American people of the necessity and desirability of adopting a "large policy" in the East. As an outcome of this, the USA had the Philippines on its hands as India had been on the hands of Great Britain. Beveridge had declared on 27 April 1898:

> American factories are making more than the American people can use; American soil is producing more than they can consume. Fate has written our policy for us; the trade of the world must and shall be ours. And we will get it as our mother [England] has told us how. We will establish trading-ports throughout the world as distributing points for American products. We will cover the ocean with our merchant marine. We will build a navy to the measure of our greatness. (22)

The USA occupied the Philippines and this in its wake aroused the political interests of the Americans in the experiments that were going on in the various Empires of the world. When President Theodore Roosevelt asked General Leonard...

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Wood to go to the Philippines, he advised him to go across the Atlantic so that he could visit both Egypt and Java. (23)

Roosevelt was conscious that the USA could not copy the policy Great Britain had followed in its Empire. But he confessed:

It is quite true, as the English say, that we ought to have examined what they have done in Egypt, India and Malaya Straits in connection with our own work in the Philippines. (24)

The British too were happy that the Americans were brought for the first time into direct touch with the problems and difficulties of ruling in the Orient for they could now ask for the sympathy of the United States. The English journalist, Sydney Brooks, wrote in 1909:

... England feels entitled to ask that her experiment in India - the most arduous and complicated and by far the greatest that any Western nation has essayed - should be judged in the United States with something of a professional appreciation and understanding. (25)

This feeling was so deep-seated in the hearts of the British that they often drew the attention of the Americans to

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24 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, 11 September 1905, ibid., p. 20. It is interesting to note that under the instructions of the Department of State, dated 26 February 1923, the American Consul General in India used to send an additional copy of his report on developments in India for the use of the Government in the Philippines. See American Vice-Consul in Calcutta (Harold Shantz) to Secretary of State, 3 May 1923, 845.00/387, Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington D.C., USA.

25 Sydney Brooks, "American Opinion and British Rule in India", North American Review (New York), 190 (December 1909), p. 774. Sydney Brooks, the British journalist, lived from 1896 to 1900 in the United States. Thereafter, he frequently visited the USA and contributed regularly to both American and British journals. He acted as an emissary between the British Government and President Roosevelt, especially in regard to American opinion on British India. See also Arthur James, "Our Interest in the Philippines", World Today (London), 50 (September 1927), p. 388.
the problems of the Philippines in the spirit of "Physician, Heal Thyself", when they suspected that the latter were critical of the British administration in India. (26)

Some Americans were conscious that their policy in the Philippines would have effect on the situation in India. For example, when the question of giving independence to the Philippines was under consideration of the US Congress in 1930, Nicholas Roosevelt, a correspondent of the New York Times and a trusted adviser to the Hoover administration, stated before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs that even talk of giving independence to the Philippines had its repercussion on conditions in such areas as India and Malaya. Therefore, if the United States got out of the Philippines, it would assume the perilous responsibility of disturbing the peace of the East. (27)

In fact, Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of State, himself opposed granting independence to the Philippines, one of his grounds being that it would "inevitably create a general unsettlement of affairs in the Far East" where Great Britain, France, and Holland were having imperial interests. (28) These contentions were partially true in the sense that Indian publicists really used to refer to


the American administration in the Philippines in comparison with
and contrast to that of the British in India. (29) Thus the
Philippines became a factor in the Indo-American relationship
although only in a minor degree.

Theodore Roosevelt and India

With the advent of the twentieth century, the American
interest in India was considerably aroused. India witnessed the
first great wave of unrest during 1905-1908 due to partition of
Bengal by Lord Curzon. The British Government came down heavily
on the leaders of the Swadeshi movement and quite a good number
of them were prosecuted for sedition. News of repression
percolated to the USA and some articles critical of British
administration were published there. Moreover, one of the
topmost figures on the American political scene during those
times, William Jennings Bryan, visited India during 1905-1906 and
in an article published in India (London), he severely criticized
the British India administration. He wrote:

Let no one cite India as an argument in defense
of colonialism. On the Ganges and the Indus
the Briton, in spite of his many notable qualities
and his large contribution to the world's advance-
ment, has demonstrated, as many have before, man's
inability to exercise, with wisdom and justice,
irresponsible power over the helpless people. He
has conferred some benefits upon India, but he has
extorted a tremendous price for them. While he
has boasted of bringing peace to the living, he
has led millions to the peace of the grave; while

29 See Motilal Ghose, American Administration of the
Philippine Islands (Calcutta, 1917), revd edn 2.
Ghose was one of the founders of the nationalist
newspaper Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta). See
also S. Shiva Ram, Comparative Colonial Policy
(Calcutta, 1926), pp. 241-3.
he has dwelt upon order established between
warring tribes, he has impoverished the country
by legalized pillage. (30)

1907 also saw a comparatively large influx of Indians
into the USA, the number reaching to 1,072 as against 258 in
1904. (31)

British Ambassador at Washington, James Bryce, informed
John Morley, Secretary of State for India, that angry pamphlets
against British rule in India were being circulated in the USA
and that there was possibility of the formation of an association
sympathising with the Indians. (32) Morley was not over-perturbed
at this. He did not think that anything would come out of this
during their life time. Yet he confessed to Minto, the Governor-
General of India, that he was slowly beginning to think that a
tide of strong opinion might one day swell in the USA about their
rule in India and that "if a third Minto should be G.G. [Governor-
General] he may be molested by such things." He, therefore, told
Minto:

To cut the moral short — while sitting tight
it is our business to keep our system fair,
legal, constitutional, and all other things

30 William Jennings Bryan, The Old World and Its Ways
(St. Louis, 1907), p. 308. Bryan's article "British Rule in
India" appears as chapter XXVI in this book. In a note
inserted in this chapter, the author says his article on
British Rule in India was severely criticized by the
Government papers in India but was as heartily praised by
prominent representatives of the native population.
Delegations of Indians called upon him in London, Paris,
and New York to express their thanks. Later, this article
was also brought out as a separate pamphlet by the British
Committee of the Indian National Congress and was widely
circulated in England and the USA.

31 S. Chandrasekhar, "Indian Immigration in America",

32 See Morley to Minto, 27 February 1908. Letters to Earl
that make one sing 'Rule Britannia' with a clear conscience as well as lusty lungs. (33)

Morley talked to Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador in London, about India (34) and Sydney Brooks conveyed to President Roosevelt Morley's desire that he should say something to put the British policy in India in the proper light before the American people. Morley also sent a verbal message to the President through another Englishman who, as Roosevelt felt, came to Washington for the purpose of giving it. (35)

President Roosevelt himself got concerned about what he observed as to the unrest in India. He enquired from Whitelaw Reid if he had any information about it. He wrote:

But I do not like what I hear about India. It looks to me as if a very ugly feeling was growing up there. How do the British authorities feel about it? Are they confident that they can hold down any revolt? (36)

The upshot of all this was that President Roosevelt, in a speech to the Methodist missionary workers in Washington D.C. on 18 January 1909 praised the achievements of the British administration in India in glowing terms. He said:

It is the greatest feat of the kind that has been performed since the break up of the Roman Empire... It is easy enough to point out the shortcomings, but the fact remains that the successful administration

33 Morley to Minto, 23 April 1908. Ibid.

34 See Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, 3 September 1908, Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, 1952), vol. 6, p. 1206.

35 Roosevelt to Sydney Brooks, 28 December 1908. Ibid., p. 1443.

36 Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, 26 November 1908. Ibid., pp. 1383-4.
of the Indian Empire by the English has been one of the most notable and the most admirable achievements of the white race during the past centuries. (37)

The British, naturally, were very pleased at this speech. President Roosevelt himself was very glad that Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, and Morley liked what he had said. He assured Ambassador Bryce that nobody owed him any credit in the matter, as he himself had felt that it ought to have been said, particularly at that time when there was agitation in India. (38)

Roosevelt later told Arthur Hamilton Lee that ever since Bryan had made his pronouncements on India, he had a mind to speak. He, further wrote:

Keir Hardie's coming over here, and the knowledge I had of the unrest in India, and my further knowledge of the fact that agitators in England and agitators in India both sometimes traded on supposed American support of the Indian agitation, made me feel that it was a good time to speak. If I did any good, I am pleased. (39)

Sydney Brooks subsequently wrote that England cared to know what the Americans were saying about British administration in India. Therefore, this "magnificent eulogy" pronounced upon

37 Some American Opinions on the Indian Empire (London, n.d.), pp. 1-2. Prior to this speech, there was consultation between Roosevelt and Bryce as to what should be the form of the former's statement on India. Bryce agreed with Roosevelt that instead of a separate statement confined to India, it would be better if it came in course of some other speech. Roosevelt also went over the text of what he was going to say with Bryce. Bryce was pleased at the statement. See Roosevelt to Sydney Brooks, n. 35, pp. 1443-4.


the British rule in India by no less a person than President Roosevelt himself, "filled the cup of British satisfaction almost to overflowing." (40)

Roosevelt had taken care to inform William Howard Taft who was to take oath of the Presidential office on 4 March 1909 that he was going to give the English a good word for their work in India. He expressed his confidence that Taft will heartily approve of this. (41) Roosevelt had also informed Sydney Brooks that Taft felt precisely in the same way as he did in this matter. (42) In fact, Taft, later, praised the British administration in India in the same vein as Roosevelt had done. Addressing the Toronto Empire Club on 29 January 1914, he advised: "... the debt the world owes England ought to be acknowledged in no grudging manner." (43)

Although on 26 February 1909 some Americans addressed an open letter to President Roosevelt taking exception to his speech praising British rule in India, (44) American interest in India appears to have waned during 1909-1913. Things were relatively calm in India. The American Consul General reported from Calcutta on 2 March 1911 that there was a steady and lasting advance in India towards permanent peace and order and strong

41 Roosevelt to Taft, 29 December 1908, n. 34, p. 1447.
42 Roosevelt to Sydney Brooks, 20 November 1908. Ibid., p. 1370.
43 Some American Opinions on the Indian Empire, n. 37, p. 3. Taft had ceased to be the President of the United States by this time.
government. (45) The American press, therefore, found little reader appeal in Indian developments during this period.

The First World War and the Changing Attitudes

Meanwhile, Indians in the USA were busy setting up an organization of their own. The Hindustan Ghadr Party was formed in 1913 with headquarters at San Francisco. It began to publish its organ, The Ghadr, from 1 November 1913, advocating revolution in India against the British rule. Attempts are also made to send arms and ammunition to India by ships which proved to be abortive. (46) Lala Lajpat Rai reached the USA in 1914 and began to educate the American public about the past and present of India as also about the Indian demand of self rule. Walter Lippmann arranged the publication of his book Young India (1916) with B. W. Heubsch of New York. Heubsch published Lajpat Rai's other books also: England's Debt to India in 1917 and Political Future of India in 1919. Rai also got co-operation from the American press. (47) The New Republic in an editorial note on 6 February

45 American Consul General in Calcutta to Secretary of State, 2 March 1911, 845.00/148, Records of the Department of State.


47 For an account of Lajpat Rai's activities in the USA, see "Recollections of his life and work for an independent India while living in the United States and Japan 1914–1917", Microfilm, National Archives, New Delhi. This is a memorandum dated 6 June 1919, written by Rai himself. This is now published in Vijaya Chandra Joshi, ed., Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings (Delhi, 1965), pp. 195–220.
1915 introduced him to its readers and advised them to take note of him. (48) On 21 February 1915, the New York Times published an article written by him under the caption: "An Indian View of the Great European War". Rai explained in this article the stand of the Indian nationalists with regard to the War and said that India was aiding Britain in the War under the hope that this will hasten the readjustment of her political position with Britain. (49) Thus, one can say with Walter Charles Mackett that immediately preceding the War and during the first years of the War there were signs that the tide of American interest in the Indian problem was setting in. Moreover, in this tide the Indian nationalists appeared to be on the gaining side. (50)

The situation, however, changed in 1917. On 9 January 1917, the New York Times carried a report from London to the effect that six Indians were sentenced to death in the second trial of the Lahore Conspiracy Case. In the course of the judgement the Court had declared that they were fully satisfied that the USA was the centre of the conspiracy. On 6 March 1917, Chandra Kanta Chakravarty, one of the conspirators, was arrested in New York. Other arrests followed soon. On 13 March 1917, the New York Times commented that the hospitality of the country had been abused to its damage and danger and that henceforth the US Government would be swift in punishing the offenders. (51) This editorial reflected

the hardening of the attitude on the side of the American officials also, for a British official commenting on the (British) Foreign Office proposal to the US Government that the Indian conspirators working from the territory of the USA be prosecuted, wrote on 14 March 1917: "The attitude of the US has recently become quite satisfactory." (52) In fact, a trial of the Indians was started at San Francisco on 20 November 1917 which lasted until 30 April 1918. Of the original 105 defendants in the case, 3 pleaded guilty, 6 were dismissed, 2 were killed, 29 were found guilty, 1 was found not guilty, 1 was adjudged insane, and the rest fled the country. (53)

President Wilson and the Right of Self-Determination

Although American attitude towards India had hardened in 1917, especially after the entry of the USA into the War on 6 April 1917 on the side of England, there was one element in the pronouncements of President Wilson during these times which greatly impressed the Indian nationalists. On 2 April 1917 and, again, on 11 February 1918, President Wilson, while speaking on war-aims, referred to the right of self-determination for all peoples and said that this was an imperative principle which statesmen would thenceforth ignore at their peril. (54)

52 See F.0. 371/3064 of 1917, Political (United States File), Public Record Office, London.


These pronouncements raised great expectations among the nationalists in India as well as among those who were working for the Indian cause in the USA. Ram Chandra, the editor of the Hindustan Ghadr, sent a memorandum to the President expressing the gratitude of the Indians at his advocacy of right of self-determination for all peoples. (55) From India, Sir Subramania Iyer, ex-Chief Justice of Madras and Honorary President of the Home Rule League of India, sent a letter to the President highly appreciating the ideals which he had presented in his War Message to the [US] Congress. Iyer assured the President that if India were promised self-government at an early date — a self-government which would lift it from the status of a Dependency to that of a partner in the British Empire on par with other self-governing Dominions — India would offer at least ten million men within six months to fight on behalf of the Allies in the War. "It is our earnest hope", reiterated Iyer, "that you may so completely convert England to your ideals of world liberation that together you will make it possible for India's millions to lend assistance in this War." He then described the British exploitation of India and the repressive actions of the Government in dealing with the nationalists and ended up with an appeal to the President highly charged with emotion:

Honoured Sir, the aching heart of India cries out to you, whom we believe to be an instrument of God in the reconstruction of the world. (56)

55 See 845.00/210, Records of the Department of State.

56 Full text of the letter in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9 May 1918, p. 3. Sir Subramania Iyer sent this letter, dated, 24 June 1917, to the President through two

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The Secretary to the President, Joseph P. Tumulty, forwarded this letter to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on 29 September 1917 saying: "The President directs me to send to you the enclosed papers with the request that you have them looked over to see whether anything proper can be done." (57) Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, in reply to Tumulty, advised: "... in view of the publication on October 2 of the letter from Sir S. Subramaniya to the President and that of an open letter to Congress, it seems to the Department that the writer should be ignored. It is apparently an attempt to use the President to assist the propaganda." (58)

The pronouncements of President Wilson had impressed the Indian leaders deeply. In his Presidential Address to the Delhi

American friends, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hotchner, to avoid the British censorship and interception. According to the account given by Henry Hotchner, President Wilson; Secretary of State Robert Lansing; former US Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau; Senators and members of Senate Committee on Military Affairs; and a large number of public figures and newspaper editors showed keen interest in Iyer's letter and especially in his offer of ten million men for the War. He also maintains that when Colonel House, President's personal adviser on international affairs, left America for England he carried with him the facts as to India. Even before that, the President, according to Hotchner, had sent to the American Ambassador in London the statement which he [Hotchner] had submitted to the President along with Iyer's letter. For Hotchner's narration of the whole episode, see Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10 May 1918, p. 5; 13 May 1918, p. 5. See also, B. Shiva Rao, "The Letter That Gave a Jolt to the British", The Hindu (Madras), 15 August 1968, Independence Day Supplement, p. III. Rao substantially reproduces what Hotchner had written about American interest in Iyer's letter.

57 Secretary to the President to Secretary of State, 29 September 1917, 845.00/212, Records of the Department of State.

58 Secretary of State to Secretary to the President, 4 October 1917, ibid. This reply indicates that Lansing was at least not as interested in Iyer's letter as Hotchner's account would suggest. See n. 56.
session of the Indian National Congress in 1918, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya made references to the right of self-determination and urged the British Government to incorporate this principle in the preamble to the statute which was going to outline the constitutional reforms for India. The Delhi Congress formally took cognizance of this principle and formulated its demand likewise. It said:

In view of the pronouncement of President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George and other British statesmen, that to ensure the future peace of the world the principle of self-determination should be applied to all progressive Nations, be it stated that this Congress claims the recognition of India by the British Parliament and by the Peace Conference as one of the Progressive Nations to whom the principle of self-determination should be applied. (59)

During 1918-1919 there were frequent references to the principle of self-determination in the Indian newspapers and journals. This so much chagrined the pro-British elements in India that Maurice Joachim complained that the USA was partly responsible for the new wave of national self-consciousness that swept over the Indian public in the post-war period. Referring to President Wilson's message of 2 April 1917, he wrote:

... the principles of self-determination that it upheld have so permeated the nationalist mind in India that, as a result, it will be appeased with nothing short of absolutely responsible self-government. (60)

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, very early in the meetings of the Commission on the League of Nations, the question


60 Maurice Joachim, "America's Attitude Towards India's Revolt", Current History (New York), 16 (September 1922), p. 1028.
of India's membership of the League cropped up. President Wilson expressed great admiration for India's performance in the War. But he had some reservations. While explaining his amendment to the draft of the Covenant to the effect that only self-governing states shall be admitted to the League, he pointed out:

Nevertheless, the impression of the whole world is that she [India] is not self-governed, that the greater part is governed by the laws of Westminster, and the lesser part is governed by princes whose power is recognized and supported by the British Government, within certain limits. Therefore, even though it may be hard to exclude India, still we ought to recognize that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. (61)

During this time, Indian nationalists were trying to draw the attention of the Peace Conference to India's case. B. G. Tilak, the leader of the Delegation appointed by the Indian National Congress to present the case of India before the Peace Conference, was not allowed to go to Paris. According to T. V. Parvate, Tilak, however, wrote a letter to President Wilson on 3 January 1919, to which Gilbert Glose replied on behalf of the President. Glose in his letter said:

I am instructed by President Wilson to acknowledge your letter and express to you his high appreciation of your kind thought of him and to assure you that the matter of self-determination for India is a question which will be taken up in due time by the proper authorities. (62)

61 David Hunter Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant (New York, 1928), vol. 1, p. 155. Miller was one of the members of the US Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.

62 T. V. Parvate, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (Ahmedabad, 1958), p. 463. Ram Gopal, another biographer of Tilak, says that on his return from England, Tilak threw out hints in the reception meeting at Bombay in regard to certain written promises he had in his possession. Five days later, i.e., on 2 December 1919, the Kesari, Tilak's mouth-piece published from Poona, wrote that he had got a written assurance from President Wilson that the principles of self-determination would be applied to India in due course. See Ram Gopal, Lokmanya Tilak (Bombay, 1956), p. 439.
At the Conference, however, President Wilson "acquiesced" to the British proposal that India be a member of the League of Nations. (63)

Indian Question in the US Congress

During the debates on the ratification of the Peace Treaty in the US Senate, some members referred to the repressive policy of the British Government in India as also to the efforts of the nationalists to achieve self-government. They criticized President Wilson for compromising on the principle of self-determination. One of the reasons of their opposition to the ratification of the Treaty was that this would commit the USA to the maintenance of status quo in countries like India, Egypt, and Ireland. Moreover, they complained that membership of India in the League of Nations in the existing circumstances would only serve to give an additional vote to Great Britain as against the lonely vote of other nations in the League. These were the lines of argument of Senators like Medill McCormick, Joseph France, Robert M. La Follette, and George W. Norris. (64)

63 Miller, n. 61, p. 492. According to Colonel House, in the meeting of the League of Nations Committee in Paris, their "worse difficulty" was about India. President Wilson had declared to him that "under no circumstances would he consent to the admission of a delegate from India, because it was not self-governing." General Smuts, however, "very cleverly" offered the suggestion that India being one of the signatory Powers would have automatically a right to a delegate. President Wilson accepted this proposition. See Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House: The Ending of the War (Boston, 1928), p. 311.

On 29 August 1919, Dudley Field Malone, an American citizen of Irish birth, appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and pleaded the case of India before them. He presented to them the resolution of the Indian National Congress passed in December 1918 in which they had referred to President Wilson's pronouncement on self-determination and had asked for its application to India. In the course of his statement, Malone pleaded that the Covenant of the League of Nations be so amended as to make it obligatory on every signatory to the Covenant to provide democratic institutions for the people who live under its government. He finally asked:

Will there be an India content and free under democratic institutions, which shall be demanded and required by our Nation, or will it be an India open for future exploitation, for wars, and for graveyards of their sons? (65)

Rustom Rustomjee, an Indian who did propaganda work on behalf of the Government of India in the USA, also tried to secure a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His request, however, was turned down on the ground that under the rules of the Senate only American citizens could be granted a hearing. He, in a letter to Senator Lodge, regretted that he was not given an opportunity at the hearing to repudiate the charges made by Malone against the Government of India. The fact that Malone had been given a hearing by the Committee without any opposition would, in the opinion of Rustomjee, generate false hope in the hearts of Indian revolutionaries and lead to "further outbursts of sporadic

65 Treaty of Peace with Germany; Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, part 15, 66th Congress, session 1, (Washington, 1919), p. 723.
but blood stained revolutionary activities...." He, however, expressed his trust that when the debate on the Peace Treaty took place in the Senate, it would be made quite clear that the United States would not give countenance to the revolutionary parties in India and Egypt. (66)

Nothing came out of Malone's pleading in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But some members of the US Congress continued to agitate the India question in the Houses. Congressman William E. Mason submitted a concurrent resolution in the House of Representatives on 2 March 1920. In the resolution, he stated that since it had been the policy of the USA to give recognition without intervention to the struggling people who sought self-determination and since the British Government had launched on a repressive policy against the Indian people led by the Indian National Congress, which fact had shocked the sense of justice of the American people, the House resolved that "it is the duty of the Government of the United States to carry out the will of the people to give such recognition without intervention to the people of India who are struggling for self-determination as will assist them in their efforts for self-government." (67) This resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed. Congressman Mason, again, submitted the same resolution in the House on 11 April 1921 and this, again, was treated in the same way.

66 Rustom Rustomjee to Henry Cabot Lodge, 8 September 1919, 845.00/247, Records of the Department of State. For the connection between Rustomjee and the Government of India and his remuneration for propaganda work, see F.O. 115/2597 of 1920, Public Record Office, London.

The British took note of these efforts of the Americans to bring the India question before the US Congress and its Committees. They were not unduly perturbed. They regarded these as so many efforts to delay the passage of the Treaty in the Senate. (68) Moreover, the British Embassy officials in Washington had earlier obtained an assurance from Senator Lodge that neither Egypt nor India would be made the subject of action in the Senate on the lines of the resolution passed in relation to Ireland. They believed that Lodge would do his best to implement this assurance. (69) They knew that Lodge sometimes changed his mind. But they were inclined to take this assurance at its face value, especially as they had asked him only about Egypt but he, of his own accord, had thrown in India so as to make his assurance cover this country as well. (70)

The Turbulent Post-War Years: Interest of the State Department

In the meantime, the Department of State had become anxious to get prompt and authoritative reports from India and, so, a


69 See File No. 3640 of 1919 with File No. 5805 of 1918, Political and Secret, India Office, London. On 6 June 1919, the Senate had resolved with only one dissenting vote that a hearing should be given to the representatives of Ireland at the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover, the Senate had expressed "its sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of their own choice."

telegram was sent to the American Consul in Calcutta on 18 April 1918:

Please telegraph Department promptly and frequently all political developments in India. Be careful to verify reports. Consult other American Consulates in India as to local conditions. (71)

The period 1919-1922 was a period of intense struggle in India against the British. In March 1919, the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, known as the Rowlatt Act, which provided for speedy trial of offences by a Special Court from the decision of which there was no appeal, was placed on the Statute Book of India. Under the leadership of Gandhi a widespread movement was launched against this which culminated in the Jallianwala Bagh incident of 13 April in Amritsar when, under the orders of Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, a crowd was brutally fired upon by the troops resulting into hundreds dead and thousands injured. This aggravated the situation and led to the first non-cooperation movement under the leadership of Gandhi. The Muslims too were greatly agitated against the British at the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire at the end of the War. This gave rise to, what is called, the Khilafat Movement jointly led by the Muslim leaders, Ali Brothers, and Gandhi.

The American Consuls stationed in India despatched reports on these developments and at times referred to them as if they constituted an "uprising." (72) The American Ambassador in London

71 Telegram from Secretary of State to Consul in Calcutta, 18 April 1918, 845.00/219a, Records of the Department of State.

72 See Consul General in Calcutta to Secretary of State, 28 April 1919, 845.00/225, Records of the Department of State.
also conveyed to the Department the concern of the British at the
disquietening situation in India. In a confidential telegram he
stated:

I learn from a reliable source that British Government
is alarmed over spread of unrest in India. It is
reported that Mohammedans and Hindus have been in
close cooperation in anti-European agitation and that
native army has been influenced by Bolshevik agents.
War office has ordered to India a reinforcement of
forty battalions.\(^{73}\)

The Department of State was concerned at possible connection
between Pan-Islamic movement and the Bolshevik activities in
Central Asia. They sent a telegram to American Consul in Calcutta
on 5 May 1920 which read:

Forward to Consuls Tiflis and Tehran; Mail report on
any features of Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic movements
which might affect situation in India or which are
connected with Bolshevik activities in Turkestan or
any other revolutionary movements in Central Asia.\(^{74}\)

This was duly forwarded to Tehran and Tiflis from where
the Department received reports in the matter. The Department also
received reports from its officers at Riga on the Bolshevik
activities in Soviet Russia in relation to India. Moreover, the
American Consuls in India, especially the Consul at Karachi, sent
frequent reports on this aspect of the situation in India. Such
reports were appreciated by the State Department.\(^{75}\)

The Department of State adopted a very cautious and guarded

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73 Telegram from US Embassy (London) to Secretary of State,
30 January 1920, 845.00/230, Records of the Department of
State.

74 Telegram from Department of State to Consul in Calcutta,
5 May 1920, 845.00/263, Records of the Department of State.

75 See Joseph C. Grew (for the Secretary of State) to Consul
in Karachi (E. V. Richardson), 13 February 1926, 845.00/508,
Records of the Department of State.
attitude towards developments in India. This is reflected in the advice which the Secretary of State gave to the President on 9 April 1921 in connection with the request of an Indian journalist, Prabodh Chandra Ghosh of Calcutta, seeking a statement by the President on the Indian situation. The Secretary of State (Hughes) writing to the President's Secretary advised the President against entering into correspondence with Ghosh. He said:

The political situation in India is such that the President cannot afford to take the risk of a possible misinterpretation of some friendly sentiment or personal view which might be expressed in a letter or in a statement on Indian affairs. (76)

He, therefore, advised that a formal acknowledgement of Ghosh's letters be made with the statement that they will be brought to the attention of the President when appropriate opportunity offered.

The same caution to dispel any impression of the US sympathy with the agitating political groups in India was displayed on another occasion in February 1922. The American Consul General in Calcutta sent a telegram to the Secretary of State on 3 February 1922 informing him that there were persistent rumours that the relations between the USA and Great Britain were strained and that the former was supporting Turkey and the Khilafat claims. (77) To this the Secretary of State replied that the rumour was absolutely untrue. (78)

76 See 845.00/330, Records of the Department of State.

77 Telegram from Consul General in Calcutta to Secretary of State, 3 February 1922, 845/309, Records of the Department of State.

78 Telegram from Secretary of State to Consul General in Calcutta, 9 February 1922, 845.00/309, Records of the Department of State.
The Consular reports from India showed a pronouncedly pro-British bias during this time. Consul General Smith justified the enactment of the Rowlatt Act in view of the existence of the "revolutionary conspiracies against the Government". He referred to the incidents in Amritsar and other places and opined that these "occurrences are striking commentary on the question of the fitness of India for self-government." He even gave credence to the suggestion in some circles that "the tentacles of the conspiracy extend far beyond India and secret leaders are in touch with Russian Bolshevists." (79) His high appreciation of the British administration was still more revealed a little later. On 5 January 1920, the Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter, a New York journal, while reporting on poor export of shellac from India, had written:

Political and revolutionary upheavals and conflicts had taken place between natives concerned with Indian liberty and British troops who have found political meetings and gatherings an excellent rifle range in which living targets by official command of British Generals were held to the guns till ammunition was exhausted.

Smith took strong exception to this and characterized it as mischievous. Countering the allegations, he remarked:

India is governed wisely, justly, humanely. As one who has lived in India for a number of years and has been brought into more or less close contact with a large number of British officials who compromise the Indian Civil Service, I have the most profound admiration for the Government of this country and for the unselfish spirit of sacrifice in the interests of India as a whole which dominates the official acts of the civil administrators who control its destinies. (80)

79 Consul General in Calcutta (James Smith) to Secretary of State, 28 April 1919, 845/225, Records of the Department of State.

80 Consul General in Calcutta (Smith) to Secretary of State, 25 February 1920, 811.911/106, Records of the Department of State.
Early in 1921, however, the next American Consul General in India, Alexander W. Weddell, in a despatch to the Secretary of State, expressed his opinion that a very great danger to anyone coming to India was that he was liable to be swept off his feet by the force of local English opinion since his official and social relations were so largely with the governing and commercial classes of this country. He, therefore, reported that to overcome the danger referred to, various newspapers owned by Indians and others but published in English, were being read and "an effort was being made to cultivate friendly relations with prominent Hindus and Mohammedans with the idea of gaining through these sources an approximate idea of the political, economical and other leavens at work in this huge Empire." (81)

Interest in Gandhi

The US Consular officers had begun to take note of Gandhi seriously. Consul General Weddell recognized that Gandhi could be regarded as "the authentic voice of India" at the moment. (82) Another American officer, Charles H. Hathaway (Consul in Bombay), believed in Gandhi's absolute sincerity about non-violence, although he noted that despite his exhortations against violence, the gospel of non-cooperation preached everywhere, "even in the remotest villages," had led to "some very nasty riots." Gandhi, he felt, was "purely a religious leader, a prophet", at bottom:

81 Consul General in Calcutta (Weddell) to Secretary of State, 11 January 1921, 845.00/278, Records of the Department of State.

82 Weddell to Secretary of State, 24 February 1921, 845.00/280, Records of the Department of State.
He viewed everything from such a standpoint as would Jesus or Buddha and clear down in the bottom of his soul (whether he knows it or not) his campaign is a conflict of religion with western industrial capitalist civilization... What he attacks in my judgment is not the British as British but the spirit of European civilization. It is this that makes his movement hard to gauge. He is calling the people of India to renovate their soul to become self-respecting so that others must respect them, i.e., he is preaching a moral regeneration. (83)

Hathaway felt that if Gandhi could plant his spirit in enough people, he could do everything. But the big question was: could he? He then turned to the question of how far there was a genuine spirit of nationalism among the people of India. Historically, there was no sense of unity in India. Whatever there was, that was the product of the British rule and that too, until two or three years ago, had not touched more than "the thin Europeanized veneer of the population." "But nobody would say that now", Hathaway wrote. And further, nobody was sure that "Gandhi's movement will not end by establishing a sense of national unity and an Indian patriotism throughout all ranks of the people." If it did, Hathaway felt, England's present position in India would be as untenable as it was in Ireland. He dreaded to see such an outcome, for he could not see that the Indians were yet fit to govern themselves. (84)

Subsequently, Hathaway tried to explain to the Secretary of State the economic philosophy of Gandhi's spinning wheel. Gandhi, according to him, failed to realize that in this age of industrialization no country could go back to hand production. But, despite

83 American Consul in Bombay (Hathaway) to U. Grant-Smith (American Commissioner in Budapest), 10 August 1921, 845.00/312, Records of the Department of State. This letter was forwarded to the Department of State by Grant-Smith.

84 Ibid.
this, if he succeeded in his mission, "the already poor Indians would be poorer still...." Hathaway reiterated that the stronger reason behind Gandhi's advocacy of the spinning-wheel was his religious temperament and his detestation of the western capitalistic and materialistic civilization. He warned that this radical difference in fundamental point of view in the event of Gandhi's views getting endorsed by an awakened India, "would make completely impossible the rule of any Western power; just as the wider extension of a similar faith in the superiority of Asiatic ideals would largely exclude Western influence in the further development of Asia."

In the US non-official circles also the Indian unrest since 1919 had begun to attract greater attention. It touched a high point in 1921-1922 with the rise of Gandhi in India. The Hearst press was particularly vociferous in condemning the British policy in India and in demanding that India should be free. In a signed article in the Washington Times, William Randolph Hearst, the owner of the Hearst chains of papers, angrily asked: "On what basis of justice, or general good will, or public benefit, or individual advantage, or liberty, or democracy, or self-determination, or anything that is recognized as right, is India kept in bondage by England?" He emphatically denied that there was any such basis and wrote: "India is surely a nation to which the principle of self-determination might best apply." He sharply posed the question: how could the United States "consistently and conscientiously support England in her domination of India against the will

85 Hathaway to Secretary of State, 28 October 1921, 845.60/-, Records of the Department of State.
of her three hundred million people?" He finally asked:

Should we not rather scrap this unnatural alliance
<with England>which stultifies all our principles
of liberty and nullifies the whole inspiring spirit
of our history?

Should we not rather remain the spiritual leader
of the world, lift high our flag of freedom and our-
selves be free? (86)

While Hearst's antipathy towards Britain was reflected in
editorials in his newspapers on the Indian issue, there were papers
which were critical of the nationalist movement. The Christian
Science Monitor depicted Gandhi as "the embodiment of reaction". (87)
The New York Times too was critical. But there were several groups
which were sympathetic. The Irish groups in the USA lent support
to the Indian cause and the liberals, the pacifists, and some
religious groups were greatly fascinated by Gandhi and his non-
violent method of conducting the nationalist movement. When the
non-cooperation movement was at its height, a number of them,
including some members of the US Congress, made public their
message of sympathy for the Indian nationalists proclaiming that
the United States had never failed to extend support to all peoples
who were struggling for freedom and therefore they would do all they
could to promote the success of their struggle. (88) The liberal
organs like The Nation and the New Republic made frequent comments

86 Reproduced in The Hindu (Madras), 27 February 1922. In the
preamble introducing Hearst's article, The Hindu wrote:
"India has reason to be grateful to the warm advocacy of
such an influential man as Mr. Hearst with his thirty
dailies undoubtedly is. The sympathy of a powerful country
like the United States cannot but be of some use in
furthering our case...."

87 See Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 7 July 1921,
quoted in Harman Singh, n. 14, p. 166.

88 Reproduced in Modern Review (Calcutta), 31 (February 1922),
pp. 242-3.
on Indian developments, criticising the British and appreciating
the stand of the nationalists. (89) Moreover, Rev. John Haynes
Holmes, the pastor of the Community Church in New York, declared
from his pulpit as early as 10 April 1921 that Gandhi was the
greatest living man in the world. (90) What impressed them most
was the novel way in which Gandhi was conducting his revolution.
Current Opinion expressed the opinion of a large section of the
Americans when it wrote:

... the revolution heretofore conducted in India is of
another sort and hard to comprehend. For the keynote
of that revolution, as spoken by its leader, Mohandas
Gandhi, sounds as if it might have been from a new
version of the sermon on the Mount. (91)

In fact, such was the attention received by Gandhi in the
United States in the post-war period that it became a matter of
great concern for Britain. This has been admitted by no less a
person than L. F. Rushbrook Williams, who was Director of Central
In one of his books, he has said:

... the attention attracted by Mr. Gandhi, due to the
picturesque nature of his activities and his personal
idealism, became a distinct factor in the relationship

89 See The Nation (New York), 110 (19 June 1920), p. 314;
113 (14 September 1921), p. 282; 113 (30 November 1921),
p. 610; 114 (15 February 1922), p. 183; 114 (22 March 1922),

90 See John Haynes Holmes, My Gandhi (New York, 1953),
pp. 29-31. For a survey of the continued interest of
Holmes and his magazine Unity (Chicago) in Gandhi, see
Unity, 101 (5 March 1928), pp. 20-21. Unity had the
privilege of holding the sole American rights to serialize
Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with
Truth, which began to appear in its pages from 5 April 1926.
Holmes regarded this as the greatest achievement of Unity
in its life of nearly half a century.

91 "The Latest Thing in Revolution", Current Opinion (New
The Lull after Suspension of Non-Cooperation

After the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement in March 1922, there was a comparative lull in India. Correspondingly there was lessening of American interest too. By October 1924, The Nation was bewailing that India hardly appeared on the horizon of American news. (93) The American friends of India complained that the "American papers and magazines are generally unwilling to give the truth about the Nationalist movement in India." (94) It also began to be speculated whether India would follow Gandhi at all. (95)

But during 1924-1926, three events gave some spurt to the American interest in India. Gandhi went on a 21-day fast in 1924 to stem the tide of communal tension in India. This brought him in the news again in some sections of the American press. Another factor was the Geneva Conference on opium. Americans largely believed that it was due to considerations of large revenue out of the opium trade that the British Government did not want to limit the production of opium in India to only that quantity which was

93 The Nation, 119 (1 October 1924), p. 322.
94 See Letter of Blanche Watson in Swarupa (Madras), 18 June 1924.
95 See Philo M. Buck, Jr., "Is this the Passing of Mr. Gandhi?", Virginia Quarterly Review, 2 (July 1926), pp. 390-404.
   See also Maurice Joachim, "Indian Turns Away from Gandhi", Current History (New York), 17 (December 1922), pp. 462-71.
necessary for medicinal and scientific purposes. (96) Bishop Brent regarded the British India Delegate at the Conference as "Our arch-enemy." (97) He had sharp confrontation with him at the Conference and this served to focus American opinion on the British policy in India on the opium question. (98) Still another factor was the Indian currency problem and its effect on American interests. In 1926, the recommendations of the Royal Currency Commission with regard to currency reforms in India drew some protests from the silver interests of America. They felt that these recommendations, when implemented, would bring about a slump in the prices of silver, affecting greatly this important industry. Hence there was some pressure from the side of these interests on the US Government goading them to take such action as to avoid the adoption of the Royal Commission's report in India. The Treasury Department, however, took the stand that it was due to advice of the American witnesses before the Commission in


98 See Entry for 28 November 1924, Diary of Bishop Brent, n.96. See also New York Times, 21 November 1924, p. 25; 29 November 1924, p. 3; 15 December 1924, p. 3.
London that a more drastic currency reform was not recommended. (99) They, moreover, warned these silver interests that there was such "a restless nationalistic spirit" in India that active opposition to currency reform there on the ground that American interests might be hurt might have an effect contrary to that desired by them. (100) They, therefore, advised silver interests that in view of the Indian politics involved "we in America should exercise the greatest discretion in this matter." (101)

The suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922 did not, however, lead to any slackening in the Consular reports from India. The waning of Gandhi's influence; the controversy between the Swarajists and the official group inside the Congress; the communal conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims; the deliberations of the Legislative Councils, etc., formed the frequent subject-matter of these reports. American Consular Officers kept watch over the reactions of the Indians to a case

99 Garrard B. Winston (Under Secretary of the Treasury) to Secretary of War, 19 August 1926, Indian Currency Commission 1926-1928, Records of the Department of Treasury, National Archives, Washington D.C., USA. See also Benjamin Strong to Pierre Jay, 11 August 1926, ibid. Strong, Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, was a witness before the Royal Commission.

100 Garrard B. Winston to M. B. Tomblin, Secretary, Colorado chapter, American Mining Congress, Denver, 14 October 1926, ibid. This letter was in reply to the resolution of the Western Division of the American Mining Congress that the US Government be urged to take action so that the adoption of the Royal Commission's report be avoided, at least in those respects which affected the American silver interest. Text of the resolution attached with Winston's letter.

101 Garrard B. Winston to F. Y. Robertson, Vice-President of the United States Smelting, Refining and Mining Company, Inc., New York, 15 June 1926, ibid.
involving an Indian in which the US Supreme Court, in 1923, had ruled that an Indian was ineligible for American citizenship since he was not a "white person" in terms of the understanding of the common man. (102) They also took note of the Indian reaction to the American administration of the Philippines. (103)

With a view to having an authentic idea of Gandhi and what he stood for, Wilbur Keblinger, the American Consul in Bombay, interviewed him in March 1924 and discussed with him the various aspects of his policy of non-cooperation with the Government and the related matters. (104) Gandhi, Keblinger reported, expressed pleasure at meeting a representative of the United States. But he was immediately told that the visit had no political significance and resulted from the personal desire of Keblinger to meet a distinguished Indian. Gandhi said he quite understood it. He answered the questions put to him by Keblinger and also volunteered some statements for, Keblinger reported, "he smilingly remarked that he never lost an opportunity to advertise his policy or to put propaganda in motion." Summing up his impression, Keblinger wrote:

The general impression gathered from the interview was that he [Gandhi] was very weary and longed for repose but that his high sense of duty toward the people who looked to him for guidance compelled him to continue the crusade he had set in motion. (105)

102 See 845.00/391, 845.00/411; 845.00/427; 845.00/430; 845.00/587, Records of the Department of State. For the reaction of the Indians, see Modern Review, 33 (March 1923), pp. 406-7; 33 (May 1923), pp. 631-2; 33 (June 1923), p. 770; also Indian Review, 24 (June 1923), p. 388; 24 (July 1923), pp. 405-7.

103 See, for example, Consul in-charge in Calcutta (William L. Jenkins) to Secretary of State, 14/16 January 1927, 845.00/591, Records of the Department of State.

104 Consul in Bombay (Keblinger) to Secretary of State, 28 March 1924, 845.00/422, Records of the Department of State.

105 Ibid.
The Department of State appreciated Keblinger's enterprise in securing this interview with Gandhi but it wrote back to him to caution that he should "exercise the greatest discretion in interviewing individuals, the association with whom, in view of their political beliefs, might give rise to embarrassment." It also told him that all information so obtained should be handled in "the most confidential manner possible." (106)

In the non-official circles, some sections retained their faith in Gandhi. Oswald Garrison Villard, the editor of The Nation, for example, continued to believe that no man in modern times had in himself so personified the spirit of Jesus as Gandhi did. He was certain that "nothing can be more important for this world than the triumph of his Gandhi's plan to make right triumph over might without resort to might." He was confident that "the world needs no other lesson half so much." (107)

Gandhi's spinning-wheel, often a butt of ridicule, also appealed to some Americans. Richard B. Gregg, who had put in seven years of practical work and study in industrial and labour problems in America (much of it in cotton mills), spent about two years and a half in studying the khaddar (coarse cloth made out of home-spun yarn) movement in India. The outcome was his book Economics of Khaddar. In this book, he analysed the logic and

106 Wilbur J. Carr to Wilbur Keblinger, 10 May 1924, 845.00/422, Records of the Department of State. This cautionary letter was sent to Keblinger, for the officials of the Department had felt that the report was interesting but would be full of "dynamite" if known. As it was, the report was not even marked "confidential" by Keblinger.

philosophy of Gandhi's khaddar movement in terms of modern technology and science. In India, he found, there were vast numbers of unemployed men and women who, in effect, were "engines kept running by fuel (food), but not attached to any machines or devices for producing goods". Gandhi proposed to harness them to charkhas (the spinning-wheel) and "thus save a vast existing waste of solar energy." (108) From this he came to the conclusion that the khaddar movement "is not a fantastic aberration of an Indian dreamer, nor an attempted reversion to obsolete and wasteful economic processes, nor a revengeful economic attack upon the West, nor any less 'realistic' than other economic movements now in progress in Russia, Japan, Turkey, China, Afghanistan and other parts of Asia." He believed that the supporters of the movement could afford to be confident that "they are in step with the spirit of the age, despite the appearances which so readily confuse the Western eye." (109)

"Mother India" Revives Interest

The publication of Katherine Mayo's Mother India in 1927 gave a fillip to American interest in India. (110) "It most certainly is a book", was the confident certificate of A. Harcourt, the President of the publishing Company, when he received the


109 Ibid., p. 163.

110 Katherine Mayo, Mother India (New York, 1927). Before writing this book, Mayo had visited India during the winter of 1926-1927. In 1929 she came out with another book Slaves of the Gods in which she attempted to "re-state some of the points developed in Mother India" through episodes taken from, as she claimed, "real Indian life."
manuscript of the book. He also forecast that the book would "create a stir." (111)

Mayo, in her book, absolved the British from any responsibility for the ills, including political backwardness, India was suffering from. Instead, she laid it squarely at the door of the "sex-obsessed" Hindus. Summarising her views on this point, she wrote:

The whole pyramid of the Indian woes, material and spiritual poverty, sickness, ignorance, political minority, melancholy, ineffectiveness - rests upon a rock-bottom physical base. The base is, simply, his manner of getting into the world and his sex-life thenceforward. (112)

When the book came out, it immediately caught the attention of a large section of the Americans and quickly became one of the best sellers. (113) The picture of the Hindu social life depicted in the book was so sickening that its reviewer in the Atlantic Monthly could scarcely sleep the night after she had gone through it. (114) The American Political Science Review exclaimed that those pictures had rendered the book "a sort of chamber of unhygienic horrors." (115) Similar was the reaction of the American Journal of Public Health and Nation's Health. (116)

111 A. Harcourt to Katherine Mayo, 24 January 1927, Papers of Katherine Mayo, Yale University, New Haven, USA. Hereafter this source will be cited as Mayo Papers.

112 Katherine Mayo, Mother India (London, 1927), fifth impression, p. 23.

113 See The Outlook (New York), October 1927 - June 1928. This journal had kept track of the popularity of the book.

114 Atlantic Monthly (Boston), 140 (August 1927), last cover page.


The book considerably succeeded — at least temporarily — in undoing much of the work done toward creating sympathy in the United States for the cause of India and in creating the impression that India lacked independence because it was unfit for it. (117)

What was more disastrous from the Indian point of view was that it had the potentiality of inducing the American reader to banish India out of his mind in sheer disgust. Wrote the Nashville Tennessean:

When he has shuddered at the horror of her description of childbirth, when he has observed the childlike deliberations of the native parliamentary body, when he has sensed the delicate balance which holds mob mania in control ... he will be glad that India is Britain's problem and not his own, 100 per cent American though he may be. And he is likely to throw his theosophy book out of the window and wash his hands. (118)

Still another effect which the book had on the mind of the reader was to divert his attention from India as a problem of nationalism to the individual Indian as a problem of biology and psychology. Leon Whipple, a reviewer, indicated this in The Survey when he wrote: "I confess I learned more from this book on the inner Indian mind and why the East is East than I ever knew before." (119)

It is true that the book also evoked critical comments published in such pro-India journals like The Nation or the scholarly journals like the Yale Review. (120) Moreover, Rev.

117 See The Outlook, 147 (16 November 1927), p. 148; see also The Independent (Boston), 25 June 1927.

118 Nashville Tennessean, 10 July 1927.

119 The Survey (New York), 88 (1 August 1927), p. 469.

Alden H. Clark, an American missionary who had worked for seventeen years in India, came out with an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* refuting the basic contentions of Mayo. (121) Yet the fact remains, as pointed out many years later by A. M. Rosenthal, that:

There are few people more important in the relationship between India and the United States than Katherine Mayo, few books, if any, that contributed more violent coloring to the American mental image of India than "Mother India." (122)

Naturally, the British officials in India were full of joy when the book came out. Wrote John Coatman, the Director of Public Information in the Home Department of the Government of India, to her:

What you say about our work in this country has cheered us a lot. Now that people in the Empire and the USA realize what we are up against we shall get a lot of more support which will stand us in good stead in the hard days to come. (123)

So, it was not for nothing that Coatman, before the publication, was begging her to "take pity on us and get your book out as soon as possible." (124) The British officials in India were conscious that Mayo's book could be of help if it were published before the impending appointment of the Simon Commission which was to go into the matter of constitutional reforms in India. J.H. Adam, a high (British) police officer, wrote to her:


123 John Coatman to Katherine Mayo, 29 September 1927, Mayo Papers.

124 John Coatman to Katherine Mayo, 23 December 1926, ibid.
I am eager to see your book and see what conclusions you have come to — all the more as the Commission to review the Reforms will be appointed in the next year or so and your book may help in the solution. (125)

Simon Commission and Other Factors

The appointment and work of this Commission — called Simon Commission after the name of its chairman, Sir John Simon — was another factor which was responsible for the revival of American interest in India during 1927-1928. The Commission reached India in February 1928 and was immediately faced with a tumultuous boycott organized and stimulated by the Indian National Congress. This attracted the attention of the American press. The US Consular officers in India also sent regular reports to the Department of State on the Indian reaction to and the work of the Commission.

An additional factor in this connection was the visit of Sarojini Naidu, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, to America towards the end of 1928 and the first half of 1929. Obviously this tour was undertaken to offset the effect of Mother India and to present before the Americans the authentic version of what India wanted. So, without mincing words, she eloquently told a select gathering at the luncheon discussion organised by the Foreign Policy Association in New York on 2 March 1929:

I want only to say to you that I am the voice, the authentic and accredited voice of my nation. I speak in the name of my nation. I speak of a day

125 J. H. Adam to Katherine Mayo, 10 January 1927, ibid. J. H. Adam was the Deputy Inspector General of Police posted at Lahore in the Punjab. Both he and Coatman were of great help to Mayo when she was in India.
when India shall stand free, sending her embassies to Tokyo and Washington, to Leningrad and London, because that is her birthright. (126)

Naidu's name also figured in the US Senate when discussions were being held on the Treaty for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (1928), popularly called the Kellogg-Briand Pact, to which the Government of India was also a signatory. Senator John J. Blaine's criticism was that in view of the reservations attached to it by Great Britain with regard to its inherent right to defend the British Empire, ratification by the Senate would mean acquiescence by the United States in the British domination over the colonies including India. In the course of his speech, he read out a telegram sent to him by Naidu. In the telegram she had said that while India always upheld the gospel of peace, she as "an unofficial but duly accredited spokesman" of her country questioned the claim of the British to commit India to any treaty in which its representatives were neither included nor consulted. (127)

These activities of Naidu were taken note of by the American press (128) and the Indians felt that her mission was "very successful." (129) Be that as it may, the net result of Mother


127 USA, Congressional Record, vol. 70, part 2, 70th Congress, session 2, p. 1406.


India's publication, appointment of Simon Commission, and the visit of Sarojini Naidu to the USA was that an atmosphere was prepared for the great rise of American interest in India during the Salt Satyagraha of 1930.

Commercial Interest in the Post-War Years

Another dimension of the US interest in India during the post-War period was commercial. Prior to the War, United States was but little known in India as a source of import trade. The US share in India's trade, however, considerably improved during the War. (130) After the War, the USA continued to take active interest in India as a market. W. H. Rastall, the US Trade Commissioner, visited India during 1919-1920, especially to investigate into the possibility for industrial machinery there. He was very much impressed with the possibilities and sent reports accordingly. He, however, found that "disproportionate" emphasis was being given to the opportunity available in South America and to a lesser degree, in China in the Departmental publications and American magazines. He, therefore, became hesitant and wanted to be sure whether there were any political reasons to explain the existing situation. (131) The Acting Director of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce replied to him on 29 June 1920. He wrote:

130 See C. K. Moser, The United States in India's Trade (Washington, Department of Commerce, 1939), p. 9. Moser was Chief of the Far Eastern Division of the Department of Commerce.

131 W. H. Rastall to Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 13 May 1920, 132,300, Records of the Department of Commerce, National Archives, Washington D.C., USA.
... the Bureau does not feel that the possibilities for American trade in India should, in any way, be depreciated or made secondary to the possibilities in South America or China. It is our policy to encourage the growth of American export trade wherever it is possible to do so, and with proper facilities afforded by American ships, the desire of a great many Indian firms to trade with USA should be encouraged and satisfied. (132)

The American Consular Officers and Trade Commissioners in India were conscious that the boycott of British goods during the non-cooperation movement had created greater opportunity for American business in India. (133) There were other factors too which made them feel that good prospects were opening. In the post-War period, projects like Sukkur Barrage were launched in India creating a good market for machinery. A Store Department for the purchase of materials was opened in Indian itself creating the hope that there would be less dictation from London in regard to purchase. Moreover, the Constitutional Reforms of 1919 had placed more powers in the hands of the Indians who were expected to pursue a policy of lesser expenditure on defence and correspondingly greater expenditure on railways, roads, power systems, irrigation schemes, etc. (134)

American Trade Commissioner, C. C. Batchelder, on arrival in Calcutta and Bombay, however, found that despite the possibilities, there were factors in the situation which made progress of American business in India very difficult. In many cases he was

132 R. S. Mac Elwee to W. H. Rastall, 29 June 1920, ibid.
133 R. A. Lundquist to Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 4 November 1920, 531 - India, Records of the Department of Commerce.
See
134 American Trade Commissioner in India (C. C. Batchelder) to Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 18 December 1922, 021.3-India, Records of the Department of Commerce.
flatly refused information. The British newspapers were violently anti-America. The rules and customs for the purchase of materials were such as almost to exclude American bidding. He, therefore, decided to take up the matter at the highest levels. After a good deal of efforts, he could manage to interview Sir George Lloyd, Governor of Bombay, and Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India. The interviews gave Batchelder great hopes. Reporting on his interview with the Viceroy, he wrote to the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce:

Incidentally the matter of the hostility of the official world as well as the commercial world to Americans as such, of which there is so much complaint, was mentioned; he [the Viceroy] made a number of inquiries, and was much distressed when he learned the facts. In the pursuit of Anglo-American international cooperation, he felt that the situation should be improved, and thanked me for bringing the matter to his attention. (135)

Americans, however, were eventually to be disappointed.

Commerce Reports, a publication of the US Commerce Department, carried an article on 7 February 1927 by one of its officers under the caption "India Opening to American Goods". It was stated in the article that a traveller on the docks of port cities in India would find tons and tons of steel and machinery fabricated in the USA but destined to be used in India. When this article reached India, British steel concerns, as reported by Charles B. Spofford, the American Trade Commissioner in India at this time, expressed their resentment to the Head of the Public Works Department in India and newspaper reporters asked him to explain why he had given

135 C. C. Batchelder to Director, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 18 December 1922, 021.3 - India, Records of the Department of Commerce.
preference to American steel when British firms were so much in need of contracts. Spofford informed his chief in Washington of the embarrassment of the Head of the Public Works Department in India and also advised extreme carefulness in giving publicity to American business in India in Commerce Reports in future. (136)

This chagrined W. H. Rastall, Chief of the Industrial Machinery Division of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, so much that he, in a personal letter to Spofford, wrote:

Truly there is a great deal of Eighteenth Century Spirit in incidents of the kind you represent, and while I, of course, would not encourage you into action that would be untactful or implict, you may from time to time find opportunities to point out that the world has outgrown the imperialistic ideas of Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, and the like. I wonder if there is any place for America's trade under the Indian sun. (137)

The situation, however, was not so bleak as the above passage would indicate. Due to the tenacity of American commercial interests as also the patient and strenuous efforts of the American trade commissioners posted in India, American trade with India during nineteen-twenties did register an advance over its pre-War position. (138)

Thus by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, missionary work, trade, and politics emerged as the three main areas of American interest in India.

136 Charles B. Spofford to Julius Klein, Director of Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 14 April 1927, 021.3 - India, Records of the Department of Commerce. For the British reaction to the Commerce Reports article, see Times of India (Bombay), 23 March 1927.

137 W. H. Rastall, Chief, Industrial Machinery Division to C. B. Spofford, 23 May 1927, 021.3 - India, Records of the Department of Commerce.

138 See Moser, n. 130, p. 17.