With the imprisonment and deportation of Tilak, the moderates gained an upper hand. The British Government was quite satisfied with the moderates' policy of petition and prayer. These leaders did not make any further demand of constitutional reforms, let alone the transfer of power to the representatives of the people. On the other hand, the extremists had a continued faith in the Vandemataram movement and desired further action. But, they were not well organised as the moderates who had organised the National Congress. The Nationalists, who succeeded the extremists and acted as their mouthpiece, had been removed from the scene. This is well expressed by Aurobindo who said "A hush had fallen over the country. No man seemed to know which way to move and from all sides came the questions, What shall we do ? What is there we can do ? What next?"

Fortunately for the movement, Tilak was released from prison and brought to Pune on June 16, 1914. The prison-life had dampened the spirit of Tilak. At the public reception organised in his honour he said, "I have not forgotten the people, I am glad to notice that the people have not forgotten me. I can only assure the people that separation of six years

could not diminish my love for them and I am willing and ready to serve in the same manner and in the same relation and in the same capacity which belonged to me six years, though it may be, I shall have to modify my courage a little." There was a modification in his demand for Swaraj. Instead of complete Swaraj, there was now a clamour for Home Rule. According to him, Home Rule would be the real first step to achieve freedom from the Britishers.

The outbreak of the First World War in August, 1914 provided him a platform to launch his plan. He, like others, did feel that it was the duty of Indians to give unstinted support to the British and help them in War through Indian military. But, he persistently demanded greater concessions from the British in return for the military help India would extend in the War. But, this would be possible only if the Congress became a united bringing together the extremists and the moderates. But, his best efforts to bring about unity failed. He had therefore to think of an alternative organisation through which he could voice the demand for Home Rule. Thus came into existence the Home Rule League.

1. ibid.
To this end, he published a series of articles in the Kesari. He also convened a conference of nationalists, on the eve of the Congress Session that was to be held in December, 1915, at Bombay. Perhaps in an unexpected move, this conference accepted his views on the subject. Based on this, he formed the Home Rule League which was formally announced on April 28, 1916. Its objectives were defined, as "attaining self-government within the British Empire by all constitutional means and to establish and organise public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same." Initially, the League became active in the Bombay Presidency as also in the Central Provinces and Berar. Gradually, it extended its activities to other parts of the country.\(^1\)

Almost at the same time, in the Madras Province, some new philosophical thoughts initiated some activities leading to certain social reforms in the beginning but finally shaped into a political movement. The leader of this movement was Mrs. Annie Besant.

At Adyar, a suburb of Madras, she started the theosophical society with Arundale as its Organising Secretary, Sir C.P. Rameswami Aiyer as one of the Secretaries and B.P. Wadia as the General Secretary.\(^2\) With a missionary zeal, she devoted

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1. ibid., 103.
her time and energy for the upliftment of Indian Society in the fields of religion and education. Slowly, she impressed on the minds of educated class who soon became her followers and supporters. She was watching the political developments in the country and she too, like Tilak, believed that Home Rule Movement would be an initial step necessary for achieving independence.

She had, in her own country, Ireland, witnessed the Home Rule Movement which was quite effective. She earnestly believed that such a movement would suit India also. This was a political movement, and so, from religion she jumped into politics. By joining the Congress in 1914, she tried to patch up the differences between the two groups within the Congress. She started two Journals, the Common Weal, a weekly, and New India, a daily, to popularise the concept of Home Rule. To educate the public in all matters connected with it, she prepared a scheme for such a movement and organised a civic parliament on February 4, 1915 at Madras. Several prominent members enrolled themselves as the members of this parliament. Throughout the year, she carried on only propaganda since she did not want to aggravate the movement.

On the eve of the Congress Session at Bombay, 1915, she convened a meeting of several leaders. S.N. Banerjee presided over the meeting. But, unfortunately, the Congress leaders felt that such an organisation would weaken the Congress and diminish its importance in the political field. For a moment she had to keep quiet watching the developments. To her disappointment, events moved slowly. By then, however, she found that Tilak had already inaugurated the Home Rule League. In September 1916, five months after Tilak's founding of the Home Rule League, she too started a similar League in Madras Presidency. The two leaders met and decided that there should be co-ordination between the two Leagues, one being a compliment to the other. Says Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "Here was India, then in 1916, a nation whose cause went unheeded (by the British) and whose leader remained yet to be found. It was at such a juncture that Mrs. Beasant stepped into the trench. She jumped from religion to politics, from theosophy to Home Rule."2

In the Congress Session of 1915, an epoch-making resolution was passed, according to which, there was an amendment in its constitution, making room for all Nationalists to attend the meeting as delegates, whether they were moderates or extremists. This paved the way for the re-entry of Tilak and all other extremists in the Congress and

1. ibid.
unification of all congressmen within the Congress as a single body. Hence, in the session held in Lucknow in December, 1916, the united body of Congress held its session.

This year also witnessed the coming together of the Congress and the Muslim League. The annulment of Partition of Bangal brought the Muslim League close to the Congress, since the attitude of the Muslims towards the British now underwent a clear change. International political developments also helped in bringing together the two bodies. The Balkan issue had resulted in the outbreak of war between the Balkan States and Turkey. Attacked on both sides, Turkey suffered a great loss. The British instead of rushing to the rescue of Turkey, remained indifferent. Indian Muslims were worried of the fate of Turkey since the Sultan of Turkey was their Khalifa or religious head.¹ Anticipating Muslim's opposition, the British, no doubt, gave assurance of sympathetic treatment to Turkey at the end of the war, provided Muslims supported them in the war. But, disappointment loomed large due to the terms of the Armistice at the end of the War, consequent upon which Asiatic portions of the Turkish empire came under the control of Britain and France under the guise of Mandates.² This widened the difference between the British and the Muslims. The latter

2. ibid.,
now moved towards the Indian Congress with a desire to work together. The Congress and the Muslim League formulated a joint scheme of constitutional reforms for presenting it to the government as their minimum demands for India's progress towards Self-government.

This coming together of two organisations was appreciated by several Andhra leaders. Rayalaseema was no exception. On 18th August, 1917, *Andhra Patrika* published an abstract of the Chittoor District Conference. The president insisted that Indians should be treated as equal partners of the British Empire. It was the right, unequivocally promised in the Queen's proclamation. They passed a resolution in favour of Congress Muslim League reforms.¹

A Home Rule League meeting was held on 29th September, 1917 at Penukonda, when Harisarvottama Rao, in his Presidential remarks, stated that even the nominal demands formerly accepted by the Congress were later given up. The difficulties of the people would not be solved until Home Rule was granted.² Similarly, a Conference of leaders of the Kalahasthi Taluk in Chittoor district was held on 27th November, 1917 under the presidency of Dharma Kumara Venkatappanayanam Bahadur, the 6th Prince of Srikalahasthi, supporting the Congress-Muslim League reforms.³ The fourth Kurnool District

conference was held on December 9, 1917 under the Chairmanship of Raghunatha Mudaliar. A resolution was passed in support of such reforms.¹

The Home Rule League at Madras headed by Annie Beasant and its counterpart at Poona headed by Tilak were somewhat jubilant about this development. The fully concurred with the suggested reforms as if it was their own scheme. Both the bodies decided to work for its success. To this end a propaganda scheme was launched upon through which they could rouse public opinion in their favour. This was something the British Government had not anticipated.

In Andhra, the dynamism with which Annie Beasant inaugurated the Home Rule Movement and gave it a momentum was appreciated by the progressive leaders. The reaction of the Telugu press was receptive in parts. The *Andhra Patrika* of October 5, 1915, for example, did not favour the coming into existence of another organisation. It said, "we believe that in the present circumstances it is necessary to have, besides the Indian Congress, another All India Association with the same ideals and aspirations as those of the Congress. It does not appear to be wise

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¹ *ibid.*, dated December 9, 1917.
to undertake other works without settling the differences prevailing among the Congress leaders and strengthening the Congress."¹

The Shashilekha, on the other hand, lauded the attempts of Annie Beasant and felt that it was right that a Home Rule was started since, "for many years past the Congress and such other bodies have been requesting the authorities to grant to India self-government on colonial lines. But, India has not been favoured with such government in the slightest degree."² The Deshamata also wrote on similar lines in its edition of October 27, 1915. Despite such opinions expressed by the Press it made the leaders all the more convinced of the efficiency of the movement.

Consequently, under the secretaryship of Harisarvottama Rao, a branch of the Home Rule League, was formed in 1916.³ Beasant's Theosophical Society had already had its hold in Andhra, where several branches were founded. Many theosophists also enrolled themselves as members of the League and carried on the work of the movement. P. Kesava Pillai of Anantapur, Arcot Range Mudaliar, Siva Sankar Pillai; Hatti Sankara Rao, Doraiswami Aiyangar and B. Muniswamy Naidu were some of those who participation in the movement was quite significant.⁴

¹. N.P.R. 1915, p. 1749, para 45.
². ibid.,
Harisarvottama Rao issued several pamphlets in Telugu explaining the different aspects of the movement. He even composed songs pertaining to the movement. Sarojini Naidu's song "Awake Mother" was translated into Telugu as "Nutana Haindava Matrugeetam." Other popular writings were Swarajyam Korutaku Karanam and Swatantra Vardhana Patram, wherein Swaraj was defined and its objectives explained. Journals like the Deshamata run by Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham, Hitakesari of Eluru, Andhra Patrika and Krishna Patrika played prominent roles in educating the people about this new movement.¹

Mrs. Annie Beasant visited several places in Andhra during 1916, when she gave a call to the people to defy government laws of repression and aggression and to learn the code of Self-government. In Chittoor, she proclaimed "No self-respecting man can remain content to live in his own country as an alien, shut out from the higher reaches of public life. To live without freedom is to die daily. It is not life but living death."² New India and Common Weal were her mouthpieces to criticise the politics of the British Government. She denounced the discrimination shown by the Railway authorities in not allowing Indians to

2. ibid.,
travel with the Europeans. This provoked the Indian students who often fought with the British students. She organised bands of Home Rule Volunteers and also unified the Indian Boy Scout movement, besides launching a national educational scheme. The National College at Madanapalli was founded by her in May, 1916 with J.S. Cousens as the first Principal. Her colleagues Mr. Arundale and B.P. Wadia, identified themselves with the Congress-League policy of Self-government. The District Associations at Chittoor, Machilipatnam, Kurnool and Cuddapah passed resolutions demanding Home Rule. K.V. Krishna Rao, Azad Ali Khan and Gooty Kesava Pillai were the presidents of Kurnool, Cuddapah and Krishna District Associations.¹

The Madras Government, realising the severity of the events that were rousing popular sentiments, came out with a circular prohibiting students' participation in the political meetings. Mrs. Annie Beasant, Mr. Arundale and Mr. B.P. Wadia were interned at Ootacamund on 16th June, 1917. This internment of popular leaders led to acts of retaliation by the people and protest meetings were held at several places in Andhra.

In Madras City a meeting was held under the presidency of B.N. Sharma, to condemn the arrest of Besant. The condemned meeting was attended by about 400 students besides others. Subscriptions were collected for the 'Besant Fund' and the audience took the Swadeshi Pledge. Mocherla Ramachandra Rao and Gooty Kesava Pillai also delivered speeches in this meeting.

The local branches of Home Rule League at the district and taluk level also organised meetings with the cooperation of the Congress and the Theosophical Societies condemning the repressive policy of the Government.

People were given a call to activate the movement in the cause of Swaraj. The meetings were attended by Government pensioners, teachers and members of local boards and Municipal Councils besides hundreds of students, defying the prohibitory circular issued by the Government. Protest meetings were held at several places in Andhra also. At a meeting at Kurnool it was resolved to start a branch of the Home Rule League as a protest against the repressive measures of the Madras Government and work vigorously for strengthening Home Rule League. At Chandragiri, the people of Chandragiri taluk organised the Chandragiri Divisional Conference to further the cause of Self-government. Resolutions were passed condemning the interment of Besant.

2. Fortnightly Reports, July 2, 1917.
and her colleagues under the Defence of India Act and demanding Self-government to India. It was also resolved to hold similar conferences every month in one village or the other in the taluk to keep alive the zeal and the enthusiasm among the people.¹

In a meeting at Borhampur it was resolved to work the Swaraj Movement with still greater enthusiasm. The Guntur meeting passed a resolution asking the Legislative Council members not to attend the Council meetings until the internment orders were withdrawn.²

All the Telugu papers also protested the internment. The Deshabhimani said that it was a stain on the British Government to have interned Annie Beasant who had sacrificed much for the welfare of the people. The Deshamata gave details about the good number of popular leaders who had associated themselves with the Home Rule League since the adoption of repressive measures by the Government. Public meetings were held where calls were given to agitate for self-Government. Harisarvottama Rao through advertisements sought the help of young propagandists and about a hundred persons responded to his call. The Madanapalli District Conference was attended by several Professors and students of the

Theosophical College who took a prominent part in the Internment Day celebrated on the 16th August, 1917. After heated discussions, the Conference passed a resolution for the furtherance of passive resistance.

On its part, the Government increased the policy of repression. Karandikar of the editorial staff of *New India* was ordered to leave Madras within 48 hours. The Government also demanded a security deposit of Rs.1000/- from Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham Pantulu's Deshamata. The names of members of the Guntur bar, who were sympathetic to the Home Rule Movement were listed by the District Judge. The Zamindars were asked not to participate in the movement. But above all these, the British Government now gave its active support to the non-Brahmin movement in South India, which had just then gained momentum. This movement was opposed to the Home Rule movement, and this came in handy for the British to oppress the movement by adopting a policy of "Divides and Rule."

A joint meeting of the All India Congress Committee and the Council of Muslim League was held in the last days of July to work out a plan for securing the release of

Beasant and her followers. By now Gandhiji was making a slow entry into Indian politics. The policy of passive resistance followed by him in Champaran in connection with the redressal of grievances of Indigo cultivators had gained success. But, the joint meeting did not favour his policy and it sought the advice of the Provincial Congress Committees and the Council of the Muslim League. It may be noted, incidentally, that at the time of the Vandemataram Movement passive resistance was no doubt thought of as an effective instrument for winning Swaraj. Extremist leaders like Aurobindo, Tilak and Pal looked at it as a weapon of last resort. But they were not given a chance to try it.¹

The subject was considered by the various Provincial Congress Committees. There was mixed reaction, some favouring it and others opining that it was undesirable. A few advised its postponement in view of Mr. Montague's visit and the probability of his announcing more favourable constitutional reforms. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee approved the latter opinion on August 14, 1917 and passed a resolution which, "Resolved that, it is advisable to adopt the policy of passive resistance, insofaras it

involves opposition to all unjust and unconditional orders against the carrying on of constitutional agitation and also against the prohibition of public meetings peacefully and constitutionally conducted to protest against the unjust and unconstitutional orders of internment and against the repressive policy of Government." A fortnight later, a special meeting of the Madras Provincial Conference was convened for approving this resolution. In the meeting, held in the intervening period at several places in Andhra, notably at Rajahmundry, Guntur and Machilipatnam resolutions were passed in favour of the adoption of passive resistance. However, some leaders like B.N. Sharma, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, N. Subba Rao Pantulu, M. Ramachandra Pantulu, P. Siva Rao, P. Venkatapathi Raju and V.P. Madhava Rao did not favour this and submitted a memorandum. However, at the meeting of the special conference their opposition was ignored and a resolution was passed approving the adoption of passive resistance.¹ Opinions in the Telugu press were divided on the subject. The Andhra Patrika and the Andhra Prakasika opposed it, while the Deshabhimani was in favour.

In response to this resolution, a pledge was drafted and several persons in favour of passive resistance signed it as a token of their determination to suffer, whatever

penalty might be imposed upon them for their resistance.  

There were thirty such signatories from Machilipatnam alone. Meanwhile, the agitation for Home Rule continued unabated. The members of all the branches of the League met at their first conference in Madanapalli under the presidency of Harisarvottama Rao and resolved to pursue their activities with greater vigour. Harisarvottama Rao also visited several places like Visakhapatnam and Bezawada during September and delivered lectures on Swaraj.

The activities and the persistent agitation carried on by the members of the League and the talk of passive resistance convinced the Government that it was no longer desirable to keep Beasant interned. The Secretary of State, Mr. Montague who also felt that internment was inconsistent with the new policy announced in the House of Commons. Beasant and her colleagues were consequently released on September 17, 1917.

The public and the press regarded their release as a great triumph of popular agitation. The Krishna Patrika wrote: "constitutional agitation is crowned with success. This is a good sign for the future acquisition of Self-government." The Deshamata showered praises in the same manner. Andhra Patrika referred to Beasant's welcome by

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1. Extracts from the G.Os relating to the Home Rule Movement in Andhra Pradesh, G.O.No.1435, Public Department, 8-12-1917.
2. N.P.R. 1917, pp. 2364 - 5, para 113.
the citizens of Madras and noted that such a reception was not given even to the Viceroy. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee met on September 28, 1917, and dropped the idea of passive resistance after the release of Beasant. On October 6, the All India Congress Committee and the Council of the Muslim League met in a Joint session at Allahabad and resolved to withdraw the question of passive resistance sent by it to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. An all India deputation was in support of the Congress League Scheme. With this ended the most important and exciting phase of the Home Rule Movement.

The Government changed its attitude towards the Home Rule Movement. They sought more help from the Indians to solve the war problems so that their demand for Self-government be considered partially. Moreover, the Government of Britain had appreciated the invaluable service rendered by the Indian Army and the financial assistance of Indian people during the days of war. These resulted in the announcement made in the House of Commons on August 20, 1917 by Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India that His Majesty's Government was considering the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive

realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. He announced that he would be visiting India to discuss the matter with the Viceroy. He also announced the removal of racial partiality from the King's Commission in the Army.  

This declaration was welcomed with great joy and much expectation by the public and the press. The Andhra Patrika Expressed the hope that Montague's visit would result in the acceptance of the Congress-League Scheme and promote cordial relations between the two countries. The Anglo Indian papers and the Europeans in India were, however, opposed to this policy. On September 1917, the Telugu Press strongly condemned the attitude of these reactionary forces and hoped that Mr. Montague would not fall under their influence.

The Government of Madras and the district authorities encouraged the non-Brahmins to stage demonstrations against Home Rule during the time of Mr. Montague. These months also witnessed several communal riots in towns like Guntur, Kurnool and Cuddapah. The local authorities did little to promote friendly relations among the communities concerned. The progressive group contemplated an agitation for Home Rule

and proposed to go on with the policy of passive resistance if reforms were not introduced.¹

A special session of the Andhra conference was held at Bezawada under the presidency of C.V.S. Narasimha Raju with A. Kaleswara Rao as the Chairman of the Reception Committee on September, 1917. Then was mooted the idea of creation of separate province for Andhras and a memorandum was to be submitted to Montague to that effect. Resolutions were passed in favour of the Congress-League scheme and also about reservation of seats to non-Brahmins in the Madras Legislative Councils to remove their suspicion that Home Rule would benefit only the Brahmins.²

A conference of one section of non-Brahmins of the six coastal districts of Andhra was held in Bezawada in favour of the Home Rule to counteract another section of non-Brahmins, who were opposed to Home Rule. The conferences of both the sections were held on the same day, i.e. October, 24, 1917, at different places in Bezawada. Sri. Ponaka Pattabhirami Reddy of Potlapudi was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the pro-Home Rule Movement. Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary, Kesava Pillai, Ranganatha Mudaliar and several other prominent non-Brahmin leaders from Rayalaseema

² Kaleswara Rao, A: op.cit., pp. 231-34.
attended this conference. This conference almost endorsed the Congress-Muslim League scheme and it was proposed to submit a memorandum to Montague. But the press and the people of Andhra were disappointed when they found that in the official list of those that were to call upon Montague names of several senior members had been removed and members of the new association, opposed to Home Rule League were included. With great difficulty, the Andhra delegation managed to meet the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, who was sympathetic to the demand for separate province and assured to consider it in due course.

The Annual session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1917 was presided over by Mrs. Beasant. Her services during 1914-1917 to the cause of the country's freedom were praised, and a resolution was passed demanding self government. For the first time a separate Andhra Congress Circle was recognised, thanks to the efforts of Tilak, who supported the cause of linguistic provinces. Consequently, the Telugu-speaking districts were separated from the rest of the Madras Presidency, and constituted into a new Congress Circle. This was in effect a victory for the sponsors of the Andhra Movement.¹

The first Andhra Provincial Congress was formed on January 22, 1918 with Nyapathi Subba Rao Panthulu as President and Konda Venkatappayya as the General Secretary.\(^1\) Political tensions increased in this year. The All India Home Rule League decided to send a special delegation to England to explain the ideals of the Home Rule Movement to the British Government in India. The Krishna District Conference held in Machilipatnam on January 26, 1918, passed a resolution that Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya should be sent on deputation to England to shape public opinion in regard to the formation of a separate Andhra Province, besides the Home Rule.\(^2\) But, the Government forfeited the passports of the Home Rule delegates. A resolution to form a separate Andhra Province moved by B.N. Sharma in the Imperial Legislative Council was opposed by non-official members like Jinnah and Srinivasa Sastry. This created a stir among the Andhras. Krishna and Vizagapatnam district committees passed resolutions in favour of both Home Rule and formation of a separate Andhra Province. Presiding over the Cuddapah District Conference N. Pattabirama Rao, said that a certain section of the Ceded Districts people were opposed to the formation of a separate province and he pleaded that they should sink all their differences and work unitedly for the attainment of the common objectives. In the Andhra Conference held at

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\(^2\) *The Hindu*, dated February 11, 1918.
Bezawada under the presidency of B. Venkatapathi Raju the delegates from the Ceded Districts voted in favour of the resolution requesting the Government to accept the formation of an Andhra Province, in the new scheme of constitutional reforms. The Guntur District Conference under the presidency of Nyapathi Hanumantha Rao also passed a similar resolution to send a deputation to England.¹

Beasant continued her Home Rule activities, toured the country and visited a number of places in Krishna district along with Arundale. Home Rule processions were started in towns like Guntur. She now paid more attention to national education and made Madanapalli the centre for her National University.² The Rajahmundry branch of Home Rule League issued a pamphlet welcoming her role.

The Viceroy convened a conference at Delhi to which several non-officials were invited. He asked for the assistance of Indians for continuing the war but declined to consider the demand of Home Rule on the ground that it was not the right time to do so. This caused great discontent among Indians in the country. The Andhra Patrika and the Hitakarini criticised the Government's policy. Government cancelled the passports of the delegates of Home Rule movement and granted a passport to D.N. Nair who was against the Home Rule enabling him proceed to England.

² Fortnightly Report, April 19, 1918.
The President of Guntur Congress declared that "this does not become the British Government who declared publicity that they entered the war to maintain the freedom of the world." The President of the Ganjam District Conference was of the opinion that would not concede the demand of Self-government, there is no justification in their talking of freedom and war pretending to protect the freedom of such countries like Belgium.¹

The All India Congress Committee met in Bombay to protest against the cancellation of the passports and against the plea for unconditional help to Britain, in the event of further war. Andhras like Konda Venkatappayya, Uruganti Venkatasubbaiah and Kaleswara Rao attended the meeting. At this conference, Tilak moved an amendment to the effect that help would be rendered to Britain only if they were to grant Home Rule.² The Andhra delegates supported the amendment of Tilak. Special District Conferences were held in Cuddapah, Vijayawada, Krishna, Nellore and Ganjam expressing the disappointment of the people regarding the Montague-Chelmsford scheme of reforms. At Guntur a special Andhra conference was held under the chairmanship of K.N. Nageswara Rao Pantulu and demanded the implementation of the Congress-League scheme.

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¹ N.P.R. 1918, p. 915, para 71.
Events now moved fast. The First World War ended on 11th November, 1918. The Montague-Chelmsford reforms were announced much to the disappointment of the people. The All India Congress meeting at Delhi recommended to the Government that India should be represented at the Peace Conference at Paris. The Andhra Provincial Congress passed a resolution suggesting the name of Tilak as a delegate. Tilak, Gandhi, and Hasan Imam went to England but returned without substantial gain. The British Government was in no mood to heed to the petitions of Indians. The immediate effect of the Home Rule Movement was the awakening of the masses to the political struggle and the rise of political consciousness. With Tilak's death in 1920 one era of freedom movement ended and another arose in its place. That was the Gandhian era.