CHAPTER - III

TOWARDS SWARAJ: SWADESHI MOVEMENT IN MADRAS CITY

The growth and spread of political consciousness changed the attitude of the Indians towards the British rule, from the representative government to that of Swaraj. As it is seen in the previous chapter, a new group with the firm determination of achieving Swaraj emerged within the Congress. Known as the Nationalists, they advocated Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods to attain Swaraj. When their tactics failed due to the repressive measures of the government, there emerged militant groups, whose members sought to liberate India through selective acts of violence. Whereas the Moderates who represented the old liberal tradition of the Congress continued their constitutional agitation. But the goal remained to be the same to all groups, the Swaraj.

These national developments had their repercussions in the Madras Presidency. Identifying themselves with the Nationalists and adopting their programme, the Egmore group challenged the leadership of the Madras Moderates.

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Note: For the Nationalists as well as Radicals the term ‘Swaraj’ meant Complete Independence absolutely free from the British Empire, whereas for Moderates, it meant colonial Self Government under the aegis of the British Empire.
otherwise known as Mylapore group. Though the Moderates supported Swadeshi, they were against the boycott.

The Swadeshi Movement economically, insisted on using goods made or manufactured in India in preference to those imported from abroad. It politically aimed at making the administration as far as possible Indian.\(^2\) According to V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Swadeshi meant the 'the development of Indian industries by Indians'.\(^5\) The original conception of boycott had two distinct but allied purposes in view. The first was to bring pressure upon the British public by the heavy loss they would suffer due to the boycott of British goods. Secondly, it was regarded as essential for the revival of indigenous industries, that could not grow in the face of free competition with foreign countries, which had highly developed industries. Further, boycott Movement could not succeed unless the essential goods imported from foreign countries could be manufactured in India. Till then people would be forced to buy foreign goods and the boycott was bound to fail.\(^4\) Swadeshi and boycott were thus the positive and the negative aspects of the same phenomenon. The idea of Swadeshi was not new. This idea got new impetus from the anti-partition movement in Bengal.\(^5\) Many people observed the partition day as a day

\(^2\) *Wednesday Review*, 19 July, P.416 (MNR)

\(^3\) TNA. Thiruvelliy Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, Part-I (Madras, 1982), p.iv.


\(^5\) In spite of the repeated protests by the Congress, public and the press, the partition of Bengal was effected on 16th October 1905 by Lord Curzon in order to reduce the importance of Bengal.
of national mourning. Several meetings and demonstrations were held throughout India. The meetings expressed solidarity with the idea of boycotting British goods as long as the partition lasted. The boycott in Bengal was a concrete manifestation of the Swadeshi Movement which spread throughout India as the specific form of liberation struggle.

In Madras a protest meeting of over 2,000 people was held. Madras press also vehemently criticized the partition and advocated Swadeshi and boycott Movement. Even the Madras Mail, in its article entitled 'Bande Mataram' attacked the policy of Lord Curzon. Under such a situation the Indian National Congress could not remain unaffected by the changes in the Indian feelings. In the Benares Congress Session held in 1905, Gopala Krishna Gokhale, the President of that Congress Session encouraged Swadeshi Movement, though not boycott.

Tuticorin, Tinnevelly and Madras were the chief centres of Swadeshi and boycott Movement in Tamil Province. G. Subramania Iyer was the pioneer advocate of Swadeshi Movement in Madras Presidency. He held a series of meetings in Madras and mofussil areas emphasizing the people to use only

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8 The Hindu, 2 Dec. 1905.
10 G. Subramania Iyer, a great social reformer, was excluded from the Mylapore group for allowing his widowed daughter to remarry. But he remained as moderate until the advent of Begum Chandra Pal to Madras.
Swadeshi articles even though they were costly in the beginning. His nationalist activities did not cease with the advocacy of Swadeshi principles alone. He advised the students to open a Swadeshi store for the exhibition and sale of articles of indigenous industries. He also said that a bureau of industrial information should be set up in Madras.\textsuperscript{11} He himself started a National Fund scheme in 1905 to support the indigenous entrepreneurs and also to send brilliant boys to Japan and other countries for undergoing training in the manufacture of articles like candles, soaps, matches and other items. He appealed to the people to contribute to the above mentioned fund atleast once a year. Students and volunteers used to go from door to door for raising funds for it.\textsuperscript{12} By this time the Movement received support from the Congress and it spread quickly.

A fresh impetus was given to Swadeshi Movement by holding number of mass meetings. The outcome of these meetings was the establishment of two industries in Madras namely, the Indian Industries Company Limited and the Madras Chrome Leather Industry Limited.\textsuperscript{13} But the most outstanding achievement of the Swadeshi Movement was the establishment of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tuticorin in Tinnevelly District.

\textsuperscript{12} S.A. Govindasajan, S. Subramania Iyer (New Delhi, 1969), pp.44-45.
\textsuperscript{13} The Hindu, 15 Mar, 1906.
Due to G. Subramania Iyer, initially the City of Madras was the centre of Swadeshi Movement, but soon it was shifted to Tuticorin by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, a non-Brahmin lawyer and a staunch advocate of Swadeshi and boycott Movement in Tamil Nadu. He started the Tuticorin Industrial Welfare Association and the ‘Dharma Sangam’ for fostering swadeshi industry and commerce. He also established a Spinning and Weaving centre and a National Emporium for selling the Swadeshi goods at Tuticorin. On seeing these institutions being successfully conducted by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, local merchants induced him to break the monopoly of the British shipping concern in the coastal trade with Ceylon.14

In addition to financial exploitation, the passengers bound for Ceylon were put to much trouble at Tuticorin. It frequently happened that there was delay for four or five days for want of accommodation in the steamers.15

In order to break the monopoly of the British India Steam Navigation Company and save the people from exploitation but more importantly to encourage Swadeshi Movement, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai started the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in April 1906 at Tuticorin with Pandithurai Thevar, a zamindar of Madurai as its President and Secretary and himself as its Assistant Secretary. It was officially registered in October 1906 with the nominal capital of

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14 R.A. Padmanabhan, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, p.28.
Rupees ten lakhs. It was not a profit oriented business concern, but a national venture. Hence, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai made it a joint stock public limited company with shares open to all the people. He came to an understanding with the Shah Lines of Bombay, an Indian Company, to run a chartered service between Tuticorin and Colombo. When the ship was put on the line on 20th November 1906, competition began between the British Line and the Shah Line supported by the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. The majority of Indian merchants shipped their cargo through the Swadeshi steamer. Such developments annoyed the British Indian Steam Navigation Company that till then monopolized shipping. Hence they decided to break down the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. At first they threatened the Shah Lines Company not to lend ships. This forced V.O. Chidambaram Pillai to purchase two ships namely S.S. Gaelia and S.S. Lawoe and placed them on the Tuticorin run. Meanwhile the Swadeshi Stea Navigation Company became popular and in order to raise funds for it, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai visited Madras. Along with G.Subramania Iyer, he arranged a meeting in Madras on 17th March 1907 and addressed the public to boycott foreign goods, then it would result in the attainment of Swaraj. G.Subramania Iyer in his address pointed out the denial of higher appointments to Indians under the British

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18 The Hindu, 10 Dec. 1906
20 Timnehally Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, p.vii.
Government, and their negligence of responsibilities in eradicating the poverty in India and requested the people to contribute to the growth of Swadeshi Movement.\(^{21}\)

Their stirring address on Swadeshi increased the interest of the people in the affairs of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. In response to their call, many people joined the Company as share holders. Nearly 4,000 shares were sold within two weeks and five apprentices were drawn from different provinces of India to navigate the ship.\(^{22}\)

Consequently the competition between the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and the British India Steam Navigation Company grew rapidly. The successful Swadeshi propaganda of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai annoyed the British ship owners and other representatives of the British circle who had a heavy loss in their business. These British merchants had influenced the officials to take severe measures to stop the preaching of Swadeshi propagandist.\(^{23}\) Due to their influence, the District Magistrate and Collector decided to crush the Swadeshi Company.\(^{24}\)

\(^{21}\) Swadesamitran, 26 July 1907, p.822 (MNR)


\(^{23}\) I.M. Reissner and N.M. Goldberg, Tilik and the Struggle for Indian Freedom (New Delhi, 1966), pp.456-57

\(^{24}\) The Hindu, 2 Apr.1908, Native News paper Report, p.192
Waller, the Assistant Collector and Joint Magistrate at Tutocorin, issued a secret circular to all officials under his jurisdiction advising them to dissuade people from traveling on or using the Swadeshi ships.

The British line also offered free trips, and even free gift of an umbrella to anyone who traveled in their ships. Even then it failed to regain its business. When this attempt failed, the British Company tried to buy V.O. Chidambaram Pillai Off. That too failed. By the time Ashe became the Asst. Collector of Tuticorin. He imprisoned V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and other leaders.

Lacking the forceful organizing drive the Swadeshi Steam Navigators company was unable to maintain its successful competition with the British India Steam Navigation Company. Badly in need of funds, the Company was forced to sell its ships to the very British Company it was competing against.25 This surrender came as a stab in the heart of nationalist India.

The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was one of the most important ventures that sprang from the new spirit of self help in the industrial regeneration of the country. It was the first of its kind in India. Though it was destroyed, the Movement did not come to an end. Various organizations were formed in order to spread the Movement.

25 R.A. Padmanabhan, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, pp.45-47
In the meantime, the Calcutta Congress Session held in 1906 gave the formal sanction to the Swadeshi and boycott Movement and enjoined the people to give preference to indigenous articles where ever practicable and even at a sacrifice. Encouraged by this, the Nationalists of Madras Presidency advocated Swadeshi, boycott, national education and Swaraj everywhere.

To promote Swadeshi, they formed three new associations in Madras namely, the Industrial Association, that raised small contributions to establish ware houses exclusively for selling Swadeshi goods; the Swadeshi League which undertook the hawking of Swadeshi goods and preaching Swadeshi Movement to the masses and the Bala Bharat, that delivered political lectures on boycott and Swadeshism and publish small pamphlets in various languages.

In addition, a large number of journals and periodicals also began to propagate the cause of Swadeshi and boycott Movement through their powerful writings. Of them, the most important journal Indian Review in its columns organized symposia in connection with the Movement and invited prominent political writers to contribute their views.

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26 Indian Review, May 1915, p 414.
27 Nadigamudi, 16 Apr. 1907, p 226 (MNR)
G. Subramania Iyer's daily Swadesamitran, S. Kasturi Ranga lyengar's The Hindu and Subramania Bharati's weekly India promoted the cause of Swadeshi in Madras Presidency.

'None but Swadeshi goods', 'Buy our Nationalists Cotton' 'Try our Bandemataram Cigarettes' were the notable advertisements appeared every where in the Madras. As a result Swadeshi Movement became very popular in Madras Presidency.  

In order to strengthen the Swadeshi and boycott Movement in Madras Presidency, at the request of C. Subramania Bharati, Bepin Chandra Pal of Calcutta visited Madras. He delivered a series of lectures on Swadeshi and boycott Movement. In his speech on 2nd May 1907, he opposed the Congress' ideal of Self-Government under British paramountcy advocated by many Congressmen in India and argued that Colonial Self-Government was impracticable in India as England would not do for the non-white people what she would do for the white people in the colonies. Therefore Bepin Chandra Pal advocated Self-Government, autonomous and absolutely free from the British control.  

This speech was an attempt to create an impression in the minds of the audience to cast off their dependence upon England. In another lecture, he had

28 Sukhbir Choudhary, Growth of Nationalism in India, p.305.
pointed out the dark side of the British administration, its independent attitude, self-interestedness, evil intentions and the oppression of the authorities. His lectures had such a profound effect on the people that many of them took off their English made hats and burnt them.30

Bepin Chandra Pal’s speeches were highly emotional and exciting. They created a stir in the minds of the students who began to take part in political activities preaching Swadeshi and boycott.31 Students of Madras Christian College welcomed him with the shouts of ‘bande mataram’. He had openly induced the students to go on strike against the prohibition of wearing ‘bande mataram’ medals. 32 Meetings were held daily in Madras. Students who attended them shouted ‘bande mataram’ at Europeans. In order to curtail student’s activities, the Senate of the Madras University, on 2nd August 1907, decided to punish the students who shouted ‘bande mataram’ by exclusion from any university examination either permanently or for a specified period or by deprivation of any university scholarship.33

30 The Shams-Ul-Akhbar, 6 May 1907, Native News Paper Report, P-147.
31 Nadagamani, 6 May 1907 N
32 V. Sankaran Nair, Swadeshi Movement: The Beginnings of Student Unrest in South India, pp.47-48
33 Diary of Events, 1907 in CID Reports (Confl.), 1907, vol.IV, p.76.
As a protest, students disturbed the educational exhibition held at the Senate House in Madras on 30th August 1907. They also stoned the windows and attacked the police station.34

In September 1907, two students were convicted and sentenced to pay a fine for shouting ‘bande mataram’ near the Senate House in Madras where an exhibition was held.35

Many joined the Nationalist camp due to the influence of Bepin Chandra Pal. Among them G.Subramania Iyer, the great Swadeshi advocate and C.Rajagopalachari a popular member of the Bar were notable.36 However when the Madras Provincial Conference was held in Vishakapatnam in July 1907, only thirty five voted in favour of the resolution on the boycott of British goods as against sixty one opposing it.

Hence it was declared lost. In anger, the Nationalists left the hall with the shouts of ‘bande mataram’.37 Thus, the Mylaporeans of Madras were able to keep the Congress firmly in the Moderate camp.

From 1905-1907, the struggle between the Moderates and the Nationalists within the national Movement was fought that culminated in a split in

34 Ibid., p.84
35 Swadesamitran, 27 Aug. 1907, P.406 (MNR)
36 CID Report (Confl.), May-Nov., 1907, Vol
37 The Madras Mail, 8 June (MNR)
December 1907. The Moderates who were much upset by the resolution on Swadeshi, boycott, national education and Swaraj, passed in the Calcutta Congress Session, decided to undo what had been done in that Congress Session.

As a first step the Moderates changed the Congress venue from Nagpur, the stronghold of the Nationalists, to Surat, their stronghold. Next was the selection of the Congress President. Protesting the unfair treatment meted out by the British Raj to Lala Lajpat Rai who had just been released from the Mandalay Jail, the Nationalist in the Congress proposed his name. But the Moderates who were the majority in the reception committee in Surat carried out the election of their candidate Rash Behari Ghosh.38

The next attempt of the Moderates was the omission of the subjects like Swaraj and national education passed in the Calcutta Congress Session in the list to be taken up for discussion in the Surat Congress Session. The omission naturally strengthened the suspicion that the Moderates were determined to go back on the positions taken up in the Calcutta Congress Session. The Nationalists decided not to permit the attempted retrogression by all constitutional means even by opposing the election of the President, if necessary.39

38 B.R. Nanda, Gokhale : The Indian Moderates and the British Raj, (Delhi, 1977) p.284
In order to go that Bala Gangadhar Tilak, the leader of the Nationalists informed the Nationalists throughout India to gather strength to attend the Surat Congress Session.

In response to his call, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and C.Subramania Bharati took efforts to gather a large contingent of pro-Tilak delegates from Madras to Surat. Presided over by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, the Madras Nationalist held a meeting in Madras on 6th December 1907 to elect delegates to the Surat Congress Session. It elected forty one delegates. It also constituted a committee consisting of K.Venkatarama Rao, C.Subramania Bharati, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, C.Selvaraj Mudaliar and V.Chakkarai Chetti and authorized them to press the resolution on Swadeshi, boycott, national education and swaraj in the Surat Congress Session. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai remarked that Swaraj could be achieved only by promoting national education, indigenous industries and establishing arbitration courts all over the country.

At Surat, the actual clash came when the name of Rash Behari Ghosh was announced for president ship. The audience did not listen to him and shouted

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40 R.A.Padmanabha, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, p.50.
41 G.O. No.1542, Jud., 3 Oct. 1911
Lajpat Rai and Bala Gangadhar Tilak insisted on his right to move an amendment. But he was not permitted. Confusion prevailed and the Chairman adjourned the Congress Session, thus the split became final.

On 28th December 1907, the next day of the Surat split, the Moderates met separately with the name of National Convention and decided to fight under the old banner. The Nationalists also under the name of National Conference met with Bala Gangadhar Tilak as President and discussed their future programs and selected Secretaries to spread their creed among the people. For South India, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai became its Secretary. Although the Surat Congress Session came to an abrupt end and the Congress was divided, the visit of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai to Surat helped him to integrate himself with Bala Gangadhar Tilak more intimately. He returned to Madras very much invigorated in his pro-Tilak faith.

By this time, a great orator and a Sanyasi, Subramania Siva joined the Movement. Along with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, he continued the Swadeshi lectures at Tuticorin and Tinnevelly. Meanwhile, on 11th January 1908, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and C. Subramania Bharati founded 'Chennai Janasangam' in Madras. In order to strengthen the feeling of nationalism, youngmen were trained

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44 Home, Political, 3 Jan.1908, J. Nos.11-118, p.8 cited in Kiran Bedi
to propagate Swadeshi and boycott. A school and a library were also established. On 17th January 1908 Subramania Siva and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai formed a Swaraj Sangam at Tuticorin in order to promote Swadeshi spirit, unanimity and courage, organize Swadeshi volunteers and raise funds for Swadeshi purposes. Subramania Siva and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai urged every one to join the ‘sangam’ without fear of Europeans. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai also induced the audience not to send their children to English schools but to give primary education until Swadeshi schools were opened. From 11th January to 9th March 1908, Subramania Siva and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai addressed numerous meetings at Tuticorin.

In addition to Swadeshi and boycott, they also championed the cause of labourers. On 26th February 1908, Subramania Siva addressed that the success of any enterprise rested with its labourers. If the labourers stood out for extra wages the European mills in India would cease to exist. So he asked them to go on strike. It created tremendous enthusiasm among the labourers. The result was the strike at the Coral mill, a British owned textile unit at Tuticorin.
The mill was making huge profits and declared a dividend of sixty per cent to its British share holders while the workers were getting only subsistence wages.51 Two hundred operatives of the mill stopped work on 27th February 1908, demanding better wages.52

The government in its determination to suppress it, prohibited public meetings and also brought secret police from Madras and other places to Tuticorin. In order to terrorize the people they arrested Sankara Subba Iyer on the pretext of having a knife in his possession.53

Undeterred labourers continued their strike and as a consequence the mill was closed. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva had given their full support to the labourers. When their demands such as increased wages, reduction of working hours and declaration of Sunday as holiday were conceded, the workers called off their strike and resumed work on 7th March 1908.54

The local municipality, the railway company and many local European firms also raised the salaries of the workers thinking that they too would go on strike.55 Thus, due to the Swadeshi preachings most of the labourers were benefited.

51 Sasilekha, 17 Mar.1908, p.159 Native News Paper Report
52 Swadesamitran, 28 Feb.1908, p.132 ; Sasilekha, 17 Mar.1908, p.159 (MNR)
53 India, 7 Mar.1908, p.149.
54 The Hindu, 6 Mar.1908.
55 Ibid, 5 Mar.1908.
In the meantime, on 1st March 1908, Padmanabha Iyengar, another Swadeshi preacher in a meeting urged the boycott of every one who did not join the Movement. People immediately responded and the result was social boycotts.

A barber at Tuticorin refused to shave Rangaswami Iyengar, a nominated Municipal Councilor on the ground that the cooperated with the collector in the proposal to increase the power of the police. Even cartmen refused to serve him. Thereupon he complained to the Collector, but the latter explained his inability to do anything.56

The Jutkawalas and the tiffin suppliers refused to help him.57 Many Jutka drivers refused to work even for anti-Swadeshi native.58

Thus by adopting these means for the first time the Movement was able to gain popularity among the mob and it began to have a mass appeal.

In order to crush these activities, the government passed various repressive legislations. The Seditious Meeting Act of 1907 empowered the government to prohibit meetings.

By the Explosive Substances Act of 1908, any one who was found in possession or control of any explosive or the materials and implements which

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56 Krishnapatirka, 8 Mar.1908, P.132 (MNR)
57 The Hindu, 6 Mar.1908
58 G.O. 1842, Jud., 3 Oct.1911; Tirunelvelly Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, p.XIV
could be used in their manufacture, would be punishable with the transportation for fourteen years or imprisonment for five years.  

The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 gave power to the government to declare an association of more than five persons unlawful if in its opinion it interfered with the administration or maintenance of law and order or constituted a danger to the public peace and tranquillity.

The Newspapers (incitement and offences) Act of 1908 was intended to stop seditious writings in newspapers, pamphlets and books and suggestions of excitement against the British rule. But these legislations did not deter the Swadeshi preachers.

Undeterred by all these measures Subramania Siva, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai and Padmanabha Iyengar continued to deliver Swadeshi lectures. For their speeches, Subramania Siva was charged under section 124 A of Criminal Procedure Code and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai under section 153 A of Criminal procedure Code and both were to be tried separately.

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59 D. Sadashivam, Growth of Public Opinion in the Madras Presidency pp 49-50
However, the decision to hold the All India celebration known as 'Swaraj Day' on 9th March 1908 caused great commotion. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar proposed to organize a procession on that day.

However on 8th March 1908, Ashe, the Joint Magistrate of Tinnevelly ordered them not to take out any procession at Tuticorin. The public were also warned not to join any such processions.

Again the next day, he ordered the three to appear before him to show cause why they should not be bound over under section 108 Cr. Pc. On that day itself the three met him and explained him why they should not be bound over under section 108 Cr. Pc. When they left the court they were greeted by a large crowd with the shouts of 'bande mataram'. Then they took part in the procession arranged in Tinnevelly and made speeches there.

On 10th morning the three went to Tuticorin and organized a procession there but returned to Tinnevelly the same afternoon to appear before the Joint Magistrate, who remanded them under custody by applying section 107 Cr. Pc.

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63 Swaraj Day was celebrated on 9th March 1908 to mark the expected release of Bepin Chandra Pal, who had been sentenced to six months imprisonment by the court for refusing to divulge the authorship of certain items published in his paper Bande Mataram (R.A. Padmanabhan, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, p.59).

64 Letter from the Inspector of Police, Tinnevelly to the District Magistrate, Tinnevelly, 11 Mar. 1908 in G.O. Nos.842-43, Jud., 18 June 1908; Indian Patriot., 13 Mar, 1908, p.102 (MNR)

65 G.O. Nos. 842-43, Jud., 18 June 1908.
Protesting the action of the government, a large crowd collected outside the court and demanded their release. They also sent application to the Session court to provide them with bail. A large meeting was also held in Tinnevelly.\textsuperscript{66} Their arrests created widespread excitement and commotion.

Simultaneously in Madras, organizations such as ‘Chennai Jana Sangam’, Bharata bhandar Swadeshi vastra pracharani sabha’, Swadeshi League, and Sarada Association conducted ‘Mother Worship’ on 9\textsuperscript{th} May in different places as a mark of honour for the release of Bepin Chandra Pal. A number of shops were decorated with flags.\textsuperscript{67} Mass meetings were held at many places.\textsuperscript{68} C. Subramania Bharati and Ethiraj Surendranath Arya, another Swadeshi preacher in the course of their speeches requested the audience to break any law which interfered with their natural rights.\textsuperscript{69} Even though the officials issued orders prohibiting processions and meeting, people held meetings and processions all over Tamil Nadu to rejoice over the release of Bepin Chandra Pal.\textsuperscript{70}

As a mark of protest against the arrest of great leaders, a series of upsurges broke out in Tinnevelly district. On 13\textsuperscript{th} March 1908, the educational institutions and shops were closed, street lights were broken, the municipal office in

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., G.O. Nos. 251-32, Jud, 16 Feb. 1909 ; India Patriot, 13 Mar. 1908, P.102 (MNR)
\textsuperscript{67} The Hindu, 10 Mar. 1908.
\textsuperscript{68} Swadesamitr, 10 Mar. 1908.
\textsuperscript{69} Semi-Official from H.F. Willkison, Commissioner of Police, Madras to J.N. Atkinson, Acting Chief Secretary to the Govt. Of Madras, 12 Mar.1908 in G.O. No1729, Jud (Conf.) 29 Dec.1908.
\textsuperscript{70} Sesilekha, 17 Mar. 1908, p.160 (MNR).
Tinnevelly was destroyed and all the records and furniture were burnt. The masses also set fire to the police station, kerosene oil tank and a part of additional district Munsif’s court. The joint Magistrate and Deputy Superintendent of Police went to the spot and ordered the people to disperse. When they refused, the Joint Magistrate ordered the police to open fire, which resulted in the killing of four persons. As a mark of protest, a violent, protest broke out in Tachanallur, a suburb of Tinnevelly where the mob set fire the union office. Street lights were also smashed. The police arrested fifty three persons and most of them were convicted.

Expecting another great upsurge, the government took special care to protect the European houses. Street lights were patrolled and watched. It also imposed a punitive police force in the riot-torn places. The District Magistrate also passed an order under section 144 Cr. Pc. Prohibiting the assembly of more than five persons within the radius of five miles of Tinnevelly, Palayamcottai and Tuticorin municipal limits. Yet on 18th morning, at Tuticorin, the workmen employed by Best and Co. struck work.

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71 Madras Standard, 17 Mar. 1908, p.147; Indian Patriot, 13 Mar. 1908, p. 102 (MNR)
72 The Hindu, 19 Mar. 1908
73 Swadesamitran, 21 Mar.1908.
74 G.O. No.532 Jud., 3 Apr.1908.
75 Madras Standard, 17
76 G.O. No.1542, Jud., 3 Oct.1911
77 Madras Standard, 17 Mar.1908, p.147 (MNR)
78 The Hindu, 19 Mar.1908.
In the meantime, on appeal by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar, the Madras High Court on 20th March 1908 ordered them to be released on bail after furnishing a security of Rs.2,500 each with two sureties to the satisfaction of the Session Judge of Tinnevelly. But considering that they were responsible for the Tinnevelly upsurges they were immediately rearrested.

V.O. Chidambaram Pillai was given double transportation for life (forty years) and was at once sent to Coimbatore jail. On appeal, the Madras High Court reduced the sentence of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai to six years transportation under section 124A and four years under 114 of IPC, and the two sentences to run concurrently. Subramania Siva's term of imprisonment was also reduced from ten years to six years and was sent to Trichinopoly jail.

Protesting against arrests another Swadeshi worker, Suredranatha Arya conducted a procession on 25th July 1908 in Madras. Immediately the government reacted by arresting him and was sentenced to five years imprisonment and was confined in the central jail. The prosecution of Padmanabha Iyengar was

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79 Criminal Miscellaneous Case No.4, 1908 in G.O. Nos. 842-43, Jud., 18 June 1908, The Hindu, 21 Mar. 1908, p.140 (MNR)
80 G.O.No.44, Jud (Confl.), 12 Jan 1909 ; G.O. No.1542 Jud., 3 Oct.1911 ; India, 11 Apr. 1908, p.245 (MNR)
81 G.O. No.1460, Pub.(Confl.), 25 Oct.1908 ; Tinnevelly Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, p.XIV.
82 G.O. Nos. 231-32, Jud., 16 Feb.1909
83 G.O. No.1461, Jud., 15 Sep. 1910 ; India, 7 Nov.1908.
84 G.O. No.734, Jud., 1 May 1911.
dropped.\textsuperscript{55} These leaders were put in different jails in order to prevent further planning by them. The removal of the leaders from the scene of action was a serious threat to the Swadeshi and boycott Movement.

Another weapon in the hands of the government of which increasing use was made was the prosecution of press. G.Subramania Iyer, editor of Swadesamitran was prosecuted under section 124A, 153A, 505 of IPC for publishing articles attacking the government.\textsuperscript{56} On furnishing security the prosecution was withdrawn.\textsuperscript{67}

M. Srinivasa Iyengar, declared editor of the weekly entitled India was also prosecuted for the same reason.\textsuperscript{68} The speeches of C.Subramania Bharati on 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} March 1908 were referred for prosecution. It was too late when it was referred on 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1908.\textsuperscript{69}

Meanwhile in July 1908 Bala Gangadhar Tilak, the leader of the Nationalists was arrested and sentenced to six years transportation in Mandalay Jail.\textsuperscript{50}

By all these means, the government suppressed the Swadeshi and boycott Movement. Press was censured. Most of the Nationalist leaders were arrested.

\textsuperscript{56} G.O. No.1212, Jud. (Confl.), 2 Sep 1908.
\textsuperscript{57} G.O. No. 1460, Jud (Confl.), 25 Oct. 1908.
\textsuperscript{58} G.O. No. 1153, Jud. (Confl.) 11 Sep. 1908.
\textsuperscript{59} G.O. No.923, Jud. (Confl.), 14 July 1908.
\textsuperscript{60} Indian Patriot, 6 July 1908, p464 (MNR)
There was no central organization for the Nationalists to direct and guide them. As a result, the presidency became calm, except occasional disturbances till the advent of Annie besant into the political scene.

Though the Swadeshi and boycott Movement did not match the high expectations it generated, its achievement was quite considerable. It gave the people a sense of self-confidence and also created a love for indigenous goods. It was the first mass Movement which induced a spirit of nationalism among all sections of the society.

Government repression and frustration caused by the failure of the Swadeshi and boycott Movement ultimately resulted in the emergence of militant nationalism. They wanted to attain Swaraj through violent activities. The Nationalists of Madras who escaped arrest found Pondicherry, a French settlement in India to be the suitable place to continue their activities and escaped to Pondicherry.

Notable among them was C. Subramania Bharathi, who shifted his paper "India" too, to Pondicherry. Through its columns, for two years he continued, his battle for Swaraj with the British bureaucracy.

The government at last banned the entry of the paper "India" and also "Suryodayam" another paper edited by Nilakanda Brahmachari, a native of
Tanjore district from Pondicherry to British India and so their publications ceased in 1910.  

Meanwhile, the upsurges in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin led to the formation of a secret association known as Bharata Matha Association at Tenkasi in Tinnevelly district. Organized by Nilakanta Brahmachari, it aimed at liquidating all European officials thereby discouraging them from coming to India and ultimately attaining Swaraj. Every member of the association had to take a 'Blood Oath' before the picture of the Goddess Kali, promising to kill all whitemen.

On hearing about V.V.S. Iyer, Vanchi Iyer, a member of the association came to Pondicherry to get revolver practice from him. V.V.S. Iyer, a lawyer and an associate of Shyamji Krishna Varma and Madame Cama and other revolutionary Indians in Paris, arrived at Pondicherry in October 1910 and started revolver practice for young Indians and preached violence to free the country.

After three months training, Vanchi Iyer returned to Tinnevelly district, on 17th June 1911 with a firm determination of murdering Ashe, the then Collector of Tinnevelly district.

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92 Tinnevelly Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, pp.XVI-XVII ; James Campbellkor, Political Trouble in India, 1907-1917 (rpi, Delhi, 1973) p.383
On the same day at Maniyachi junction near Tuticorin, Vanchi Iyer shot Ashe and then he shot himself dead. The political assassination of Ashe in British times, shook officialdom into a frenzy. The investigation of the crime revealed the existence of a conspiracy initiated by Nilakanta Brahmachari. Fourteen persons were committed for trial before a Special Tribunal of the Madras High Court.

The result of the trial indicated that the accused belonging to different castes and grades of society were found guilty of conspiracy against the state but were not found to be guilty of abetment of the murder of Ashe. They were charged under section 121 A, 302, 109 and 101 IPC and were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for terms varying from one to seven years.

This murder was an outlet for the oppressed Swadeshi Movement though it was suppressed in 1908 itself. This militant nationalism did not receive support in the Madras Presidency. Hence it dwindled out soon.

Immediately after the Surat split, some Moderates met at Pherozeshah Mehta's home to discuss their future programmes. There, V.Krishnaswami Iyer

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93 Sedition Committee Report, p.117; Tinnevelly Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, p.XVIII, R.W.D.P. Ashe was the Joint Magistrate of Tinnevelly during the upsurges in 1908. He was mainly responsible for the arrest of swadeshi leaders as well as suppressing the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. So the feelings of the members of the Bharatha Matha Association was against him.


95 Sedition Committee Report, p.117

96 Tinnevelly Riots Conspiracy and Ashe Murder, p.XXI ; H.R. Pate, Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly, p.346
mooted the idea of a Convention of Moderates. As per his advice, a National Convention of Moderates met on 28th December 1907 in Surat. A committee was appointed with Rash Behari Ghosh as President, Gopala Krishna Gokhale and D.E. Wacha as Joint Secretaries to draft a Congress Constitution. The said committee met in Allahabad on 18th April 1908 and adopted a constitution on the lines indicated by the leaders of Surat Convention in which no reference was made to Swaraj. According to the constitution, the objective of the Congress was Self-Government which should be achieved by constitutional means. The delegates of the Congress should be from the British Committee of India, provincial, district or other committees and associations formed by the Congress or affiliated to the Congress. They should also express in writing their acceptance of Congress objectives. Thus, by making constitutional restriction, the Nationalists were prevented from entering the Congress.

97 J.N. Jagadeesh, Builders of Modern India; V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (New Delhi, 1974) P.18.
98 Note: The resolution on Self-Government was changed from “the system of government obtain in the self-governing colonies” to the “the Self-Government enjoyed by other members of the British Empire”. The resolution of swadeshi was changed from “to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference wherever possible over imported commodities even at some sacrifice” to “to stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference wherever possible over imported commodities”. On boycott previously the resolution was “that the Congress is of the opinion that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of the province was and is legitimate”. It was changed into “this Congress is of the opinion that the boycott of the foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that province was and is legitimate” (KINC, Madras, 1908, Appendix B, pp. XIX-XXV).
100 Ibid., p.XXIII.
The Moderates decided to hold the First Congress Session under the new constitution in Madras in December 1908. Preparations were started in the entire Madras Presidency. There were only twelve district associations in the Madras Presidency which made their existence generally known. In order to establish mass contact, these associations were reorganized. In the districts there were no such associations, steps were taken to organize Congress Committees. Madras Moderates like V.Krishnaswami Iyer and V.S Srinivasa Sastri took the responsibility of organizing the Madras Congress Session. They toured throughout Madras Presidency and enrolled a number of people in the Congress committees. They faced much difficulty in Salem where G.Vijayaraghavachari and C.Rajagopalachari were against the holding of the same in Madras. But with the help of L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer, A.S. Balasubramania Pillai and V.Masilamani, the opposition was neutralized and as planned the Congress Session was held in Madras in December 1908.

The Congress accorded its most cordial support to the Swadeshi Movement but it sacrificed the ideals of 'Swaraj' and 'boycott'. Though the aim of the Congress was Self-Government, it welcomed the Minto-Morely Reform proposals

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102 N. Jagadesan, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, p.19.
103 Report of Indian National Congress, Madras, 1908, p.19
104 Ibid., p.88
which contained no such promises. The Congress went back to its traditional role of petitions, prayers and constitutional agitation.

In the Madras Presidency, due to his hold over the Central Congress machinery and the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, V. Krishnaswami Iyer kept the Egmoreans (Nationalists) out of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. Thus they were denied an opportunity to express their anger and frustrations in the Congress.

Such an action of the Moderates indicated their stand of not favouring any agitation against the government though they favoured Swadeshi Movement. In order to remain in public affairs, S.Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and T.Rangachari entered Madras Provincial Congress Committee, where they were powerless. G. Subramania Iyer after furnishing security for his press became a moderate. C.Vijayaraghavachari kept himself aloof from politics for some time. The Congress remained in exclusive control of the Mylaporeans until 1915.

Thinking that they could not withstand the Congress agitation for Swaraj, the British Raj thought of a compromise with the Moderates. Hence, it published the Minto-Morley Reform proposals on 17th December 1908. Though it did not come upto Indian expectation of a democratic set up, initially the Congress welcomed it.

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105 Ibid., p.XIX.1
In order to ascertain the opinion of the prominent leaders, The Hindu of Madras interviewed them and found that there was universal welcome and appreciation of the proposed reform.  

The Hindu very soon noted that in the implementation of the reforms, there were many shortcomings considerably curtailing the promises made by Morley, the Secretary of State for India.

The Madras Provincial Congress Committee in its meeting on 9th March 1909, opposed the creating of separate electorate for the Muslims granted under the Reform proposals. At the same time, it recommended for the proportionate representation to the Muhammadans in the general electorate.

The Lahore Congress Session held in 1909 also disapproved the creation of separate electorate on the basis of religion. Even V. Krishnaswami Iyer, the leader of the Mylapore clique decided to oppose the separate electorate with agitation, but Gokale advised him not to do any agitation which would drive the Government of India and the Muhammadan community very close.

But the opposition was limited to the introduction of separate electorate only. Its appreciation of the Reform Proposals on the whole continued unabated. The

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Moderates did not even visualize the freedom of India from the British control even as a remote ideal. Colonial Self Government was their highest aim and constitutional agitation within the limits of the repressive laws was the only mean they thought of for achieving their objectives. In practice they took no steps even to achieve that limited aim of colonial Self Government. They were with Minto Morely Reforms.

The Madras Moderates also held district conferences at various towns of Madras Presidency. These conferences were presided over by eminent men like P.S. Sivaswami Iyer, a member of the Executive Council, S.Subramania Iyer, editor of The Swadesamitran, T.Rangacharai who subsequently became a prominent Nationalist politician, T.V. Sehagiri Iyer, a distinguished educationist and a member of the Madras Legislative Council and V.P. Madhava Rao, the retired Dewan of Mysore.

The attainment of Swaraj, the encouragement of Swadeshi goods and the establishment of Swadeshi industries were the important matters of discussion in these conferences.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{111} B.S. Baliga, Tanjore District Handbook (Madras, 1957), p.97
The Madras Moderates also hosted the Congress Session in 1914 when the First World War (1914-18) was going on. The Congress became more or less a government organ. Lord Pentland, the then Governor of Madras attended the Madras Congress Session. It passed a resolution expressing support to Britain in the First World War.\(^{112}\) The resolutions passed in the Annual Congress Sessions as well as in the Conferences were sent to the Secretary of State for action. The Moderates did nothing more than mere petitioning. The inaction of the Moderates in practice, insufficiency of their programme in theory and the dominance of Brahmins in the Congress in general led to the growth of divisive forces. The Brahmin supremacy was challenged by the non-Brahmins for the first time by launching the Justice Party.

The development of caste organizations in South India helped the non-Brahmins to preserve their caste identity.\(^{113}\) For them the dominance of Brahmins not only in the field of education and public services but also in the Congress was indigestible.\(^{114}\) As usual the Madras Congress Session held in 1914 was also dominated by Brahmins. Hence it was considered as Brahmin Congress and even

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\(^{114}\) Non-Brahmins who were more than eighty per cent of the total population of the Madras Presidency constituted hardly eighteen per cent of the graduates of the Madras University as against the Brahmins who were merely three per cent of the population formed 71.3 per cent of the Madras University graduates (G.O.No.22, Pub. 2 Jan. 1919). Brahmins also held fifty five per cent of deputy collectors and 12.6 per cent of district munsiffs post in 1919 (Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947* rpi, Madras, 1985)
a Malayalam journal induced the non-Brahmin Hindus to form their own organizations for the representation of their own interests as against those of any particular caste or class.\textsuperscript{115}

Of the twenty four members of Madras Provincial Congress Committee for the year 1914-15, eighteen members were Brahmins including its President L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer; Only five were non-Brahmin Hindus and one was a Muslim. All the fifteen members of the AICC from Madras were Brahmins.\textsuperscript{116}

The gulf between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins further widened when B.N. Sarma and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri both Brahmins came out successful, out of the seven candidates who contested the election to the Legislative Council from Madras Presidency.

The non-Brahmin section of the Madras Presidency was shocked to hear the defeat of T.M. Nair. Depending on the support of Brahmin members of the Legislative Council, they nominated T.M. Nair as their candidate.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{115} Malayali, I Aug. 1914 (MNR)
\textsuperscript{116} Report of the Executive Committee for the year ending 31st December 1914 (Madras, 1915) cited in David Arnold, Nationalism and Regional Politics, pp. 29-30.
The defeat of T.M. Nair was considered as a defeat of Non-Brahmins at the hands of Brahmins. This was an important turning point in the political history of the Madras Presidency.

The ideals of the Congress too did not find favour with the non-Brahmins. The Congress fought for greater share for Indians in the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and the public services. But the concessions granted by the government in response to these demands could be availed of mostly by the Brahmins especially in the case of Madras Presidency.\textsuperscript{118} Though representative government was introduced for the first time by the Minto-Morley Reforms, non-Brahmins derived no great benefit as qualifications laid down for elections were unfavourable to them and the Brahmins continued to play a dominant role.\textsuperscript{119}

The success of the Muslim League in winning separate electorate in the Minto-Morley Reform Act of 1909 undoubtedly encouraged the passion for communal organization. The Brahmin dominance in the Home Rule League seemed to confirm the feeling of the non-Brahmins that the British rule will degenerate into Brahmin rule.\textsuperscript{120} Hence many of the non-Brahmins abstained from appearing on Congress platforms and planned to organize their own political party.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., pp.198-200.
\textsuperscript{120} West Coast spectator, 28 Nov. 1916 (MNR)
Besides, Telugus in the Congress who wanted to reduce the influence of the Tamil Congressmen in the Andhra affairs and to gain the Telugus freedom of action, organized a series of conferences aimed at establishing a separate Telugu unit within the Congress.\textsuperscript{121}

In addition, the absence of the Nationalists in the Indian National Congress resulted in losing the Congress' influence with the public especially when the Reform Scheme was accepted by the Moderates. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and other Congress members of the Legislative Council cooperated with the government irrespective of its response to their resolutions. The Congress passed various resolution to achieve its goal of Self-Government. During 1910-17, for instance, out of the 168 resolutions moved by the Congress, the government accepted only twenty four.\textsuperscript{122} Even Gopala Krishna Gokhale's bill on Elementary Education introduced in the Legislative Council in 1911 was not favoured by the government in spite of the fact that it was well received by the Anglo-Indian Newspapers such as the Indian Daily News, the Madras Mail and the Madras Times. In order to gain support for the bill, meetings were arranged by S.Subramania Iyer, a former Judge. Even, Gopala Krishna Gokhale himself visited Madras. Thousands of students met him. Gopala Krishna Gokhale spoke to them about the need and responsibilities of

\textsuperscript{121} G.O. No. 1905, Pub., 1 Sep. 1914; G.O. No. 782, Pub., 20 May 1915.
\textsuperscript{122} B.B. Misra, The Indian Political Parties, pp 115-16
public life. This intelligentsia began to realize the ineffectiveness of the methods adopted by the Moderates. But there was no leader to lead them. Many Nationalist leaders were in jail and others took shelter in Pondicherry.

The region of terror let loose by the government since 1908 had its impact on public and private behavior and fear reigned in the hearts of everyone. But a significant change occurred due to the release of Nationalist leaders.

Subramania Siva was released in 1911. He started Tamil journals like Jnanabhumi, Prapancha Mitran and the Indian Pilgrim and propagated nationalism through their columns.

V.O. Chidambaram Pillai was released in December 1912, but he was restricted from entering his native district. But the release of Bala Gangadhar Tilak in 1914 strengthened the hands of the Nationalists. In addition to these, the advent of Annie Besant into politics in 1914 and the death of Gopala Krishna Gohale and Pherozebeh Mehta, the most influential moderate leaders in 1915

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124 Note: There were number of Bachelors of Arts in the Madras Presidency. Madras University itself produced 8,707 Bachelors of Arts in 1910-11 itself. Of them 4,074 were Brahmins, 1,033 were non-Brahmin Hindus, 306 were Indian Christians, 69 Muhammadans and 225 were Europeans and Eurasians (G.O. No.22, Pub., 27 Jan 1919).
weakened the Moderates hold over the Congress. Moderates who formed Home Rule Leagues had to fight for Home Rule.

The Provincial, district and taluk Congress committees ceased to be active by 1914. Membership of the Congress also began to decline year after year. It was 1,663 delegates in the Surat Congress Session (1907) which decreased to 207 in the Bankipur Congress Session (1912) and it increased to 2,259 in the Bombay Congress Session (1915) and the Calcutta Congress Session (1917) it was 4,792. The increase in the number of delegates after 1915 was due to the entry of Nationalists into the Congress, more directly to the series of articles on the Congress published in New India by Annie Besant.

Moderates cooperation with the government and their opposition to the Congress programme proved very costly to them. They gradually lost the respect and support of the public and were reduced to a small political group. The vast majority of the Indians continued to extend their passive support to the Nationalists.

The Government of India tried to console the Moderates by passing the Minto-Morley Reform Act in 1909 and annulling the partition of Bengal in 1911. Though the annulment pacified Bengal which had passed through six years of sorrow and tribulation, the introduction of separate electorate was not even

acceptable to many of the Moderate leaders. Many of them were then convinced that the British Government did not want to lose powers and control at any cost. They were driven to the conclusion that disunity and dissensions within the Congress would threaten the very existence of the Congress and they abandoned the policy of constitutional cooperation with the British Government. It paved the way for the re-entry of the Nationalists into the Congress. In the Lucknow Congress Session in 1916, the Nationalists joined the Congress, nine years after the Surat split. This marked a departure from Surat Congress Session and was a sufficient proof of the fact that the country was prepared to take bold steps for gaining Swaraj. After this reunion, the influence of the moderates in the Congress steadily declined. Balà Gangadhar Tilak assumed the leadership of the Congress Nationalists, and the Movement for Home Rule gathered a new momentum.