CHAPTER IV

HOME RULE MOVEMENT IN MADRAS CITY - 1916-1920.

The year 1916 was a momentous one in many respects in the history of the Congress. It witnessed the reunion of the Congress and the establishment of the Home Rule League. In this year the Hindus and the Muslims forgot their communal differences and stood on the same platform to achieve Self-Government in India. But in Madras Presidency, communal differences for the first time openly emerged in the form of a Non-Brahmin Association, which was later called the Justice Party. In addition to the already existing two wings of the Congress such as the Egmore (Nationalists) and the Mylapore (Moderates) wings, there emerged two more groups, the Home Rule League and the Madras Presidency Association. However, subsequently the Home Rule League and the Madras Presidency Association became defunct and the Mylapore group became powerless. But the Egmore group was split into the Congress No-Changers or Gandhians and the Congress Pro-Changers or Nationalists. Though, throughout this period party factions, defections and indifferences afflicted the Tamil Nadu politics, the demand for Home Rule was heard everywhere.

The Home Rule League founded by Annie Besant and Bala Gangadhar Tilak, dominated the political scene of India from their formation in 1916 to the
emergence of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919. Annie Besant, an Irish born theosophist was very active in the Madras politics since 1914. The outbreak of the First World War in Europe gave a new dimension to the Congress demand for Self-Government or Swaraj. Having the Irish nationalist background, Annie Besant jumped into the fray to achieve Swaraj by adopting some new methods. By starting two newspapers, The Common Weal, a weekly and New India, a daily, Annie Besant popularized the demand for Self-Government. Knowing that without unity Self-Government was impossible, she advocated the need for unity through her papers and platforms.

As a delegate to the Madras Congress Session held in 1914, she pleaded for Self-Government not as a reward but as a right. However, her attempts to unite the Nationalists and the Moderates in that Congress Session did not materialize. But the death of Gopala Krishna Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915 dealt a severe blow at the Moderates' hold over the Congress and they reluctantly yielded to an amendment of the Congress Constitution in 1915 to facilitate the re-entry of the Nationalists into the Congress. In spite of the dissatisfaction of some Nationalists over that concession, Bal Gangadhar Tilak decided to rejoin the

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1 Swadesmitra, 25 Mar. 1915.
2 New India, 2 Jan. 1915.
4 By the amendment any association of atleast two years standing which accepted the creed of the Congress making it a condition for membership was allowed to convene a public meeting and elect unto fifteen delegates to the Congress (G.A. Natesan and Co. (ed.), Congress Resolutions (Madras, 1917), pp.175-77).
Congress. His intention was to take advantage of the partial opening made for them and then strive to get complete control over it. Having won the first round, the Nationalists thereafter embarked on a vigorous campaign of political agitation. They organized mass meetings, undertook lecture tours, enlisted volunteers and distributed political literatures. By such means, the Nationalists gradually moved into the nerve centre of the Congress activities.

Meanwhile, on 24th September 1915, Annie Besant made a formal announcement of forming the Home Rule League to work both in India and in England. Its main objectives were, educating the masses, inculcating in them the idea of liberty and the formulation of a detailed scheme of Home Rule on the lines of Colonial Self-Government. She wanted to start it as an auxiliary body to the Indian National Congress and moved a resolution to that effect in the Bombay Congress Session held in December 1915. Fearing that the Congress would be weakened, the Moderates did not approve of the idea of any organization within the Congress and asked to postpone its formation until the Congress and the Muslim League submitted their reports. Annie Besant accepted that suggestion.

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5 S.R. Mahrotra, Towards India's Freedom and Partition (New Delhi, 1979), pp.88.
6 Desi Official Fortnightly Report from the Govt. of Madras to the Govt. of India, 29 Sep. 1915 (Here after FR)
8 Ibid., p.212; The Bombay Congress Session held in December 1915 authorized the AICC and the All India Muslim League Committee to frame a scheme of reform on the basis of the resolution on Self-Government passed in that Congress Session. They were asked to submit the same on or before 1st September 1916 [G.A. Natesan and Co. (ed.), Congress Resolutions, p.212]
and the formation of the League was thereby postponed. But Balala Gangadhar Tilak established the Home Rule League on 28th April 1916 in Pune and defined its objective as ‘attaining Self-Government within the British Empire by all constitutional means and to educate and organize public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same’. Annie Besant, however, founded the Home Rule League for India in England on 7th June 1916. Its general aim was to educate the British public in relation to India and to place before them the demand of the Congress for Self-Government. Before starting the same in India, she toured throughout India and spread the ideal of Home Rule everywhere. However, to the great dismay of many, the Congress and the Muslim League failed to submit the report within the stipulated time. It made Annie Besant to inaugurate the Home Rule League in Madras, on 3rd September 1916, with herself as its President, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, B.P. Wadia and G.S. Arundale as its General Secretary, Treasurer and Organizing Secretary respectively.

As said earlier, it emerged as an auxiliary forum to the Indian National Congress. Its objectives were; to secure Self-Government for India through law-abiding and constitutional activities; to maintain the connection with Great Britian by becoming a free nation within the British Empire under the Imperial

9 New India, 4 Jan. 1916.
12 Fortnightly Report, 16 Sep. 1916.
Crown and his successors; to support and strengthen the Indian National Congress which had laboured for more than thirty years to lay the foundation of Indian Self-Government and to carry on a continuous educative propaganda on the necessity of Home Rule for India. Annie Besant wrote in the New India, that India should have some sort of Self-Government within the British Empire and the Indians wanted to have all the rights and privileges of the citizens of the British Empire. Hence, Home Rule within the British Empire was the only panacea suitable to India.

With this aim, she suggested that the Congress should formulate a plan of Self-Government and the Home Rule League should popularize it by all possible means. In order to get the approval of their plan in the Congress, Annie Besant and Bala Gangadhar Tilak worked to send those delegates who pledged to vote for Home Rule, to the Lucknow Congress Session to be held in December 1916.

The result of their propaganda was the dominance of the Nationalists in the Lucknow Congress Session. In that Session, a resolution on Self-Government jointly prepared by Congress and Muslim League was passed. It exhorted the British Emperor to issue a proclamation conferring Self-Government to India at an

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14 New India, 4 Dec. 1916.
15 Letter from the Acting Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madras to the Govt. of India, 23 June 1917, Home in Home Rule Movement, 1914-20 (FMF) [Here after HRM], pp.375-77.
early date. By Self-Government, the leaders meant representative government controlled by the people. However, the British Government felt that the Indians were unfit for Self-Government. In order to retaliate this stricture, the Congress carried on an effective propaganda through the organs of the Home Rule League.

Fearing that the dominance of Brahmins in the Congress and the Home Rule League would result in the assumption of political power by Brahmins, some of the non-Brahmin leaders like P. Thyagaraya Chetti, a Telugu Devanga businessman, T.M. Nair, a Malayalee Nair Physician and C. Natesa Mudaliar, a Tamil Vellala Physician formed the South Indian Liberal Federation, later called the Justice Party, on 20th November 1916. Its chief aim was to launch non-Brahmin Movement to oppose the Brahmin domination not only in public services but also in the Congress and the Home Rule League.

The South Indian Liberal Federation issued a manifesto with the signature of P. Thyagaraya Chetti criticizing the Home Rule Movement in Madras. The manifesto stated that though the non-Brahmins formed 400 lakhs out of 450 lakhs of the population and comprised the bulk of tax-payers, land-holders, zamindars and agriculturists, they remained practically without any political power. Public bodies and public services were practically monopolized by the Brahmins who had

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16 Report of Indian National Congress, Lucknow, 1916, pp.70-71
been using official powers and political influence for their own advantage. It demanded equal justice for the non-Brahmins in all walks of life. The tone of the manifesto was little militant and it aimed at giving resistance to the Home Rule Movement. However, the manifesto had come under severe criticism in the hands of the pro-Congress organs. Reacting to the manifesto, The Hindu commented that it gave a distorted and unfair representation of many of the matters, it had referred to and that it could serve no good, instead it could create ill-feeling between the same Indian community. Criticizing it, the New India wrote that it showed distrust in the ultimate objective of independence. It opined that in the case of India gaining Home Rule, it mattered little whether Brahmins or non-Brahmins, Hindus or Muslims were most powerful, for all were the children of the same mother 'the Bharatmata'. Denouncing the non-Brahmin Movement as an enemy of the nation, it further said that it was an instrument to oppose the works of the Indian National Congress and Home Rule League. Besides, it condemned the Movement as unpatriotic, short-sighted and narrow-minded.

On the other hand, the non-Brahmin Movement enjoyed the support of three journals namely 'Dravidian' in Tamil, 'Justice' in English and 'Andhra Prakasika'.

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20 New India, 21 Dec. 1916; Eugene F. Irshick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India, p.49.
in Telugu. In their attempt to attract the non-Brahmins from the Congress, they attacked the programmes and the proceedings of the Congress through these papers almost daily. But a considerable number of non-Brahmins in the Congress did not like the non-Brahmin Movement. They wanted not only to contradict the claims of the Justice Party to represent the entire non-Brahmin community, but also to check the defection of non-Brahmins from the Congress to the Justice Party. At the same time they were not satisfied with the Congress League Scheme, because it provided for the minimum constitutional demands of the Muslim League and the Congress but said nothing about the non-Brahmins. Hence they began to think in terms of an organization that would seek communal representation to safeguard their own interests in the elections.

However, they did not want to break away from the Indian National Congress, of which they had long been members. Encouragement to that was so great that in a meeting held in Madras, the non-Brahmin members of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee such as E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, T.V. Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar, George Joseph, P. Varadarajulu Naidu and some others formed the Madras Presidency Association. The chief aim of this association was to place

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24 Eugene F. Ischick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India, p.60.
before the Secretary of State for India, a scheme of reforms designed to give the non-Brahmins full communal representation\(^{26}\). The Madras Presidency Association insisted that communal representation for non-Brahmins should be embodied as an integral part of the Congress-League Scheme\(^{27}\). This was in a way to counteract the claims of the Justice Party as the sole spokesman of non-Brahmins. Except communal representation, the members of the Madras Presidency Association supported the Congress ideals and goals. Surprisingly many of them happened to be members of Annie Besant’s Home Rule League, which worked for the Home Rule for India.

In the Lucknow Congress Session in 1916, a resolution was passed recognizing the Home Rule Leagues of Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant as a body affiliated to the Indian National Congress and permitting them to carry on a vigorous propaganda in favour of the Congress -League Scheme\(^{28}\).

As decided in the Session, Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant visited many parts of India and addressed several meetings. In support of their intensive campaigns, many Moderates came forward to join the Home Rule Movement\(^{29}\).

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\(^{27}\) G.O. No.278, Pub., 23 Mar. 1918.


Among them G.A. Natesan, V. Krishnaswami Iyer, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, S. Subramania Iyer and C.P. Ramaswami Iyer were the important moderates of Tamil Nadu. Important among the Nationalists who attacked the Home Rule League at first and later joined it were C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurti, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and T.S.S. Rajan. For the moment, the Home Rule League united all the disgruntled political factions of Madras under Annie Besant. Using Tamil, the language of the people she attracted the attention of the people to her Home Rule Movement. Two of her staunch non-Brahmin supporters of the Madras Presidency Association were T.V. Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar and P. Varadarajulu Naidu who spread her message among the people. At once the Movement became very popular. In February 1917, the Home Rule League had 110 branches and over 5,000 members in the Madras Presidency alone. The Congress also adopted the Home Rule Movement and continued the work by committees connected with it. Annie Besant's attacks on the castles of political power had electrifying effect on the people. Agitation for Home Rule became widespread throughout India and the government resorted to repressive measures. At first she

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31 New India, 18 Sep. 1918.
33 Fortnightly Report, 16 Feb. 1917.
34 G.O. No.744, Feb., 9 June 1917.
was expelled from Bombay and subsequently from Central Province and Bihar. Determined to achieve Home Rule, she continued the attacks on government policies. To draw the students to the agitation, she convened a protest meeting of students in Madras against the failure of 2,800 students at the Secondary School Leaving Certificate and the intermediate examinations. Denouncing the government and the university authorities for their reactionary measures, she wrote that the authorities in order to keep India down, wanted to strangle higher education. As a result, many students joined the Home Rule Movement. On one occasion the students of Madanapalle college which was then under her direct control, wrote on the black board 'We do not ask for Home-Rule, we demand it'.

The entry of a large number of students into the agitation alarmed Lord Pentland, who decided to curb the political activities of the students. At first he warned and directed them not to take part either in political meetings or join any political association or take part in any Movement. The educational authorities also considered such activities as undesirable. The government also informed the heads of colleges and schools, both under political management and otherwise to strictly

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35 Eugene F. Inceick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India, p.37.
36 Letter from the Acting Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madras to the Secretary, Govt. of India, Pub., 23 June 1917 in HRM, 1916-20, p.359.
37 Ibid., p.363.
enforce these directions. No wonder this repressive order evoked a great deal of criticism in the press. While expressing support to the attitude of the students, Annie Besant in her New India strongly condemned the action of the government. Lord Pentland reacted quickly by prohibiting Annie Besant from writing or speaking or publishing anything political in New India. Again on 7th June 1917, he passed another order restricting the Movements and activities of Annie Besant and her co-workers, B.P. Wadia and G.S. Arundale. According to the order, on or before the expiry of a period of fourteen days from the date of serving of that order, Annie Besant and her colleagues should take up their residence in any one of the following six places; Nilgiris district, Coimbatore district, Bellary, Palni hills, Shevaroy hills and the municipal town of Vizagapatnam. Another government order issued on 14th June 1917 reduced the period fixed for Annie Besant and her colleagues from fourteen days to seven days to leave Madras and Chingleput district for their place of confinement. Obeying the order she and her colleagues selected Otacamund in the Nilgiris district. There, they hoisted the flag of the Home Rule League. Immediately, the District Magistrate issued an
order under section 144 Cr. PC prohibiting them from hoisting the flag⁴⁴. Despite such restrictions, Otacamund at once became a centre of political activities and a place of pilgrimage for the Home-Rulers⁴⁵.

Their internments, earned more popularity and support for the Home Rule Movement. Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Munshi Narayan Prasad Asthana, C.Y. Chintamani and several others joined it as a protest against the arbitrary action of the Government of Madras⁴⁶. Almost all the papers criticized the internments. For example, The Hindu in its editorial described it as a violent and unconstitutional act of aggression upon Indian constitutional agitation. It, thus, induced a campaign against the government action⁴⁷. Though Mahatma Gandhi, who was then rising up, did not like her political propaganda during the World War he wrote to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford stating that the internments were a big blunder⁴⁸.

Moreover the appeal of the Home Rule League did not confine itself within the frontiers of India. S. Subramana Iyer, a senior Congressman and then a leader of the Home Rule Movement appealed to President Woodrow Wilson of the

⁴⁵ Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1918-19, p IX.
⁴⁷ The Hindu, 11 June 1917.
⁴⁸ H.N. Pandit, Fragments of History: India's Freedom Movement and After (New Delhi, 1982), p.21
United States of America to apply his war message of democracy and self-determination of nations to India.\(^49\)

A printed copy of the letter was placed on the desk of the Senators and the Congressmen. It created great sensation in America and the American Labour Party at once wanted Home Rule for India as in Canada and Australia. An Indian Home Rule League was established in New York.\(^50\) Though the spark of the agitation spread throughout the world and there was a persistent demand for her release, the government was not moved to cancel the internment punishment.

In order to get them released a number of open and mass meetings were arranged throughout Tamil Nadu.\(^51\) A large number of Home-Rule placards and invitations to undertake the ‘Swadeshi Vow’ were pasted on the walls. Pictures and postcards bearing the portraits of the internees were sold on large scales. A booklet entitled ‘the Swadeshi Vow why Indians should take it?’ was sold.\(^52\) Pattabi Sitaramayya, a member of the Home Rule League took an active part in the protest meetings. Moreover, he moved a resolution in the Legislative Council asking its members to stay away from the proceedings of the council until the internment order was cancelled.\(^53\) Even then they were not released. So, on

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\(^{49}\) S. Vijayalakshmi, "Healing the Breach and the Home Rule Movement", p.489.

\(^{50}\) New India, 10 July 1917.

\(^{51}\) G.O. No.744, Pub., 7 June 1917.

\(^{52}\) Fortnightly Report, 17 July 1917.

\(^{53}\) Letter from the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madras to the Secretary, Govt of India, Pub., 31 July 1917 in HRM, 1914-20, p.485.
31st July 1917, the AICC and the Muslim League together held a meeting to work out a plan to secure the release of Annie Besant and her followers. A resolution was also passed to launch passive resistance. On this issue opinion was gathered from PCCs. When the opinion was in favour of that, the Home-Rulers held a meeting in Madras on 9th August 1917 to formulate a policy of passive resistance and to gather support for that. They welcomed all those who were desirous of joining the Home-Rule League, even though they were not prepared to become passive resisters. The New India and The Common Weal exposed the various aspects of passive resistance. The underlying idea was that everyone should personally refuse obedience to any law or executive order which in his/her private judgement would be morally wrong to be obeyed. The Indian Press Act (1910) and the Defence of India Rules (1915) were cited as specific instances of law coming under that category. Meanwhile the leaders of the Home-Rule League popularized the idea of passive resistance among the mofussil people by distributing vernacular leaflets, illustrated post cards, public meetings and processions. This had its immediate effect on the people. For instance, Sivakamu Ammal, a student of the Bombay Medical College left that institution to join the passive resistance Movement. By doing so, she felt that she could do great service to the nation than by becoming a doctor. On its side, the Government of Madras

54 New India, 2 Aug. 1917.
55 FR, 17 Aug. 1917.
directed the District Magistrates to discourage protest meetings, especially street processions\textsuperscript{56}.

Before passive resistance was approved of and Annie Besant was still in internment, the question of election of the President for the next Congress Session came up before various PCCs. In recognition of her sacrifices and in appreciation of her contribution to the cause of Indian nationalism, all the provinces suggested that Annie Besant should be elected\textsuperscript{57}. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee also on 12\textsuperscript{th} August 1917 in its special meeting nominated Annie Besant as the President of the Indian National Congress by fifty to twelve votes\textsuperscript{58}. On finding her release very urgent, the MPCC on 14\textsuperscript{th} August 1917 approved of passive resistance\textsuperscript{59}.

Fearing that, the launching of such passive resistance would wreck the government at a time of the World War, the authorities immediately changed their attitude towards India. The result was the historic Declaration of Responsible Government by Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, on 20\textsuperscript{th} August 1917 in the House of Commons, as the goal of the British policy in India\textsuperscript{60}. It was for the first time the word ‘Responsible Government’ appeared in any of the British

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} New India, 19 Aug. 1917.
\textsuperscript{58} Fortnightly Report, 1 Sep. 1917.
\textsuperscript{59} New India, 16 Aug. 1917.
\textsuperscript{60} G.O. No.948, Pub. (Press, Confl.), 19 Oct. 1918; Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill (Delhi, 1919), p.13; India in 1917-18; p.36.
reform schemes. However, it did not incorporate the Congress-League Scheme. Any how for the time being, the Declaration pacified the passion for passive resistance.

But the Declaration evoked mixed feelings. The Moderates welcomed it as the Magna Carta of India. The Nationalists held that it fell far short of the legitimate expectations of the Indians and characterized it as a concession to intensive agitation⁶³. It also did not escape the press criticism. According to The Hindu it was an uninspiring and disappointing, Declaration which would cause great dissatisfaction throughout the country⁶².

On finding, the country was not in favour of the Declaration, and at any time passive resistance might be launched which would affect his mission to India, Montagu asked the Government of India to release the political prisoners. Still the Government of Madras did not consider the release of Annie Besant advisable and informed Montagu accordingly⁶⁴. Therefore, to get her released, a manifesto was published in New India approving the policy of passive resistance⁶⁴. The meeting of the MPCC convened on 25th August 1917 approved it in theory, but strongly opposed to resorting to that at the critical time of Montagu's mission to India. But the party in favour of passive resistance gained upper hand and the resolution in

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⁶² India in 1917-18, p.37.
⁶³ Rangaswami Parthasarathy, A Hundred years of the Hindu, p.213.
⁶⁵ New India, 24 Aug. 1917.
favour of it was passed by a large majority\textsuperscript{65}. Fearing worst consequences, the Government of Madras requested the Government of India to remove the restrictions imposed on Annie Besant and her colleagues\textsuperscript{66}. On 15th September 1917, the Government of India announced its decision to release them\textsuperscript{67}. On their release, the move for passive resistance was also given up\textsuperscript{68}. Thereafter Annie Besant toured Madras, Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad and Bombay to gather the opinion of every class in order to present a united front for Home Rule to Montagu who was scheduled to visit India in November 1917. On 26th November 1917, Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant, on behalf of the Home Rule Leagues and the Congress presented a memorandum to Montagu demanding Home Rule. In the memorandum, they stated in clear terms that nothing less than the Congress-League Scheme would satisfy the Indians\textsuperscript{69}. The Justice Party, while welcoming the Declaration, stressed the need for granting representation to the non-Brahmins\textsuperscript{70}. Montagu also discussed the reform proposals with the then Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 30 Aug. 1917; PB, 1 Sep. 1917.
\textsuperscript{66} Fortnightly Report, 18 Sep. 917.
\textsuperscript{67} New India, 16 Sep. 1917; RAMP, 1917-18, P.IX.
\textsuperscript{68} G.O.No.917, Pub. (Consl.), 5 Oct. 1918.
\textsuperscript{69} New India, 29 Nov. 1917; Joint Select committee, Appendix B, p.9.
\textsuperscript{70} Justice, 29 Nov. 1917.
The Calcutta Congress Session which met in December 1917 under the Presidency of Annie Besant passed a resolution expressing its satisfaction over the Montagu Declaration. At the same time it emphasized necessity for the immediate enactment of a parliamentary statute providing for the establishment of Responsible Government in India, within a fixed time. Further, it stated that the Congress-League Scheme should be immediately implemented as the first step in the process\(^7\).

On 11th March 1918, the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, while disapproving Montagu's Declaration, passed a resolution stating that no reform could be inaugurated or worked out which did not conform to the principles of Congress-League Scheme. It called upon the Congress propaganda committee, the Home Rule League and all other affiliated associations to carry on a vigorous and active campaign for securing the Congress-League Scheme of reforms. Public meetings were held in various places to emphasize it as the minimum demand\(^7\). The Madras Presidency Muslim League also declared that the attainment of Self-Government within the British empire was their goal\(^9\). The Justice Party demanded separate communal electorate as the only panacea for them\(^4\). As an alternative to separate communal electorate the Madras Presidency Association


\(^9\) Letter from Yaqub Haam and Moufane Abdur Subhan Sahib Bahadur, the honorary Secretaries, Madras Presidency Muslim League to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madras in G.O.No.968, Pub. (Press, Conf.), 19 Oct. 1918.

suggested reservation of seats for non-Brahmins in plural member constituencies\textsuperscript{73}. It was only after much effort, the Madras Presidency Association convinced the MPCC to accept the demand for communal representation\textsuperscript{75}.

Dissatisfied with the attitude of the Nationalists, the Madras Moderates and few other staunch Home-Rulers, published a manifesto in May 1918 stating that the path of wisdom lay not in the rejection of the scheme, but in effecting considerable modifications in it\textsuperscript{77}. This however did not lead to their permanent separation from the Congress. But the Nationalists rejection of the Mont-Ford Reform Scheme forced them to depart from the Congress.

The Montagu mission to India resulted in the announcement of Mont-Ford Reform Scheme on 8th July 1918\textsuperscript{78}. Public opinion was sharply divided on that scheme. The Congress had three lines of thinking. The Moderates stood for the total acceptance of the scheme\textsuperscript{79}. The Nationalists urged total rejection of it, and the Home-Rulers favoured a middle path of responsive cooperation. The Moderates thought that diarchy proposed in Mont-Ford Reform Scheme was a step in the right direction and hence its total acceptance. Holding that Swaraj could not

\textsuperscript{73} Letter from Chidambaramthu Mudaliar, President 1st annual conference, Madras Presidency Association to the Private Secretary, Govt. of Madras in G.O.No.273, Pub., 23 Mar.1918.

\textsuperscript{75} G.O.No.273, Pub., 23 Mar. 1918.

\textsuperscript{77} FE, 18 May 1918; P.S. Sivaswami Iyer, L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer, Presidents of the MPCC, G.A. Natesan, editor of the Indian Review and a few others.

\textsuperscript{78} A.C. Kaphau, Constitutional History of India, 1765-1975, (2nd edn., New Delhi, 1976), p.204.

\textsuperscript{79} New India, 21 July 1918.
be built on half-way houses, Bala Gangadhar Tilak and C.R. Das opposed the scheme, while the Home-Rulers suggested some modifications in it.

In Tamil Provinces many Nationalists changed their previous stand and proposed for some modifications in the scheme. On 3-4th August 1918 the MPCC held a meeting to discuss it.

It elected C. Vijayaraghavachari as President, Annie Besant as Chairperson of the reception committee and S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, as one of the Chairperson of the meeting. In that meeting, the great debator, S. Satyamurti advocated total rejection of the scheme, but was voted down by 187 to 154 votes. The New India, The Common Weal and The Hindu which at first advocated total rejection, then changed their stand. Thus, in Madras the tendency was in favour of accepting the reform scheme without much modifications.

Under these circumstances, it was decided to hold a special Congress Session in Bombay to consider the reform scheme. Anticipating the domination of Nationalists in the Session, on 16th August 1918, the Moderates convened a separate meeting. There they decided to boycott the Bombay Congress special Session to be held on 29th August 1918. Efforts of reconciliation and rapprochement with the Moderates ended in failure and the Moderates did not attend the Congress Session. The Bombay Congress special Session met on 29th

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60 P.N. Chopra (ed.), India’s Struggle for Freedom: Role of Associated Movements (Delhi, 1985), p.44.
62 R.C. Majumdar (ed.), The History and Culture of the Indian People, p.287.
August to 1st September 1918 under the presidency of Iman Hasan⁴³, reaffirmed the resolutions relating to Self-Government passed in the previous two Congress Sessions. It emphatically stressed that nothing less than Self-Government within the British Empire could satisfy them. Contradicting the reform scheme, the Congress declared that the people of India were fit for Responsible Government⁴⁴.

It also disagreed with the formula of diarchy in the provinces. It further disclosed that some of the proposals were disappointing and unsatisfactory⁴⁵. Moreover, the younger and the progressive Congressmen rejected the leadership of Annie Besant since she had suddenly changed her strategy and opposed any resistance to the reform scheme. Her stand of modification rather than rejection of the scheme came in for severe criticism. Undeterred Annie Besant also convened a meeting in Madras and passed a resolution opposing the reform proposals and declared that nothing less than full Self-Government should enable the Indians to take their rightful place in the Empire. She also commented that the political reforms were unworthy of England to give and India to take⁴⁶. Although she criticized some aspects of the Mont-Ford Reform Scheme, it is evident that she was for negotiations. Despite the criticisms of the Nationalists, she remained in the Congress. On the other hand, the Moderates joined hand with government and stayed away from the Bombay Congress special Session. Important Moderate leaders like Dinshaw Wacha, Surendrenath Banerjee, Bhubendranath Basu,

⁴⁴ New India, 7 Apr. 1919.
⁴⁶ G.O.Nos.1919-20, Feb., 4 Nov. 1918.
Ambica Charan Mazumdar and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri boycotted the Congress Session and organized the first All India Moderates Conference in Bombay in November 1918. Finding the reform scheme as a real and substantial step towards Responsible Government, they welcomed it. Their stand was spelt out by Surendranath Banerjee, when he presided over the Moderates conference in Bombay in November 1918.

“We are friends of evolution and the enemies of revolution... our creed is co-operation with the Government whenever practicable and opposition to its policy and measures when the supreme interest of the Motherland requires it.”

Their views and ways made the cleavage between them and the Nationalists final at the national level.

Under such an atmosphere the Delhi Congress Session was held from 26th to 31st December 1918. The resolutions passed in the Bombay Congress special Session were reaffirmed. The Congress demanded that full Responsible Government should be granted to the provinces at once. The Congress made it clear that the people of India were fit for Responsible Government and repudiated

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87 R.C. Majumdar (ed.) The History and Culture of the Indian People, p.285; J.N. Jagadesan; V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, p.32.
88 New India, 27 Nov. 1919; R.J. Moore, Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917-1940 (New Delhi, 1974), p.12.
the assumption to the contrary contained in the Mont-Ford Reform Scheme. Although V.S. Srinivasa Sastri boycotted the Bombay Congress special Session, he attended the Delhi Congress Session and urged the omission of the words 'disappointing' and 'unsatisfactory' from the text of the resolution. But it was not accepted by the Nationalists. Then Annie Besant and her associates openly accepted the scheme. Many Nationalists considered this change as betrayal and attacked Annie Besant severely. In order to avoid further split, Bala Gangadhar Tilak and his associates avoided extreme measures. So, except refusing diarchy in the provinces, the Congress endorsed the Mont-Ford Reform Scheme and insisted on a mandate to enforce that refusal.

Dissatisfied with the attitude of the Congress, Annie Besant in her New India commented that the refusal struck at the root of the scheme and did not envisage a compromise. The Hindu wrote that the change implied the rejection of the scheme rather than the negotiation of it.

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92 J.N. Jagadesan, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, p.32.
93 The Mont-Ford Reform Scheme proposed to establish in the provinces of British India a system of diarchy or dual government. Under that system the provincial administration was to be divided into two parts namely the reserved subjects to be administered by the Governor and his Executive Council, and the transferred subjects to be administered by the Governor and his Ministers (A.C. Kapur, Constitutional History of India, p.205).
94 New India, 7 Apr. 1919; The Hindu, 5 Apr. 1919.
This led to a further cleavage in the Nationalists' rank keeping aside Annie Besant, the Tamil Nationalists began to assert their separate identity. Annie Besant and her associates were criticized for being too moderate in their demands and too conciliatory to the British Government. Under such a situation, on 18th March 1919, Annie Besant resigned from the Provincial Congress Committee taking with her several prominent Moderates and Home-Rulers. This is how the Congress came out of the control of the Home-Rulers.

In the meantime, in the Madras Provincial Congress Committee the cleavage between the Egmore and Mylapore groups became very acute. Dissatisfied with the attitude of the Nationalists, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, the leader of the Mylapore group started the Madras Liberal League purely on moderate line in April 1919 with P.S. Sivaswami Iyer as its President and L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer who was the President of the PCC from 1914-19 as its Vice-President whereas the Egmore group on the request of Bala Gangadhar Tilak and S. Satyamurti formed the Nationalist Party. It was heralded by a conference on 8th November 1919 in Madras with C. Vijayaraghavachari as its Chairman.

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56 From 1915 to 1918 there was an alliance between the Home Rule followers of Annie Besant and the Madras Nationalists, but when the latter began to look to Bala Gangadhar Tilak as their all India leader from 1917, the gulf between the two groups widened rapidly.
58 Desabхaktan, 22 Apr. 1919, p.643 (MNR); PR, 21 Apr. 1919.
59 V.O. Chidambaran Pillai, George Joseph, Konda Venkatappayya and Challa Guruswami Chatti were its Vice Chairpersons and Harisankardama Rao and C. Rajagopalachari were its Secretaries (Fortnightly Report, 17 Nov. 1919).
While presiding over the conference, S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar its President outlined the reasons which led him and his party to break away from the Mylapore group. He pointed out in the first place, to their defection from the Indian National Congress at the previous Congress Sessions. He attacked them for having refused to cooperate with the Congress both in India and in England. However, the Nationalists wanted a vigorous propaganda work to counteract the works of the Moderates in England. The decision of the Mylaporeans to hold a separate conference demarcated finally the Egmoreans within the Congress and the Mylaporeans outside it.

Indian Viceroy Lord Montague was not in concord with the demand for communal electorate. Some kind of communal electorate was eventually conceded to the non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency. Informal meetings were held by a few Brahmins and non-Brahmins in Madras in an endeavour to arrive at an agreement regarding the number of seats to be reserved for the non-Brahmins in the new council. Finally, Lord Meston, the Finance member of the Viceroy’s Council reserved twenty eight seats for the non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency. After achieving its main objective, the communal representation, the Madras Presidency Association became extinct. Thereafter its members, T.V. Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar, E.V. Ramaswami Naicker and P. Varadarajulu Naidu joined hands with the Egmoreans.

97 Fortnightly Report, 17 Nov. 1919.
98 Fortnightly Report, 19 Jan. 1920; Swadesamitran, 1 Apr. 1920, p.423 (MNR).
100 Eugene F. Ischick, Politics and Social conflict in South India, p.135.
It is evident, that at the beginning of 1920, the Egmoreans of the former swadeshi and boycott Movement were at the zenith of their power. After a prolonged struggle with the Mylaporeans and the Home-Rulers, the Egmore group emerged victorious. They formed the Nationalist Party and got complete control over the MPCC and installed S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as its President, T. Rangachari and T.V. Venkatarama Iyer as Vice-Presidents and S. Satyamurti as its Secretary.