CHAPTER I

GROWTH OF MUTUAL AWARENESS: 1783-1939

Many Indians grew up in admiration of the ideals and objectives which had made the United States a great nation. American Declaration of Independence was to the Indian mind a self-evident truth, that all men are created equal, possessing certain inalienable rights of life, liberty and happiness. India looked to United States for inspiration, support and sympathy, when it was fighting for its independence from the same imperialistic power against whom the United States had fought for its freedom. Historically and ideologically, Indian nationalism appealed strongly to the American instincts, and many Americans perceived the peculiar dimensions of the struggle between British imperialism and Indian nationalism.

This Indo-U.S. awareness of each other had been fostered through economic and cultural contacts. Commercial ties between India and United States of America could be traced to the last quarter of eighteenth century. Trade arose out of a desire to secure for the United States certain commodities such as Indian muslin and spices. The first United States vessel to reach the shores of India was the United States of Philadelphia in 1784, followed by Hydra and Chesapeake. These ships did not engage in extensive trade but
the Americans on board became familiar with political, economic and social conditions in India. They commented upon the hostility between English and French and the conditions of natives under Europeans.¹

In 1794, Jay Treaty gave United States the most-favoured treatment. By 1803, the value of imports from British India had risen to $3,450,000. Between 1900 and 1940, United States was securing 2 to 4 per cent of its imports from India and sending 1 to 2 per cent of its exports.²

Development of trade encouraged the establishment of official representation in India. In 1792, President George Washington appointed Benjamin Jay, who had already lived in India for many years as a private spectator, to be the First Consul to India.³ The American officials constituted a source of intelligence on India. There reports to Washington were, however, incomplete and insubstantive. There were large gaps and scanty stretches regarding politics, religion and Indian society.⁴

American missionaries formed another link between the United States and India. During the beginning of the Nineteenth century, United States was passing through the second great awakening in its religious history. Religious journalism in conjunction with some other factors helped to create an interest in foreign missions for carrying the gospel to the non-Christian world. The American foreign missionary in a way caught fire from the British evangelical movement.5

The American missionaries began their work on a permanent footing from 1813 when a ban on missionary activity was formally removed.6 The initial period was marked by important pioneering work. As a result, missionaries were not only preachers and translators, but also publishers and educators. Gradually, their interest in education and social work increased.7

Since the missionaries worked in India, they came to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the people and their religious practices. The annual reports of societies in America, the memoirs and books written by missionaries on India and their published sermons, gave an insight into

5 Elsbree, Oliver W., The Rise of Missionary Spirit in America, 1790-1815, Williamsport, 1928, p.31.
7 Ibid., p.44.
their attitude towards India. To a great extent their reaction towards Hindu religion and thought were not favourable. This attitude stemmed from the belief of early missionaries in their cultural superiority and the uniqueness of their spiritual message. This was partly because the missionaries were products of the early Nineteenth century when the western nations were vigorously expanding on the globe and western imperialism was in its prime.  

The prevalent theology of the period also served to strengthen this attitude among the missionaries. It was ardently believed by Christian theologians of this period that those who had not heard the message of Christ and accepted him as their saviour were eternally doomed.  

Unfortunately, popular Hinduism in the first half of the Nineteenth Century was at its lowest ebb. Growing ignorance had resulted in the spreading of grave social evils. The evils of sati, thuggee and female infanticide had increased. The missionaries confused the external forms of Hindu religion with its real spiritual message. Their speeches to their compatriots in the United States of America

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8Ibid., p.78.
9Ibid., p.79.
tended to be largely misrepresentations of Indian religious beliefs and practices. In November 1816, a very well-published sermon entitled "Sermon on the Idolatory of the Hindus" was delivered by Samuel Nott at Franklin, Connecticut. In this sermon Nott gave the following interpretation of the character of Hindu gods and goddesses: "They are like men in their passions and feelings, and the places where they dwell are filled with folly, disorder and contention. Pride and selfishness, jealousy, anger and lust pervade the very heavens where they dwell."

Reverend Jabez T. Sunderland, the well-known Unitarian minister and friend of India, observed: "As a rule the home churches are extremely careful to select for missionaries to all foreign fields their 'soundest' and that means their least progressive representatives."

It was heartening to note that the second group of Americans - the Transcendentalist philosophers and writers as well as the Sanskritists of the Nineteenth Century remained unaffected by the Evangelical propaganda and reacted favourably to Hindu thought and religion. These scholars

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11 Sunderland, Jabez T., "Christian Missions in India", New World, March 1898, p. 42
through their diligent study of the history and culture of India, helped instil in Nineteenth-Century America respect for India's cultural heritage. According to Romain Rolland, "Hindu thought infiltrated the American spirit in the Nineteenth Century and contributed to the strange moral and religious mentality of the modern United States. With its strange mixture of Anglo-Saxon puritanism, Yankee optimism of action pragmatism, scientism and pseudo-Vedantism."

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson the great transcendentalist who was mainly responsible for popularising Hindu thought in United States before the 1870's. In his famous address delivered in July 1838 at the Harvard Divinity School, Emerson declared, "Europe has always owed to oriental genius its divine impulses." Emerson's famous poem 'Brahma' written in 1856 showed the influence of the philosophy of soul in relation to the supreme soul.

13 Rolland, Romain, Prophets of the New India, New York, 1930, p.329.
Although Emerson was enamoured of the entire oriental literature - Chinese, Persian and Indian - he bestowed his choicest praise on that of India. As a matter of fact, for him, India was the chief representative of the East and he often identified the whole Orient with it. In his journal, he paid glowing tributes to the Vedas, "There was nothing for me but to read the Vedas, the Bible of the tropics for which I came back every three or four years. It is sublime as heat and night and breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment, all the grand ethics which visit in turn each noble and poetic mind."17

Henry David Thoreau, renowned thinker and writer, was equally interested in Hindu thought and religion. His essay, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," written in 1839, was an enthusiastic eulogy of the Gita and of the great poems and philosophies of Ancient India.18

This sympathetic attitude towards Hindu thought and religion found its culmination in the reputed poem of Walt Whitman entitled "Passage to India," written in 1868. In this poem, the poet pays tribute to the sublimity of Hindu thought and the magnificent panorama of India's

17 Ibid., p. 45.
18 Rolland, Romain, Prophets of the New India, p. 330.
There was also a small number of distinguished scholars who held chairs in American universities where they carried on research and taught students. The first was William Dwight Whitney 1827 to 1894 of Yale University. Four others, whose activities bridged the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries were Charles Rockwell Lanman, 1850-1941 of Harvard; Maurice Bloomfield, 1855-1928 of Johns Hopkins; E. Washburn Hopkins, 1857-1932 of Yale; and A. V. Williams Jackson, 1862-1937, of Columbia. These erudite scholars together with their pupils in the Twentieth Century and a few additional scholars from abroad such as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy 1877-1947 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston established a distinguished tradition of productive humanistic scholarship concerning India. But the number of American institutions willing to shelter such work was small. Only


"Passage 0 Soul to India
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic
the primitive fables.
Lo Soul, the retrospect
brought forward
The old, most populous,
wealthiest of earth's lands.
The streams of the Indus and
the Ganges and their many affluents ---
The flowing literature
tremendous epics, religions, castes
Old occult Brahma interminably
far back.

- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass.*
eight universities maintained chairs of Sanskrit or Indic studies in the inter-war period—Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Pennsylvania, John Hopkins, Chicago, and California. Only one museum (Boston) had a full-time curator of Indian art.20

Indian visitors who aroused popular interest in Indian culture were Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu and Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was a kind of reverse missionary, one who came from India to America. Vivekananda in his Chicago address at the World’s Parliament of Religions 1893 presented Hinduism as the mother of religions—a religion which had taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. He quoted illustrative passages taken from Hinduism.21


21"As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they may appear crooked or straight all lead to thee".

"Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him, all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me".

(Swami Tejasananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1979, p. 47.).
The parliament of Religions, he concluded, had shown to the world that holiness, purity and charity were not the exclusive possession of any church in the world. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreamt of his own religion and the destruction of others he was to be pitied and told that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, "Help and not fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension".²²

The American press rang with his fame. The best-known and most conservative of the metropolitan newspapers proclaimed him a prophet and a seer. The New York Herald referred to him as undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions and added, "After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."²²a

Rabindra Nath Tagore was another honoured visitor to the United States. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for his book "Gitanjali" in 1913. He visited United States several times. When Tagore visited New Haven, Connecticut, he was presented with the Yale Bicentennial Medal. During all his visits to America, Tagore spoke his message of tolerance and at every opportunity, he sought to underline

²²Swami Tejasananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, p.47.
²²aIbid., p. 49.
his faith in the American Republic.  

Indian society also felt the impact of American thought. Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, yet he admired his ethical teachings. In the preface to his precepts of Jesus (1820), he said, “This simple code of religion and of morality is so admirably calculated to elevate man’s ideal to high and liberal nations of one God ... and is also well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves and to society that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form.” He founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 as a purificatory movement to cleanse Hinduism of the errors which had crept into it since the post-Vedic period.

Notwithstanding commercial, missionary and intellectual contacts some Americans did form queer notions regarding India. Thoughtful books about India had small sale. E.M. Posters “Passage to India” was read less for what it said about India than for its quality as a work of art.


25 Ibid., p. 19.

Professor Van Tyne wrote on India about four years after the close of the war. His British sympathies were well known. His book "India in Ferment" did not tell the American people anything complimentary about the Indians. Katherine Mavos, "Mother India" was largely responsible for a distorted impression about India. "Mother India" was described by Mahatma Gandhi as a drain inspector's report.

From these different sources developed various American stereotypes about India. Some of them mutually contradictory which appeared in the remarks of legislators, editorial writers, columnists, public speakers and became accepted truths in the minds of the readers or listeners. In India before World War II the sources of information about America were as unreliable as those about India in the United States. Few Indians had come to United States except students whose purpose was not to study in United States institutions but to acquire technical experience. If they had been successful, they would speak well of the United States. But if they had had unpleasant experiences because of their skin and colour, they would be angry.

29 Brown, W. Norman, The United States and India and Pakistan, p.266.
However, certain instances of contact left a strong impression upon Indians. One was United States relief given during the famine of 1896-1900. Gandhiji's sympathetic press in America at certain periods pleased Indians who liked the United States accordingly. 30

It was however in the twentieth century that Indian nationalism became a force to be reckoned with. Indians hopes were sustained by United States public response. The nationalists hoped that the representatives of the people the government would stand up for the cherished ideals of its people.

Support for Indian freedom was expressed by some American intellectuals as early as the first decade of twentieth century. An organisation called the Society for the Advancement of India was formed under Myron H. Phelps which maintained contact with Congress Office in London. At this time, many Americans opposed their own government's action in the Philippines and Cuba, taking interest in the Indian Freedom Movement. American historian and scholar, Charles Francis Adams speaking before the American Historical Association in 1901 denounced British rule in India. "I submit that there is not an instance in all recorded history from the earliest times until now, where a so called inferior race or community has been elevated in its character, or

30 Ibid., p.267.
made self-sustaining or self-governing, or even put on the way to that result through a condition of dependency or tutelage."\textsuperscript{31} Making a direct appreciation of this truth to India, he declared in the most unequivocal terms that notwithstanding any or all material or other improvements made in the country by British during the three hundred years, British rule had been an absolute failure as a means for increasing the capacity or fitness of the Indian people for self-government - on the contrary, it had lessened it. And he held that there was no ground for believing that it would or could ever have any other effect. What she needs now is simply "Hands Off" on the part of her foreign conquerer, so that her native capacity for self rule, which Adams held had been weakened by British dominance, was not destroyed. She may again, as in the past, come into activity and therefore, into growth, normal development and permanent strength.\textsuperscript{32}

William Jennings Bryan, one of United States’s best-known leaders during his world tour, stayed in India for a short period and on his return published a pamphlet \textit{"British Rule in India (1906)}", which contained a realistic


\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.161-162.
criticism of imperialism in India. "The trouble is that England acquired India for England's advantage not for India's and that she holds India for England's benefit. She administers India with an eye to England's interest and not India's". Andrew Carnegie, another prominent American, after a visit to India wrote several articles between 1906 and 1908 for Der Morgen, a German newspaper. He ridiculed the oft-quoted saying that India was the brightest jewel in the British Crown, and expressed the hope that the jewel may some day "Glow Blood Red". 33

But the government's policy was that of the "Big Stick" and "Dollar Diplomacy". President Theodore Roosevelt felt it necessary to defend imperialism in India in words that have few parallels even in British statements. In his message to the 58th Congress President Roosevelt proclaimed with regards to Philippines, "There are points of resemblance in our work to the work which is being done by the British in India and Egypt". Theodore Roosevelt asserted that "English rule in India and Egypt like the rule of France in Algiers or Russia in Turkistan means a great advance for humanity". Roosevelt insisted English rule in

33 Jauhri, R.C., American Diplomacy and Independence for India, p.10; Hess, Gary R., America Encounters India, p.8.
India has been one of the mighty feats to the credit of the white race during the past four centuries of expansion and dominance.\textsuperscript{34}

The Indian nationalists were taken aback. This was the first official statement before the First World War, and it came from the President himself. Britain was quick to realise its importance. The \textit{Times} commented, "The remarks of Roosevelt upon the Government of India by the British, will have a special interest in England because they show he has no sympathy with the anti-British campaign conducted for years in America, against British rule in India. Another British journalist noted that it is a proof of how far the happy revolution in Anglo-American relations and her greater experience in the realities of weltpolitik have carried America away from the standpoint of former days".\textsuperscript{36} Even Roosevelt's speeches did not go unanswered. An open letter was addressed to the President protesting against his address. Among the prominent signatories were Jenkin Lloyd Jones of Chicago, Professor Charles R. Laman of Harvard, Moorfield Stone of Boston, Louis F. Post


of Washington, William Lloyd Garrison, and Myron H. Phelps of New York and several others. The memorandum to the President drew his attention to the harsh realities of British rule. Freedom of speech and assembly were severely restricted, prominent persons were being deported without trial, agitation for redress was being declared as "sedition". The open letter asked, "Is this method of governing a people one which the President of a Republic should praise". Mark Twain, speaking out against British and American imperialism, declared, "England and America: yes we are kin. And now that we are also kin in sin there is nothing more to be desired".

The casual debate over India in the United States provided opportunity to a large number of Indians pouring into United States to gain support for the nationalist cause. Students and nationalists formed the main immigrants to United States at this time. Students who studied at such universities as Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Princeton, Chicago and California drank the American spirit of liberty and the

37 Singh, P. Diwakar, American Attitude Towards the Indian Nationalist Movement, Munshiram Manohar Lal, Delhi, 1974, p. 94.

idea of the intrinsic worth and dignity of every individual.
When these young men returned home, they showed fresh skill
at aggravating the old wound — alien authority. 39

Indian patriots, who had been out of one European
capital after another, got refuge in the United States of
America. They worked in cooperation with American sympa-
thisers who were usually missionaries, scholars, writers,
newspaper editors and the traditional anti-colonial, anti-
empire and anti-British psychological set. 40

Freedom fighter Taraknath Das who came as a
student to America began publishing "Free Hindustan" in
1908. Later on in association with Sailendra N. Ghose and
B.K. Roy, he organized the "Friends For Freedom Society".
Several Americans — Roger Baldwin, Robert Morse Lovett,
one of the editors of the New Republic, Norman Thomas and
Agnes Smedley supported them. The society also received
financial and moral support of Irish-Americans. 41

39 Shridharni, Krishnalal, My India, My West, Gollanez,
40 Ibid., p. 301
41 Muzumdar, Haridas T., America's Contribution to India's
Another pioneer of the Indian Independence Movement was Har Dayal, founder of the Ghadar Party in California. He began editing the weekly newspaper Ghadr (meaning mutiny or revolution) in San Francisco. Har Dayal left no doubt as to why the paper had been named Ghadr: "Our name and work are identical. Mutiny he said would break out in a "few years". Har Dayal in an article published in the Ghadr entitled "The Voice of India: India's call to Young Men", urged sacrifice, revenge and unity. Har Dayal brought himself forcibly to the attention of United States and British officials when he arrived in Washington on February 9, 1914 as a member of a delegation of Hindus to protest against congressional bills introduced by three California representatives - John E. Raker, Everis Anson Hayes and Denver S. Church which would exclude the immigration of all Asiatics to the United States. He also objected to Hindu labourers being bracketed with "all idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons etc." Meanwhile, the British Embassy took steps to curtail the activities of Har Dayal. A complaint against him was made by Ernest Scott, the First Secretary, and a warrant for his arrest was issued by the


43 Ibid., pp.144-145.
Bureau of Immigration "On charges of being a member of excluded classes, an anarchist or advocating the overthrow of United States Government by force. He was arrested in San Francisco on March 25, 1914. 44

As an offset to the revolutionary method adopted by Har Dayal, came the peaceful programme advocated by Lala Lajpat Rai. He founded the India Home Rule League of America. Among his early supporters was J.T. Sunderland, author of "India in Bondage". Lajpat Rai's "Young India", "England's Debt to India", "Open Letter to Lloyd George", "Self Determination for India" and "India a Graveyard" were published in the United States. They helped to mould public opinion. The pattern of nationwide lectures set by Lajpat Rai were carried forward by Dr. Syed Hossain, Dr. H.T. Muzumdar, Dr. Krishnalal Shridharni, Dr. Anup Singh and several other distinguished visitors from India. 45

During the First World War, repression against supporters of Indian Freedom was severe. The persecution of Indians and the open interference of Britain in the Indian cases led Robert Morss Lovett, a life-long fighter for civil

44 Ibid., p. 154.

rights were a few years later, "No one will defend the subserviency and sycophancy of American officials in these cases... But that the agents of a foreign power, even under the special cloak of an alliance which did not exist should play upon the stupidity, prejudice and corruption of our courts should stimulate the ferocity of our police and soldiers - behind the lines, should smuggle Legislation into our statutes for purposes of their own, is intolerable among free nations."  

At the end of the war, India's demand for freedom obtained broader support. President Woodrow Wilson's enunciation of the doctrine of national self-determination and its appreciation in the post war peace settlement ared Indian hopes and expectation. Resolutions advocating Indian independence were passed in 1920 by the American Socialist Party and by the former Labour Party, both left-wing organisations. 

Lala Lajpat Rai with the active assistance of Dudley Field Malone presented a memorandum to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee conducting an enquiry into the


right of self-determination for certain countries. 48

England's national policy was denounced by the American Congress in 1919 in the words, "Judged by the ancient standards, Britain rule might find something to commend it, but measured by the best traditions and ideals of the English people, no man can successfully defend it... and so at the conclusion of this war when the millions of India, whose sons had fought for England and for us on the strength of our promises of self-determination and freedom for all peoples, demanded that right of self-determination, the infamous Rowlatt Act was passed, making the discussion of those demands a crime punishable with penalties of utmost severity. England has failed in India, failed in Egypt, failed in all Africa because of the successful resistance by the reactionary leaders of this great colonial policy. 49

During the debate over ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, several Senators spoke for India's right of Independence and opposed ratification on this
ground. Joseph I France of Maryland on October 9, 1919 observed, "We cannot justify ourself in signing and sealing an international agreement which sanctions permanent ensalvement of India". George W. Norris of Nebraska defended the right of the people of India to freedom, and criticised the British Government for refusing self-determination and self-government to India after such a valuable contribution during the war. In the House of Representatives, William E. Mason of Chicago likewise expressed hope for the self-determination of India. 50

In India, however, the portentous events of 1919 overshadowed concern about the peace settlement. The Government of India Act of 1919, which embodied a scheme for the progressive evolution of self-government, was accompanied by the passage of the Rowlatt Act, which provided for the suspension of civil liberties in cases involving political terrorism. Indian resentment touched off a wave of hartals. These in turn generated riots in the Punjab, which led the British to fear revolution. Gandhiji led the National Congress in a non-cooperation campaign. The American Consuls at Bombay, Calcutta and

50 Jauhri, R.C., American Diplomacy and Independence for India, p. 29.
Madras reported extensively to the State Department on the non-cooperation movement. The American public knew comparatively little of the events of 1919 and most information came from British sources. Former Civil Servants in India wrote extensively in English journals, some of which were published in America. Most of the American press including The Nation, The New Republic and Literary Digest was favourably impressed by the reforms. 51

Ernest B. Lee wrote in the Fortnightly Review, that 

"No Englishman who reads the Rowlatt report can fail to be impressed with its scrupulous fairness, its clear and cogent reasoning and its weight as an unimpeachable record of facts based upon an enormous mass of intricate documentary evidence." 52

The Jallianwala Bagh incident, however, did spark a reference in the Senate on February 27, 1920. Senator Norris inserted in the Congressional Record an article on the Amritsar killings. The Americans likened Gandhi to a Hindu Jean Jacques Rousseau. Several liberal magazines - The Nation, The New Republic, Christian Century frequently published his biographical sketches. Americans recognized Gandhi as the symbol of Indian political awakening.

51 Hess, Gary R., America Encounters India, pp.10-11.
52 "The Case for the Rowlatt Act", Fortnightly Review (VI), August 1, 1919, p. 229.
Gandhi's non-cooperation movement was commented upon by the United States press. The press opinion could be divided into three distinct groups. The liberal section sympathized with the Indian struggle. Second, the section critical of Gandhi and his movement, while the third category was the neutral section whose interest in Indian problems were limited to Gandhi and his unique struggle.53

One notable feature of the period was the change in the attitude of the American Church towards India. The Church was greatly impressed by the personality of Gandhi. Being a Hindu, his ways of life, his insistence on love, tolerance and truth, were all based on Christian precepts.54

After the failure of the non-cooperation movement, Indian politics witnessed a stalemate and so did American interest, until the appointment of Simon Commission. The leading American newspapers gave wide publicity and coverage to the Commission's activities. She was invited to be an original signatory to the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 on the same footing as the self-governing British dominions. The American press hailed the historic announcement of Purna Swarajya at the Lahore Session of the Indian


54 Ibid., p.361.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 had a wider appeal. Many newspapers and magazines covered it. During the Round Table Conference in London, Roger Baldwin, a member of the Civil Liberties Union, along with sixty-two Americans, sent a memorandum to the British Government asking it to grant independence to India. The Government of India Act of 1935, drawn after the labours of the Round Table Conference, belied Indian hopes and Americans upheld Nehru's characterisation of this Act as a charter of Slavery.  

The Congress Party was banned and Gandhi again put in jail. Gandhiji sought United States support. A few

55 Jauhri, R.C., American Diplomacy and Independence for India, p.31; Hess, Gary R., America Encounters India, pp.11-12.
hours before his arrest in January 1931, Gandhiji sent to America the following message. "On the eve of embarking of what promises to be a deadly struggle, I shall expect my numerous American friends to watch its career and use the influence of a great nation for the sake of oppressed humanity. This Indian struggle is more than national. It has international value and importance. I am convinced that if my countrymen and women retain up to the last the spirit of non-violence, they will have inaugurated a new era upon earth." Immediately after his arrest he gave the following message for America: "Even as America won its independence through suffering valour and sacrifice so shall India in God's good time achieve her freedom by suffering sacrifice and non-violence..."

"Tell America as the exponent of that liberty we hunger for not to forget our sad people in her prayers."  

After the arrest of Gandhiji and his followers, another interlude of comparative inactivity ensued. Some Indians began to doubt American appreciation of nationalist feeling. Jawaharlal Nehru's experience as the Congress delegate to the Brussels Congress of Oppressed Nationalities awakened him to the political threat of United States

57 Sailendra N. Ghose to Dr. Sunderland, Private Papers of Dr. Sunderland (January 6, 1931), p. 19, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, Delhi.
imperialism. After the conference Nehru spoke of the rise of United States imperialism, which he feared might fore­shadow an Anglo-Saxon move to dominate the world. This apprehension had been a recurrent theme in the articles by Taraknath Das in the Modern Review of Calcutta and in his 1923 book, India in World Politics. Despite the limitations of American understanding of Indians and their culture, the public did reflect pronationalist sentiment as it witnessed the upheaval of early 1930's. 58

Expressions of sympathy for the nationalists came from American liberals. The Nation and The New Republic consistently defended the policies of the National Congress. After Gandhiji's arrest, Blaine introduced a resolution urging that the United States use its good offices to bring about a settlement which would acknowledge the Indian claims. Holmes formulated a petition signed by more than one hundred clergymen calling upon British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald to reach an accord with Gandhi. Roger Baldwin wrote to Nehru, whom he had met at Brussels in 1927, that American sentiment was on the nationalist side and advised the Congress to stand firm. H.T.Muzumdar publicized the identification of the Indian Movement with the American independence movement.

On January 26, 1931, the first anniversary of the independence day proclaimed by the National Congress, he led a group of Americans and Indians to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where he read the Indian Declaration of Independence. After agreeing to the pact with Irwin, Gandhiji expressed gratitude to Americans and other peoples who had supported the Congress. 59

Gandhiji's participation in the second Round Table Conference brought India back to the front pages of American newspapers. From 1932 until the outbreak of World War II, Indo-American relations again were distant. In the American press the Government of India Act of 1935 and the ensuing provincial elections were overshadowed by the domestic question of the depression years and the collapse of international order in Europe and East Asia. It was the outbreak of Second World War and India's strategic position, which drew the attention of the United States to the Indian Movement.

59 Ibid., p. 15.