VEER SAVARKAR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Dr. Ambedkar : Life And Mission

Lokamanya Tilak : Father Of Our Freedom Struggle

Mahatma Jotirao Phooley : Father Of Our Social Revolution

SWATANTRYAVEER SAVARKAR

VEER SAVARKAR

DHANANJAY KEER

Not to be lent out

POPULAR PRAKASHAN BOMBAY

A. V. KEER

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To

The Memory of

SINDHUTAI ANANT BHIDE

Preface to the Second Edition

I TAKE great delight in presenting this revised and complete biography of Veer Savarkar which, on its first publication in May 1950, was well received by leading Indian Newspapers and eminent men of learning in India and in foreign countries.

The title of the original biography was *Savarkar And His Times*. I have deleted the expression 'And His Times' since a life always has around its central figure an elaborate historical background. I have added seven chapters to the original book, keeping its last chapter as Chapter XXV in the new edition. The valuable new information and new facts I could get through research and through a plethora of material which was kindly made available to me by Savarkar himself and through his kind interviews, were inserted at their proper places in historical sequence.

There are no serious changes made in the content of the original book although on a retrospective of the events of the last thirty years I have modulated some of the statements, phrases and expressions to help the correct appraisal; but I have kept to the spirit.

There are sometimes two types of great men working for the good of society at one and the same time. The first type prefers to be pained for the welfare of society while the second whips it to betterment. Gandhi typifies the first and Savarkar represents the second. Savarkar had the light of a man of mission, the insight of a statesman and the foresight of a political prophet. His life removes the wrong impression created in the minds of non-Indians that the Indian Freedom Movement started with Gandhi and Nehru. If posterity closely studies the events that took place during the incarceration and internment of Savarkar (1910 to 1937) it might regard Savarkar's emphasis on Hindu nationalism as a historical necessity for which he would not be held solely responsible.

A life is a story of a man working and as I believe that biography is both art and history, I have tried to depict vividly, though with sensitive detachment, Savarkar as he was. I agree

with Carl L. Becker that complete detachment would produce few histories and none worthwhile. A biographer must sympathise with the hero, should identify with his aims and motivations but at the same time must show detachment enough to judge him freely. As usual I have done my utmost to achieve it.

I acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to all the authors, journals and publishers from whose books, journals and publications I have drawn excerpts.

I am deeply indebted to Bhide Guruji for closely reading the manuscript and the proofs of the new edition and to Vishwasrao Patil for reading with great interest the manuscript. My grateful thanks are due to Chandrakant Sinkar and Sharad Potnis for typing the new pages and to my brother Vinayak for preparing the index. There are several persons who help me with encouragement and many others who appreciate my work and promote it. To them I owe a debt of gratitude. My publisher's friendly and keen interest has played no mean part in the completion and production of this new edition. To the printers I express my appreciation of their co-operation.

77 Bhageshwar Bhuvan
Lady Hardinge Road
Mahim, Bombay 16
23 October 1966

DHANANJAY KEER

Preface to the First Edition

SWATANTRYAVEER SAVARKAR needs no introduction to the Indian public, neither does his biography. Long ago, Asaf Ali described Savarkar as the spirit of Shivaji and the late Srinivas Sastri said of him that " he was a great and fearless patriot and volumes could be written about his yeoman services in the cause of Indian Freedom ". This is, however, too small a volume to describe that spirit and those services adequately.

Savarkar's life has already appeared in almost all Indian languages, and in his twenties it has appeared in almost all European languages. But excepting the great Marathi biography by S. L. Karandikar, who wrote it about seven years ago, no book has dealt exhaustively with the various facets of his life. Hence this is a humble attempt to give in detail the myriad sides of Savarkar's life in its proper historic perspective. This book provides a fuller survey of Savarkar's revolutionary, literary, political and social activities and movements. It also deals with his personal life, and covers his life upto the present moment.

I have made a faithful attempt to present a true and correct picture of the various events and incidents that occurred in the life of Savarkar, and also the trends of thoughts and opinions entertained in those times. Most of them do not necessarily reflect my personal views. But they are narrated to record matters of mere history. To quote Sir Edmund Gosse, I have attempted ' to give a faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life '.

Savarkar's life is romantic, epic and volcanic and so it is full of flashes and flames. Bharat has just shed her revolutionary shell, and entered an evolutionary phase. And a revolutionary realist as he is, Savarkar now in Free India naturally insists on the adoption of peaceful, constitutional and democratic means by the people for attaining their objectives. This was only a logical corollary to Savarkar's ideal as proclaimed in his historic work on ' 1857 '.

My earnest appeal, therefore, to all lovers of Indian Freedom and true democracy is that they should go through this book

dispassionately and in a rationalistic manner and know exactly the real Savarkar. And if the book helps them know the real Savarkar, I shall feel glad that the object of writing this book is fulfilled.

My debt of gratitude is gladly acknowledged to all those who read and scrutinised the manuscript and made valuable suggestions, and particularly to those who constantly encouraged me, but whose names I omit for obvious reasons. I also gratefully acknowledge my debt to the various authors, journals and publications from whom I have drawn excerpts. Lastly, my special thanks are due to Messrs. India Printing Works, for their prompt execution and exquisite printing of this work.

Bombay, May 10, 1950. D. K.

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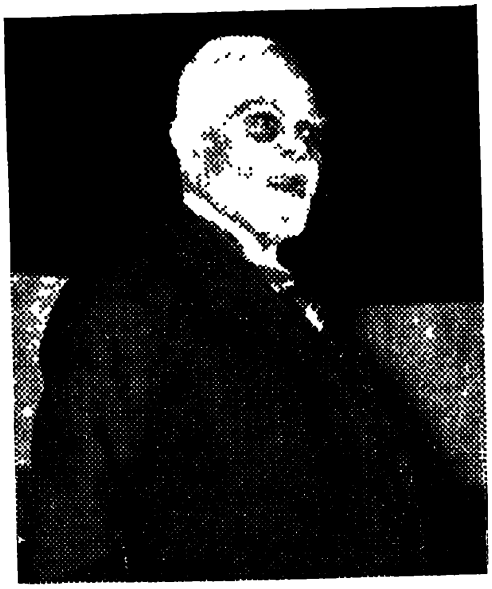
Founder of the Abhinava Bharat Society

Chapekar Brothers, Damodarpant, Balkrishna and Wasudeo
whose martyrdom inspired young Savarkar

Savarkar, leader of the
Mitra Mela

Lala Hardayal

Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma



Sardar Singhji Rana

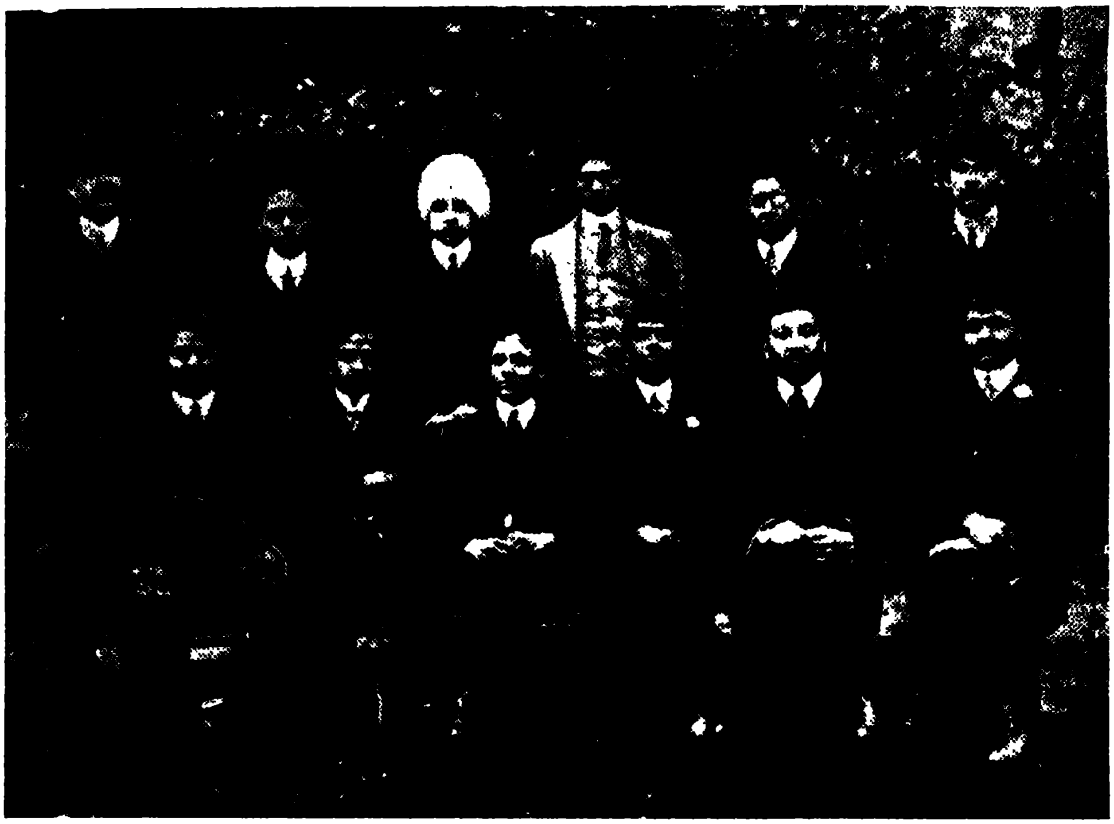
Virendranath Chattopadhyaya

Madame Cama

Guy Aldred

Khudiram Bose who threw the first bomb on April 30, 1908

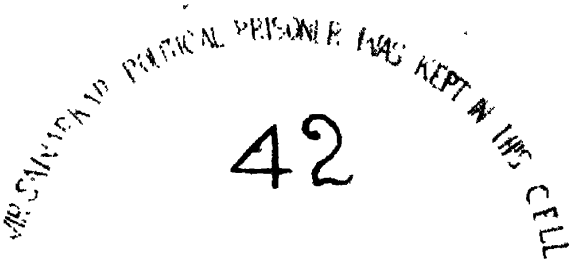
Madanlal Dhingra shot Curzon Wyllie on July 1, 1909



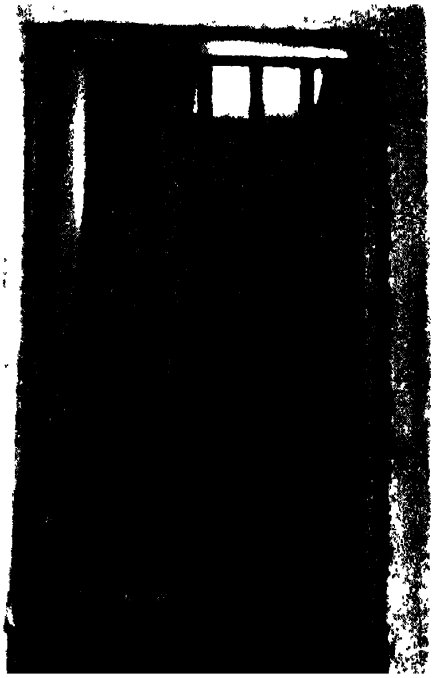
Group in London, Savarkar third from left in the front row

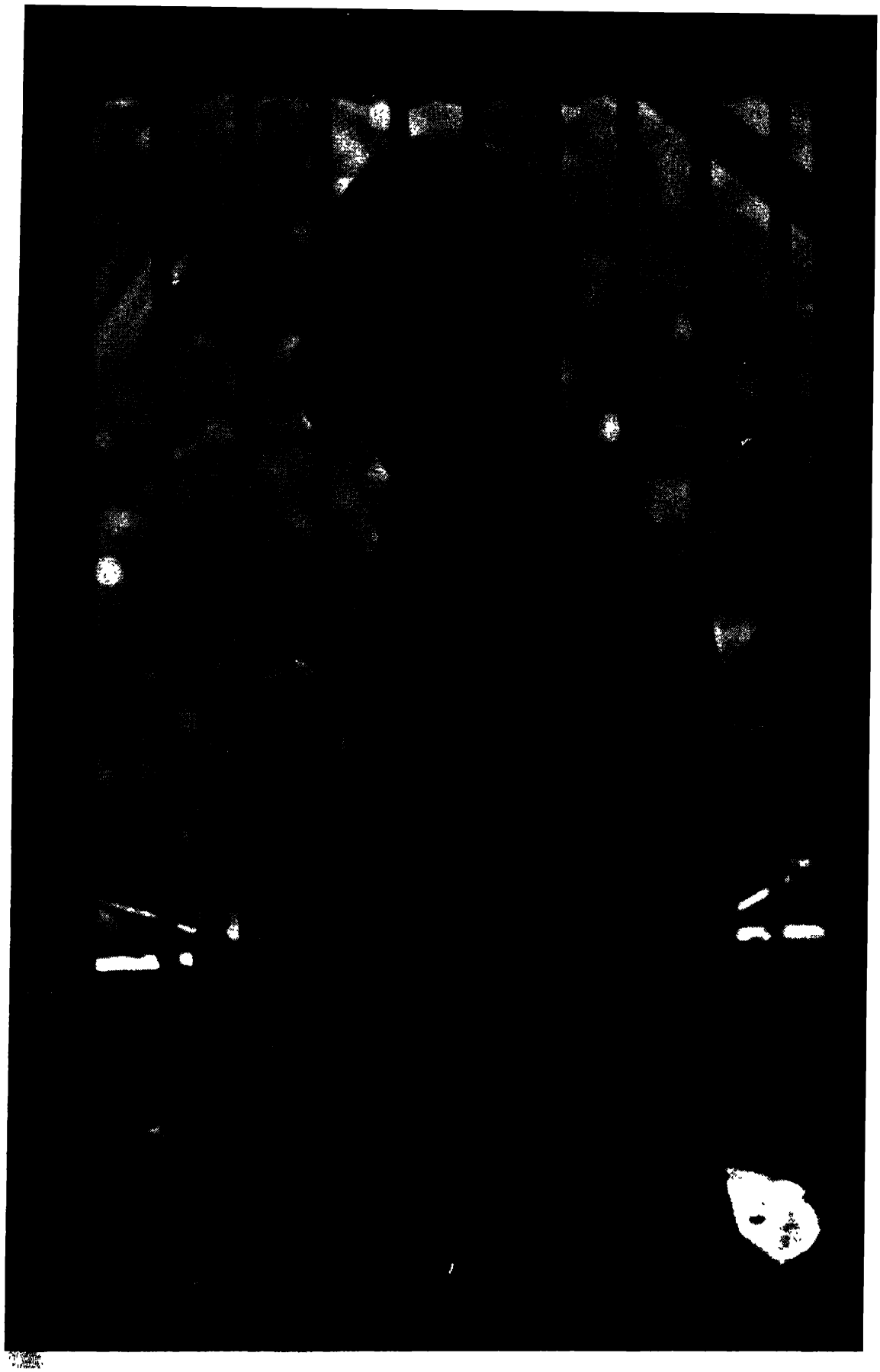
M. August Beernaert,
former Belgian Prime Minister
and President of the Hague
Tribunal

The cellular jail in Andamans



The cell where Savarkar was caged





Savarkar in internment

Immediately after release
(January 1924)

Savarkar Brothers

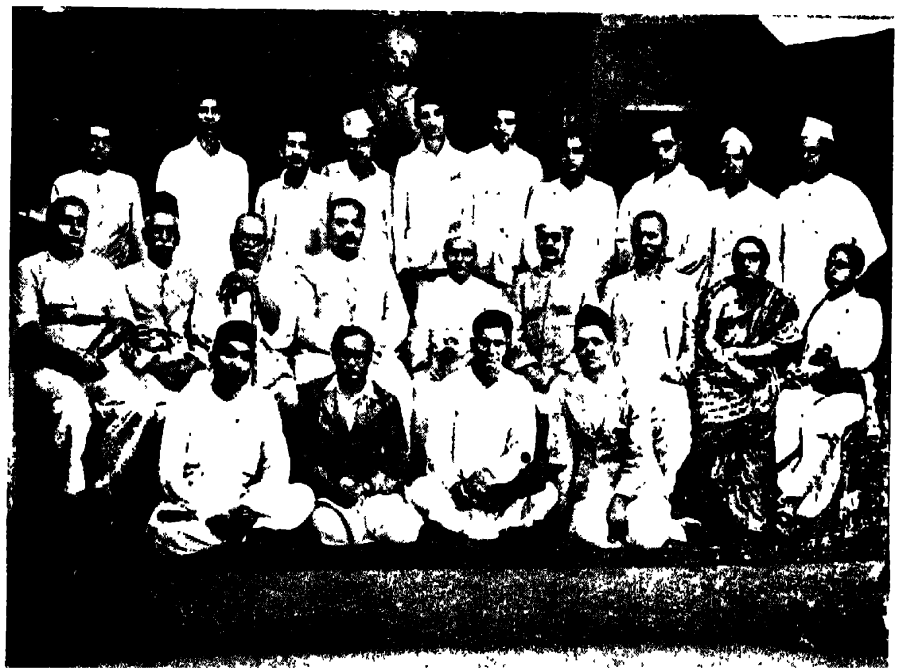
Patit Pavan Temple
First Pan-Hindu Temple

With the Gurkha Leader and the Nepal Prince

Bombay welcomes Savarkar (June 1937)

Ahmedabad Session 1937, Savarkar with Dr. N. D. Savarkar, Dr. M. G. Shinde and Personal Secretary Gajananrao Damle

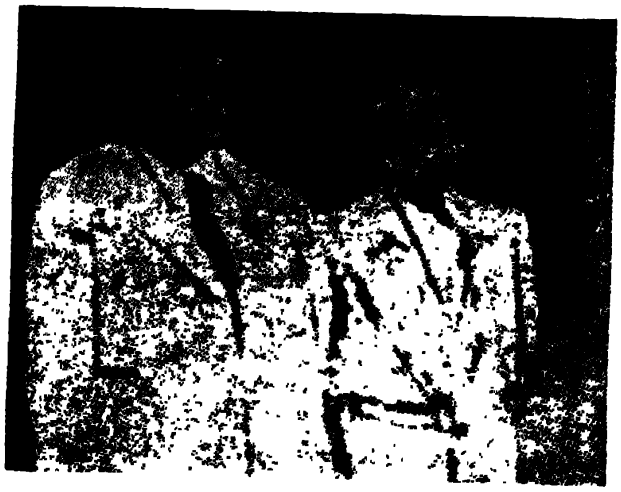
Bhai Paramananda, Dr. Moonje and Savarkar, the Triumvirate of the Hindu Mahasabha



The Mahasabha Working Committee

President of the Hindu Mahasabha (seven successive years)

With Subhas Bose and Jamnadas Mehta



Subhas Bose with Ras Behari Bose

Hindu Mahasabha, Calcutta Session 29-12-1939, Savarkar with Sir Manmathnath Mukerjee and N. C. Chatterjee

A Shuddhi Ceremony (29-6-1941) with Rao Bahadur S. K. Bole (President of the Bombay Provincial Hindu Mahasabha), Masurkar Maharaj and Seth Bhagoji Keer

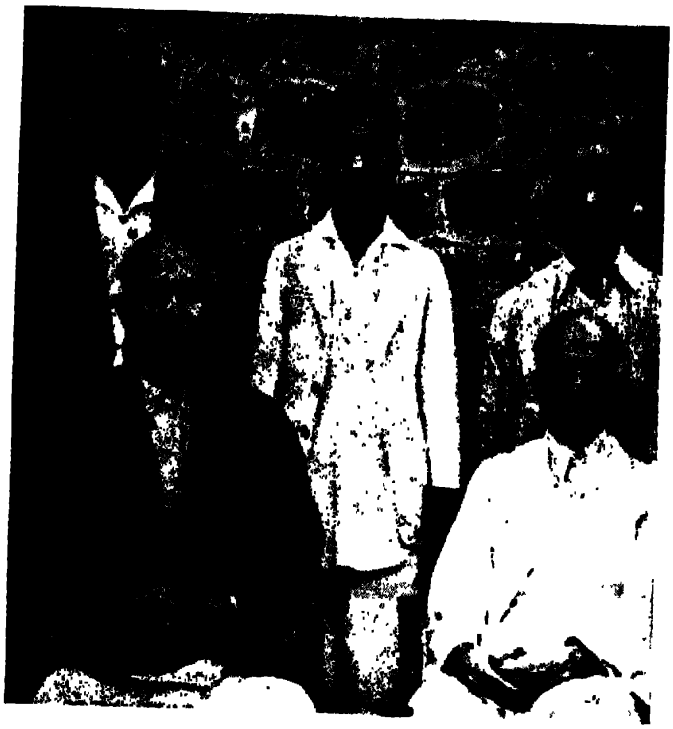
Savarkar
and Cripps

At the time of the Cripps Mission, the Mahasabha delegation meets the Congress delegation led by Maulana Azad

Savarkar, the great orator
But this Quit India Movement must not end in Split India Movement."

Family Group
Mrs. Yamunabai Savarkar (wife), Mrs. Prabhat Chiplunkar (daughter) and Vishwas Savarkar (son)

With Secretary A. S. Bhide



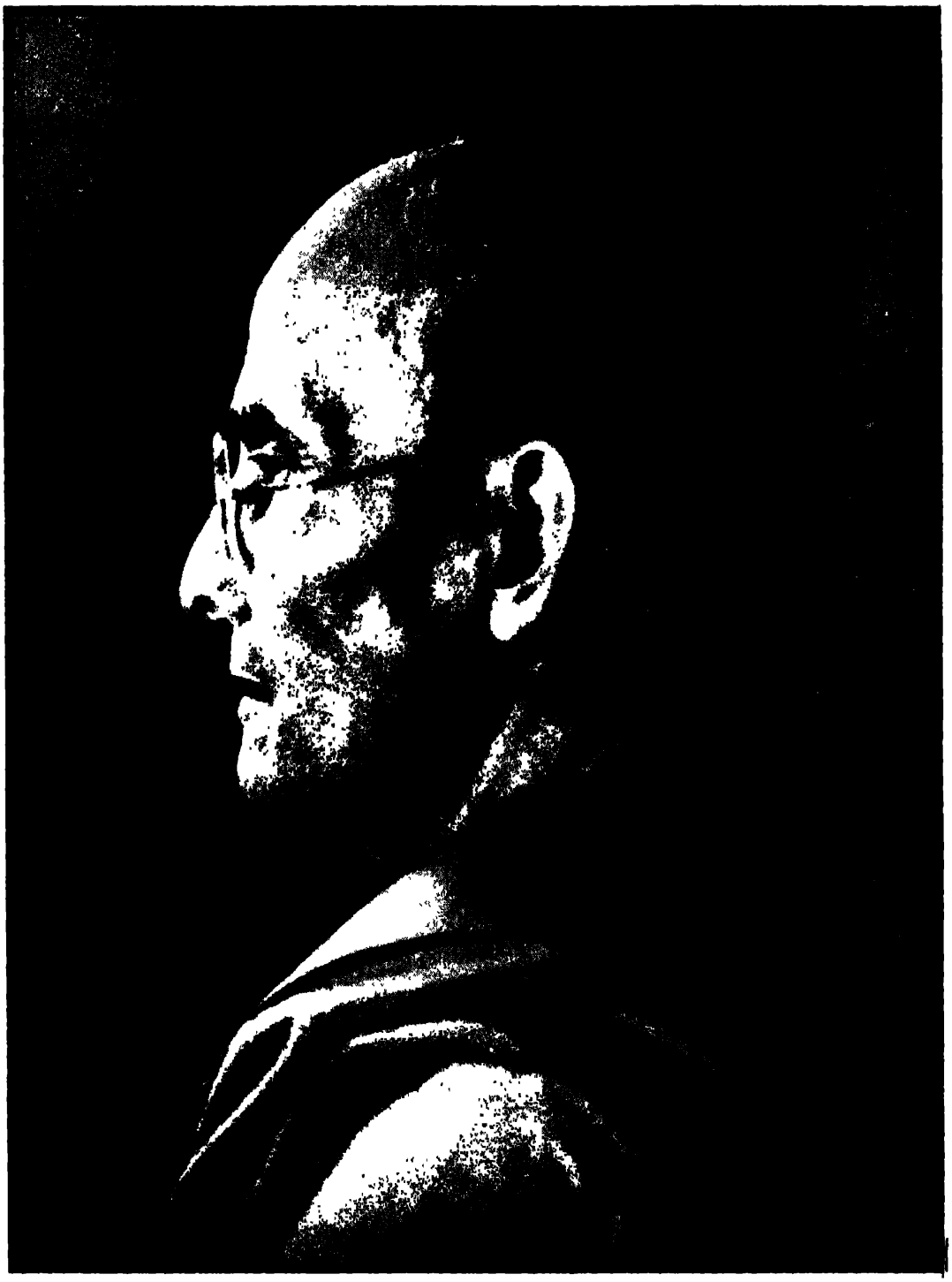
At Walchandnagar, January 1946
with Seth Gulabchand Hirachand, Vishwas Savarkar and Personal Secretary Gajananrao Damle

Red Fort (Gandhi Murder) Trial (22-6-1948) Nathuram Godse, Apte, Karkare, Badge (approver), Madanlal, Gopal Godse, Shankar Kistayya, Savarkar and Dr. Parachure

Release from Belgaum jail
with Appa Kasar (former bodyguard) and G. M. Nalavde, Mayor of Poona

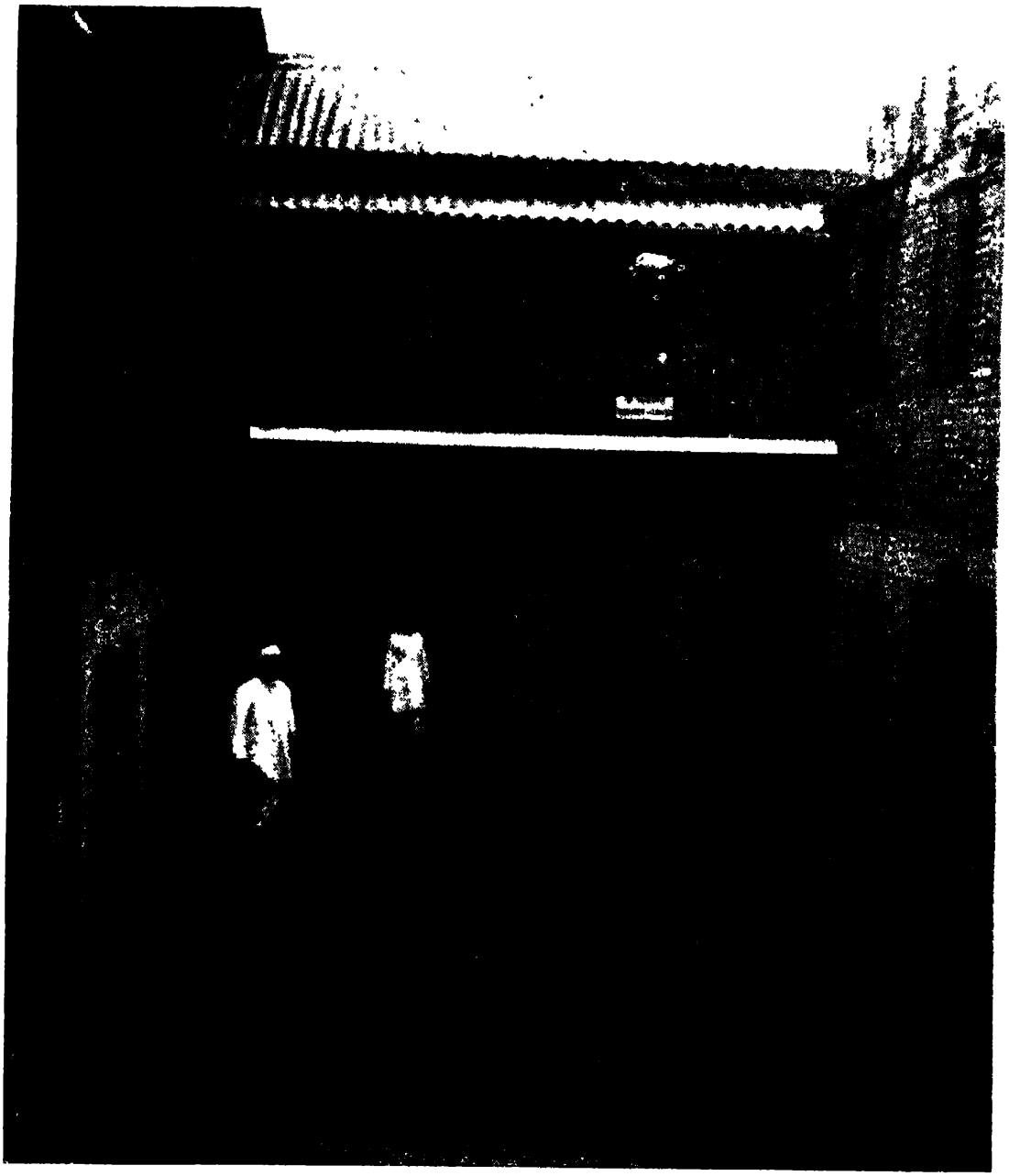
Savarkar with J. S. Karandikar, M. S. Golwalkar and G. V. Ketkar
Poona, 10 May 1952

Homage to Martyrs, Poona (10th May 1952)



Portrait 1952

Political Prophet



Memorial to Martyrs, Nasik (10th May 1953)

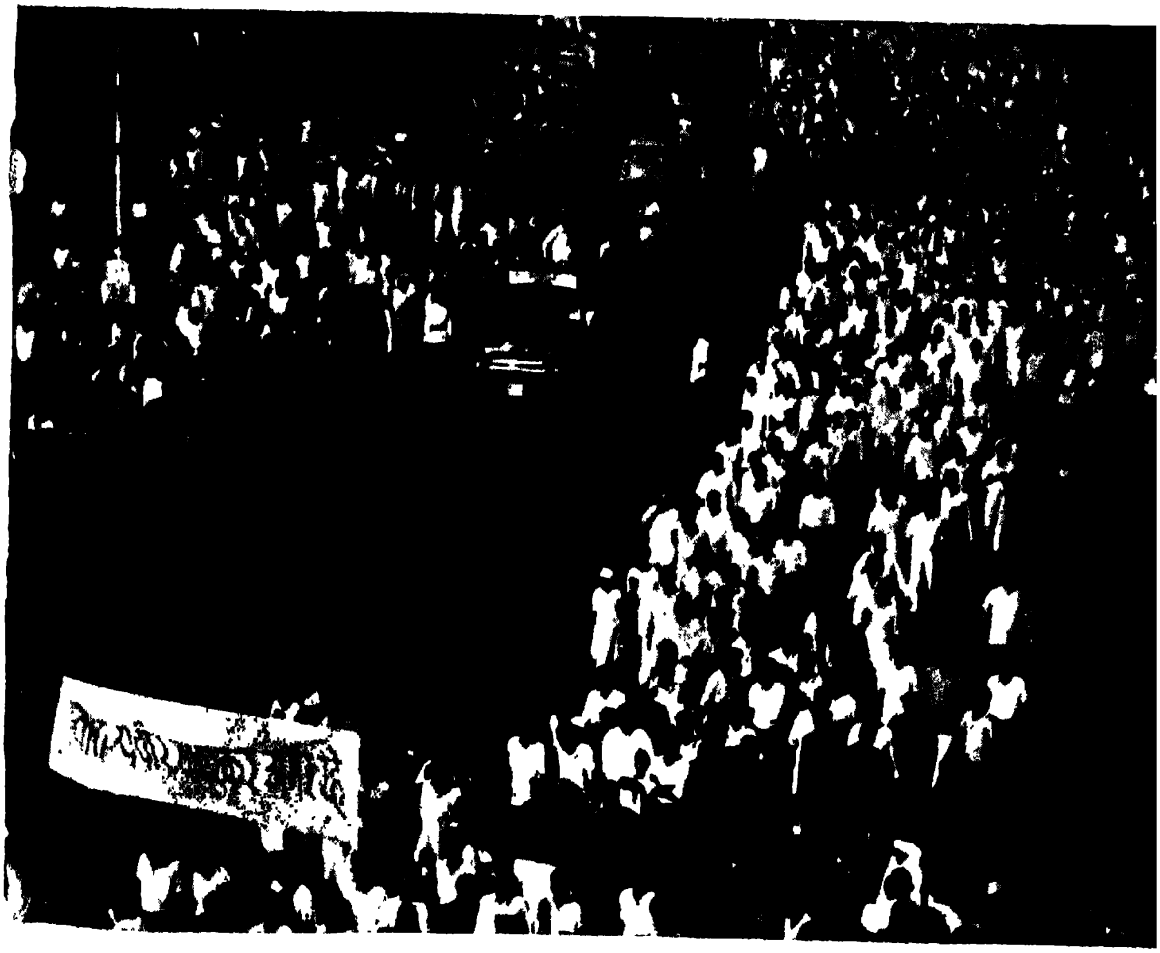
Hindu Mahasabha,
Jodhpur Session,
November 1956;
Mahant Digvijayanath,
Dr. N. B. Khare,
Barrister N. C. Chatterjee,
Seth Bhagirath Mehta

'1857 Centenary
Celebrations' in Delhi
(May 1957)

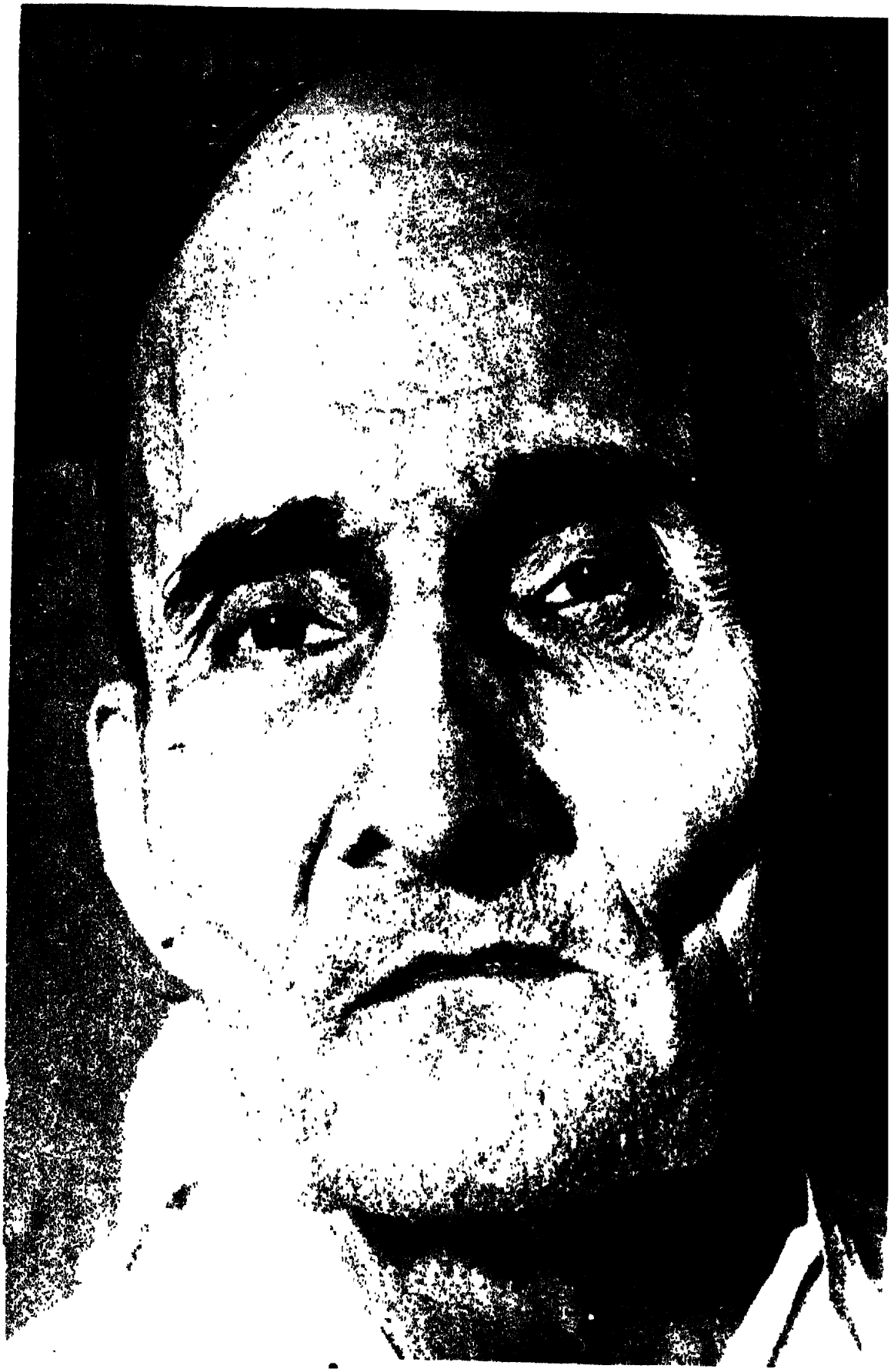
Civic Reception,
Bombay, May 1958
with S. S. Mirajkar,
Mayor of Bombay

Mrityunjaya Day, Poona, 15-1-1961.
last appearance in public

Visit from Vishnu Dayal, Mauritius Minister.
Right (standing) Bal Savarkar, personal secretary



Funeral procession on February 27, 1966



Savarkar at 80

CHAPTER 1

Childhood and Youth

In politically fallen, socially degraded and financially ruined Hindustan, the eighteen-eighties and nineties witnessed the darkest period in the history of our country. The first peep of the dawn in the form of the reforms of 1909 was still to come. The dawn of 1919 was beyond the horizon. The spiritual planets like Maharshi Ranade, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda were kindling light of social regeneration and re-awaking the Indians to their spiritual heritage. Dayananda, Dadabhai, Ranade and Vivekananda were rousing the people from their slumber. The revolts of Ram Singh Kuka and Wasudeo Balwant Phadke had disturbed their thoughts for a good while. Tilak was carrying discontent and unrest from towns to villages. Babu Anand Mohan Bose and Babu Surendranath Banerjee were infusing a spirit of new life in Bengal. The Ilbert Bill fomented the growing ill-feeling towards British rule. Dreading the resurgent revolts aimed at the overthrow of its power, the British Government was deeply engrossed in finding out a safety valve for the passage of the wrath of Indian revolution. And not long before, the British top-ranking officers and Indian public men founded the Indian National Congress on December 28, 1885, despite the fears and opposition of Sir Syed Ahmed, who warned the Muslims to keep aloof from the Congress.

Sprung from the neo-ideology of this institution, which was fathered by Englishmen and mothered by the Indian intelligentsia, the Moderates in the following decades placed mild, just and bare demands of the Indians before their God-sent and enlightened rulers and pleaded for them with all the force and prayerfulness of their master-minds. They sincerely believed that the victors would of themselves bless the vanquished with

the much cherished reforms. So they held that their highest patriotism and best interests demanded the continuance of British rule in India.

The press was almost muzzled. The Arms Act was introduced, not, as it may be imagined, with a view to delivering Indians but to degenerating and emasculating them further. In those days bills and Budgets were prepared, printed, published and enforced before they were even known or seen by Indians. The First Indian Councils Act of 1861 was slightly widened in 1892. In short, it was a shameful and mournful period. The alternative was reform or revolution.

Two events typified the year 1883. Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a leader of renaissance, was at the end of his earthly pilgrimage, and Wasudeo Balwant, the rebel, laid his bones in Aden longing for the establishment of an Indian Republic. In such an atmosphere surcharged with unfulfilled aspirations was born Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on Monday, the 28th May 1883, at 10 p.m. at Bhagur, a village near Nasik. The aims and aspirations of Dayananda and Wasudeo Balwant were to be unified in a great idea, new voice and new nationalism. Seventy-five days before Savarkar's birth, Karl Marx, the Prophet of the Proletariat, passed away unnoticed in a London corner and sixty-two days after was born Benito Mussolini who later moulded the destiny of Italy.

Savarkar springs from the illustrious caste of Chitpavan Brahmins that produced Nanasahib of 1857-fame, Wasudeo Balwant and Lokamanya Tilak, all of whom strove to snatch the crown of Independence from the hands of the British. The Savarkars originally hailed from the Konkan, a land symbolising the great feat of reclamation performed by Parshuram, who is a mighty mythological figure. During the declining days of Peshwa rule, the Savarkars were an important family which had moved in and seen great events. They were Jahgirdars of a small village, Rahuri, and enjoyed the honour of palanquin for their acknowledged eminence in Sanskrit scholarship. The blood, bones and brains of such ancestors carved out this epic figure of Indian revolution, Vinayak Savarkar, who declared a war for the liberation of Hindustan. And as, with the rise of Mazzini, Austrian rule over Italy began to wane, so with the

rise of De Valera and Savarkar the British Empire began to wither and vanish.

* * *

A man of position and personality, Vinayak's father, Damodarpant Savarkar, was well-built, studious, stern and self-respecting. In spite of his English education he loved and remembered the past. He was gifted with poetical talents and was a good conversationalist. What is more, he was an admirer of Tilak. Damodarpant's firm and undemonstrative disposition made him a stern disciplinarian. Vinayak's mother, Radhabai, was a pious, beautiful and bright woman known for the tenderness of her heart. Of this nice couple were born three sons and one daughter. The first was Ganesh, the second Vinayak, the hero of this biography, the third was a daughter named Mainabai and the fourth was Narayan.

Damodarpant was a good-natured and religious-minded man. He recited several passages from the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and read out to his sons Ballads and *Bakhars* on Pratap, Shivaji and the Peshwas. He was a warm admirer of Homer and had studied and read Pope's translation of the *Iliad* to his sons. It was the practice of Vinayak's mother to make her eldest son read chapters from the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana* to her other children before they retired for the night. Thus the Ballads, *Bakhars*, legends, heroic exploits, historical episodes and mythological stories greatly contributed to the mental development of the child Vinayak.

Vinayak, the infant Jahgirdar, was sent to the village school at the age of six. Soon he showed signs of his remarkable inborn genius. Much of his inspiration he derived from history and epics. His love of books and newspapers was so great that he read omnivorously, and any book or newspaper that he could lay his hand upon, he read from cover to cover. His studies were intense, exciting and prolonged. His depth and intelligence and the immense interest he took in human affairs can be judged from one incident. While reading the history of the Arabs, he asked his father about the first pages of their history. The first pages of the book were missing. Naturally the father replied that they might have been torn off. What the boy, in fact, wanted to know was the antecedents of the Arabs. The

range and loftiness of this idea touched the infinite Universe. Savarkar depicted this idea in one of his latter-day poems and concluded that the first pages of all history are always unknown! This is the curse on history, he added.

Vinayak was hardly ten when well-known newspapers from Poona accepted his poems, not knowing that the contributions came from a precocious lad. His insatiable thirst for knowledge, his excellent memory and the peculiar charm in his voice and gait impressed every one and raised high hopes of his future. Damodarpant saw something new and extraordinary in his son that startled him. He was terribly alarmed when one day he saw his son reading the *Aranyakas* in the house; for, reading the *Aranyakas* in a house, it is said, forebodes evil for the reader's worldly life. They are to be read and studied in the woods!

A witty, bold and handsome boy, Vinayak was also full of pranks. He once broke the bangles of his sister, and was shut by his elder brother in the safe and saved from the anger of his father. In his boyhood he learnt archery and riding. To the horror of his companions he once caught a poisonous serpent with a piece of wire in his hand.

A man is seen at his best in his childhood. Milton says that childhood shows the man, as the morning shows the day. Here is an index to the life-book of Savarkar. In June 1893, serious riots broke between Hindus and Muslims in the Azamgarh District of the United Provinces and in August of the same year in Bombay. The news of the atrocities then perpetrated on the Hindus in the United Provinces and Bombay fired his blood and he resolved to avenge the woes and deaths of his co-religionists. The boy Savarkar led a batch of selected school-mates in a march upon the village mosque. The battalion of these boys showered stones upon it, shattered its windows and tiles and returned victorious. This incident gives the first hint of the heroic mettle Vinayak was made of and the key to his future daring life and leadership. The victory, however, was not allowed to go unchallenged. The Muslim school-boys gave battle to Vinayak, the Hindu Generalissimo. Although the number of his soldiers decreased at the time of joining the battle, Vinayak routed the enemy with missiles like pins, pen-knives and thorns with which he had equipped his army. The battle had its lesson. The boy leader fell to training and organis-

ing his group. For military training the group was divided into two detachments—one Hindu and the other a British or a Muslim—to defend a field or a compound. Always the Hindus won and the Muslims or the British lost in the mock fights and warfare.

Vinayak completed his primary education at the village school and moved to Nasik with his elder brother for high-school education. In the meanwhile, misfortune overtook the family. Radhabai, Vinayak's mother, died of cholera, leaving the children to the care of her husband. At the time of this first calamity Vinayak was hardly ten. He was passionately devoted to his mother, and so he felt the loss terribly. Henceforward his father worked from dawn to dead of night, personally discharging the household duties and tending the small ones affectionately.

In every life there are certain momentous incidents that decide the fate or change the mode of one's life. A frustrated and penniless mutineer from Piedmont asked alms of Mazzini in the name of the outlaws of Italy. That was the moment of Mazzini's conversion and dedication to the struggle for his country's Independence. Such an occasion occurred in boy Savarkar's life, too. It made an indelible impression on his mind. Those were the times full of horrid tales. People of Maharashtra stood between famine and death, plague and soldiers, the devil and the deep sea, as it were. The harassment caused by the rigid segregation camps during the plague epidemic, the strict quarantines, the dreadful plague hospitals, the reckless burning of properties and the outrages on women reached a climax. The patience of the people was wearing out. Tilak warned Lord Sandhurst's Government that they should not drive the people to desperation.

These countless miseries of the famine and plague-stricken masses and the excesses committed by the soldiers infuriated the Chapekar brothers of Poona, and they shot dead the British Plague Commissioner, Mr. Rand, the bullying incompetent tyrant, and one British Officer Mr. Ayerst on June 22, 1897, in Poona, which has been the traditional cradle of the liberators of Hindustan. That was the 'auspicious' day of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's rule. The Diamond Jubilee was being celebrated despite the grinding famine and raging plague in Maharashtra. The celebration was, however, performed in

Poona in such a way that the whole country became ablaze with the act that electrified the Indian people. Once again Poona proved the historical law that repression, injustice and racial humiliation give rise to violent reaction that recoils on the head of alien rulers. As a result of this assassination, though outwardly on a charge of publishing seditious articles, Tilak was thrown behind the bars. Betrayed by the Dravid brothers, Damodarpant Chapekar was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. He embraced gallows with the Geeta in his hands on April 18, 1898.

But in a slave country struggling for freedom such abnormal times generally feel the pulse of a nation and often show up simpletons and sycophants and separate traitors from patriots. And nine out of ten informants in such a country rarely go unpunished. Consequently one night with the stroke of the city gun at nine, went out two bullets and the Dravid brothers of Poona, the informants in the Chapekar trial, were shot dead in the street by the junior Chapekar, Vasudeo, and his friend Mahadeo Ranade, nephew of the historian Rajwade. This brave youth Chapekar, his another brother Balkrishna and Ranade were also hanged in May 1899. The end of the Chapekar brothers marks a turning point in the history of the freedom movement of India; for they proved to be the harbingers of the coming revolutionary movement in India.

In the meantime, Vinayak had an attack of small-pox at Nasik and he was back to Bhagur. There the horrible news about Chapekars' heroic end reached his ears. It drove the boy Savarkar to a grim resolve. He approached the family Deity, Durga, in the sanctuary and invoked the blessings of the Great Mother, the source of divine inspiration and strength. Sitting at the feet of the armed Goddess Durga at dead of night. he took a vow of striving nobly and sacrificing his nearest and dearest, his life and all, to fulfil the incomplete mission of the martyred Chapekars. He vowed to drive out the British from his beloved Motherland and to make her free and great once again. It was the glorious vow of Shivaji. Shivaji the Great took his vow of liberating his country from foreign domination at the age of sixteen in the temple of Rohideshwar. Young Tilak took to political agitation at five-and-twenty after finishing his college education. Mazzini entered politics at the age of seventeen, and

De Valera, who was born a year before Savarkar, at thirty, but Savarkar entered politics and took the vow of liberating his Motherland when he was hardly sixteen. So sincere, inspired and spontaneous was the love for his country burning in his heart!

To stir up his comrades and people Savarkar composed one night a ballad over the martyred Chapekars. His face glowed. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he pored over his lines. Hearing the sobs, his father woke up and found his son sitting far into the night by the lamp. He read the lines of the ballad and clouds shadowed his face. The father scented a new danger and tried to dissuade his son from those daring thoughts of martyrdom at so early an age. He gently patted Vinayak on his back and advised him to take to some light songs. The father at once understood what those dripping lines, their spirit and their flash would mean to their author and his family.

At Nasik Vinayak's academic career was not extraordinary. The depth of his knowledge and the fire of his eloquence, however, quite fascinated his teachers and they talked very highly of his ability. While a junior high-school student, his article on 'The Glory of Hindustan' appeared in two parts as an editorial in the local paper, *Nasik Vaibhav*. With the great flow of his words, breadth of his knowledge and boldness of his views, he easily towered above all in the elocution competitions. Astounded at the range of his knowledge and power of his speech, the judges at first doubted the originality of his views, but subsequently were glad to own their mistakes. Vinayak's poems of welcome to Maharshi Ranade and Lokamanya Tilak and the several ballads he composed during these years for the village chorus also won him a high reputation.

In 1899 Vinayak's father and uncle succumbed to plague. Vinayak's younger brother Narayan was also attacked by plague. He was removed first to a dilapidated temple on the outskirts of Bhagur and then to the Nasik Plague Hospital where Ganesh *alias* Babarao, looked after him even at the risk of his own life. Fear lurked in Vinayak's mind that Babarao, too, might catch the infection. And one day it did so happen. Vinayak was terribly shocked. Boy as he was, he burst into tears in a corner, but he did not give out a word of it to Babarao's young wife. The stuff of his courage was that of a man who stamps his mind

upon history. Death was on the prowl in Nasik which had become the city of the dead. In this haunted and deserted city Vinayak passed his days and nights with heart-throbs fearing to hear bad news about his brothers who were writhing with deadly pain in the hospital. At last the danger was over. Both the brothers recovered and returned, and were once more united in a happy home.

* * *

Stars shine out at night. Although Vinayak's mind was filled with these great anxieties, his vow would not let him sit silent. He was restless. He had a purpose in life and it was the liberation of his Motherland from foreign yoke. He mused on it by day, dreamt about it by night, and he was waiting for an opportunity to throw himself into his life's mission with all the strength of his mind and muscle. Shakespeare has described such a powerful mind in these beautiful lines:

> "The force of his own merit makes his way,
> A gift that heaven gives for him."

With that end in view Vinayak made friends with Mhaskar and Page, who were new friends of Babarao at Nasik. Babarao was a simple and hard-working man but rather credulous. Obliging by nature, he was a good propagandist. His selfless public service had won him the affection of the public and many families. His new friends Mhaskar and Page were sincere, patriotic young men, and they worked in the background as did some men of their generation in Government service. In action they were Tilakites and in thought they were drawn to the revolutionary ideas of S. M. Paranjpe. The political views of Paranjpe were the burning thoughts of the boy Savarkar. Paranjpe and Savarkar were politically parallel, but socially poles apart. Both were orators. The elder orator was a master of satire whereas the younger was a live volcano. While Paranjpe was the dream of revolution, Savarkar was its living reality.

After long debates and varied discussions Vinayak won these two followers of Paranjpe over to his side, administered an oath of secrecy and the vow to them and formed a Patriots' Group of three members. This Group, established in 1899,

soon assumed the shape of a Friends' Union called Mitra Mela at the beginning of 1900. Chosen youths of merit and mettle were secretly initiated into this fold. This was the famous 'Beehive', in the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, of revolutionaries in Western India! The Mitra Mela sprouted into the world-famous Abhinava Bharat Society in 1904, its network was spread over Western and Central India and subsequently its branches in the form of the Ghadr Party resounded in England, France, Germany, America, Hong-Kong, Singapore and Burma with their heroic deeds and risings liks the Komagata Maru. The aim and ideal of the Mitra Mela was absolute political Independence of India, and it emphatically asserted that such an independence could be won, if need be, by an armed revolt. Its watchward was instruction and insurrection.

The organisation started. By diffusing knowledge among the members, dispelling their doubts and ignorance and inspiring them with the noble aim, its younger leader Vinayak Savarkar vitalised the gilded youth and the intelligent vagabonds, and brought the best out of them. He instilled his patriotic ideas into their head and those innocent and reckless youth were converted into a batch of patriots and a galaxy of martyrs who afterwards made history.

The new patriotic and political atmosphere transformed the city into a political volcano. The Mitra Mela dominated all public and political institutions of Nasik, changed religious ceremonies and festivals into political and national functions. These activities of the Mitra Mela gave sleepless nights to the District authorities. The Mitra Mela re-sanctified and revitalised the life of Nasik which had grown stale, insipid and shapeless.

Nasik has played a very important role in India's ancient and modern history. This southern Kashi stands on the bank of the Godavari and is the place where Sri Ram passed his voluntary exile resulting from his boundless devotion to his father. It was from Nasik that Sri Ramchandra started on his great march to annihilate the tyranny of Ravan. It was here that Ramchandra and Laxman cut the *Nasika*—nose—of the demoness Shurpanakha. Strange to say, Savarkar started his war of Independence for the liberation of his countrymen in Nasik, cut off the nose of the British Imperialism and was later on exiled for

his deathless devotion to his Fatherland, turning Nasik into the new Jerusalem of Revolutionary India.

During the weekly meetings of the Mitra Mela sometimes there were hot and lively discussions. On the eve of the accession of King Edward VII in 1901, a debate was held to consider whether or not they should hold a condolence meeting for the death of Queen Victoria and to declare allegiance to King Edward. Mhaskar and Page were in favour of declaring allegiance in order to allay the suspicions of the Government. There was a battle royal. Vinayak asked: "King or Queen, the question is whose king he is. England's Queen or King is the Queen or King of our enemies. To declare allegiance to such a King or Queen is not allegiance. It will be the Bible of slavery!" Ultimately both the moves were ruled out. While Vinayak was at Kothur, a speaker at one meeting extolled King Edward VII as 'our father'. Within an hour of this meeting posters appeared in the village from nowhere and bitingly queried: "Then what relation does your father bear to your mother?"

Vinayak's charming personality, his voracious reading, his trenchant views and inspiring thoughts electrified his colleagues. They devotedly listened to the teachings and preachings of the leader. To them the precepts were thenceforth no more abstract ideas. They were an everyday guidance and moving force in the daily life of Nasik. Vinayak created in his followers a liking for reading, debating and physical training to make, if need should arise, worthy and noble sacrifices. He himself took physical exercise called *Namaskar* in which one has to prostrate before God or idol as a form of exercise. He did that exercise till the perspiration from his body left his mark on the ground. In later life, however, he opined that moderate exercise consolidates and strengthens the body.

Members of the Mitra Mela served the city in many useful ways. They chastised the tyrannical elements and browbeat the bully. Those were the days occasionally smitten with terrible plague that reduced families to ashes, and razed houses to the ground. It was a dreadful sight. The cries of the dying men, women and children, the groans of the afflicted and the wailings of their relations were too shocking for these budding youths. There was paucity of men to carry the corpses to the cremation

ground. This band of youths carried the dead all day long. Vinayak, too, shared the toilsome task. One night thoroughly fagged out, young Vinayak fell asleep at the cemetery unnoticed and was left behind.

Another prominent cast of Vinayak Savarkar's leadership was that he knew no caste distinctions. To him all Hindus were equal. Those of his countrymen who were prepared to sacrifice their lives on the altar of freedom were his comrades. He shared his food with non-Brahmin families and broke bread under their roof. His attractive figure and engaging manners inspired the deepest affection and devotion in his colleagues. He was popular but by nature reserved and rather shy. He was amongst them but not of them and so he sometimes retired secretly to some sequestered corner to hold, as he put it, " the Parliament of his mind "! His dress consisted of a dhoti, a coat, a jacket and a cap with a line of embroidery in the middle.

The heart of Vinayak's poems and patriotism in those days was the liberation of Hindustan. In one of his poems composed at this stage of his life he says: " O Aryan brothers, arise." Elsewhere he says: " For the uplift of Aryan race and Aryan Land, better to keep it under one unit grand." At another place he observes: " Follow the laws of Nature. Little drops of water make the pond. Organise all Hindus and unify them." These lines are the best interpreters of his thoughts as the words ' Arya ' or ' Hindu ' and ' One Unit ' are the rallying-points of his ideology.

The influence the Mitra Mela exercised upon the poetry and politics of Maharashtra was profound. With a little hyperbole it may be said that the Mitra Mela was a University. Its songs of freedom and its tales of the lives of the makers of world history inspired the students with a great vision and imbued them with courage and patriotism. Choirs were formed. They fed and fanned the flames of the passions of the people with revolutionary ideas. It was a group of these singers from Nasik that sang a ballad later on at the historic Fort Raigad in the presence of Tilak, making the Father of Indian Unrest quite restless.

Poets, speakers, propagandists, patriots and martyrs were produced by the Mitra Mela in scores. Out of this galaxy came the poet Govind Trimbak Darekar of Maharashtra. A Maratha

by caste, his popular name was Aba. He was lame. The young poet was richly gifted, but was unlettered and therefore unacquainted with the rules of composition. Vinayak tutored him and Aba Darekar became poet Govind, the famous revolutionary poet of Maharashtra. The poetry of Savarkar and Poet Govind chiefly forms the Marathi poetry on patriotism and martyrdom.

It is remarkable that though mostly engaged in the propagation of his ideals, Vinayak never had a failure in his school career. As a rule his colleagues and he were very particular about their success in examinations. Nor were they ever a whit behind their class. But to Savarkar life being an oblation, he, like Tilak, cared more for the service of his Motherland than for academic distinctions. Yet his preparations were extraordinary. Prodigy that he was, his head was a depository of world history, an encyclopædia of political and social revolutions and revolutionary figures. Few professors, even at fifty, could rival the sweep, breadth and depth of his vast knowledge. He had mastered the Marathi saint-poets Ramdas, Moropant and Mukteshwar and proficiently compared and contrasted them in literary circles.

One of the essays entitled, 'Who was the Greatest Peshwa?' which he wrote in an essay competition, carried away the prize. This essay was in the forties prescribed by Bombay University for the Matriculation Examination. Savarkar has brought out in this article the brilliance and great leadership of Peshwa Madhavrao I. Thus, before entering the Fergusson College, Poona, young Savarkar was a first rate debater, a powerful orator, a rising writer and a leader of a revolutionary organisation which was creeping over all villages and towns in the Nasik District.

A few months before Vinayak's Matriculation Examination, an important event occurred in his life. Vinayak was married to the eldest daughter of Trimbak Ramchandra *alias* Bhaurao Chiplunkar, who knew Savarkar from childhood. Bhaurao was a tall, noble and attractive figure. He loved riding and hunting. Being a *Karbhari* in the Jawhar State he wielded much influence in the State. The most important part the marriage played in Vinayak's life was that it solved the problem of his University education, which had caused anxiety to Babarao Savarkar for

the previous five or six months. He loved his brother very dearly.

After the premature death of their mother and untimely death of their father, the burden of maintaining the family fell upon Babarao's shoulders. He had to struggle hard to keep the wolf from the door and to drive his brother's chariot along the right path of revolution. That showed his mettle and unbounded attachment to his brothers for whom he sacrificed his personal ambition. Babarao was a devotee of yoga and so he would have been a great yogi had he not subordinated his future to that of his younger brother. Even as a boy, Babarao believed fervently that his younger brother was born with a mission to liberate his Motherland, that his uncommon genius and his great faith would bring about a political revolution in Hindustan and that he would win back her lost freedom. This belief revolutionised his whole being.

The family was in straitened circumstances as a theft took place in their house. Still Babarao vowed before his ailing and anxious brother Vinayak that, come what might, he would send him to University. On his part Vinayak Savarkar passed the Public Service Examination and was ready to enter Government service, if need arose. But Bhaurao Chiplunkar promised help, fulfilled the promise and relieved Babarao from great anxiety. Vinayak Savarkar's regard for his generous father-in-law approached reverence. Years after, through the airhole of the dark cell in the Andamans, he sighed his grateful tributes to Bhaurao Chiplunkar in these words: "If there be any man or any family next to dear Baba to whom I owe all that is best in me and owing to whose noble patronage and winning solicitude I had unusual chances and facilities of assimilating the noblest things of this world and even of doing something for our common Motherland, then that man and that family is theirs (Chiplunkars')."

CHAPTER 2

The Rising Leader

VINAYAK SAVARKAR passed his Matriculation Examination in December 1901, and left Nasik for Poona in January 1902. What was then the state of Poona? Exactly a year before Poona had lost Mahadeo Govind Ranade, India's foremost torchbearer of learning and light. Ranade was a great social reformer, a towering scholar, an ardent patriot, a renowned thinker, an eminent economist and an exemplary judge. He was the foremost precursor of a new age, and wished to build a social order conforming to the demands of the new age. Though not strictly a Congressman his word was law in every annual session of the Indian National Congress of his day. His political ideal for India was, in his own words: "A federated India distributed according to nationalities and subjected to a common bond of connection with the Imperial Power of the Queen-Empress of India." [1] R. P. Paranjpe had just returned from England with a dazzling success in his academic career. G. K. Gokhale was about to leave the Fergusson College and enter upon a political career. Tilak was becoming a formidable leader. Shivrampant Paranjpe was a dominating figure with his magic pen and marvellous oratory.

As to the political state of India, the Congress was the spokesman. From its inception upto 1906 the Moderates dominated the Congress. Its stalwarts, from Surendranath Banerjee to Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale, believed with Ranade in the inscrutable "dispensation of Almighty God for the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British Rule in India." [2]

Vinayak Savarkar joined the Fergusson College, Poona, in January 1902. Poona was then the living heart, and the Fergusson College, the Harrow of Maharashtra, in traditions and in

[1] Ganesh & Co., Publishers, Madras, *The Indian Nation Builders*, p. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

producing historic personalities. As soon as Savarkar was in the College, he directed his attention to sowing the seeds of revolutionary doctrines in the fountain-head of Maharashtra. On the eve of his departure for Poona in a send-off at Nasik he had expressed the hope that at Poona he would inspire the pick of Maharashtrian youth with revolutionary thoughts and spread the revolutionary tenets through them over all the Districts of Maharashtra.

A youth of power and purpose, Savarkar could easily make his mark in the college. His fellow-students could not but feel the impact of his striking personality. His qualities of head and heart were great. He had entered Poona with a stock of reading, a gift for writing, and a genius for oratory such as few students of his day possessed. He was much advanced in classical, historical and political literature. Even the professors who turned up their nose at his extreme political views could not help praising him. As he was a resident member of the college, it was convenient for him to gauge his fellow-students and gain their confidence. Soon a Savarkar group was formed. This band of youths captured almost all departments of the college institutions from the dining club to the library. It was a patriots' group, studious, rebellious, aspiring and yet greatly obliging.

The group started a hand-written weekly named the *Aryan Weekly*, in which Savarkar often wrote illuminating articles on patriotism, literature, history and science with ease and elegance. Some of the thought-provoking articles from this weekly found their way even into the local weeklies and newspapers of Poona. One of those brilliant articles of Savarkar was 'Saptapadi' in which he had dealt with the seven stages of evolution that have to be gone through by a subject nation. He had studied all the dramas of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti and in one essay he brilliantly compared and contrasted Kalidas with Bhavabhuti with remarkable originality. His professor highly praised him for this illuminating essay. Of the English poets, Scott, Shakespeare and Milton influenced him much. Milton's *Paradise Lost* almost fascinated him. He had learnt by heart some of its cantos. Later he used blank verse metre for a part of his epic poetry. His essay on the *Ramayana* and the *Iliad* similarly evoked Prof. Patwardhan's appreciative remarks for his erudition.

Savarkar often gave scholarly talks on the history of the world, the revolutions in Italy, Netherlands and America and gave his colleagues an idea of the stress and struggle those countries had to undergo for winning back their lost freedom. The young Demosthenes in Savarkar had captivated students and professors. On important occasions and at the main functions in the college all flocked to hear his stirring speeches. One day he delivered a lecture on the history of Italy under the chairmanship of Principal V. K. Rajwade. He was mightily pleased with Savarkar's range of knowledge and his oratorical gifts although he disliked Savarkar's reference to modern politics. In a reminiscent article the late G. G. Mujumdar, *alias* Poet Sadhudas, has very well described Savarkar's hold over the college environments. In 1903, at the opening of the new session of the college a meeting was held in the college hall. Prof. C. G. Bhanu was in the chair. After the introductory speech of Prof. Bhate, Savarkar in his black coat and black cap rose amidst a deafening applause. He reminded his audience of the glorious past and his speech bewailed the loss of freedom. A wave of emotion swept over the audience. His speech infused courage into the craven-hearted and fired them all with the spirit of patriotism moving every one to tears. Then the President of the meeting rose and with a grave face threw cold water on the excited feelings. He said: "Young men, you need not take Savarkar seriously. He is a Devil!" In those days a fearless, patriotic and brilliant youth of independent nature was described in this manner. In his college days Tilak, too, was known as a Devil [3] and the Blunt! Poor Prof. Bhanu! His bookish knowledge could not distinguish a deliverer from a devil.

The Savarkar Group dressed alike, used Swadeshi (of one's own country)-made goods, took evening strolls together and carried on discussions in old temples and in the heart of hills about their plans and problems. At the same time the group never failed to attend to the prescribed course of studies. They took care of their moral, physical and intellectual developments. Out of the armoury of this group sprang a host of literary and political figures who served the cause of Indian freedom. They believed in energy and endurance and not in enjoyment. Their

[3] Marathe, A. V., *Lokamanya Tilak* (Marathi), p. 12.

ideal of life was not cricket. Their motto was 'survival of the fittest'! Yet Savarkar was not without his lighter moments and at times enjoyed them fully. He played an important part in a Shakespearian tragedy staged by the Fergussonians.

In the public activities of Poona also Savarkar took a prominent part. His relations with Shivrampant Paranjpe, the most popular orator and brilliant editor of the *Kal*, were very cordial. While a high school student he was occasionally in correspondence with Paranjpe. Once student Savarkar had expressed his desire for being given a job of a sub-editor, or even that of a compositor in the office of the *Kal* just to enable him to have university education. But the proposal, it seems, was dropped partly for want of an encouraging reply or owing to the promised help by Savarkar's father-in-law. Savarkar first saw Paranjpe in Poona in 1902. Paranjpe's revolutionary ideas were nearer to the aim of Savarkar. Although the mould of their fervid patriotism was the same, it stemmed from different souls. Savarkar's thoughts were deep-rooted, unbending and powerful and had a broader base and a wider range than those of Paranjpe.

On important occasions young Savarkar saw Tilak whose association with the revolutionaries was a legend. Tilak's superb insight must have gauged the stuff Savarkar was made of. Savarkar, by this time, was an acknowledged leader of the youth.

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A change in the political tone was coming on with the growing tension. A new spirit of self-reliance began to gain ground. Tilak was turning the eyes of India from the British public to the Indian masses for her own salvation. Stimulated by these feelings Lala Lajpat Rai appealed to Indians to become arbiters of their own destiny. Inspired by the epoch-making victory of Asiatic Japan over European Russia, Surendranath Banerjee encouraged the people with these words: "The sun has risen in the East. Japan has saluted the rising sun. That sun, in its meridian splendour, will pass through our country."[4] Gokhale characterised the partition of Bengal as a cruel wrong inflicted upon our Bengali brethren. The love of country and the feel-

[4] Ganesh & Co., Publishers, *The Indian Nation Builders*, p. 93.

ing of united India was rising. Simultaneously, the Swadeshi movement preaching and encouraging the use of indigenous goods was also gaining ground in India.

The opposition to the partition of Bengal was coming to a head in October 1905. The partition of Bengal awakened the dormant forces of nationalism and the sleeping embers of communalism. As it was a move to counter the politically dominant Hindus by a creation of an Eastern Bengal, Hindus opposed and Muslims supported it! Strangely enough, the fate of Bengal has indeed not been a covetable one throughout the last two centuries. Bengal was the stronghold of the Mogul Empire. Bengal was the keystone of the arch of the British Empire. Bengal has been the grazing ground for conversions and communal riots. Bengal has recently been the foundation of a Muslim Sovereign State!

By now Savarkar had developed into a prominent figure in the political and social gatherings and meetings of Poona and had won the hearts of the public of Poona. Acharya Kaka Kalelkar[5] said that Savarkar's stirring eloquence was a great attraction to the public of Poona in those days. Savarkar and his group were ardent promoters of Indian-made goods and staunch opponents of the partition scheme. Tilak had made the partition of Bengal an all-India issue. Savarkar resolved to unfurl the banner of boycott of foreign goods; for the boycott and Swadeshi movements were the obverse and the reverse of one and the same coin! Representing the students at a meeting on October 1, 1905, Savarkar, therefore, urged his countrymen to despise everything that was English and to abstain from purchasing foreign goods. He also suggested that students should make a bonfire of their clothes of English and foreign cloth on the Dassara day. His fervid oratory stimulated the students and the people who attended the meeting to perform the deed and they agreed. N. C. Kelkar was in the chair and S. M. Paranjpe supported the idea.

After the meeting was over, Kelkar suggested that instead of burning the clothes, the lot so collected should be distributed among the poor. Economically, the bonfire would be a waste. Upon this Savarkar gently retorted that the spark it would lit

[5] Kalelkar Kaka, The *Pratibha*, 15 January 1936.

up would be morally and materially more valuable and lasting. Savarkar saw also Tilak who was out of Poona on the day of the meeting. Tilak, too, agreed, but on one condition. He insisted that at least the heap of clothes should be a huge one. Savarkar readily took the task upon himself. With his moving oratory he provoked the people to the deed. And with a cartful of clothes the procession started on October 7, 1905, wending its way along the Reay Market and proceeded to the open field across the Lakdi Pool. Tilak joined it at the termination. At the conclusion of the procession Tilak opined that the clothes should be burnt there and speeches should be made somewhere else. But Savarkar reasoned, " Then why this procession? We could have sent clothes here and made speeches at the Reay Market. In fact, glowing speeches should be delivered before the burning heap! That will have a deep impression on the minds of the people," he argued. Tilak cared more for youthful vigour and so he agreed. The meeting then commenced around the glowing heap. Tilak said that the struggle they had inaugurated for the promotion of Swadeshi goods would be crowned with success if the youth pursued it with unremitting energy. Paranjpe opened the vials of his satire and his speech became more scorching than the fire itself. As directed by Tilak the youths left the place after the fire was completely extinguished.

Thus Poona had the first big bonfire of foreign cloth in India! Its flames whirled high up in the sky and the noise echoed throughout the length and breadth of India. Hatred of British domination was rising and Savarkar added fuel to the fire of hatred. In his later life Kelkar often mentioned that the speeches made in those days by Savarkar left an indelible imprint on his memory for a good many years. Even the police reporters were enamoured of the power of his oratory. Describing Savarkar's speech at the Sarvajanik Sabha in Poona one reporter says: " It was so dexterous! so triumphant! He is at the most twenty-two, but he is already an accomplished orator of an enviable rank."

The flames of the bonfire scorched the heads of the Fergusson College. These fearless views and deeds of Savarkar were fiery enough to burn their ties of blood with Bombay University. The leading part played by this fiery youth in the bonfire affair

turned their moderate heads. *Indu Prakash*, a leading paper of the Moderates, angrily said that Savarkar was an ill-tongued messenger from the very start. R. P. Paranjpe, the then Principal, fined Savarkar Rs. 10 and expelled him from the college residency. Two crosses now glorified Savarkar's lion-like chest. He was the first Indian leader to make a bonfire of foreign cloth in India and the first Indian student who was rusticated from a Government-aided institution for political reasons. The reaction was widespread and general. Tilak denounced this action of the college authorities and declared: "They are not our teachers." Almost all patriotic papers condemned this unwise step taken by the college authorities. A wave of indignation passed all over Maharashtra. Sympathy and money poured in. Savarkar paid the fine from his own pocket and donated the money to the Industrial Fund known as the *Paisa Fund* and to some other societies.

In one more respect this incident is significant, for it marked the struggle between two coming ideologies which continued in Indian politics for years to come. Gandhi from South Africa criticised the bonfire, as, for years thereafter, he hugged the belief that boycott movement had its roots in hatred and violence. Gandhi was not far away from his future Guru Gokhale in this opinion. Gokhale said in his Presidential Address at the Benares Congress in 1905: "It is well to remember that the term 'boycott', owing to its origin, has got unsavoury associations, and it conveys to the mind before everything else a vindictive desire to injure another. Such a desire on our part, as a normal feature of our relations with England, is of course out of the question." Seventeen years after Gandhi as organiser and leader of the Civil Disobedience Movement, however, made a public bonfire of foreign clothes in Bombay on November 17, 1921.

The Moderates tried, but failed in winning over Savarkar to their side. Savarkar had high regard for Gokhale's great talent and sterling patriotism, but he differed from him fundamentally and temperamentally as well. The feelings and opinions of the professors, who were mostly Moderates, about Savarkar were mingled with awe and aversion. For their part they admired his intellectual powers and his fervid oratory, but detested his revolutionary views. One of them, Prof. Patwardhan, foretold

that Savarkar was bound to be a great demagogue. Time has its revenge. Thirty-eight years later presiding over the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of his disciple Savarkar, R. P. Paranjpe said with pride: "In his younger days as I knew him, Savarkar was marked by a keen intellect, fervid eloquence, great fluency in writing and magnetic personality. I remember his patriotism was intense, but as is natural to young men, it was based entirely on strong emotions not much regulated by cold reason."

Paranjpe was only a great mathematician statesman. And an extraordinary personality like Savarkar lay beyond the pale of the general enunciation of his theorem as put in the last line of his speech. Indeed if there was any great revolutionary leader worth the name in the history of Indian Revolution whose emotions are regulated by cool reason, it is Savarkar. This can be proved by citing several examples when he bridled the emotions and thoughtless daring plans of his lieutenants. Moreover, if you are to be a leader of action or revolution, you must raise your reason to a certain pitch of emotion. Otherwise your reason will forget that you have to lead, leap and lift and will rust through inaction!

While these turbulent and tumultuous days were rolling by, Savarkar's B.A. Examination was fast approaching. As was always customary with him, he studied day and night at the fag end of the year, made up all the studies in the last two months, appeared for the examination and to the joy and jubilations of the public came out successful. Congratulations from all parts of Maharashtra were showered upon him. It was not his personal triumph only. It was also the success of the youth movement and the roaring tide of nationalism.

Savarkar the prolific writer was coming to the front. During this period he composed his famous ballads on Tanaji and Baji Prabhu, who are the heroes of Maharashtra. These ballads inspired young and old alike to do similar deeds of valour. The ballads were soon proscribed by the British Government, but they attained the popularity of folk-songs in Maharashtra for over four decades and at long last they were restored in Free India. Savarkar's lyric of patriotism, his inspiring songs of heroes and hymns thrilled clubs and kitchens, schools and colleges, choruses and meetings all over Maharashtra, and he was hailed as a bard of Freedom or a rebel poet. His famous poem

on the Hindu widow dealt severely with the cruel customs and outworn traditions, and attacking the brutal desire of old bridegrooms, brought out a touching picture of child widows.

The charm of the poem was so irresistible that even men like Kaka Kalelkar ever remembered it. In this poem one finds the seeds of the great social reformer in Savarkar. The poem won the prize in the competition for which it was composed, the other rival sharing half the prize. "What is everlasting in this world?" Savarkar asks in another poem. He sings: "The sun sets, the sea ebbs. All things rise and fall." In this Savarkar hinted at the sure downfall of the British Empire. That there is an end to everything is an eternal truth. This seems to be the central idea of the poem.

During the same period Savarkar wrote in Marathi many memorable articles and brilliant essays. Among these important essays the one that occupied a high place was: "Why should we celebrate the festivals of historic personalities?" This was a prize article. In this thought-provoking and brilliant essay one is impressed by his profound thinking, the historical deductions and the sweep of his originality. He concludes his essay in a grand peroration: "Why, then, should the historical functions be celebrated? To pay our national gratitude we owe to those heroic souls. They should be celebrated as a mark of reverence and remembrance of the immense good those benevolent men have done to the world, and because they have sacred sanction of ancient traditions. They are the clouds which shower the nectar of instruction. They are the monuments of virtues. They are the chemicals that act as incentives to human thoughts and feelings. They are the preceptors who impart virtuous instruction to the youth. They are the living history of the deeds of noble heroes. Functions in their honour should be celebrated because of this. There are so many advantages and definitely no disadvantages. Especially we, Hindus, should take to these functions for emerging out of the present degraded state which was the result of want of self-respect and dutifulness. For, that is the only easy and sure path to the prosperity of the nation."

Savarkar wrote brilliant prose. With the wings of an eagle his imagination soared high up in the sky. It vied with the loftiness of the Himalayas. It visualised "the Himalayas tower-

ing above the roof of the world to see whether there was any other country under the sun as captivating as Hindustan. Elated at not finding on earth an equal of Hindustan, the Himalayas opened the apartments of the heavens. But there, O Aryan Land, instead of finding your equal, the Himalayas found something else. In Heaven the nymphs were enamoured of the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas and those virgin attendants of Gods clung to the neck of the Himalayas and deserting the capital of Indra, lived with the Himalayas." "The diamonds and jewels," proceeded Savarkar, "O, Aryan Mother, you have preserved for us in the mines can easily crowd to overflowing a ship made of this vast world."

One thing more and of tremendous significance. In 1902 Savarkar had written in the *Kal* one essay which he concluded with a prophetic vision. He stated therein: "Hindus are responsible for the poverty and disorganisation of Hindustan. But if they ever desire to attain prosperity, they must remain Hindus." This deep-rooted, bold and distinctive characteristic of Savarkar's nationalism distinguished him from Tilak and Shivrampant Paranjpe.

* * *

Savarkar's effort to build up his secret revolutionary society and to spread its mission continued unabated during these days. While at college he had convened in 1904 a meeting of some two hundred selected members of the Mitra Mela. In an atmosphere filled with grandeur and religiosity, the name of the Revolutionary Party was changed from the Mitra Mela to the Abhinava Bharat. Now the party girded up its loins to extend its political and revolutionary activities and influence, spread its net all over India, and assume the responsibility of a revolution on an all-India scale. It had the resemblance of Young Italy of Mazzini or that of the revolutionary societies in Russia. Its leading members had studied *Forst's Secret Society of European Revolution,* and later *How The Russian Revolution Is Organised.*

After graduating from Bombay University in December 1905, Savarkar went to Bombay to study law. A year before he had passed his first LL.B. Examination in Poona. While in Bombay he organised the youth from different colleges. He held several propaganda meetings in different localities. B. G. Kher, who

later became Chief Minister of Bombay under the 1935 Government of India Act, was one of those youths who came under the influence of the leader of the Abhinava Bharat. Kher was an initiate of the Abhinava Bharat. It was in Poona that J. B. Kripalani, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, was initiated into the Abhinava Bharat while he was a student in the Deccan College. Hundreds of youths now joined the organisation.

While carrying on his propaganda work in Bombay Savarkar contributed to the *Vihari*, a local Marathi Weekly and made it the mouth-piece of the Abhinava Bharat. Its circulation grew by leaps and bounds, like its fiery sister weekly, the *Yugantar* of Bengal, which was started in March 1906. Savarkar was now the acclaimed leader of the revolutionary movement which had spread almost all over Maharashtra. So he was invited to deliver speeches at public meetings, festivals and functions in Maharashtra. A brilliant young man with a black cap, short-collared coat, square jaws, presentable forehead, prominent cheek-bones, Savarkar was an energetic and magnetic personality. The propaganda and popularity of the revolutionary leader rose rapidly and his arrest seemed imminent. Rumours about his arrest were afloat in Nasik, Poona and Bombay, but they proved to be false.

During his stay in Bombay Savarkar was one day called by the students of Poona to interview a person named Agamya Guru, who had made some fiery speeches at Poona. Savarkar went to Poona for the purpose. He met him on February 23, 1906, as leader of the students' delegation. When the mystic began in a mystic way to talk of yogic powers, his travels and the necessity of God's support, Savarkar cut him short and asked to state his political views. He replied that to do so he required financial support first and then by and by he would reveal his great ideas on politics. And in about twenty-five minutes the interview terminated.

The Agamya Guru was abstruse as his name. But more ridiculous was the invention of the detectives that traced Savarkar's inborn spring of inspiration to the mystic. Poor creatures! they knew not that revolution and mysticism never go together!

Nobody knows what happened to this mystic except that early in 1908 he was found guilty of outraging the modesty of an

English girl in London and was released after undergoing a term of four months in a British jail.

In February 1906, Savarkar made a very powerful speech at Poona advising the people to follow the dictates of Ramdas to the effect that they should gather men, fill their hearts with the thought of freedom and fall on foreigners. He was reported to have stopped before uttering the last word as he noticed that detectives were present at the meeting. Fact was that he shrewdly stopped and made the audience complete the sentence by uttering the word 'foreigners'! Mr. Montgomerie, I.C.S., who was then First Class Magistrate of Nasik, wrote in his confidential report that Savarkar had already grown into an accomplished orator of an enviable rank.

About this time news came to India that Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma, then resident of London, offered scholarships for Indian students desiring to study in Europe. Savarkar revolved the idea in his mind. The scholarship being insufficient he first approached his father-in-law in the matter. He made sure of some help from him and applied for one of the scholarships with recommendations of Tilak and Shivrampant Paranjpe. Giving a brief sketch of his career Savarkar proceeds in his application: "Independence and Liberty I look upon as the very pulse and breath of nation. From my boyhood, dear sir, upto this moment of my youth, the loss of Independence of my country and the possibility of regaining it form the only theme of which I dreamt by night and on which I mused by day." In his recommendation Tilak said: "When there is such a rush like that, it is no use recommending any one particularly to your notice. But, still, I may state, among the applicants there is one Mr. Savarkar from Bombay, who graduated last year and whom I know to be a spirited young man very enthusiastic in the swadeshi cause so much so that he had to incur the displeasure of the Fergusson College authorities. He has no mind to take up Government service at any time and his moral character is very good."

After applying to Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma for Shivaji Scholarship, Savarkar went to Nasik. There he delivered a speech on April 22, 1906. In the course of his speech he drew attention of the audience to a picture of the god Maruti holding a club in His hand and a demon under His feet. He said that

the complexion of the demon was red—obviously a reference to the colour of the English! He further exhorted the people to take up gymnastic exercise of which the god Maruti was the presiding deity.

In response to Savarkar's application Pandit Shyamji agreed to grant him the scholarship. Receiving this good news Savarkar wrote from Nasik to him that the next day he was proceeding to Poona to sign the agreement. There he would have the pleasure of meeting the two most distinguished persons, Tilak and Paranjpe, for the last time. He was sorry that for three years more he would not have that advantage and good luck of their company. But the loss would be compensated, he added, by the company of the *Indian Sociologist*. Savarkar wrote another letter to Pandit Shyamji requesting him to clarify some points. Cautious as he was, he asked Pandit Shyamji whether he had any objection to his studying law as he had already stated his intention in the application. "The study of law," wrote Savarkar, "shows the vital points in the system of Government and accurate base where to strike at an advantage." He was going to Tilak, he went on, to clear away every doubt. He was very busy delivering lectures during the Shivaji Festival and would complete the arrangement soon to start for London, he concluded.

Accordingly, Savarkar went to Poona and signed an agreement on May 20, 1906, before Daji Nagesh Apte and Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar and received a sum of Rs. 400 through Tilak as the first instalment of the Shivaji Scholarship which Pandit Shyamji awarded him.

On May 25, 1906, Savarkar sent Pandit Shyamji a declaration which he had signed at Nasik before his colleagues V. M. Bhat and W. S. Khare on April 24, 1906. The declaration read: "I do hereby pledge my word of honour and solemnly declare that I will not accept either directly or indirectly any post or honorary office, title, favour or seat on any council (Municipality or District Board, etc.) or service under the British Government and that I will not advise anyone to serve the said Government in any capacity and also that I will not accept any emoluments from them."

In the accompanying letter to Pandit Shyamji Savarkar said: "I send herewith the solemn declaration having signed it as

solemnly as a declaration of faith to my mother or father." Concluding his letter he said he was grateful and hoped to enjoy the good fortune and grace.

On the eve of Savarkar's departure for London, he was given a send-off at a big public meeting in Nasik at which he made a very thrilling speech. In that speech he described his country as steeped in the mire of dependence and added that his real object in going to a foreign land was to repay the obligations to Hindustan wherein he was born and to discharge his duty by the Motherland. Tilak and S. M. Paranjpe also invited him to dinner and had a talk with him. Tilak the great lion must have cast a measuring eye at the young lion. This was the last meeting between Tilak and Savarkar. They never met each other afterwards. It is not unsafe to believe that Tilak must have cautioned Savarkar to go slow.

Savarkar made preparations for the voyage. He bade farewell to his wife and his son named Prabhakar. Amidst an atmosphere filled with various dreams of Savarkar's future greatness his relations, his comrades and devotees gave him in Bombay a hearty send-off on June 9, 1906, and the steamer *Persia* left Bombay on her great voyage with the prince of Indian revolutionaries on her deck engrossed in his great vision and great thoughts about Indian Independence.

CHAPTER 3

Revolutionary Activities

THE year 1906 was a landmark in Indian politics. During this year Savarkar, the leader of the Abhinava Bharat, went to London. That year saw the birth of the Muslim League at Dacca. The formation of Barindranath's revolutionary party at Maniktola, a suburb of Calcutta, and the foundation of the revolutionary institution, the Anushilan Samiti, took place during the same year.

With a band of a few hundred youths at his command in Maharashtra, Savarkar left India. Maharashtra was too small a field for the young lion and the lion went in search of lions. During those days revolutionaries from Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China occasionally took shelter in London. Under the garb of a law student, Savarkar also was going to enter the gates of the Empire capital. His main object was to have a look at the den of the British lion, to learn how to organize a revolution and carry on the struggle for the liberation of Hindustan by inculcating tenets of revolution into the brilliant brains of the cream of the Indian students, who went abroad either for academic careers or for qualifying themselves for the Indian Civil Service. The young orator of Maharashtra was now to be in London, which was the largest debating society under the sun.

On board the ship *Persia* Savarkar happened to come across a youth named Harnam Singh who became since then a devoted follower of Savarkar. Harnam Singh was homesick. He was about to give up his journey to England. But Savarkar persuaded him easily. He pointed out to him how the adventurous and ambitious British, French and Portuguese youths served in foreign lands for the glory and welfare of their Motherlands and how his Motherland suffered for want of daring sons. He

further said to Harnam Singh: "Dear is one's own mother, but dearer, by far, is and ought to be our Motherland, the Mother of mothers of our race." [1] And Harnam Singh continued the voyage and reached London.

Savarkar reached London in the first week of July 1906. He took his lodgings at the India House founded by Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma. In due course Savarkar was admitted to Gray's Inn, one of the four Inns of Court in London. A sterling patriot and a noted social reformer, Pandit Shyamji was highly respected as an incomparable authority on Sanskrit Works by eminent scholars like Prof. Max Muller and Prof. Monier Williams. Born on October 4, 1857, he came of a poor family by name Bhansali. He studied upto the Matriculation class in the Elphinstone High School, Bombay. During his school days he went on a lecturing tour on behalf of the Arya Samaj as the right-hand man of Swami Dayananda. He married the daughter of Seth Chhabildas Lallubhai and through the influence of Prof. Monier Williams proceeded to London in March 1879, took his B.A. at Cambridge and was called to the Bar. There he read an essay on 'The Origin of Writing in India' at the Royal Asiatic Society of London and was elected its member. In 1881 he was sent by the Secretary of State for India to represent India at the Berlin Congress of Orientalists.

On his return to India Pandit Shyamji successfully served three Indian States, Ratlam, Udaipur and Junagad either in the capacity of a Dewan, or a Member of the Council. During his term of office at Junagad he went out of his way to oblige a European officer named Macouochie, who, with the aid of Dewan, ultimately sacked the Pandit himself. This one-time disciple of Swami Dayananda was much influenced by Tilak.

After the arrest of Tilak in 1897, Pandit Shyamji left India and settled in London. He was in correspondence also with M. G. Ranade. In London Pandit Shyamji studied Herbert Spencer and was deeply influenced by his philosophy, so much so that he announced at Spencer's funeral on December 4, 1903, a donation for establishing a chair at Oxford in the name of his English Guru. He established a Home Rule Society in London on February 18, 1905 and started propaganda for the

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 35.

Home Rule of India through the columns of the *Indian Sociologist*, which he had launched in the previous month. In Highgate he started India House which provided boarding and lodging to his scholars and to other paid guests.

As soon as Savarkar established himself, he started towards the close of the year 1906 the Free India Society. It was a recruiting institution of the Abhinava Bharat Society and worked openly. Savarkar began to organise Indian students and transform them into patriots and martyrs. His magnetic personality brought Bhai Parmananda, then a well-known leader of light and learning, into the revolutionary movement. He attracted Lala Hardayal. Born of a Kayastha family in Delhi in 1884. he was educated at St. Stephen's until he took the B.A. degree of the Punjab University and was awarded a scholarship tenable in the Government College, Lahore. In 1904 he stood first in the list of successful candidates for the M.A. degree in English literature. On the recommendation of the Punjab University he was given a state scholarship of £200 a year by the Government of India. He entered St. John's College, Oxford, in 1905, and began to read for the Honours School of Modern History. A staunch Hindu, Hardayal had an instinctive disbelief in and hatred for the Muslims. He was a man of strong emotions and great vision and wielded a mighty pen.

Savarkar's another colleague was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. He was a brother of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. After graduating from the Calcutta University he entered the Middle Temple Inn to study law having twice failed in the I.C.S. Examination. He was a brilliant journalist and a fiery patriot. V. V. S. Aiyar was a lawyer from Rangoon. He went to London for qualifying himself for the Bar. When he came to London he used to wear fashionable English dress and said he wanted to study English music and get a few lessons in dancing. He came in contact with Savarkar who impressed upon him the necessity of giving up dissipating habits when momentous issues were hanging in balance. When Aiyar met Savarkar first he was agreeably surprised to see that Savarkar was so young and so brilliant. Sardarsingh Revabhai Rana hailed from the old ruling Rajput family of Limbdi in Saurashtra. Born in 1878 he was graduated from Bombay in 1898 and was called to the Bar in London. He

then went to Paris, joined an Indian firm that dealt in jewellery and settled in Paris. He was a fearless supporter of the struggle for Indian independence. In Paris he organised a political meeting for the propagation of Indian Home Rule in May 1905.

Gyanchand Varma was Secretary of the Abhinava Bharat Society, London, and was a man of great ability and calibre. He came of a poor family, but he had an indomitable will. He accepted a job of a fireman on a steamer and went to England to study for the Bar. He became a devoted colleague of Savarkar. Madame Cama was another great patriotic personality. She went to London for medical treatment in 1902. She lectured on Indian politics at Hyde Park and also in New York. Born in 1861, she was a student of Alexandra Parsi Girls' School, Bombay. She was the wife of a Parsi solicitor and her father-in-law was a noted social-reformer. She abandoned her liberal role and became a staunch member of the Abhinava Bharat Society and was engaged in spreading revolutionary literature for the propagation of the freedom struggle of India.

P. M. Bapat, better known now as Senapati Bapat, went to England in August 1904, to study Engineering at Edinborough. Destined as he was to engineer bridges and roads leading to Indian freedom, he joined the revolutionary camp. He had graduated from Bombay University in 1902. While a college student at Poona he had been rusticated from the college hostel for disobedience. A selfless and saintly patriot, he has been a great and good name in the revolutionary movement. Before joining the revolutionary camp he had openly preached the philosophy of killing in one of his essays which he read at a seminary. His thesis was that murder which was committed to meet the ends of justice was justifiable.

M. P. T. Acharya was a Tamil journalist and patriot. He had conducted a Tamil paper with the Tamil classic poet C. Subramanya Bharati. When C. Subramanya Bharati was arrested Acharya fled to Pondicherry. British detectives made it impossible for him to live there, so he fled to Europe via Colombo. W. V. Phadke was a son of a judge. After obtaining his B.A. degree from Bombay University he went to London to study for the I.C.S. But he subsequently joined the revolutionary camp and he informed his father in 1908 that he had become a nationalist and did not wish to enter the examination.

His father persuaded him, but he failed in the examination. Madanlal Dhingra was an Engineering student. He was always engaged in merry-making. Many others like Dr. Rajan of Madras, K. V. R. Swami, Shukla who afterwards became Chief Minister of the C.P., Sukhasagar Dutta, brother of Ulhaskar Dutta, Sikandar Hyat Khan, Asaf Ali, Khan of Nabha took interest in the work of the Abhinava Bharat Society and later they rose to eminence in Indian politics.

What was the condition of Indian students in Britain before the arrival of Savarkar in London? Formerly eight out of ten Indian students prided themselves on being more English in their make-up and mind than Englishmen themselves. So far, the dream of Lord Macaulay seemed to have been realized to a large extent. He had expected the emergence of " a class Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." [2] Almost all educated Indians suffered from Anglomania. Indian students drank merrily, danced lustily and donned richly. They visited all quarters freely, and were very apologetic in their talk about things Indian. After returning to India, these ambitious position-seekers would drum in the ears of their countrymen many faked tales and garbled facts about the goodness and greatness of the British men and minds!

In these days India had no place in the pictures and columns of the British Press. That is why Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, had to purchase the shares of the *Daily News* to secure a place for his say in its columns.

With the appearance of Savarkar the sun shone on the dark deeds of British Imperialism in India and revealed the good side and the noble aspirations of India to Europe. Savarkar was a youth great in courage, great in vision, great in ideas and great in action. The skyhigh towers and the ocean-wide powers of the British could not dazzle, delude, or overawe him. The mist disappeared. The towers and powers looked in their naked perspective. The members of the Free India Society began to think. They held weekly meetings, celebrated anniversaries of Shivaji, Guru Govind Singh and Guru Nanak and also the Dassara Festival. Indian students from all corners of Britain

[2] Krishna, K. B., *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 138.

joined the festivals heart and soul. Of course there were some like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who did not join.

With Savarkar's powerful group to defend Indian aspirations, officially sponsored meetings in London now did not go well. Strong youthful voices began to blow away the sheep clothing of God-fearing Englishmen like Sir Henry Cotton. Moved by the tragic vision of the downfall of the Indian Empire, Sir Henry Cotton appealed to the Indian youth to desist from their perilous aim of carving out a free Independent India.[3] English people and Press felt something stinging in their hearts. A few days earlier Senapati Bapat had written a brochure demanding Home Rule for India. As a result of this demand Bombay University deprived him of the Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai Scholarship. Upon this Savarkar pungently commented whether that scholarship was meant for a student who prayed for the perpetual slavery of Hindustan![4]

It is worth mentioning what the Muslim students thought of this India House. Mr. Ziauddin Ahmed, then in Germany, warned Mr. Abdulla Suhrawardy in these clear words: "You know that we have a definite political policy at Aligarh, i.e. the policy of Sir Syed. . . . I understand that Mr. Krishna Varma has founded a society called 'Indian Home Rule Society' and you are also one of its vice-presidents. Do you really believe that the Mohammedans will be profited if Home Rule be granted to India? . . . There is no doubt that this Home Rule is decidedly against the Aligarh policy. . . . What I call the Aligarh policy is really the policy of all the Mohammedans generally—of the Mohammedans of Upper India particularly."[5] Asaf Ali wrote to Pandit Shyamji in September 1909: "I am staying with some Muslim friends who do not like me to associate with nationalists; and, to save many unpleasant consequences, I do not want to irritate them unnecessarily."[6] Thus the Muslim antagonism to the Freedom Movement of India dates back to its beginning itself.

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[3] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[5] Karandikar, S. L., *Savarkar-Charitra*, pp 132-133.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

Savarkar, leader of the Abhinava Bharata Society, began to spread his revolutionary ideas from London through pamphlets, booklets and books. During the first six months of his stay in London Savarkar translated the autobiography of Mazzini into Marathi, for his mind was saturated with the teachings of Mazzini when he went to England. He was Mazzinism personified. The manuscript of the book was sent to his brother Babarao Savarkar for publication. It was printed at Poona and published by his brother at Nasik in April 1907. It was dedicated to Lokamanya Tilak and Lokamanya S. M. Paranjpe. The first edition of the book was sold out in three months.

The impact of Mazzini's teachings on the Indian Freedom Movement was too deep. Lajpat Rai wrote a life of Mazzini and Surendranath Banerjee made a lot of speeches on the life and mission of Mazzini. But Lajpat Rai's book was as mild as the speeches of Surendranath were moderate. Surendranath writes in his autobiography: "I lectured upon Mazzini but took care to tell the young men to abjure his revolutionary ideas and to adopt his spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to the paths of constitutional development." On the contrary Savarkar openly gave his message to the youth to fight for the liberation of the Motherland through the book and the inspiring introduction he wrote to it.

Savarkar's *Mazzini* was the first book to enjoy an uncommon popularity in Maharashtra. It was so dearly loved that leading papers and leading men in Maharashtra extolled it to the skies and it was taken out in procession by young and old devotees. Even Sir Valentine Chirol described this book as a Nationalist Textbook. Savarkar's *Mazzini* naturally was the first victim of the Indian Press Act. The book was mostly loved for the introduction of the Indian Mazzini, expounding the great mission of the Italian patriot. The fiery propaganda and the burning patriotism pervading this immortal introduction captivated the minds of the people so much so that, though it was suppressed by the Government, patriotic youths learnt it by heart and repeated the twenty-five pages of its inspiring introduction word for word! The book was restored in 1946 after having suffered proscription for forty years.

The history of the Sikhs also absorbed Savarkar's mind. He learnt *Gurumukhi* script, read all the religious and important

original writings such as the *Adi Granth*, the *Panth Prakash*, the *Surya Prakash*, *Vichitra Natak* by the Gurus and other works on Sikhism, and issued many pamphlets. His pamphlet named *Khalsa* and many others issued in *Gurumukhi* rained into the hands of Sikh soldiers, making them conscious of their duty and of the coming storm, and educating them for the cause of Freedom. This did not escape the notice of the Government of India.

In Britain May First was observed as a thanksgiving day in honour of the British victory over the Indian revolutionaries of 1857. Newspapers like *Daily Telegraph* [7] proclaimed in head lines: "Fifty years ago this week. An Empire saved by Deeds of Heroism." In addition, now a drama was staged in London in 1907 in which Rani Laxmi and Nanasahib were depicted as ruffians and murderers. To counteract the vilifying propaganda carried on through the English play Savarkar decided to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the heroes of 1857. On the 10th May 1907, Indians in Britain held meetings, observed fasts, took vows, and paid their grateful homage to those great martyrs of 1857 and displayed on their chests memorial badges with pride. In trains and in streets scuffles ensued between impudent Britishers and the patriotic Indian youths who wore metal badges to commemorate the great memory of their heroes. Harnam Singh and R. M. Khan, who wore such badges, quitted their college protesting against the Principal's words of insult about the heroes of 1857. Patriotic feelings clashed. These fearless heroic actions stirred the hornets' nest of the British Press. The much-admired and adored Pandit Shyamji became notorious as a patriot Pandit; for the patriotism of a Hindu was a narrower phase than humanism in the eyes of the Imperialist Britishers! Pandit Shyamji attained a marvellous notoriety in the eyes of the British journals and gentlemen who scathingly condemned him for his fearless propaganda for Home Rule!

Alarmed by the hostile opposition in the British Press, Pandit Shyamji left London for Paris to instil, as his enemies said, revolutionary principles keeping himself out of harm's way. His paper was banned in India since September 1907. From Paris he continued his propaganda for years. He had developed a

[7] 6 May 1907.

sort of paternal affection for Savarkar. His whole-hearted devotion to the cause of Indian Freedom, his noble mission and phenomenal energy had impressed Pandit Shyamji immensely. The Pandit had gone over to the Abhinava Bharat Society. So while leaving London he entrusted the management of India House entirely to Savarkar.

Few have spent so much, struggled so hard, and donated so abundantly to the Freedom Movement of India as Pandit Shyamji, the great patriot, did in those early days of difficulties, dangers and despair. He was a lover of Spencer's dictum that 'resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative'. What was most striking, he had ruthlessly denounced Gandhi for helping the British against the Boers, who fought for their liberation.

Suspicion and alarm now tightened their grip on the British mind. A little while earlier Englishmen had described the blessings of Brahmins on Surendranath Banerjee as the coronation of the Emperor Surendranath! This shock also quickened the palpitation of the Empire capital for a good many hours.

The debates and discussions held at the Free India Society on the political philosophy were highly inspiring and of a very high order. They echoed throughout India in Savarkar's letters from London which were read with great interest all over Maharashtra. The members of the Abhinava Bharat were all intellectual giants. Savarkar gave them light and literature. He told them that whosoever wanted to live a deathless life should die for the freedom of his country. He impressed upon their minds that peaceful evolution had a meaning and a sense, but peaceful revolution had neither. He emphasized: "In the end passive resistance falls because it has no backing of the army and because it presupposes all men to be selfless and believes that all men will not co-operate with the aggressor." "Besides, it blindly presumes," he went on, "that the aggressor has a high sense of morality and will not resort to arms or enact new orders and ordinances." He illustrated how passive resistance staged by the farm-workers of Narbonne in Southern France was suppressed by military forces in 1907!

In young Savarkar's view the sea of humanity was progressing. "The sooner the deliverance of humanity," he proclaimed, "the surer the downfall of British Imperialism!" According to

him France was the God-given political laboratory for the French in order to make experiments with all kinds of Governments, all sorts of revolutions, and all categories of societies. "The French people," he said, "are by nature gifted with imagination and initiative and wonderful creative ability." [8]

Such was the power of his thoughts and personality! Savarkar was both magnetic and mesmeric. India House was completely under his spell. M. P. T. Acharya, Savarkar's colleague, describes the young leader of the Abhinava Bharat vividly. He says: "His personal charm was such that a mere shakehand could convert men as V. V. S. Aiyar and Hardayal—not only convert but even bring out the best out of them. Sincere men always became attached to him whether they agreed with or differed from him. Not only men in ordinary walks of life but even those, aspiring to high offices, recognised the purity of purpose in him, although they were poles apart from him, and deadly opponents as regards his political objectives. They even opened their purse for his propaganda. That means Savarkar had a rare tact in dealing with men of every variety. Savarkar's austerity was itself a discipline to others, which easy-going people hated and shunned. England was a country for amusement and most people wanted to make the most out of it." [9]

Relating the story of his own conversion Senapati Bapat observes: "Before I met Savarkar, I had planned a revolutionary pamphleteer's and lecturer's life for myself. A few months after I met him, I cancelled my plan and took up the idea of going to Paris for learning bomb-making." Bapat further observes: "One of the chief reasons was the impression that Savarkar made on me by his brilliant writing and speaking. 'Here is a born revolutionary writer and speaker;' I said to myself, 'I may well leave writing and speaking to him and turn to some other work in the revolutionary field'." [10] Asaf Ali described nicely the serious atmosphere of the India House of Savarkar's days and wrote in his memoirs of Savarkar: "I wonder how so young a person—for he could not have been much beyond two or three and twenty in 1909—commanded the will of almost every-

[8] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 62.
[9] Acharya, M. P. T., The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.
[10] Bapat, Senapati, The *Mahratta*, *ibid.*

one who came into contact with him." Asaf Ali added that Savarkar was the spirit of Shivaji.[11]

David Garnett, an eminent English literary figure, who plaved a very important role in Savarkar's revolutionary life in London, writes in his autobiography, *The Golden Echo*, that he was struck by Savarkar's extraordinary personal magnetism and adds that there was an intensity of faith in the man and a curious singleminded recklessness which were deeply attractive to him.[12] Savarkar's ivory-white, broad cheekbones and forehead, his most sensitive yet most powerful face, a delicate acquiline nose, a sensitive, refined mouth and an extremely pale skin impressed his visitors and his jaws struck terror.[12]

* * *

Another great task to which Savarkar devoted his energy was foreign propaganda. He was the first and foremost Indian leader who perceived and foresaw the impact of vital forces in international politics. Years after, Subhas Bose took up the thread where it had been left by this precursor and moved international forces for the cause of Indian freedom. To that end Savarkar wrote vigorous political articles on Indian affairs in the *Gaelic America* of New York, got them translated into German, French, Italian, Russian and Portuguese languages and had them published in the respective countries. In this his aim was two-fold. First, he wanted to acquaint the civilised world with Indian affairs and enlist their moral sympathy for the cause of Indian freedom; and secondly, he strove to make India a living issue in international politics. It was with this aim in view that Savarkar had deputed Madame Cama and Sardar Singh Rana to represent India at the International Socialist Congress which was held on August 22, 1907, at Stuttgart in Germany. In spite of the opposition from the British Socialist representative, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Madame Cama, with the support of Mr. Hyndman of England and M. Jean Jaures of France, stood before the Conference to move the resolution on India and unfurled the flag of Independence of India which was designed by Savarkar whom Madame Cama described as a noble and selfless young patriot. The resolution wanted to

[11] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 124.
[12] Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo*, pp. 145-48.

declare that the continuance of British rule in India was positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the best interests of India and lovers of Freedom all over the world ought to co-operate in freeing from slavery the fifth of human race inhabiting that oppressed country.[13] The British delegates prevented the resolution being adopted, as it had not already been submitted to the International Bureau.

Cama was, however, allowed simply to make a speech. And inspired by the call of Independence she declared: "This flag is of Indian Independence. Behold it is born! It is already sanctified by the blood of martyred Indian youths! I call upon you, gentlemen, to rise and salute this flag of Indian Independence. In the name of this flag I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to co-operate with this flag in freeing one-fifth of the human race!" [14]

The delegates rose up and saluted the flag of Indian Independence. They were tremendously impressed by her speech and described Madame Cama as an Indian Princess! President Herr Singer declared that the spirit of the resolution was approved by the International Bureau and Congress. How far these Herculean efforts of Savarkar and the great endeavours of his comrades were successful can be seen when no less a personality than the Kaiser himself clearly stated in his famous reply to President Wilson that absolute political Independence of India was one of the indispensable conditions for world peace!

The year 1907 was in turmoil and tempo. India was drifting from the policy of petition to the politics of pressure under Tilak and from the politics of pressure to the potency of powder under Savarkar. So tense were the feelings and so grim was the fight that even the good-hearted and God-fearing grand old man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, was driven to despair and to the thought of revolt. The fiery doctrines of boycott of foreign goods, the propagation of Swadeshi and the hatred of foreign rule were spreading all over India. In the Punjab, discontent and political excitement fanned by a set of regulations regarding the new canal colonies reached a dangerous point. To avert the trouble, Punjab's great leader, Lala Lajpat Rai and the violent agitator Sardar Ajitsingh were deported.

[13] Maharashtra Prakashan Sanstha, *Savarkar-Charitra*, p. 67.
[14] Mujumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, p. 322.

The left wing was forging ahead with the rise of Tilak. His titanic intellect, formidable personality and his great gifts of leadership wielded an unparalleled influence. Tilak was the first great mass leader of modern India, who enjoyed a universal popularity. He denounced the mendicancy of the Congress method. His doctrine spread from province to province. All forces of action rose under his banner. The Congress was to be held at Nagpur in December 1907, but the Moderates thought that Nagpur would elect Tilak President. So they shifted the venue to Surat. Savarkar, leader of the revolutionaries, was in favour of Tilak and so he had written to his brother to oppose the Government if the Government prevented the Congress being held at Nagpur. Ultimately, the Surat Congress broke over the Ironsides of Tilakites and the young revolutionaries of Abhinava Bharat who had gathered at Surat and held a secret meeting of some two hundred strong at the instance of Babarao Savarkar.

The Government feared the rising tide of nationalism and therefore it tried to curb activities of political leaders. As a result of their strong speeches Subramanya Bharati, the Tamil poet and patriot, and Chidambaram Pillay, who was a member of the Abhinava Bharat Society, were jailed. From London Savarkar was anxiously watching these events in Madras province.

The Indian revolutionaries of Abhinava Bharat were also in touch with the revolutionary forces of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China. Savarkar's aim was to organize a United anti-British Front with a view to rising in revolt simultaneously against the British Empire. One of the Schemes to be carried out by the United Front was ' the blocking of the Suez Canal in the event of an armed rising in India! [15] Prominent Egyptian leaders then residing in Paris had promised active support for carrying out the scheme '! Thus every minute, every word, every thought and every act of Savarkar breathed some sort of plan or idea for the liberation of his Motherland and the downfall of the British Empire. Such intense patriotism coupled with his young age, his brilliant brains, his long-range plans and the British statesmen's correct reading of men and times were des-

[15] Pal, Niranjan, *Thirty Years Ago*, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

tined to lead to Savarkar's unusually long incarceration as is the fate of every pioneer liberator of a slave country!

The liberation of the Motherland was to be achieved by a preparation for war which included (1) the teaching of Swadeshi and Boycott, imparting National education and creating a revolutionary spirit; (2) Purchasing and storing of weapons in neighbouring states; (3) opening of small bomb factories; (4) purchasing weapons in foreign countries and smuggling them into India; (5) adopting guerilla tactics whenever possible; (6) waiting for a favourable opportunity to rise in revolt; and (7) carrying patriotism and politics into the rank of Indian Military forces and seducing them. That opportunity was drawing near. There were abundant indications that a war was imminent in Europe; and the revolutionaries of the Abhinava Bharat expected to take advantage of the international situation and fight out the Britishers to win back the independence of their Motherland. In the first issue of the *Talwar,* an organ of the Abhinava Bharat, Savarkar had fully discussed and weighed the possibilities of the outbreak of a war in Europe within four or five years while explaining the complicated affairs arising out of the Kiel Canal in 1908. That golden opportunity was not to be missed.

Keeping this in view Savarkar and his Abhinava Bharat Society were busy writing, printing, packing and posting explosives and inflaming literature. Savarkar often appeared at the weekly meetings of the Abhinava Bharat with stains of picric acid on his hands. Pistols were smuggled into India through books and books through false bottoms of boxes. The atmosphere of India House was filled with heroic pride. Savarkar sent Bapat and Hemchandra Das to study the art of bomb-making. A Russian Chemical Engineer gave Bapat a Bomb Manual in the Russian language. Hemchandra Das, who was an expert photographer, took photographs of the Bomb Manual. Bapat then got the Manual translated into English by a Russian girl by name Miss Annya, who was a medical student at Berlin. Savarkar took out a lot of copies of the Manual and immediately Bapat, Hotilal Varma and Hemchandra Das left for India with cyclostyled copies of the Bomb Manual.

Savarkar wanted to impart military training to his comrades and wanted them to receive the baptism of fire. At that time

a war had broken out between Spain and Morocco as Spain wanted to grab a part of Morocco. Savarkar sent[16] his two lieutenants to fight on the side of Morocco. One of the lieutenants was Sukhasagar Dutta. David Garnett had given Dutta the rifle which Galsworthy had presented to him. But their rifles were seized at Gibraltar and they were allowed to go to Algiers. They could not meet Abdul Karim, leader of the Arabs, and so they returned disappointed.

The year 1908 saw many other stirring events in India. A new spirit was rising in India. The country was at the dawn of a new epoch. It was a time of violent repression, profound discontent and fierce antagonism. New hopes, new desires, new measures and new thoughts were in the air. Love of freedom, hatred of slavery and hope for a great future captivated the young and the old alike. Poets and patriots blossomed forth. Youths vied with one another in making the purest and greatest sacrifices on the altar of freedom.

Savarkar's mighty pen was feeding and fanning the wrath of Indian revolutionaries. He wrote a brilliant leaflet 'O Martyrs!' on the eve of the celebration of the anniversary of the Heroes of 1857. Its fiery and historic appeal stirred the sleeping embers of patriotism in the hearts of both soldiers and patriots. In a moving tone he wrote: "We take up your cry, we revere your flag, we are determined to continue that fiery mission 'away with the foreigners'. For the War of 1857 shall not cease till the revolution arrives, striking slavery into dust, elevating liberty to the throne. . . . No, a revolutionary war knows no truce, save liberty or death! The war began on the 10th of May 1857 and is not over on the 10th of May 1908, nor can it ever cease till a 10th of May to come, sees the destiny accomplished, sees the beautiful Ind crowned either with the lustre of Victory or with the hallow of martyrdom! But, O glorious Martyrs, in this pious struggle of your sons, help! . . . Whisper unto us the nobility of such an alliance of Religion and Patriotism, the true religion which is ever on the side of patriotism, the true patriotism which secures the freedom of religion! . . . With limited means you sustained a war, not against tyranny alone, but against tyranny and treachery together."

[16] Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo*, p. 150.

About a hundred Indian students from different parts of Europe attended the meeting in High Gate on May 10, 1908. This Pamphlet was distributed among them and in England, and hundreds of copies were sent to India.

P. M. Bapat, Hotilal Varma and Hemchandra Das reached India in March 1908 and circulated the cyclostyled copies of the Bomb Manual through important centres of the revolutionaries. Bapat saw the Bengal revolutionaries Barindra Ghose, Prafulla Chakravarti and Narendra Goswain at Calcutta on April 7, 1908. The new technique made bombs really effective. Then followed the most outstanding and memorable event of the year that fanned the sacrificial flames of revolution, when Khudiram Bose threw a bomb in Muzaffarpur on April 30. Two unfortunate English ladies were killed in the act instead of the District Magistrate, Mr. Kingsford, for whom the bomb was intended. It shook violently the whole of Hindustan and resulted in the incarceration and transportation of brilliant editors, great leaders and daring youths of Bengal and Maharashtra. Khudiram's comrade, Prafulla Chakravarti, killed himself with his revolver; his other comrades, Kanailal Dutt and Satyendra Bose shot down the approver Narendra Goswain in the hospital of Alipore jail and died on the gallows. Kanailal Dutta's dead body was cremated amidst kingly and patriotic tributes.

The famous Maniktola trial ended in the transportation of a batch of valiant fighters like Babu Arvind's brother Barindranath Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt, Hemchandra Das, Indu Bhushan Roy, Upendranath Banerjee and many others to the Andamans. To cope with the growing furious tide of this revolution Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, asked Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, for more repressive measures. Morley was opposed to a policy of repression. But vain, vacillating, touchy, subtle and bookish liberal that he was, he ultimately yielded to political pressure which was brought to bear on him by the articles written by Kincaid in *The Times*, London, at the instance of Sir Curzon Wyllie. These articles, however, were attributed to Chirol who was in charge of the Foreign Department of *The Times*.

In India persecution and prosecution, repression and suppression reared their ugly heads. Brave and brilliant editors wrote with fiery pens. Vivekananda's brother Bhupendranath Dutt,

Editor of the *Yugantar*, Babu Arvind Ghosh, editor of the *Bande Mataram*, Prithvigir Harigir, editor of the *Harikishor*, Yeotmal, and Bhaskar Vishnu Phadke of the *Vihari*, Bombay, were arrested and sentenced to one or two years' rigorous imprisonment. Shivrampant Paranjpe was sentenced to 19 months' rigorous imprisonment for his inflammatory article on the Muzaffarpur Bomb affair. For a similar reason Tilak, Father of Indian Unrest, was transported to Mandalay on July 23, 1908. From his talk with Gokhale, Morley had scented that Tilak was in close touch with Savarkar and Bapat and the British Government asked the Indian Government to arrange for his incarceration. Just before the decision of the Tilak case some of the members of the Abhinava Bharat had intercepted in Bombay one night a message from the British Government regarding the Tilak affair which contained the information. Several rebel editors like R. N. Mandlik, new editor of the *Vihari*, Dhondopant Phadke of the *Arunoday*, Thana, Balwantrao Limaye of the *Swaraj*, Sholapur, Achyut Balvant Kolhatkar of the *Sandesh*, Nagpur, N. V. Bhave of the *Harikishor*, Yeotmal, and the editor of the *Pratod*, Satara, were also put in prison.

The approver in the Alipore case had disclosed Senapati Bapat's connection with the Bengali revolutionaries. Upon this Senapati Bapat eluded the police, escaped and went into voluntary exile for years. Bengal and Maharashtra were closely linked! Sir Valentine Chirol, who was then travelling in India, wrote to the *London Times*: "The emotional Bengali calls along the whole world to witness his deeds. The Chitpavan Brahmin whose bent of mind is far more practical works in silence. The Deccan is honeycombed with secret societies. . . . Even in Bengal, the Bengalees did the shouting; it was Poona that provided the brains that directed the Bengali extremists." [17]

Thus the fountainhead of the revolutionary movement in India was Savarkar, the acknowledged leader of India House.

The news of Tilak's transportation came as a thunderbolt to Indians in London. The great statesman Gokhale was then in London on his fourth political visit, this time on account of the Morley-Minto Reforms proposals then in the offing. Fear-

[17] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 112.

fully or prayerfully Gokhale declined to preside over a meeting held in London to protest against the deportation of Tilak and the repressive measures of the Indian Government, nor did he attend the meeting. What a contrast! Morley rightly wrote to Minto that Gokhale, as a party manager, was a baby and while any politician aspiring to be a leader should never whine, Gokhale whined like a second-rate leader![18] In the same letter Morley appreciated Tilak's spirit. Whereupon Minto expressed his view that Tilak was an arch-leader of sedition![19]

Humiliated at the timid and spineless attitude of Gokhale and hurt by his blank refusal, some of the hotheads in the revolutionary camp thought of putting an end to his life. But Savarkar bridled them and bitterly condemned the very sinful thought. He voiced a timely warning that such a mad act and attack on one of their compatriots for his own way of thinking would imperil the power and prestige of the revolutionary movement.[20] The proposed meeting was then held at the Caxton Hall under the chairmanship of Mr. Parekh, and by a special resolution condemned Gokhale's attitude vehemently.

Immediately after Gokhale's arrival Savarkar with his lieutenants, Dr. Rajan and Aiyar, had seen Gokhale and R. C. Dutt. There was a discussion on the War of 1857 between them. Gokhale had taught history and Dutt was a historian. In the course of his talk with them Savarkar stressed the point of writing and interpreting the history of 1857 from the national point of view. The historian agreed to this, but the statesman disagreed and the discussion ended. K. P. Jayaswal, afterwards a noted historian, was one of Savarkar's admirers and attended the meetings at India House regularly.

* * *

The last quarter of 1908 was the busiest period for the Free India Society. Leaders of note and figures of fame from India had reached London. Lala Lajpat Rai, Gokulchand Narang, Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, Gokhale, R. C. Dutt, G. B. Khaparde and R. V. Karandikar—the last pair for the Tilak case appeal—were then in London. October 16 was observed as anti-Partition

[18] Krishna, K. B., *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 141.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[20] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 163.

day, and under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai, Khaparde, Karandikar and B. C. Pal spoke on the occasion. On the same day in the same hall a meeting was held to extend sympathies to the Indians in South Africa. Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari was in the chair and Lajpat Rai, Savarkar, Pal, Khaparde and others were the speakers. Babu Bepin Pal impressed his audience with his powerful oratory. His lectures delivered later on at the Caxton Hall on the 20th and 21st December were attended by many Englishmen.

On December 20, a National Conference was held. Dadasahib Khaparde presided. Madame Cama spoke on the 'Boycott' resolution which was seconded by Gyanchand Varma. At the same meeting Aiyar spoke on the resolution on Turkastan congratulating her on becoming a Republic and was seconded by Sir Aga Khan, afterwards H.H. the Aga Khan. The main resolution demanding 'Swaraj' was moved by Dr. Kumarswami and Savarkar seconded it. Addressing the Conference Savarkar said that the true meaning of Swaraj was absolute political independence. He also told his audience: "Knowing this full well, you are voting for this resolution. Before passing this resolution just bring before your mind's eye the dreadful prison walls, and the dreary dingy cells." The resolution was passed unanimously.

"The Morley-Minto Reforms," declared the conference by another resolution, "are deceptive, disappointing and insulting inasmuch as they will foment communal tension in India." And indeed, the reforms proved to be a great slur on the growth of constitutionalism in India. Minto's craze to outshine the efficient Curzon, his policy of counterpoise, his fear of a Muslim revolt which Sir Syed Ahmed threatened him with, the spineless nature and want of grit in Gokhale and Morley's proverbial unfamiliarity with Indian affairs culminated in a communal division of India holding a nascent threat to Indian unity.

But the reforms were beyond doubt a surrender to the revolutionary agitation in India and outside. "I detect," wrote Sir Valentine Chirol from Bombay on January 8, 1909, to the *London Times*, "a very general tendency to ascribe these lavish gifts to the vigorous actions of the extremists. If it had not been for the bombs, we should not have had these boons, was a

remark which roughly summed up the popular opinion in this aspect of the subject." [21]

Soon after the conference in the decorated Caxton Hall, the birthday anniversary of Guru Govindsingh was celebrated on December 29, 1908, when Babu Bepin Chandra Pal presided. The function began with the song 'Amar Desh', and Savarkar's famous Marathi song 'Priyakar Hindustan'. Gokulchand Narang read at the meeting his essay on the Guru. Lala Lajpat Rai with his unbending personality, sturdy patriotism, hallowed by his constructive work and with his profound erudition poured forth his burning words. He was a very effective speaker and held a high place among the orators of India. Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, a sterling patriot, an orator of high rank, a well-read scholar, a thinker and a great editor also spoke on the occasion. It was a meeting of scholars, speakers and orators!

After these great speeches, Savarkar was pressed by the audience to speak, and he rose amid a deafening applause. Gifted with a moving tongue, spotless sincerity and burning heart, he thrilled his audience. A man of faith and conviction is always irresistible and all-conquering. So was Savarkar with the personality of a hero. In the lighted, moving and inspired atmosphere created by Savarkar even the magic speech of India's greatest orator, Surendranath Banerjee, the heartforce and fire of Bepin Babu, the freshness and fervour of Lajpat Rai and the polished diction of Syed Reza paled into insignificance!

The only giant Savarkar had not crossed his swords with, was Pherozeshah Mehta, but even with his great power of rhetoric Mehta was no Surendranath. Asaf Ali has described vividly how people were captivated by the charm of the oratory of Savarkar, the young Demosthenes of India. Depicting Savarkar as a matchless orator he ever heard in India or England, Asaf Ali wrote afterwards: "Nor is it an exaggeration to say Savarkar is one of the few really effective speakers I have known and heard, and there is hardly an orator of the first rank either here or in England whom I have not had the privilege of hearing—excepting Mr. Eardly Norton, of whom I have heard so much that I should be almost reluctant to avail myself of the opportunity of hearing him speak lest I should be disappointed." [22]

[21] *The Times*, London, 25 January 1909.
[22] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 126.

The fervid patriotism, love of unity and a will to sacrifice in the Indian youth became an eyesore to the Britishers. One man's meat is another man's poison! The newspapers cried hoarse against them. "Crush the extremists and rally round the Moderates" was their theme. British Press, pensioners and patriots also grew alarmed at the daring and disloyal attitude of the Indian youths. In the words of the *Standard*, "it is beyond question that not a few of the highly intelligent Indians in our Universities and reading for the Bar, are striving their utmost by such means, particularly to accustom the minds of young rising generation to the idea of an armed revolt!" [23]

The *London Times* endorsed this view and asked the Government to take great care to control education and to be very careful as to the kind of people whom it appointed to teach the youth of India.[24] A meeting was also held under the presidency of Lord Lamington, an ex-Governor of Bombay, to consider and adopt means to socialize these warlike elements. But the meeting was hotly disturbed, only B. C. Pal getting a smooth hearing. An incident added fuel to the fire. Vasudeo Bhattacharya, ex-editor of *Sandhya* and one-time editor of *Yugantar*, about the same time struck Sir William Lee-Warner a blow on the face for having called Kunjavihari Bhattacharya 'a dirty nigger'. Sir Lee-Warner was, while in India, a terror to the Indian Princes; and the attack on such a person was not an ordinary matter. So Vasudeo Bhattacharya was prosecuted and fined Rs. 20. But the attack made India House the talk of the whole city. If anyone gave his address as India House, the listener would at once look up at the man and say, "Then you belong to the revolutionary party!" Artists and careerists in London took a dread and said, "Who will go to India these days? There bombs may explode anywhere and at any moment!"

The British Press and the people thus turned their attention to the wonderful India House in Highgate and its leader. But when representatives of newspapers visited it, they were surprised to see that Savarkar whom they criticised and opposed was merely a beardless and up-to-date youth of twenty-five. The *Standard* described Savarkar as an Indian, with youth and intel-

[23] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 108.
[24] Besant, Dr. Annie, *Wake Up India*, p. 238.

ligence stamped upon him. Mr. Cambel Green wrote in the *Sunday Chronicle* that Savarkar was not only the spokesman of the students but also of Shyamji Krishna Varma and said: "He has a clear olive complexion, clear deep penetrating eyes, and a width of jaw such as I have seen in few men. His English is excellent." He added: "The fact is Mr. V. D. Savarkar believes in India for the Indians and in the complete emancipation of India from the British Rule. He says India has nothing for what to thank the English, unless it be the denationalization, as he calls it, of the Hindus." [25]

The Indian students talked in the Indian languages and Scotland Yard became non-plussed. So to their succour was deputed one Kirtikar, who had worked in the Bombay High Court in the capacity of a translator, to watch the activities of the Abhinava Bharat. This plain-clothed detective resided at India House under the guise of a student of Dental Surgery and every day he sent a secret report to Scotland Yard. Suspicion soon fell on him. Dr. T. S. Rajan and Aiyar kept a watch over his activities. One night when he was out, they broke into his room and found an incomplete report awaiting dispatch to the detectives.

On Kirtikar's return Savarkar and Aiyar interrogated him and unmasked his veil. Finding that his treachery was unearthed, he trembled from head to foot at the sight of Aiyar's revolver and confessed the facts. The dental surgeon felt the loss of his teeth. However, instead of ejecting him Savarkar shrewdly allowed him to continue in India House to make him less troublesome. He, however, decided that Kirtikar's reports should go to the detectives only after his perusal. Detectives of Scotland Yard watched closely the activities of the residents of India House. Savarkar also kept his men with the object of shadowing the 'shadowers.' [26]

Savarkar's resourceful brain knew all the types and twists of the revolutionary business. He won the sympathies of the Irishmen serving in Scotland Yard who actually helped the Indian revolutionaries in smuggling political literature. Besides, the Abhinava Bharat had its secret agents in Scotland Yard. Niranjan Pal, a comrade of Savarkar and son of the Bengal leader,

[25] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 119.
[26] *Evening Standard*, London, 25 March 1909.

Bepin Chandra Pal, writes: "In those days we, too, had our secret agents in Scotland Yard. Some of them were sent to London ostensibly as students but really to act as spies. Two of such men ingratiated themselves with Savarkar and secured lodgings in India House. But such was Savarkar's magnetic personality that soon they came under his spell and of their own accord, confessed everything to him." [27] Savarkar's sharp and penetrating eyes and the peculiar way in which he cross-examined any visitor to the India House exposed many an expert detective and many a time hoodwinked the watchdogs.

But the most remarkable gift of Savarkar was his balanced mind and the power of discrimination. He was a revolutionary realist and never dreamt of giving and taking life emotionally or by wasting human energy and life thoughtlessly. That outstanding characteristic of Savarkar distinguished him from the terrorist or a solitary reckless revolutionary. His aim was to rise in an organised revolt at the opportune time and liberate his country from foreign yoke. The gift of his marvellous presence of mind and the realist in revolutionary Savarkar were seen when he checked Senapati Bapat who offered to bomb the House of Commons. Senapati Bapat states: "I proposed once to attempt the life of the Secretary of State for India, at another time, I offered to drop a bomb in the Parliament House. On both occasions Savarkar refused his consent and on the second occasion took great pains to persuade me to return to India without delay for such work as was waiting for me here. I treasured his advice and followed it soon enough." [28] Savarkar checked the Senapati lest their secret mastery of the art of bomb-making should be exposed before it reached India. Savarkar thus prevented the revolutionary movement from falling into an abyss from a horrible precipice!

Meantime, the smuggling of arms and ammunition into India went on. Savarkar sent pistols with Mirza Abbas and Sikandar Hyat Khan. He sent with Chaturbhuj Amin, the cook of India House, 20 browning pistols. Chaturbhuj Amin was a member of the Abhinava Bharat Society. He was not a mere cook. He had obtained a diploma in tailoring in London, but he worked as cook. He was a devotee of Savarkar and helped him in des-

[27] Pal, Niranjan, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.
[28] Bapat, Senapati, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

patching letters and parcels, giving the detectives the slip. He reached Bombay in March 1909 and delivered the parcel to Gopalrao Patankar as he could not find H. A. Thatte, who was the President of the Abhinava Bharat Society in Maharashtra. He saw V. M. Bhat, but he also could not take delivery of the parcel as the detectives had an unobstrusive watch on him. These pistols fell into the hands of different revolutionary groups. Chaturbhuj could not resist the temptation of keeping one pistol for himself!

CHAPTER 4

The Storm Breaks

THE Abhinava Bharat was pondering over the sentences upon the Maniktola revolutionaries. Babarao Savarkar's heroic sacrifice blazed vigorously under the sacrificial ferment. The bursting point of repression by the British was reached. The zero hour had struck. The choice of the Abhinava Bharat fell on Madanlal Dhingra, the darting arrow. He possessed the daring spirit of a man who looked into his open grave!

Smartly dressed Dhingra looked like a dandy. He was a devoted follower of Savarkar and was proud of his nation. One day someone taunted him that the Japanese were the bravest people in Asia. Dhingra retorted that his Hindu Nation was nothing less in comparison. In the course of the talk, it was decided to test the mettle of Madanlal himself. A pin was pierced through his palm. Blood flowed out profusely, but Dhingra remained unperturbed.

A few days earlier Madanlal Dhingra had asked his leader whether the time for martyrdom had really come. Out came the epigrammatic reply from Savarkar: "If a martyr is determined and ready that fact by itself generally implies that the time for martyrdom must have come." Dhingra then joined a jolly club which high-placed Englishmen attended. He crept into their confidence. There he learnt to shoot and gained closer knowledge of men like Lord Morley, Lord Curzon and Sir Curzon Wyllie. The living symbol of racial arrogance, the Bengal culprit and the enlightened despot, Lord Curzon was Dhingra's immediate target. Some days before at a meeting Madanlal Dhingra had pursued this target with the eyes of an eagle. But the doors of the Hall were closed in his face and restless Dhingra returned and said to Savarkar, "The tiger has escaped!"

Determined to avenge the atrocities committed by the British

Government in India, Madanlal decided to kill an equally responsible man, Sir William Curzon Wyllie. So on the last day of June 1909 Madanlal Dhingra came to Savarkar in the Students' Hostel kept at the residence of B. C. Pal in Sinclair Road, where Savarkar had been staying since April 3, 1909. There they had a talk. Then Savarkar and Niranjan Pal accompanied Dhingra to Notting Hill Gate Station. Savarkar gave him a nickle-plated revolver and while bidding him farewell he said, "Don't show me your face if you fail this time."

Next day, July 1, Savarkar sent Korgaonkar and G. C. Varma to the Imperial Institute where a meeting was to be held to celebrate the annual function of the National Indian Association. The two deputies were to keep Dhingra to the resolve. Night fell. The function was celebrated. And at the conclusion of the meeting Dhingra sprang upon Curzon Wyllie with the fierceness of a tiger and shot dead the man who was the eye and brain of the India Office. Along with him also fell Dr. Cawas Lalcaca, an Anglocised Parsee zealot, who tried to save the life of Sir Curzon Wyllie. Dhingra was arrested forthwith. Two pistols, a knife and a dagger were found on his person. After the deed, the doctors who examined the victims were astounded to see Dhingra's pulse beating normal, for he was no common killer. Great was the courage and selfless was the soul of Madanlal. Dhingra was then put in Brixton Jail. And proceedings against Dhingra commenced.

The incident shook London to its marrow! As if some unusual crowbar turned London upside down! India was the subject in every British cottage, in every paper, in trains, in trams, at public squares and in markets, palaces and the British Parliament. The atmosphere became tense. Dhingra's father wired to Lord Morley that he was ashamed to own Madanlal as his son. Even Dhingra's brother in London publicly disowned him. Under the fiery eyes of the Britishers loyal Indians also trembled. Their holy tears overflowed. They assembled on July, 5, at the famous Caxton Hall to condemn Dhingra. At the meeting Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari, Sir Aga Khan, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, B. C. Pal and Khaparde were loud in their denunciation. The meeting was attended by Maharajkumar of Coochbihar, Sir Dinshaw Petit, Fazalbhoy Karimbhoy and others. Just then Theodore Morrison, a member of the

India Council, brought Dhingra's brother on to the platform. Dhingra's brother spoke sentences which were not his own. Sir Aga Khan, the chairman, then declared, "The meeting unanimously condemns Madanlal Dhingra."

Just at this moment a defying voice from the thickly crowded Hall roared, "No, not unanimously." The chairman angrily uttered: "Who says no?" Out came the reply, "I say no." The chairman pursued, "Your name please." Upon this some lost their patience and shouted, "Pull him down, drive him out!" In a moment Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari jumped from the platform and ran in the direction of the voice. The challenging voice shot back: "It is me. My name is Savarkar."

At this the audience trembled in their joints. They feared that revolutionaries would now bomb the meeting. Women shrieked, non-partisans took to their heels and partisans came from words to blows. The chicken-hearted shook beneath benches and chairs! In the heat of the passion a Eurasian swooped down upon Savarkar and struck him a blow on the forehead. Savarkar's face was besmeared with blood. His clothes were dripping, his spectacles broken to pieces. "With all this I say, I am against the resolution," he said standing as firm as a rock to maintain his opinion to the last drop of his blood. As he was saying this, Tirumalacharya, who was standing by Savarkar, thrashed the head of the fanatic, one Mr. Palmer, and down went Mr. Palmer reeling. Aiyar was about to shoot Palmer, but Savarkar winked at him and restrained him.

Sir Surendranath had left the hall protesting against the cowardly attack on Savarkar. Sir Aga Khan, too, did not like the rashness of Sir Mancherjee. At last at the instance of Sir Mancherjee the police interfered, but, seeing that the truth was on Savarkar's side, they let him go. Savarkar also let the Eurasian go! And the meeting ended. All the revolutionaries in London got angry with B. C. Pal. M. P. T. Acharya wrote a letter to the *Indian Sociologist*, saying that they were grateful to Pal for his past service; but they should boycott him because he called Dhingra a cowardly assassin.

Savarkar decided not to leave the matter at that. Tossing from side to side in his bed with a fold of wet cloth on his forehead, he dictated a letter the very night for the London *Times*. With its publication he silenced all the hostile criticism against

him. His arguments were irrefutable when he stated that, as the case of Dhingra was *sub judice*, the meeting had no right to usurp the powers of the court and condemn Madanlal in advance. Moreover, he had a right to record his vote. Thus did the historic meeting test the stuff of the leader of revolution and his knowledge of law. Here one thing may be made clear. Had the meeting at the Caxton Hall sympathised with Lady Curzon Wyllie in her bereavement and done nothing else, Savarkar, too, would have sympathised with the poor lady. Savarkar was a poet and philosopher full of human attributes. Niranjan Pal, who was present at the meeting, dwelt upon this great trait in Savarkar and observed: "The assassination of Sir Curzon Wyllie reminds me of another great trait in Savarkar's character, his humanity. An Indian student laughingly described how Lady Curzon Wyllie ran down the staircase and threw herself on the body of her husband. All this was too much for Savarkar. 'A wife sobs her heart out for her husband and you laugh at it! I do not trust you—I cannot!' Savarkar had replied in burning indignation. It was a prophetic statement, for the very man secured the King's pardon by giving evidence against Savarkar." [1]

When preliminary hearing of the Dhingra trial commenced on July 10, at the Westminster Court, Dhingra, despite the evil advice to feign madness, boldly asserted that he wished that the English Court of Law should sentence him to death, for in that case the vengeance of his countrymen would be all the keener. He further said: "Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India; and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill the Englishman who is polluting our sacred land. I am surprised at the terrible hypocrisy, the farce and the mockery of the English people." Dhingra made this *ex tempore* statement as the written statement found on his person at the time of his arrest was suppressed by the police who said that no such statement was recovered at all. Dhingra was then committed to Sessions.

In India also there were sky-high denunciations of the deed of Madanlal. N. C. Kelkar, at one such protest meeting, asked his audience to uproot the doctrine of violence. He said it

[1] Pal, Niranjan, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

was a poisonous tree which must not be allowed to grow even in neglected corners. Kelkar was indeed a man of elastic convictions. Afterwards, while writing the life of Garibaldi, he openly glorified the sacrifice of revolutionaries as the fertilizer of the nation! Gokhale went one step further than Kelkar. He denounced the whole London group of about fifty revolutionaries and insinuated that their activities would not stop unless Savarkar was arrested.

How did fearless and broad-minded English leaders react to the situation? Hyndman, Father of British Socialism, wrote in *Justice* that though he condemned the means adopted by Dhingra yet he must admit that the impeachment Dhingra had levelled against the British Government was literally true.

Savarkar saw Dhingra in Brixton Jail on July 22. He said to Dhingra, "I have come to have your *Darshan*." On hearing the tribute to his sacrifice, glee played over his face and grateful tears appeared in his eyes.

Dhingra's Sessions trial was a formal affair. There, too, he repeated his demand that his statement suppressed by the police should be read, and offered no other defence. But the police persisted in their assumed ignorance of the statement as in the lower Court. The Court thereupon sentenced Dhingra to death and the trial ended.

Dhingra's last wish was that he should be burnt in conformity with Hindu rites, that no non-Hindu should touch his body, that his clothes and articles should be sold and the money should be donated to the National Fund! Is death more fearless than Dhingra? How many such peerless jewels has a slave country to dedicate for propitiating the Goddess of Freedom?

Newspapers now directly attacked Savarkar as the fountain-head of the tragedy. In India his relations and colleagues were persecuted. Some lost their jobs; some their property. Harsh measures were adopted to crush the Indian students. Indian students were represented as being incarnates of every possible evil under the sun. Students proceeding to London were now required to produce certificates from local Governments.[2] And a student centre was opened by the India Office ostensibly to help the Indian students but mainly to spy on their activities.

[2] *Oriental Review*, 26 October 1910.

Pandit Shyamji's Scholarship money for Spencer Lectureship was returned. The diplomas of the Pandit and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya were cancelled as a result of their writings and propaganda.

Though Savarkar passed the final examination of the Gray's Inn, the Benchers of his Inn refused to call Savarkar and Harnam Singh to the Bar. Thereupon Savarkar made an appeal to the authorities of the Gray's Inn. They appointed a Committee to inquire into the affair. That Committee instituted an inquiry into the matter. Match as Savarkar was for the legal brains on the Committee and their cross-examination, nothing was proved against him though this Committee was aided by the Government of India.

At last the Committee of the Gray's Inn decided not to call him to the Bar unless he gave them a written undertaking that he would never participate in politics. Savarkar rejected their offer *in toto*! So did Harnam Singh also. Getting the diploma was not his aim. His sole aim was to free his country and make it great and powerful. This barrister was not meant for conducting petty cases and amass wealth. He was the nation's barrister. He was destined to study the case of his Motherland and put it before the world opinion as did Mazzini and Lenin. Hindustan knows how from the sunshine of his youth to the golden evening of his life, he remained a loyal barrister all along defending and fighting for the absolute political Independence of India, her integrity and her honour.

Savarkar was now on the verge of physical collapse. For the past four years he had worked with a phenomenal energy. Persecution reached its climax. A yell of wrath fell on him from all quarters. India House was closed down after the Curzon Wyllie incident. Savarkar had asked in March 1909 Pandit Shyamji to relieve him from the work of the management of India House. As Savarkar was now staying with B. C. Pal, on the next day of Wyllie's death, angry crowds stormed at Pal's residence. Elder Pal told the mob that Savarkar was his paid guest and averted further consequences. Savarkar, however, thought it wise to leave his residence for their and his own safety. Homeless, friendless, starved, stranded and shadowed by detectives, he wandered from lodge to lodge and house to house for shelter. But who would shelter a defeated Guru Govind

Singh? Was not the defeated Tatya Tope betrayed? In a single day Savarkar had to quit two lodgings. From one of these he was ousted even at midnight! The detectives followed his shadow. No sleep, no rest, no food! At last a German landlady in Red Lion Passage accepted him as a boarder for some days. There he was wrapped up in his visions of the revolution. He was oblivious to and even unsympathetic with the surroundings. Yet he held secret meetings in London and the propaganda work continued.

Fatigued and fagged out, Savarkar soon went to Brighton, a seaside English town, for a change. It was here sitting by the side of Niranjan Pal on the beach that in overwhelming emotions filled with helplessness and hopelessness in a foreign land, the deserted youth sobbed his glorious moving poem "Take me O Ocean! Take me to my native shores. Thou promised me to take me home. But thee coward, afraid of thy mighty master, Britain, thou hast betrayed me. But mind my mother is not altogether helpless. She will complain to sage Agasti and in a draught he will swallow thee as he did in the past." Several front rank poets and first-rate literary men of Maharashtra have regarded this poem as an unparalleled poem on patriotism. Foremost amongst them is the Gandhian patriarch, Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, who described it as an inscription on the Marathi language.[3] Acharya Atre, a front rank playwright and journalist, commented in his address at a literary Conference at Indore that every lofty idea in this pathetic song represented a specimen of great life and great poetry! Thirty years after, describing the moving incident at Brighton, Niranjan Pal remarked: "It has been my supreme good fortune to have met and known almost all the great patriots and personalities of modern India, but I have yet to know of a patriot who loved his Motherland as dearly as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar."[4]

Even at Brighton Savarkar had an urgent feat to accomplish. It was the publication of Dhingra's suppressed statement before he was hanged. Savarkar, therefore, called his comrade Gyanchand Varma, to Brighton and arranged for giving publicity to Dhingra's written statement which had been suppressed by the police. Two days gone, and Dhingra would join eternity.

[3] Kalelkar, Kaka, The *Pratibha*, 15 January 1936.
[4] Pal, Niranjan, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

Savarkar, therefore, resolved that Dhingra must see the statement published. Accordingly, Savarkar got the copies of Dhingra's statement printed and Varma posted them from Paris to different American and Irish papers. It was difficult to find an English paper to publish the statement. So Savarkar gave his young friend David Garnett a copy of Dhingra's statement and requested him to arrange for its publication. Garnett[5] took that journalistic scoop to Robert Lynd, who was then on the staff of *Daily News*. He undertook the job and inserted the statement in his paper during the night shift. The statement then exploded on the morning of August 16, throughout London as a bombshell! The detectives and police officers were sure it would never be published. It was in their possession. But they were outwitted and the statement entitled "Challenge" flashed throughout the world. The statement of Dhingra read:

"I admit, the other day, I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the unhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths. . . . I believe that a nation held in bondage with the help of foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race, I attacked by surprise; since guns were denied to me, I drew forth my pistol and fired." The statement proceeds: "As a Hindu, I feel that a wrong done to my country is an insult to God." It concluded: "The war of independence will continue between India and England so long as the English and Hindu races last (if this present unnatural relation does not cease)."

This was the statement which Dhingra said he did not remember fully and a copy of which the police had secured at Dhingra's residence and another on his person. They had no idea that there were more copies in existence. How could Savarkar get a third copy and send it with Varma for being circulated and published all over the world? Some papers like the London *Times* openly spoke out their minds by saying that someone must have put these words into Dhingra's mouth! It was clear beyond doubt that the author of the statement was the leader himself!

Delighted at the frustration of the police plan, Dhingra

[5] Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo*, p. 148.

embraced gallows on August 17, 1909. His last words as explained in the statement were: "My wish is that I should be born again of the same Mother and that I should die the same death for her again." His dead body was not handed over to the London Hindus. Still Varma himself performed the obsequies and got his head tonsured according to Hindu rites in honour of the great soul! Long live Dhingra for the intense love of his country! They never die who fall in a great cause! He fell with faith in his mission and in the destiny of his countrymen and love for his Motherland.

Dhingra's deed thrilled the entire world. Huge placards from Irish papers paid glowing tributes to Dhingra: "Ireland honours Madanlal Dhingra who was proud to lay down his life for the sake of his country." Only men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, however, who were then in London seemed to be unconcerned with the momentous deed. His father Motilal Nehru, the immoderately Moderate, had warned him not to go near the *Majlis* where Indian students discussed politics.[6] Later in life Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru kept silent over this thrilling episode even in his autobiography.

The storm raised by Dhingra did not immediately subside. Comments continued for a long time.

Mr. W. S. Blunt, author of *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt,* wrote about his interview with Mr. Lyne Stevens, the Doctor Royal friend. Blunt says: "He talked about the Dhingra assassination, which seems to have at last convinced his Royal friends that there is something wrong about the state of India. People talk about political assassination as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense, it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like that other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped she apologises, not before."[7] Blunt further wrote in his Diaries that no Christian martyr ever faced his judges more fearlessly or with greater dignity and remarked that the day of Dhingra's execution would be regarded as one of martyrdom in India for generations.[8]

[6] Norman, Dorothy, *Nehru, The First Sixty Years,* Vol. I, p. 13.
[7] Blunt, W. S., *My Diaries,* Part II, p. 276.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

Lloyd George expressed to Winston Churchill his highest admiration of Dhingra's attitude as a patriot. Churchill shared the same views and quoted with admiration Dhingra's last words as the finest ever made in the name of patriotism. They compared Dhingra with Plutarch's immortal heroes.[9] Lala Hardayal wrote in the first issue of the *Bande Mataram*, started by Madame Cama: "In times to come, when the British Empire in India shall have been reduced to dust and ashes, Dhingra's monuments will adorn the squares of our chief towns, recalling to the memory of our children the noble life and noble death of one who laid down his life in a far-off land for the cause he loved so well."

What kind of Swaraj was Dhingra's ideal for which he sacrificed his life? The Abhinava Bharat unequivocally proclaimed times without number its ideal of Swaraj in these words: "India must be independent; India must be united; India must be a republic; India must have a common language, and a common script. That script is Nagari, that language is Hindi. That Republic is that national form of Government in which the sovereign power—whether it be exercised by a Monarch or by a President, matters not much—rests ultimately and uncompromisingly in the hands of the Indian people."[10] The leader of Abhinava Bharat always repeated: "Before you destroy anything you must know what you are going to construct in its place." He had fully dwelt on the constitutional problem in his speeches and writings. His study in political science and constitutional law was far advanced.

Savarkar referred to the constitutional problem in his famous leaflet which he addressed to the Indian Princes under the title, 'Choose O Indian Princes!' The Maharaja of Gwalior had handed over the revolutionaries to the British Government. So he sounded a warning to the Indian Princes: "Whether the head of the Imperial Government of the Indian Nation be a President or a King depends upon how the revolution develops itself. . . . The Mother must be free, must be one and united, must make her will supreme." The leaflet voices a warning to the Princes that the newly born nation would call them to account for their deeds and misdeeds and swearing by the blood

[9] Blunt, W. S., *My Diaries*, Part II, p. 288.
[10] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 68.

of Dhingra, it thunders: "Choose whether you shall be the first of the nation's fathers or the last of the nation's tyrants." The leaflet concluded with a threat: "When the mightiest of empires is trembling at the very birth-pangs of this revolution, you, weak as you are, cannot hinder its onward march or smother its birth any more than you can change the force of gravitation or the rotundity of the earth." [11]

It was a year before this momentous period that the leader of the Abhinava Bharat had tried to contact the Prime Minister of Nepal, then in London, and had appealed to him in a letter written in Dhingra's blood to play the Victor Emmanuel. Next day the representative of the Prime Minister sent his message to the representative of the Abhinava Bharat that "God's will shall prevail!"

Bapat also had seen Shri Sayajirao Gaikwad, Maharaja of Baroda in London. The Maharaja of Baroda was in sympathy with the revolutionary movement. Shankar Wagh, a faithful follower of Savarkar, served the Maharaja as barber. He used to pass important information about the revolutionary movement to the Maharaja. British officers had kept a watch on Wagh. Still the Maharaja did not discharge him.

* * *

The hot discussions in India House and the fiery speeches of Savarkar were too hot for some of the Indian leaders who visited England in those days. Gandhi of Africa fame, who was proud of his being a loyal citizen of the British Empire, was one of them. Whenever he visited London he visited India House and discussed Indian political problems with Savarkar. He had held such discussions with Savarkar since 1906. During his London visit in October 1909 he, accompanied by the South African delegates, discussed the political problems with Savarkar from all angles. Arguments, reason and history were against Gandhi. Naturally his lieutenants supported Savarkar's views. Gandhi was impressed by the enthusiasm which Indian doctors, lawyers and leading men displayed in cooking for the dinner on the Dassara day and the trouble they took for making the function a success. Gandhi attended the dinner in a swallow-tail coat and a stiff front shirt.

[11] Karandikar, S. L., *Savarkar-Charitra*, pp. 317-18.

It was an ideological conflict between the promising Gautam and the spirited Shivaji. Gandhi arrogated the religion of God to himself and imputed irreligion of the devil to the revolutionaries and to those leaders who opposed him. Savarkar represented the rebellious force of a subject people. That force was the outcome of historic and human laws. This he had made amply clear in the opening issue of the *Talwar*, started by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya from Paris in November 1909. The passage quoted below will conspicuously cast a flood of light on Savarkar's mental make-up and his human stand and prove his rational outlook. It states: "We feel no special love for secret organisations or surprise and secret warfare. We hold that whenever the open preaching and practising of truth is banned by enthroned violence, then alone secret societies and secret warfare are justified as the inevitable and indispensable means to combat violence by force."

Savarkar further says: "Whenever the natural process of national and political evolution is violently suppressed by the forces of wrong, then revolution must step in as a natural reaction and therefore ought to be welcomed as the only effective instrument to reenthrone Truth and Right." He then brilliantly sums up: "You rule by bayonets and under these circumstances it is a mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when no constitution exists at all. But it would be worse than a mockery, even a crime, to talk of revolution when there is a constitution that allows the fullest and freest development of a nation. Only because you deny us a gun, we pick up a pistol. Only because you deny us light, we gather in darkness to compass means to knock out the fetters that hold our Mother down." [12]

This great, grand and concise doctrine of the revolutionary philosophy of Savarkar would shine out amongst the doctrines of world-famous revolutionary philosophers. President Thomas Masaryk, one of the eminent thinkers and men of action of the modern world, supported this stand when he said: "Revolution is a moral act when it is the only means left for the defence of liberty and justice." [13] And Masaryk was a leader who had worked out and experienced what a revolution was like! Savar-

[12] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 72.
[13] Ludwig, Emil, *Defenders of Democracy*, p. 109.

kar philosophized his doctrines when he was only six and twenty. If this is not rational thinking, if this is not revolutionary realism and historical truth, what else is it? A Shivaji is born with a love for justice, loyalty to truth, and obedience to God. He is a foe to tyranny and a terror to aggression, for he believes with Franklin in the eternal truth that rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.

Despite these differences Gandhi presided over the Dassara *Sammelan* in London in 1909 which Savarkar was to address. Gandhi said he was very proud to have the honour of sitting by the side of Savarkar. He expressed the hope that India would reap the fruits of Savarkar's sacrifice and patriotism. Mr. Asaf Ali tells us that while formally introducing Savarkar that evening to the audience Gandhi said, "But Mr. Savarkar, the speaker of the evening, is to follow me and I should not like to stand between you and him." Asaf Ali has described Savarkar's speech on the day as one of the finest speeches he ever listened to.[14] In this speech Savarkar impressed upon his audience that without Sri Ramachandra life in India would be nothing. He asked them to remember that Ram established Ram Raj after slaying Ravan, the symbol of tyranny, aggression and injustice, and added: "Hindus are the heart of Hindustan. Nevertheless, just as the beauty of the rainbow is not impaired but enhanced by its varied hues, so also Hindustan will look the more beautiful across the sky of future by assimilating all the best from the Muslim, Parsi, Jewish and other civilizations."[15]

The discussions Gandhi had with Savarkar, however, left a stinge of bitterness. During his return journey at the end of 1908 Gandhi vehemently attacked the Indian revolutionaries in London and indirectly Savarkar in a violently non-violent booklet which he wrote in Gujarati. It was first published in the columns of *Indian Opinion* which Gandhi had started in South Africa. It was written in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa. "I came in contact," writes Gandhi in his introduction to the new edition of the *Hind Swaraj*, "with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I felt that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills."

[14] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 135.
[15] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi-Patre*, p. 142.

Savarkar humorously described the book as *Maro Kato ka Panth.* The ideological fight between Gandhi and Savarkar thus started during the first decade of the twentieth century and continued markedly pronounced, though Savarkar was behind the bars undergoing trials and stresses of life away from the political scene. The viewpoints of Gandhi and Savarkar, not to speak of their outlook on life, were poles asunder!

The most singular and consistent note that prevailed from that time till his last day in Savarkar's literature and speeches was that he was proud of his race and heritage. An incident of that period also underlines this fact. One day an English lady, residing at a hotel, asked Savarkar if he went to church on Sundays. He said, "No!" The lady paused for a moment and asked him whether he and his friends were Hindus. Savarkar proudly replied that he was a Hindu. One of his colleagues protested that Savarkar's assertion was too direct and would offend the English lady's ear. Thereupon Savarkar retorted: "Then change your father's name if you are cowardly ashamed of it. But you may as well tell the lady that her being English offends my ear too." [16] Savarkar, however, never hated any Englishman only because he was an Englishman.

Minto was striving to crush the forces of seditious agitation in India with his new measures. Repression was raging all round. But the revolutionary movement was still spreading and its morning shadow appeared to the Indian Government longer than what it was. Soon one branch of Abhinava Bharat was unearthed at Gwalior, another at Satara and a few small factories of bombs and secret stores were unearthed in Maharashtra after the arrest of Savarkar's elder brother Babarao. Babarao himself was sentenced to transportation for life on June 8, 1909, on a charge of having waged a war against the King-Emperor by publishing a booklet of inspiring poems! One of these poems asked the people: "Pray tell, whoever got political freedom without war?"

In the absence of his leader brother, Babarao led in Maharashtra the then 'Quit India' movement backed by bombs and pistols. He heard the shocking news of the confirmation of Babarao's transportation for life by the Bombay High Court

[16] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 161.

in November 1909. So he wrote from London a letter in poetical lines to his sister-in-law, Babarao's wife, consoling her in her great sorrow at the severe blow. The letter written in verse has since then been a charm for Maharashtrian womanhood. Savarkar wrote—

". . . Even so this our Motherland, our Mother, craving for the assistance of the Lord that she too be rescued from the crocodile clutches of Bondage, enters our Garden, plucks a fresh flower from the bough and offers it at His feet in worship. . . ."

"Behold, O Sister, on one side stands watching the Past—souls of sages, saints and heroes of our race gone before and on the other the Future—generations yet unborn." [17]

"Deathless is the family that falls to a man,
For the emancipation of its Motherland,
Filling the skies with the fragrance of their sacrifice,
Made in the welfare of man's rise." *

Mark the great simile, noble interpretation of life! The feelings are real, experienced and not adopted. He is truly a Great Man whose heart soars high, whose courage remains supreme and who can composedly dissolve himself into the Universal self or feels oneness with Him even when his 'self' is surrounded by flames.

Savarkar's wife and his brother's wife Yesubai responded nobly to it. They asked him, to the surprise of the British Government, to carry on the good fight [18] against British rule although they themselves were standing near the erupting volcano.

* * *

In Savarkar one finds a unique combination of a doer and a dreamer. His pen was as powerful as his tongue. He was the leader of a revolutionary movement and a great literary power as well. He wielded both pen and pistol with equal command. Perhaps no leader of any other revolutionary movement struck terror into the hearts of his enemies with his pen and pistol except Savarkar. It is no wonder that his writings and ballads

[17] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.* * Translation.
[18] Kincaid, C. A., *Forty-Four Years A Public Servant*, p. 118.

impressed effectively his personality on the Indian revolution and inspired soldiers and patriots to fight the battle of freedom—from Rajaji to Roy, from Hardayal to Bhagat Singh, from Rajan to Kher, from Kanhere to Gogate and from the Ghadr to the I.N.A.

After describing the noble war of Italian Independence in Europe, Savarkar invoked the warriors of 1857 to deliver his message through their own mighty words and mighty deeds. His aim in writing his book on 1857 was to inspire his people with a desire to rise again and wage a second successful war for the liberation of their Motherland. For achieving that goal, he always stressed the need for carrying politics and patriotism into the military forces of India.

Savarkar got admission into the library of the India Office through the wife of Mukerjee, who was the Manager of India House when Savarkar went to London. Mukerjee's wife was an English woman and she secured him the necessary permission. At the Library of the India Office, Savarkar read heaps of original letters, numerous confidential documents, secret parliamentary papers and several military despatches. He referred to some books in British Museum on 1857. He read Rajanikant's *Sepoys' Mutiny* in the Bengali language. After profound study and patient industry for over eighteen months, he completed by April 1908 his monumental Marathi work *The First Indian War of Independence—1857*. Savarkar sent the manuscript to his brother Babarao Savarkar in Nasik. The detectives got scent of it and carried simultaneous surprise raids on several printing houses in Maharashtra to seize the manuscript but failed. As no press dared publish it in India through fright, the manuscript was returned to one of Savarkar's friends in Paris. Savarkar's friends tried to publish the Marathi book in Germany as it was possible to print it in a printing house where Sanskrit works were printed, but the German compositors found it difficult to compose the book and so the attempt was given up.

Some brilliant members of Abhinava Bharat in London like W. V. Phadke translated the manuscript into English under the supervision of Aiyar. The members of the Abhinava Bharat contributed funds for the publication of the great work. The detectives of Scotland Yard had succeeded in securing through

their agent a chapter of the original manuscript and thus the British and India Government had come to know of the coming book. The British detectives had described the book as revolutionary, explosive and seditious. The two Governments were so much terror-stricken and had become so much nervous that they proscribed the book hurriedly which they admitted was not even published! The book of Savarkar was thus the first of its kind in the treasury of world literature. It was proscribed before it saw the light of day! Unique honour to the author who stands unparalleled in this respect in the domain of the literary world. Savarkar took up the challenge and held the two Governments to caustic ridicule in the British, American and European Press. Even some of the British papers resented the shameless attitude of their Government. There was after this a hot pursuit and intellectual fight for some time between Scotland Yard and Abhinava Bharat for preventing the publication on one side and accomplishing its publication on the other. At last Savarkar eluded the police and the detectives and succeeded in getting the book printed in Holland in 1909, though the British detectives intervened in this affair in France and Germany. Copies of the book were stored at Rana's house in Paris. Thus Savarkar was making history while writing one.

Equally romantic was the history of its distribution and circulation! The book reached India, America, Japan and China wrapped in specially printed covers bearing fictitious names such as 'Pickwick Papers' and 'Scott's Works' and was sold at a fabulous price at times of Rs. 300 for a copy. Englishmen distributed copies of the book among their friends as a rare gift! Mahomed Ali obtained it on loan from Sir Charles Cleveland. European authors and historians read the work with great interest. The work became the talk of the world and since then it has gone through several editions in various languages.

The French edition of the book was published early in 1910. The book was translated into French by M. P. T. Acharya and Madame Cama. The foreword was written by E. Pirion, who was a French revolutionary and journalist. According to him the book provided a lesson of unity to the Hindus and Muslims, because Hindus and Muslims united for the first time against a common enemy since the invasion of Mahomed of Gazni. It

was a national rising; and like great nations in Europe, Indian people also would be welded into a nation. The book was a poem. It was a hymn. It was a manual of patriotism, he added. Although it was said on the title page that the book was by 'an Indian Nationalist', E. Pirion knew that its author was Savarkar. This foreword was published in the *Le Courrier* of 25th July 1910 and the magazine was banned by the French Government.[19]

Echoes and effects of the great work were visible in 1914. It inspired the second war of Indian Independence in 1914. Leaders of the Ghadr party who published the book and spread its message, raised the Komagatamaru Rebellion. They had read the book with a religious zeal and had drawn undying inspiration from the work. Bhagat Singh and his colleagues brought out an underground edition in 1928 to feed the flames of revolution and finance their Party. They regarded the great work as the Geeta of revolutionaries. It was published in Germany in 1942 by the Friends of India Society.

More tremendously did it influence the third war of Independence under the lead of Netaji Subhas Bose in 1943. The names of the battalions and divisions, songs and slogans, spirit and inspiration of the Indian National Army were derived from this holy book of Savarkar. K. F. Nariman wrote in "The Savarkar Special Number" of *Free Hindusthan Weekly*, Bombay: "The idea of the I.N.A. and particularly the Rani of Jhansi Regiment seems to have originated from Veer Savarkar's proscribed publication on the great 1857 Revolution and Mutiny."

Writing about it in the same issue of *Free Hindusthan*, G. V. Subbarao, editor of *Goshti*, Bezawada, said: "If Savarkar had not intervened between 1857 and 1943, I am sure that the recent efforts of the I.N.A. would have been again dubbed an ignoble mutiny effectively crushed by the valiant British-cum-Congress arms and armlessness! But thanks to Savarkar's book, Indian sense of a 'Mutiny' has been itself revolutionised. And not even Lord Wavell, I suppose, can now call the Bose effort a Mutiny! The chief credit for this change of values must go to Savarkar and to him alone. And that is why I call him the sun of our Indian firmament."

[19] Paranjpe, V., *Bharat Jyoti*, 27 March 1966.

A great book is always born of the brain and heart of a great author and its greatness depends on the personality which gives life to it. A cold and detached mind is almost a dead mind and can produce hardly any history. In this respect Savarkar belongs to the line of Rousseau, Voltaire and Mazzini. They are masterminds. Their type forms a different category. They are great precursors of a coming storm, proclaimers of a new age and originators of a revolution. To them literature is not a mere ornament or entertainment for court life. Their literature burns with a mission to make free citizens out of virtual slaves. Their books are more dangerous than bombs. Their books are as decisive as battles! Rousseau's *Emile* was burnt, princes and potentates quailed before Voltaire and the Governments of two countries suppressed Savarkar's book even before it had been published! Rousseau, Voltaire and Savarkar are not to be measured by the common standard.

Carlyle said his history about the French Revolution was itself a kind of revolution. Indeed, like Carlyle's history about the French Revolution, Savarkar's history about the Indian Revolutionary War of 1857 was itself a revolution!

This world-famous brilliant and moving work is a story of human emotions, passions and aspirations. The sweep of the author's narration is vivid and irresistible. The work reveals the author's rare gift as a poet-historian in action. Writing about this book of Savarkar, Sir Valentine Chirol in his *Indian Unrest* has commented that it is "a very remarkable history of the Mutiny combining considerable research with the grossest perversion of facts and great literary power with most savage hatred! [20] Deduct Chirol's gross words and the uncommon beauty and grandeur of the book will glow in its splendour! That is why Sir Valentine Chirol in his *India Old and New* depicted Savarkar with a loving hatred: "Savarkar, one of the most brilliant apostles of a later school of revolt." [21] Reviewing the great work, P. K. Atre, a typical Maharashtrian author and journalist, opined that Maharashtra did not produce a greater genius than Savarkar ever since the great Dnyaneshwar.

The book continued to be proscribed for thirty-eight years. M. S. Gokhale, a devoted Savarkarite, secretly published the

[20] Chirol, Valentine, *Indian Unrest*, p. 149.
[21] Chirol, Valentine, *India New and Old*, p. 85.

book in Bombay and challenged the ban openly. Owing to the pressure of public opinion, the Congress Government of Bombay, helplessly wedded to the God of non-violence, released the book for publication when its mission was almost fulfilled. The romantic story of the book is not, however, yet complete. The original manuscript of this book was in those stormy days of its birth sent to safe custody. Mr. J. De S. Coutinho hailed from Goa and was a staunch member of the Abhinava Bharat. He escaped to Portugal during those hectic days with the manuscript through his influence at the Portuguese Embassy and thence to America. Facing great difficulties and dangers as an Indian revolutionary, he treasured it as a monumental document for over thirty-eight years in Washington where he was professor at a college, and returned it to Savarkar through Dr. D. Y. Gohokar after India became free and independent. India lost another great book by Savarkar. That is the *History of the Sikhs* which Savarkar had almost finished towards the close of the year 1909. The manuscript of the book was sent to India for publication. It was lost in transit. The Indian Post Office, it was said, gulped it down.

It will be a great deed of national importance, if the Union Government or the Maharashtra Government, whichever may be in charge of the book, restores the manuscript. The Government's one obsession was to crush ruthlessly whatever emanated from Savarkar's brain. 'Savarkar' had become synonymous with 'sedition'. The British Government of India must have, however, found that the Ganges was Savarkar's inspiration, martyr's blood was his ink and bones of heroes were his pen! The Ganges swept away the British-make dams. The ink reddened the pages of history. The pen immortalized the martyrs and patriots and damned the traitors for ever!

* * *

After Dhingra's martyrdom threats grew louder. Clouds hung heavier. Winds blew with a terrific speed. In India Savarkar's followers, comrades and relations were persecuted and prosecuted and his elder brother Babarao was sentenced to transportation for life. His dreadful transportation was avenged by a spirited and lion-hearted youth named Anant Kanhere. He shot dead Mr. A. M. T. Jackson, the then British Collector of

Nasik, on December 21, 1909, in the Vijayanand Theatre in Nasik where a dramatic performance was held in his honour on the eve of his departure. Kanhere with his comrades K. G. Karve and V. N. Deshpande and other three comrades were facing the trial. On November 13, 1909, an attempt was made on the life of the Viceroy Lord Minto at Ahmedabad by a Gujarati revolutionary Mohanlal Pandya, who had been closely associated with Barindra Ghose when he was in Baroda and Savarkar's younger brother Narayanrao Savarkar. As a result of the proceedings, Narayanrao was arrested. The Head of a High School told the police that he had seen Narayanrao in Poona on the day of the bomb explosion and so he was released after some days.

Owing to stress and strain, Savarkar's health broke down. Friends nursed him as would do a mother. He had an attack of high fever and developed acute bronchitis. He was removed to a sanitorium in Wales and put under the charge of an Indian Doctor, C. Muthu. Pandit Shyamji often sent him money. About ten days later Savarkar came to know of the murder of Jackson and the arrest of his younger brother Narayanrao Savarkar along with many youths under the charges of murder, conspiracy and waging of war against the British King.

All this news fell heavily on Savarkar. Friends prevailed upon him to leave London. They feared that his life was in danger. He was brought to London. A secret meeting of the Abhinava Bharat Society was held and tributes were heartily paid to his selfless work and noble patriotism. He left London for Paris at the beginning of January 1910. The Indian revolutionaries in Paris enthusiastically received him. The centre of revolutionary activities now shifted to Paris. There Savarkar stayed with Madame Cama, who had done yeoman services in the cause of the Freedom Movement. Savarkar held discussions, addressed meetings and carried on his propaganda work from Paris. But he was moved by the tragic news of the harrowing tortures of his followers.

It was found out in the Jackson murder trial that Savarkar was the spirit of India House and the leader of the Abhinava Bharat Society, who had sent Browning Pistols with one of which Jackson was killed. George Clarke, afterwards Lord Sydenham, who had accepted the Governorship of Bombay to

maintain order, decided to prosecute Savarkar. According to George Clarke, Savarkar was one of the most dangerous men that India had produced.[22] So he appointed Mr. Montgomerie a Special Magistrate at Nasik to record evidence so as to establish a *prima facie* case. A great deal of evidence was dug up and made out in India. A complaint was filed on January 17, 1910, before the Special Magistrate Mr. Montgomerie. He obediently issued a warrant as sought by the Government of Bombay under the advice of the Advocate General. At first Lord Morley hesitated but he yielded. A telegraphic warrant was issued by the Bombay Government under the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1881. The India Office asked C. A. Kincaid, who had served in the Bombay Province, to make a long affidavit as to the meaning of the references quoted in the papers sent from India.

The warrant was granted by Bow Street Court, London, on February 22, 1910. The charges against Savarkar were:

(1) Waging war or abetting the waging of war against His Majesty the King Emperor of India;
(2) Conspiring to deprive His Majesty the King of the Sovereignty of British India or a part of it;
(3) Procuring and distributing arms and abetting the murder of Jackson;
(4) Procuring and distributing arms in London and waging war from London; and
(5) Delivering seditious speeches in India from January to March 1906 and in London from 1908 to 1909.

Savarkar was well aware of this coming danger. He now prepared himself to stand at the scene and save the persecution of his comrades and followers. He would not avoid the foe and sow seeds of demoralisation in the Revolutionary Party while his comrades braved prison and tortures. Friends in Paris entreated him not to return to London as news had filtered into their camp that a warrant for his arrest was awaiting him in London. His friends said to him, "As a general, you must remain behind to lead. The danger is around you." But "No," said Savarkar, "I cannot see the persecution of my colleagues and followers. As a leader, I must face the music."

[22] Sydenham, Lord, *My Working Life*, p. 247.

To preach with life and not with mere lips, Savarkar decided to leave Paris. He resolved to save his soul and lose his life. He was made of the stuff of martyrs. Martyrdom can be a religion only with a few and not with the whole party. The leader of Young India started for London. His decision was as courageous as Shivaji's to go to Agra. And Shivaji started for Agra again! And yet Scotland Yard sedulously spread a story that Savarkar had fallen a victim to a false letter they have manoeuvred in the name of a girl!

It was Sunday, the 13th March 1910. The train reached Victoria station, London. Here had come the much dreaded Savarkar at last, thought the London Police. The long accumulated fury burst on him. No sooner did he step out of the train than the Inspector E. John Parker of Scotland Yard cried out: "Here he is! Here he is!" In a moment they arrested him. Perinben Captain, who accompanied him, was let alone. The shadow of death was galloping after him. In the eyes of the policemen he read ruin. The day of his glory had come. The end also had come with a crash. But who knew then that his end was the beginning of the end of the British Empire?

After the arrest Parker found in Savarkar's trunk two copies of *The War of Independence of 1857*, seven copies of 'Choose Oh Indian Princes', one copy of the life of Mazzini and some newspaper cuttings.

An Empire's laws and system of justice are always soiled by the blood of the martyrs of the countries it rules. Savarkar went to England for study under a regular passport from the Indian Government and now he was arrested as a fugitive offender! In 1910 he was arrested in England for the speeches he made in India in 1906! What a marvel this British process of law! David Garnett wrote a letter under the heading 'Past Offences' to *Daily News* and held the British Government to ridicule.

England has been the mother of exiles. The knights-errant of liberty have found shelter in England. Here is an impressive roll-call: Mazzini, Marx, Garibaldi, Kossuth and Lenin. If Savarkar had been content to conceal his unbounded hatred of slavery and to pass a reveller and degree-seeker, there would have been ample scope for his brilliant genius and flight of imagination. But no such pretension was possible for him. So the mother of exiles did not receive him well. The boast that

England was the training ground for the patriots of the world was reduced to a farce. It was true only in the sense that England sheltered patriots only of those countries over which their Balance of Power politics hung. It was not a shelter for fearless freedom-loving Indian patriots whose country's fate England had sealed. The British took Savarkar to be a Nana-sahib sworn to overthrow their yoke, a Guru Govind Singh in disguise or a Shivaji ready to foster a rebellion. Naturally his life was considered a peril to the imperialists.

Gallows now stared Savarkar in the face. A terrible vengeance was let loose on his followers. These ardent patriots said they had come out to set their country free. Now their leader in a befitting manner stood up at the peril of his life to practise what he preached.

From the station Savarkar was taken into Bow Street Police custody. He was now certain about the terrible fate that would befall his family. In order to soften the severe blow he wrote his last will and testament and sent it through his solicitors to his noble sister-in-law, Yashodabai, whom he had no chance to meet this side of the grave. The testament represents the enormous stress of emotion under which he was reeling. His family was plunged in an irretrievable sorrow. His little son had passed away in February 1909. The eldest brother Babarao was sentenced to transportation for life, the younger brother was again arrested in the Nasik conspiracy case as said above, and he himself in Brixton jail. His glorious promise and the sudden separation became the theme of their sorrow. This touched him to the core. He expounded in his poetic will the noble and sublime ideal for which the family had fallen. He reminded his sister-in-law:

> "We will work and die in defence of Righteousness; thus had we pledged our words. Behold, the test has come, we enter the flames. We have kept our word. . . . We dedicated to Thee (Motherland) our thoughts; our speech and our eloquence we dedicated to Thee, O Mother! My lyre sang of Thee alone, my pen wrote of Thee alone. . . . Thy cause is holy! Thy cause I believed to be the cause of God! and in serving it I knew I served the Lord! . . . These are thy ideals! Thou art hero's better half! be thy life as supremely heroic.

. . . Good-bye, dear Vahini, Good-bye. . . . Convey my best love to my wife and this:

That it was certainly not blindness that goaded us on to this path! No! we entered it under the full blaze of the searching light of Logic, History and Human Nature: knowing full well that a Pilgrim's Progress leads through the valley of Death, we took up our Cross and deliberately followed Him."

Savarkar was produced at the Bow Street Police Court on March 14, 1910. After some time, the case came up for hearing on April 20, 1910, at Bow Street Police Court before Sir Albert de Rutzen. Mr. A. H. Bodkin was instructed by William Lewis of the Treasury. Mr. S. A. T. Rowlatt, who afterwards gained notoriety in India, was junior Counsel to the Treasury. When Savarkar appeared in the Court all his comrades attended the Court. Mr. Reginald Vaughan defended Savarkar. The Magistrate refused to release Savarkar on bail. The case was remanded till Saturday, the 23rd April.

Upon this Savarkar was transferred from Bow Street Police Custody to Brixton jail, wherein a Briton by name Guy A. Aldred was also undergoing imprisonment for having published Shyamji Krishna Varma's fiery paper, *Indian Sociologist*, which had been suppressed by the British Government. Aldred was the first Briton to suffer imprisonment for the cause of Indian Freedom.

On Saturday, the 23rd April 1910, Mr. Bodkin opened the case and laid five charges against Savarkar. On May 12, the Magistrate gave decision that Savarkar should be sent to India for trial. Mr. Vaughan, counsel for Savarkar, made an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The appeal made from the decision of Bow Street Court and the Habeas Corpus application were discussed on June 2 and 3 before the Court of Criminal Appeal. Mr. A. Powell, K.C. and J. M. Parikh moved for a writ of a Habeas Corpus. The Chief Justice, Lord Alverstone, upheld the decision of Bow Street Court. Mr. Justice Coleridge dissented from sending Savarkar to India; but his decision was waived as a minority view.

Once again an appeal was made from this decision to the Court of Civil Appeal. Their Lordships seemed to be quite

impressed by the arguments of the Appellant Counsel, but the amazing ability of Ruffas Isaacs, the Solicitor-General, afterwards Lord Reading, Governor-General of India, turned the scale. The Chief Justice Vaughan Williams upheld the decision of the Court and sympathetically handed Savarkar over to the Indian Government which under a special ordinance had set up a Special Tribunal in India for Savarkar's trial.

The appellant counsel then begged for time to file a further application before the Lord Chancellor. He was given a fortnight. Savarkar wrote to Paris friends for funds. They generously subscribed an ample sum, but the messenger who was to take the money to London took to merry-making and spent all the money. No messenger or money came to Savarkar and so the application could not be filed.[24]

Savarkar's comrades saw him in Brixton jail. Niranjan Pal states: "I asked Savarkar why he ignored our warnings and pleadings and left Paris knowing full well that a former comrade had turned an approver and a warrant for his arrest was awaiting in London." Pal adds: "Therefore, had Savarkar wished it, he could easily have remained in safety and comfort in the French Capital as other Indian revolutionists were doing in those days. Instead he came to London to be arrested, because, he told me, standing behind the iron-bars of Brixton Prison, his shoulders were broad enough to bear the consequences. He had the courage of his conviction."

Meanwhile, somewhere in May 1910 Irish and Indian revolutionaries with the help of Mrs. Dryhurst an influential lady and the Sinn Fein leader Moude Gonne[25] attempted at rescuing Savarkar while he was an undertrial prisoner. They lay in ambush awaiting the police van which carried the illustrious prisoner to the Court and back to the Prison. But it seems that the plan leaked out and the police van which they waylaid turned out to be a vacant one! For Savarkar had been taken by a different route. Savarkar's other comrades also struggled heroically for his release.

Some one, probably Gyanchand Varma, told Garnett that there were two men in Paris who would go to jail for long periods in order to rescue Savarkar but A.A. betrayed. Virendranath Chat-

[24] Kincaid, C. A., *Forty-four Years A Public Servant*, pp. 118-24.
[25] Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo*, pp. 158-59.

topadhyaya saw him in Brixton jail fourteen times. It is not known whether by A.A. Garnett meant Asaf Ali. Some had thought out a plan of personating Savarkar in his cell but failed.

During his last interview Savarkar whispered in Hindi to V. V. S. Aiyar, whom the police called the right-hand man of Savarkar, that circumstances permitting he would have an interview with his comrades at Marseilles.[26] Aiyar took the cue: he was to be ready with a car at Marseilles. Just at this moment the Warder said, "Time is up!" With a heavy heart they looked into each other's eyes. They knew that it would perhaps be the last time they were seeing each other. Tears rose but controlling himself Savarkar said, "No, No, we are Hindus. We have read the Geeta. We must not weep in the presence of unsympathetic persons." During the trial Aiyar looked very cautiously after the defence arrangement. He had requested Pandit Shyamji not to refer to Savarkar in glowing terms in the *Indian Sociologist*. He was afraid it would injure his case if Pandit Shyamji did so.

David Garnett also saw him in Brixton jail and gave Savarkar clean collars and handkerchiefs. His neck had the size of a school boy, only 13½ inches. He was perfectly calm and at his ease. Garnett offered to collect money for his defence and tried to make arrangements for his escape, but failed. Thereupon Savarkar gratefully thanked him and said: "It does not matter whether one wins or is defeated, whether one succeeds or fails. Care nothing about the result so long as you fight. The only thing that matters is the spirit. . . . You have done wonderfully and there was no reason why you should have done anything at all. Do not worry about me. I shall escape somehow. I have a plan worked out already, in case your plan failed."[27]

All the comrades paid their loyal homage to their leader. Savarkar was now on the eve of being extradited to India. Therefore he thought it his loving duty to bid farewell to his comrades in England and on the Continent. This farewell is a masterpiece of patriotism, humanism and duty. It is an illustration of great poetry, great ideas, great vision and great life. It is as follows:

[26] Savarkar narrated this to the author.
[27] Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo*, p. 160.

The Farewell

"Whose heart to heart by silken ties is knit
Of friendship sweet, that sweeter grows by far,
Partaking of Godly Sacrament of Mother's creed divine:
Oh friends! Farewell! as tender and fresh
As the morning dew that wakes the fragrance
Friends adieu! adieu!!

God-appointed Duty

We part to play our God-appointed parts
Now pent and nailed to burning Rocks, now tossed
On surging waves of Fame; now seen now lost
Or humble or exalted—wherever posted by the Lord
Of Hosts, yet posted best, as if alone it was
The mission of our life thus there to act.

Historic Stage

As in some oriental play sublime,
All characters, the dead as well as living
In Epilogue they meet
Thus actors we innumerable all once more shall meet
On History's copious stage before the great
Applauding audience of Humanity
That would with grateful cheer fill hill and dale
Till then Oh loving friends, Farewell! Farewell!

Humanity to Guide

Wherever may my humble ashes lie
In the Andaman's sad brook whose weeping course
Add to its dreariness a tongue or stored by Ganga's
Sacred crystal stream in which the stars
Their midnight measures dance—
They will be stirred with fire and glow
When Victory's trumpet, blasts proclaiming
'Shree Ram has crowned his chosen people's brow
With laurels golden green! The evil spirit is cast
Away and chased back to the deep from whence
It first arose! and Lo! She lordly stands,

Our Mother Ind, a beacon light Humanity to guide,
Oh martyred saints and soldiers, do awake!
The battle is won which you fought and fell!!'
Till then Oh loving friends, farewell! farewell!

Sacrifice a Law

Watch sleeplessly the progress of our mother
And learn to count it, not by so much work
Done or tried, but by how much they suffered,
What sacrifice our people could sustain!
For work is chance but sacrifice a law;
Foundation firm to rear a mighty Dome
Of Kingdoms new and great!
But only great if their roots be in martyr's ashes laid
Thus work for Mother's glory till God's breath
Be rendered back, the Godly mission done—
A martyr's wreath or victor's crown be won!!" [28]

The British Government thus gave a sigh of relief, like the ferocious Aurangzeb, at having trapped Shivaji at last; and they shipped him off.

[28] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.*

CHAPTER 5

Epic Escape and Trials

ON the first day of July 1910, the steamer s.s. MOREA conveying Savarkar to India started on her historic voyage from London! To avoid complications on the usual route through France the steamer MOREA sailed via the Bay of Biscay. Proud like a kite, she held her prey in the clutches. She tossed on. But woe followed the waves. The book of fate was signed and sealed by destiny! There was some engine trouble and the MOREA required repairs in the neighbourhood of the port of Marseilles. She anchored at Marseilles on Thursday evening, July 7, 1910.

On June 29, the British Government had informed the French Government that the MOREA was bound for India with a political prisoner, and requested the French Government to watch the steamer, if she anchored at Marseilles, and to guard against any possible attempt of Savarkar's rescue by the Indian revolutionaries on the Continent. Mr. E. John Parker, Scotland Yard Inspector from London, and Mr. Power, Assistant Superintendent of Police from Bombay, and ten other policemen were in charge of the illustrious prisoner. The Police Commissioner of Marseilles, Henry Leblias, saw Parker and showed him the letter of the Commissioner of Police, London, addressed to the Chief of Police, Paris. He promised help if there was any trouble.

Though tied to a sacrificial post, Savarkar talked freely, during the course of the journey, to the amazement of the passengers. Inwardly he was revolving the idea of escape. He had thrown a measuring eye at the port-holes. The halt at Marseilles put his heart in a flutter. Had his message to the comrades on the Continent reached them through Aiyar? Would they come to his rescue? Night was coming on. His expectations now darkened into anxieties. All night long restlessness

tortured him and doubts assailed him. Dawn broke. His thoughts now galloped. Mother Ind seemed to whisper to her darling son: "Flee! flee! the time is not gone! Oh! my son! I would not see your neck in the rope! Did you forget that my great son Krishna ran away when persecuted by the tyrant Jarasandha? Don't you remember the historic escape of my Shivaji from Agra? Would you not learn anything from the daring escape of Napoleon from Elba? Flee! flee! your flight will bring to light the heroic endeavours of my sons to shatter my fetters. You are not a mouse to be easily trapped. You are the President of a revolutionary party. Flee, for my sake, flee! Now or never!"

An inspired ray appeared in Savarkar's eyes. He collected himself. His heart throbbed with the thought of swift escape. His face lit with a fire of decision. Yes, he was a lion, and he would not die the death of a mouse. He resolved to venture. Twice he tried to scale out but utterly failed in his attempt. Fortunately nobody knew it but himself. It was now morning. He stood up again! Parker was half awake. He said to him that he wanted to go to the water closet. Parker asked the guards on watch to take him to the water closet. Savarkar entered the water closet. Mohamed Siddick and Singh, two head-constables watched the prisoner. Singh was peeping under the door. So Savarkar had to play a ruse. He bolted the water closet from within. The door of the water closet was set up with a glass pane. This was a special arrangement for watching the man inside.

There was no time to lose. Savarkar's actions were more rapid than his thoughts. He took off his night gown which he had purposely put on and threw it over the glass pane of the water closet. Then in the twinkling of an eye, he jumped up, squeezed himself out of the porthole at the top of the water closet, and murmuring 'Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!' jumped into the sea. The guard caught sight of him. When Savarkar's half body was out of the porthole one guard tried to force the door but in vain. "He is off!" he shouted. There was a din on the steamer. Savarkar heard bullets whizzing by. This was the time to put to test his hard-won skill in swimming and climbing. The glorious son of Hindustan now dived, now swam through the shower of bullets, reached the steep end of

the harbour of Marseilles, and climbed the quay. Once he fell down, like the lizard before Brutus, in his attempt at climbing the quay. The second time he succeeded and ran off. The pursuing marine gendarmes who had jumped after him could not catch him. He was free, legally, mentally and bodily! He had scored a triumph, and held the British Government to ridicule. Britannia might be once ruling the waves, but she could not rule the waves that carried Savarkar to the shore of France; nor could she rule the waves created by Savarkar, which turned the ship of his Motherland from slavery to Swaraj!

The pursuers were in hot chase. Savarkar ran excitedly for about five hundred yards from the harbour. He saw trams running, policemen on duty. He wanted to hire a cab. But he had no money. His freedom for a coin! He asked a policeman on duty in broken French to take him to the nearest Magistrate, but the policeman did not pay attention to him. The pursuers who had now overtaken him all the while crying out "Thief! Catch him!" greased the palm of the policeman, and with his connivance they caught him by his neck and dragged him to the steamer. It was clearly a breach of International Law. The British guards had arrested Savarkar on a foreign land!

Commissioner M. Le Blais came and had a talk with both Parker and Power. He said he would have to report to the French authorities. Parker, too, telegraphed to his Scotland Yard authorities "Prisoner attempted escape. Recaptured. Report follows."

It was fated that Savarkar's colleagues, Madame Cama and Aiyar, who had planned his rescue, should be late by a few hours. They were driving post-haste towards the harbour. They reached the scene to hear the crowds gossiping with their eyes and fingers towards the steamer. They must have cursed themselves. All day long the whole of Marseilles was agog! Crowds flocked towards the harbour. And mortified at the disgrace, the MOREA set sail early next morning.

The news of Savarkar's thrilling escape on July 8, 1910, crossed the oceans. India's cry for freedom filled the skies, and Mother Ind's heart-rending bewailings stirred the world. India was discussed for the first time in foreign countries. Hindu manhood glowed in resplendent glory and opened the eyes of foreign

institutions which doubted the virility and valour of India. The entire European Press published the Hindu hero's life as best as it could and compared him with Mazzini, Garibaldi and Kossuth, and hailed him as a martyr. Daring and devoted nation-builders like Shivaji, Napoleon, Churchill in 1916, De Valera in 1918 and Subhas Bose in 1941 performed miraculous escapes, but Savarkar's escape was the most heroic and thrilling the world ever witnessed! It is an epic and unique example of 'propaganda by deed.'

Enraged at their discomfiture and filled with fear of degradation in service, the officers in charge, once back on the MOREA with their charge, began to use foul, filthy and violent language about Savarkar. They even threatened him with torture at nightfall! One of them exclaimed, "What a breed these Savarkars are!" Savarkar rebuked the boiling guards and officer sternly. He had watched one officer keeping a loaded revolver in his trousers just over his head. Sure of that support at hand, Savarkar struck them dumb with these words: "Look here, you are taking me to the gallows. It is quite natural that I should try my best to escape. If you want to live by the side of your wife and children, take care not to insult or touch me. For I have already set fire to my home and will not fail to vindicate my self-respect and safety by all means. Be then prepared for the eventualities." The guards understood the gravity of the situation and kept mum!

At Aden the s.s. SASTI took charge of MOREA passengers and post. The guards huddled Savarkar into a tiny cabin, only a space of four feet was allowed to him to stand, move and walk! Sunlight became a luxury for him. Hand-cuffed and closely tied to each guard by turns on one side, stiffled by excessive heat and crushed by a colossal disappointment on the other, Savarkar had to stand a tide of tense feelings for throwing away life at once! But he overcame the feelings and survived.

Savarkar's failure at Marseilles was, however, glorious. A noble failure serves the world no less than a crowning success. Crushing failures have often in them the germs of a glorious future. Our greatest glory, says Goldsmith, consists not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall. G. K. Gokhale expressed the feeling of that heroic generation when he said, "We of the present generation in India can hope to serve our

country by our failures. The men and women who will be privileged to serve her by their successes will come later."

* * *

The s.s. SASTI reached Bombay without any mishap. On July 22, 1910, the prince of Indian revolutionaries was received at the Bombay Harbour in a befitting manner. Hand-cuffed, he was marched through rows of drawn swords. A close motor-van transferred him to a closed special train which delivered him to the Nasik Police custody. Few days later, he was brought to the Yeravada Jail. Mr. Joseph Baptista, his counsel, interviewed him on September 13, 1910, at the instance of Madame Cama. Mr. Baptista had already received the papers of the case from Mr. Vaughan, Savarkar's London solicitor.

Honest Englishmen were protesting against Savarkar's extradition. Mr. Hyndman in his *Justice*, the Organ of Social democracy, declared that Savarkar was undergoing trial in Bombay for an alleged political offence and in order that he might not have a fair trial defended by Council and safeguarded by public opinion in this country he was sent back to India, where, innocent or guilty, his condemnation could be officially ensured.[1] In the Manifesto he issued he declared that his Party had neither part nor lot in the outrages and crimes committed by British rule and added that the members of his Party sympathised with the legitimate efforts of the Indians to emancipate themselves from the monstrous domination under which they suffered.

On July 1, 1910, Lord Morley complained of the extradition proceedings taken against Savarkar [2] and added that he intended to direct the Government of India to revert to the older practice of requiring the local Government of India before starting the political prosecutions. This came like a bolt from the blue to George Clarke, the Governor of Bombay, at a time when he was oppressed by anxiety. Several telegraphic messages and explanations passed between the India Office and the Governor of Bombay to decide whether or not Savarkar should be tried. The Bombay Government said that delay in prosecution would be dangerous. The Governor threatened Lord Morley with his resignation; but before issuing any final orders in the case the

[1] Chirol, Valentine, *Indian Unrest*, pp. 347-48.
[2] Sydenham, Lord, *My Working Life*, p. 247.

hesitating philosopher Lord Morley became Lord President of the Council. The new Secretary of State for India at last on August 31, 1910, telegraphed to Bombay Government granting permission to open the trial and added that they would restore Savarkar to France after judgment had been pronounced, should the international issue require it.

Under a Special Tribunal Act a Special Tribunal was appointed to try the case without a jury or a right of appeal. The tribunal was composed of the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir Basil Scott, Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and Mr. Justice Heaton. The Counsels for the prosecution were an imposing array. Mr. Jardine, the Advocate-General, Bombay, Mr. Weldon, Mr. Welinkar and Mr. Nicolson, the Public Prosecutor. The defence consisted of legal luminaries like Mr. Joseph Baptista, Chitre, Govindrao Gadgil and Rangnekar. Mr. Baptista was a selfless, eminent nationalist leader and colleague of Tilak. He came forward to defend Savarkar and the other accused. He was a pillar of strength to the Freedom Movement. Following his example other lawyers accepted, although as professional men, to stand counsel for them.

Three trials were to be heard by the Tribunal. The first trial involved thirty-eight accused including Savarkar, the second involved Savarkar and Gopalrao Patankar, both co-accused in the first and the second trials. In the third, Savarkar was alone! All were to be tried under eight different charges. Kashinath Ankushkar, Dattatray Joshi, W. R. Kulkarni and Chaturbhuj, the cook of India House with whom Savarkar was alleged to have sent twenty Browning pistols to India, were the approvers.

Savarkar was transferred from Yeravada Jail to the Dongri Jail in Bombay to stand his trial. The trial opened on September 15, 1910. A Special party of fifty armed police guarded the High Court. The Police Commissioner of Bombay personally supervised the police arrangements in the Court. Only few representatives of newspapers were permitted into the Court.

Savarkar was brought to the Court in a closed van under an armed escort. As soon as he stepped into the dock, he heard the sound of clapping! It was a stark surprise. He looked at the empty galleries and saw vacant benches. He saw nobody there. Who welcomed him then? They were his co-accused in

the dock down below. They gave a spontaneous ovation to their leader of international fame! A unique reception and homage in the political history of the world by those who stood on the threshold of death to a leader who awaited the same fate! To the pleasant surprise of his comrades, he recognised after a few moments' guess his brother Narayanrao in the dock, now grown into a fine youth. The trial opened like a great thrilling drama. Savarkar's thrilling escape at Marseilles had rivetted the attention of the world on the Nasik Conspiracy Trial at Bombay. Hindustan watched it with mixed feelings of horror and anxiety.

Silence was proclaimed. The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Mr. Jardine, rose and made the opening speech for the prosecution and occupied the whole of the first day's proceedings. When the Court resumed hearing on September 26, it was argued before the Tribunal that they should stay the proceedings and allow Savarkar's appeal against his arrest at Marseilles to go to the French and British Governments. This objection was overruled. On September 27 and 28, the Advocate-General continued his speech. After two prosecution witnesses were examined and cross-examined, the Court asked Savarkar to cross-examine them if he so desired. Thereupon Savarkar rose and stated before the Tribunal that he did not recognise the jurisdiction of the Indian Government to try him as he was entitled to the Right of Asylum and therefore to the protection of French Law. He added that he had entirely abandoned himself to the French Nation, the land of Fraternity, Equality and Liberty, and so he would not take any part in the trial.

On the same day Savarkar's counsel Mr. Baptista raised the point that Savarkar's arrest was illegal. The Court overruled the objection. On October 1, 1910, the provisions of the Extradition Act were fully discussed. When asked by the Court, Savarkar refused to say anything on the point. The Court declared its opinion that Savarkar's illegal arrest at Marseilles did not affect the powers of the Indian Law Courts to try him. During the course of the trial, the prosecution withdrew the charge against Savarkar that the accused had waged war against His Majesty the King. Thus the second trial ended before its start. During the pfotracted trial many witnesses for the prosecution were mangled. About three hundred witnesses were

examined and cross-examined. Majority of the accused complained to the Court that they had given their statements before the Magistrate under tortures or for saving their relations from harassment at the hands of the police and the same should not be taken to be true.

After the witnesses came the statements of the accused. When the Chief Justice asked Savarkar to have his say, he stated, "I am quite innocent of the charges laid against me. I took part in the proceedings of the trial in England where courts are established by democratic rules sanctioned by the people. In such courts, one can expect to get justice. There the authority does not rely upon brute force. The condition of Indian Courts of Law is quite the reverse. I am not amenable to the Jurisdiction of Indian Courts of Law. I, therefore, decline to give any statement or bring any evidence for my defence."

Then followed the arguments of the counsel. The Advocate-General made a long speech which lasted for a week. Though Savarkar's name was last on the list of the accused, he began with Savarkar! The defence Counsel took a little more than a week to complete their addresses. One of the accused, Gangaram Rupchand, read out his own statement in his defence.

Chief of the revolutionary party as he was, Savarkar bore himself with courage and dignity throughout the trial. Dressed in a fine European suit, he glowed with smiles, intelligence and brilliance. He looked like a hero confident of his cause. He had made a sincere appeal to his co-accused to throw as much brunt and responsibility upon him alone as possible and try to mitigate their sufferings, and secure their acquittal. Such a life and death struggle could not embarrass him. On the contrary, he helped the defence Counsel by jotting down points for cross-examination. Throughout the trial he cheered up the broken-hearted and encouraged others. The end was near at last. The accused discussed among themselves about their crowns and crosses. A cross or gallows or transportation was considered first class. Lesser sentences were considered second class or pass class according to the period of the sentence, and an acquittal was deemed a failure!

At last came the day of judgment after sixty-eight days of protracted trial. It was Saturday, the 23rd December 1910. The judges took their seats amid pin-drop silence. After read-

ing the judgment the Chief Justice began to announce sentences and started with Savarkar. He announced: "Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the sentence of the Court upon you is transportation for life and forfeiture of all your property." The sentences on the other accused followed.

The Court struck the leader when he was gagged. The decision was *ex parte*. The legality of his arrest on French soil did not matter to the Tribunal. That he was before them during the trial was sufficient. The fact that he was brought to India on an illegal warrant was not a point of consideration for their just heads. It was indeed a glaring strain on law and outrage on the International Law!

The Special Tribunal passed judgment on a man whose case was *sub judice* in the International Court at the Hague! In a country swayed by imperialism, justice also assumes an imperious face and imperils truth. It is not justice. It is the dark desire for domination. The vulgarity of the saying, "Everything is fair in love and war," is seen in its hideous colour during such great political trials. The party or Government in power sets lawyers busy not to find truth and give justice, but to find reasons for upholding the predetermined legal answers! Did not Englishmen try Mary Queen of Scots though they had no power or right to do so? Even so did they try Savarkar. Mary was not born an English subject, nor was she ever denizated. One more sovereign point. It is the received doctrine that a foreign sovereign is immune from all processes of law. Her death was a political necessity and Mary's head fell on the scaffold!

Out of the other thirty-seven accused in this famous Nasik Trial, Shankar Vaidya, Vinayak Barve, and Vinayak Fulambrikar were set at liberty at the commencement of the trial. Vinayak Gaydhani, Ramchandra Kothe, Govind Bapat, Hari Thatte, Trimbak Jog, Shankar Mahajan, Mukund Moghe and Keshav Paranjpe—these eight were acquitted. Keshav Shripad Chandvadkar *alias* Brahmagiri Buwa was sentenced to transportation for fifteen years. Gopalrao Patankar, Krishnaji Khare, and Trimbakrao Marathe—these three were sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment each; Damodar Chandratrye, Purushottam Dandekar, Gopal Dharap, Sakharam Gorhe and Vishnu Bhat—these five to five years' each; Shridhar Shidhaye, Waman

Palande, Damodar Paranjpe and Raghunath Bhave—these four to four years' each; Vishnu Kelkar and Kashinath Tonape—these two to three years' each; Purushottam Gokhale, Anant Konakar and Vishwasrao Davre—these three to three years' each; Vinayak Tikhe, Balwant Barve and Sakharam Kashikar—these three to two years' each; and Vinayak Manohar, Gangaram Rupchand, Narayanrao Savarkar and Raghunath Ambedkar—these four were sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment each.

When the judges rose, the patriot-prisoners sprang up to their feet and shouted "Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!" even on their way to the savage jails. The judges were startled and looked back. The police rushed in. In the dock Savarkar tried to bid good-bye to his brother, but was not allowed to do so. He waved his hat, and under the escort he walked steadily away from the court with his princely countenance. He felt extremely sorry that his brother was cast adrift, befriended by none, hated by many and suspected by a powerful Empire. The fireplace in the house seemed extinguished for ever.

The judgment in Savarkar's trial deals exhaustively with various political and secret activities of the Abhinava Bharat, its inflaming pamphlets, its books, its plans and aims and says: "There is evidence in the shape of certain documents found in the possession of the accused Kashikar, shortly after the arrest of Ganesh Savarkar in 1909, which indicates that the association aimed at some sort of organization founded upon the model of Revolutionary Societies in Russia. The suggested methods of preparation for war are the purchase and storing of weapons in neighbouring countries to be used when opportunity should occur; the opening of many very small but secret factories at some distance from one another for the manufacture of weapons clandestinely in the country seeking independence and the purchase by secret societies of weapons in other countries to be secretly imported in merchantships."

The judges quote an extract from Savarkar's *Bande Mataram* pamphlet in which he had said: "This campaign of separate assassinations is the best conceivable method of paralyzing the bureaucracy and rousing the people. The initial stage of revolution is marked by the policy of separate assassination."

This was an historically true assessment of the Abhinava

Bharat. The Society had storehouses of bombs at Bassein and other places. Bomb factories were also started and were working in the suburbs of Bombay and other places in Maharashtra. After describing Savarkar's various activities the Judges observe: "We find the accused guilty of the abetment of waging war by instigation, by the circulation of printed matter inciting to war, the providing of arms and the distribution of instructions for the manufacture of explosives. He is, therefore, guilty of an offence punishable under Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. We also find him guilty of conspiring with the other accused to overawe, by criminal force or show of criminal force, the Government of India and the Local Government."

But the tragedy did not stop here! Not content with one transportation for Savarkar the Indian Government of Lord Hardinge and the Bombay Government of Lord Sydenham instituted a second case against Savarkar, this time charging him with abetment of the murder of Mr. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik. The Indian Government dreaded his return even after serving a sentence for twenty-five years. It was mad with vengeance. It knew that a day for this man was a month for others. The same Tribunal was to try him. The show was one-sided like the former one. Savarkar maintained his incontrovertible stand even in this trial, refused to stand to their judgment, and prejudice his case at the International Court. But it mattered little to the Tribunal.

This trial opened on January 23, 1911. After the Advocate-General's summing-up, Savarkar was brought from the Dock to the Bar to have his say. Savarkar reiterated his innocence and said that he had no direct or indirect connection with the crime. He pointed out to the Court that the only evidence that came before the Tribunal of his alleged complicity was the pamphlet, *Bande Mataram,* found with Chengirirao, who had arrived in Bombay on January 28, 1910. But that too was not concerned with Jackson's murder; because it was clear from the evidence that it was despatched from London *after* the murder, he added. As for the pistol, which was used in killing Jackson, it was strenuously contended that there was no sufficient proof that Savarkar was the person, who entrusted the twenty Browning pistols to the cook Chatturbhuj with one of which Jackson was killed.

Despite these overwhelming odds, however, on January 30, 1911, the Tribunal sentenced Savarkar to another transportation for life! Upon this Savarkar rose and declared: "I am prepared to face ungrudgingly the extreme penalty of your laws, in the belief that it is through sufferings and sacrifice alone that our beloved Motherland can march on to an assured, if not a speedy, triumph!" [3]

Two transportations! Unsurpassable, unheard of! Release after half a century! A unique record and a landmark in the political history of the world! It is significant that the judgments of these famous trials have not been reported in the law reports.

Was Savarkar shocked at the savage sentences passed upon him? Not in the least. He had entered the sacrificial conflagration with iron will and divine devotion. Nothing conquered his invincible spirit, for nature had given him the stoutest heart of his age that could not be crushed by adversity or peril. He fell. He fell for a cause for which Nanasahib died, Tatya Tope fell and the glorious Maha Rani Laxmibai gave her life on the battle-field. The punishment inflicted upon Savarkar was titanic, but his indomitable spirit was an iceberg. He was aged twenty-seven years, eight months and three days when Government laid him in his veritable grave!

The brave son of Hindustan gave a message to the Indian youth. The youth, who were acquitted in the first trial, brought a burning message in the following poetic lines from their leader:

First Instalment

"Pleased be Thou, Mother! to acknowledge this little Service of Thy children.

Boundless is our indebtedness to Thee! Thou chose us to bless and suckle us at Thy breast!

Behold! We enter the flames of this consecrated Fire today. The first instalment of that debt of Love we pay.

And totally a new birth there and then will we immolate ourselves over and over again till the hungry God of Sacrifice be full and crown Thee with glory.

[3] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 117.

With Shree Krishna for Thy redoubtable Charioteer, and Shree Ram to lead, and thirty crores of soldiers to fight under Thy banner.

Thy army stops not though we fall!

But pressing on shall utterly rout the forces of Evil and Thy right hand, Oh Mother, shall plant the golden Banner of Righteousness on the triumphant tops of the Himalayas."[4]

* * *

The Indian Government prosecuted Savarkar post-haste. As a matter of fact and on principle, the Special Tribunal should have stayed the proceedings from October 25, 1910, as Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary of the British Government, had signed an agreement with M. Paul Cambon, the Ambassador of the French Republic, on that day and agreed to refer the Savarkar case to the International Court at the Hague. This, of course, he had done because of popular French clamour for justice to Savarkar and in recognition of the sovereignty of France.

But this agreement was a result of a powerful agitation of the people and the press. The sensational news of Savarkar's escape first appeared in a few lines in the Paris edition of the *Daily Mail* of July 11. Savarkar's colleagues, who had failed in their attempts at rescuing Savarkar at Marseilles, wired from Marseilles the news of the thrilling escape of their leader to the *L'Humanite,* a Socialist newspaper in Paris, edited by M. Jean Languet, the grandson of Karl Marx. He flashed the news of Savarkar's escape on July 12. Pandit Shyamji, Madame Cama and Ranaji lost no time in contacting the great Socialist leader of France, Monsieur Jaures who was also the Mayor of Marseilles and other French influential leaders. M. Jaures took up the cause and voiced the demand for the return of Savarkar to France.

Rana saw also M. Francis de Pressense, President of the League of Man's Rights, who wrote a letter to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs urging him to demand the return of Savarkar to France. In case of refusal Mr. Pressense suggested that the matter should be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration.[5]

[4] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.*
[5] Rana's letter dated 29 March 1950 to Savarkar.

L'Eclaire, Le Temps, Le Matin and all other national newspapers of France joined the attack and a storm of protest reigned over France against the illegal arrest of Savarkar on their soil.

In England Guy A. Aldred, the young editor of the *Herald of Revolt*, who was released in July 1910, also raised a hue and cry for Savarkar's release by his incessant appeals, untiring speeches and a chain of articles on behalf of 'the Savarkar Release Committee' which was established in London in August 1910. Aldred stressed the illegality and immorality of the warrant of the Indian Government and appealed to all freedom-loving citizens of the world to demand Savarkar's release.

Embassies all over the world, too, were stirred. Monsieur Pierron, Assistant Ambassador of Spain, Monsieur Jambon, Assistant Ambassador of Paraguay, and the Ambassador of Portugal at Calcutta expressed their opinion that the French demand for Savarkar's return to France was lawful. According to International Law, the surrender to a fugitive must be a national act and not a local act. This point was also hotly discussed in the French Press. In short, "Savarkar's extraordinary heroism at Marseilles was applauded by the impartial press of the world. His whole career, his patriotic exploits in India and England were recounted at great length everywhere,"[6] and almost all European press supported the French Press in its demand for the return of Savarkar to France. In view of these discussions in the world press in general and the blaze of protest in the French press in particular, the French Government at last made a demand for the return of Savarkar to France.

The British Premier, Mr. Asquith, declared on July 29, 1910, in the House of Commons that the French Government had demanded the return of Savarkar. At the outset English statesmen tried to hush up the matter, calling it their home affair. Papers like *The Times*, London, opined that international law on the point was not authoritatively settled.

At this juncture Savarkar smuggled a statement of the authentic account of his escape and re-arrest at Marseilles through the Yeravada Jail to his friends in Europe, and gave a fresh impetus to the whole affair. The statement was circulated throughout the world press, and a vigorous demand was again put forward

[6] Yajnik, Indulal, *Shyamaji Krishnavarma*, p. 289.

for Savarkar's return to France. The entire French press demanded with one voice the return of Savarkar to France in vindication of the Right of Asylum. The Socialist Conference of Europe in its Copenhagen Session held in September 1910, demanded Savarkar's return to France, and as a result of this national and international pressure the French Republic had to renew its demand for Savarkar's restoration in vindication of its sovereignty. And at last the British Government had to yield.

Thereupon England's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, signed a six-articled agreement as related above, and submitted to arbitration the question of Savarkar's arrest at Marseilles and return to the Republic. Articles 1, 2 and 3 deal with the duty, composition and working of the Arbitration Tribunal. The fourth article defines the place and representation on the Tribunal and the fifth article lays down that the proceedings of the Tribunal would be either in the French or the English language and the decision in the two languages. The sixth article defines the time limit.

The British opinion was not wholly on the side of its Government in this affair. There were some voices of dissent. Sir Henry Cotton, speaking at the residence of B. C. Pal at a small gathering held in honour of the New Year, 1911, saw Savarkar's portrait in the hall. He admired Savarkar's intellect, courage and patriotism, although he warned the Indian youths not to waste their energy in that way. He then openly appreciated Savarkar's claim to the Right of Asylum and expressed the hope that the British Government would hand him over to France. There was a huge uproar against Sir Henry Cotton. Some suggested to the British Government to stop his pension and even revoke his knighthood! Indian papers like the *Indian Social Reformer* said that Sir Henry Cotton was deliberately embarrassing Sir William Weddernburn and others, who were trying to efface the memories of the past.

From the first M. Briand, the Prime Minister of France, did not act sincerely in this matter. Under fear of a powerful and threatening Germany M. Briand looked upon England as a friend. Naturally powerful nations like Germany and Russia were dropped out from the panel of the Tribunal and small

nations were selected on it. The Hague International Tribunal was composed of M. Beernaert, ex-Prime Minister of Belgium as its President, M. Graham, an ex-Minister of Norway, Mr. Jonkheer Loman, a Member of the Second Chamber of Holland, England's Earl of Desert and France's Louis Renault as its members. M. Louis Renault was an eminent jurisconsult, an authority on international law, a permanent Member of the Hague Tribunal and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1907. This world-famous trial opened on February 16, 1911, and though expected to last about a month as stated in article six of the agreement, wound up its work after a few hurried sittings. On February 24, 1911, they gave judgment in favour of the British Government, "admitting that an irregularity was committed in the arrest of Savarkar and in his being handed over to the British Police."

The judgment was a shock to freedom-loving minds all over the world. *The Morning Post* of England, *The Post* in Germany, the *Daily News* of England, described this Award of the Hague Tribunal as something that reduced the "Right of Asylum" and International Law to a farce. The *Times of India* was glad that the British case was upheld by the Hague Court on all points. It added that Savarkar belonged to the meanest and most despicable class of criminals and that steps should be taken against those who were responsible for this unprecedented humiliation. *The Times*, London, regretted that the award in Savarkar's case should have moved the Berlin *Post* to violent attack on the Hague Court and the *Post* represented the most moderating force in German politics and was the recognised organ of the Conservative Party led by Prince Hatzfeldt. Vehemently criticising this gross outrage on International Law, Guy A. Aldred in his editorial in the *Herald of Revolt* of March 1911, writes: "Savarkar has been damned to a life of sojourn in an Indian dungeon by the infamy of a man who previously betrayed the French proletariat. But for the latter's agitation against the Hindu patriot's irregular arrest at Marseilles on July 8th last—and Briand's fears of a general strike,—the French Premier would never have invited the decision which brought about his resignation three days later. The Hague Award, annulling the Right of Asylum, was only possible because Aristide Briand voluntarily betrayed the sovereignty of France."

This gross violation of the Right of Asylum and the grave injustice perpetrated on Savarkar were bitterly criticised also by the *La Societe Nouvelle* published at Mons in Belgium. Its editorial in its issue of March 1912 said: "England's infamous empire rests on blood, ferocious repression and officially acknowledged systematic tyranny." Dora Marsden, editor of The *Freewoman,* fearlessly attacked the Hague Award and published Aldred's vigorous article under the title "The Savarkar infamy." A German fortnightly published at Zurich, Switzerland, called *Der Wanderer* editorially supported Aldred's work in connection with Savarkar's case. Most of the British, German, American, Italian and the entire French press condemned the Hague judgment.[7]

The consequences of the Hague decision were enormous and far-reaching. The betrayal by Briand was so grave and ruinous that only three days after the Hague Award he resigned rather than face the questions in the Chamber of Deputies. On the day of this Hague decision the Russian Duma passed a bill annulling the right of political asylum! As a reward for this marvellous blackmail in connection with Savarkar's case at the Hague, Mr. Eyre Alexander Crowe, an assistant in the Foreign Affairs Office of Britain, was knighted in 1911.

The international issue in the Savarkar case was thus foully settled. But the agitation for the release of Savarkar sponsored by Aldred and Pandit Shyamji went on unabated till the outbreak of World War I when Aldred was imprisoned for anti-war propaganda and Pandit Shyamji had to shift his headquarters to Geneva. But during that period Pandit Shyamji had spread the agitation all over Europe. It was through the efforts of Pandit Shyamji that Professor F. M. Zandrine, officer of Public Instruction and a leading member of the executive council of the Federation of the Italian press, promised Monsieur Pierre Khorat, the biographer of Savarkar, and Pandit Shyamji that the Italian Republican Party and especially the Parliamentary group would agitate for the release of Savarkar and accord-

[7] Aldred, Guy, A., editor of *The Word,* Glasgow, quoted his articles from his *Herald of the Revolt* and other extracts from different contemporary newspapers of Europe concerning Savarkar's Case at the Hague in the special Savarkar issue of *The Word* in April 1947.

ingly in October 1912, the Republican Party of Italy resolved in its meeting at Rome to commence the agitation.[8]

Thus Savarkar's was the greatest historical trial the world has ever seen. The trial flashed India's aspirations on the front pages of world press. India's manhood and valour were indelibly imprinted on the pages of world history. The trial left also an imprint of Savarkar's personality on the International Law and stamped on Marseilles the footprints of a champion who heroically strove for the deliverance of a suppressed nation. India was discussed for the first time in international politics. Its impact was so great that its righteous pressure, it was said, hastened the fall of the Premiership of M. Briand! Such was the magnitude, such was the deathless blow that Savarkar struck individually, nationally and internationally upon the British Empire!

In his introduction to Ranade's biography of Savarkar N. C. Kelkar states: "The British Government boasts of having bestowed on India a seat in the League of Nations after the great war; but it was already snatched and confirmed for India by Savarkar, when he leapt from the port-hole of the ship into the sea at Marseilles, and standing on the soil of France challenged the nations of the world 'Speak out gentlemen, speak out' in the name of International Law!"

* * *

"Did you recognise me? The garments are different. I am the same man. This prison dress satisfies the basic human want namely protection from cold. Providence willing, we may meet again. If the affairs of life ever tempt you, think for a while! If life means giving birth and rearing young ones, crows and sparrows also do the same in their nests. But if you take a broader view of life, you will agree that we have lived like men. We have extinguished the fire in our kitchen so that some day the smoke of gold may come out of thousands of homes."

It is the great art of life to forget one's own petty self, serve others and seek their good. He is a Great Man who follows his path with invincible resolution, who resists temptation both from within and from without; who bears the heavy burdens

[8] Yajnik, Indulal, *Shyamaji Krishnavarma*, pp. 304-5.

cheerfully and who is calm in storms and fearless under frowns.

Mark the self-denial and self-control in the aforesaid piece of advice. Standing on the threshold of eternity, a young man, who had been struck with a thunderbolt, was heroically consoling his young wife. It was Savarkar, the hero of Indian Independence. Government was kind enough to permit his wife to interview him in the Dongri Jail, Bombay, in the presence of a Jail Officer before he departed for the Andamans. His wife's grief was indescribable. Her soul was wrung with agony. With the sublime courage of a *Sati* she saw her rosy life put into a yawning grave. A sad inquiry dwelt in her gaze and wavered on her lip. She had already lost her baby son when her husband was in London. Saintly, heroic, she stood speechless. Crushed with the heavy chains and overflowed with feelings, Savarkar thus interpreted the grandeur and gravity of the fate that had befallen her! There was no time for righteous sighs or sobs. The time for interview ended. While parting Savarkar's brother-in-law, who was also present there, entreated him to recite every morning a certain Mantra, and the scene vanished like a dream.

A week or so before this interview Savarkar was informed in the Dongri Jail that the verdict of the International Court at the Hague had gone against him and that the fifty years' sentence now stood confirmed. He took off his civil dress and gazed at the jail garments and the ticket No. 32778 to be borne on chest, thinking that the dress he was putting on would either leave him in 1960 or his corpse would come out with it. His property worth Rs. 27,000 was confiscated and even his books and dress were put to auction. His father-in-law's property worth Rs. 6,725 was confiscated under the orders of the Ruler of Jawhar State. The cooking pots which were on the fire place at Savarkar's house in Nasik were also seized and his sister-in-law was thrown on the street. His spectacles were returned to him as a favour. Such complete sacrifice in the cause of freedom was made hardly by any other man throughout India's struggle for freedom. Someone sarcastically murmured, "The kind Government will release you in 1960." With a smile Savarkar replied, "Death is more kind. If it delivers me earlier?" Savarkar laughed consciously, the fool freely.

In order to bring the inhuman life sentence for half-a-century under the pale of human laws, Savarkar appealed to Government that the two transportations inflicted upon him should run concurrently. For, a man has but one life. How can he have two life sentences then? But his application was rejected. The officer who conveyed this decision to him said with mixed feelings of humour and sympathy that the Government desired him to undergo during this lifetime the sentence for the next life also. Savarkar then exclaimed: "Then the good thing about this is that the Government has at least rejected the Christian belief in resurrection and accepted the Hindu doctrine of rebirth! This is not a small gain!"

The furnace of tribulations was lit. The first task that was assigned to Savarkar was the chopping of cocoanut shells. He writhed with pain. But his mind took a philosophical turn and interpreted the chopping of the shells as the chopping of the fragments out of the elements of life and twisting them into one whole. "In its process, the compound of life develops to its full size and again dissolves into many fragments returning to the original elements from which it emanates."

Ordinarily the very idea of the terrible sentence for half-a-century would have crushed even the stoutest heart. But it was Savarkar's motto that enabled him to bear heroically the colossal shock. His motto was: "Don't be too much hopeful of success. Be always prepared for the worst possible reverses! For those who are born in an age of despair and darkness must be prepared to face the grim struggle with the possibility of reverses, if they aspire for the dawn of a new era."

To cope with the titanic term of two transportations he thought out an equally august plan. In order to pay the debt of the Motherland and render service to humanity, he made up his mind to compose an epic, write it on the canvas of his mind and dedicate it to the Motherland through his would-be sons, if he was ever allowed to settle according to the jail rules with his wife on the island, or in any other way. This was the bare minimum that he could do in his hopeless, helpless state. He had no pen, no paper, no light, no lamp.

So Savarkar started in right earnest to compose poems. The first poem he composed was on Guru Govind Singh, the sire of martyrdom. According to Savarkar, Great Men with great suc-

cess shine like the golden domes of great palaces; but the foundation that holds the pillars and domes lies buried under the ground. Guru Govind Singh, who fell in a great cause dejected, betrayed and deserted, was more heroic and appealing than any other hero in the eyes of Savarkar who had also met with the Guru's fate.

Savarkar then composed another poem on the crucified Christ whose divine personage submitted himself to torture and sacrifice and showed considerable physical fortitude in going through the cruel ordeal for his divine mission. Although an advocate of the doctrine of 'protection of the good and destruction of the evil-doer,' he held in high reverence the glorious martyrdom of Jesus Christ.

Savarkar's heroism had thrilled both the hemispheres with his epic adventure. European countries hailed him as a martyr, but he now happened to read the Anglo-Indian papers who stigmatized him as a 'rascal'! Did not the predecessors of these pirates similarly describe in London papers Washington in 1780 and Napoleon in 1803?[9] But Savarkar took both the remarks in good humour. He equated the jeers with the tears, the rascality from the pen of pirates and pedlars with the glory of martyrdom, and found his individual worth unchanged. The man who stands upon his own conscience and character cares not for praise or censure. Savarkar, however, said to himself that a public servant should be ever prepared both for applause and censure.

From Dongri Jail Savarkar was shifted to Byculla Jail. Savarkar inquired of the sergeant in charge about the name of the jail. Being afraid to pass on the information the sergeant spelt the word Byculla and obliged Savarkar. So strict were the orders governing Savarkar's movements! Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to Thana Jail. Normally warders, havaldars and petty officers cherished in their heart of hearts a very high respect for him. They felt for his colossal ruin. One of the petty officers in the jail tauntingly remarked that Savarkar would be definitely set free in the year 1960. Savarkar silenced the twitters of the small fry when he asked him, "But is the British rule itself going to last for fifty years more?"

[9] Shaw, Bernard, *Saint Joan* (Introduction).

The petty officer deified the leonine courage of Savarkar and was proud to be his slave. He did Savarkar a good turn. At dead of night he brought the first note of cheer from Narayanrao Savarkar, then a boy of seventeen, serving a sentence of six months in the Thana Jail. Commenting on his dark future Savarkar brushed over the dark canvas of the Andamans and wrote in reply that he hoped he would at least dedicate an epic to the Motherland during the term of his transportation. The famous English Poet Coleridge once wrote: "I shall not devote less than twenty years to an epic, ten years to collect material and warm my mind with universal science, the next five in the composition of the poem, and the last five in the correction of it." This shows how stupendous is the task of composing an epic!

The day of Savarkar's final departure for the Andamans soon dawned. Escorted by a squad of armed guards, batches of convicts on transportation reached the Thana Jail from all corners of the Province. Some frightful, some fearless, some tearful, some helpless, some reckless and some repentant, they were specimens of heartless murderers, meanest brutes, daring cutthroats and criminals of every description. But this strange type of humanity conceived a sort of awe and reverence for Savarkar, the Barrister convict. As a mark of goodness and respect they even went to bed rather early to enable the Barrister Babu to have a sound sleep. Their attitude was natural; for it is a notable fact that convicts and prisoners have always a high regard for a barrister. They know he is a man who shelters their crimes and sins under the shield of his intelligence or shatters the web of the villainy of those devils!

The march to the Andamans began. With a kurta, a small pot, an iron plate in one hand, blanket and a mattress under one armpit, Savarkar walked with his hand roped to that of a European officer. Seeing the officers taking special care of Savarkar, the convicts said with a proud note that the Government feared him! In spite of the utmost secrecy observed, the news of Savarkar's departure leaked out and anxious faces were on the lookout in the streets of Thana for a glimpse of the world-famous Indian patriot. At the Thana station Europeans took their women upon their shoulders to enable them to catch a glimpse of the distinguished prisoner! Savarkar, in hand-

cuffs and irons, was seated in a special compartment and his hand was tied to that of a stout officer. The train then steamed out for Madras.

One officer, travelling in the same train, took a look at Savarkar at every halt. At last, at Madras he came up to Savarkar to bid him adieu. In a moving tone he said: "Good-bye friend, I hope you will be released in December at the time of the Delhi Durbar." Savarkar thanked him for his good wishes and said: "I don't think so. Our blows on the Government are quite fresh. They will not be forgotten so soon." "All the same," the Officer continued: "I will never forget this your dignified courage." It was a wrong impression prevailing among the Britishers that Savarkar was ungentlemanly, insolent and a dangerous man. They imagined that the presence of a Briton infuriated him. Savarkar, however, corrected their wrong notion with his gentle speeches. He said he never hated anybody simply because he was an Englishman or a Mohammedan. He returned smile for smile, thanks for good wishes and scorn for scorn!

On reaching Madras, the officers took Savarkar to a steamer in a small boat, which was well guarded. While in the boat, one officer tried to pump out some information from him concerning the assassination of Mr. Robert William D'Estoourt Ashe, the Collector of Tinnevelly. Aiyar had left France and had come to Pondicherry. From there he started the revolutionary propaganda work and distributed several pamphlets in Tamil appealing to the youth to become members of the Abhinava Bharat Society. One of Aiyar's lieutenants, R. Vanchi Aiyar, shot Mr. Ashe at Meenaxi station, who had put down the riots associated with the sentence passed on Chidambaram Pillay. Savarkar had come to know about it in Thana Jail, But the officer wanted him to comment or criticise his statements. So he said: "In the province of Madras there are no thoughtless youth and so it is all quiet here." Savarkar with an implied smile asked him whether he was sure about the statement he made. And the officer understood it all.

On June 27, 1911, Savarkar was lodged in the steamer the S.S. MAHARAJAH. He was put on the lower dark deck in the iron cages meant for the convicts. Would he ever again see his Motherland or die the fate of the Russian exiles in Siberia,

thought Savarkar to himself. But his thoughts were interrupted. The engine roared. The steamer whistled! His voyage to the Devil's Island began. A terrific shock came to him. For his was the fate of a defeated Washington. Surrounded by the shabby and vile, wild and wicked men, fed on loathsome food, lying beside a cask used as water closet, he was overwhelmed by a feeling of nausea. He was stifled and only the philosophical bent of his mind came to his rescue. It said, "It is nothing. Food turns into stool and stool into manure and manure into food again. Then the food and stool are in reality not dissimilar." However, on application, the kind medical officer gave him the advantage of a ventilation hole to breathe more freely without worsening the malignant ashtma he had contracted in London.

For a while even the invincible mind of Savarkar was overwhelmed with a feeling of despair, sorrow and separation. A human heart after all! His mind took flight from the limited 'I' to the unlimited universe and the elements. He looked at the endless stretches of seas. He wondered at the fate of man when compared with the infinite vastness of the oceans and the universe. He said to himself: "Man has been dreaming of a good future ever since the dawn of the Vedas. And a dream is nothing but a flash of light in the pitchy darkness of the present." He exclaimed that it would be the greatest day in the history of mankind when the sun would witness the millennium and the real Golden Age where man loved his brother and gave up lust. "Happy the man who saw this promised land in the distance; happier he, who strove to bring it nearer; and happiest he, who has the fortune to enter it. Would that I be one of that shining company! At least some share of it will surely fall to me. What a glorious fortune that will be!" Absorbed in such exalted thoughts, Savarkar came to the end of the journey.

It was the morning of July 4, 1911. A shimmer of golden sun was shaking through the trees and was giving life and hope to the denizens in the dreaded Indian Bastille, the Andamans! The steamer had anchored at Port Blair, the capital of the Andamans. The terrific jaws of the jail opened. The steamer was the threshold of life and death. Once one crossed it, one stepped into the yawning Deathland. As they crossed the gate

of the jail, the convicts quailed with their blankets overhead and plates in their hands. Savarkar was absorbed in great thoughts while going his way to the jail. With the ambition of a patriot, the vision of a poet and the foresight of a prophet, he was engrossed in assessing the importance of the Andamans. Given proper opportunities of development, he murmured to himself, these islands could be the outposts of Free Hindustan replacing Singapore which was so by accident. They would be the gateway of India on the East. If a strong naval base were built there, he thought, no enemy could strike at the Eastern coast of India. How prophetic! The islands have become important naval bases during the present decade.

CHAPTER 6

The Indian Bastille

WITH a blanket on his head and a platter in one hand, Savarkar stood in chains before the ferocious lofty gates decorated with all kinds of chains, hand-cuffs, fetters, guns and bayonets. The gate creaked! Someone whispered that Mr. Barrie was coming on. Savarkar was preoccupied and was not conscious of Barrie's arrival. A voice roared, "Leave him. He is not a tiger!" The harsh voice waked Savarkar up. Turning to Savarkar the jailer opened conversation with him.

BARRIE: Are you the same man that tried to escape at Marseilles?

SAVARKAR: Yes, why?

BARRIE: Why did you do it?

SAVARKAR: For some reasons. One of them was to free myself from these hardships.

BARRIE: But you fell into them of your own accord, is it not?

SAVARKAR: True. I threw myself into them. Just so, I thought it my duty to escape from all these tribulations.

BARRIE: To tell the truth, I am not an Englishman. I am an Irishman.

SAVARKAR: May be. Were you an Englishman, it would matter little. I would not hate you because you were an Englishman. I have spent the best part of my youth in England and I am a warm admirer of many virtues of Englishmen.

BARRIE: But the point is that I was an Irish revolutionary and fought for the independence of Ireland. Now I see the futility of it. Hence as a friend I may tell you that you are still young and I am advanced in age. . . .

SAVARKAR: (*cutting him short*): And don't you think that perhaps that may be the reason of the change that has come over you? Not increasing wisdom but dwindling energy!

BARRIE (*scandalized*): You see, you are a barrister and I am a mere jailer. Don't discard my advice. Murders are murders and they will never bring independence.

SAVARKAR: Quite so; but why don't you try your advice on the Sinn Feiners? And who told you that I was a party to violence?

BARRIE (*suddenly assuming his official tone*): What I talked is against the rules. It pained me to see a youth of your great learning and fame among these criminals. I have nothing to do with your past. Mind well you are to abide by the rules. Their breach will bring on its penalty. One thing more. I may inform you that any attempt on your part at escaping from this island will be a feast to cannibals.

SAVARKAR: I know Port Blair is not Marseilles!

Thus ended the first passage at arms between Mr. Barrie and Savarkar.

This Barrie had gained a marvellous notoriety among the criminals and political prisoners of India. By nature he was violent, ferocious and stupid. A pot-bellied, bulky, red-skinned fellow with round staring eyes, a fierce moustache, a flat nose, a short neck, he carried a big staff in his hand. No other mediocre official lived so long in the memory of the prisoners in the Andamans as did Barrie for the atrocities he perpetrated in his official capacity as the jailer of the Indian Bastille. He was a half-illiterate, full-blown coward; he lustily loved authority for which he fawned on his superiors and with which he tyrannised the convicts. He was ignorant of intellectual pursuits and his pastime was cruelty. His tone expressed instinctive hatred for political prisoners. He loved self-praise immensely and sometimes displayed his learning which of course consisted of a few lines of poetry and some extracts to evoke a good remark from Savarkar. His poor wife and educated daughter often blunt the edge of his villainy and Christmas reminded the Christian jailer at least not to return evil for good!

Savarkar fearlessly entered the ferocious jaws of the Deathland as the early Christian martyrs faced the lions in the Coliseum of the Romans. He started his life in the Andamans with a salt-water bath which began and ended with the brays of the Jamadar. Then he was locked in a cell on the third floor of the yard No. 7 of the Cellular Jail. The whole floor of yard No. 7

was vacated for him. The most wicked and vicious Pathans drilled in the methods of torturous jail administration were posted to guard his cell. It had been a part of the policy of the British bureaucracy to utilize whenever possible the fanatic Muslim mind against Hindu forces and fighters. At every major crisis, at every decisive event, they gave full reins to their instinctive anti-Hindu bent of mind to frustrate the plans of Hindu leaders or torture Hindu agitators. History is replete with such instances.

It is the characteristic of a great life that it is ever full of duties and sacrifices. The soul that suffers gets stronger and sober. The soul of a Great Man never stands still. For Great Men are the heart of humanity. Their work never ceases for a single second until the day of death. The proverbs that no pains, no gains; no gall, no glory, are undying. After a deed of deathless virtue, Savarkar was also thrown into the furnace of tribulations. The more the gold burns, the brighter it shines; greater the number of clouds, the more dazzling is the splendour of the sun when he breaks forth.

Love of one's own country or humanity, if from within, is sublime and enduring. Patriotism or service of humanity, if from without, fades and withers. The former originates in a devotion to human progress or a belief in the sanctity of human life. The latter springs from immoral and foul personal ambition. Courage and spirit of self-sacrifice perpetuate true love, and self and pelf scandalize the untrue love. Savarkar belongs to the first heroic line of sefless patriots who belong not to one particular country but to the whole world. Savarkar was a pioneer in this line, and pioneers idealize the real and the successors realize the ideal.

Savarkar's arrival deeply stirred the whole of the Andamans. There was a feeling of change, freshness and life in the Andamans. To have a talk or a look at Savarkar, the world-famous revolutionary leader, visits of foreigners and guests became a common feature in the Andamans. Ocean-going steamers, warships, mercantile ships would sojourn to give leisure to their men of authority or fame to have a talk with the illustrious Indian prisoner. They even humbly cajoled Mr. Barrie for permitting them to have a look at Savarkar. Next morning after Savarkar's arrival the Pathan warder announced the com-

ing of Mr. Barrie. Accompanied by a guest, Barrie appeared with his usual staff in hand. He opened the conversation with a reference to 1857.

Barrie being struck dumb on all points his guest interfered, and said to Savarkar: "But don't you condemn the self-centred rebels like Nana and Tatya Tope?" "Condemn? You see, I am a prisoner. I can't freely discuss these points here. If you stop me in the middle and try to lower the prestige and honour of my nation, it will be a sheer act of cowardice," replied Savarkar with a distinct note in his voice. Barrie granted Savarkar's request and allowed him to discuss freely. "I know," said Savarkar, "You are feeling the embers. This is a discussion on vital points in history and I will do it freely at any cost. It is sheer cowardice to bear silently vile attacks on one's national honour." He proceeded, "The Government had appointed a committee to investigate the so-called atrocities of this nature. It pronounced its verdict 'that those descriptions were baseless' and were invented by the wily brains of the British soldiers."

The flame of righteous pride in Savarkar's heart was fanned. The hero was justifying the deeds of heroes. With a rise in his voice he said, "You describe Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope as self-seekers. For, Nana wanted to be king and Tatya wanted to attain glory. But is it not also true that Victor Emmanuel wanted to be King, Washington had an eye to the Presidentship and Garibaldi craved for Greatness? The fact is that they all fought for their national independence. None should decry them. As for the massacres at Cawnpore, they were an answer to the terrible atrocities and the wholesale burning of villages committed by the British troops approaching Cawnpore." Barrie's guest was silenced. The conversation ended.

Before Savarkar's arrival the revolutionaries of Maniktola case, Savarkar's brother Babarao with Wamanrao Joshi, some editors from Allahabad and some other political prisoners were rotting in the cellular jail of the Andamans. Out of the first group three had received sentences for life transportation for having waged war against the King Emperor and others were short-termed prisoners. Defeated valiant fighters of '1857' were the first and foremost champions to face the hellish fire of the Andamans. Stricken in age, one of the surviving warriors of

'1857' congratulated Savarkar on his having continued the War of Independence. After the heroes of '1857' came the fighters of Wasudeo Balwant. Thus the sacrificial fire was kept burning from 1857 to 1910 in the Andamans and continued to do so by patriots and martyrs who were transported to the Andamans in subsequent years.

The coming of Savarkar brought better days for the political prisoners in particular and convicts in general. Hitherto no discrimination was made there between political and ordinary prisoners. Barrie and his fawning dogs ran amock. Barrie's word was law; his dogs' barkings were its arms. A man of little education, Barrie compensated for his inferiority complex by his harsh voice, bullying nature, crooked ways, and dull wits. His rough life had taken off the edge of his sense so much so that he utterly failed to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In his zest to rule the convicts with an iron hand he proved to be worse than the English officials. Indeed the hot sand is more scorching than the sun itself. He called the revolutionaries bombthrowers, damned rascals and put the letter 'D' round their neck describing them as "dangerous" characters! His attitude towards the ordinary convicts was lenient, but towards revolutionaries inexorably severe. He violently abused the prisoners in general and wickedly harassed them. Even with this sort of harassment, uptil now the political prisoners had failed in giving a united fight to curb the unjust rule of Barrie. Their condition was very miserable.

The revolutionaries had to undergo unbearable physical tortures. They were yoked to the oil-mill. And the working on the oil-mill demanded such hard labour that it squeezed the life out of even the hardened and seasoned convicts, and they trembled at its sight. The oil-mill was, therefore, aptly regarded as the friend of suicide. Prisoners had to turn its handle horizontally for hours together without even a slight break. They had to take their meals and drink water, while the oil-mill was in motion lest the quota of the oil should fall far below the expectation. Even with such hard labour full measure of the required quota could never be fulfilled by even the strongest prisoner. Their hands bled; hearts ached; heads whirled. They fell in dead faints. When they revived, round and round they had to go again in excruciating agony.

Prisoners were sent to water closets in a file of eight or ten and they had to rush out without finishing the natural functions at the whim of the warder or were dragged out in that state too. It was an offence to answer the call of nature except during the scheduled time of morning, noon and evening. If any political prisoner felt the necessity to do so at odd hours, he did it in his cell in the small pot or on the walls of his cell and bribed the scavenger with a pinch of tobacco to get it cleared or else he was punished for this unavoidable natural call by being put into standing-handcuffs from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 12 noon to 5 p.m. During these punishment hours if he could not check his natural calls, he would answer them in that hanging condition.

Political prisoners were not given as much leisure or rest as is given even to the beasts of burden for answering nature's calls or other natural functions. Educated persons were used as beasts of burden and illiterate persons were given clerical work. Pathans, warders and petty officers gulped down the share of the prisoners' food and milk. What is more, the doctors followed the diagnosis of the jailer!

A prisoner was deprived of his right of writing letters home once a year even if he broke the file at the time of meals, or talked with his neighbour. Prisoners were forced to take their meals in soaking rains or in the scorching sun. The duration of time for meals depended not on the clock, but on the crowing of the warder. None could ask for more food or eat less. If surplus was thrown away, the prisoner was made to bring it back and eat it up!

Sometimes the prisoners had to drink water with a squeez on their noses. So dirty was its smell. Some political prisoners were made to do odd jobs at the residence of the officers, to clean streets and to draw carts of the officers. To relieve themselves from the insufferable hard labour prisoners ate some harmful herbs or took some other drastic medicine that brought on diarrhoea or vomits of blood or high fever. Some pretended stark madness covering their faces even with stools. Their last refuge was suicide, the sure guide, friend and saviour, a consummation devoutly to be wished! Thus the cellular jail machine was more soulless and dreadful, more devilish and dehumanising than any other terrific jail machine under the

sun such as the Bastille or the Fortress of Peter and Paul in Czarist Russia.

Writing about this prison life, Savarkar said: "Life in a jail for good, for evil, is a unique chance. Man can never go out of it exactly as he came in. He goes out far better or far worse. Either more angelic or more fiendish. Fortunately for me, my mind has so quickly adapted itself to the changes in circumstances. It seems so strange that a nature so restless and active, roaming over continents, should so quickly feel quite at home in a cell hardly a dozen feet in length. And yet one of the kindest gifts of Providence to Humanity is this plasticity, this adaptability of the human mind to the ever changing environments of life." [1] To become your own friend you must retire into your own inner self and cultivate the friendship of the conscience, the God in you. A *yogi* in action can exercise such a tremendous control over his senses. Savarkar had conquered his senses and adapted himself to the new change. His mind climbed the tower of human imagination and saw the vastness of the universe dissolving its identity into Him. "When early in the morning and late in the evening," he wrote from the Cellular Jail, "I try a bit of *Pranayam* and then pass insensibly into a sweet sound sleep—Oh how calm and quiet is that rest, so calm that when I get up in the morning, it is long before I can realize again that I am in a prison cell lying on a wooden plank. All the common aims and allurements of mankind having receded far, the conscience is perfectly pleased with itself with the conviction of having served under His Banner and served to some purpose. A calm, sweet equanimity is left with my soul and it lulls my mind in an intense peace." [2]

Here is a graphic description of the daily life in the Cellular Jail in one of Savarkar's annual letters: "I get up in the morning when the bell goes on at 5 a.m. At its sound I feel as if I had entered a higher college for a higher study. Then we do our work of rigour till 10 a.m. While my hands and feet are automatically doing the given task, my spirit avoiding all detection is out for a morning trip, and across the seas and oceans, over hills and dales, it roams sipping only pleasant things and things noble, like a bee among flowers. Then I compose some

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

new lines. Then we dine and at 12 noon work again. From 4 p.m. comes rest, reading, etc. This is the usual round of life here."

The master artist in Savarkar further described the vivid picture in a Voltarian satire. He added: "In a prison what happens on the first day, happens always, if nothing worse happens. In fact, it seems to be the essence of prison discipline to avoid all novelty, all change. Like specimens and curios in a museum, here we are each exactly in the same place and same position, belted and labelled with the same numbers with more or less dust about us. . . . We get up early, work hard, eat punctually at the same place and the same amount and kind of food prepared with the same matchless prison skill and medical care." He concluded: "Almost every night, I tell you, I break the jail and out by dale and down and by tower and town go on romping till I find some one of you—some one who somewhere had been held close to my bosom! Every night I do it but my beneficent jailers take no notice of it. You have only to wake up in the jail, that is all they say!"[3] Solitary monotony for twelve years in a cell! This is a clue to the introversion that clung to Savarkar in later life and made him disinclined to mix freely with people and personalities. He was isolated from his colleagues and the current of national life.

* * *

For the first fortnight Savarkar was closed in a solitary cell. Then he was given the work of chopping the barks of cocoanuts with a heavy wooden mallet. His hands bled, swelled, ached and the coir was blistered with blood. In order to frighten Savarkar into submissiveness, Barrie displayed the power of his wrath by reviling his co-sufferers in his presence. Barrie's one aim was to impress upon Savarkar that he was not a political prisoner, but an ordinary criminal. The jailer always tried to dishearten and frighten him by riveting his attention to the ticket on his breast showing imprisonment for half a century. But with all his resourcefulness Barrie could not overpower or overawe Savarkar. His personality, his fame and his courage had outgrown the pale of Barrie's mind, men and power.

[3] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 39.

The case of other political prisoners was quite different. With sunken heads they bore humiliations and were mortally wounded in their feelings, when Barrie spurred them with loathing. Savarkar consoled his co-sufferers and breathed life into them. He cheered them. He told them that those who worked for a great cause outside worked much but they who suffered for it in prisons and fields worked more. He said that though they were helpless in those days, yet a day would dawn when statues would be erected to their memory in the very jail. Future generations would make a pilgrimage to that place saying, " Here dwelt for years the patriots of our land, the flesh of our flesh, the spirit of our spirit that fell in the cause of freedom." He added that their sufferings, their wounds and their struggle would be fruitful in the end.

Indeed, thirty-two years later Netaji Subhas Bose of the Indian National Army hoisted over Port Blair the flag of independence on December 30, 1943, honoured the memory of the Indian revolutionaries by saluting the Cellular Jail and renamed the Andamans " Shaheed Island " in memory of the martyrs. The wheel of destiny had turned. In a press interview in November 1943, Netaji said: " Most of the political prisoners sentenced to penal servitude for conspiracies to overthrow the British Government,—and there have been hundreds of them,—were locked up in this Island. Like the Bastille in Paris, which was liberated first during the French Revolution, setting free political prisoners, the Andamans, where our patriots suffered much is the first to be liberated in India's fight for independence." [4] Savarkar's prophecy came true to the letter!

Subhas Bose was not a degenerated man to disparage the noblest sacrifice of the heroes of the Andamans. He knew that their prison life had only one class. That was facing death in every form at every moment. Not fruit but frown, not cosy beds but wooden planks galled them. There they rolled in dark, damp, dirty, dingy cells. Every hour of theirs they passed in moving, mournful and moanful misery. Their food was half-cooked, soiled, filled with drops of sweat and often seasoned with pieces of reptiles or white dead worms. They toiled like horses and worked as bullocks! The climate sapped their vita-

[4] *Jai Hind*, published by Amritlal Prabhashankar, p. 74.

lity and life. Under the strain and stress of extreme physical rigours some of them showed signs of mental aberration and lapsed into insanity. They underwent these poignant trials for the very liberation of their Motherland. Had they worked safely enough to save their skin, had they loved a life of peace, pelf and position, they would have attained it easily for some of them were sufficiently rich or eminently gifted with rich brains. Subhas knew this and so he honoured them first.

In the middle of August 1911, Savarkar was yoked to the oil-mill, the hardest task, the greatest test and the severest pain the cellular life witnessed. The jail superintendent called Savarkar and said he would not give him that work again if he did it for two weeks. This severest turn of dealing with prisoners was a result of the strong remarks of an officer from Calcutta, the then Capital of the Government of India, to the effect that the prisoners in the Andamans were treated considerately. That visit gave a handle to Barrie to play havoc in the Andamans. Barrie deliberately reminded Savarkar of the fifty years' rigorous sentence and promised him help if he did not refuse to do the work. Heartless as he was, he unkindly remarked that Savarkar was promoted from coir to *kolu*—the oil-mill! This promotion or rise in the status, curiously enough, was upheld by Bombay University which informed Savarkar only a day before he was harnessed to the oil-mill that his B.A. degree was cancelled. The jail authorities handed over to him on August 14, 1911, a letter from the Secretary, Education Department, informing Savarkar that under section 18 of the Indian Universities Act the B.A. degree which had been conferred on him had been cancelled by the Senate of Bombay University at their meeting held on July 1, 1911, as he was convicted and sentenced in the Nasik conspiracy cases.

As for the remembrance of 50 years' imprisonment Savarkar was used to it now, as an artillery soldier is used to the booming of guns.

The barrister thus began to move around the oil-mill like a bullock. His body ached, muscles writhed with pain, stomach turned and mouth parched, for the prisoner was not even given more than a certain quantity of water. Moved by the sight, some political prisoners helped him secretly. There was even healthy rivalry among them for washing his clothes secretly.

Savarkar was overwhelmed with their feelings. In turn he would sometimes wash their clothes without their knowledge and they sincerely entreated him not to do so.

Savarkar felt that his great powers that would have enriched the destiny of the country were wasting away. Disgustful of dying a slow, painful death, and that too unobserved, his mind drove him to the thought of suicide. In such a state suicide becomes a deed of self-respect. For a while he was fascinated by the idea and greedily looked to the upper side of the window of the cell from where many mounted on to heaven by means of rags tightened to their necks. Dusty and deadly fatigued, one day he reeled against the wall surrounding the oil-mill and fell in a faint.

When he revived, things around him became gradually visible and intelligible to him one by one; he knew by and by who and where he was, and he picked himself up with great effort for work! For some time mind routed reason. Defeated reason again joined battle. It said, "What an ego! You never craved for name, fame and glory. You wished to suffer most for humanity. You attained it. What of your abilities and intelligence! There was a time when there were no Himalayas; there will be a time when they will not be there. Even the sun in the universe has an unsteady position. He will be pricked one day like a bubble and still the universe will go on. Therefore, if you want to die, do not die a cowardly death by suicide, but die valiantly." [5] Reason inspired courage into the mind and it plumed its feathers, soaring, and singing again. Strange breezes of bliss passed over him relieving him from worry and weakness and he experienced fresh glooming joy of the soul and sleep fell as gently on his eye-lids as dew!

The first secret note Savarkar got was from Hotilal Varma. The note dashed against the inside wall of the cell with a stone. The sound caused a great hubub. Warders from below ran upstairs and searched Savarkar and his cell, but in vain. When they were gone, he took it out from the innermost delicate part of the body and read it! In it Hotilalji had informed Savarkar that there was a division among the Bengali revolutionaries. It was a fact that some of them could not stand the

[5] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 131.

sufferings and turned informants and lackeys. In others the conscience was not yet dead. They told their colleagues to put an end to their lives since life had been made impossible for them due to severe agonies.

Savarkar felt sympathy for the past services and sacrifices of those heroic souls who had turned informants. Their tortured body became untrue to their faith and trampled upon the soul. Yet, he held that none had the right to criticise them but those who had suffered more than they. Those who decided to live under any circumstances avoided tortures by being lackeys and spies of Barrie. Those who despised a life of dishonour preferred death to living as traitors to the cause of the country. There were few who considered life worth living till it did not go against their principles.

* * *

There were rumours afloat in the Andamans that all political prisoners were to be released in memory of the Delhi Durbar. Expectations became rife; rumours rained. Though sceptical of his release, a wave of sensation passed through Savarkar when he heard everyone saying, "Barrister Babu, you are to be released." On December 7 to 15, 1911, the Delhi Darbar was held. Except the Savarkars and a Bengali political prisoner all were given remission of a month per year. All that Savarkar got was potato-rice. And the cells were again enveloped in utter disappointment.

Savarkar, however, was very anxious to know if India had made any progress with the royal event. He learnt that the settled fact was unsettled; the partition of Bengal was annulled. Savarkar was happy and said to his colleagues: "Once a man is convinced that quinine roots out Malaria, he will take it whenever he gets an attack of Malaria." The capital of India was about to be transferred to Delhi as foretold by Savarkar, but he said that from the standpoint of history, culture, politics and geography, Ujjain should be the proper place for the capital of India.

December 23, 1912, was the day for the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. But the state entry of Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, in oriental splendour, was greeted with a terrific bomb at the famous Chandni Chowk.

Lord Hardinge was wounded while riding in the silver Howdah upon an elephant. The man behind Hardinge who held the state umbrella was killed. Hardinge fainted from loss of blood and his wounds took some months to heal. It seemed that the royal proclamation could not pacify the revolutionaries. They were grappling as before with the British power for the liberation of the Motherland. The chief man in this act was Rash Behari Bose who fled to Japan. The British Government was persecuting him there. In November 1915 the Japanese Court passed extradition orders against Bose. But Mayo, a patriot of Japan, asked a baker to employ Rash Behari and he eluded the police.

Savarkar's younger brother Narayanrao Savarkar, who was a student at the National Medical College, Calcutta, was arrested in connection with this Bomb case and brought back to Poona; Barrie heartlessly told Savarkar that his brother Narayanrao was expected in the Andamans as a result of this Bomb case. The police could not rope in Narayanrao Savarkar and so he was released. The word Savarkar was synonymous with sedition and sedition became synonymous with Savarkar! Yet in the eyes of the great ones of the nation Savarkar stood very high. The Chief Commissioner told Savarkar that he had met Babu Surendranath Banerjee on board the steamer and the latter had inquired after the health of Savarkar. Savarkar had nothing but high regard for Surendranath Banerjee. He paid tributes to the uncrowned king of Bengal for the word of encouragement he sent through a German Military Officer-prisoner and the sympathy and help he rendered to the patriots in the cellular jail.

There was another great patriot on whose mind the personality of Savarkar had an indelible impression. It was Lala Lajpat Rai. He wrote in his book *Young India*: "At this stage we might mention the name of another nationalist who exercised a vast influence on young Indians in England for a number of years is now serving a lifetime in the Andamans. We mean Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. In the simplicity of his life he was of the same class as Arabinda Ghosh and Hardayal. In the purity of his life he was as high as either. In politics he fell in the first category minus their religious fervour. In his general views he was more or less what Hardayal was, minus his

denunciation of those who were engaged in non-political activities. Savarkar had extremely fine qualities of a leader. He was caught because he was reckless; he never cared about his personal safety; he had the dash of the old warrior who always put himself in the post of danger. Hardayal kept himself in the background and avoided danger. Arabinda stood midway between the two."

A fine tribute came unexpectedly from Maxim Gorky. A great Russian literary figure, Gorky praised Savarkar's heroism and denounced the British Government for inflicting a terrible sentence on Savarkar.

* * *

Savarkar resolved to resort to agitation within the four corners of law in the Andamans to secure the privileges of political prisoners for his comrades and to compel the jail authorities to give physical and cultural amenities to political prisoners. To gain his end he first devoted his mind to the education of the political prisoners. The revolutionaries were all youths. Some of them had chosen this life owing to their daring, noble and selfless disposition. Some of them had vague and hazy notions about the fundamental principles of the revolutionary struggle, its aims and its methods. Savarkar decided to drill and steel them in those fundamentals which gave them a solid base of knowledge of Political science, Economics, and Constitutional Law. The contact began at the oil-mill, or at the work of chopping the bark. Besides, such education was imparted through the top of the windows and holes at the bottom of the walls of the cells. It was also imparted on the occasion of the transfers of prisoners from one cell to another and when they went to and came from the jail office and through a secret service of private notes.

This movement needed books; but books were a red rag to Barrie. On Sundays prisoners got books. Every evening they got books, but each his own. Exchange of books was dealt with severely. For this breach of discipline offenders would hang in hand-cuffs for a period of four days. The chief obstacle in the way was Barrie's terrible ignorance and his loathing for books. To his ignorant mind books containing words like 'nation', 'country', 'patriotism', drove men to acts of violence. Books

on theosophy, he held, made them mad! Barrie, perhaps, forgave a prisoner for any trifling offence or a glaring breach, but never for keeping a book or slate! Savarkar cheered his co-sufferers by telling them the stories of heroes from the mythology and history. In jail not a scrap of paper was tolerated. A tiny piece of lead hidden in hair or in the cavity of mouth would amount to a crime resulting in severe punishment. The cell of Savarkar was raided even twice or thrice a week during the first six or seven years. Illegible writing on the walls was considered a wilful damage to Government property.

The task of educating his co-prisoners was difficult. At the beginning even the educated prisoners treated this new move with scant respect and the illiterate fled from it. Pointing out the then confusion in New China due to want of constitutional experts, and the disorderliness in new Iran for want of economists and accountants, Savarkar impressed upon the revolutionaries that for conducting a Government efficiently they should also have Gokhales, Dutts or Sir Madhavraos among them having a mastery of Constitutional Law, Science of Economics and Politics. In their present lot they could do nothing better than store this knowledge in order to equip themselves better for the future work, struggle and action, as some of them were short-termed prisoners and would soon be free. It was Savarkar's belief that knowledge without action was lame and action without knowledge was blind. To him knowledge that did not issue in any tangible action was like a tree without fruit!

Savarkar fought out the problem of books despite the opposition of Barrie and ultimately secured the Superintendent's permission to store books. It was mutually arranged every prisoner should ask his relative to send books at a particular time so that every month they might receive a parcel of new books. Still Barrie would have his say. He blackened some pages or tore away those pages of the books which he considered objectionable. The idea of a library appealed to European officers and they also kept their books in the library. Some prisoners were entrusted with the work of maintaining the library. At first the criminals avoided Bade Babu's (as Savarkar was called by them) literacy campaign. Soon some of them saw its utility and joined; others who fled from him were sometimes awarded scholarships, in the currency of the Andamans, a pinch of tobac-

co, and were won over. The effect was visible. Many completed some course and were appointed Munshis—clerks. Criminals became sober. They read religious books with great devotion. Many learnt to read papers and when they could do so their joy knew no bounds!

With the growth of the literacy movement the library also began to grow. It was filled with complete works of Spencer, Shakespeare, Mill, Vivekananda, Ramkrishna; great works of Gibbon, Emerson, Macaulay, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Nietszche, Rousseau, Voltaire and Tagore. The library also contained Plato's *Republic*, Thomas Moor's *Utopia*, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Wilson's *State*, works of Great Mahratta and Bengali Poets; Bengali, Hindi, Marathi Weeklies and Monthlies; Modern Review and Indian Review. It was in the Andamans that Savarkar drank deep at the fountain of Bengali literature. Though he had composed a poem on the Nobel Prizeman, Rabindranath Tagore, he was of the opinion that Bankimchandra, Roy and Madhusudan were equally great in sweep, imagination and rhythm.

But the books that appealed to him most were *Yogavashistha* and the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis. The spell of the latter was so irresistible that he gladly received it as a gift from a European officer on his return journey from the Indian Bastille. The energy and patience of Savarkar were inexhaustible! Savarkar taught the criminals and his colleagues with the endurance, insistence and love of a loving teacher. To some of the dull criminals he had to teach the alphabet for over twenty times before his perseverance could bear fruit. The criminals read religious books and newspapers with great interest. Everyone was now eager to secure news about Hindustan and make propaganda for her cause. At the time of Savarkar's departure the library contained about 2,000 books. The object of the campaign was fulfilled. The cent per cent illiteracy amongst the convicts was changed into sixty per cent literacy when Savarkar left the Andamans.

But none of his propagandistic moves aroused so vigorous an opposition and such widespread misunderstanding as did his great efforts for investing Hindi with the importance of the Lingua Franca of India. That Hindi should be the Lingua Franca of India was one of the important creeds of the Abhinava

Bharat. The Abhinava Bharat had declared this times without number. Savarkar struggled hard to impress upon the minds of his colleagues and co-prisoners the importance of Hindi. Struggle, storm, sparks, agreement and spell are the characteristics of Savarkarian movements. They are the fate of every pioneer, precursor and prophet. Savarkar appealed to his colleagues to call for books on Hindi. He taught them Hindi. He insisted that every prisoner should learn his main provincial language and Hindi as the national language. Madrasis and Bengalis were averse to it and adversely criticised Savarkar's stand. They even suspected that Savarkar wanted to kill their mother-tongues under the guise of a National Language. If somebody wished to bestow gifts in memory of the celebration of any good day or event, Savarkar persuaded him to give Hindi books. Savarkar answered his critics that he never persuaded any one to purchase Marathi books and asked them whether he wanted to kill Marathi also.

Not less violent was the opposition from the British Officers. They knew Urdu and therefore they opposed the introduction of Hindi and Nagari and more so because it was a cause propagated by Savarkar. Hence they feared that it would either enormously increase his influence or perhaps develop into a menace in some respects! This latter suspicion was mooted and fomented by the Muslims in the Andamans too!

In this cause the Arya Samajists helped him, as Swami Dayananda, their prophet, was the first and foremost leader to champion the cause of Hindi with Nagari script, as the Lingua Franca of India. Dayananda wrote his books in Hindi. Savarkar's respect for Dayananda was high. He got the *Satyartha Prakash* read by his colleagues and co-prisoners. He regarded the great work of Dayananda as a fearless and formidable exposition that teaches and implants the noble ideals of Hindi culture, elucidating the importance of Hindu religion as the national religion of Hindustan. Savarkar explained to his colleagues how Hindi had been the national tongue, an all-India language of the saints and merchants, princes and pilgrims from Rameshwar to Badrinath, from Puri to Dwarka ever since the days of Prithviraj.

Before this the second language of the jail office of the Cellular Jail or the Andamans was Urdu and the posts of Munshis had been occupied by persons from Upper India who were educated

through the Urdu medium. Letters, reports and applications to and from the Andamans were written in Urdu! After a long struggle Savarkar persuaded the prisoners to write their letters in the provincial languages or conveniently in Hindi and to write their complaints, answers, or applications in Hindi so that the necessity and urgency of Nagari-knowing Munshis should be felt increasingly. The effect was tremendous. Formerly ninety per cent of the letters from and to the Andamans were in Urdu, a few years after the arrival of Savarkar the tables were turned and the ratio was in the reverse order. Some distinguished prisoners from the Punjab, who had composed their poems in Urdu, got themselves accustomed to Nagari-Hindi and re-wrote their poems in Hindi!

In the colony of free citizens this constant propaganda for Nagari and Hindi took root and the ceremonial invitation cards began to appear in Hindi. From the conversations of Hindus the similes and metaphors describing the Arabic environments disappeared by and by. It was Savarkar's unfeigned and constant demand for over forty years that Urdu should be preserved for Muslims, but it should not be allowed to replace or dominate Hindi in any field on any account. The propaganda and importance of the *Lingua Franca* appealed even to the officers who were secretly tutored in Hindi. It was through Savarkar's efforts and pressure that a Girls' School was started in the colony but he could not stop the teaching of Urdu in Boys' Schools as his departure came off suddenly. Savarkar held that if the importance and future of the Andamans was to be increased usefully in reference to the safety and predominance of Hindustan and Hindu culture, Hindi and Nagari should be made compulsory in the Andamans.

The significance of this farsighted move can now be imagined and appreciated. Long before any leader of prominence ever since the days of Dayananda dreamt of its importance or entered the field, Savarkar was the only outstanding Hindu leader who strove in right earnest from 1906 to invest Hindi with the power and prestige of a National Language. On the vital problems of nation building he was always outspoken, uncompromising and prophetic. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha was, of course, toiling in the field, but slogans fail in the field, if guns are not in the forefront. It was after forty-three years since the days of

the Abhinava Bharat's declaration that the nation accepted Hindi with the Devanagari script as the Lingua Franca of Free Hindustan!

* * *

In the meantime troubles were coming to a head in the Andamans. The boldest among the prisoners resolved to launch upon a strike to vindicate their rights. The strike was marked by many incidents. A Punjabi revolutionary was yoked to the oil-mill. He was sober and sturdy and came of a good family. Having worked till 10 a.m. he took his bath and meals calmly regardless of the words of abuse poured by the petty officers to make him work. The situation grew rather intolerable. The pot-bellied jailer with the staff in his hand appeared on the scene. The prisoner told him that he was chewing his food scientifically. Barrie threatened him with punishment, but he did not yield.

Such rebellious prisoners were kept on rice-gruel, and in order to weaken the strength of their minds doses of quinine or some drastic purgative were forced down their throats. That tortured their physique and aggravated their agonies. Despite these insufferable tortures this valiant revolutionary did not yield. At last Barrie came to terms. After four days' regular work he was relieved of the hard labour. As a result of this strike, the political prisoners were sent outside for work in deference to their demands. There they did some odd jobs, but one and all refused to draw carts of officers and regained their dignity.

Savarkar's elder brother was one of the most unbending prisoners. The jailer and his dogs tried every method and measure to torture him. Unfortunately some maladies worsened the trouble. He was seized now and then with a splitting headache, typhoid and cholera, but not a drop of medicine was given to him. He groaned frightfully with pain. Still he was made to chop the shell of cocoanuts. In the closed cell he helplessly passed his watery motions upon the rubbish and threw it outside when the door opened. For such unavoidable breach he was often hung in hand-cuffs in a painful state, his bowels purging and his urine passing the while! Yet this brave man of steel frame worked at the oil-mill with all his might and in spite of his agonies, but never did he yield to humiliation nor did he do a dishonourable act to purchase a sigh of relief. For

good many days the two brothers were not allowed to have even a glimpse of each other. When Savarkar enquired of the officers about the severe illness of his elder brother he was told to speak for himself. They said rules forbade them to disclose his whereabouts to a prisoner or to speak about his health!

In the end secret sympathies worked and Babarao caught sight of his brother. Seeing his younger brother after years, he burst out: "Tatya, how do you happen to be here?" That direct query pierced Savarkar's heart. He was about to speak, but the brothers were suddenly pulled asunder. Subsequently a secret note to his brother from Babarao lamented. "The belief that you were carrying on the fight for the liberation of our Motherland enlivened my heart and lightened my tortures. Who will carry on your work? Your gifts and powers will now go to waste." The reply from Savarkar went in a consolatory tone: "My abilities and powers have stood the grim test. The glory of it is that what I preached I practised and fell fighting in the forefront. It is also a righteous duty to suffer tortures rotting in the cell with curses from those for whom we fell. For the achievement of the final victory, these sighs, sufferings and sacrifices in the cells are as necessary as is the fighting with the blare of the trumpets of glory."

To alleviate the tortures and to blunt the edges of the cruel claws of the administration, the political prisoners headed by Savarkar, began to think out ways and means. It was necessary to bring pressure upon the administration from without. British officers who ruled in the land of Death depended upon each other for company and comforts. They played, they danced, they enjoyed themselves together and naturally their interests did not clash in the administration. Hence a complaint against one was never paid heed to by another. It was, therefore, necessary that the leaders in India should know something of those terrible tortures. But how to bell the cat was the question. At last Hotilal Varma dared and did it. His secret letter to Surendranath Banerjee giving the details of the jail life in general reached the Bengal leader through secret channels. Surendranath published it in his *Bengali* under the signature of Hotilalji with the numbers of his cell and chawl! It was a veritable bombshell. On hearing this Barrie ran to the cells like a man scorched by embers. He roared at Hotilal:

"Stand up at once. You are a rank rascal," said he in a voice of thunder. Barrie told Savarkar about the mischief of Hotilal and falsely added that the Press in which the *Bengali* was printed was confiscated.

Everybody in the Andamans was always anxious to get a piece of news about the happenings in the Motherland beyond the ocean. New-comers were, therefore, always received with utmost cordiality for the sake of news. News also filtered and was circulated through many other channels. A brave son of a great leader of the Punjab serving a term in a prison in the Punjab wrote a letter to Savarkar on the back of the ticket of a convict. The fellow brought it to Savarkar undetected. Sources of foreign news were the rubbish papers at the water closets of the British officers, old soiled wrapping papers of pins, nails and other articles. Many prisoners lost their privilege of working outside the jail for bringing in pieces of newspapers but the news agency worked unabated. Political prisoners secretly shared their bread with those devoted and daring messengers. Barrie gaped and was dumbfounded to know the futility of suppressing news. He often told the Superintendent that even if the devil were appointed jailer it would be impossible for him to stop news going to these bomb-throwers. Sometimes on his night rounds Barrie heard messages transmitted by the political prisoners to one another from one end of the jail to the other through some peculiar sounds of the chains. If at all the illiterate warders suspected something, the political prisoners told the warders that they were muttering prayers in their mind to the tune of chains! This Andaman's wireless system was introduced in Nagari by Babarao Savarkar.

Among the most heroic sufferers in the Andamans that put up a brave fight to undermine the rigid and rapacious jail administration of the Cellular Jail and to break the spell of terror was one Indu Bhushan Roy. Stout, sturdy and spirited, he was sentenced to transportation for 10 years in the Maniktola case. Indu Bhushan soon fell ill and was thrown into his cell. And instead of giving medicine, Barrie yoked him to the oil-mill. With deadly pale face, Indu walked with great effort and great pain. Savarkar tried to console him by bringing his own severest lot to his attention and cheered him up. But to no purpose. Next morning Indu Bhushan was a stiff block, his

tongue drawn out, his legs hanging loosely. Barrie hushed up the note which Indu had suspended on his chest and stated that Indu's death was the outcome of insanity. Savarkar challenged this statement and persisted in telling Barrie that it was an outcome of the extreme physical hardships of jail life. Upendranath Banerjee of Alipore case was also harnessed to the oil-mill. His whole frame ached and his mental condition grew so much pitiable that a sympathetic word would move him to tears. Ullaskar Dutt of Alipore case whom the judge described as a noble youth was a witty, fearless and good-hearted man. When he was tortured with electric shocks, Ullaskar moaned, raved and pitieously groaned. He was then transferred to the mental hospital and thence to Madras and was afterwards released.

After the tragedy of Ullaskar, Barrie asked Savarkar when he would go mad. Savarkar replied angrily, "Perhaps after *you* go mad!" At this time a note from Savarkar discussing the policy of an immediate strike was seized and Savarkar was punished by putting him in standing hand-cuffs. Crook as he was, Barrie managed to get Savarkar's note in *Modi* read by a Bengali as if it were written in Bengali! Savarkar appealed to the Superintendent to look into the truth and see whether the chit was in Bengali. The truth came out and Barrie was severely reprimanded. The second time Savarkar was hung in hand-cuffs was for his note asking somebody to bring news. Barrie unkindly joked with Savarkar who was given the punishment of standing hand-cuffs, "What is this about?" "Postage!" replied Savarkar. "It has rather cost you much," said Barrie. Savarkar answered back pungently, "Not at all! In your case you have to pay subscription for newspapers plus postage. We get news free of subscription. Only this sort of postage we have to pay half-yearly or so!"

Savarkar sometimes received such punishments. He was put in solitary confinements thrice, was given cross-fetters once and cautioned twice or thrice for possessing a piece of pencil or paper or for adding a piece of cloth to his dhoti!

The third in the line of martyrs was Nani Gopal, a Bengali revolutionary of good family. As he was yoked to the oil-mill, he gave up all work, observed silence, abandoned jail apparel, and gave up food. The Superintendent decided to flog him.

Savarkar warned Barrie that if they shed his blood the revolutionaries would definitely retaliate. Meantime, thrilling news about Indu Bhushan and Ullaskar appeared in the Indian press. The officers were alarmed. Consequently there was a sudden round-up in the Andamans. Rumours had it that the revolutionaries were planning to bomb the Cellular Jail! Strict measures were adopted. Thorough search was taken in every cell and in the settlement also. Free people and prisoners alike were harassed. Bar-fetters, hand-cuffs, standing hand-cuffs, penal diet, solitary confinement and all sorts of punishments were imposed. Savarkar was told that he would never be allowed to work outside, though according to rules he ought to have been released long before from the Cellular Jail to settle on the island. The Jail Report said that his conduct was exemplary, but his past was dangerous!

Barrie was now wild with rage. He ordered all political prisoners not to speak in English as he thought their talk in English raised them high in the eyes of the ordinary criminals. At once a rebel rose and said in Hindi that because the jailer asked questions in English they answered in English and added that political prisoners were not so much enamoured of English. He further retorted: "It is true that we have not become one with the English tongue and shamelessly enough forgotten our language. Look at our jailer, he is an Irishman, but does not know a word of his mother-tongue!" Barrie was scandalized. In a fit of paroxysm he bragged out: "You Indians, you are our slaves." A bold voice shot back, "Your slaves! What are you? You are a child of a slave of the British Empire. We are slaves of the British Empire and not yours! Moreover, we have been striving at the risk of our necks to overthrow the foreign yoke while you are calling that empire your own, the empire which has enslaved your Motherland and what is worse, you are living on the crumbs of loaf that are thrown before you!" Upon this all the prisoners burst into shrieks of uncontrollable laughter to the great scandal of the jailer! The order was reversed immediately. He ordered the political prisoners not to speak again in Hindi!

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The protests in the press, the questions in the Imperial Council, the growing volume of public opinion and the thrilling stories of the Cellular Jail brought pressure upon the Government of India and the Home Member, Sir Reginald Craddock, paid a visit to the Andamans in 1913. Some selected political prisoners were called for interview. A few were told that they deserved a more grievous fate. Others were told that their past was dangerous. Savarkar had an interview with Craddock on November 16, 1913. It took a shrewd turn.

CRADDOCK: Savarkar, what a pitiable condition you have thrown yourself in. I have read your writings. If your intellectual powers had worked in the proper direction, any highest post of authority in India would have been conferred upon you. But you chose this line!

SAVARKAR: But it is up to you now to save me these tribulations. I learn Gokhale's Bill demanding compulsory education has come up for consideration in the Council. If such opportunities are offered to us, almost all from our fold will prefer peaceful methods.

CRADDOCK: How do you know that? Do you also know the whereabouts of your comrades and lieutenants?

SAVARKAR: How can I? I am here in a solitary cell. But we know each other's views. It is a sin to follow the path of violence when it is possible to make progress in a peaceful way. Such were my views when we worked in the revolutionary camp. Such were theirs. Perhaps they may be thinking likewise.

CRADDOCK: Not at all. They are still proclaiming the battle cry in your name in India and in America.

SAVARKAR: I know about it from you. How can I prevent them from using my name?

CRADDOCK: We will consider the advisability if you are prepared to write to them about your present views.

SAVARKAR: Of course, I shall willingly do it. But that letter must be written by me independently, otherwise it will be of no use.

CRADDOCK: The letter must go through us.

SAVARKAR: Then it will mean to them that it was an extraction!

CRADDOCK: We can't allow it.

SAVARKAR: I can't help it.

CRADDOCK (*staring a bit*): Well then, what are your grievances?

Savarkar began to tell the tale of trials. The Chief Commissioner intervened. "But you all have conspired and acted dangerously. If Russians had ruled India, they would have transported you to Siberia or shot you dead." He added that political prisoners should be grateful to the British Government for having treated them so considerately.

SAVARKAR: In that case the Russians would not have disarmed us. People of Siberia can be generals. Had it been possible for us to bear arms, the story of the overthrow of the Mogul empire would have been repeated!

CRADDOCK: What if you had rebelled against the ancient Indian Kings. They would have trampled you all under the feet of elephants.

SAVARKAR: They would have! In days gone by in England also a man was dragged along the street for committing theft and was beheaded. But it is not so now. The thing is that this advanced stage is the result of the efforts of both the camps. If rebels were trampled under elephant's feet, they also, when successful, used to behead a king like Charles I. Times are changed. Both camps have improved their methods! It is a sign of progress. You frankly tell us that you are not guided by any rules and we will prepare ourselves for that too.

Craddock came and went. Yet, Nani Gopal had not taken food. Forty-five days glided by. Some political prisoners went on a sympathetic fast and thus the third strike began. Savarkar awaited his home letter, but it was not handed over to him as Dr. Savarkar had written to him that Keir Hardie had compared Irish and Indian revolutionaries in his speech in Parliament and remarked that 'British Government had harshly crushed Savarkar.' Savarkar knew this through his secret source and then joined the strike. From the first he was averse to a hunger strike and wasting energy. But Nani Gopal's life was in danger. He, therefore, declined to take food and asked for

an interview with Nani Gopal. Nani Gopal and Savarkar were allowed to meet. Nani Gopal broke his fast when he knew that Savarkar had gone on a sympathetic fast. Mirzakhan, the notorious pocket edition of Barrie, proudly told Savarkar that Nani was a brave disciple of Savarkar and his courage befitted a Pathan and not a Hindu! Savarkar answered in a Savarkarian way. He said, " Had Nani been a Pathan he would have like a fawning dog licked the dust at the feet of Barrie! Fact is that had all the Pathans been brave and all the Hindus not brave, your Pathan or Mogul Empire would not have been smashed by the Hindus."

The years rolled by and at last came the news that the Government of India had decided to bring back the termed convicts to Indian jails. Those undergoing life terms were to be released from jail to settle on the island, if their conduct was satisfactory. While in prison they were to be given better class food and clothes and after five years they were to be allowed to cook their own food with a little money to easen their life!

Thus pressure from without and struggle from within slackened the rigours and rigid rules of the Deathland!

CHAPTER 7

Genius Thrives in Jail

In his utter helplessness and colossal frustration of life Savarkar was striving superhumanly to wring some good out of it. A true ascetic and man of action as he was, he resolved to make the most of life and to make the best of it. Such men of supreme courage and indomitable will make appearance from age to age. Stone walls do not imprison them, nor do iron bars encage them. Their angelic souls rise above and soar. Earnestness is the breath of their life. Grave is not its end. Their souls are indestructible. A cruel destiny was weaving and tightening round the neck of Savarkar. Despite the horrible and indescribable agonies, his genius throve in jail.

Ever since his childhood, when he was quite ignorant of what an epic was like, Savarkar had a mind to compose an epic on 'Panipat', but, being a poet of action, he could not find time for this great work. He seized this opportunity and almost achieved his goal. He performed this marvellous feat in the dark Andamans where reading and writing was a crime. He had no paper or pencil. In prison life philosophy is the ultimate refuge of a troubled soul. And we know how all distinguished political prisoners of world fame wrote famous histories, autobiographies, works on philosophy and other kind of great works.

John Bunyan wrote his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress,* Thomas Moor wrote his *Utopia,* Sir Walter Raleigh, his *History of the World,* Tilak, his *Gita Rahasya,* and later, Hitler, his *Mein Kampf,* and Nehru, his *Autobiography* and *Glimpses of World History.* Fortunately all these eminent men were supplied with writing and reading facilities. But Savarkar was the only eminent political prisoner of world fame who composed some ten thousand and odd lines of poetry of great imagination and of great thought, wrote them on the prison walls with thorns and pebbles, learnt them by heart secretly, and astounded the world,

giving a convincing proof of how the Vedas were handed down ever since the dawn of civilization! Just imagine the unbending tenacity and undying will power of a young man undergoing a sentence for half-a-century, who, while hanging in handcuffs during the punishment hours of jail life, recited, revised and learnt by heart his poems. Add to this, his untiring energy and ingenuity in making the wild criminals and devoted colleagues learn some of those poems by heart.

One of such men was Ram Hari from Prayag. He was editor of a Hindi weekly, *Swarajya*. Once he was removed to Savarkar's cell and there he learnt by heart Savarkar's Marathi poems which he had written on the walls of his cell. On his release Ram Hari recited the poems to Narayanrao Savarkar at Calcutta. The poems were first published in the latter part of the year 1922 under the title *Kamala*.

Savarkar is a term synonymous with patriotism in the domain of Indian politics and poetry. The parent thought of his poetry is the worship of the Goddess of Freedom. He sings:

We dedicated to thee our thoughts
Our speech, our eloquence to thee, Oh Mother!
My lyre sang of thee alone and
My pen wrote of thee alone, Oh Mother!

And

For thy sake death is life
Without thee life is death.

And

O Mother, who will dare insult thee in the world
We will give thee bath of his blood.

And

Even so this our Motherland craving the assistance
Of the Lord that she too be rescued from the crocodile
Clutches of Bondage enters our Garden, plucks
A fresh flower from the bough and offers
It at His feet in worship.

And

Deathless is the family that falls to a man,
For the emancipation of its Motherland,
Filling the skies with the fragrance of their sacrifice,
Made in the welfare of Man's rise.

Abject slavery and crushing foreign yoke are the source of his note. Glorious past is its inspiration. Patriotism is its song, Swaraj its aim and Humanity its goal. His poems and ballads have enchanted and inspired numerous patriots, and, though suppressed by Government, were secretly circulated from sire to son. No Bharatiya poet except Valmiki, Vyas and the great poets Chand and Bhushan—the latter pair sang the declining glory of the Rajputs—has sung of glorious victories of the Hindus, Hindu life, history and culture so immensely and epically as Savarkar has done. No modern Hindu poet except Savarkar has preached and propagated love for Swaraj and Swadharma so intensely, fervently and stirringly. Savarkar represents an admirable fusion of the valour of a warrior and the genius of a poet.

G. T. Madkholkar, an eminent Mahratta literary critic, describes Savarkar as a poet who rivals Kalidas in the use of similes, a poet on the war path bristling with vigour, genius, learning. He combines in himself the lustre of the spear of the Mahratta warriors, who hammered the Mogul throne of Delhi to pieces and the sweetness of all the emotions of the Mahratta saint-poets who have raised this mortal world to the level of the abode of Lord Vishnu. "It is because of all this," observes Madkholkar, "that I make bold to say that Savarkar occupies the first and foremost place in the galaxy of Marathi poets."

According to Madkholkar, Savarkar is perhaps the only poet who has during the last thirty years made conscious efforts to inflame the urge for independence and the sense of self-respect by holding before the Hindus, who were deprived of their freedom, the grand picture of the ancient glory and the valiant deeds of the past. The reason why all of Savarkar's literary productions have assumed such a fascinating and sublime quality is that Savarkar has so beautifully and lavishly made use of the Vedic, epic and historical ideas in his poetry, plays and other works. Madkholkar concludes: "In his poems he has strung

together so many beautiful and sublime ideas about Hindu life, culture, philosophy, and history that in the poetry of no other modern poet of the last hundred years can they ever be found."

Savarkar's poetry has an autobiographical ring and is subjective *par excellence*. He is a poet of action, of great personal experience, of lofty imagination, of noble emotions, of great sincerity and of great personality. His poetry bears a unique charm. His is great poetry of rare thrill, epic sweep, sky-high range, and grand metre! His thoughts breathe, his words burn. Though hurled from the summit of a mountain into the limitless ocean, or into the frying-pan, the undying soul of Savarkar survives and sings songs of God and Man. Himself a subject of an epic, he has produced an epic. Poet Savarkar belongs to the line of great poets. It is easy and safe for a poetical soul to sing mystic and vague songs of grand eternity, eyeless fraternity and aimless liberty at a time when his own kith and kin are ground under the heels of slavery and poverty. But it is given to a few poets of Savarkar's nerve and mission to raise the fallen in revolt and to drive a slave country to a fight for freedom. The reward for the former class is some coveted prize. The prize for the latter class is the rope! Only the definite, daring and self-experienced poetry can soar in the realm of this inspired class.

There are good poets in Marathi. But in the words of Dr. K. N. Watwe, Ph.D., and Acharya Atre, two foremost authorities on Sanskrit and Marathi Poetry respectively, even a dozen of that class would not together make one Savarkar. The difference between them and Savarkar is the difference between the simile and the metaphor. Some of them have repeated or expressed the thoughts of others, the sensations of others, the emotions of others. Savarkar has expressed his own emotions, his own sensations, his own thoughts. His style may, at some places, lack the 'correctitude' of strict school-masters and dry professors. In that Deathland he could not prune and polish it! Yet, in personality, in sincerity, in style, and in prophetic vision, he is superior to them all. In greatness of sweep, in loftiness of imagination, in the gift of prophetic vision, he scarcely yields to the great ones of world poetry. Take, for example, Savarkar's *magnum opus* in poetry, the *Kamala*. His

Kamala rivals in delineation and delicacy with Shakespeare's Miranda or Shakuntala of Kalidas.

Savarkar's creative imagination is powerful and is ever on its wings. In the twinkling of an eye it perches on the tower of the universe. "It surveys the royal procession of the Lord of the Universe marching in pomp and splendour. The ages are its miles and through the friction of the wheels of His Chariot have sprung dusty sparks that are shining as stars. In its pomp and splendour the procession is climbing down the endless path of Time. The comets are its arrows, the solar system is the row of fireworks going on. Suns and Moons are torches and Life is its energy!" To Savarkar's lofty imagination the whole universe is the image of the God Shiva. The limitless sky is its hair and in it are the Moon and the Milky Way!

Savarkar compares lotuses in water to half-nude Gopikas bewitched by Krishna, bathing in the Yamuna. To him Kamala, the heroine in his long Poem, looks as fascinating in a porched sofa as does a simile in the poetry of Kalidas. He describes her beauty in a marvellous simile. To him Kamala looks like the sweet dawn between fading moonlight and blooming of the day. To him at dawn stars look like the frozen drops of dew. He calls the bee an agent of the God of Love or Cupid that flies from flower to flower transporting kisses. Flowers are the imprints of kisses taken by the watchman of the nymphs who enter the garden secretly. In his famous Ballad on Sinhagad, the sea, the mother of gems, envies the lot of the earth because it has sheltered the invaluable jewel Tanaji, who fell fighting on the Kondana Fort.

What a good, great and grand poetry! The wonder of it is that it blossomed in the wild Andamans! The collection of his poems are aptly named as "Wild Flowers." These flowers have not met with world-wide appreciation for want of an agency that would distribute these flowers among the appreciating public of the world at large. Though complete in themselves, 'Kamala', 'Gomantak', 'Saptarshi', 'Virahochhvas', 'Mahasagara' are parts of the incomplete epic. His other poems, 'Chain', 'Cell', 'Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath', 'Oh Sleep', and 'On Death Bed' have a philosophical basis. These poems shed a searchlight on the innermost corner of the heart of Savarkar who loved entire secession from worldly affairs and

who was in his heart of hearts an ascetic loving a retired and contemplative life intent on soul-contemplation! To Savarkar engrossed in such soul-contemplation the very Shanivar Wada, the perennial source of political inspiration, appeared a heap of stones! But the world around had not reached that detached stage of viewing things through such an angle! Peoples were crying for food, freedom, and faith. The worldly man comes out and he was Savarkar, the revolutionary realist!

Hence it was clear that Savarkar's outlook on life was that of an ascetic moving in great events. Love of action and not renunciation of action was the predominant and positive note of his life and literature. His views on the Vedant philosophy are ever to be remembered. He writes from the Andamans to his brother: "The Americans need Vedanta philosophy and so does England, for they have developed their life to that fullness, richness and manliness—to Kshatriyahood and so stand on the threshold of that Brahminhood, wherein alone the capacity to read and realize such philosophy can co-exist. But India is not. We are at present all Shudras and can't claim access to the *Vedas* and Vedanta. . . . We, as a nation, are unfit for these sublime thoughts, for it is well known that Bajirao II was a great Vedantist and that is why, perhaps, he could not see the difference between a kingdom and a pension. Let us study history, political science, science, economy; live worthily in this world, fulfil the householders' duties and then the philosophic dawn might come."

To him life on this earth was like a three petalled flower. One is coloured with pleasure, the second with the colour of pain, the third mixed or colourless. Now the petal of pleasure and then that of pain gets warmed and thus this vain round of recurrence goes on. According to him the true picture of the world is one wherein a tigress with a piece of flesh of deer in its mouth is suckling its babe, a picture of pity and cruelty.

Savarkar was not a bloodthirsty man. He was guided by the noble precept laid down by Lord Krishna: "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by." He said he was a revolutionary under necessity and not by inherent choice. He sincerely abhorred absolute violence. Where is the man who would run the ordeals of fire or would tread the paths of furies with bleeding feet for sheer amusement, he asked. He was a man who

always fought for a just and righteous cause, for the protection of the good and for the destruction of the evil-doers. "For it was this very principle," he stated, "that humanity was a higher patriotism that made us so restless when we saw that a part of it should aggrandise and swell like a virulent cancer in such wise as to threaten the life of the human whole, and forced us, for want of any other effective remedy, to take to the surgeon's knife and feel that severity for the moment would certainly be mercy in the long run."

He said in his poem which he wrote in April 1919 when he was in the jail hospital for diet and treatment. 'On Death Bed': "If ever I deemed it legitimate to have recourse to the exceptional swift and severe rules of emergency, it was only because duty led me and my generation into circumstances so abnormal and urgent as to render them indispensable in the interest of righteousness itself." Duty for the sake of duty! He interpreted that duty of man. He said: "Though the wise men, priests and sooth-sayers speak differently and in diverse accents, yet whatever conduces to the progress of Man, whatever contributes to the greatest good of the human soul and had been approved by the pious and the pure that alone I took to be the Duty of Man."

Death had no horrors for Savarkar. He said that he had paid the debt he owed to his Motherland by facing the furious fire, getting himself consumed bone by bone and flesh by flesh; he had paid the debt of God by fighting under 'His Banner,' and that he had adopted the Abhinava Bharat to continue the line of his family. He realized the kinship with all that breathed in the Universe and at times was so overpowered with a sense of Universal sympathy that his feet would get stuck to the spot lest he should trample to death under his feet some blades of grass, or worms. Often in a pensive mood he held the morsel in his hand, thinking that it contained seeds which were flesh and life striving to grow and enjoy the air they breathed. Man is an unfolding God says the Hindu philosophy and Savarkar in his pensive mood typified its spirit.

If he died in despair, he said, he would not feel sorry for there was no end to one's desires and ambitions. If the end of life was shifting to another life according to merits, he was confident that a good place would be reserved for him as he possessed the

best testimonials from Lord Krishna himself that he served selflessly for the cause of Man, God and Country. If life meant disintegrating into fragments and atoms, death would be to him a sound sleep in that case; or let those atoms, he said, forget themselves and let the 'I' in him disappear into the Universal oneness!

Yet there is one more point notable about Savarkar the poet. He introduced blank verse metre called 'Vainayak' into Marathi poetry. The Anushtubha metre of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* fame, Milton's blank verse metre which poet Madhusudan of Bengal popularized in Bengal, charmed him exceedingly in his school and Andaman days.

The romanticism in Savarkar's poetry was properly bridled by a sense of realism, a love of service and sacrifice, and a goal of universalism. His head is towered up in the Universe, his mind weighing good and evil, and his eyes watchful for the greatest good of Man. Front-rank critics and great ones of Marathi literature from Kelkar to Madkholkar, from Daji Nagesh Apte to P. K. Atre, all paid glowing tributes to his genius as they were fascinated by the flights of Savarkar's imagination conveying great and good thoughts!

* * *

In the Andamans Savarkar had ample time to philosophize his political theories and theorise his political philosophy. His thoughts, reading and experience evolved into a definite ideology. The seeds of his ideology took firm root and sprouted into a tree. The decrease in the population of the Hindus and the consequent danger to Hindustan by the rise of rival and alien proselytizing faiths absorbed his mind. In Europe people belong mostly to one religion. There the strife between races aimed at predominance and domination. In India it is a question of rival religions, where kidnapping and conversion are ostensibly done in the name of religion to strengthen a rival faith. The danger Savarkar scented was clear, straight and real.

Though the British Government had to resort to a policy of non-interference in religious affairs, they were in a way not inclined to curb the proselytizing activities of the Muslims. Mosques, markets, dens of Muslim robbers and prison houses were free for the conversion of Hindus. Whenever news came

to Savarkar about the conversion of a Hindu lad or a prisoner, he was restless and he turned his mind devotedly to the serious threat, outwardly a religious but inwardly a crucial problem of national importance and existence.

Almost all Indian jails had a majority of Hindu prisoners. The authorities naturally would appoint non-Hindus to watch and control the prisoners. Hence Muslims easily rose to the posts of petty officers and havaldars and warders. Those Pathans, to quote the verdict of the Cardew Commission, 'enjoyed a bad pre-eminence as the active agents in the matter of unnatural vices.' They turned these opportunities to bad account and harassed and forced Hindu convicts to embrace Islam. The revolutionaries in the Cellular Jail were almost exhausted due to their great efforts in agitation and action in India and sufferings in the Andamans. In those hard, helpless, and hopeless days none of them desired to aggravate their lot by opposing the religious fanaticism of the wicked and vile Pathan petty officers. Obviously from fear some of them tried unworthily to cloak their cowardice with a philosophy of tolerance and broad-mindedness. It mattered little to those progressive men whether that vile and fallen lot of wretched Hindus remained in or went out of their fold and field! 'Let it be so,' summed up their social and individual psychology. What was worse, some even miserably passed days, giving the Muslim warders high hopes of their self-conversion.

Suffering for a nation's welfare is a public and personal duty. Savarkar was doing it in jail. Why this additional burden? But then a report of the conversion of a Hindu or an injustice done to a prisoner would inflame him. Like a lion helpless in a cage, he restlessly fluttered over the insult and injustice done to the racial, national, or religious soul. So with curses on his head, cares in his heart, burden on his back and troubles under his feet, he resolved to put a stop to the conversion activities of the Muslims.

With that aim in view he began to shake off the passivity in Hindus, change their tone and tendencies, mould them into an organism alive to every injury, and make them masters of their fate and land. To the broad-minded and wiseacres he asked why the non-Hindus tried to win over to their fold that base, wicked, corrupt lot of dangerous drunkards and murderers.

They said the Muslims were fanatic and with them reason did not weigh. Well, why did these cool and cultured Europeans use the hoe of gold for removing that mud in Indian villages, woods and valleys? Of course, to fertilize their lands of influence with the manure! Savarkar asked his colleagues why those Westerners polluted their holy religion with that vile and worthless lot of humanity? Why should the Missionaries and Maulavies render service or offer food and shelter as a price for religion and never from a humanitarian angle? If the ulterior motive of these Missionaries and Maulanas was to increase the strength of their religion and to dominate the world, then let the Hindus have the freedom to serve Humanity in their own way. Let the Hindus aim at increasing their numerical strength to fight their struggle for existence and material well-being. Thus went forth his chain of arguments.

Savarkar impressed upon the minds of his colleagues that it was not a fact that a vicious man necessarily gave birth to vicious men. New Australia and Canada had sprung up from such vile and base elements thrown away from their mother countries. He reminded them that the *Ramayana*, one of the best epics of the world, was given to the world by Valmiki, a man fallen in early life. To Savarkar losing one man was losing numerous future families and increasing the numerical strength of the rival faiths in India!

Allured by comforts, enticed by passion, baited by vices and dreaded by tortures, a few Hindu prisoners in the Andamans were driven into the fold of Islam. The jail administration did not take these conversions seriously. One day Savarkar came to know that a Hindu boy was on the verge of conversion. When the Superintendent came on his rounds, Savarkar cried out, "Application, Sir!" The Superintendent asked him to see and speak for himself. Savarkar tauntingly asked him whether the Superintendent had ordered the other prisoners also, who caught their letters or trapped the revolutionaries, to mind their own business. Savarkar said angrily that he would make a complaint; let him hear or not. The Superintendent toned down. He then informed the Superintendent about the likely conversion. The Superintendent asked him why the Hindus did not convert Muslims instead of making complaints against them. Savarkar stated that Hinduism was a non-proselytizing religion.

He told the officer that Hinduism was based on the noblest possible principles. To Hindus, he said, religion was not like the colour of the chameleon. He concluded: "It is their received and noble belief that all the religions of the world are at bottom one and have the same aim, namely the welfare of humanity. The Hindus never look upon religion as a means of wordly strength and social solidarity. That is in my opinion their fundamental blunder from the point of view of national strength and solidarity."

The Superintendent understood Savarkar's stand well. He asked Savarkar what he expected the authorities to do. Savarkar stated that no prisoner should be converted to any other religion by fraud, force, deception, or enticement without the knowledge and consent of the jail authorities, who on their part should certify the *bona fides* of every case. He added that all minors should be brought up in their parents' faith until they were able to judge the things for themselves. The Superintendent agreed. And while departing he rated the Pathan warder who was about to execute the conversion in question.

The boy in question was saved, but the Hindu prisoners would not allow him to sit in their file for meals. He sat beside Savarkar. So they called Savarkar Bhangi Babu. In the end Savarkar persuaded some of them to discard that suicidal attitude and by and by the Shuddhi spirit came to stay. It was a piece of great news all over the Andamans that Savarkar had stopped the conversion of a Hindu. Upon this some convicts, who had come across the creeds and propaganda of the Arya Samaj while in India, were organized. With the help of some fearless and bullying prisoners, some prisoners were reconverted to Hinduism, their mother fold. Those Sanatanists who had called Savarkar Bhangi Babu now began to look at the problem from a new angle of vision, realised the value of solidarity and strength and appreciated the farsighted aim of Savarkar and supported him. Even a Christian of long standing was reconverted to Hinduism; later on several Muslim attempts were foiled by an eleventh-hour intervention or early precautions. The Muslims complained against Savarkar that he converted even born Muslims to Hinduism. Hindus realised now that Muslims could be converted to Hinduism. Muslim converts and

warders reviled Savarkar incessantly, but were silenced by the turbulent Hindu convicts drilled in the art of railing.

A new idea caught the imagination of the Hindus. They now learnt that no man lost his faith because he took food, drink and shelter outside his faith. The new-comers began to bear Hindu names, read Hindu scriptures and take meals with their co-religionists. Hindu temples in the colony were opened to them by and by. Formerly at the wharf of Port Blair Hindu prisoner-workers sometimes had to starve as they refused to take food from the bags mischievously touched by Muslims. Savarkar showed them their humiliating plight and suicidal foolishness and encouraged them to touch the bags of food first themselves. They did so and the Muslims, knowing the reaction and the double edge of the weapon, stopped the mischievous nonsense!

Despite the danger of personal violence, Barrie's intrigues and incitement against him and the threats of murder from Barrie's lackeys, Savarkar could succeed in infusing an organic feeling among the Hindu prisoners and even catching the imagination of Hindus in the Colony. Once a Muslim ruffian incited by Barrie struck a blow on Babarao Savarkar's head. Babarao bled profusely. Barrie rejoiced at the incident. Savarkar remarked: " Where dreaded gallows failed to subdue the spirit of the Savarkars, can these goats ever succeed? "

Just then the census hour struck and Savarkar persuaded the Arya Samagists and the Sikhs to record their caste and religion as Hindu or at least Hindu, with the words Arya or Sikh in the bracket. Ever since his London days Savarkar was thinking over a national definition of a ' Hindu ' that would embrace all the folds of Hindus—the Sanatanists, the Sikhs, the Brahmos, the Arya Samajists and others. At last he, in a divine moment, composed his famous definition in a melodious couplet. According to it ' A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat-Varsha from the Indus to the Seas as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland, that is the cradle land of his religion.' That definition he developed and brought out in a thesis after his transfer from the Andamans to the Ratnagiri Jail. The chaos and confusion created by nearly fifty current definitions of the word Hindu including the one made by Tilak, which was mainly religious, were brought politically, socially, religious-

ly in order, method, historic perspective and scientific thought. This definition of the word Hindu by Savarkar is held by many as the greatest contribution to Hindu thought, history and polity.

Savarkar held that Reconversion (Shuddhi) consolidated and strengthened the Hindu Society. He asked the Hindus to shed inferiority complex and the idea of contamination by non-Hindus in respect of food, water, shelter and touch so that there might be less cause for friction and fight between Hindus and Muslims; because the Muslims being deprived of their throne and sword, the only means that remained for them was rationalism. He was of the opinion that every one should be allowed to propagate the cause and mission of his religion by a rational and peaceful way. He never hated the Muslims because they belonged to a different religion. He abhorred the aggressive, unjust and wild designs of the Moslems and Missionaries. Except for these points, Savarkar fought for all prisoners alike and the facilities wrested were enjoyed by Muslims too.

When a few years after, in November 1920, Savarkar was appointed foreman in charge of oil godown, he never harassed the Muslim prisoners because they were Muslims. He treated them justly and kindly, but warned them not to harass Hindu prisoners, or to soil the water in the tank by cleansing their feet in it, or to do purposely less work and bring him into trouble. Muslims began to say 'Ram Ram' and a tiny Hindu Raj came into being in the Andamans. No mischief, no trouble, no punishment. Merchants, traders, or wealthy men under the guise of merchants, went to have a glimpse of the Foreman of the tiny Hindu Kingdom whose capital was the oil-depot. Untouchability had disappeared from the kingdom. Pan-Hindu consciousness was pulsating through Hindu veins.

Savarkar had been hammering into the heads of his colleagues and convicts that among the social institutions, the greatest curse of India was the caste-system. "The mighty current of Hindu life," he said, "is being threatened to perish in bogs and sands." He added: "It is no good saying, 'We will reduce it to four caste system first'. That would not and should not be. It must be swept away root and branch."[1] Many a time he would touchingly remark that the curse of caste-system had deprived India of several great brains.

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 32.

Savarkar strongly disapproved the Andhrasabha movement and similar disintegrating moves. He disliked that every province should desire separation and shout and invoke long life to itself. How could the province live unless the nation lived, he asked. "They all—Maharashtra, Bengal, Madras—are great and will live long but through Her, India! So let us not say '*Andramataki*' but '*Bharatmataki Jai*' of whom Andhra is a limb and let us sing not 'Vanga Abhar, but Hind Abhar'," [2] he warned.

In one of his annual letters Savarkar said that he was strongly in favour of inter-provincial marriages among the Hindus. He was deadly opposed to the practice of marrying the European girls at that stage of the nation.[3]

* * *

World War I broke out in August 1914 as forecast by Savarkar in his London days. But alas! He was not free to utilize the golden opportunity to free his nation. Yet he felt the situation advantageous to India in many respects. "It sent a thrill of delight," he wrote in March 1915 from the Cellular Jail, "in my heart to hear that the Indian troops were allowed to go to Europe, in their thousands to fight against the best military power in the world and that they had acquainted themselves with such splendour and were covered with military glory. Thank God! Manliness after all is not dead yet in the land." [4]

Considering that the needs and difficulties of the British Government were the opportunities for Indian progress, Tilak strategically supported the militarisation policy of the Indian Government. But, strangely enough, Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, who was back from Africa, surprised the country when he girded up his loins, trod and toured the country and panted for recruiting unconditionally soldiers for the British Government to give bloodbath to the Germans. Tilak's step was responsive and statesmanly. Gandhi's step was emotional and loyal. He had helped the British Government during the Boer war and received a reward for his loyal services to the British Empire.

[2] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 36.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

The Indian revolutionaries in Europe and America now decided to throw their whole weight into the direction of a revolt. They prepared themselves for an all-out struggle for overthrowing British rule in India. To that end the revolutionary leaders like Lala Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya of the Abhinava Bharat, and Raja Mahendra Pratap were busy discussing plans and spinning negotiations with Germany. With the full support of the German War Cabinet they set up in Germany the Indian Independence League called the Berlin Committee led by leaders like Dr. Champakaram Pillai, Hardayal and Chattopadhyaya. Dr. Pillai also was a great revolutionary, who stood for a united greater India and had won two doctorates in Berlin, one in Engineering and the other in Economics and Politics. The Committee issued manifestos and founded anti-imperialist organisations. The Kaiser of Germany and the Sultan of Turkey pressed the Indian princes to rise in revolt against the British rulers.[5]

Accordingly, global plans were devised by the Berlin Committee to smuggle lakhs of rifles and ammunition through the Muslim countries and Tibet for the revolutionaries of the Ghadr party in the Punjab, to land the revolutionaries of the Ghadr party in Bengal and attack the Eastern Frontiers of India. One of the major plans was to raid Port Blair and pick up their leader Savarkar and other revolutionaries from the Andamans. The Sedition Committee Report tells us that a third steamer was to sail to the Andamans, shipping a cargo of arms at sea and raid Port Blair, pick up anarchists and convicts.'[6] Mr. J. C. Ker, referring to the plans of the German Government, states: "During the war efforts were made by the Germans to use the Indian revolutionaries for their own purposes. Elaborate and world-wide plans were devised to land arms in Bengal for the use of the revolutionaries there, and emissaries proceeded between the leaders in India and German representatives in Batavia and elsewhere to complete the arrangements."[7]

The revolutionary leaders recruited and inspired Indians abroad to fight for the Independence of their Motherland under the banner of Ghadr party initiated by the leaders of the Abhi-

[5] The *Times of India*, 2 June 1955.
[6] Sedition Committee's Report, p. 124.
[7] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 233.

nava Bharat and inspired by Savarkar's slogans, Savarkar's book *War of Independence of 1857*, his pamphlets and his personality. Pictures showing Savarkar at the oil-mill were flashed in American papers and in the Ghadr papers started by Hardayal on November 1, 1913, at San Francisco. Hardayal's papers preached the formation of secret societies to start a revolution to expel the British by any and every means, murder or mutiny. Thus the oil Savarkar pressed out at the oil-mill in the Andamans did not fall into the bucket down below, but outside it and inflamed the fire and wrath of the Ghadr revolutionaries. And so the remark made by Sir J. C. Ker that "with his (Savarkar's) removal, the society in London ceased to be of any great consequence, and on the outbreak of the Great War it was broken up," [8] is not wholly true; for the heads of the Ghadr were the lieutenants of Savarkar. Simply for the sake of safety and strategy the headquarters was shifted to the United States of America.

At the instance of the British Government Hardayal was arrested in America on March 25, 1914, but he was released on bail and he fled to Europe. The heartlessness of Barrie was unending. One day he informed Savarkar that his friend Hardayal was due to come to Andamans. After many secret inquiries Savarkar learned that Hardayal had in fact given the Government of the U.S.A. the slip and fled to Europe.

At times when in good humour, Barrie would of himself break shocking news to Savarkar. One day in February 1915, Barrie told Savarkar that G. K. Gokhale was dead. Savarkar paid his meed of tributes to the memory of the great patriot. Hearing the glowing tributes paid by Savarkar to the selfless service and sterling patriotism of Gokhale, Barrie was taken aback and he noted in his diary that though outwardly the Maharashtrian leaders differed, inwardly they were of one mind. Hardayal also held the same opinion. Gokhale also admired Savarkar's intellect and patriotism and talked about him very highly many a time to N. C. Kelkar.[9]

As pre-planned by the revolutionaries with the German Government, the German war machine began to operate. The

[8] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 232.
[9] Introduction to S. R. Ranade's *Swatantryaveer Barrister Savarkar* (Marathi), p. 4.

German submarine, *Emden*, with Dr. Pillai in it, moved in the Bay of Bengal raiding British cargo-ships, bombarding some of the places on the Eastern coast of India, striking terror into the hearts of the authorities of the Andamans and causing sleepless nights to the Indian Government. Once Dr. Pillai landed and in the guise of a fisherman saw the Maharaja of Kochin![10] There was a rumour in the Andamans that the *Emden* was to pick up Savarkar and send him in a German aeroplane to the headquarters of the Ghadr. Savarkar had also discussed this possibility with his colleagues in the Cellular Jail and was fully aware of it. But at this moment he was removed to the tower of the central building of the jail, and was strictly watched. Meanwhile, on November 11, 1914, the famous *Emden* was destroyed and the escape of Savarkar could not be effected. The French Government insincerely handed Savarkar to the British Government and the German Government struggled for his rescue!

In their other plans the revolutionaries succeeded considerably. About 8,000 Sikh revolutionaries arrived in India from America, Canada and the Far East in 1915, and the situation in the Punjab became tense and threatening. "The internal situation began to grow menacing," writes Lord Hardinge in his memoirs, "owing to the revolutionaries realising the military weakness consequent on depletion of the Indian troops." Alarmed by the growing menace, pressure and incursion of the revolutionaries, Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, got the Defence of Realms Act passed by the Legislative Assembly. Describing this critical situation, Mr. J. C. Ker says: "Early in the war a serious situation developed in the Punjab, arising out of the return from America of Sikhs who had been demoralized by the teaching of the Ghadr party. During the first three years of the War some 8,000 Sikhs came back from the United States, Canada, and the Far East. . . . Several risings were attempted, and efforts were made in two or three instances to seduce the Indian regiments. A large number of dacoities and murders were committed in many of the Punjab districts, and efforts were made to raise a rebellion."[11]

The War of Independence of 1857 had been suppressed with

[10] *Bharat Jyoti*, 25 January 1953.
[11] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 284.

the help of the Sikhs. To wash out the stigma from the history of 1857 this Second War of Independence was started by an overwhelming number of Sikh revolutionaries. They buzzed to undermine the loyalty of the Indian troops in India and Siam and induce them to take up the cause of freedom. There was trouble with the 10th Baluchis of which the Mashud company shot their officer in Bombay on their way to Mesopotamia. Revolutionary strongholds were discovered at Delhi, Lahore and Meerut. The brilliant Vishnu Ganesh Pingle from Maharashtra was arrested with ten loaded bombs inside the line of the 12th Cavalry at Meerut and was hanged. Conspiracies aimed at robbing the armoury and magazine of certain regiments were discovered at Lahore, Pindi and Ferozepore. In Bengal, too, revolutionaries like Narendra Bhattacharya, afterwards M. N. Roy, were striving their level best to achieve their goal. The *Komagatamaru*, a chartered steamer with 500 passengers, called at the mouth of Hoogly on September 26, 1914. Next day the Bengal police seized it. Its leader Gurdit Singh was arrested on November 15, 1921. Writing about this Mr. J. C. Ker observes: " Money (from Germany) was sent to the conspirators in Calcutta, and the nucleus of a training camp was set up in a remote spot in the jungle. This hiding place was discovered, and in a fight between the police and a party of the Bengalis armed with Mauser pistols, the leader was killed, and the plot collapsed. Another plan organised with the help of the Ghadr party was to enter Burma through Siam, and after gaining over the military police to proceed to the conquest of India."[12]

Armed with extensive powers and with the help of the 6,000 troops from Nepal, the British Government ruthlessly suppressed this heroic rising. There was a holocaust of victims at the altar of freedom. Some five thousand men were put on trial for treason in the Punjab alone. Five hundred revolutionaries were tried by court-martial and executed, eight hundred were sentenced to transportation for life, ten thousand were interned without trial, and a large number had to remain underground for years. Rivers of blood flowed. Yet the leaders and historians of Gandhian persuasion are drumming into the ears of the people that they won Independence without shedding blood!

[12] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 233.

Setting aside its previous decision of not transporting the prisoners to the Andamans, the British Government transported about 500 revolutionaries, who had thus taken part, fought and failed in the Second War of Independence, to the Andamans. Prominent among them was Bhai Parmananda, who had already come into contact with Savarkar during the latter's London days. On their arrival in the Cellular Jail the revolutionary leaders narrated to Savarkar how his writings and the great book on '1857' and his sacrifice had a magic effect in changing them overnight into patriots and warriors! The new batch of the prisoners consisted of farmers, workers and businessmen. It was difficult for the jail authorities to bend them to their will. There were point blank refusals. Nobody would do hard work. For a time the jailer and the Superintendent seemed to lower their voice and the standard of work, and requested them to work as best as they could. There were scuffles and broils over bad words. Words of abuse were returned with blows, and consequently many noble and spirited patriots from this group perished in their helpless fight with the cruel jail authorities in their prime of youth.

During the war period Savarkar made vigorous attempts to effect his release. He made petitions and appeals to the Government of India that he should be released with or without conditions or at least be enlisted in the volunteer corps. The authorities knew his intention and were not at all willing to do so. To them a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush! Savarkar's wife also petitioned the Indian Government for his release. She said that his case went undefended as he relied on the French Government for the right of asylum. Savarkar asked his younger brother Dr. Savarkar in his annual letter why the Indian National Congress had not uttered a word of sympathy and fought shy of speaking about the release of political prisoners when responsible leaders like General Botha released all Boer rebels or John Edward Redmond struggled and succeeded in getting all the Irish prisoners released. He wrote to his brother to agitate in the matter and send a public petition so that, if at all the release came at any time, it would be acceptable as a token of the countrymen's love and remembrance for those who never ceased to love their land of birth and rightly or wrongly fell fighting for her.

Thereupon provincial conferences passed resolutions demanding the release of 'political prisoners.' But it was seen that there was some vagueness about the phrase 'political prisoner,' prevailing in the press and the statements of politicians and resolutions of the conferences. Savarkar, therefore, asked his brother to note that the term political could be distinguished from 'private' only by the criterion of the motive of the act and not by the act itself. He said: "No act is or can be by itself political. For even a rebellion, if that proceeds entirely for my own bread and butter, is not political and ought not to create any sympathy in others." So he informed his brother that the point should definitely be pressed that "political prisoners means all those undergoing imprisonment whether convicted or not, whether for individual acts or acts in general, for actions which proceeded from purely and admittedly political motives." [13]

In his petitions to the Viceroy and Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, Savarkar submitted to them that while they were considering the question of Reforms in India they should release all political prisoners. Grant of reforms and grant of amnesty for all prisoners and exiles in foreign lands should go hand in hand. He said: "How can there be peace and contentment and trust in a land where a brother is torn away from a brother, where thousands upon thousands are rotting in cage cells and stand exiled and in jails, and where every other family has a brother or a son, a father or a friend, or a lover snatched away from its bosom and kept pining away his life in the parched and thirsty Saharas of separation!"

"If progress is made easy," Savarkar asked, "Where is the man who would run the ordeals of fire or would tread the paths of furies with bleeding feet for sheer amusement! That is rare and rarer it is to find a true patriot and humanitarian who would indulge in reckless and bloody and necessarily outrageous revolutions—if but and even when, a safer, nobler, more certainly moral because entirely effective and employing least resistance—if but such a path, the path of constitutional progress be open and accessible to him?" He added: "It is a mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when there is no constitution at

[13] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 66.

all, but it is worse than a mockery, a crime, to talk of revolutions as if it were a work of rose water even when there is as elastic and progressive a constitution as, say, there is in England or in America." [14] In another letter he said: "If the Councils are made to represent the voice of the people there would be no hesitation on my part to stand by law and order which is the very foundation and basis of society in general and Hindu polity in particular. The man is a social animal; so is the State."

Needless to say, this petition was indirectly and obviously a pressure on the Government and a support on behalf of the revolutionary party to the national forces that were demanding responsible Government in India. Indian Government wanted to know the views of the revolutionary party on the proposed Reforms and so its accredited leader, Savarkar, was asked by the authorities to offer his views on the drafts of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Even in the published draft of Mr. E. S. Montagu's scheme was expressed the hope that the revolutionists would now find something to be done constitutionally for the realization of their hopes and aspirations and would change their minds and return to useful paths of activity.[15] The blood of martyrs never drops in vain. They die so that humanity may prosper.

Savarkar gave in his letter of July 6, 1920, a brief summary of his new petition which he had submitted on April 6, 1920, to the Indian Government depicting his ideal of Human Government or World Commonwealth. Viewed from the angle of truth, sympathy, justice, impartiality and looking to the times, this letter revealed why Guy A. Aldred of Britain claimed for Savarkar a place in the line of prophets and humanists of the world. Those who boast of their broad-mindedness and large sympathies and dream of world Federation should pause for a while to read the following passage from Savarkar and compare it with their present ideal, for Savarkar declared his ideal when they were, speaking politically, in their swaddling clothes. Savarkar observed in 1920:

"We believe in a universal state embracing all mankind and wherein all men and women would be citizens working for and

[14] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 72.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

enjoying equally the fruits of this earth and this sun, this land and this light, which constitute the real Motherland and Fatherland of Man. All other divisions and distinctions are artificial though indispensable. Believing thus that the ideal of all political Science and Art is or ought to be a Human State in which all nations merge their political selves for their own fulfilment even as the cells in an organism, organisms in families and tribes, and tribes in nation states have done, and believing therefore the humanity is higher patriotism and therefore any Empire or Commonwealth that succeeds in welding numbers of conflicting races and nations in one harmonious, if not homogeneous whole in such wise as to render each of them better fitted to realize, enrich and enjoy life in all its noble aspects is a distinct step to the realization of that ideal. I can consciously co-operate with any attempt to found a Commonwealth which would be neither British nor Indian but which may, till a better name be devised, be styled as an Aryan Commonwealth." Savarkar concluded: "With this end in view I ever worked in the past. With this end in view I am willing to work now. And therefore I rejoiced to hear that the Government have changed their angle of vision and meant to make it possible for India to advance constitutionally on the path to Freedom and strength and fulness of life. I am sure that many a revolutionist would like me cry halt under such circumstances and try to meet England under an honourable truce, even in a half-way house as the reformed Council Halls promised to be, and work there before a further march on to progress be sounded." [16] Whenever Savarkar turned introvert the philosopher in him dominated the politician and he breathed such great thoughts.

[16] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, pp. 88-89.

CHAPTER 8

Out of His Grave

WORLD War I terminated in 1918 and soon after a systematic and persistent propaganda was carried on throughout the country for the release of all political prisoners. People, popular leaders and the press voiced their demand for the release of political prisoners through petitions, meetings, conferences, congress sessions and in Councils. The National Union of Bombay, Anantrao Gadre, Senāpati Bapat and Shivrampant Paranjpe took a leading part in collecting signatures of the people on the petition and the great petition was forwarded to Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. The Secretary of State for India rejected it. Under a special resolution the Amritsar Congress demanded the release of all political prisoners. The District Home Rule Leagues from Maharashtra, too, wired to the Viceroy demanding the release of the Savarkar brothers. The royal proclamation in connection with the royal clemency to political prisoners issued on December 24, 1919, stated in clear terms: "I therefore direct my Viceroy to exercise in my name and on my behalf my royal clemency to political prisoners in the fullest measure which, in his judgment, is compatible with public safety. I desire to extend it on this condition to persons who, for offences against the State or under any special or emergency legislation are suffering imprisonment or restriction upon their liberty."

According to this proclamation, all provincial Governments opened the gates of their prisons. Many political and ordinary prisoners were set free from provincial jails and the Cellular Jail too. Even those who had come after Savarkar or were his co-prisoners were released, but the Government of India held Savarkar's release incompatible with public safety. In his case all rules were literally and strictly, and many a time unjustly, enforced. Ordinary prisoners were allowed to settle on the

Island after five years' imprisonment, but the Savarkar brothers were singled out as an exception to this rule even after ten years. All hard-skinned convicts were given light work, but the soft-skinned Savarkars were given the hardest possible work from the beginning. Savarkar had passed through a critical illness early in 1919. He was in the jail hospital on deathbed. But he was now much improved.

After eight long years Government permitted Dr. N. D. Savarkar to see his brothers in the Cellular Jail. Savarkar's wife and Dr. Savarkar saw him in the last week of May 1919. The Savarkar brothers were startled to find the absence of Yashodabai, wife of Babarao Savarkar. The struggling flame of her noble life had flickered away just two months earlier! Yashoda Vahini was to Savarkar his earliest friend, his sister, his mother and his comrade—all in one, all at once. She really died as dies a *satee*! Deserted by all relatives, cursed as the wife of a convict by unpatriotic persons, separated from her husband, crushed by overwhelming grief, she had to pass her days in miserable conditions till the release of Narayanrao Savarkar on June 23, 1911. She perished in her unconscious state pining for a glimpse of her husband. Savarkar's wife was supported by her father despite the frowns of the Government. Another lady, Savarkar ever remembered with grateful tributes, was Madame Cama who had been a second mother to his younger brother and stood so nobly and so faithfully by them in the darkest hour of their life. "At the touch of one such faithful, noble, unshaken, loving hand," wrote Savarkar, "one's heart recovers its belief in humanity—belief rudely shaken by the disappearance of the closest and by the treachery of the truest and by the indifference of the dearest." The interview terminated in an hour in the presence of the jail authorities, Savarkar being given some time to speak to his wife separately.

As regards other facilities, Savarkar was given the work of a clerk and afterwards was allowed to work as the foreman of the oil-depot and department in the latter part of 1920. The jail authorities sometimes allowed him to enjoy in the jail yard moonlit nights and starlit dawns in company with his brother Babarao. Barrie who expected to see the bones of Savarkar in the Andamans had gone away to lay his bones in safety as he

feared that any one of Savarkar's followers might blow up his head in India!

At last the heavy brunt Savarkar bore all along for his co-sufferers, the rigorous work, unhealthy food, crushing anxieties, sapping climate, and the monotonous dreary and insipid life told upon his nerves. His deteriorating health reached the lowest point of vitality and he was reduced to a skeleton. Chronic dysentery and diverse other ailments thoroughly crushed him. He was, at last, taken to jail hospital for treatment where tuberculosis of the lungs was suspected. Till the appearance of such a crisis in his health, for months he was sinking for want of medical help and hospital diet. For want of milk he softened his rice with water. Half-boiled, half-cooked food he no longer could digest. His brother Babarao, who was allowed at this stage to cook for himself, sent him 'Dal' secretly. But the illness was developing into a dangerous malady. Later, however, in the hospital he was given milk when he could not digest it. His diet dwindled to a sip of milk. His body burnt with constant fever. He grew delirious, often fell into dead faints and was under the grip of hallucinations. Forlorn, forsaken though not forgotten, he was rotting, withering and pining away in a lonely corner of the hospital, banned and barred from his near and dear ones and surrounded by unsympathetic men. Now death began to hover over his head.

Yet with a peaceful mind and composed feelings of a true yogin Savarkar invoked death. He was content with his achievements in life. He had seen the world, done his duty by his countrymen and acted in great events heroically. If the end of life was the passage to another world called heaven, then he was sure of a reserved place there as he had testimonials from Lord Krishna for having done his duty for duty's sake and if the end of life was to dissolve the composition of all elements, he was prepared to immerse them in the universal oneness! Wordsworths and Tennysons and Tagores would sing the glory of these self-experienced true feelings. Such is the grandeur, loftiness and piousness of these thoughts.

The jail life of any other Indian leader pales into insignificance before this horrible tale of Savarkar's life in the Cellular Jail. Lokmanya Tilak suffered most, but was at least enlivened

by the availability of writing material, help of a cook and a special little house. Not to speak of those who were speechless and peaceless even in 'A' class rich rooms called the prison! Yet unbending, upright, and exemplary, Savarkar faced jail life with great fortitude. He agitated but within the four corners of the law; he acted resolutely, but skilfully, and reformed the jail life. At times he had to face misunderstanding among his colleagues. But he persuaded them to realize the facts. Never did he speak ill of his colleagues, not even of Barrie who inhumanly harassed him. All political prisoners had respect for Savarkar. The convicts regarded him as a god. His spirit, soul and energy were of a deathless stamp. Almost all the political prisoners from the Andamans with rare exceptions bade good-bye to political life afterwards. Bhai Parmananda and Ashutosh Lahiri who respectively spent four and seven years in the Cellular Jail were, however, the shining exceptions. The permanent effect of this jail life was seen later in Savarkar's health, lonely disposition, and his aloofness from the society.

During the two years 1920 and 1921 the release of political prisoners was still more persistently demanded by Indian leaders and Indian press. Vithalbhai Patel moved a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly on February 24, 1920, recommending amnesty to political offenders and referred to the case of Savarkar brothers. Speaking on the resolution, G. S. Khaparde dealt fully with the case of Savarkar brothers. Tilak wrote a letter to Mr. Montagu urging the release of Savarkar. In response to Savarkar's application dated the 6th April 1920, the Government of India, however, replied that they were not prepared at that moment to extend to the Savarkar brothers the benefit of amnesty.

In May 1920 even Gandhi wrote in *Young India* that no act of violence was proved against the Savarkar brothers. . . . The cult of violence had, at that moment, no following in India. Unless there was absolute proof that the discharge of these two brothers could be a danger to the State, he added, the Viceroy was bound to give them their liberty. Bhai Parmananda, after his release, saw Colonel Wedgewood then travelling in India and the Labour leader, on his return home, took up the cudgels on their behalf and expressed the terrible conditions in the Andamans through the British press in January and February 1921.

The Rev. C. F. Andrews, too, took up the cause and wrote a series of articles demanding the release of the prisoners of the Andamans. Savarkar's letters from the Andamans were printed and published in all provincial organs and given wide publicity. People and leaders were moved to read the letters.

Meantime, Dr. N. D. Savarkar with his brother's wife paid a second visit in November 1920 to see his brother. Although reduced to the backbone, Savarkar came laughing, his face looking sunken and dull like a clouded moon; his ivory-white cheekbones and skin gone darker. Yet the spirit was unbent, dominating the quivering flesh. His eyes were shining and intellect looked sharper as before.

At this time the Cardew Committee that had been to the Andamans for surveying the conditions in jail submitted its report to the Government of India and consequently Government decided to close the Andamans settlement. Savarkar propagated, even at the risk of creating temporary misunderstanding, that the colony should be fully developed and hence prisoners should not express their willingness to go and rot in Indian jails, rather they should develop and bring the colony to prosperity.

Years glided by. A sense of oneness and noble patriotism began to throb through the veins of the Andamans. At such a time the death of the great Tilak in 1920 shocked India and its repercussions reached the Cellular Jail. All prisoners observed a day of fast in memory of the Father of Indian Unrest. The fast was swiftly and silently organised to the surprise of the jail authorities. Tilak's dramatic disappearance caused the sudden appearance of Gandhi, a man of boundless capacity and fabulous energy, on the political stage. Writing on the subversive movements in India, Mr. J. C. Ker, who was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1901 to 1929, observed: "The death of Tilak in August 1920 removed his (Gandhi's) strongest rival for the Hindu leadership, and early in 1921 the campaign of Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers was in full swing." [1]

Gandhi started along with the Khilafat Movement his Non-violent Non-co-operation Movement in India. Swaraj was to be won within a year. Savarkar attacked the queer definitions of

[1] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cummings, p. 237.

non-violence and truth and emphasized that the Khilafat would prove an '*affat*'—a calamity.[2] Under the influence of this movement some underground revolutionary leaders were inveigled into appearing before the police and the result was that more revolutionary leaders were exiled into the Andamans. Savarkar told his colleagues that the end of politics was neither co-operation nor non-co-operation. It always hinged on responsive co-operation; the goal of humanity was mutual co-operation, he added.[3]

Leading members of the Central Legislative Assembly and Council began to take an active interest in Savarkar's case. In the Central Legislative Assembly Mohammad Faiyaz asked the Government on February 19, 1921, whether the Savarkar brothers were confined to cells and whether the Government contemplated taking action against the officers who ill-treated them. Mr. S. P. O'Donnell replied that they were not ill-treated, that their work consisted of light labour and that it would be dangerous to release them.

In March 1921 K. V. Rangaswamy Ayyangar, member of the Council of State, moved a resolution in the Council recommending the Governor-General-in-Council to extend amnesty to Savarkar. He said that Savarkar differed with Gandhi over the boycott of the Councils as Savarkar was willing to work the Reforms. Honourable Mr. Seddon said that Savarkar was a danger to the peace of the country. Hon. Sir William Vincent said that the Government of Bombay was stoutly opposed to his release as they feared that on the release of Savarkar excitement in the province would result in dreadful occurrences; but orders for the transfer of the brothers had been issued. Nabab Sir Bahram Khan and Mr. Hayat Khan opposed Savarkar being released and said that if Government released them they would be adding petrol to the fire. Thereupon Ayyangar said that he was ready to stand security for Savarkar to assure Government of his good intentions and honest motives. In the previous month the 'D' ticket was removed from Savarkar's chest.

At last came the day of Savarkar's return to his beloved Motherland. The unexpected happened. There was a stir among the prisoners and the people all over the island.

[2] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 496.
[3] *Ibid.*

Savarkar was overwhelmed with feelings at the thought of leaving those poor and patriotic hearts. One of them by name Kushaba Patil stealthily or with the connivance of the guards garlanded him! Before bidding good-bye to the anxious and devotional faces, Savarkar gave the sacred oath to the chosen few:

> One God, one country, one goal,
> One race, one life, one language.

And Oh! Look here he crossed out the ferocious gates of the Andamans amidst the indistinct greetings from his co-sufferers! London could not captivate him, *Morea* could not carry him without a furore and the Andamans could not suppress him. The Mother must feed him. What a ray of hope, a sigh of relief, and a flash of emotion must have overcome the brothers! Savarkar brothers were brought in the steamer S.S. MAHARAJAH, the same steamer that had carried them to the Deathland, and here Savarkar with his elder brother started on his voyage back to India on May 2, 1921. On board the ship a European officer presented Savarkar with Thomas A. Kempis' *Imitation of Christ.* It was Savarkar's favourite book. On the fourth day they caught sight of India. Savarkar exclaimed, "Behold Baba, the feet of Mother Bharat washed by the blue waters of the ocean." So saying they reverentially bowed their heads and shouted, "Hail Thee Goddess of Liberty! Bande Mataram!" The same unflinching love for Mother India even after such a great ordeal!

On their arrival the Savarkars were taken to Alipore Jail. Savarkar was already a name to conjure with. A Chinese youth rotting in that Jail asked him whether any bullet could harm him, for he had heard many romantic stories about Savarkar. Savarkar replied that a bullet must pierce him! A policeman asked Savarkar how many days he had swum in the ocean! "Not more than ten minutes," said Savarkar. Those artless simple believing souls got angry with Savarkar for belittling his own story. Savarkar belonged to the line of rationalists and not to that of mystics and hence he did not make capital of his matchless exploits.

No sooner did they arrive in Alipore Jail than the Savarkars

were hit below the belt by the *Capital*, an Anglo-Indian paper of Calcutta. 'Ditchar,' writing in the *Capital*, alleged that the Savarkar brothers had conspired with the Germans. Messrs. Manilal and Kher, Solicitors of Bombay, acting on behalf of the Savarkar brothers, extracted an unconditional apology from 'Ditchar' and the *Capital*.

From Alipore the brothers were separated, Babarao being taken to Bijapur Jail. Afterwards Babarao was transferred to Sabarmati Jail, from which he was released after a serious crisis in his health in September 1922. Savarkar was taken to Ratnagiri Jail *via* Bombay. There the same rotation and repetition of the rigours awaited him. What facilities he had secured in the Andamans were now lost. The monotony and insipid life once again drove him to throw away life, but he bridled his feelings and regained his balance at nightfall.

In August 1921, the Khilafat Movement ended in the Moplah rebellion in which thousands of Hindus were butchered; women were subjected to shameful indignities. Thousands of Hindus were converted to Islam; entire Hindu families were burnt alive; women in hundreds threw themselves into wells to avoid dishonour. Yet Gandhi regarded these murderers, looters and ravishers as god-fearing Muslims.

In the Ratnagiri Jail Savarkar came into contact with Khilafat prisoners and Gandhian truth-seekers. Though brought secretly, they persisted in reading the papers openly as devotees of Truth, and secured eatables through secret illegal sources and ate them stealthily. Their perverted brains did not mind, they said, if all Hindus became Moslems but they wanted Swaraj which was now a fact in sight attainable in a few months' time. The Khilafat Pathans in the Ratnagiri Jail rioted and the Hindu prisoners were saved as they were forewarned by Savarkar.

It was in the Ratnagiri Jail that Savarkar wrote his immortal work *Hindutva* and sent it out secretly. It was published under the pen name 'Mahratta' as the author Savarkar was in jail. The whole movement for Hindu Nation and Hindu polity is based on this book which defines the principles of Hindu nationalism. Indeed, this book bore out the truth that if there was any political leader in his day in India who stood on a firm, profound and well-defined political philosophy, it was, except M. N. Roy and Dr. Ambedkar, Savarkar. Some of his con-

temporaries looked to their mystic inner voices and others acted as messengers of Russian imperialism. The last chapters of this book are typically Savarkarian in grandeur, profundity, and eloquence. The poetical genius that produced the epic poetry shines through the pages of the book with eloquent reason and looks for a gleaming future. This was the need of the hour, the prescription of an expert doctor. Reading the signs of the times, Savarkar timely pointed out the ulcer that was growing and vitiating the health of Hindustan.

The book was both a result of Savarkar's deep reflection and an intense reaction to Gandhism which had surrendered to the anti-national demands of the Muslim reactionaries and had helped to feed and fan Muslim fanaticism.

The book inspired the saintly soul of Swami Shraddhananda and he exclaimed: "It must have been one of those Vedic dawns indeed which inspired our seers with new truths, that revealed to the author of *Hindutva* this 'Mantra', this definition of Hindutva!" Moved by the great aim, lofty vision and inspired exposition of the book, Vijayaraghavachari, an eminent leader of light and learning, remarked, "Especially the last chapter is inimitably eloquent and patriotic. I am afraid I am unable to find suitable words to describe my ideas regarding the book, especially the last chapter." N. C. Kelkar opined that Savarkar's thesis on Hindutva unfolded a new scientific analysis of Hindutva unseen hithertofore. Later on this book became the Bible of a great movement. Savarkar's poems and parts of his unfinished epic also appeared one by one. One of them is 'Gomantak.' This is a canto describing the eighteenth century horrors in Goa. In these poems Savarkar stirs the reader to the core. The reader shudders. The poems enrage him and his face darkens with shame. The poet narrates to the reader how under the guise of love and humanity the Portuguese in India perpetrated the vilest misdeeds which were a black tyranny and a disgrace to humanity! The *Kamala* also was published and was highly praised.

Shortly afterwards, followed the transfer of Savarkar to the Yeravda Jail. There he devoted himself to the spread of literacy and to the development of the jail library, and propagated his views on the current political questions among the Gandhian prisoners. Gandhi was then imprisoned for sedition in Yeravda

Jail. Savarkar narrated the stories of the lives of revolutionaries to the prisoners, whose knowledge of historic events was as hollow as their caps. He described their thrilling deeds, great sacrifices and selfless services to which, he said, at least their countrymen should be grateful, humanely if not patriotically. But they were struggling to secure special classes for themselves in prison. Why should they try to understand the sufferings, sacrifices and service of those dauntless revolutionary souls? He was also watchful in the prison about the conversion of Hindus. He had performed a *shuddhi* in Ratnagiri Jail and here he converted a Christian officer and his wife to the Hindu fold.

The year 1922 passed by. In 1923 at the third Ratnagiri District Political Conference, Savarkar's unconditional release was demanded by a special resolution. The Savarkar Release Committee led by Jamnadas Mehta agitated and published one pamphlet 'Why Savarkar should be released'. A meeting was held at the Marwadi Vidyalaya, Bombay, and a strong demand was made for Savarkar's release. Vithalbhai Patel was in the chair. In 1923 the Indian National Congress at its Cocanada session at last passed a resolution, which was moved from the chair, demanding the release of Savarkar.

Now helpful winds began to blow in his direction. Sir Rufus Isaacs, now Lord Reading, who as Solicitor-General had led for the Crown in Savarkar's extradition trial in England, was Governor-General of India. He must have felt sympathy for Savarkar. His Excellency Sir George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, came with his Councillors to interview Savarkar. Lt.-Col. J. H. Murray, I.M.S., who was the Jail Superintendent in the Cellular Jail, was now at Yeravda as the Jail Superintendent. The conditions of release were prepared in the light of the discussions held between Savarkar and H.E. the Governor who was accompanied by Mr. A. Montgomerie, the then Home Member. After substituting a few words, Savarkar accepted the conditions, signed the terms on December 27, 1923. On January 4, 1924, Dr. Savarkar was informed that his brother would be released on January 6, and he was allowed to make arrangements for his brother's stay in Ratnagiri in consultation with him. Accordingly Dr. Savarkar saw his brother on January 5

in Yeravda Jail. And then Savarkar was released conditionally on January 6, 1924, from Yeravda Jail. The terms read:

(1) that Savarkar shall reside in Ratnagiri district and shall not go beyond the limits of that district without the permission of Government or in case of emergency of the District Magistrate;

(2) that he will not engage publicly or privately in any manner of political activities without the consent of Government for a period of five years such restrictions being renewable at the discretion of Government at the expiry of the said term.

The release orders said that Savarkar must proceed immediately by the nearest route to Ratnagiri and report the arrival personally to the District Magistrate, Ratnagiri.

The release of Savarkar was hailed with great satisfaction all over India. Savarkar was taken by Dr. V. M. Bhat to the City of Poona where Savarkar saw N. C. Kelkar. Shivrampant Paranjpe, with his changed outlook, appeared to Savarkar as a distortion of the great revolutionary apostle. Paranjpe talked to Savarkar about the proposed new daily, *Nava Kal*. Savarkar abruptly remarked with a pun that he knew only the old *Kal*!

But all was not yet well. The dark night of imperialism was still reigning. The owl, popularly known as the old dame of Bori Bunder, ominously hooted in its current topics: "At Ratnagiri he will have predecessor of a very different stamp. After the third Burmese War, King Thiba was exiled to Ratnagiri and it was there that he died."[4] What more humane and beneficial note can an owl hoot?

The political situation in India was getting complicated since 1915. S. P. Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha, was the last Moderate to preside over the Congress. He spoke in favour of gradual evolution and cautious progress, and his address proved to be the swan-song of the Moderates as Congressmen. The Liberals were the Moderates who had seceded from the Congress. Their big Gokhale and Mehta had passed away. The then Left Wing was growing powerful. Mrs. Annie Besant's Home Rule League and Tilak's grand entry into the Lucknow Congress hastened the fall of the Liberals.

[4] The *Times of India*, 7 January 1924.

On the eve of the Lucknow session the shrewd elements in the Muslim League adopted the Congress ideal of self-government for India within the empire. For winning support of the Muslim League to its demands, the Congress made a pact with the Muslim League, conceding them separate representation and communal electorates. The Lucknow Pact, after Tilak's death, unfortunately proved to be a rift in the lute. It was one thing for a man like Tilak to say that he wanted Hindu-Muslim unity and another for a man like Gandhi to say that he wanted Hindu-Muslim unity. The former had the confidence, strength and realism of Shivaji whereas the latter had the nervous surrendering mood of the Rajputs who placated the Muslim rulers of Delhi. The pact then reduced the political problem to a simple equation. If the Muslim League represented the Indian Moslems, whom did the Congress represent? The answer was all those Indians *minus* the Muslims. The Moderates and Moonje opposed this pact from the beginning! The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were declared on August 20, 1917, and were published in 1918. The Congress declared the reforms as disappointing and unsatisfactory. The Moderates pronounced this scheme a substantial instalment of responsible Government to be welcomed and improved upon.

Although Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, was of the opinion that the " separate representation and communal electorates were opposed to the teaching of history ", and " fatal to the democratization of institutions and caused disunion between the Hindus and the Mohammedans ",[5] he yielded to the Muslim demand as he feared a Moslem rising if he did not do so. Montagu confirmed the policy of Morley and Minto and the Lucknow Pact. Gokhale's testament also held this view and his skeleton plan recognised the need for separate and direct representation of Mohammedans and other non-majority communities![6]

Meantime, the Rowlatt Act was passed in 1919 and the Government of India took power to arrest and imprison any individual without trial. Tilak was then in London fighting out the Chirol case. Martial law reigned in the Punjab and roused general indignation. Then came the tragedy of Jallian-

[5] Montagu, E. S., *An Indian Diary*, p. 100.
[6] Aga Khan, H.H. the, *India in Transition*, p. 44.

walla Baug and the inauguration of Gandhi's Non-co-operation Movement in collaboration with the Khilafat Movement which was entirely religious, essentially fanatical and historically regressive. At this critical juncture Tilak passed away!

The fiasco and futility of Gandhi's non-co-operation and the collapse of the Khilafat Movement turned C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru to the Assembly with a view to giving organized opposition to the Government. Kelkar, Jayakar and Moonje, who were sceptical of Gandhi's political tactics and who were awakened by the Moplas' atrocities and outrages on Hindu women, men and children in Malabar, made common cause with this party. The Liberals in the new Assembly carried a motion declaring that they wanted a revision or re-examination of the reformed constitution at an earlier date than 1929. Hence they were also not liked by Government and their wisdom with moderation was disliked by the masses who were awakened to political consciousness by Tilak and Das. The strange, enigmatic, and conquering politician in Gandhi was about to retire into oblivion for the next five years. After the failure of Gandhi's Non-co-operation Movement and the Khilafat Movement, Sarojini Naidu declared that Mahatma Gandhi should not needlessly interfere in politics. He was a saint and he should be satisfied with the homage the people paid him.[7]

The Liberals were routed in the election of 1923. They lacked an organized party. The vociferous Das and Nehru occupied their places. Savarkar was willing to work the reforms. He always held that the movement for freedom should be launched from within and without!

[7] *Lokamanya*, 22 August 1924.

CHAPTER 9

Social Revolution

THUS Savarkar was interned in Ratnagiri where the defeated and dethroned King Theba of Burma had perished. Two weeks after this memorable event of January 6, 1924, the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha was established ostensibly through the influence and attempts of Babarao Savarkar, but, in fact, inspired by Savarkar himself. The main object of the Sabha was to organize, consolidate and unite the Hindus into one organic whole and enable them to oppose effectively any unjust aggression; thus while protecting their own cultural, religious and economic rights, the Hindus were to strive for the general welfare of mankind, universal compassion being the basic urge of Hinduism.

A few days after Savarkar's conditional release, R. G. Pradhan, W. S. Mukadam, S. S. Dev and A. N. Surve asked several questions in the Bombay Legislative Council in February 1924 regarding the conditional release of Savarkar. Pradhan asked the Government whether they had made or contemplated making provision for the maintenance of Savarkar and his family. The reply was in the negative.

The first event of note that took place in the history of the Sanghatanist party was the visit to Ratnagiri of Shankaracharya in May 1924, during the celebration of the Shivaji festival. The Sanghatanist party utilised the great occasion for arousing people's enthusiasm for the Sanghatan movement. But about this time plague broke out in Ratnagiri and their work was hindered. Consequently Savarkar was allowed to shift to Nasik, the city which he had transformed into the Jerusalem of Indian revolutionaries. After 19 years of glorious struggle and long incarceration Savarkar's entry into the city was hailed with great enthusiasm by the people. As a token of their gratitude he was presented on August 24, 1924, with a purse on behalf of Maharashtra. Dr. B. S. Moonje presided over the function and N. C.

Kelkar read out the address. Shankaracharya sent his blessings on the occasion by presenting a dress of honour to the great patriot. Expressing feelings of esteem, gratitude and love that Maharashtra cherished for Savarkar's heroic fortitude, sterling patriotism and untold sufferings in the cause of freedom, the address presented to Savarkar ended with the hope that Savarkar would soon be a free man to carry on his mission in the country unrestricted and unhampered.

Savarkar carried on his work for the uplift of the Hindu society in Nasik too. During his stay at Nasik, he rescued some Mahar Hindus from the snare of the Agakhani Mohammedans. With the permission of the Government, he visited Bhagur, Trimbak, Yeola and Nagar, and propagated his new Hindu Sanghatanist ideology among the people. At Bhagur, Savarkar, to the horror of the orthodox, had tea at the house of an Untouchable and expressed his wish that after his death his dead body should be carried by a Mahar, a Maratha, a Brahmin and a Mang.[1] The rousing receptions accorded to Savarkar and his stirring speeches aroused suspicion in the Government quarters and so they compelled him to return to Ratnagiri.

On his way back to Ratnagiri, Savarkar visited Bombay in the second week of November 1924. There the Muslim leader Shaukat Ali came to meet him. The Muslim leader praised Savarkar for his patriotism and sacrifice; but he said that he disliked Savarkar's Hindu Sanghatan ideology and wished that it should be stopped. Thereupon Savarkar asked the Muslim leader to stop his Khilafat Movement first if he wanted him to stop Hindu Sanghatan Movement. Shaukat Ali replied that the Khilafat Movement was the breath of his nostrils. Savarkar told him that as long as there were separate organisations for the Muslims and the movement of conversion was carried on by them, so long the movement of Hindu Sanghatan and the propaganda for reconversion would go on unabated. At this Shaukat Ali told Savarkar that the Muslims were agitated and were against his Hindu Sanghatan. If he did not give it up and mend matters he left him to his fate. Savarkar replied with equal force that where the mighty British *Raj* failed to

[1] *Samata*, 21 September 1928.

browbeat him, a handful of Muslims armed with knives would not succeed.

Then the Muslim leader told Savarkar that the Muslims had many other countries and they would leave India, if inevitable. Savarkar at once answered back, "O quite freely! Why do you wait? The Frontier Mail is daily running towards that direction!" Shaukat Ali was now quite nervous. While taking Savarkar's leave, he cut a joke to make up the loss he suffered in arguments with Savarkar. With a bitter tone he said he was a giant and Savarkar was a dwarf and that he could punch Savarkar easily. "Here," said Savarkar sharply, "I am not disinclined to accept your challenge. Come on! You know Shivaji was also a dwarf before the giant Afzulkhan. They had a meeting. And everybody knows what was the history afterwards!" The Muslim leader lost his face and stepped out.

Meantime, an attempt was made by leading members in the Bombay Legislative Council to press the Government to remove restrictions imposed on Savarkar.

On July 31, 1924, Dr. M. B. Velkar moved a resolution in the Council appealing to the Government to restore Savarkar to complete liberty. He said Savarkar was a great national asset which neither the Government nor the people could afford to lose. Moreover he was in favour of Responsive Co-operation. Thereupon A. N. Surve moved an amendment asking the Government to remove all restrictions but those relating to political activities if the Government was not gracious enough to give him full liberty.

H. B. Shivdasani said that as the English took off their hats to Von Miller, Captain of the *Emden*, which sank so many British ships, they should have, as sportsmen, taken off their hats to a patriot like Savarkar. K. F. Nariman made a very fighting speech. In the course of his speech he said: "What will be a national hero if you take away politics from him?" There were clashes between the members of the non-Brahmin party and Nariman when he said that there were some men born with a feeling of absolute loyalty! Supporting the resolution, Nariman cited examples of De Valera, Zagul Pasha and Mahatma Gandhi who were not released on conditions by the British Government.• But the President said that their cases differed from that of Savarkar. Savarkar, he said, was con-

victed of abetment of murder. Upon this Mr. Nariman withdrew the analogy.

Maulavi Raffiuddin Ahmed said that Savarkar's head was full of sedition as mosquitoes are full of malaria. D. R. Patel said that prevention was better than cure! The amendment was lost. The resolution was rejected by 51 against 37 votes.

On his arrival in Ratnagiri, Savarkar had to stay at Shirgaon, a village on the outskirts of Ratnagiri as the plague had not still subsided in Ratnagiri. So he wrote to the Government that he was down with fever and could not get inoculated as last time inoculation had brought on a high fever. So he should be allowed to go to Satara or Nagar. Belgaum was out of question as the Congress was to be held there. But Government said No. He should choose any place in Ratnagiri district. Government allowed him to apply to the High Court for permission to practice as a lawyer. In his application to the High Court he stated that his name was kept on the roll although he had passed the examination at the Grey's Inn. But before he could actually be called to the Bar complaints regarding his political activities were filed against him by the Indian police before the Honourable Benchers of the Inn. Consequently a sort of informal trial was conducted against him. He tried to explain his position, but the Benchers were not satisfied with his political views. They, however, allowed his name to continue on the roll of the Inn with a view to taking up the question of calling him to the Bar if ever they found him no longer engaged in any objectionable political activities. But after his arrest in London, financial difficulties forced him to resign the membership of the Inn and to claim the deposit back. The High Court, Bombay, however, rejected his application.

Savarkar's stay in Ratnagiri attracted several pundits and patriots of all-India fame. One of the early visitors to Savarkar in Ratnagiri was the great founder of the R.S.S., Dr. K. B. Hedgewar. The interview took place in March 1925 at Shirgaon. Savarkar's monumental work *Hindutva* giving ideas of the principles of Hindu nationalism and Hindu State had just appeared on the scene and captivated and inspired many great brains and great hearts. Before starting the volunteer organisation known as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Dr. Hedgewar had a long discussion with Savarkar over the faith, form

and future of the organisation. A great Hindu leader and an unbending upright nationalist, Dr. Hedgewar wanted to conserve and direct the energy of Hindu youths towards all-round uplift of the Hindu Nation. After the collapse of the Non-co-operation Movement of Gandhi and the fiasco of the Khilafat Movement, the country lay prostrate, and chaos and confusion reigned in the student world. In the wake of this confusion and in consultation with Savarkar and others, Hedgewar decided to build up an organisation to supply the Hindu society with power and pillars.

Yet it is significant that no branch of the R.S.S. was started at Ratnagiri as long as Savarkar was there. The organizers perhaps feared that the youths would fall under Savarkar's spell and would be driven into the vortex of revolutionary activities and this would ultimately involve the whole organisation.

* * *

After some time Savarkar moved to Ratnagiri. At first he stayed for some days at the house of the *Navoo* (nine) Patwardhans, a well-known family in Ratnagiri. There Savarkar was honoured by men like Appasaheb Patwardhan who were followers of Gandhi but who regarded Savarkar as their inspirer. Kaka Kalelkar had cautioned Patwardhan not to be swayed by Savarkar's views. Mahatma Gandhi also told Patwardhan to be cautious about Savarkar's views as, according to Gandhi, Savarkar was a deep one. Gandhi did not take objection to Patwardhan's participating in Savarkar's movement for the abolition of untouchability and added that the Untouchables were shrewd enough to know who was their real benefactor.[2] Savarkar then stayed for some time in B. G. Kher's house at Ratnagiri.

Savarkar then devoted himself to public work and propagation of his ideal from the platform of the Ratnagiri Hindusabha which was then, as was the Hindu Mahasabha itself, a non-political body. The late Dr. M. G. Shinde, a sincere and staunch worker and devoted Savarkarite who stood by his leader through thick and thin, was Savarkar's chief lieutenant. Different men for different purposes were drawn to him. Some loved him, some protected him, some spread his ideology among the people, and others worked and toiled for him.

[2] *Navakonkon*, 5 July 1965.

Palukaka Joshi, a devotee, copied his master's manuscripts, his essays and dramas, articles and writings, and directed them to the proper places. Legal celebrities Nanal and Rao Bahadur Parulekar, Dattopant Limaye, editor of the *Satyashodhak*, Gajananrao Patwardhan, editor of the *Balwant*, Rao Saheb Ranade, Dr. B. N. Savant, Kashinathpant Parulekar, G. D. Lubri, R. V. Chiplunkar, Vishnupant Damle, Wamanrao Chavan, Bhalchandra Patkar, Achyutrao Malushte, Narayanrao Khatu, Haribhau Gandhi, Dattatraya Savant, Atmaramrao Salvi, Keruji Mahar and a host of others were the pioneer workers in this movement launched by Savarkar.

Gradually Savarkar began to initiate the people into his new ideology through the Hindu Sabha. Afire with the new ideology the Hindus in Ratnagiri began to worship strength, consolidation, and unity. It was inevitable that such an unadulterated Hindu movement should upset the mental balance of the Gandhian pro-Muslim zealots. The breath of the movement was against the current fads and fashions in Indian politics passing under the good name of non-violence and truth. Worship of strength and love for the machine age were taboos to the Gandhian faddists. Naturally the new cult of lathi irritated them much. They thought that the cult of lathi created communal disharmony. The Muslim opposition to this cult and ideology sprung from the fear that the force would be used against them. In reply, the Savarkarian group suggested to the apostles of the self-abnegation policy to cut their own hands lest they might strike the faces of the Muslims. Surrendering philosophy, the child of fear complex, being not in the blood of the Sanghatanists, they did not care for the objections of the faddists, nor did they care for the opposition of the fanatics. They believed that the real leaders of the Hindus were those, who had risen even in armed revolt against injustice, aggression and tyranny in any form. For the defence of their natural and national rights, the Sanghatanists said, they would not only use the force of lathi, but would also await the opportunity to utilise, if necessary, the fire and power of machine guns, submarines, aeroplanes and battleships.

In 1927 the question of playing music before mosque raised its ugly head in Ratnagiri too. In Turkey and many other European countries wherein Muslims live, there is neither ban

on nor objection to the playing of music before mosques or in public places. Islamic law does not insist upon the slaughter of the cow and when a Muslim goes to Haj he does not sacrifice the cow in Mecca or Medina. Music before mosque is played in all Muslim countries without any objection.[3] That there should be an abundant and abiding respect for all creeds, faiths, and ways of life is the true key to universal happiness. But there must be a give and take on both sides. It is the duty of the followers of every faith to accommodate, conduce and contribute to the peace and progress of the world. Here in this case even conventionally and legally the Hindus were entitled to take their processions with music past the mosques; still the Muslims raised objection to these Hindu rights. So the situation grew tense. The Hindus took out their procession with great pomp and preparedness amidst this tension and excitement.

The Muslims appealed to the District Magistrate for help. He rejected their appeal in these words: "I do not think that an amicable settlement is possible, as the Mohammedans under the influence of some undesirable advice allege that no procession ever passed the mosque with music in the past." The District Magistrate continued: "It is unfortunate that the question of music before the mosque has recently been the cause of so much trouble everywhere. The duty of the Executive is clear. It is to afford protection to the peaceful enjoyment of existing rights and customs to those entitled to it without fear or favour. I, therefore, agree with the District Superintendent of Police that Mohammedans have no grounds for making these applications."[4] Obviously the struggle ended in a triumph for the Hindus. On this occasion Savarkar reiterated his views that force and fanaticism on the Muslim side would never solve this problem of music before mosque; true understanding and due respect for the Hindu rights of citizenship on their part alone would mitigate the evil.

Soon after the decision of the authorities in the aforesaid matter, the Muslims exhibited placards in a procession declaring that they did not want Swaraj. The Sanghatanists said that Allah should read the placards and grant their prayer; for the Swaraj of the stamp of Kohat, Malabar and Gulbarga might

[3] Ambedkar, Dr. B. R., *Thoughts on Pakistan* (1941), p. 267.
[4] Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, *Five-Year Report*, p. 41.

never come into existence. The Hindus said: "Oh! friends, you never joined us on the platform, never accompanied us to prisons, and never followed us to the gallows. What else will a reasonable man expect of you?" In spite of such an attitude, Savarkar every year on the days of Hindu festivals visited Muslim and Christian quarters to promote good feelings between the Hindus and the other communities. On the occasion of the Dassara festival, accompanied by his co-workers, Savarkar distributed 'gold leaves' among the Muslim and Christian citizens too. But these feelings were never reciprocated. The doctrine of false humility and degraded self-respect practised by Gandhist Hindus stood at the non-Hindu doors with offers of supplicant service. And the non-Hindus loved it more than genuine goodwill and self-respect displayed by Savarkar. Due regard for self and reasonable self-love constitute the basis of virtue. A man of sense and self-respect considers so.

Congress leaders, however, never understood the difference between settlement and appeasement. "Appeasement,"[5] said Dr. Ambedkar, "means to offer to buy off the aggressor by conniving at or collaborating with him in the rape, murder and arson of innocent Hindus who happen for the moment to be the victims of his pleasure. Settlement lays down the limits which no party to it can transgress." Gandhian leaders always tried to appease the Muslims who treated their action as cowardice.

During the previous three years Savarkar wrote numerous articles against Gandhism, Gandhi's obsession for Hindu-Muslim unity and he did not spare Pandit Motilal Nehru also. Hero and defender of the Hindus that he was, he bitingly ridiculed their pro-Muslim policy. The failure of the Non-violent Non-co-operation Movement and fiasco of the Khilafat Movement had shaken not a little the position of Gandhi as leader of the nation. Yet the Hindu-Muslim unity became an obsession with him to such an extent that Gandhi never checked the Muslim Khilafatist leaders like Yakub Hussan, Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali who openly declared their devilish ambition to convert crores of Hindus to Islam, nor did he condemn the Muslim murderers like Abdul Rashid who murdered Swami Shrad-

[5] Ambedkar, Dr. B. R., *Thoughts on Pakistan* (1941), p. 268.

dhanand, one of the greatest leaders of the Hindus, and the Muslim leaders who hailed Abdul's heinous act as deserving a place on the summit of the seventh heaven.[6]

The indescribable, blood-curdling and savage atrocities committed by the Moplahs who resorted to carnage, pillage, sacrilege, conversion and outrage of every species, were, according to Gandhi, the acts of "the brave God-fearing Moplahs who were fighting for what they consider as religion and in a manner which they consider as religious." Gandhi did not stop at that. He had supported the invasion of Hindustan by the Amir of Afghanistan which had been hatched by the Khilafatist leaders. Gandhi had openly declared in *Young India* that "I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government."[7] According to Savarkar, this was a treacherous act, although Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the historian said that every sane Indian would dissociate himself from such a mad and dangerous project. What is more, Gandhi had described Shivaji as a misguided patriot.[8]

These were the antecedents of Gandhi when he was to visit Ratnagiri in March 1927. On the eve of his visit Congressmen naturally wanted the Ratnagiri Municipality and the people to give the great leader an address. But Savarkar, it is said, frankly but ungenerously expressed his displeasure over the move. Gandhi came to Ratnagiri on March 1, 1927. Adulators on both sides worsened the situation. The Gandhian zealots tried to poison Gandhi's ears and entreated him not to visit Savarkar. But it so happened that in his reply to the address given by the Municipality and the people Gandhi, befitting a great leader and a great organizer, referred to Ratnagiri, the birthplace of Tilak as the place of pilgrimage and said that Ratnagiri was also the abode of Veer Savarkar whom he had known well in England and whose sacrifice and patriotism were well known. Although they had their differences, they had not affected their friendship and differences of opinion should never mean hostility, he added. This was reported to Savarkar who was down with fever. He hurriedly sent a note to Gandhi inviting him to his residence. Gandhi came, curtailing his other

[6] The *Times of India*, 30 November 1927.
[7] *Young India*, 4 May 1921.
[8] *Ibid.*, 9 April 1925.

engagements. The attention of the people at once rivetted on the residence of Savarkar. He received Gandhi and Kasturba with great cordiality.

It was after nearly eighteen years that Gandhi was now meeting his old opponent of London days. However of different stamps, the great ones recognise each other's strength. The real object of Gandhi was to see whether the revolutionary volcano was now extinct, or a spent force, or still burning. During the course of the interview, Gandhi told Savarkar with a pleasant smile that he would have stayed with Savarkar in Ratnagiri for a day or two had his programme been not already fixed. Savarkar replied that he would have also been glad to entertain him, but agreed that Gandhi should go on with his great mission of arousing the nation's enthusiasm for the Freedom Movement, as Gandhi was fortunately free to do so. They discussed political problems. But neither was convinced of the other side. Then the problem of Shuddhi was discussed and the conversation between the two leaders ran as follows:

SAVARKAR: Well, what are your views on Shuddhi?

GANDHI: To me the view that a man loses his religion is absurd.

SAVARKAR: In a way you are right. But as our caste system and tradition have laid down that under certain circumstances a man loses his religion, it is necessary to set the matter right by adopting such remedies and rites as would enable us to restore the reconverted man to his society. What is the harm in doing such a thing? Both the society and the new-comer thereby get mental satisfaction.

GANDHI: I have no objection. It will do no harm if you have such a ceremony. But although I believe in reconversion of a person, who was forcibly or deceitfully converted to an alien faith, I am not for reconversions of persons whose ancestors have changed faiths decades ago. Nor do I uphold the conversions of persons from other religions. Because I believe that it is better to die while observing one's own religion than to embrace other religion. None should be persuaded to change his or her faith. It should be left to the will of the person.

SAVARKAR: Yes, after weighing carefully what is good for the

betterment of one's own happiness, a man should decide the means. That is freedom of thought. The message of Hinduism is practical as well as spiritual, passive as well as active. It says on the one hand that it is better to die under the domain of one's own religion, and on the other, that it is better to transform the world into an Aryan Religion.

GANDHI: Our goal is ultimately one. We both strive for the glory of Hinduism and Hindustan.

While taking leave of Savarkar, Gandhi said: "It is clear that we disagree on some problems. But I hope you have no objection to my making experiments." Savarkar replied in a moment, "You know the story of the boys and frogs. You will be making the experiment at the cost of the nation." R. K. Gavande, President of the Malvan Taluka Congress Committee, intervened and said that he now realised that Gandhi plus Savarkar was equal to Swaraj! Upon this Gandhi laughed.[9]

Gandhi was now doubly sure that the faith and fire in Savarkar was unaffected even by the tortures and tribulations of the jail life in the Andamans. This was the last meeting between Gandhi and Savarkar. Though Savarkar was released afterwards in 1937 and made a whirlwind propaganda through the length and breadth of India as the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, no occasion arose for a meeting between the two leaders.

The first and foremost battle on the home front as such Savarkar had with the Hindu orthodoxy or the Sanatanists was over the question of mixed-caste schools in the district. The orthodox Hindus opposed the idea tooth and nail. The School Board faltered and the District Board failed in its support.

So Savarkar carried on intense propaganda in favour of mixed schools through the press and from the platform and appealed to the district and provincial authorities for help against the forces of orthodoxy which denied the just, civic, human, and legitimate rights to the children of the Untouchables to sit in public schools along with the caste-Hindu children. Attention of the Government also was drawn by Savarkar to the fact that

[9] Gavande, R. K., *Rajbandi*, p. 76.

the Untouchables being as good tax-payers and citizens as the touchables, their children were entitled to the benefit of all public schools. It was also pointed out that those very orthodox Hindus did not feel any qualms of conscience in allowing the Christian and Muslim children to sit by their children in schools.

Savarkar entreated the orthodox Hindus in an appealing tone not to treat their co-religionists worse than dogs and cats. "Can you prevent Christian children from attending public schools? No. You dare not. You know the consequences. The British Government will speak with bullets," he challenged. "You insult the Untouchables, because they are ignorant and helpless; but you yield to the unjust demands of the Muslims because they are aggressive. When a Mahar becomes a Muslim or a Christian convert, you treat him as your equal. But as a Mahar he will not receive the same treatment. What a shame my countrymen!" he thundered.

Savarkar appealed to the District Magistrate to bring the rowdy elements to book and wrote to him in a moving tone: "I wish, sir, to enlist not only your legal protection as a Magistrate, but also your human sympathies as a gentleman, in the cause." It may seem strange that Savarkar should have written for help to the Government of those days. But it must be noted that Savarkar was always uncompromising with untruth and injustice, and not with men and power. The breath of his ideology was the hatred of oppression in every form, not of personalities and authorities. The virility and sincerity of Savarkar in this cause ultimately triumphed. The District Magistrate saw things for himself, and wrote the following remark during one of his visits to schools: "It is the good result of Mr. Savarkar's lectures that the untouchable boys have been allowed to sit mixed and get their education without any invidious distinction being made in their case!" [10]

Then came another shock to orthodoxy! An Untouchable teacher was transferred in 1928, to a school attended entirely by caste-Hindu children. The Sanatanists moved heaven and earth to get the order of the School Board rescinded, but to no purpose. The School Board threatened to close the school and

[10] Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, *Five-Year Report*, p. 150.

the orthodox Hindus regained their civic sense! The effect was tremendous and historic. Because of this victory of Savarkar over orthodoxy and the establishment of rival mixed-caste schools by the Hindus, and consequently for want of new converts, the American Mission working in Ratnagiri had to wind up its activities, and its chief departed in despair! Thus ended the first battle at Ratnagiri against the orthodox and the missionaries in a unique victory for Savarkar.

Shuddhi or the reconversion movement, the main spring of Sanghatanism, was also inaugurated by Savarkar in Ratnagiri and was coming to a head despite heavy odds. The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha fought its way inch by inch until the Hindus came to realize the movement's democratic support to the Indian unity, Indian peace and Indian prosperity in the peculiar situation obtaining in India. Reconversion adds to the strength and forces of nationalism in India and decreases the forces of communalism, disruption, and disorder. The movement holds forth immense possibilities.

The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha reconverted from the middle of 1926 and onwards several persons to the Hindu fold with prescribed religious ceremonials. The Christian missionaries were enraged at this; so they warned a certain boy, who was reconverted to Hinduism, not to pass by the mission quarters lest other boys should catch the contagious idea that converts could again become Hindus. The most difficult problem which arose from this reconversion movement was the marriage problem of the reconverted persons. The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha had vigorously supported the marriage of Tukojirao, Maharaja of Indore, with Miss Miller, an American woman, and even had expressed its readiness to arrange for a priest to perform the marriage ceremony.

The Sabha in the beginning got two reconverted girls married to two Hindu gentlemen under the direction of Savarkar, who performed the marriage rites himself. Orthodoxy shook to its roots at this! Later, during Savarkar's internment, about two hundred persons were saved from the clutches of non-Hindu missions. Diseased and disabled Hindu children were reared up by some Sanghatanists and were prevented from being handed over to the non-Hindu forces. The main support of money and sympathy for the work of Vinayak Maharaj Masurkar, while

his reconversion movement was going on in Goa, came from Ratnagiri, the stronghold of Savarkarism.

The reconversion movement was a war. It really aimed at bringing the senseless to their senses. And a war with the Hindu orthodoxy was a war indirectly with the maulavies and missionaries. Displeased at the new reconversion movement, the Muslims and missionaries lodged complaints against Savarkar with the District Magistrate, who happened to be a Muslim, charging Savarkar with creating communal disharmony and tension in the District. Out went a thundering rejoinder in the next month from the Ratnagiri Hindus into the hands of H.E. the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, justifying the stand taken by Savarkar and the cause espoused by him. This neutralised and nullified the complaints of the opposite camps. Savarkar told the District Magistrate that if the reconversion movement created tension, why should the conversion movement be not considered so? He emphasized that if at all anybody was to be held responsible for the tension, the missionaries and maulavies should be held so because they had started the conversion movement first. Reconversion followed the conversion movement. He further said that his was not an aggressive or unjust movement carried on in the far-off corners of America or Turkey. He was doing sacred work in his own country, which had been exploited in her fallen days by foreign faiths. It was a strange attitude on the part of a Government that allowed robbers to commit robberies and prohibited the owners from protecting and defending their property! But in this unfortunate land those were the times when a politician like Mahomed Ali, who expressed his unholy desire to divide the Depressed Classes equally between Hindus and Muslims, from the presidential chair of the Indian National Congress, was eulogised as a patriotic and nationalist leader! At the same time the reconversion movement was decried as anti-national and a force of reactionarism, and its leaders from Shraddhananda to Lajpat Rai, and from Moonje to Savarkar, were decried as communalists and reactionaries by those so-called rationalists and super-nationalists, who upheld and regarded the Khilafat Movement of a frankly religious and medieval colour as a glorious spectacle. Did not Yakub Hussan, while presenting an address to Gandhi at Madras, openly enjoin upon the Mussal-

mans to convert all the Untouchables in India to Islam?'[11] And was he not in the eyes of the Congress more patriotic, progressive and a truer nationalist than Moonje or Parmananda?

To the Congressmen the Khilafat leaders, who sent their congratulations to the Moplahs on their 'brave' fight for religion, were progressive and patriotic leaders. Can there be any nationalism worse than this kind of deceptive and disruptive nationalism? The 'communalism' of the Hindu Sanghatanists was righteous; because it was bred in self-defence; the 'nationalism' of the upholders and supporters of the Khilafat was perverse, because it nourished anti-national feelings among the Muslims.

The question of temple entry for the Untouchables cropped up in 1925. The orthodox quarters were alarmed. They shouted that their religion, God and traditions were in danger. Their religion and traditions and customs welcomed an Untouchable provided he became a Mohammad or a Minto. The orthodox touched animals like bullocks and buffaloes, could endure the presence of a dog or a cat in their houses, but not the presence of their co-religionist Hindu Mahars or Hindu Bhangis though they were human beings! They feared that their sacred God would be polluted by the mere sight of a Hindu Bhangi. 'He is not God who can be desecrated' went the epigrammatic Savarkarian reply to the orthodox. Savarkar held that those men who regarded such inhuman faith as abhorred the touch of a human being and yet gladly touched animals like dogs and cats, were themselves a blot on humanity. It was they who were really fallen and not the 'Untouchables'! Removal of untouchability, he added, therefore, implied purification and salvation of such misguided orthodox touchables also!

Orthodoxy began to collapse under such ruthless arguments. To pull down the steel walls of orthodoxy, Savarkar started Pan-Hindu Ganesh festivals in 1925. He transformed the Ganesh Festival started by Tilak into a Pan-Hindu festival. An Untouchable was not allowed for ages within the precincts of the Hindu sanctuaries. By and by the question of temple entry was

[11] *Young India*, dated 8-9-1920.

discussed with wisdom and vehemence during the days of Ganesh festival. The Untouchables were brought into the hall of the Vithoba temple in Ratnagiri, the most important temple in Ratnagiri District.

Just then the independent movement started by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1924 for the liberation of the Untouchables came to a head. It hated the sense of dependency and abhorred the feeling of patronage of caste Hindu reformers. Tell the slave he is a slave and he will revolt was its slogan. Self-elevation and self-help was the symbol on its standard. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar unfurled the banner of revolt at Mahad in December 1927.

The one leader who fearlessly and whole-heartedly supported Ambedkar's struggle was Savarkar. Upholding that struggle for human rights, Savarkar said that untouchability must be condemned and abolished not only as the need of the hour but also the command of the true religion; not only as a policy or as an act of expediency but also as a matter of justice; not only as a matter of obligation but also as a service to humanity. He therefore declared that the pious and bounden duty of the Hindu world at large was to restore full human rights to their co-religionists.

The Untouchables responded well to the bold stand Savarkar took for their deliverance. He was invited by them to preside over the conference which they held at Malvan, a leading town in the southern part of Ratnagiri district. The conference sang Vedic hymns in a body. Savarkar distributed sacred threads among the so-called untouchable Hindus and declared amid great applause: "A battle royal has been raging for the last seven generations over the right of studying the Vedas. Here are the Vedas. Here is the sacred thread. Take these two. Is that all? Even non-Hindus read the Vedas. Why should not the Hindu Mahars read them? The feud over this problem was a useless task. Let us expiate the sins we committed. We are all responsible for our political subjugation. That is the past. Now let us declare on oath that we shall rectify our past blunders and win back our weal, wealth and glory. The people who regard untouchability which has been a disgrace to humanity as a part of their religion, are really the fallen people." He then told the conference that he would have been

very happy, had it been possible for Dr. Ambedkar to preside over this conference. It was Dr. Ambedkar's practice, Savarkar added, to distribute the sacred threads on such occasions. So the next day the threads were distributed; Subhedar Ghatge and P. N. Rajbhoj took leading part in this conference. After the conference was over, Rajbhoj, a volatile leader of the Depressed Classes from Poona, observed: "I was really sceptical of the Savarkarian movement at the beginning. My contact and discussions with Barrister Savarkar and my personal observation have thoroughly convinced me of its far-reaching effect. I am extremely rejoiced to declare that this famous leader of the political revolutionaries is also an out and out social revolutionist!"

In the month of September 1929, Dr. Ambedkar went to Ratnagiri in connection with a murder trial at District Sessions Court. Savarkar seized this opportunity and extended to Dr. Ambedkar an invitation signed by hundreds of citizens to address a meeting at the Vithoba temple, a very important centre where battles for social reforms had been going on for the past three years. The orthodox ran for an injunction. Just then Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar received a telegram from Bombay demanding his presence, and Ratnagiri lost an opportunity to hear speeches of two great revolutionaries from the same platform.

Then in November 1929, took place an event of far-reaching consequences. All the city was agog. The City Magistrate was present by a special order to see that the proceedings of the public meeting, held in the Vithoba temple of Ratnagiri to decide the question of the entry of the Untouchables into the Vithoba temple, came off peacefully.

The momentous meeting began. Savarkar's convincing speech swept away doubts, hesitation and misgivings which were lurking in the minds of the opponents.

The Magistrate himself having been carried off his feet by the force and faith of Savarkar's speech, forgot his entity, rose and exclaimed, "Now who and what remain to be convinced?" None came forward. It was a unique triumph for Savarkar. Amidst flickering opposition and deafening exclamations, the Untouchables entered the Vithoba temple of Ratnagiri, step by step, singing gracefully and gratefully the glory of "one God, one goal, one language, one country and one Nation."

With great feelings and devotional eyes the densely crowded meeting saw the historic spectacle, the first of its kind in the history of Hindustan. As the age-long sufferers followed their children who climbed the steps of the temple one by one, singing the song, their hearts throbbed, and eyes glowed. The song was specially composed in Marathi by Savarkar himself for the occasion! It read:

The Impurity of ages is gone
Scripture-born stamp is torn
The age-long struggle is ended
The net of enemies shredded
The slave of ages hoary!
Now is a brother in glory! (Translated)

A Pan-Hindu band was trained and it replaced the non-Hindu bands. The Hindu band attended festivals and functions. Women of Ratnagiri performed to the shock of Maharashtra and Hindusthan their *Haldi-Kumkum* ceremony on a Pan-Hindu basis. During the Pan-Hindu Ganpati festivals a Bhangi Hindu sang Vedic hymns and *Gayatri Mantram*, the sacred privilege enjoyed till then by the Brahmins alone. The incident echoed throughout India. The *Times of India*, Bombay, styled it a sacrilegious prize. The event resounded through some London papers too. On another occasion a Bhangi family needed a priest for a marriage ceremony. The Mahar Hindus being the Brahmins of the Bhangis, their priest declined to perform the ceremony. The Hindu Sabha thereupon sent a Brahmin priest, and he performed the ceremony.

Soon the movement gained ground and grew gradually popular. While the struggle for opening temples to the Untouchables was forging ahead, Savarkar was thinking of having a Pan-Hindu temple with a view to giving an impetus to the temple entry movement. He held that the youths trained in the new ideology would throw open the doors of the remaining temples to the Untouchables when they would become trustees of the temples. So he approached Bhagoji Baloji Keer, the famous temple-builder of Maharashtra, who fervently believed that Savarkar's word was God's call! He summarily and spontaneously silenced Savarkar's opponents by telling them that Savarkar's name was Vinayak and Vinayak was the name of

the god Ganapati. In deference to Savarkar's wishes Bhagoji built in February 1931 a magnificent temple known as the Patit Pavan Temple in Ratnagiri wherein all Hindus irrespective of caste could assemble for prayers. This was an epoch-making achievement of Savarkarian movement. This monumental Pan-Hindu temple was the first to stand in the history of Hindusthan open for Pan-Hindu worship, Pan-Hindu functions and Pan Hindu propaganda. An event declaring the arrival of a new era and new light.

The opening ceremony of the temple came off on February 22, 1931. Acharyas, Shankaracharyas, pundits and patriots declared Ratnagiri a place of pilgrimage. In fact, as one speaker then put it, Ratnagiri became the new Kashi of the re-awakened, purified and unified Hindudom where a Hindu scavenger acted as a priest, persons from the so-called Depressed Classes delivered sermons, Mahars read the sacred Geeta, Brahmins garlanded and bowed themselves before these priests; and a Brahmin youth conducted a Pan-Hindu hotel. Indeed, the Patit Pavan Temple came to be the university of the Pan-Hindu movement.

Prohibition of one caste from dining with another was the keystone upon which the arch of the caste system mainly rested. Savarkar decided to strike a fatal blow at this keystone. He contemplated inter-caste Pan-Hindu dinners. As usual orthodox Hindus opposed the idea vehemently. Savarkar, however, silenced their learned spokesmen by throwing at their faces extracts from their own scriptures and holy works that sang that Lord Krishna dined with Vidura, a son born of a maid-servant, and that their great Brahmin Rishi, Durvasa, dined along with his numerous disciples at the Pandavas' who were Kshatriyas. Yet, it was not easy to hold a Pan-Hindu dinner. The movement developed gradually from private quarters to public places. And then came off the first public Pan-Hindu dinner popularly known all over India as *Sahabhojan*, in a theatre in 1930. This was the acid test to know who were the real seasoned reformers and who were seasonal. What a horrifying event it was in the eyes of traditionalists! Upto this time even the beggars recoiled from touching the food served at a Pan-Hindu dinner. Mahars refused to eat with the Bhangis and Bhangis with the Dhors. The Depressed Classes desired to eat with the caste-Hindus but not with the different sub-castes

from amongst themselves. Onlookers thronged to witness the Pan-Hindu dinner, and Ratnagiri was the subject for headlines all over India.

In its 'current topics' the *Times of India*, Bombay, writing on the subject, observes in its issue of December 9, 1930: "This all-caste dinner was celebrated in a unique manner—a manner that has given deep offence to Nationalist Congressmen, who are mostly believers along with Mr. Gandhi in four watertight castes by birth. For, at Ratnagiri some enthusiastic reformers, who regarded caste system as the bane of Hinduism, held an all-caste dinner which was attended by Brahmins, Banias, Chambhars, Mahars and Bhangis!" Styling it as a bold creed, the writer goes on: "What is still more interesting, the spirit of this splendid essay in practical reform, Mr. V. D. Savarkar, delivered a speech in which he flung into the teeth of orthodoxy the daring credo of his party. 'From today I shall not believe in highness or lowness of caste. I shall not oppose the intermarriage between the highest and lowest castes. I shall eat with any Hindu irrespective of caste. I shall not believe in caste by birth or by profession and henceforth I shall call myself a Hindu only—not Brahmin, Vaishya, etc.'"

Savarkar incessantly preached: "Eat with anybody. Eat anything that is medically fit and clean. That does not deprive you of your religion. Remember the root of religion is not the dish or the stomach, but the heart, soul and the blood!" The names of those persons, who took part in the all-caste dinners, were published in newspapers to the surprise and shock of their orthodox relations.

The first week of the opening ceremony of the Patit Pavan Temple saw the biggest of such Pan-Hindu dinners in India. The reactions to the Pan-Hindu dinner were tremendous. Acharyas took to their heels and saints went head over heels. Cow-worshippers thought it beneath their dignity to honour human beings and eat with men who were their co-religionists. There were some who did everything else for the movement, but declined to eat with all classes. Their heads agreed, but hearts disagreed! At last their dilemma was solved. Savarkar, who held that social reforms settled down more permanently if they were effected with full consideration and conciliation, accepted a compromise which allowed the no-changers to take

their dinner by sitting not in the line with the revolutionary reformists, but in another row facing them. Orthodoxy clamoured and raised a hue and cry in the city! Rumours were afloat in the neighbouring villages that the all-caste dinner would cost the reformers dear and that a rift was visible in the ranks of the reformers.

When the beggars saw lawyers, leaders, dewans, merchants, doctors, big and respectable men of all castes sharing food in a communion, they, too, expressed their willingness to accept the Pan-Hindu food which they had declined to accept on the previous occasion. But now Savarkar would not offer them the food unless they also sat in one and the same row irrespective of castes. And ultimately they did so! At last Pan-Hindu sense and mentality came to stay. Karmaveer V. R. Shinde, a great social reformer of the Deccan, rejoiced to see what his D. C. Mission aimed at was both preached and practised in Ratnagiri. Overwhelmed with grateful tears, he acclaimed Savarkar as the real Patit Pavan of the Hindus, the saviour of the fallen and trodden. It was a just appreciation and correct assessment of a great achievement. Some leaders, who witnessed the practical reforms, called Savarkar *Sanghatanacharya*—Master-brain at organisation—and others described him as their new *Shankaracharya,* the supreme head of new Hinduism.

Every revolution has its convulsions and revelations. Defeated at all other points orthodox Hindus and non-Hindus now threatened Savarkar's life. In many families dissensions arose. Unpleasant words were exchanged between son and father, wife and husband. Harsh gestures were exchanged between friends, and estrangement rankled amongst relations. Newly married girls were forbidden to see the faces of their reformist parents, brothers or relatives. A married girl in one case perished in her illness despite her father's fervent entreaties to her father-in-law to send her to him for medical treatment. The father of the girl was asked to withdraw his support and devotion to Savarkarian ideology, but he did not yield.

Half-hearted reformists were trapped and they repented in sack-cloth and ashes. If some one from Savarkar's camp fell ill, whispers and vilification would attribute the illness or misfortune to God's wrath. Thereupon Savarkar would retort that even his cat was unaffected. All the while Savarkar infused

courage into the minds of his followers with his undying dictum: "Reform implies always a minority, custom means a majority. Have undeviating faith in your mission and courage of conviction, and you will successfully overcome the forces of reactionaries!"

* * *

After the opening of the Patit Pavan temple, Savarkar gave an impetus to the movement of social equality. A conference was held in the Patit Pavan temple at Ratnagiri just after the temple was opened during the last week of February 1931, under the aegis of the D.C. Mission led by V. R. Shinde. This was the Mission's sixth annual session and was presided over by Savarkar. All the workers and leaders of the D.C. Mission and other leaders of the Depressed Classes were pleased with the achievement of this Savarkarian movement. One after another they acknowledged gratefully that their dreams were brought into reality by Savarkar in Ratnagiri. They repeated that if the atmosphere of Ratnagiri captivated all the parts of India, there would be no trace of untouchability left in the land.

Another conference was held on April 26, 1931. It was the Ratnagiri District Somavanshiya Mahar Conference. Savarkar presided over it. It was attended by hundreds of Mahars from all corners of the district. The Mahars had poured in the city as they heard that Pandhari was shifted to Ratnagiri where they were allowed to enter the temple and worship God—an unbelievable thing for them—a thing for which they had pined for ages!

Savarkar's teachings and message to the Untouchables were appealing. He asked them to live a simple life, and to shed their inherent inferiority complex. He admonished them: "Your weakness is worse than the wickedness of the caste Hindus. For your own welfare you must also suffer with fortitude and faith. You want rights, but you are not prepared to pay the price. Be men. Know that you are men. If someone scolds you for your proximity on the public road, tell him that the public road is not the property of his father. Do not abandon your occupations. Stick to them and improve them. Every occupation has its value. Live a clean and temperate life. Never disown your fathers, saints, and blood. Do not observe

untouchability among yourselves. Always treat with equality and kindness all the sub-castes amongst your own so-called Depressed Classes. That is also your duty. Forget it not!"

Dr. Ambedkar's *Janata* [12] appreciated Savarkar's advice to the Mahars and other Untouchables. A few days earlier Savarkar had issued a statement supporting the Nasik satyagraha conducted by Dr. Ambedkar's followers and appealed to the Nasik caste Hindus to open the Kalaram temple to the Depressed Class Hindus. The statement was circulated by Bhaurao Gaikwad among the Nasik caste Hindus. Savarkar also declared at a meeting that had he been free, he would have been the first man to court jail in the Nasik satyagraha.[13]

Savarkar, however, sounded a warning to the extremist leaders of the Untouchables in particular, who wished to have Brahmin girls in marriages for untouchable youths. Savarkar considered this view to be mistaken, extravagant, and unjustifiable. To break off the barrier of caste system, he observed, in respect of marriages did not mean compulsory and forced marriages. According to him, many things besides caste governed matrimonial alliances. "If a Hindu girl," he wrote, "selects as her husband any Hindu youth who does not belong to her caste or vice versa and if the couple is otherwise fit for matrimony the marriage should not be condemned, nor the couple be regarded as outcast on that account alone!" As for the marriage of a Hindu with a non-Hindu, he was opposed to it if it took place without bringing the partner into the Hindu fold. In his opinion such a precaution was necessary for the collective good of the Hindu Nation.

About this time the Keer temple at the Fort locality in Ratnagiri was declared open to all Hindus at a meeting held under the chairmanship of Shankaracharya, the religious head of the Hindus. Shankaracharya was garlanded by a Hindu Bhangi as the representative of the Ratnagiri Hindus. The scene was reminiscent of the first Shankaracharya, who had embraced centuries ago a pantheist Untouchable while returning from his bath in the Ganga.

It was the wish of Savarkar that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar should declare open the temple. So he invited Dr. Ambedkar

[12] The *Janata*, 11 May 1931.
[13] *Ibid.*, 9 March 1931.

to open the temple. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar replied that he was sorry that he was unable to accept his invitation owing to previous engagements. He further observed in his reply to Savarkar: "I however wish to take this opportunity of conveying to you my appreciation of the work you are doing in the field of social reform. If the Untouchables are to be part and parcel of the Hindu society, then it is not enough to remove untouchability; for that matter you must destroy chaturvarnya. I am glad that you are one of the very few who have realised this."

To the caste Hindus Savarkar's advice was that they should be prepared to adopt even the pursuit of sweepers. There should be no monopoly in any field. He advised the non-Brahmins to perform the religious rites and sacramental life themselves and told them that there was no need of an intermediary between them and God. "The moment you resolve not to invite the *Bhat* (Brahmin) to perform religious rites, the power of Brahminism would collapse like a pack of cards," he wrote. Learning and expounding the scriptures or sacerdocy should not be the monopoly of one particular class. Prestige and authority should be justified by individual achievement and not by caste, he opined. Priests, irrespective of caste, should be certified as are doctors, asserted Savarkar.

Savarkar's love of Hindu religion was not narrow-minded either. He said: "When a non-Hindu worships or a Mohammedan merges into humanity melting his religious *libido*, the Hindus, too, shall dissolve their separate entity." "Till then," Savarkar observed, "it is necessary that the Hindus should be within their bounds. It is against the creed of humanity itself, if we ignore stark realities of life."

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During the last quarter of the year 1931 two eminent leaders visited Ratnagiri. One was Savarkar's former colleague Senapati Bapat and the other was Thakur Chandansingh. Though Bapat came to Ratnagiri to preside over the Ratnagiri District Political Conference, he refused to attend to any work regarding the conference until he had paid his respects to Savarkar. And Bapat ran to Savarkar and devotionally embraced him. Bapat then opened the book of his life to his leader and

unburdened the story of his life since the days of his voluntary exile and the transportation of his leader Savarkar.

A few days earlier Bapat had expressed his opinion on the action of V. B. Gogate who had shot Mr. J. E. B. Hotson, the then acting Governor of Bombay, on July 22, 1931, at the Fergusson College, Poona. After his visit to Savarkar, Bapat made several fiery speeches in regard to Gogate's act and added that to the Ganga of sacrifice and blood, the Yamuna of the blood of the enemies and traitors should be added. As a result of these speeches he was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. Gogate was a staunch Savarkarite and had met Savarkar in Ratnagiri some days before he shot the hot-headed Hotson. Hotson was saved because that day he had put on an armour.

The visit of Thakur Chandansingh, the President of the All-India Gurkha League, to Ratnagiri in September 1931 along with Hemchandra Samsher Jung, a representative of the Royal Family of Nepal, was most rousing and thrilling. It was the outcome of the contact established by the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha with Nepal. It was significant that it was the Maharashtrian statesmanship that viewed the importance of Nepal on the political and physical map of India with great concern. It is well-known now that Tilak had deputed his lieutenant Kakasaheb Khadilkar to Nepal in 1902 to open an arms factory there. Khadilkar began his work under the guise of some mercantile pursuit, but his project was scented by the British Government, and Khadilkar was compelled to return to Poona without accomplishing his object.

It was very strange that the Congress, which fought for Turkey's Khilafat and sent a few bottles of medicine to Chiang Kai Shek in China and a few bushels of grain to Communist Spain, should deliberately neglect Nepal, a State so much interested in India's destiny and geographically, religiously and culturally a part and parcel of India. Nay, the Congressites considered it nothing less than a foreign State.

Thakur Chandansingh was a great admirer of Savarkar. He had translated Savarkar's articles and published them in *Tarun Gurkha* and in the *Himalayan Times*. At a meeting held at the Patit Pavan temple Thakur Chandansingh said that he was voicing the feeling of Gurkhas that the Gurkhas were the defenders of Hindu faith and in case any danger, internal or

external, threatened the unity of Hindustan they would be in the fore front of the struggle. Presiding over the meeting, Savarkar exhorted the Hindus to press on the Pan-Hindu movement and root out the customs which weakened their social organisation. Anglo-Indian papers like the *Pioneer* of Allahabad expressed grave concern over the participation of the Gurkhas in the Pan-Hindu movement and said that the Gurkhas were the trusted friends of the British Government.

The importance and impact of the Gurkha leader's visit to Ratnagiri did not escape the British Government's vigilance. Savarkar was asked by the Home Department, Bombay, to submit his explanation and to communicate the speech he made at the time of the reception of the Gurkha leader. After two days the District Magistrate called Savarkar to his office and asked him about the speech. Savarkar dictated a gist of his speech. Savarkar the barrister dictated the speech of Savarkar the orator. And naturally nothing implicating was found in it. However, Savarkar was finally warned that his explanation was not satisfactory and that any further breach of the conditions imposed upon him would compel Government to make him undergo the remaining period of his transportation—about 37 years, if he referred to politics publicly or privately! Government demanded similar explanations from Savarkar on many other occasions. Every speech of Savarkar was reported to the Home Department, Bombay, through the District Magistrate. On some occasions Savarkar dictated the summary of his important speeches to the District Magistrate as a precaution. The mere word 'Swaraj' or 'Raj' in his article or speech was highly resented by the British Government and many a time he was threatened with dire consequences.

The Gurkha leader was tremendously impressed by Savarkar. Hearing and seeing Savarkar, the Gurkha leader said: "I have now come to realise what Napoleon must have been!"

And indeed Napoleon and Savarkar, the inveterate enemies of the British Empire, suffered the greatest humiliation and mental and physical torments at the hands of the British Power than any other adversary of the British Power which squandered crores on Napoleon and lakhs on Savarkar to crush their undying personalities to a slow torturous death. But undaunted, heroic and invincible as both these heroes were, they worked and

struggled with undivided zeal for the downfall of the British Empire. In fact, Savarkar had the fortune to see the sun set on the British Empire and in the end his country free and independent!

The Savarkarian social revolution echoed throughout Hindustan and had its reverberations even in London papers. Savarkar succeeded where prophets, philosophers and emperors had failed. A man who had to rot for fourteen youthful years in the most dreadful jail and again was interned for over another thirteen years in Ratnagiri and was forbidden to participate publicly or privately in any political activities, had worked this miracle. All this happened a considerable time before Gandhi made the Harijan uplift one of the chief planks of his activities.

Savarkar's approach to untouchability, the age-long corroding current of evil, and his potent remedy and method for its abolition were as rational and constructive as they were fearless and far-reaching. There had been in the past rationalists like Agarkar, and institutions like the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj working for that cause. Later, there followed also the great personality of Gandhi in the field. There were some showy, touchy, and fashionable learned men who expressed lip sympathy in spotless diction for the Depressed Classes in order to please and show the ruling bosses their radical views. But Savarkar's point of view fundamentally differed from those of such institutions and personalities. Western ideas of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty dominated the motives of the rationalist group led by Ranade. Revolt against orthodox Hinduism and re-orientalization of Hinduism were the objects of the Arya Samaj; eclecticism was the aim of the Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj. Agarkar was an unbridled rationalist and a lonely giant. He showed no genius for active social work. The Arya Samajists compromised their prophet's stand by mixing their identity with the Gandhian principles, lost sight of its political impact, and lost their vitality, fervour, and firmness. Though Gandhi believed in the caste system, he wanted to remove untouchability. But his Harijan movement was anything but Hindu, though the money for the cause came mainly from the Hindus.

Gandhi never raised his little finger against the proselytizing greed of the maulavies and missionaries and observed reticence

about it. But even then it was his fortune that he received wreaths for his Harijan movement while Savarkar faced the wrath of all non-Hindu missionaries. Like all positive and powerful reformers, Savarkar wielded the force, construction and hammer of Luther. And a Luther is not born for laurels. Savarkar's one aim was to purge Hinduism of its most baneful superstitions and orthodox bigotry. His reformative zeal did not aim at the denunciation of Hinduism. He strove for its revival in the light of modern times and to ensure its survival. That was why he was offensive inside and defensive outside. He aimed at moulding the different castes of the Hindus into a classless Hindu society in which all Hindus would be by birth socially, economically and politically equal. Rational, nationalistic and revolutionary in outlook, his ideology was as deep-rooted as it was far-reaching, and looked to the prosperity and peace of the Hindu society, Hindu life, Hindustan and ultimately universal welfare. His was not the work of a fashionable reformer, or a showy rationalist, or a wordy humanist. His was a mission for a great cause for the emergence of Hindustan as a world power to play her destined part in the comity of nations.

Four decades ago he admonished the Hindus to break off the seven shackles that hindered the progress of the Hindu society. He fought for temple entry, popularised Pan-Hindu dinners, familiarized the Hindus with reconversion, annihilated the belief in highness and lowness of birth, favoured intercaste marriages, and ridiculed the injunctions on caste-ridden vocations and sea-voyage. The power and faith of the Savarkarian movement depended for its vitality and goal upon the elixir of Shuddhi and Science which hold the key not only to Indian peace and prosperity, but also to the destinies of the Middle East and Far East, the one-time tributaries of Hindu life. In one of his songs he visualized that the Hindus after achieving freedom would liberate all subject nations under the sun, and would help them establish love, equality and peace for the progress of humanity. And it was towards this end that all his Sanghatanist movement was directed. Savarkar preached and worked for the abolition of untouchability with unparalleled success when few of his great contemporaries were thinking of the removal of the untouchability, and a majority of them had not realised its significance.

Restricted in his activities, shadowed by spies, Savarkar thus shelled one of the strongholds of the Hindu orthodoxy in India. For this signal achievement he applied the battery of his oratory, poured in his volcanic energy, utilized the fund of his resourceful erudition and the flow of his volcanic pen. He used platform, press, examination centres, theatres, circus-tents, festivals, fares and functions for popularizing the movement, and whipped the people into a revolt. The forces of conservatism and orthodoxy tottered before the powerful battery and the bees that had nestled in the barriers of the caste system tried to fling their poisonous stings into his body, but failed. For, every Luther is born with an impenetrable armour.

The revolution in Ratnagiri district was an unparalleled success; so much so that V. R. Shinde, hearing the news of Savarkar's unconditional release in May 1937, remarked that had Savarkar's activities been restricted to social revolution only, he would have banished untouchability altogether from the face of India within five years. Worthy was the tribute paid and sincere was the appreciation made by a writer in a special issue of Dr. Ambedkar's *Janata* [14] to the effect that Savarkar's service to the cause of the Untouchables was as decisive and great as that of Gautama Buddha himself. In July 1945, Kakasahib Barve, his contemporary and President, Maharashtra Provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh, expressed in his presidential address at a conference in Sangli the view that had Savarkar continued his intense work in the cause of the removal of untouchability, it would have given a tremendous impetus to the movement.

Thus it can be seen that the vitality of Lord Buddha, who fearlessly initiated the Untouchables into his fold, the virility of Shivaji, who purposefully hammered its corners that lay in his way, the vigour of Dayananda, who strove to bury it, are all crystallized in the revolutionary philosophy of Savarkar whose approach to the problem was predominantly political and equitably social.

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Savarkar's propaganda was not one-sided. With a batch of his workers, he visited the slums and squalid dens, hamlets and

[14] The *Janata* Special Number, April 1938, p. 2.

hills, villages and towns where the Untouchables lived. This batch studied their ways of living, taught them cleanliness, guided them, and worshipped with them. They took the Chambhars into the quarters and temples of the Mahars and the Bhangis into the quarters and temples of the Dhors.

The discussions and debates with opponents over the burning problem of reconversion and Hindu organisation stormed and abated. Stirring speeches and moving appeals would go on till early dawn. The next morning saw Savarkar in another village and so his propaganda went on. Savarkar was then in the best of his health. Men of wealth, distinction and status followed him climbing hills and dales with cheer. In fact, no other caste-Hindu leader whose name was connected with the removal of untouchability saw as many quarters of the Untouchables as did Savarkar. The suppressed people watched and waited for his arrival at their villages with bewilderment and hope and crowded for the *darshan* of Savarkar, the saviour of the fallen Hindus, who opened to them the gates of the temples of God, Man and Light.

While the Savarkarian movement of social equality had ushered in a new era in Maharashtra, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made on October 13, 1935, a declaration that the Depressed Classes would abjure Hinduism. His declaration rocked all political parties and social institutions. Leaders of Islam cast greedy glances at the Depressed Classes. Promoters of Christianity turned many a holy thought in their minds at the sight of the prospective converts. Mahatma Gandhi said that it was an unfortunate decision when untouchability was on its last legs. Savarkar said that on the conversion of the so-called Untouchables there was no possibility of their receiving treatment of equality under Christianity or Islam. He pointed to the prevailing riots between touchable Christians and untouchable Christians in Travancore.

Observing that untouchability was on its wane, Savarkar further said that if Dr. Ambedkar, like all positivists and rationalists, abjured the religion, he had no objection to his doing that. "Truly speaking," he proceeded, "any Ism in the sense of religion contains something which is not amenable to reason and which is based on mere belief. Those who believe that the existing religious opinions are not amenable to reason or logic,

should not hug irrational prejudices to their bosoms. Ambedkar should, therefore, embrace a religion which is based on principles that are not averse to logic and reason." What they should do, he concluded, was to fight valiantly by the side of the progressive Hindus and rise in the scale of life.

On November 13, 1935, Savarkar wrote a letter to Dr. Ambedkar inviting him to preside over a Pan-Hindu dinner. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar replied that he was glad to read the account of his social work at Ratnagiri and really appreciated[15] it. He was sorry he could not accept the invitation as he was busy with the Law College activities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was of the opinion that inter-dining had not succeeded in killing the spirit and conscience of caste. The real remedy, he suggested, was inter-marriage. Savarkar was trying to persuade Dr. Ambedkar from his grim decision. But the meeting could not take place as Dr. Ambedkar could not go to Ratnagiri.

Savarkar did not like the idea of the Depressed Classes going over to any other religion. He hoped that the reconversion movement would succeed in claiming them back if they embraced any other religion. Although Savarkar held much the same views on the abolition of untouchability and both of them admired the qualities of each other, still when Ambedkar said that the Hindus were the sick men of India and the Hindu's life had been a life of continuous defeats, Savarkar pointed to some glorious chapters from the Hindu history and added that if it was a history of defeats and darkness, it was the duty of a noble son to turn the defeats into victory and bring glory to the ancestors.

Savarkar's life in Ratnagiri was full of other activities also. It was in Ratnagiri that the famous Pan-Hindu anthem was composed by him and was first sung. Ratnagiri is the birthplace of the Pan-Hindu Flag which was first flown by Ramananda Chatterjee, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha at its Surat session in 1929, and was ultimately adopted by the All-India Hindu Mahasabha as the Pan-Hindu Flag at Lahore in 1936. It was the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha that remembered and sent its grateful homage to Nepal which was then the only Independent Hindu Kingdom in the world, and it appealed

[15] Savarkar. *Iatibhedochhedak Nibandha*, p. 230.

to her to make her arm stronger for the sake of Hindudom. It was the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha again that declared Nagari script and Sanskritised Hindi to be the national script and lingua franca of Hindustan!

Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha did a tremendous work in the cause of Swadeshi also. Savarkar and his colleagues visited the market places, lanes and by-lanes, and sent children selling and propagating Swadeshi articles as hawkers do. Savarkar himself saw individually every shop-keeper, entreated and insisted on the purchase of Swadeshi goods like soap, sugar, bangles, paper and many other articles of Indian make. One can easily imagine what amount of humiliation, exhausting patience and personal pecuniary loss Savarkar must have undergone at the hands of insolent, illiterate and even so-called progressive yet unpatriotic countrymen.

It was again Savarkar who attracted with great persuasion the Hindus to the trade of Bed-making. To that end he himself learnt the art of carding cotton with the carding-bow. He then induced Hindu youths to follow the vocation and thus the Ratnagiri Hindus had beds prepared by Hindus.

The most vociferous and effective was the movement launched for the purification of the Marathi language. The question had been agitating great minds for decades. But it was left to Savarkar to crown the movement with triumph.

Shivaji set up a committee to compile a Dictionary of pure Marathi words. The *Rajyavyavaharkosh* was compiled by Raghunath Pandit and others appointed by Shivaji the Great. The rise of the English Language added to the difficulties of Marathi which had been, to a great extent, already influenced by the Urdu and Persian languages. A nation must keep its mother tongue alive, its cherished heritage undefiled, its values and connotation unaffected. In the life of every nation the problem of purification of its language does arise. There has been a growing desire for the original and native forms of mother-speech in England too. Stating that there should be as much reverence and affection for one's native tongue as for the country and home, Frank H. Callan, author of *Excellence in English*, observes: " As we naturally and rightly resent and stand against all foreign incursions that may injure and corrupt the land of our birth and the scene of our infancy and childhood,

desiring nothing so much as to preserve their integrity and familiar attractiveness, so in like manner we ought to guard nothing more jealously than the primitive purity and individuality of our language." [16]

Mr. Callan tells us that Defoe was against Latinized syntax and style of English. Swift employed his genius to resist Gaelic foreign tendencies in English prose. Gibbon was saturated with French; Johnson gave undue preference to Latin; and Carlyle was full of German constructions. All the three, says Callan, impeded the movement.[17] Lamb played an important role in the purification of the English language and Dryden and Shakespeare were pure English writers. So was Newman.

Ireland's great movement for the revival and resurrection of her mother tongue and its purification is too well-known.

In India the flag of the movement to purify the language was unfurled by Savarkar. Savarkar was against Urduised and Persianised Hindi or Marathi, as they eliminated Marathi and Hindi words and impoverished the Marathi and Hindi Languages. He, therefore, launched a movement for the purification of the Marathi language. Battles were joined on the issue. He wrote a series of articles on this subject in the *Kesari* in April and May 1925. Those articles made a great stir among the Marathi litterateurs and some of them opposed the movement. Savarkar replied in the *Kesari* to the criticisms from September to November 1925. After an untiring campaign the rational and national importance was realized and some of the opponents turned into its supporters. Some spineless ones conceded the principle, but fastidiously higgled about the details. Some came to respect it, and still few croak about it.

The Maharashtra Literary Conference at its Jalgaon session accepted the principle of purification of the Marathi language. Dr. Madhavrao Patwardhan, D.Lit., a great Marathi poet, originally used a lot of Persian words in his poems. He came forward to scoff at Savarkar but remained to pray. And when he himself began to champion the cause he re-wrote his poems in undefiled Marathi! Such was the glow of Savarkar's movement. New words were coined. Dictionaries of pure Marathi words to substitute Urdu and Persian words were compiled and pub-

[16] Frank H. Callan, *Excellence in English*, p. 370.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

lished by Dr. Patwardhan and also by A. S. Bhide. The words gained ground and public sanction. The critics, too, unwittingly influenced by the psychology, are helping the movement by using the new words, and thus the purification of Marathi has come to stay.

Savarkar did not stop here. He suggested that all those who stood for pure Hindi and for the preservation of the purity of the Indian languages should meet in an All-India Conference to devise ways and means and launch a nation-wide movement for the purity of the Hindi and other languages. Savarkar also suggested reforms in the Devanagari script and reduced it to fifty-six letters for the convenience of the press.

In respect of the Nagari script, Savarkar made an appeal to all provincial newspapers to print in every issue at least two columns of matter in their provincial languages in the Nagari script. If all the provincial languages of India are printed in the Nagari script, what immense cohesion, understanding and advancement will be achieved! Dr. Ambedkar held the same view on the subject.

The movement for the purification of the language scored its triumph when Hindi with Devanagari script was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India as the lingua franca of India in preference to Hindustani, another name of Urdu. Thus Savarkar left his permanent impress upon Marathi and Hindi. A contribution of no mean order.

Hundreds of eminent men and spirited youths visited Ratnagiri, some to measure the strength of their rationalism and learning, some to pay respects to the idol of patriotism and sacrifice and others to have a glimpse of the Prince of Indian Revolutionaries. Even eminent Government servants visited him under the pretext of discussing social reforms.

Young leaders of the spirit and heroic stamp of Achyutrao Patwardhan showed deep regard for Savarkar. During the blooming days of the civil disobedience movement of 1930 he discussed some points with Savarkar. When the young khadi-clad leader doubted the possibility of regaining Independence by an armed rising, Savarkar asked the charkha-general, "Then friend, tell me how you are going to win back Independence by the charkha?"

It was in Ratnagiri that N. C. Kelkar agreed with Savarkar

and promised to introduce part of Savarkar's reforms in the Devanagari script, and well did he fulfil his promise when he started the new Monthly, *Sahyadri*. Dr. Moonje, too, paid a visit to Ratnagiri. His regard for Savarkar approached reverence. Some years later he even told a Viceroy that to him Savarkar was next to Shivaji. Bhai Parmananda's visit to Ratnagiri was more of a personal character than a public one. Savarkar's right-hand man of London days, V. V. S. Aiyar, met him in Ratnagiri after fifteen years. Gyanchand Varma of London fame, Sachindranath Sanyal, Nani Gopal of Andaman fame, G. V. Mavlankar, afterwards Speaker of the Indian Parliament, Dr. Madhavrao Patwardhan, D.Lit., and Dr. S. V. Ketkar, encyclopædist of Maharashtra paid their respects to Savarkar at Ratnagiri.

Among the leaders who visited and interviewed Savarkar in Ratnagiri the only man who impressed Savarkar most was Dr. Ketkar. That is why while paying an obituary tribute to Dr. Ketkar's memory at a literary circle in Ratnagiri in 1937, Savarkar marvelled at the fathomless brains in the small skull of the Doctor. A lion alone stops at a lion.

Yusuf Meher Ali, then in the shell of Socialism, saw Savarkar in Ratnagiri and to his bewilderment Savarkar took him to the inside of the Patit Pavan Mandir, the Pan-Hindu temple. It was no wonder that rationalist Savarkar should do so. He himself was not a believer in God. He used that Pan-Hindu temple as a means of propagating the principles of social equality.

Acharya P. K. Atre and Anantrao Gadre, both interested in the revolution of social equality, visited Savarkar in Ratnagiri. Prabodhankar Thakare and Madhavrao Bagal made speeches there and discussed social problems with him. At times those who were jealous of his learning and genius asked him to preside over literary meetings at short notice. Prof. M. D. Altekar's speech on women's place in the poetry of Kalidas was one of such occasions. And when Savarkar in his concluding remarks gave chapter and verse from Kalidas, his critics were thrilled with admiration.

The Chitpavan (Brahmin) Vidyarthi Sahayyak Sangh, Ratnagiri, requested Savarkar to address their annual meeting. Savarkar told them that he could not join an institution, which stood purely for a particular caste. He added that he would

accept their invitation provided they adopted a change in their constitution to the effect that in the absence of a worthy Chitpavan Brahmin student, any deserving Hindu student would be awarded the scholarship. They did so ostensibly to please him and Savarkar agreed. Once at Malvan, a town in the southern part of the District, one Humanist asked him whether he would like to be a member of his Human Religion. A broad-minded Hindu as he was, he replied in the affirmative, and asked if there was really such a force as Human Religion under the sun when a State like Russia invested with a universal urge was extending its frontiers and threatening the workers of other countries with bombing. Savarkar always liked to be a realist rather than a man of clouds even at the risk of being branded as a communalist.

CHAPTER 10

Rationalist and Author

MODERN civilization is the outcome of scientific research and progress. Science and Democracy are two great potential forces in the modern world. Democracy defines the shape and aims of social and political endeavour. It strives for a good, just, equitable and progressive life. Good and progressive life demands an equal and proportionately just enjoyment of all the material and cultural resources and possession. Those possessions and resources are brought within the reach of men by science which controls the laws and forces of Nature and bends them to the services of men. While bringing about this change, science emancipates the mind of man from the bondage of superstition and ignorance. Thus science plays a dominant part in the reconstruction of every country's life and economy, and solves its crucial problems of food, clothing, shelter, security and peace.

Savarkar holds that the greater the domination of superstition the lesser is the tendency of the people towards science. So he raised his mighty pen against superstition from which flowed Voltaire's satire and emanated the force of Luther. Voltaire venerated nothing while Savarkar, like Swift, did his job with devastating candour. Voltaire smashed the ancient idols; Savarkar swept them into a corner as historical and cultural monuments for record and research. Voltaire disfigured the idols, Savarkar dethroned them.

Savarkar's outlook was absolutely modern and scientific and secular. He showed the fallacy and hollowness of time-worn and scripture-born arguments. He denounced the ideologies that described the machine as a device of the devil invented to spite the glory of God and to strike a blow at the influence of religion and make man feeble, mechanical, helpless and heartless, lead

ing him to his final doom. Savarkar ruthlessly exposed this false propaganda. So he was to Maharashtra what eighteenth century great European reformers were to Europe.

About the God of Man and the Lord of the universe, Savarkar had peculiar views. According to him, we live in this world, but the universe has nothing to do with us. The belief that what the Lord of the universe likes is good and what He likes must be beneficial to the progress of Man, is useless, because it is not true. The forces in the universe are to a little degree for Man, but to a greater extent they are against him. What man can do at the most is to learn the laws of the universe as best as he can, and turn them to his benefit and welfare. This is, he sums up, the real worship of the universe.

In his view whatever contributes to human good is good, what is derogatory to the progress of humanity is bad. The definition of morality should be framed, he says, in reference to the common good of mankind. If God is kind enough to take a man out of danger, and is all pervading, who first throws a virtuous man into the flames of danger, he asks. Who sinks steamers full of men, children and women despite heartfelt prayers? Who sets a conflagration to the woods and roasts the birds, reptiles and other creatures like fish? Savarkar asks: 'Why does God make the wicked so powerful as to be in a position to harass the good? If God is omniscient and most kind, does he not know the innocence and purity of that good man beforehand? Why does he at all test the virtuous man through cruel and fierce ordeals?' In this respect Savarkar is more agnostic than Ingersoll, and more balanced than Agarkar, the giant rationalist of Maharashtra.

Savarkar feels sorry that superstition should hold its sway in our land even during the twentieth century. He observes: "We have allowed the Britishers to crush everything that was with us, but not that precious possession of ours, our credulous superstitions!" "Let an earthquake occur, public prayer is our remedy. Let a patriot fall ill, we go to attend a crowded prayer-meeting. Let a pestilence ravage our land, and we kill goats in sacrifice to ward off the calamity. It was quite all right when we did not know the causes of such things, but to stick to these superstitions even when science has revealed the causes of such calamities is simply absurd," writes Savarkar.

Savarkar asks the Hindus to follow the cause and effect theory that is never disturbed by the thought of Divine pleasure or displeasure. He points out to the people that water boils at a certain temperature and God never interferes in this process. Oxygen and Hydrogen combined in proper proportions, are bound to yield water any day of the year whether God wills it or not! He proceeds: "With the aid of science, even Godless Russia is actually floating castles in the air in the form of aeroplanes and giant super-fortresses." "What actually matters is scientific accuracy and not astrological superstition. Astrology cannot save what science has doomed and where safety is assured by science, astrology cannot endanger it," he observes, in his brilliant article entitled, 'Machine is a boon to Mankind.'

Savarkar tells the people that it is time for them to realize that 'sacrifice' cannot bring rains, nor can it avert a famine. He appeals to the Hindus to discard the superstitions and religious aspect clinging to their usages regarding maternity and asks them to send their women to well-equipped, well-lighted, modern maternity homes instead of galling them in dark, dingy and smoky rooms. He suggests that the corpses should be carried in a car in a decent manner and burnt in electric crematorium.

Such a lover of science was bound to condemn the anti-machine attitude and anti-intellectual trends of Gandhism and its charkha fads. To Savarkar a telescope is a human eye with its capacity of vision increased a thousand times; a telephone is but a human ear with an enormous increase in its power.

"Machine has made it possible for man stay beneath water, rise high up in the sky. Machine has made man far-reaching, far-seeing, far-speaking and far-hearing. Machine has conferred upon man blessings which no prophets could give or no penance could secure. Mankind owes its present civilization entirely to the use of machine, and thus machine far from being a curse, is a wonderful boon which has bestowed supernatural powers upon this human race!" observes Savarkar. He appeals to the nation that it is the duty of every thinking man to promote the principles of science in every department of life. Without it, no nation can hope to survive the present stage, he adds.

To Savarkar science by itself is not responsible for the evils of Capitalism or the destructive orgy of modern war technique. It is the fault of the ways of distribution, lust for domination,

and greed for exploitation. Electricity can light a bulb or detonate a bomb for the destruction of a city. Sarvarkar says that the evil should be checked. In short, he observes, not warfare but welfare of mankind should be the ultimate goal of science.

Savarkar stands for science and absolute science. He stands for TODAY and not for the blind traditions of YESTERDAY. He appeals to the Hindus to test all their ancient holy works on the touchstone of science. He writes: "We do not regard the ancient works as all-pervading, omniscient and perfect by themselves. The *Smritis* and the *Vedas* we love reverentially, not as omniscient and unchangeable works, but as historical books and as the landmarks in the great and glorious journey of the human race." He, therefore, asks the Hindus to test the knowledge in the ancient holy works, their laws and learnings on the touchstone of science and to follow fearlessly what contributes to the good of the nation.

To Savarkar, no animal is sacred. Even the cow is meant for man; not man for the cow. Not cow-worship but cow-protection is our national asset. He denounces the viewpoint of the Hindu leaders of the past, who, for saving the lives of a handful of cows, lost their kingdoms, their human rights, and their all. He, therefore, observes that if it is inevitable in a grave crisis to live upon beef and save human lives in India, the Hindus should also do it. The prosperity of a nation does not depend upon its capacity for penance and yoga, love of justice, or sense of virtue. History is replete with innumerable instances, he writes, which show that the wicked, cruel, unjust and inhuman kings, conquerors, democracies and republics have smothered the weak kings and powerless democracies, though the victims were just, human and non-aggressive. Discipline, dry gunpowder, the range of guns, the sharp edge of swords and an unflinching will are the factors that protect the rights and liberties of a nation. Justice and injustice have no relation to victory or defeat. Victory and defeat are quite different from justice and injustice. If victory and defeat have at all any relation with any other thing, it is valour, observes Savarkar. But this worship of strength, power and discipline, Savarkar says, should not be used for aggressive and greedy aims. He states

that justice, if weak, is futile and lame. It goes under. Injustice, if powerful, tramples upon it.

These rational views of Savarkar have impressed many persons and leaders of socialist and communist leanings. They acknowledge this Savarkar to be the rationalist leader of Maharashtra. In fact, in the domain of realism, rationalism and revolutionism Savarkar has surpassed Ranade, Tilak, Agarkar and Dr. Ketkar. S. K. Kshirsagar, an eminent and fairly unbiased literary critic in Maharashtra, observes that Maharashtra produced two great leaders of thought. They were Savarkar and Dr. Ketkar the compiler of Marathi Encyclopaedia. "Savarkar's matchless heroism," he writes, "and ideal patriotism had won a name and fame even before the transportation of Tilak to Mandalay. But Savarkar's all-pervading political philosophy became known after Tilak's death. Though Tilak was revolutionary in action, his thoughts on history, social reconstruction, and politics were not as deep-rooted, fundamentally revolutionary and volcanic as those of Savarkar." [1]

When a leader is accepted, Kshirsagar goes on, people have to change their entire line of thought, and Maharashtra learnt this for the first time in history from the leadership of Savarkar. Observing that Savarkar was the first and foremost leader of thought of Modern Maharashtra who gained a wide following, Kshirsagar further remarks that had Savarkar's followers been truer to his philosophy than to its mere glorification, a far greater cult than that of the Sikhs or the Arya Samaj would have sprung up all over India in the form of Savarkarism. The critic's assessment is rather too pessimistic. Pioneers of a great cause, precursors of a revolution and prophets of a new order have seldom prospered in their own age.

* * *

As a man of letters Savarkar has few equals in Maharashtra. There never was a greater genius born since the author of *Dnyaneshwari* in the land of the Mahrattas. Like a cloud, Savarkar was myriad-sided. He was a volcanic writer, a heroic author, a renaissance scholar, a historian in action, a dramatist, a novelist and an epic poet. His genius earned him a place

[1] K. B. Kshirsagar, *Suvarnatula*, p. 129.

among the first few greatest geniuses of our Motherland. His creative genius was versatile and had the effluence of a volcano. There was grandeur of Everest, the sweep of an eagle, profundity of the ocean and the flash of lightning in all his writings. The pen and tongue of no other Indian author and orator was so entirely devoted to the nation's cause as those of Savarkar. His literature filled the reader with hope and courage. It inspired the patriot, stimulated the thinker and drove the soldier to fight for justice, liberty and welfare of humanity. What is more, his was the only pen that suckled a line of martyrs, an unparalleled phenomenon in Indian literature! To Savarkar nothing was better, higher and holier than this noble human work of uplifting his fellowmen in this holy Hindustan.

G. T. Madkholkar, an ex-President of the Marathi Literary Conference, well-known critic and at present editor of the *Tarun Bharat*, Nagpur, in one of his memorable articles remarked that during the last seventy-five years, Maharashtra produced eight writers worth the name who possessed great imaginative power namely, Chiplunkar, Paranjpe, Shripad Krishna, Achyutrao Kolhatkar, Kelkar, Gadkari, Atre and Khandekar. Of these, he said, Chiplunkar and Paranjpe were the only two writers whose imagination was of the classic type. Savarkar, he said, belonged to this classic type. "The imagination of Savarkar," Madkholkar proceeded, "is not as playful and charming as the butterfly; it has the sublime sweep of an eagle. It has not the playfulness of a spring; it has the depth of the sea. It has not the delicacy of a creeping flowering-plant; it has the blazing power of lightning." One more quality and by no means a less important quality of Savarkar's imagination escaped the notice of this eminent critic. It was that Savarkar's imagination was not devoid of realism. Savarkar's imaginative power was not aimless and unbridled. It soared to the height of Everest, but is not lost in the clouds! It had wings powerful enough to come down to the earth. In this Savarkar outshone his two rivals, Chiplunkar and Paranjpe.

In the domain of propaganda by literature no Indian writer excelled Savarkar. Pointing out that the literary productions of Savarkar were dominated by vigour, sublimity and idealism, Madkholkar wrote: "Savarkar's idealism in both these respects —complete independence of India and the resurrection of the

Hindus—is to be called uncommon for the simple reason that none else has so fearlessly advocated the cause of independence and nobody has so comprehensively preached for the resurrection of the Hindu race. It seems that his fighting temperament is not prepared to take note of the limitations, possibilities, or properties. The result is that whatever ideal he advocates assumes so intensely propagandistic and challenging a form that his writings are surcharged with the spirit of a battle-cry." On this N. C. Kelkar agreed with Madkholkar. Describing Savarkar as a man of art, Kelkar said: "Delicacy, so inherent in art, is not apparent in Savarkar. Like the American author, Upton Sinclair, or Norris, Savarkar possesses all the force of a propagandist and is a straight hitter. He could hardly be excelled as a propagandist by anyone else in Maharashtra. Whatever subject he chooses, may it be the purification of the Marathi language, or the purification of the converts, the reform of the script, or the reformation of the society, he will come out like one pouncing for a battle-field with sword in hand." Kelkar proceeded: "A Spartan general advised his soldier, 'if your sword is shorter than that of your rival, always march a step in advance.' But Savarkar's sword is longer in the first instance and he himself stands a step in advance of others." Kelkar concluded: "All the writings of Savarkar are like leaps through arches fixed with knives and blazing torches turned inside."

Presiding over a literary function in Bombay in 1943, a renowned novelist of Maharashtra remarked that Savarkar's pen had the force of the combined pens of the trio: Agarkar, Chiplunkar and Tilak. And indeed it was so. Chiplunkar, Agarkar and Tilak, all were spirited writers. All were virile. They all had a ready pen. But while Agarkar wrote with his dry intellect like a giant, Chiplunkar wrote like a proud man, and Tilak wrote like a leader-general. Savarkar, however, wrote like a rationalist and a warrior-prophet. Savarkar was master both of thought and word. His writings rippled with emotions and masculine force. He overwhelmed his readers with a well-drilled army of arguments. He exposed treachery, superstition and hypocrisy.

But the most unrivalled characteristic of Savarkar's excellence was that he carried his great learning easily and wrote with genius and judgment. His perspicuity was peculiar; his insight

rare. No other pen caused such a social upheaval with the violence of spring-tides as did the volcanic pen of this man. He lashed his social opponents with a hard rod of rationalism and crushed their opposition. His rationalistic articles on 'The Machine,' 'God or Gunpowder,' 'God of Man and Lord of the Universe,' 'Woman's place in *Manusmriti*,' 'Woman's Beauty and Duty' and his biting pungent articles on 'the Cow' will easily place him amongst the great social reformers of the world.

During his internment at Ratnagiri, besides the several articles mentioned above, he wrote early his famous book *Hindu Pad-Padashahi.* It is a history of the Rise and Fall of the Mahratta Empire. Read in conjunction with Ranade's *Rise of the Maratha Power,* this book gives you the full nationalistic and broad view of the great national movement of the Mahratta Hindus. It was a righteous war for the liberation of the Hindus against the theocratic patriotism, fanatic fury, volcanic greed and foreign domination of the Muslims. In this book Savarkar depicts in his authoritative tone the glorious spectacle of the rising Mahrattas, their insatiable central desire, and their inordinate love for restoring to the Hindus Swadharma and Swaraj, the God-given rights of Man. The book reveals Savarkar's master-intellect, true insight, stately diction, great thought, and honest pride.

Here is an interesting parallel! Both Savarkar and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote history. Both were great personalities. Nehru wrote for the fame and glory of Gandhi and Indian Freedom. Savarkar wrote for promoting the cause of the nation. Both wrote their histories with vigour and vivacity and told their stories nobly and splendidly. While Nehru was a man of immense reading Savarkar was a man of great knowledge. Savarkar wrote with astounding oiginality and much gusto while Nehru wrote with less originality but more with a philosophic temper of mind. Nehru lavished praise on his heroes and lashed at others. Savarkar inspired the nation and hammered out false gods.

But Nehru and Savarkar, the historians, differed on the vital issues of Indian history. In his *Glimpses of World History* Nehru got a perverted vision of Shivaji's action in killing Afzulkhan. Nehru's angle of vision could misrepresent the most vital crisis in the life of Shivaji the greatest Indian of his age. That

angle of vision expressed surprise in his *Discovery of India* that Jayachand was looked upon almost as a traitor, that Hinduism was a national religion, and that Pratap regarded Akbar, the hero of Pandit Nehru, as an alien. To Savarkar, the historian, Jayachand is synonymous with a traitor, Akbar a symbol of foreign domination and Pratap a nation-builder. Have you heard Savarkar, the historian, on Chitor, Panipat, and 1857? Have you come across any history of England that does not speak of Trafalgar and Waterloo? Have you come across any history of India without the mention of Chitor? Behold, it is Nehru's *Discovery of India.*

Another great book Savarkar wrote during his internment is *My Transportation for Life.* It is the most convincing and inspiring work which depicts his jail life in the Andamans. If five books that will last as long as the Marathi language lasts, are selected, this stately and inspiring book will be one of them along with Dnyanadeva's *Dnyaneshwari,* Tukaram's *Gatha,* Tilak's *Gita Rahasya* and Apte's novel *But who pays Heed?* Leading critics in Maharashtra are of opinion that this book of Savarkar would occupy a prominent place among the great classics of the world. Again a great parallel. Pandit Nehru wrote a great autobiography. In his mundane way, Nehru's autobiography is vigorous and glorious. But it is lyrical about Gandhi and at some places slightly pompous and unfair.

Savarkar's *My Transportation for Life,* a part of his incomplete autobiography, is splendid, inspiring, ingenuous and stately. Nehru is bristling with views and valour, while Savarkar is bleeding with a serene thought and majestic heart. If the full epic autobiography of Savarkar and the great romantic life story of M. N. Roy had appeared in the field in time India would have shone in the domain of world autobiographies with these two immortal autobiographies. Leo Deutsch's *Sixteen Years in Siberia* describes the horrors of prison life and the soulless prison machine. So do *White Cross to Red Flag* and Dostoevsky's *Dead House* and Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis.* But *My Transportation for Life* would rank very high among them.

This Savarkar's book was translated into Gujarati and somehow was proscribed by the alien Government egged on by native machinations. And though on the advent of the Congress Ministry the inspiring book escaped the literary genius of K. M.

Munshi, the then Home Minister of Bombay, it was released by Morarji Desai in a fearless manner when he became Home Minister of Bombay.

As a dramatist, Savarkar did not care so much for a plot or stage effect. Here the playwright lived the life of his 'self', speaking and acting through his characters. His characters move with emotion and reason. Humour is sometimes uncommon to genius, and Savarkar is no exception to it. Still all the three plays of Savarkar written during his internment are wonderfully effective. The *Usshap*, first staged on April 9, 1927, paves the way and struggles for the well-being and welfare of the Depressed Classes and strives to bury untouchability. But the Government feared that Savarkar's play would give rise to communal trouble or tension and so asked Savarkar to withdraw the book from market and stop the play for some time. Savarkar argued the case skilfully and then the ban was lifted and the play was allowed to be staged.

His second play, *Sanyasta Khadga*, the *Forsaken Sword*, written against the background of the life of Lord Buddha, is a devastating commentary on the doctrine of absolute non-violence, and preaches that relative non-violence is a virtue. This play removes the web of absolute non-violence, and ends in showing that not the saint, but the sword protects the hearths and homes of a nation against the aggressive forces in the world. Some of the characters from this drama non-violently enough do not 'cut' jokes, because the word 'cut' implies violence! Dr. N. B. Khare as a staunch Congressman saw this play staged in Nagpur in the early thirties. As the play advanced and the guns of philosophy of the struggle for existence began to boom, Dr. Khare grew animated and to the amazement of the audience sprang upon the stage with dramatic suddenness and shouted: "Friends, countrymen, our country at present needs some one to preach this philosophy." This drama ends in a tragedy. Clear was the object! A slave country must accustom itself to the spirit of tragedy. Before writing the *Sanyasta Khadga*, Savarkar had planned a play on the life of the Buddha. The title of that proposed play was *Bodhi Vriksha*. But it remained incomplete.

Uttarakriya, the third play of Savarkar, produced in 1934 deals with the post-Panipat period of Mahratta history.

Savarkar wrote two novels, the *Moplah Rebellion* and the

Transportation. The first is short, succinct and sweet with a subtle charm and satire. It was originally published in Babarao Savarkar's name—for Savarkar was then passing his days in internment. The novel was acclaimed as the best from the viewpoint of an ideal theme and literary treatment. The second novel has a thrilling background of the magic of the Andamans, and according to some film journals, it would be a great and thrilling screen version, if reproduced.

About this time Savarkar published a new collection of his poems under the title *Ranfule, Wild Flowers* which contained his famous poem *Kamala.* Savarkar the poet was now under the profound influence of Pan-Hindu ideology and so he omitted the lines which referred to the Founder of Islam!

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As for the role of women in life, Savarkar has definite views to offer. He believes that there is a fundamental and natural difference between man and woman. Their duties are different. So their education, too, must necessarily differ. Reformer as he is, he does not like women to obey the dictates of old useless customs.

Savarkar regards female education indispensable to the uplift of a nation; but by female education he does not necessarily mean university degrees, although he has no objection to their obtaining the degrees without disregarding their primary duty to the home, children, and the nation. He holds that a system of education must be drawn up on new lines, and women should be given some sort of specialized training congenial to the temperament of women. A woman should be a ministering angel rather than a masculine Amazon or a Virago. She should imbibe the quality of her proverbial modesty and grace rather than mere eloquence or proficiency in mathematics. Women are the solace and comfort of hearths and homes. The larger the number of good healthy mothers, he observes, the stronger and healthier will be the nation. Therefore, a woman's education should enable her to enrich the nation with a generation stronger, more beautiful, and more patriotic than the past. The Russian woman is on an equal footing with man. Yet, does it mean, he asks, that a Stalin delivers a child instead of his wife?

To Savarkar life is an oblation. According to him, a woman should look beautiful with her natural charms and try to keep it with good aids to beauty. In addition, he has something to say to a beauty about her duty. Beauty is handed over to her, he warns, as a strict sacred trust. And that trust is eugenics. A beautiful woman who fails to fulfil this condition becomes morally guilty of a breach of trust. A nation that strives to have daughters more beautiful than their mothers and sons stronger than their fathers necessarily adds to artistic culture handed down to it through heritage. Is this not the angle and approach of a realist and a reformer? Years after Savarkar wrote this, we find today England, France and other European countries propagating these very doctrines to arrest the decrease in population in their countries and to avoid the consequential downfall and decay of the virility of their nations.

CHAPTER 11

Back to Freedom

In Savarkar's private life, however, duty overshadowed beauty. In his household affairs little attention was paid to artistry although he felt quite at home in the company of beauties.

While in Ratnagiri, Savarkar's wife bore him three children. The first was a daughter named Prabhat. Born in January 1925 at Satara, she was a smart girl. The second was a sickly daughter by name Shalini. She died in her infancy. The third was a son called Vishwas. He was born in March 1928 in Bombay and was a weak child. Savarkar's father-in-law, Bhausaheb Chiplunkar, had made a vow to the god Parashuram that if his daughter Yamunabai gave birth to a son, he would bring the daughter and her son to the temple to fulfil the vow. Accordingly Chiplunkar took the Savarkar family to the Parashuram temple near Chiplun. Rationalist Savarkar had nothing to do with the vow. He gracefully accompanied his father-in-law and was mightily pleased, as he was on a previous occasion, to have a glimpse of his great ancestor.

This small family was brought up by Savarkar's wife Yamunabai with great affection. She was a very patient and dutiful woman and was a model of unselfishness and contentment. To live a placid life near a fire that was always burning and bursting was indeed no mean achievement. Yamunabai was religious and stuck to her traditional religious fasts despite her husband's rationalistic and secular outlook on life. The household was run with frugality as a rule as Savarkar entertained groundless fears that his family would come to want.

The monthly pittance the Government paid him was no more than adequate to cover the expenses. Nor was it possible for him to make a living by his pen. Had he deposited in a bank all the money he got through the public purse he would have earned interest on it. But it seems he had not done so. So he

sometimes lent money at interest to needy acquaintances so that the needs of both the parties were met. But this proved to be unprofitable. Some cheated him with the result that Savarkar tore away all the promissory notes and never bothered the debtors about repayment. He treated these dealings as bad debts.

In Ratnagiri Savarkar the organizer was seen at his best. There was much warmth and utmost cordiality in his discussions with the people and the workers in social and literary fields. In the morning he would go for a stroll, have some tea and bhajis at a particular hotel in company with his warm admirers. They enjoyed his inspiring talks and anecdotes. He then walked back home looking through the gold-rimmed glasses at men and shops on either side, his white coat, long whiskers, prominent moustache and black round cap shining; his dhoti rolling in the dust, his shoes sometimes striking against stones and his admirers dangling after him.

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Although his heroic struggle in the direction of social and mental revolution continued throughout the period of internment at Ratnagiri, Savarkar was doing his utmost to break his shackles. Government were trying their way to prolong the period of his internment on some plea or other. It is said that climate influences character. Inhabitants as they were of a region where fire is a luxury, the Britishers took great care of fire wherever it burnt in their Indian Empire. They watched the fire-places in India with special care. Whenever any fire broke out in any part of India, Savarkar's residence was shadowed. Surprise raids were a common feature with Savarkar's residence. Once the Superintendent of Police surrounded Savarkar's residence at dawn and showed Savarkar the order under which he was directed to search Savarkar's residence for copies of the proscribed book, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. Savarkar came out of the house with his family and said to the officer with a smile: "Yes, we have come out. You can go in and search the house. But remember that I have struggled with Scotland Yard for four years and outwitted them." Yet the police had not come to Savarkar's residence without reason. Sardar Bhagat Singh had printed two thousand

copies of that famous book of Savarkar to raise funds for his revolutionary society and had respectfully sent the first two copies of the book to Savarkar.

On another occasion Savarkar was almost perplexed. The detectives and police officers surprised him. But gifted with a marvellous presence of mind, he waited till the search was over and at last when the time for the report came, he handed over to the officer the very writing pad which contained an article ready for the press. The police officer used it without peeping inside while Savarkar held a crumpled piece of paper containing a poem on Sardar Bhagat Singh.

To supplement his heroic efforts in the cause of social reforms and express his views unobserved on current politics, Savarkar then launched a weekly named *Shraddhananda*. It was edited by his brother Dr. Savarkar in Bombay. It published several inspiring articles by Savarkar. Though the articles did not appear in the name of Savarkar, Maharashtra could feel the inspiring touch and tone; and in a short time this weekly attained enormous popularity and had a wide circulation.

Gandhi had just then begun to come out of his virtual retirement. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress passed a resolution in December 1927, demanding absolute political independence. Gandhi dubbed it childish. Savarkar bitterly criticised the attitude of Gandhi towards that resolution.

Savarkar was very happy that the Indian National Congress passed a resolution declaring complete Independence of India, but added that Pandit Nehru should not fight shy of including in that resolution Goa and Pondicherry also. But his biting articles in the *Mahratta* and especially in the *Shraddhananda* in which he harshly criticised Motilal Nehru and Gandhi for their pro-Muslim policy did more harm than good to the cause which Savarkar championed. Hindi edition of *Shraddhananda* was also launched but both the weeklies were wound up; the first having roared over three years.

Condolence meetings in memory of Swami Shraddhananda, who was cruelly murdered by a fanatic Muslim, and in memory of Deshbandhu Das and Lala Lajpat Rai, were addressed by Savarkar before sighing crowds at Ratnagiri. When Paranjpe, his early master, died he said in the condolence message: "Shivrampant is dead. Long live the editor of Kal!"

There was a move to elect Savarkar as President of the Hindu Mahasabha at its Jubbulpore session in 1927, but it was not successful. Referring to this proposal, N. C. Kelkar, who presided over the session, began his presidential address with these words: "The Reception Committee, I learn, had adverted to the possibility of getting Mr. Vinayakrao Savarkar to preside over this Conference, and I share their regret and disappointment in the failure of their object."[1] Government did not allow him also to go to Delhi in November 1927 to preside over the Depressed Classes Congress. During these days a prominent Congressman of Maharashtra suggested Savarkar's name for the presidentship of the Indian National Congress and wrote that in the event of Savarkar's absence, his address should be read out by installing a portrait of Savarkar in the presidential chair. Not only this, it was even suggested by Bhai Parmananda that Savarkar should represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference.[2] Babu Padmaraj Jain, a prominent Hindu Sabha leader, said that the Hindu Mahasabha wanted Savarkar to represent the Hindus at the Round Table Conference, but it was very unfortunate that the Hindus were being deprived of his leadership.

The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha was the first organized Hindu Body which came forward to back up Dr. Moonje in his acceptance of the invitation to the Round Table Conference and in January 1931 passed a resolution "expressing appreciation of the ability and courage with which Moonje and Jayakar had defended the Hindu cause, which it was declared, was identical with the cause of India as a whole against the anti-national encroachments of the Moslems." The resolution further threw a challenge to the Moslems to accept an arbitration by the League of Nations. It added that the rejection of the arbitration offer by the Muslims exposed the unjust nature of their claims.

In May 1934 Savarkar was arrested again and detained for two weeks in connection with shots fired at a military officer Sweetland in Bombay by Wamanrao Chavan, who was a Sanghatanist firebrand from Ratnagiri. Savarkar wrote from Ratnagiri prison on May 8, 1934, that he had nothing to do

[1] Kelkar, N. C., *Speeches and Writings*, p. 301.
[2] Quoted in the *Pratibha*, dated 15 January 1933.

with the boys Waman Chavan and Gajanan Damle; the latter had been arrested because Chavan had kept his trunk at his place. Savarkar said that these boys were the two out of hundreds of youths who took part in the social movement. He further said that he was prepared to cease taking part in any agitation, social or political, without the previous sanction of the Government. Government, however, could establish nothing and Savarkar was released on the 15th day.

After his release he wrote to Government thanking them for his release and requested that he should be judged for his personal actions and words alone and should be protected from heresay. The documents and other articles seized from his house were returned to him and the Bombay C.I.D. Inspectors were reprimanded for showing overzeal in their duty.

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Government went on extending the period of Savarkar's internment from time to time—1929 to 1937—as they considered him a danger to the peace of India. On February 26, 1929, Jayaramdas Daulatram asked some questions in the Council regarding the release of Savarkar. Government told the House that Savarkar had violated the second condition on several occasions, details of which it was not expedient to publish. G. R. Pradhan and C. R. Shroff took much interest in the question. When one of them asked Government whether they had received any application from Savarkar for maintenance, Government said that they would consider if Savarkar approached. Thereupon the District Magistrate of Ratnagiri fixed a monthly maintenance of Rs. 50 and later raised it to Rs. 60. In the last week of October 1930, the Bombay Government instructed Mr. D. Simington, District Magistrate of Ratnagiri, to give his opinion as to whether, having regard to Savarkar's antecedents and to the then political situation, he considered that the restrictions imposed on Savarkar should be either wholly or partly withdrawn without danger.

The District Magistrate, Mr. D. Simington, is reported to have opined that in the then state of politics Savarkar should not be released. He also reported to Government that Savarkar had devoted himself to the removal of untouchability and had achieved a certain measure of success, and added that he had

successfully admitted the untouchables to the new Patit Pavan Temple. It was a bad recommendation, but a gentleman's appreciation of Savarkar's social work. In 1934 Mr. R. M. Maxwell, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, declined Savarkar's request for permission to go to Bombay to attend the Bombay City and Suburbs Hindu Sabha Conference which was held in Bombay on the 23rd and 24th January 1934.

But whenever he was allowed to go out of Ratnagiri City or the district, secret wires clicked in code words from Ratnagiri to all important police headquarters of Bombay, Poona, and other cities. And every District Magistrate in the province tried his utmost to avoid Savarkar's presence in his district by complaining to the Home Department that his presence in the district would tremendously increase the work of the police and other departments.

Leaders in the Council and people from outside were doing their utmost for the release of Savarkar, but the Government was not yielding to that pressure or to the petitions of Savarkar. Yet he made petition after petition. Neither Savarkar nor the Government believed their eyes when they read the pledges given in his earnest applications. On November 24, 1934, Savarkar applied for release and said that he would be on the side of law and constitution even if he took to politics. He hoped that he would not be denied the chance to work out the new set of Reforms. On December 19, 1934, he was informed that his conduct during the last two years was not wholly satisfactory. The Government had come to the conclusion that it would not be in the interests of public tranquillity to withdraw the restrictions. So they were extended for a further period of two years from January 4, 1935. Again the period was extended to two years from January 4, 1937. On December 2, 1936, Savarkar petitioned the Central Government for his release, but the Home Member asked him to submit his application through the Local Government.

In the meantime a Committee called Savarkar Restrictions Removal Committee was set up in Bombay under the chairmanship of Dr. M. B. Velkar on July 18, 1935. Anant Hari Gadre, a plodding propagandist, was the prime mover in this agitation. Lakhs of signatures were collected and the petition was submitted to the Government.

But the India of those days was dominated by Gandhi who literally threw away into the waste paper basket the appeal for Savarkar's release. When approached for his support and signature to the appeal, Gandhi said he did not know who that Savarkar was, and asked whether he was the same Savarkar who wrote *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. Gandhi subsequently explained to the public that he thought it derogatory to approach the British Government for the release of Savarkar. Nehru went one step further. He was reported to have torn non-violently the 'Release Savarkar memorandum' to pieces. And all this happened before Savarkar had joined the Hindu Mahasabha as a political party in opposition to the Congress. Coming events cast their shadows before. Let history record this fact which is stranger than fiction.

Years rolled on and at long last the day of release arrived. After fighting the provincial elections under the new Act of 1935 and almost unchallenged by any major political opposition for the Hindu seats, the Congressmen were hatching the eggs of ministership under the wings of Gandhi. Government were eager to have interim ministries in the provinces with a view to pressing the Congress to accept office. In the interim period of the deadlock Khan Bahadur Dhanjishah Cooper, with the support of Jamnadas M. Mehta, a representative of the Tilakite Democratic Swaraj Party, expressed his willingness to form an interim Ministry in the Province on one condition. Mehta had been a champion of the campaign for Savarkar's release for a number of years in the past. He made Savarkar's release a condition precedent to accepting the office. H.E. Lord Brabourne, the then Governor of Bombay, showed his willingness to release Savarkar subject to Savarkar's good behaviour. Mehta's repartee at once resolved the bracket of the conditions. Mehta said that the Governor himself and even the speaker himself were free citizens subject to good behaviour, in fact any citizen in any country was so. Then the Governor's telephone murmured between London and Bombay, between Bombay and Simla and to the great relief of Hindustan, Savarkar was at very long last released unconditionally on the 10th May 1937, the 10th May, the red letter day in Indian history on which the first War of Independence started.

To have released one of the greatest political prisoners of the world, to have set free the greatest revolutionary leader of India and one of the noblest sons of Mother India was no common achievement for Jamnadas Mehta.

Several functions were held at Ratnagiri in honour of Savarkar's release. At one of these functions M. D. Joshi, a prominent Congressman, expressed his view that Savarkar was also one of the doctors of the nation and would prescribe for the ills of the nation. Whatever party Savarkar might join, he would add to the freedom movement and welfare of the country, added the speaker. A purse was presented to Savarkar by the citizens of Ratnagiri. In his parting speech Savarkar was moved with the memory of the social movement in Ratnagiri. He said he was very sorry that his mission had caused divisions, heart-breakings and scuffles among families and friends. He had done it, he continued, all in the best interest of the Country, God and Man.

As for the future, Savarkar said that the goal of Independence was to be attained by resistance, alliance and pressure; that the basic outline of that independence should be a 'one man one vote' democracy and that he would strive for and achieve that goal not by sacrificing the just rights of the Hindus. Whatever happened, he said, he would never desert the cause of the Hindus. He would die a Hindu rather than prosper as an anti-Hindu soul, concluded Savarkar. After his release Savarkar unfurled the tri-colour flag reminiscent of the Abhinava Bharat emblem at the Ratnagiri District Political Conference held under the presidentship of K. F. Nariman. Political life and fight to begin after a lapse and lull of full twenty-seven years!

CHAPTER 12

Whirlwind Propaganda

SAVARKAR'S dramatic release was a pleasant surprise to Hindudom. Leaders like Kelkar, Bhai Parmananda, Dr. Moonje and Aney were happy over the exhilarating event that brought to them the release of a national force. The reaction of the Congress High Command to his release was notable. Pandit Nehru welcomed Savarkar back to freedom. Rajagopalachari felt great joy at the release of a national hero, who was to him a symbol of courage, bravery and patriotism. Deshagaurav Subhas Bose welcomed him and urged him to join the Congress and strengthen the national movement. He added that bright future awaited Savarkar. M. N. Roy welcomed the hero and hoped that Savarkar would devote his life again to the emancipation of India on his own line of thinking.[1] Gandhi had nothing to say about it. He was proverbially silent.

The appearance of Savarkar on the political horizon naturally aroused the envy of the petty patriots to whom Gandhism was a faith and profession. Naturally the non-violent non-embarrassing politics suffered a volcanic wave. The shrewd leaders in the Congress camp, who knew Savarkar's mettle, were sure that their steel was not strong enough to break his spirit. They, therefore, sophistically hoped that Savarkar would join the Congress or rest on his laurels. Some nervously whispered that the steam-roller was out. They knew well that he wore both a cross and a crown. The crown had been smelted, shaped, tried and glorified in the process of untold sufferings and incomparable sacrifice. But what all of them feared most was his conquering personality, matchless oratory, and above all, his militant political ideology.

Maker of history, father of a political ideology, leader of a

[1] Messages of Nehru, Bose, Roy and Rajaji to the *Lokamanya*, Bombay, 27 June 1937.

world-famous revolutionary party, Savarkar was not a man to follow success by changing his principles and betraying the souls of his revolutionary comrades. Lonely he set out on his mission. He bade farewell to Ratnagiri to see how the land lay, where the fuel existed, where the spark of righteous resistance smouldered in Maharashtra. He reverentially bowed to the *Gadi* of Shivaji at Kolhapur, proclaimed his entry into the political arena and burst upon the Indian political scene.[2] It was here that he first declared that the Hindu States were the centres of power. At Pandharpur he paid his respects to the great saints of Maharashtra. The orthodox raised black flags and showered parched popcorn on the procession in condemnation of Savarkar's views of social equality. It was at Miraj that he first drew out his claw and attacked the imbecile attitude of the Congressmen in the Central Assembly where they had sometime before shamelessly argued that the kidnapping of Hindu girls by Muslim ruffians in the North-West Frontier Province was but a problem of physical needs. This stroke was a portent and a straight hit challenging the power and prestige of the Congress. Congressmen twisted the statement, tried to make an issue out of it, and they not only boycotted the reception functions held in Savarkar's honour but hoisted black flags on their houses.

Savarkar reached Poona, the political, historical, and cultural capital of Maharashtra. The whole city was full of stir. There was a new hope, a new life. With Savarkar came up the historic Hindu flag. The resurrected flag was hoisted for the first time in recent years. The spell of the name Savarkar was as mighty as it was mesmeric. Political workers, who were humbled down and routed by the Congress in the last elections, began to look up straight with the support of Savarkar.

Then Savarkar came to Bombay. At Dadar station the three brothers met as free men for the first time after 1908. The eldest brother Babarao was released in the same week after being interned at Nasik for nearly four years. After a big procession from Bori Bunder to Girgaon, Savarkar was given a warm welcome at a meeting held in Krishna Cinema, Bombay. The meeting was addressed by K. F. Nariman, M. N. Roy and S. K. Patil, all paying tribute to Savarkar's sufferings and sacri-

[2] Deb, J. M., *Blood And Tears*, p. 143.

fice. M. N. Roy touchingly described Savarkar as the tree of which, he said, he was a branch among others, and with glowing eyes added that the inspiration he had drawn from Savarkar during his student days could stand him in good stead, and enabled him to face forces of injustice, exploitation and slavery in all parts of the world.

Savarkar took his permanent abode in Bombay. He stayed for a year or so in Bhaskar Bhavan, Dadar; the eldest and the youngest brothers keeping a joint establishment independently. Time and again he visited Poona and other parts of Maharashtra during the latter part of 1937. At Poona, he attended a party given by Khan Bahadur Dhanjishah Cooper. During this visit he stayed with Damu Anna Joshi, Manager of Balmohan Theatrical Company. Both the parties of the Untouchables—those who favoured the idea of conversion and those who opposed it presented him with addresses at different places. In his reply to the address of those who favoured the idea of conversion, he said a change of religion would not solve their social or political problems. If they fought along with the reformers they would be able to solve their problem within next ten years. If despite this they thought they would be benefited by the change of religion they should do so. They should not wait any longer to oblige the caste Hindus. To those who were against the idea of conversion he said they should fight along with the other Hindus to destroy the caste system and found a casteless Hindu society. Big intercaste dinners followed.

The first appeal Savarkar made to the youth was to start rifle classes, to learn to handle at least the air-guns. "There is a scope for drama, poetry and literature in life; but when the mother is on her death-bed, it is a sin to go out for a change of climate, or to enjoy life and stars," he said.

During his Poona visit Savarkar declared on August 1, 1937, that he had joined Tilak's Democratic Swaraj Party and shortly afterwards he joined the Hindu Mahasabha. Those who knew his political ideology were not surprised at this. He did not join the Congress that had departed from its democratic and national stand, and begun to surrender to the anti-national demands of the Muslims. Organizing a separate political party, however, was an uphill task. Gandhi was fortunate in having

at his disposal the Congress, which was already shaped into an active political organization by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and Das. Here Savarkar began almost with a clean slate.

The leaders and workers of the Democratic Swaraj Party and Hindu Mahasabha were men who had opposed Gandhian movement but owing to their inertia had retreated after Tilak's death to Poona. The social views of most of them were not in keeping with the revolutionary social views of Savarkar. They joined Savarkar because Savarkar had pitted himself against Gandhism. On his own part Savarkar joined them because they were against Gandhi. Besides the majority of them in Maharashtra were Brahmins who were not prepared to touch Savarkar's social views even with a pair of tongs. Of course, there was a group of young men inspired by Savarkar's ideology. They were prepared to make sacrifice for the independence and integrity of their Motherland under his leadership.

Moreover, there were title-holders, sardars, old lawyers and some zamindars. The capitalists and the industrialists who had supported the Congress took little interest in Savarkar. With this men and material Savarkar aimed at carrying on his fight for the independence and integrity of India.

Savarkar's colleague Virendranath Chattopadhaya was in Europe and it is said he had gone Red. But because he went over to Trotaskytes, it is reported, he was shot dead by Stalin's government. Savarkar was the only Indian leader who issued a statement and demanded an inquiry into the matter. But both the British and Russian governments kept silent about his death. Hardayal was an exile in Europe. At the intercession of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru the Indian government had granted him permission to return to India, but shortly after, on March 4, 1939, he died. Madame Cama, and Pandit Shyamji were dead and Rana was in exile. Bapat and Dr. Rajan were in the Congress.

Savarkar declared that the right of revolt belonged to anybody provided he was prepared to face the consequential ordeal. When Jesus Christ was crucified he had a few followers; Mohammed had to flee sometimes for want of support; and Columbus discovered America despite opposition and ridicule offered by his crew and comrades. There was no harm, Savarkar said, if the country had many parties. Savarkar further said that the

Moderates also were great patriots; but Tilak opposed them and brought about unrest that led to a political awakening. The revolutionaries left Tilak behind, Savarkar continued, and showed the world to what degree the barometer of active resistance and national wrath could be raised by a struggling India. "The object of our worship is the Goddess of Freedom. The temple is one. Let the ways and means differ. The worshippers should not quarrel among themselves over the means. Differences always exist and the clashes make for light." He then reminded the people that Tilak became Lokamanya after his death. Tilak did not agree entirely with him; but Tilak did not commit the sin of coming in his way, Savarkar declared. He pointed out that Tilak, Gokhale, and Surendranath Banerjee never considered politicians of independent thinking their enemies, because those politicians did not subscribe to their own political views.

Savarkar expressed also the fear that the Congress would one day throttle the Bande Mataram, and the national song would meet the same fate as did the poetry of Bhushan in the University curriculum. And within a few years the Congress did sacrifice the Bande Mataram on the altar of their pseudo-nationalism for appeasing the Muslim mind. "Efforts of all and various forces," Savarkar asserted, "have led to the dawn of freedom. It is a victory achieved by the cumulative efforts and combination of all forces. Still Delhi is far off."

As regards his political mission, he declared that his aim was to establish a free independent Indian State on the bedrock of the Hindus, the national majority. He added that he wanted to make the paper majority of the Hindus actively conscious of the fact that they were the bedrock and mainspring of the national life and the State. In brief but in unmistakable terms, he defined his mission: (1) Absolute political independence of Hindustan as the goal. (2) Its achievement by any means. (3) Regeneration of the Hindus.

Savarkar then explained why he laid stress on the consolidation of the Hindus, though he asked them to remove the rigidity of the cast-iron rituals, and to break all the barriers of caste system. The concept of Hindutva, he said, was broader than Hinduism which related to the religious system of the Hindus, their theology, and dogma. Hindutva was far more compre-

hensive and not only referred to the religious aspect of the Hindus as did the term Hinduism, but comprehended their cultural, social, political, and linguistic aspects. He declared: "Let Hinduism concern itself with the salvation of life after death, the concept of God, and the universe. Let individuals be free to form opinions about the trio. The whole universe from one end to the other is the real book of religion. But so far as the materialistic and secular aspect is concerned, the Hindus are a nation bound by a common culture, a common history, a common language, a common country, and a common religion."

* * *

The people of Nasik gave Savarkar a warm welcome. His old colleagues Wamanshastri Datar, Krishnarao Mahabal, Shridharpant Vartak and others met him. He stayed at Tiwari's bungalow. He addressed a meeting at the famous Vijayananda theatre. An address was presented to him by all parties. There he told the people to change the name of Jackson Garden to Kahnere garden. Another meeting was held at the same theatre under the presidentship of Govindrao Deshpande. The admission to it was by tickets. In a fervent appeal he exhorted the people to abolish untouchability.

At Sholapur, Savarkar was received by Rambhau Rajwade, V. R. Patil, Seth Gulabchand Doshi, Dr. Mulye, Seth Manikchand. Ramkrishan Jaju and Dr. Antrolikar tried to oppose the receptionists. The city was filled with the slogans about the martyrs of Sholapur. This Jaju, a Congress leader, had boasted that if Savarkar came to Sholapur he would be seated on a donkey and a procession would be taken out. Acharya Atre, a ready-witted speaker, said that if that was the intention of Jaju, Savarkar would be seated on the shoulders of Jaju for there was no better donkey in Sholapur! The whole of Maharashtra rocked with laughter. Gandhi and other front rank Congress leaders sat silent non-violently on these demonstrations sponsored by leading Congressmen when a grateful Maharashtra gave Savarkar a hero's welcome.

Barshi gave Savarkar a spontaneous welcome. There were exchanges of blows between rival parties. One Congress ruffian had come with a knife but he was overpowered. And these men

and leaders belonged to the Congress of Gandhi who preached principles of non-violence to the world.

On his return from this tour, Savarkar was laid up in September 1937 with typhoid. The illness lasted 21 days. Savarkar became very weak. He could not shave himself. So he asked his barber to remove his moustaches also. On his recovery Savarkar looked fresh and younger although he was in his 55th year.

In the last week of October 1937, Savarkar hoisted at Poona the tri-colour flag of the Revolutionary India, which was designed by the Abhinava Bharat and first unfurled by Madame Cama in Germany. This was the first flag that was flown as the national flag of India since 1857, and fortunately it was brought to India after years through the efforts of Gajananrao Ketkar.

Savarkar presided at the C.P. and Berar Hindu Conference in Akola which was held in the last week of November 1937. There he defined the principles of Hindu nationalism. Since independence had come in sight, he thought, it was the proper time to define it. He told the conference that every country was known after and ruled in the name of its national majority. "The Hindus, the national majority of Hindustan," he declared, "had sacrificed almost exclusively for the liberation of Hindustan. In that very Bengal which is now virtually ruled by the Muslims the sacrificial fire was kept burning by Hindus alone. The buried bones in the Andamans can also proudly proclaim that the heroes of independence were the Hindus. Whatever has been achieved is done through the sweat, struggle and sacrifice of the Hindus. Those laws and rules under which the weal, welfare, culture and honour of the Hindus would flourish would alone constitute Swaraj for the Hindus!" He reiterated his unflinching resolve that it was better to die in the thick of the fight for such a righteous cause than to live with passive interest and be a witness to its defeat. A resolution declaring absolute independence of India was passed by the conference. He then visited several cities and villages. At the request of Dr. Hedgewar he visited the R.S.S. branch at Wardha.

Savarkar's visit to Nagpur had its peculiar charm and enthusiasm. A vast crowd received him at the Nagpur station. Amidst an atmosphere full of a new hope and charm, Dr. Moonje, the champion of the Hindu cause, in a moving tone said that

whatever service and power he had at his disposal, he laid from that moment at the disposal of Savarkar.

On December 13, 1937, at Nagpur Savarkar warned the Hindus to be prepared to flout the Pakistan scheme. In the same speech, referring to the then political trend and happenings in Kashmir, he foretold that the existence of Kashmir Hindus would soon be in utter danger, if the anti-Hindu forces were not checked at that very stage. How prophetic he was can be judged from the current history of Kashmir!

He, therefore, openly denounced Gandhi's ill-advice to the Maharaja of Kashmir to abdicate in favour of the Muslims and to go to Benares to do penance, because the Muslims were in a majority in Kashmir. He attacked the unfair attitude of Gandhi who would not advise in the same way the Nizam of Hyderabad and Nawab of Bhopal to abdicate in favour of the majorities in those States, who happened to be Hindus, and ask the Muslim rulers to go to Mecca to do Toba. The rapid advance of Savarkar's fiery and clear-cut ideal of unalloyed nationalism began to create a nucleus of followers, leaders, and supporters all over India. At Nagpur he advised women to propagate swadeshi, to help the reformers to annihilate untouchability and to be mothers of fine, healthy progeny. Kitchen and children were the main duties of women, he said. For a woman to suckle a baby at her breast was, according to him, her greatest pleasure on earth.

It was in the fitness of things that such an inspired personality was elected unanimously to the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha, in spite of the sly opposition of some Congressmen, for its nineteenth annual session which was held at Ahmedabad on December 30, 1937. This was the highest honour that the Hindus could confer upon him. Savarkar made the greatest sacrifice of his life in joining the Hindu Mahasabha and staked his name and his all for the cause of Hindus. Pelf, power, and popularity were on the opposite side. There was no position to which he could not have risen once he had joined the Congress. But he preferred duty to popularity, weal of the nation to personal wealth, and personal cross to popular crown. Prataps never pander to popularity or bend their necks to dishonourable eminence. It is given to Mansinghs to thrive on it. The Hindu Mahasabha now began to rise as a political organiza-

tion. Savarkar infused life into it and gave it a platform, a slogan, a Bible, and a banner. Some men make institutions great. Some are made great by institutions. Savarkar made Hindu Mahasabha great.

Such a warrior philosopher appeared on the political field and platform of Indian politics, when the dawn of rosy revolution had faded away, the morning of the unalloyed nationalism of Dadabhai Naoroji and Tilak had disappeared, and the evenings were filled with weird shadows of pro-Muslim nationalism. To defend the legitimate, civic, religious, cultural and economic rights of the Hindus in their Homeland was taboo in 1937. Builders of our nation like Shivaji, Pratap, and Guru Govindsingh were stigmatized as treacherous or misguided. Prophets like Dayananda, noble patriots like Lala Lajpat Rai and Swami Shraddhananda were decried as narrow-minded men. The Muslims were offered by Hindu leaders blank cheques of suzerainty over the Hindus on the one hand, and the Hindus were themselves offered blank betrayals by their leaders on the other. The slogan, no Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity, was the breath of life of the pseudo-nationalists, and this slogan was constantly and rightly held by the foreign Government as a loaded gun against the national demand for freedom.

The policy of non-co-operation and non-violence was the cry of the day. Jail-seeking was regarded as the royal road to independence, although, in fact, it was a royal road to personal prestige and power. A soldier was cursed as a sinner, and a spinner in the Congress camp was nursed as a saviour. The principle of one vote for three Hindus and three votes for one Muslim in the form of the Communal Award was accepted as justifiable, democratic and fully national. Recognition to Muslim population had become a righteous duty, but mere recording of the correct Hindu population in the census was a communal act. The cause of the Muslim religion had become a national call, and the Hindu religion became a symbol of reactionarism. Hindu leaders like Sarojini Naidu appealing to the Muslims of the world to unite were eulogized, and the Muslim leaders, who publicly declared their intention of dividing the Depressed Classes between the Hindus and Muslims, were elevated to the pedestal of Godheads. But the Hindu leaders, who stood by Hindu self-respect, were branded as com-

munalists. In fact, it was the Dark Age in Indian politics of the modern times, as Dr. Ambedkar once put it.

At this dark time, Savarkar appeared on the Indian political horizon incomparable in sacrifice, uncompromising in principles. The warrior, who had lived in his veritable grave, grappling with death for a quarter of a century, again came to the front. For the welfare of his people, for carving out the independence of his nation, he had eaten the coarsest food, worn the roughest clothes, slept on the bare earth in the darkest room, and worked as a bullock at the oil-mill.

The voice of such a dynamic personality was bound to exercise an irresistible influence over the people. Savarkar felt it was his righteous duty to remove ruthlessly the web of Gandhism that had choked the political life of Hindustan. Great political leaders are born with fabulous energy. So was stubborn Tilak. So was tenacious Gandhi. So indefatigable were Nehru, Subhas Bose, M. N. Roy and Dr. Ambedkar. So was dynamic Savarkar. These were the six leaders that shook the remotest corner of Hindustan with the vibrations of their views and vigour. Savarkar marched from Province to Province, propagating his great ideal, exposing the territorial nationalism of the Congress, and expounding his own stand based on political rationalism and historical realism. He went on conquering new planes and new patriots, and for a time it seemed that he was pushing aside time-old personalities and theories like cobwebs.

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Throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan, Savarkar was hailed as the saviour of Hindus, partly with mixed feelings of love and reverence and partly with awe and jealousy. Thousands of people gave him an enviable welcome on February 6, 1938, at Delhi, the historic capital of India. Savarkar was suffering from diarrhoea. He was treated by Dr. Gupta. Although he was feeling very weak, he was put in a chariot and a five-mile-long procession was taken out. In that memorable procession of thousands of people, Dr. Moonje, Lala Narayan Dutta, Bhai Parmananda, Prof. Ramsingh, Dr. Jayakar and M. S. Aney took keen interest with pride. Flowers were showered on him, sweets were distributed, all public squares of Delhi were decorated and flags were unfurled in honour of the great hero, who made for

the first time a triumphant entry into the heart of the nation. Savarkar asked the volunteers to change the Urdu slogan Zindabad into Amar rahe!

On his return journey, Savarkar was accorded a warm reception on Bhopal station. He visited Nagar on February 13, 1938, and had to go through a crowded programme. The Congress leader Rao Saheb Patwardhan met him and garlanded him. Rev. Nanasaheb Modak was at home to Savarkar. At Kopargaon Jamnadas Mehta, presiding over a function held in honour of Savarkar, said that he accepted ministership on condition that the Government would release Savarkar. This was a great achievement of the Cooper Ministry, he added. Dr. Bhope, Gopalrao Gaikwari, Dr. Khanolkar and Sahasrabudhe took great interest in making this tour a great success.

Then the new ideology stirred the United Provinces. This province was the chief scene of the romantic history of 1857, and naturally Savarkar's speeches were filled with the glorious reminiscences of that heroic struggle for Independence. The Cawnpore Municipality presented Savarkar with an address. Cities like Faizabad, Barabanki, Lucknow and Agra gave him public receptions.

At Cawnpore he delivered, on April 3, 1938, an inspiring speech on '1857'. He said: "This very Cawnpore has witnessed the defeat of the British forces at the hands of Tatya Tope. Since my childhood I have been cherishing an irresistible yearning for visiting this city as the venue of the scenes of revolution and visiting Kashi as the holy city of Hindustan. Since my arrival here I have been haunted by the spirits of Nanasahib, Tatya Tope, the war cries raised by their battalions and the thunder of their cannons." He saw the famous Massacre Ghat at Cawnpore and the temple of Shiv whence Tatya Tope blew his bugle and gave a clarion call to his army. The historian of '1857' astounded the people by exactly pointing out certain places imprinted with historical events of 1857, though it was his first visit to the city.

He paid a visit to the Sanskrit Pathashala and Gurukul at Faizabad. While replying to the address given by the institution, Savarkar highly praised the authorities and teachers of the Pathashala for giving equal opportunities to all Hindus irrespective of castes. Receiving an address on behalf of the public

at Barabanki, Savarkar reached Lucknow on April 5. There he was taken in a grand procession, which passed through the streets decorated with arches. At a mammoth public meeting Savarkar declared how the Congress had departed from its true nationalism and was surrendering to the anti-national demands of the Muslims.

In Lucknow, the noted revolutionary Sachindranath Sanyal of Andamans fame gave a party in honour of Savarkar at his place, where Acharya Narendra Deo a great leader of the Congress met Savarkar. During the discussion Narendra Deo said that because the Muslims were in a minority it was necessary that they should be given some concessions. Savarkar replied that the Muslims did not oblige the Hindus by remaining a minority. In fact they had tried to convert the Hindu majority into a minority but they had failed. The President of the Lucknow municipality was a Muslim. He presented Savarkar with an address.

Then addressing a meeting at Hasanganja and Shahaganj he reached Agra where he was accorded a rousing reception. He was presented with public addresses. At the Agra fort Savarkar showed how and where Shivaji confronted the trembling Aurangzeb. There he spoke on the importance of military education and urged the youth to join the army or start rifle classes. While in Agra he was the guest of Rajnath Kunzru, brother of Hridayanath Kunzru. During this tour Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Chief Minister of United Provinces, met him.

On April 15, Savarkar presided over the Marathi Literary Conference, which was held on the grounds of Robert Money High School, Bombay. In his presidential address, which was unprecedented in its verve, vigour and message, he asked its delegates and the vast crowd that had gathered to listen to him to abandon their pens in favour of guns. The parrots of progress grew restless at the re-appearance of Shivaji, who wanted to give them arms to turn them to the cause of freedom. Savarkar said in a masterful manner to the Literary Conference: "The absence of poetry and poets, novels and novelists would not be felt during the coming decade. Austria and China suffered not because they lacked good literature, but because they lacked military power. Did you not hear, O learned men,

and scholars, the last pathetic shriek of the President of Austria? He said, 'We yield under German bayonets' and not under German sonnets."

Savarkar further said: "If literature is a part of the national life, its primary aim ought to be the security of national life. I absolutely admire the advocates of the principle of 'Art for Art's sake.' But when a theatre is ablaze, it is the duty of the true worshipper of Art to rush out to extinguish the gathering flames. What worth is literature, then, if a whole nation is writhing with pain under the oppressor's heel?" He went on: "Did you forget the fate of Nalanda and Takshashila, the seats of learning, and other great libraries that were turned into smouldering ruins? . . . It was the triumphant sword of Shivaji that made Maharashtra safe for poets and philosophers."

He concluded his famous presidential address at this Literary Conference: "I say, therefore, with all the emphasis at my command that the crying need of our times is not men of letters, but soldiers. It does not matter even if the whole decade is barren in respect of literature. Let there not be a song sung, or a sonnet composed. But let the streets resound with the thud of the feet of thousands of soldiers marching with modern rifles on their shoulders. A sweet lyric here, and a love story there, may come in as a diversion. We know even Napoleon would relax on occasions. Having brought his enemies to their knees, Bajirao I also enjoyed the prattle of love. But it gives me terrible pain to see my country reduced to the Brahmavarta of Bajirao II. My heart breaks with anguish when I see the vapid emasculated young faces engrossed in love prattles. So my message to you, literary men, is that you should abandon your pens in favour of guns; for literature can never flourish in a slave country. It has been well said that pursuit of science is possible only in a free nation protected by the power of arms." This speech echoed for several months throughout Maharashtra which was being stripped off Gandhism. For the Gandhian literary men, who wallowed in the fads of non-violence, it was a bitter pill to swallow.

During the first week of May 1938, Savarkar attended the Hindu Youths' Conference at Poona when processions demanding the lifting of the ban on arms were taken out. Poona was thrilled with the slogan 'Down with Arms Act.' The Socialists

and Reds tried to disturb the meetings. Some of them said that they were admirers of the Savarkar of 1908. Thereupon he said that such young men as wanted the Savarkar of 1908 should stand up. None got up! At night there was an inter-caste dinner called the *Sahabhojan*. There a Brahmin ruffian of Congress persuasion tried to belabour Savarkar, but G. M. Nalavde foiled his attempt. Acharya Atre was so much anxious about Savarkar's safety that at night he drove Savarkar to Bhamburda station near Poona and not to Poona station where the ruffian was reported to be eagerly prowling Poona station. During this visit Savarkar visited the Rifle Class started during the vacation at the Nootan Marathi Vidyalaya, Poona.

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Then the land of the Vedas and the Five Rivers gave a splendid reception to Savarkar, the warrior philosopher. In the second week of May 1938, Lahore gave him a public reception. Amidst deafening applause he garlanded the statue of Lala Lajpat Rai, the lion of the Punjab. He also paid a visit to the historic Shahid Ganj of the Sikhs. At Lahore, in a press interview, Savarkar said that he and Jinnah were not birds of the same feather, because, while he stood for equality and no concessions, Jinnah did not stand for equality and always asked for more and more concessions. Savarkar told the press representatives that he insisted that either there should be joint electorates without any reservation of seats for any community in any legislature or any local body, or there must be joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities either on population basis or according to a system of weightages equally applicable to all minorities. He further said that the Congress should assume the role of a Parliament in which all parties should participate, and not the role of a party as it was developing in those days.

While writing on the splendid reception accorded to Savarkar by Lahore people, the *Tribune*, a leading Nationalist paper, appreciated the services that Savarkar was rendering to the cause of the Motherland. Discussing the difference between the viewpoints of Savarkar and Jinnah, the paper observed: "As a matter of fact Mr. Savarkar's anchor as a sincere and a true nationalist holds as ever. The several speeches made by him during the last three days, show unmistakably both the general

soundness of his political views and the fervour and intensity of his love of country and freedom. His conception of a modern nation and an ideal state is that of a nation and state in which no difference is made between one person and another on the score of community, religion or caste. Holding this view, and this is undoubtedly the only correct view, it is only right that he should want the Congress which is India's supreme national organization, not to recognize religion, class and community and to stand for the equal rights of all citizens." [3]

At Lahore, the Reds protested against Bhai Parmananda being seated near Savarkar during the procession. Savarkar silenced them by saying that Bhai Parmananda alone was fit to sit by him. At the D.A.V. College Savarkar spoke on the importance of military training in the prevailing context of world situation. At the reception given by the Young Men's Association he said that Bhai Parmananda's failure was due to the insincerity and ingratitude of his followers. A host of other institutions presented him with addresses. Chandragupta Vedalankar, the young orator, spoke at many places on Savarkar.

Thereafter Savarkar was accorded an imposing reception by a waiting public on the outskirts of Amritsar. Mahashay Ratanchand and Kuka, who had become followers of Savarkar in the Andaman jail, took, along with Captain Kechavchandra and Gyani Pindidas, keen interest in the reception of Savarkar. About sixty thousand people enthusiastically participated in the procession and a group of them drew on, inspite of Savarkar's disapproval, the motor-car in which he was seated.

Thousands of Sikhs received Savarkar at the famous Golden Temple. Master Tara Singh cancelled his tour and came to receive Savarkar. At the Darbar Hall a meeting was held under his presidentship to give Savarkar a hero's welcome. In reply to the address Savarkar advised them fervently not to be entangled in the webs of non-violence. He asked them to follow Guru Govind Singh. At the Saraf Bazaar meeting the Sikhs presented Savarkar with a *Kripan*. He asked them what earthly use was served in presenting that *Kripan* to a Mahratta by those people for whom the *Kripan* had lost its meaning and spirit and whom the doctrine of non-violence was haunting. Delivering

[3] Quoted in The *Mahratta*, dated 20 May 1938.

a speech at another public meeting, he said: "The more you hanker after the Hindu-Muslim unity, the further it runs away from you. Plainly speaking, there does not exist any minority problem worth the name. The Parsis, the Jews and the Christians inhabiting this land never claimed special rights and they have declared more than once that they do not want separate electorates." [4]

On his way back, Savarkar paid a visit to Ajmer. There addressing a big meeting, Savarkar appreciated the services of Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress for creating a spirit of awakening in the country, but asked the people to oppose the Congress for its appeasing policy towards the Muslims. Referring to this new awakening, *The Sunday Times*, Lahore, wrote approvingly of Savarkar and said: "He is a man of sterling worth and possesses an indomitable courage which made him boldly face the ordeals, through which he passed." [5]

After paying visits to Ajmer and Nasik, Savarkar went to Gwalior. A big procession was taken out to the memorial of Rani Laxmi. Savarkar walked for two hours as a mark of respect to the great warrior who fought to overthrow British rule in 1857. Savarkar made a very thrilling speech at the memorial. He visited with great pleasure Shivapuri where the *Samadhi* of Tatya Tope stands. He requested Sardar Shitole to erect a suitable memorial to the memory of the great general who fought against British rule in 1857.

A few days after his return from Gwalior, Savarkar came to reside at his own small house called Savarkar Sadan at Shivaji Park, Bombay. It was built from money given by his admirers. Savarkar resided on the first floor while the brothers stayed on the ground floor for over three years. Thereafter he let out three out of the six blocks. The telephone arrangement was made by Laxmidas Tersi, a well-known Hindu leader of Bombay. Some time later, a new motor-car was given him by Jamnadas Mehta through a friend of his. Savarkar, however, sold the car during the war after using it for over a year.

Shortly afterwards, Savarkar spoke on 1857 at Sunderdas Medical College, Bombay. The Congress leader Dr. Jivraj Mehta took him round. Savarkar visited the famous Hindu institution

[4] Quoted in The *Mahratta*, dated 20 May 1938.
[5] *Ibid.*

Shraddhanand Anath Mahilashram and made kind inquiries. On August 1, he made a speech at Poona on 'The Politics of Tilak.' He visited the Ayurvedic Medical College and congratulated Vaidyaraj Nanal for having introduced Surgery in the course of the studies, as, he added, Ayurved had suffered much for want of surgery. He was glad that the Institution had set aside the fad of non-violence.

Savarkar then started on a tour of Sind. On his way he visited Jodhpur. Kothiwala, the police officer of Jodhpur, revealed that he was the police officer whose arm was tied to that of Savarkar when Savarkar arrived in Bombay on July 22, 1910. He insisted that Savarkar should use his car and give him an opportunity to expiate his sin. Long before, while in internment, Savarkar had sounded a grave warning to the Sind Hindus against the separation of Sind from the Bombay Province. However, the limb of the Bombay Province, like the lamb in the Aesop's Fable, was misled and was not only mutilated from Bombay, but subsequently was cut off from the Motherland.

The receptions accorded to Savarkar all over Sind from the 1st to the 10th September 1938, were imposing. In Karachi the procession took five hours to wend its way to its destination. The enthusiasm of the Hindus was afire. The Sikhs presented him with an address. Baba Madan Singh Gaga, a Gadhar Leader, who was in the Andaman jail with Savarkar, took a leading part in the reception. Savarkar urged upon the students of the Arya Samaj College to take to military training. Sukkar vied with Karachi in offering its homage to the leader. The Hyderabad Municipality held a reception of civic welcome to the great son of India. Kothari and Sukkar Municipalities, too, paid their homage to Savarkar.

The Sind Hindu Conference, which was then held at Sukkar under the lead of Savarkar, sounded a timely warning to the Sind Hindus, and asked them to boycott the Congress and organize a stronghold of Hindus to save their hearths, homes and interests in the near future. The Sind Hindus then under the influence of the Congress forgot this warning, and ultimately paid for their folly in 1947. Unfortunately they blindly followed Gandhi and ran ruefully for their lives. Describing this tour of Savarkar, the *Sind Observer*, an English Daily of Congress persuasion, declared: "He came, he saw, he conquered."

In October 1938, the Hyderabad (Bhaganagar) struggle was launched to vindicate the civic, religious, economic and political rights of the Hindus in the Hyderabad State, who were groaning under the heels of the medieval tyranny of the Nizam. The Hindus and Sikhs in the State were not allowed to hold meetings, take out processions, political or religious, renovate their temples, and to start even private schools to educate the children in their mother tongue; Hindu temples, Hindu Bazaars and Hindu houses were burnt down; twelve per cent Muslim population held eighty per cent posts, positions and jobs of vantage in the administration. And what was the attitude of the Congressmen to this movement for civil liberties? Their head, Gandhi, eventually declared that he did not want to embarrass His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad. Such was the policy of the Congressmen and Gandhi that whenever the tyrants were Muslims and the tyrannised were Hindus, their nationalism, their sense of justice, their love of civic rights and political liberty would at once crawl. Therefore in deference to the wish of their *de facto* leader, Gandhi, the Congressmen did not raise their little finger against this barbarous and fanatical persecution of the Hindus and Sikhs by the Nizam's Muslim Government. Their sympathy, their love of justice and their tears Congressmen poured and shed with Tagore for Abyssinia and the Arabs in Palestine.

Savarkar attended the historic Aryan Conference at Sholapur in the last week of December 1938, at the pressing request from the leaders of the Arya Samaj for his guidance and lead in connection with the Hyderabad struggle, which was gathering momentum, and as a result of which several thousands of Hindu civil resisters were suffering imprisonment in the Nizam's jails. In the same week came off the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Nagpur where Buddhist representatives from Japan also were present. The procession in honour of the president-elect took five hours to reach its destination. Boundless enthusiasm prevailed. Flowers were showered from an aeroplane on Savarkar, the chosen leader. The presidential address of Savarkar delivered at this Nagpur session was a master-piece of the principles of nationalism and humanism, rights and duties of the minorities, principles of foreign policy and national and international politics. During the session the

Hyderabad Struggle received the prime attention of all the Sanghatanists.

While in Nagpur, Savarkar received a telegram from G. D. Birla who was a supporter of Hindu Mahasabha. In his telegram he asked Savarkar to refer to Gandhi's Harijan work in his presidential address. Savarkar simply pocketed the telegram and Birla pocketed the insult. Savarkar asked Birla to stop the subscription he was making towards the maintenance of the office of the President of Hindu Mahasabha.

Then followed Savarkar's visit in the third week of February 1939, to the land of Bande Mataram, the home of Surendranath, C. R. Das, Bepin C. Pal, Arvind Ghose, and Khudiram Bose. The Khulna Conference opened a new outlet for the salvation of the Bengal Hindus. Such was the tremendous effect of Savarkar's matchless oratory and dynamic personality on Bengal that, pointing to the thundering receptions to Savarkar and to his merciless logic, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, an organ of Congress persuasion, sounded a timely warning to the Congress bosses to be on their guard and to dissuade themselves from placating the unholy demands of the Muslim League. Savarkar captivated the hearts of the leaders and lawyers, like Sir Manmanath Mookerjee, N. C. Chatterjee, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee and public workers of Bengal. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was initiated into Indian politics, and he became a great asset and nucleus of Hindu Sanghatan ideology. Indeed, Dr. Mookerjee was a discovery of Savarkar's tour of Bengal. Almost all Bengal papers published special issues full of life-sketches of the romantic career of the Prince of the revolutionaries of Hindustan. One daily described this tour as an all-talkie, all-movie tour of the Indian Robinhood.

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After Bengal came the turn of Bihar, the land of the sturdy fighters and tough warriors for the Hindu cause. A Provincial Hindu Conference was held at Monghyr in the third week of March 1939, under the presidentship of Savarkar. The flag, the spirit and the ideology began to capture new fields and new avenues. Monghyr gave an imposing reception to Savarkar and the procession was the most splendid that the city ever witnessed. The leading Hindi Daily, the *Prabhakar*, of Mon-

ghyr, described it as an unparalleled reception ever accorded to great men. Savarkar delivered his stirring presidential address with great heartforce. He declared that Hinduism and Hindutva were two different things. Hindutva constituted, he said, all those aspects and aspirations which the word nationalism comprised.

The *Indian Nation,* Patna, commenting on the presidential address of Savarkar, wrote: " It was a stirring speech. He made an impassioned appeal to Hindus to unite to resist inroads, and revive their past glory. His speech was heard with rapt attention and created an atmosphere of great enthusiasm among the Hindus. He spoke with feeling, and the audience also was greatly impressed with the arguments he gave in support of his conclusions." Then followed the Mahakoshal Provincial Hindu Conference at Jubbulpore in the first week of June 1939. The idea of the unjust treatment to the national majority of the Hindus and the danger of disintegration of Hindustan began to attract the attention of the Hindus. The Jubbulpore Municipality held a civic welcome in honour of Savarkar at the time of the conference.

In the meantime ' Hyderabad days ' were observed all over India by Hindu Sanghatanists; centres of civil resistance movement were opened with dictators in charge at Poona, Nagpur, and Akola. The Hindu Mahasabha gave Savarkar full powers in respect of the movement. Savarkar toured Berar in the middle of April and in June 1939 and gave a tremendous impetus to the Hyderabad struggle. Touching scenes in villages and towns on the border lines of C.P. and Berar and Bombay provinces and on the banks of the Penganga at Umarkhed in Berar were witnessed on those occasions. One of the most touching incidents at one of these mammoth meetings took place when the tribal leaders of the forest dwellers—Pardhis—devotionally honoured Savarkar with a rough woollen blanket and a lathi in their tribal fashion.

Savarkar's thrilling voice was then heard, giving a send-off to several batches of volunteers who entered the Hyderabad State to offer civil resistance. Nearly 15,000 volunteers, workers and leaders were suffering imprisonment for offering civil resistance. Senapati Bapat, L. B. Bhopatkar, S. R. *alias* Mamarao Date, Dr. Paranjpe, D. K. Sathe, Anantrao Gadre and Bapurao

Joshi from Maharashtra, and Chandakiran Sarada, Mahashay Krishna, Pandit Narayan Swami, and Baba Madansingh Gaga from other provinces led battalions of civil resisters into the Hyderabad State and Yeshwantrao Joshi, the leader of the Hindu Sabha in Hyderabad, with his colleagues had already been arrested and sentenced by the State bureaucracy. Pandit Nathuram Godse, who was the secretary of the Pratikar Mandal established at Poona under the presidentship of G. V. Ketkar, Editor, *Mahratta*, led the first batch of civil resisters from Maharashtra into Hyderabad, the administratively most dangerous State in India.

During this Struggle there was complete co-operation between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj in spite of the wily hindrances caused by topmost Congress leaders, callous misrepresentations made by the so-called nationalist-cum-Congress press, unsympathetic attitude of the Provincial Congress Ministries and the non-embarrassment policy of Gandhi.

On April 5, 1939, Savarkar successfully foiled in a fighting speech the plans of Gandhi at the Sholapur Aryan Conference which was on the verge of withdrawing the Civil Resistance Movement in pursuance of Gandhi's draft resolution! Gandhi was so sure of the withdrawal of the movement by the Arya Samaj that he even saw Dr. Moonje in Delhi, told him about the draft resolution, and asked Moonje to wire to Savarkar to follow suit. Dr. Moonje told Gandhi that he should not trouble himself about the movement started by the Hindu Mahasabha and added that Savarkar knew best how and where to stop it.

As was their wont, the Congressmen were then busy supporting the Muslim struggle against the Kashmir State. Except the weak-kneed policy of their prototypes in the Hyderabad State who stopped their struggle in the State on instructions from the Congress High Command and Gandhi, they never seriously denounced the medieval barbarism and misrule in Hyderabad State, which had assaulted several Hindu civil resisters in its jails and put to death about a dozen of them in the jails. Though the Congress journals and leaders kept themselves unconcerned with the struggle against the Hyderabad State, the agitation reached the British Parliament. There Col. Wedgwood raised the question of Hyderabad struggle carried on by the Hindu Sanghatanists, and the same day A. S. *alias* Bhide

Guruji hoisted the Hindu flag at the British Residency at Hyderabad.

After a prolonged struggle, H.E.H. the Nizam was brought to his knees and in accordance with his traditional policy bowed down to save his Gadi before he was completely beaten. On July 19, 1939, H.E.H. the Nizam declared the reforms wherein he gave recognition to the civil resistance movement, and offered to the Hindus at least 50 per cent of the seats in the elected Legislatures wherein formerly the Hindus had zero per cent representation. Savarkar who smelt the coming sweep of World War II withdrew the movement after this partial success. The Arya Samaj followed suit. This successful termination of the struggle for the civic, political, economic and religious rights of the Hindus and Sikhs, who were totally suppressed in the Hyderabad State, was a new feather in Savarkar's cap and added prestige and power to his leadership. It was proved to the hilt that Savarkar could independently and inspite of Gandhi lead and guide a struggle. Another characteristic noticed about Savarkar's leadership was that he knew where to stop a movement. His critics said that he was satisfied with little concession and so he hurriedly made a compromise. But the critics had not shown guts enough to tell the Nizam to concede to the popular demands. Nevertheless, through the struggle Savarkar felt the pulse of Maharashtra. The undying spirit of Shivaji and Tilak was not yet dead there and Savarkar experienced that it revolted against tyranny and injustice as before.

Now all was not well with the Congress and its lead. Owing to the growing popularity of the Hindu Mahasabha under the leadership of Savarkar, the Congress High Command resolved to boycott the Hindu Mahasabha. This was an amazing stand taken by the Congress lead. But no Mahasabhaite worth the name worried himself about this boycott.

In the last week of September 1939, Savarkar visited a few places in Karnatak. He spoke at the Municipal Hall and at the Karnatak college in Dharwar, and addressed meetings at Hubli and some other villages like Hosur, Gurla Hosur, Bail Hongul and gave a fillip to the Hindu Sanghatan work. Savarkar's next visit outside Maharashtra was to Meerut in the first week of October 1939, to support the candidature of Maharaja Krishna in the provincial bye-election. There the opposition

from the Muslims and Congressmen to the Hindu Mahasabha was smouldering. The Muslims even attacked Savarkar's procession at Meerut and there ensued a deadlock in the street between the two sides. The U.P. police force of Govind Vallabh Pant as expected failed to protect the just and legitimate rights of the peace-loving Hindu processionists and indirectly encouraged the aggressive nature of the Muslims by forcing the Hindus themselves to abandon the procession.

After Savarkar's arrival in Bombay, a statement was issued to the press by seven leaders namely Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir V. N. Chandavarkar on behalf of the Indian Liberals, Savarkar on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, N. C. Kelkar and Jamnadas Mehta on behalf of the Democratic Swaraj Party, and Dr. Ambedkar on behalf of the Independent Labour Party. These seven leaders declared: "The Congress and the Congress Governments believe in annihilating all parties and making the Congress the only party in the land, as is the case in Fascist and Nazi regimes—a result which would be a deathblow to Democracy." [6] This timely warning against the developing Fascism had its effect. The Congress papers attacked Savarkar particularly, saying that Savarkar could do nothing but join the Liberals. Sounding a warning with the patriotic men against the Congress Fascism was something unpatriotic, but surrendering the national interests at Jinnah's feet was to the monopolised press a patriotic and national act.

[6] Lele, P. R., *War and India's Freedom*, p. 89.

CHAPTER 13

War and Militarisation

SAVARKAR'S insight perceived the growing danger from the designs of the awakened Muslim mind. He knew that Muslim opposition to the national aspirations was not confined to a song here or a piece of music there. According to him there was a fundamental difference in their outlook on life and literature and in their aspirations for the governance of Hindustan as a nation. Therefore, the first thing Savarkar did was to strive to bring into operation the Federal part of the 1935 Act, and frustrate the Muslim designs. Though the Federal part of this Act, he said, handed over no real power especially in the matter of military and foreign policy to the representatives of the people, it offered an opportunity for the realization of national unification of the States and other parts under the British occupation into an organized and corporate whole.

But partly being not sure of the party domination at the Centre, and partly being afraid of the opposition led in the field by the youthful left-wing forged by its president Subhas Bose, the Congress High Command bypassed the issue of Federation. Not because there was no promise for immediate independence that the Congress did not accept the Federation. The Congress could have fought here, too, to undo the unsatisfactory portion of the Federation.

Shrewd and practical politician that he was, Jinnah feared that if the Federation came into operation, it would weld India into a unified and united State under which the separatist designs of the Muslims would be totally crushed. Hence he condemned the Federation Scheme as 'thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable'[1] to the Muslims. In fact, this fear of Jinnah fully justified Savarkar, Bhai Parma-

[1] Suleri, Z. A., *My Leader*, p. 93.

nanda and Dr. Moonje in their pro-Federation stand which was conducive to national solidarity. Had the Congress accepted the Federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935, it would have made the Central Government an irresistible and irremovable power that would have been the death-warrant of the separatist Muslim ambitions, and would have muzzled the four or five Muslim-ruled rebellious provinces into complete subordination. But short-sighted and irresolute as its stand was, the Congress lost a unique opportunity to consolidate and strengthen the integrity of India.

About this time World War II broke out. The Federation Scheme was suspended. The Congress party gave up power in all seven provinces, went into wilderness demanding the war and peace aims of the British Government, and launched an individual Civil Disobedience Movement. Jinnah rejoiced at this and declared in his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim League at Madras with great joy: "After the war had broken out the first good news, along with other bad news that we got, was the declaration of the Viceroy that His Majesty's Government are pleased to suspend the All-India Federation Scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 (cheers). . . . India's future constitution will be considered *de novo,* including the policy and the plan on which the Government of India Act, 1935, was based. That was no doubt a great relief, because it was against that part of the Act that Muslim India was fighting from the very commencement." [2]

When the Congressmen gave up ministries, the Legislatures of the Muslim majority provinces had hardly any Muslim League members. But thanks to the jail-seeking policy of the Congress party, Jinnah was given sufficient time to consolidate his position and with what little strength he had in those provinces at his command, he soon established League Ministries in five provinces. These Ministries proved a stepping-stone to his future plans and policies. The end of the rule of the Congress party in the seven provinces was hailed by Muslims all over India as the Day of Deliverance. Their Pirpur Committee's report levelled heinous charges against the Congress party. The Congress leaders on their part produced certificates of good conduct

[2] Suleri, Z. A., *My Leader,* p. 99.

from the British Governors. On top of it all, Jinnah continually voiced that "A parliamentary system based on the majority principle must inevitably mean the rule of the major nation. . . . Western Democracy was totally unsuited for India and its imposition would be resisted by the Mussalmans."[3] The Muslims, Jinnah said, should be treated as a separate nation and not a minority, otherwise there would be irretrievable disaster to the country.

The Congress leaders thought that Jinnah was the voice of the Muslim classes and not of the Muslim masses. The Congress party and Pandit Nehru particularly started Muslim mass-contact drive to attract Muslim masses to the Congress. As this reading of the Muslim mind was historically untrue, the Muslim mass-contact movement of Nehru proved to be not only a dismal failure, but also a Muslim conflict movement. Jinnah had made no secret of his burning hatred for the concept of the Constituent Assembly of an all-India character. To the Muslims he said: "We do not want in any circumstances a constitution of an all-India character with one Government at the centre. . . . If we once agree to that, let me tell you, the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence."[4]

On September 1, 1939, Britain declared War on Germany 'to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defence of all that was sacred to man.'[5] H.E. the Marquis of Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, proclaimed that India was at war with Germany and expressed that India would fight for human freedom as against the rule of force. Soon after this Gandhi told the Viceroy that he was not thinking of the deliverance of India, and he broke down before the Viceroy as he pictured to himself the House of Parliament and Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction. Pandit Nehru on his return journey from China issued a statement at Rangoon declaring that India had no desire to take advantage of Britain's difficulties and was not out to bargain.

The Liberals thought it disastrous if India were to offer help subject to conditions. The Parsis offered prayers and H.H. the Aga Khan appealed for heartfelt, loyal and unstinted service to

[3] Suleri, Z. A., *My Leader*, pp. 117-18.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[5] Churchill on September 3, 1939.

the cause of the British Empire. Dr. Ambedkar lamented that India had no voice in her foreign policy in declaring war and in the making of peace. He further said that India should remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations and strive to achieve the status of equal partnership therein. He, too, appealed to Government to take steps to prepare Indians for defending their country. The Muslim League offered conditional support asking the British Government to create a sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans, and curiously enough urged His Majesty's Government to satisfy the Arab national demands.

As President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar declared that Britain's claim that she entered war to safeguard the vital principles affecting human freedom was a political stunt so long as she continued to hold India in political bondage. In his interview, on October 9, 1939, he plainly told the Viceroy at Delhi that none of the belligerent powers in Europe including Poland and, above all. Russia was actuated by any moral or human principle of Democracy, or the liberties of the down-trodden or political justice and equality beyond what suited the self-interests of the respective nations and states.

It was a great event in Savarkar's romantic life. The British Power that had exiled him for twenty-seven years thought it fit to interview Savarkar and know his views and policy about World War II. In the course of this interview Savarkar frankly told His Excellency, the Governor-General Lord Linlithgow, that he still was a revolutionary; but as the political situation and strategy demanded it, he was prepared to co-operate in the policy of militarisation and suggested to Government to keep the Sikh and Gurkha battalions on the North-West Frontiers. He feared, however, that an attack on India would probably be made from the eastern side. The Viceroy was so much impressed with Savarkar's lucid discourse on the current problems that he expressed to some of his Executive Councillors that Savarkar was possibly the only politician who could ably discuss the war situation from the Indian viewpoint and its major issues in the context of international politics. The Viceroy was also surprised to see that in spite of an unusual record of long incarceration and great sufferings Savarkar was still alert, and clear in thinking and unflagging in energy! He expressed this opinion to Dr.

Mookerjee also. In the evening Sir Jagdish Prasad and Sir Ramswami Mudaliar, Members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy, invited Savarkar to a tea-party.

* * *

Savarkar was of opinion that Indian foreign policy should hinge on a very practical stand, on the principle of serving, safeguarding and promoting the national self-interest. He averred that it should not depend on isms. The sound principle, he observed, in politics laid it down that no form of Government or political 'ism' was absolutely good or bad under all circumstances to all people alike. He, therefore, thinks it inadvisable to dictate to Germany, Japan, Italy or Russia to choose a particular form of Government. Democracy itself demands that the will of the people must prevail in choosing their own Government. Naturally he held that all those nations that were friendly or likely to be helpful to the Hindu Nation would be friends and allies of Hindustan.

To Savarkar, no academic and empty slogans of Democracy or Nazism or Fascism could be the guiding principle to India's foreign policy. He said we should never hate or love Fascists or Bolshevists or Democrats simply on the ground of any theoretical or bookish reasons. There was no reason, he said, to suppose that Hitler was a human monster because he passed off as a Nazi or Churchill was a demi-God because he called himself a democrat. Savarkar wanted Hindustan to maintain a policy of neutrality towards all nations in the world in respect of their internal affairs or mutual relations with each other. To him the ideal of Democracy and the ideal of Fascism made no difference. He measured the forces of liberty and freedom and the forces of Nazism and Fascism by the same standard. He had, it seems, no clearer and deeper conception of a new state; nor had he faith or interest in a new world order.

According to Savarkar, all nations look first to their own security and prosperity while dealing with international problems. They make or unmake pacts with this end alone in view. Let alone the history of pacts and treaties which Britain made with Indian Princes, what great nations have stood by their pledges? By an agreement the U.S.A. was pledged to protect Korea. In 1905 Japan swallowed Korea and U.S.A. was

the first nation to recognize the Korean conquest. The world knows the fate of Nine-Party Treaty of Brussels to stop Japanese Aggression. They orated and adjourned. The history of the Treaty of Rapallo, the Treaty of Berlin, the Treaty of 1933 and the dramatic end of the Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 between Germany and Russia is stunning and shocking.

Savarkar, however, said that the Hindu Mahasabha felt itself concerned with the issues at stake in the war so far as they were likely to affect the safety and interests of the Hindu Nation. He, therefore, appealed to the British Government to make an unambiguous declaration of granting Hindustan the status of a self-governing Dominion as an immediate step leading towards the final goal of complete independence and to introduce immediately responsible Government at the Centre based on the democratic principle of 'one man one vote.' He urged the Viceroy to guard India's Western Frontiers by Hindu forces, to introduce compulsory military training in High Schools and Colleges throughout India (as in England), to start and encourage rifle classes, to expand the Indian Territorial Force, to inspire the people of India to feel instinctively that the Indian Army was the Army of the people of India and not of Britain, and he appealed to the British Government not to use Indian forces outside India proper. Savarkar called upon Capital and Labour in the country to utilize the unique opportunity of the European War to capture the markets by working to capacity all the existing industries and by starting new ones and replacing at full speed all foreign articles by *Swadeshi*.[6]

Out of fear and distrust the British rulers had kept India unarmed and unprepared. So the main object of Savarkar's war policy was to make Hindus re-animated and re-born into a martial race. It was in this belief that, like Tilak, he had supported from the Cellular Jail in the Andamans the militarization movement during World War I, and was delighted to hear that his countrymen were allowed to go to Europe in thousands to fight against the best military power in the world. In his youth, he wrote from London in 1906 quoting from the *Spectator* that soldiers could be thoroughly trained in six months, and casting a longing look at the then Boy Army of Britain,

[6] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 146-68.

he felt that every Indian youth must learn Drill, Riding and Shooting. Long ago, in 1906 Savarkar observed in one of his letters from London that a nation's existence depended upon its political independence. If the nation enjoyed independence, it could make progress. That independence in its turn depended upon the mental and military training the nation imparted to its youth. That was why after his release the first slogan he raised was, "Down with the Arms Act, Start Rifle Classes." Thus it can be seen from this that his militarization policy was consistent during both the World Wars.

Savarkar was the only all-India leader, and the Hindu Mahasabha was the only political party in India that launched an intense propaganda for the militarization of the Hindus and for the industrialization of the country with pure patriotic and political objects during World War II. Long before the outbreak of World War II, Savarkar had seized every opportunity of bringing to the notice of the nation the woeful want of the military strength of the Hindus whenever he spoke at schools and colleges and even at literary conferences. So he now wanted the youth to join the Army and to cross the seas to give fight and pass through the baptism of fire in all the world theatres of war and learn the use of the latest weapons.

After Savarkar's interview with the Viceroy, the Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee passed its famous resolution declaring that neither the allies nor the axis powers entered war with any altruistic motives; but they were out for their national or imperialistic ambitions.

The Calcutta session of the Hindu Mahasabha held during the last week of December 1939, proved to be a landmark in the history of Hindu Mahasabha and in the life of Savarkar. So great was the enthusiasm that the president-elect had to pass two sleepless nights to attend receptions accorded to him by thousands of people at every important station *en route* to Calcutta. Howrah station was packed to capacity with anxious crowds of workers and eager public. Cheer upon cheer greeted his arrival. Heaps of garlands were showered upon Savarkar, groups of bands played before the station, and numerous photographs were taken. Eager sightseers stood on either side of the road waiting to cheer the warrior philosopher. Then followed the largest procession Bengal witnessed till that day. Armed

Sikh horsemen led the procession. Rose water and scents were sprinkled upon the president-elect by crowds of men and women standing in the balconies, and on the roofs to witness the mammoth procession and have a look at the great leader of Hindustan. This was the biggest session of the Mahasabha held till then. More than two lakhs of people participated. In his presidential address Savarkar reiterated the basic tenets of Hindu nationalism, reviewed the problem of minorities, and propounded his doctrine of national co-ordination of class interests.

Savarkar's dynamic personality and his clear-cut thinking and his characteristic fearlessness made an irresistible impression on the minds of thinking men in the country. These opinions echoed through several leading newspapers of India. The *Hindustan Standard,* Calcutta, remarked: "The president himself is a dynamic personality who radiates hope where there is defeatism, brings cheer where there is distress and calls into play creative energy where there is desolation. The Hindu Mahasabha must be beholden to Providence that it has succeeded after years of wandering in the wilderness in claiming for three years in unbroken succession as its leader and spokesman that high priest of militant Indian Nationalism who has dreamt dreams and seen visions. . . ." [7]

Bengal's another great journal, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* observed: "Whether one agrees with all his views or not, Mr. Savarkar compels attention by the boldness and clarity of his utterances. He knows no doubt or hesitation. His logic is merciless; his humour caustic, and his irony effective. He is a man with a mission. The faith that burns in him throws a halo all round and he seems as he delivers his message and advances like a conquering hero, sweeping away from his path like cobwebs all time-worn theories and personalities." [8] Sounding a warning to the Congress, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* further said: "One consideration is that Congress has lost its hold over Bengal. We shall not go into the story today, but it is an admitted fact that it is the non-communal outlook of the Congress which has failed to satisfy the Hindus of this Province." And the paper added: "In Indian politics we have at least a man who is not afraid to call a spade a spade."

[7] Quoted in The *Mahratta,* dated 5 January 1940.
[8] *Ibid.*

Describing Savarkar's presidential address as militant, the *Tribune*, Lahore, stated: "The militancy is not only intelligible, but in part defensible as a natural reaction produced in the sensitive Hindu minds by the aggressive Communalism of the Muslim League." [9] The *New India*, commenting on Savarkar's address, observed: "Thrice Mr. Nehru was elected as Congress president and thrice has Mr. Savarkar been chosen as the Mahasabha leader. Both have certain qualities in common. Both made great sacrifices for the country and both possess a trenchancy of style which is direct and provocative. Had he been admitted into the inner circle of the Congress fold, we are sure, Mr. Savarkar would have become president of that organisation. Whether right or wrong, the man is utterly and downrightly sincere." [10]

Another significant feature attached to the session was that the Maharaja of Nepal was given a garden party and a public address under the signature of Savarkar on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. Ill-health prevented Savarkar from attending the function. The Maharaja himself honoured Savarkar, when he went to the bedside of Savarkar and had a private talk with him about Savarkar's mission for an hour. During these days N. R. Sarkar also saw Savarkar and discussed the general policy of Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian politics.

During the last week of January 1940, at Malabar Hill, Bombay, Savarkar discussed with the leaders of Parsi community the rights of minorities. Immediately thereafter Savarkar made a tour of West Khandesh in the middle of March 1940. Such was the vitality and energy of Savarkar in those days that he ran through a crowded programme of meetings at several places from Chalisgaon to Daundaiche in a single day. Paying flying visits and making speeches at Takarkhed, Shahade and Prakashe, he came to Talode where the Jahagirdar received him. The public meeting was attended by the leaders of the Bhills. It was during these tours that a Bhill, who had completed his term of imprisonment in the Andamans, fell at Savarkar's feet. The devotion of the convicts in the Andamans to Savarkar was boundless. One Kusha Patil, a convict on his return from the Andamans, often paid homage to Savarkar as he believed that

[9] Quoted in The *Mahratta*, dated 5 January 1940.
[10] *Ibid.*

Savarkar was a God. Kusha Patil said: "It was through Savarkar's care and kind words that I became what I am today!" After addressing very big public meetings at Nandurbar, Pimpalner and Dhulia, Savarkar returned to Bombay.

Attending to his correspondence and granting some interviews to workers and partymen, Savarkar left for Salem to attend the Salem Hindu Conference in the last week of March 1940. Receiving addresses of welcome *en route* at several stations, he reached Salem. At the Municipal House he spoke on the importance of military training. At the conference he spoke on the need for Hindu Sanghatan and military training and exhorted the Hindus to oppose the Muslim League scheme of partition of Hindustan. He paid his respects to Vijay Raghavahariar at his place. He was an ex-president of the Hindu Mahasabha and was a former president of the Congress.

At Madras, on the morning of the 25th March, he was given a great ovation. Dr. T. S. Rajan, an ex-minister of the Madras Province and one-time lieutenant of Savarkar in his London days, met him. In the evening before an audience of thousands of Hindus Savarkar spoke at the beach on the need of Hindu Sanghatan ideology and the necessity of opposing the scheme of partition sponsored by the Muslim League. In the city he was given addresses of welcome by several associations of Arya Samajists, Marwaris, Sindhis and Gujaratis. On March 26, 1940, the birthday anniversary of Shivaji, Savarkar spoke on the politics of Shivaji at a mammoth meeting held on the beach of Madras under the presidentship of Dr. P. Varadarajalu Naidu.

After a fortnight Savarkar again left Bombay for his Travancore tour. Unprecedented receptions were accorded to him throughout the state. At Quilon, he was honoured as a state guest. The Changanacheri Municipality accorded him an address of welcome. The leaders of the Christian community interviewed Savarkar. Representatives of the so-called Untouchables saw him. At the Hindu Conference held on May 5, 1940, at Changanacheri, Savarkar spoke on the policy of the Mahasabha towards the States and the importance of Shuddhi. At Tinnevelly station he was accorded a rousing reception. After a grand procession Savarkar was heard at a public meeting with rapt attention.

On receiving addresses of welcome at the stations of Kolipatti,

Satur and Virudhunagar, he reached Madura, the Athens of South India. Great honour done only to great Acharyas was done to Savarkar by the priests of the famous Meenakshi temple. At Madura, elephants, horses, camels headed the procession, carrying the Hindu National flag through decorated streets. Rose water mixed with fragrant sandalwood was sprinkled on the procession. After running through a crowded programme, Savarkar addressed a mammoth meeting in the city and returned to Bombay.

Savarkar had a second interview with the Viceroy at Simla on July 5, 1940. In the evening Jai Lal, a retired judge of the Lahore High Court, arranged in his honour a tea-party at his residence. Sir Jogendra Singh, an ex-minister of the Punjab, Raja Sir Daljit Singh, Sardar Raghuveer Singh and Justice Varma of the Patna High Court were present. During the discussion Savarkar impressed upon them the need for the Hindu Sanghatan Movement. When Savarkar returned to Simla station, he received a telephone message from H.H. the Jamsahib of Nawanagar, the then Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in India, requesting him for an interview, but the same could not be arranged for want of time. While Savarkar was returning from Simla, Walchand Hirachand the great industrialist of India, met him in the train and had a long talk with him. Sikandar Hyat Khan, the then Chief Minister of the Punjab, was travelling by the same train. Walchand Hirachand took him to Savarkar's compartment. Savarkar was glad to meet his one-time colleague and Sikandar Hyat Khan talked of Savarkar in a most touching manner. He took Savarkar to his compartment and the two leaders had a cordial talk on leading political and communal problems. An interview was arranged at Delhi with Madan Mohan Malaviya but Savarkar could not find time to meet such an important patriarch. In August 1940 he attended the death anniversary of Tilak at Poona where he averred in his famous speech that absolute non-violence is absolutely sinful.

* * *

During all these tours, Savarkar stressed the need for Hindu militarization in his speeches at Poona, Wardha, Chalisgaon, Delhi, Nagar, Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind), Sukkar and during the

war years he sent forth appeal upon appeal and gave an impetus to the movement, explaining his militarization policy at Meerut, Salem, Changanacheri, in Calcutta at Ashutosh Hall and Scottish College and at Sangli in the Willingdon College. In one of his speeches he said: "Today it may well appear that these men in the armed forces are mere slaves in the pay of a foreign Government; but there can be no doubt that when the crucial moment comes, they will prove themselves real patriots and staunch Hindus." While addressing the students of the Scottish College, Calcutta, he said: "Since the days of our First War of Independence in 1857, it has been the policy of the British Government to keep the army out of politics. Our policy should be to carry politics into the Indian army by all possible means and once we succeed in this, the battle of freedom will be won."

On another occasion he said: "Forces beyond their control have compelled the British Government to trust you with arms and ammunition. Formerly youths had to rot in cells for being in possession of pistols, but today the Britishers are placing rifles, guns, cannons, and machine-guns in your hands. Get fully trained as soldiers and commanders. Get thousands of mechanics trained into technical experts in building shipyards, aeroplanes, guns and ammunition factories.

At another meeting he said: "Why not co-operate when you are gaining? Did you not flout the wily expectation of Lord Macaulay? Then why not welcome this unique opportunity for our own good? You know your enemies. I ask you to join the Army and wield the guns and turn them to the cause of freedom. I tell you this as plainly as I told the Viceroy himself about it. Do not worry about the bonds and agreements. The reverse of those scraps is blank. You can write new bonds and new agreements on it when the time comes. Mind, Swaraj will never come to you, although you cover the whole earth with paper resolutions. But if you pass resolutions with rifles on your shoulders, you will attain it."

Till the day of Savarkar's whirlwind propaganda for Hindu militarization, military career was the monopoly of the Muslims, who formed the three-fourths of the Indian Army. The realist in Savarkar sensed the danger of the Muslim preponderance in the army in case of internal anarchy and external pressure.

With that end in view Savarkar preached militarization so that when the proper time came for the British to quit India, Free India could stand erect with its national army. It was his belief that a country unarmed and unprepared to defend itself from military aggression cannot retain its freedom for a day.

The editors of the so-called nationalist papers that throve on military contracts and military advertisements of the foreign Government whom they asked to quit, basely enough decried the soldiers as hirelings; their leaders described the soldiers as "rice soldiers," their partymen stigmatized them as mercenaries, and the meanest born amongst them called Savarkar 'a recruit hero'.

The pity of it was that those very journalists throve on papers, whose owners throve on Government contracts; those very leaders whose relatives and friends made skyhigh profits out of military contracts; those very persons who paid all sorts of taxes and co-operated with the British Government in conducting the railways and all other departments producing war materials with selfish motives and for paltry things and those followers of Gandhi whose Gandhi Seva Sangh supplied the military with blankets, were the persons who ignobly attacked now and then Savarkar, who never asked his countrymen to contribute a pie to the war fund and whose propaganda for the Hindu militarization emanated from his selfless, patriotic, and far-sighted policy and anxiety for the welfare of India. What a paradox! What a low level a slave country's reason descends to! In its degraded conditions it often curses the selfless as selfish.

What of Gandhian jail-seekers and Congress-minded editors, some of Savarkar's flamboyant lieutenants, too, at first could make neither head nor tail of his militarization policy, and were sceptical about it. No wonder then that men who posed as radicals and were outside Hindu Mahasabha looked askance at this policy.

Despite these curses and misunderstanding, Savarkar vigorously carried on his propaganda. Independently and in honourable co-operation with the Government the Hindu Mahasabha workers and leaders gave an impetus to the Hindu militarization movement through the Hindu Mahasabha papers they had at their command, from the platform and through the Militarization Boards which they had established independently of

Government recruiting machinery. The effect of this intense propaganda was seen everywhere. The Muslim plans for preponderance was effectively checkmated and brought down and the percentage of the Hindus in the army went as high up as seventy.

So powerful was the effect of this propaganda that Sir Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, in a speech at Poona raised an alarm at the increasing number of Hindus enlisting daily in the Land, Navy and Air Forces thereby reducing the percentage of Muslims in the fighting Forces. The *Eastern Times,* a prominent Muslim League paper, too, raised an outcry against the march stolen upon the Muslim monopoly and wrote: "The Hindu Mahasabha also has agitated strongly for militarization of the Hindus as a great opportunity and with the active co-operation of the Government, has met with astonishing success." [11]

The Muslim leaders were restless over this problem and so four years later Liaquat Ali Khan, then Secretary of the All-India Muslim League and Member for Finance in the Interim Government, wrote a letter to the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten complaining about the inadequate representation of Moslems in the Armed Forces.[12]

The Muslims and the British Government knew well what Savarkar's militarization movement stood for. It aimed at carrying politics into the military ranks of the Indian Army, and winning over the Army to the side of revolution for the final overthrow of the British yoke. It was, indeed, the military movement of Shahaji to facilitate the mission of his son, Shivaji, for the attainment of Swaraj. Every British statesman knew what Savarkar aimed at. Writing in *Great Britain and the East* in January 1943, Sir Alfred Watson, former editor of the *Statesman,* Calcutta, said: "In his belief of dictatorship, Nehru has a dangerous rival in Savarkar, who does not hide his aspiration to rule under any veil of anonymity but publicly proclaims it as the leader of the Hindu Sabha." Sir Alfred proceeded: "Savarkar claims domination on the democratic basis of counting heads. For that domination he is prepared to fight and loudly demands that in recruiting for armies in India, the pre-

[11] Bhide, A. S., *From Quit India to Split India,* p. 27.
[12] Allen Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten,* p. 58.

sent rulers shall elect a majority of Hindus so that he may have an instrument to enforce his will when British rule is finally abandoned. If it ever comes to a tussle between Nehru and Savarkar, as seems inevitable, there is little doubt who will win." Watson's remarks were quite pertinent.

It is well known that Deshgaurav Subhas Bose cherished a loving admiration for Savarkar, and showed reverential respect for him whenever he visited Savarkar, the Prince of Indian revolutionaries. It is also an open secret now that Subhas, the devotee of Shivaji and his politics, had discussed the Indian political and international situation respecting World War II with Savarkar at Savarkar Sadan, on June 22, 1940, six months before his dramatic disappearance from India in January 1941. In the course of the discussion Savarkar, the Indian Mazzini, inspired Subhas Bose, the Indian Garibaldi, with the idea of an armed revolution from outside in order to intensify the struggle for Freedom. The born general in Subhas took the cue, and played the role of the Indian Garibaldi, rightly called the Netaji of the Indian National Army, which was founded by Ras Behari Bose in the east.

After Bose's mysterious disappearance, Savarkar issued a statement in which he, unlike other statesmen, said: "May the gratitude, sympathy and good wishes of a nation be a source of never-failing solace and inspiration to him wherever he happens to be! Wherever he happens to be, I have no doubt, he will continue to contribute his all, even health and life to the cause of Indian Freedom." [13]

A world-famous veteran revolutionary and a man of great mental force and a powerful pen, Ras Behari Bose, who was the guide and sole adviser of the Azad Hind Government of Subhas Bose, was in correspondence with Savarkar till the outbreak of World War II. He was also president of the Japan Hindu Sabha and had immensely contributed through the Indian League of Independence to the forces of the Indian Freedom Movement outside India. Netaji Subhas, the I.N.A. and India owe a debt of deep gratitude to Ras Behari Bose, another great figure of Indian revolution.

[13] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 319-20.

CHAPTER 14

Hindu Manifesto

THE ideal and ideology which Savarkar laid down and propagated is called the Hindu Sanghatan ideology or Hindu nationalism or Savarkarism. Although a natural development, an outgrowth and a manifestation of the various views and tenets upheld by several Hindu nationalists jointly, severally or individually, the ideology is put into a form and finally formulated and codified into an integrated doctrine of social and political outlook on life by Savarkar.

There were great Hindu leaders of Thought before Savarkar or existed even in his day, but none of them advocated all the principles or singly fought for them. They were stone-masons to this ideology, but the sculptor was Savarkar. In modern times Vivekananda, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Hardayal were looked upon as great Hindu leaders of Thought, who spoke and wrote about Hindu thought. Vivekananda was a great philosopher, who devoted his lifetime and great talents to the unfolding of the Hindu philosophy and propagated it without political bias or a desire to win worldly gain to Mother India. Nevertheless, he was of opinion that a nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.[1] His ideal for India was 'an Islamic body with a Vedantic heart.'[2]

Conscious of the separatist tendencies of the Muslims, Lajpat Rai, a staunch Hindu leader, held that Hindus were a nation in themselves because they represented a type of civilization all their own. Hardayal wrote in the *Pratap* of Lahore in 1925: "I declare that the future of the Hindu race, of Hindustan and the Punjab, rests on these four pillars—(1) Hindu Sanghatan, (2) Hindu Raj, (3) Shuddhi of Moslems, and (4) Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the Frontiers. So

[1] Swami Vivekananda, *Lectures From Colombo To Almora*, p. 306.
[2] My Motherland Series, *Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa*, p. 16.

long as the Hindu Nation does not accomplish these four things, the safety of our children and great-grandchildren will be ever in danger, and the safety of the Hindu race will be impossible." [3] Tilak, a representative leader of Hindu Thought, had neither the time nor an opportunity to apply his mind to the geographical nationalism of his day. The only seer, who was conscious of this ideology in some way, was Dayananda. But unlike Savarkar, he perhaps held that there was no knowledge beyond the Vedas; besides, Dayananda was more a social than a political force.

Bhai Parmananda was a strong advocate of the concept of the Hindu Nation. Swami Shraddhananda and Bhai Parmananda were kin to Lajpat Rai just as Hardayal was kith to Savarkar; but none was kin to Savarkar. Before Savarkar there were promoters of Hindu solidarity and advocates of the removal of untouchability in Maharashtra and in other provinces too. As saviours of Hindustan they did their work in their own way, according to the demands of their times and needs.

There were champions of Hindu nationalism amongst the contemporaries of Savarkar. But the ideas of the social reform of Savarkar's predecessors and the politics of his contemporaries found a rare combination in Savarkar. Savarkar held definite thoughts on the rejuvenation of the Hindus. His approach to the Hindu-Muslim problem, the doctrine of absolute non-violence in thought, word and deed, and the foreign policy distinguished him from all other leaders; and his radical views about social regeneration and revolution, political concepts and precepts of a nation, economic policy, problem of the national script and *lingua franca*, and his ideas about a World Commonwealth form the Hindu Manifesto of a social and political system. It is laid down in an outspoken, concise and virile form, sustaining the Hindus' struggle for existence and enabling them to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. No wonder then that Savarkar's monumental work entitled *Hindutva* was acclaimed by Swami Shraddhananda as a message given at the dawn of a new age; and Savarkar's famous presidential speech at Ahmedabad giving the fundamental principles of the Hindu nationalism was hailed by Bhai Parmananda as the Bible of Hindu Sanghatan.

[3] Ambedkar, Dr. B. R., *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 123.

What is Hindutva

The word Hindu is the heart of that ideology, and Hindustan its geographical centre. According to Savarkar "every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this Bharat Bhoomi—this land from the Indus to the seas, as his Fatherland and Holyland —the land of origin of his religion and the cradle of his faith." Therefore it follows that the followers of Vedism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and all Hill-tribes are all Hindus. Around this life-centre moves Hindutva which Savarkar defines as not only the spiritual or religious history of our people, but the history in full pervasion. Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva. Hindutva is not, he observes, particularly theocratic, a religious dogma or a creed. It embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of the Hindu race. Forty centuries, if not more, he states, had been at work to mould it as it is. Prophets and poets, lawyers and lawgivers, heroes and historians, have thought, lived, fought and died just to have it spelled thus.[4]

This movement is called Hindu Sanghatan and means organization for the solidarity and strength of the Hindu Nation.

A nation is a group of mankind which is bound together by some or all of these common ties such as common religion and culture, common history and traditions, common literature, and consciousness of common rights and wrongs, occupying a territory of geographical unity, and aspiring to form a political unit. When a nation realizes this ambition, it becomes a State. A nation may be without a State. A State is a governmental unit and it may have more nationalities than one under its rule. By 'nationality', C. B. Fawcell, the author of *Frontiers—A Study In Political Geography*, understands the group of qualities which characterize the people of any one nation. French nationality, he says, is that group of qualities which distinguish the French from other European people.[5]

The principal elements instrumental in the formation of a nation are a common past, a common tradition and a will to live together. Renan defines a nation as a social group whose solidarity has been established by the sentiment of the sacrifices

[4] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 3.
[5] Fawcell, C. B., *Frontiers—A Study In Political Geography*, p. 5.

made in the past and of those it is still ready to make in the future. In his essay on nationality he observes that "a nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. . . . One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down." Prof. Harold J. Laski lays it down that it (nationality) implies a sense of special unity which marks off those who share in it from the rest of mankind. "That unit is the outcome of common history, of victories won and traditions created by a corporate effort. There grows up a sense of kinship which binds men into oneness. They recognise their likeness, and emphasize their difference from other men." [6] Dr. Holland Rose writes that "nationality is at its height a union of hearts once made, never unmade—a spiritual conception unconquerable, indestructible." [7] "In reality," observes Garner, "a nation is not a portion of society politically organised, that is, it is not a State, but in its perfect form it is a portion of a society definitely separated from the rest of the world by natural geographical boundaries, the inhabitants of which have a common civilization, common customs, traits of character and traditions." Israel Zangwill in his *Principle of Nationalities* discusses some of the factors that constitute a nation, viz. unity of religion, unity of language, possession of common traditions of suffering and of joy. By tradition he means songs, legends, stories attached to heroes, etc. "A nationality," states Durkheim, the Belgian Sociologist, with admirable brevity, "is a group of which the members, for racial or merely historic reasons, wish to live under the same laws and form a State." G. P. Gooch, an eminent historian, in his *Nationalism* dealing with some factors that constitute a nation, observes: "But the strongest of all is the identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasures and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past." [8]

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[6] Laski, Harold J., *Grammar of Politics*, pp. 219-20.
[7] Quoted in the *Principle of Nationalities* by Israel Zangwill, p. 28.
[8] Gooch, G. P., *Nationalism*, p. 7.

Hindu Nation

Savarkar's stand was that in Hindustan the Hindus were a nation, and other people were communities and numerically, therefore, minorities. Savarkar observes: "The ancient and modern history of the Hindus is common. They have friends and enemies in common. They have faced common dangers and won victories in common. One in national despair and one in national hope, the Hindus by an admirable process through assimilation, elimination and consolidation are welded together during the aeons of a common life and common habitat." Above all, the Hindus are bound together, continued Savarkar, by the dearest ties, most sacred and most enduring bonds of a common Fatherland and common Holyland. Verily the Hindus, stated Savarkar, as a people differ most markedly from any other people in the world than they differ among themselves. All tests whatever of a common country, race, religion, language that go to entitle a people to form a nation, entitle the Hindus with a greater emphasis to that claim.

According to Savarkar, the festivals and cultural forms of the Hindus are common. The Vedic rishis are their common pride, their Grammarians Panini and Patanjali, their poets Bhavabhuti and Kalidas, their heroes Ram and Krishna, Shivaji and Pratap, Guru Govind and Banda are a source of common inspiration. Like their ancient and sacred language the Sanskrit, their scripts also are fashioned on the same basis and the Nagari script has been the common vehicle of the sacred writings since centuries in the past.

India is dear to us, further observed Savarkar, because it has been and is the home of our Hindu race, the land which has been the cradle of our prophets and heroes, and Gods and Godmen. Otherwise, he went on, land for land, there may be many a country, as rich in gold and silver on the face of the earth. "River for river," asserted Savarkar, "the Mississippi is nearly as good as the Ganga and its waters are not altogether bitter. The stones, trees and greens in Hindustan are just as good or bad stones and trees and greens of the respective species elsewhere. Hindustan is a Fatherland and Holyland to us not because it is a land entirely unlike any other land in the world, but because it is associated with our history and has been the

home of our forefathers wherein our mothers gave us the first suckle at their breast and our fathers cradled us on their knees from generation to generation."

According to the believers in Indian nationalism, a nation meant peoples living in a common land. Whoever came to India, the Arabs, the Jews, the Russians, the Germans, the Portuguese, the Greeks, they formed a nation together with the Hindus, because these new-comers also lived in India. " Congress committed the serious mistake," stated Savarkar, " at its very start of overlooking this fundamental, social and political principle that in the formation of nations, religious, racial, cultural and historical affinities count immensely more than their territorial unity." What they called Indian Nation Savarkar called the Indian State, because he believed that the Hindus could form a State with other minorities.

Savarkar found nothing objectionable in the ideal of Indian Nationalism. It was, in fact, said he, a noble ideal suited to the Hindu mentality with its synthetic trend, always prone to philosophy with a universal urge. It is also true, he believed, that the ideal of politics itself ought to be a human State, all mankind for its citizens and the earth for its Motherland. But is territorial unity the only constituent of a common nationality? Not territorial unity, he replied, but the religious, racial and cultural unity is what counts most in the formation of a national unit. The idea of territorial nationality alone was envisaged by the Congressites, who in general preferred to be totally ignorant of Muslim history, theology and political trend of mind.

Savarkar observed that " Moslems in general and the Indian Moslems in particular have not yet grown out of the historical stage, of intense religiosity and the theological concepts of State. Their theological politics divide the human world into two groups only—the Moslem land and the enemy land. All lands which are either inhabited entirely by the Moslems or ruled over by the Moslems are Moslem lands. To any other land no faithful Moslem is allowed to bear any loyalty." Their Holy-land is far off in Arabia. Their mythology and godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently, their names and their outlook smack of foreign origin. Their love is divided. Their love for India as their motherland is but a

handmaid to their love for their Holyland outside India. "The territorial patriots wanted the Hindus to cease to be Hindus at least as a national and political unit. Some of them actually gloried in disowning themselves as Hindus at all. But the Moslems remained Moslems first and Moslems last and Indians never!" said Savarkar.

After the fiasco of the Khilafat, the Muslims exploded the Congress myth of territorial nationalism by migrating to Moslem lands. Greece, Palestine and even Hungary and Poland have thousands of Moslems amongst their nationals. China has crores of Moslems. Yet the country of the Poles continues to be Poland, of the Grecians Greece. There the Moslems did not dare to distort them, but are quite content to distinguish themselves as Polish Moslems or Grecian Moslems or Chinese Moslems. But the Indian Moslems never identified their aspirations with the national aspirations of Hindustan.

Gokhale had realised that the "seventy millions of Mohammedans were more or less hostile to the national aspirations,"[9] and warned Sarojini Naidu that the Hindu-Moslem unity would never come in their lifetime.[10] Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had warned the British Government against the unjust Muslim claims.[11] Lala Lajpat Rai had fully realized the danger of the separatist tendencies of the Muslims and Dr. Annie Besant had foretold in her *Future of Indian Politics* as early as 1922 that the primary allegiance of Muslims was to Islamic countries, not to our Motherland, and warned in her memorable words: "In thinking of an Independent India, the menace of Muslim rule has to be considered.[12] As late as 1941, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar expressed the same kind of grave doubt about Moslem allegiance to India when he said, "Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his Motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin."[13]

So far as the Hindus are concerned, said Savarkar, there can be no distinction nor conflict in the least between their communal and national duties, as the best interest of Hindudom are simply identified with the best interests of Hindustan as

[9] Parasnis, Prof. S. R., *Namdar Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, p. 74.
[10] G. A. Natesan & Co., *Sarojini's Speeches and Writings*, p. 26.
[11] Chandavarkar, Sir V. N., *Presidential Address at Calcutta*, p. 6.
[12] Arundale, George S., The *Mahratta*, dated 22 July 1942.
[13] Ambedkar, Dr. B. R., *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 333.

a whole. The truer a Hindu is to himself as a Hindu, holds Savarkar, he must inevitably grow a truer national as well. The Hindus are the bedrock on which the Indian Independent State could be built. He asserted: "A Hindu patriot worth the name can't but be an Indian patriot as well. To the Hindus Hindustan being the Fatherland and Holyland, the love they bear to Hindustan is boundless. That is why they predominate in the national struggle that is going on for the overthrow of the British yoke. Even the buried bones in the Andamans would assert this fact." Savarkar further declared that "we Hindus must have a country of our own in the solar system and must continue to flourish there as Hindus—descendants of a mighty people." Hence their solidarity, unity and strength should be kept intact. So Shuddhi for him has not only a religious, but also a political, national and a secular meaning. If the population of the Hindus dwindles and the strength of the other faiths out-numbers them, there would be a serious threat to the building of peace and prosperity, nay, to the very existence of Hindustan.

Savarkar believed in the resurrection of the Hindus, who have stood by the graves of empires and civilizations that prospered in other parts of the world. He believed that there was some such virility and staying power inherent in the Hindu race as could find few parallels in the annals of the world. Therefore, he observed, that amidst the terrible struggle for existence, which was incessantly going on in the creation, survival of the fittest was the rule. The Hindus survived the national cataclysms because they were found the fittest to survive.

* * *

Justifiable Nationalism

To those who say that the concept of a Hindu Nation is parochial, Savarkar asked whether or not the concept of an Indian Nation itself was parochial in relation to the Human State. "Why are you an Indian patriot and not an Abyssinian one, and go there and fight for their freedom? Some Englishmen born in this territory are and may continue to be Indians. Can, therefore, the overlordship of these Anglo-Indians be a Swaraj to the Hindus? Aurangzeb and Tipu, too, were here-

ditary Indians. Did that mean that the rule of Aurangzeb or Tipu was a Swaraj to the Hindus? No! Although they were territorial Indians, they proved to be the worst enemies of Hindudom, and therefore a Pratap, a Shivaji, a Guru Govindsingh or the Peshwas had to fight against the Muslim domination and establish a real Hindu Swaraj," thus argued Savarkar.

"In fact, the Earth," Savarkar the politician, with a poetical verse, said in reply to the dreamy world federalists, "is our Motherland and humanity our nation. Nay, the Vedantist goes further and claims this universe for his country and all manifestations from the stars to the stone his own self. O brothers, the limits of the universe—there the frontiers of my country lie, says Tukaram. Why then take the Himalayas to cut us off from the rest of mankind, and deem ourselves as a separate nation as Indians and fight with every other country and the English in particular who after all are our brothers-in-humanity!" The fact, said Savarkar, is that all patriotism is more or less parochial and communal and is responsible for the dreadful wars throughout human history.

But, according to Savarkar, there is an acid test for distinguishing a justifiable nationalism or communalism from an unjust and harmful one. So long as, stated he, a nation or a community tries to defend the just and fundamental rights of a particular nation or a people or a community against the unjust and overbearing aggression of other human aggregates and does not infringe on the equal and just rights and liberties of others, it cannot be condemned or looked down upon simply because the nation or community is a smaller aggregate in itself. But when a nation or a community treads upon the rights of sister nations or communities, he continued, and aggressively stands in the way of forming larger associations and aggregates of mankind, its nationalism or communalism becomes condemnable from a human point of view.

Nationalism, said Savarkar, when it is aggressive is as immoral in human relations as is communalism when it tries to suppress the equitable rights of other communities and tries to usurp all to itself. But when communalism is only defensive, it is as justifiable and human as an equitable nationalism itself. The Hindus, Savarkar reiterated, do not aim at usurping what

belongs to others. They do not want any special privileges, but they will not allow themselves to be exploited.

Savarkar was for Hindu-Muslim unity and contemplated a non-sectarian State for India. He held that it was as suicidal as ridiculous to borrow hostilities and combats of the past only to fight them out into the present, because Shivaji and Aurangzeb had done it.[14] But he justified the past struggle of the Rajputs, the Sikhs and the Mahrattas to overthrow the Mogul rule as he considered, "as long as the Muslims lived in India in the capacity of alien rulers, so long, to be willing to live with them as brothers was to acknowledge national weakness."[15] So he was never prepared to accept the Muslim domination or their demand for vivisection of India. He contemplated that kind of unity which would go to create an Indian State in which all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion were treated all alike on the principle of 'one man one vote.' In this view Savarkar was not far away from the realistic approach of Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dr. Annie Besant or Dr. Ambedkar. But Savarkar did not want the majority to go on its knees to the recalcitrant minority. Therefore, he considered that seeking unity on the part of the majority was losing it.

To those who believed that the third party, i.e. the British Government, was the hindrance to the Hindu-Muslim unity, he asked, "Who set Muhammad Bin Quasim, Mahomed of Gazni and Aurangzeb to lay India waste with a mad fanatic fury? Were they the creations of the third party, the Britishers?" He warned the Hindu-Muslim unity-hankerers that the real question at the root of the Muslim opposition, displeasure and problem was not a word here or a song there. The Muslims cherished secret designs to disintegrate the Indian State and to create a State within a State or subvert the national State and in the end wanted to brand the Fatherland of the Hindus and other non-Muslim sections in Hindustan with the stamp of self-humiliation and Muslim domination. He, therefore, denounced this attitude and declared to the non-Hindus and especially to the Muslims: "If you come, with you; if you don't, without you and if you oppose, in spite of you, the Hindus will continue to fight for their national freedom as best as they can."

[14] Savarkar, Foreword to *Hindu-Pad-Padshahi*.
[15] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 75.

Savarkar further explained his attitude towards the minorities in general. The Parsis, he stated, amongst the other minorities were by race, religion, language and culture most akin to the Hindus. They had been loyal to India and had made her their only home. They had produced some of the best Indian patriots and revolutionaries like Dadabhai Naoroji and Madame Cama. He, therefore, said that the Parsis would be incorporated into the common Indian State with perfect equal rights and trust.

The Christian minority, Savarkar observed, was civil, had no extra-territorial political designs against India, was not linguistically and culturally averse to the Hindus and therefore could be politically assimilated with the Hindus. Only conversion, he added, should be made voluntary and on a legitimate basis.

As to the Jews in India, he said, they were too few and had given no political or cultural troubles and were not in the main a proselytizing people. They willed, he continued, to be friendly towards the Hindus who had sheltered them when homeless, and could be easily assimilated in a common Indian State.

Thus the problem of minorities was not at all the problem of all minorities, but the problem of only one minority—the Muslim minority.

So far as the Muslim community was concerned, Savarkar said, every equitable treatment which an Indian citizen could claim on an equality of footing with others in respect of language, religion and culture, could be given to them, but they should be held as suspicious friends for at least some years to come for their extra-territorial designs.

Nationalism and Humanism

Savarkar believes that nationalism is but an inevitable step towards the goal of humanity and Pan-Human State. In 1920 he wrote that he believed in a universal State embracing all mankind and where all men and women would be citizens working for the fruits of the earth, the sun and the land which constitute the real Motherland and Fatherland of Man. In fact he said, the world was our country and humanity was our religion and patriotism. In his youth he wrote that history was to be studied to weld humanity into a World Common-

wealth. But while the process and struggle, he said, was going on for welding humanity into a World Commonwealth, the weak people had gone under and the fittest had survived.

"Therefore," Savarkar warned the Hindus, "before you make out a case for unity, you must make out a case for survival as a national or a social human unit."[16] This made him devote all his energy to Hindu Nationalism as he believed that Hindu consolidation was a step inevitable in the realization of the ideal of a Human State or a World Commonwealth. Savarkar stressed this point in a letter to Guy A. Aldred, editor of *The Word*, Glasgow. He said: "I hold that although mankind must march on through nationalism and federalism, through larger and larger statal incorporations to their ultimate political goal, yet the goal is not and cannot be nationalism but humanism, neither more nor less. The ideal of all political science and art must be a Human State." "The Earth is our real Motherland, mankind our Nation and a Human Government based on equality of rights and duties is or ought to be our ultimate political goal." This was a message sent by Savarkar to the World Fellowship Institution at Conway, which had chosen him for presiding over their annual session in 1944, which he could not do for reasons of health.

Being a realist Savarkar, however, warned the Hindus in these words: "As long as the law of evolution that lays down the iron command 'that the weak and the cowards are always the victims of the strong and the courageous' is too persistent and dangerously imminent to be categorically denied by the law of righteousness whose mottos shine brilliantly and beautifully—but as the stars in the heavens do,—so long the banner of nationality will refuse to be replaced by that of universality.[17] Savarkar declared in unmistakable terms that as long as the whole world was red in tooth and claw and the national and racial distinction so strong as to make men brutal, so long if India had to live at all a life whether spiritual or political according to the light of her soul, she must not lose the strength born of national and racial cohesion.[18]

Therefore, Savarkar again emphasized: "As long as every

[16] Savarkar, Foreword to *Hindu-Pad-Padshahi*.
[17] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 30.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

other 'Ism' has not disowned its special dogmas, whichever tend into dangerous war cries, so long no cultural or national unit can afford to loosen the bonds, especially those of a common name and a common banner that are the mighty sources of organic cohesion and strength." [19] He substantiated his point by citing the failure of Buddhism. Though a universal religion without any the least ulterior end in view, it could not, Savarkar observed, eradicate the seeds of animal passions or of political ambitions. He, therefore, asked the Hindus to be on their guard against the Mumbo Jumbo of universalism and non-violence which crush the faculty even of resisting sin, crime and aggression, nay, kill the very sense of wrong and the power of resistance.

Savarkar therefore asked the Hindus to take universalism cautiously. He observed: "What was the use of a universal faith that instead of soothing the ferociousness and brutal egoism of the nations only excited their lust by leaving India defenceless and unsuspecting?" [20] Nevertheless, describing the glory and grandeur of Buddha, he said: "But as it is, thou art ours as truly as Ram or Krishna, or Mahaveer had been, and as thy words were but echoes of yearnings of our national soul, thy visions, the dreams of our race; even so, if ever the law of righteousness rules triumphant on this our human plane, then thou wilt find that the land that cradled thee, and the people that nursed thee, will have contributed most to bring about the consummation if indeed the fact of having contributed thee has not proved that much already." [21] What heaps of books and lakhs of preachings on Buddha could not expound, Savarkar did in a paragraph!

So from the point of nationalism, humanism and universalism, Savarkar gave his immortal message to the land of Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Mahaveer, Vikramaditya, Shalivahan, Pratap, Shivaji, Guru Govindsingh, Banda, Dayananda, Vivekananda and Tilak: "Therefore, ye, O Hindus, consolidate and strengthen Hindu nationality: not to give wanton offence to any of our non-Hindu compatriots, in fact to any one in the world but in just and urgent self-defence of our race and land; to render it im-

[19] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 67.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

possible for others to betray her or to subject her to unprovoked attacks by any of those 'Pan-isms' that are struggling forth from continent to continent!" "As long as other communities in India or in the world," Savarkar concluded, "are not respectively planning India first or mankind first, but all are busy in organising offensive and defensive alliances and combinations on entirely narrow racial or religious or national basis, so long, O Hindus, strengthen if you can those subtle bonds that like nerve-threads bind you in one organic Social Being. Those of you who in a suicidal fit try to cut off the most vital of those ties and dare to disown the name Hindu will find to their cost that in doing so they have cut themselves off from the very source of our racial life and strength." [22]

"Thirty crores of people with India for their basis of operation, for their Fatherland and for their Holyland, with such a history behind them, bound together by ties of a common blood and common culture, can dictate their terms to the whole world. A day will come when mankind will have to face the force. Equally certain it is that whenever the Hindus come to hold such a position whence they could dictate terms to the whole world—those terms cannot be very different from the terms which the Geeta dictates or the Buddha lays down. A Hindu is most intensely so, when he ceases to be a Hindu; and with a Shankar claims the whole earth for a Benares—*Varanasi Medini*—or with a Tukaram exclaims 'my country? Oh brothers, the limits of the universe—there the frontiers of my country lie,'" sang the poetic soul of Savarkar.[23]

* * *

Relative Non-Violence

The peace and prosperity of the Hindus was the central aim of Savarkarian philosophy. To Savarkar what was conducive and whatever contributed to the human good was moral, justifiable, desirable and just. To him relative non-violence was a virtue and absolute non-violence was not only sinful, but immoral. Savarkar, therefore, hated the monomaniacal principle of absolute non-violence. A lioness besmeared with a deer's

[22] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, pp. 116-17.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

blood suckling her cubs at her breast was his nature's picture. He believed that man could not have saved himself from complete extinction had he not succeeded in adding strength of artificial arms to his natural arms. He said that the lesson was branded on every page of history down to the latest page that nations which, other things equal, were superior in military strength survived, flourished and dominated while those which were militarily altogether weak were politically subjected or ceased to exist at all.

Hindu soul aimed at equality not only between human beings, but also equality amongst all beings. Therefore Hindustan preached and practised that strained water be given for horses and even corn-throwning centres be opened in the oceans so that big fish should not swallow little ones. But while Buddhism was at its meridian, the Huns and the Scythians came down like an avalanche upon India and trampled under their feet Hindu families, their thrones, and their Gods. Pointing this to the Hindus, Savarkar said that the Holy land of their love was devastated and sacked by hoards of barbarians, so inferior to them in language, religion, philosophy, mercy and all the soft and human attributes of man and God;—but superior to them in strength alone—strength that summed up its creed, in two words—Fire and Sword! In trying to kill killing India got killed and at last found that palm leaves at times are too fragile for steel. But during the days of Vikramaditya and Shalivahan valour accomplished what formulas had failed to do. Therefore, Savarkar concluded: "We denounce the doctrine of absolute non-violence not because we are less saintly, but because we are more sensible!" The truth of this doctrine was demonstrated later on in practice by the champions of the doctrine of non-violence in the measures adopted by them in Hyderabad, Kashmir and elsewhere.

Savarkar was one with great thinkers of the world. The controversy between the cult of absolute non-violence and the principle of relative non-violence is age-long. All the saviours of humanity have supported the principle of relative non-violence. In Hindustan, Manu's immortal epigraphic command that an aggressor must be killed instantly, stands out distinctly. The great Shakespeare lays down that arms are fair when the intent of bearing them is just. Thomas Paine denounced the

Quaker cult during the American War of Independence. "I am thus for a quaker," said Paine, "that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms and settle matters by negotiation, but unless the whole world wills, the matter ends and I take my musket and thank heaven He has put it in my power. . . . We live not in a world of angels. The reign of satan is not ended, neither can we expect to be defended by miracles." At another time he declared: "Wherefore, if you really preach from conscience and mean not to make a political hobby-horse of your religion, convince the world thereby proclaiming your doctrine to our enemies for they likewise bear arms. . . . Preach repentance to your king and warn him of eternal ruin . . . ye would not spend your invectives against the injured and insulted only, but like faithful ministers, cry aloud and spare none."[24] President Masaryk asked Tolstoy, the Russian apostle of the doctrine of absolute non-violence, why should a peace-loving man void of evil intent be slain and not the man of evil purpose who killed.

Savarkar in his immortal work *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, observed: "When Humanity will reach the goal of universal justice, of ultimate beatitude, when the millennium preached by the incarnations, by the Messiahs, and by religious preachers will be an accomplished fact on earth, when the resignation taught by Christ in the glorious words 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also' will be impracticable—because, there will be no one to hit on the right cheek, in such a divine age, if anyone revolts, if anyone sheds a drop of blood, if anyone even whispers the word revenge, then at once, the sinner by this act, by his very utterance, would be eternally damned. For, when truth reigns in every heart, revolt must be a heinous sin. When everyone abhors killing, to shed a drop of blood must be a sin."[25]

Savarkar continued in his rational approach to this problem: "But so long as that divine age has not arrived, so long as the highly auspicious end remains only in the lines of saintly poets and in the prophecies of the divinely inspired, and so long as, even to make that state of universal justice possible, the human mind has to be busy eradicating sinful and aggressive

[24] Watts & Co., *Some of Paine's Masterpieces*, pp. 35-36.
[25] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 273.

tendencies, so long, rebellion, bloodshed and revenge cannot be purely sinful." [26]

Savarkar believed that revolt, bloodshed and revenge had often been instruments created by nature to root out injustice and introduce an era of justice. He proceeded: "And when justice uses these terrible means for her salvation, the blame of it does not lie on justice but on the preceding cruel injustice, the power and insolence of which called forth the means. We do not hold the justice which gives the death sentence responsible for bloodshed, but rather the injustice which is taken to the gallows." Savarkar brilliantly concluded: "Therefore the sword of Brutus is holy. Therefore, the *Waghanakh* of Shivaji is sacred. Therefore, the bloodshed in the revolutions in Italy is of fair fame. Therefore, the beheading of Charles I is a just deed. Therefore, the arrow of William Tell is divine. And the sin of brutality falls heavily on the heads of those who committed the provoking injustice." [27]

Savarkar believed that had the world no fear of revolt, bloodshed and revenge, the earth would have bent under the devil-dance of unchecked robbery and oppression. "If oppression were to be secure," he observed, "from the fear that Nature would, sooner or later, create the avenger of temporary injustice, the whole world would have swarmed today with Tsars and Robbers! But because every Hiranyakashipu has his Narasimha; because every Dushshasana has his Bheema; because every evil-doer has his avenger, there is still some hope in the heart of the world that injustice cannot last." [28]

But in India when Savarkar was passing his days in internment her political leaders had made a hobby-horse of the doctrine of non-violence and offered their advice to the insulted, enslaved and the butchered Hindus, supporting indirectly Nietzsche who believed that the resignation in Christianity was meant for the defeated and the downtrodden. In no other enslaved country humbled to dust, the doctrine of absolute non-violence was discussed in so dry, dull, futile and longwinded a manner as was done on the advent of Gandhian leadership in India. This futile discussion and reiteration of this doctrine

[26] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 273.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 274.
[28] *Ibid.*

bankrupted the wit, baffled the brains, benumbed the revolutionary fervour, and seduced the hearts of the Hindus, softening their limbs and stiffening the bones of the enemies. Leader after leader blew hot and cold in the same breath while dealing with this doctrine. Some changed sides, abjured their faith, revoked their statements, and condemned their former patriotism and even previous life.

Sarojini Naidu, who sang of the Gandhian doctrine in her later life, had shouted from the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916: "It may seem a kind of paradox that I should be asked to raise my voice on behalf of the disinherited manhood of the country, but it is suitable that I, who represent the other sex, that is, the mothers of the men whom we wish to make men and not emasculated machines, should raise a voice on behalf of the future mothers of India to demand that the birth right of their sons should be given back to them, so that tomorrow's India may be once more worthy of its yesterday. . . . The refusal of the privilege, that gifted privilege and inalienable right to carry arms, is to insult the very core of their valiant manhood!" [29]

Such was the realistic tone of politics of Tilak's India. But these very leaders and patriots like Sarojini Naidu became parrots and perched on the cult of absolute non-violence of Gandhism and made a paradox of their politics by thrusting down the throats of youths the opiates of absolute non-violence in season and out of season. The effect was tremendous and terrible. For a time the revolutionary urge cooled down in the country to a great extent, and people lost even the sense of resisting crime and aggression and subsequently the emasculated Hindu nation fell an easy prey to the organized and furious Muslim violence, and was torn to pieces. The Gandhian lambs resolved to lead a vegetable life, but the wolves were not concerned with their pious resolution. It was Savarkar alone who raised his mighty voice against this suicidal doctrine and applied most of his herculean energy to the task of warning the leaders and the Hindus against the impending holocaust that was soon to overtake them. Savarkar's was a peculiar Maharashtrian approach. Even the great Maharashtrian saint,

[29] G. A. Natesan & Co., *Sarojini's Speeches & Writings*, p. 78.

Tukaram, sings in a fit of practical righteousness: "Kill the scorpion, the despiser of the worship of God, if it enters the shrine; give tit for tat. No mercy to the wicked."

Revolutions: Why and How

Savarkar's thoughts on the how and why of a revolution are noteworthy.

"A revolution is evolution in leaps."

"Revolutions are not regulated by fixed laws. They are not accurately working machines like clocks and watches. They have their own way of marching. They can only be regulated by a general principle; but they brush away minor rules by their very shock. Revolution has only one watchword—'Dash on!' All sorts of new and unthought of circumstances might arise during its progress; but one must stop, one must overcome them and press forward." [30]

"There is no other life-killing poison to a revolution than indecision. The sooner and the more sudden the spreading of a revolution, the greater are its chances of success. If delay is made after the first start and breathing time is given, the enemy gets time to guard himself; those who rise prematurely lose confidence, when they see no one joining them; and a clever enemy, profiting by the past, puts obstacles in the way of those who want to rise later. Therefore, to give the enemy time between the first rising and the spreading of a revolution is always harmful to the revolution." [31]

"The destruction of individuals, of society and of Kingdoms is caused as much by anarchy as by foreign rule, as much by the absence of any bond as the presence of cruel bonds. If any revolution forgets this sociological truth it generally kills itself in the end. . . . That revolution which destroys injustice and oppression is holy. But when a revolution roots out one kind of injustice and oppression and plants, at the same moment, the seeds of another kind, it becomes at once unholy and the seeds of destruction accompanying that sin soon put an end to its life. . . . The moment the foreign power is destroyed, in order to guard the country from the evils of anarchy, a con-

[30] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 159.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

stitution liked by the majority of the people should be at once established and that constitution should be obeyed with reverence by all. In short, the rule should be revolution outside and constitution within, chaos outside and cosmos within, sword outside and law within." [32]

Economic Problem

As regards the economic problem, Savarkar's approach was at once realistic and nationalistic. Savarkar was not an orthodox Hindu, so also he was not a believer in bookish and orthodox socialism. He was not one with Manu or Marx. According to him man has got a stomach, but stomach is not the man. The Christian maxim that man does not live by bread alone appealed to him. Savarkar believed in the spiritual truth that racial, cultural, national and several other aspects also go to constitute the human nature. Therefore, he believed that the attempt to interpret all human history and human activities in economical terms alone was altogether one-sided and amounted to maintaining that man has no other urge in him to live but hunger.

Savarkarian outlook on life held that besides hunger—the problem of bread—man has other appetites as fundamental as that, sensual, intellectual, sentimental, some national, some acquired, some personal, some social, and his Being is complex; so also is his history. Savarkarism considered that the solution suggested to the effect that the economical community of interests provides the only and the best solvent of all religious, racial, national and other antipathies that divide mankind in the world was as superficial as simple. The fact that in Europe, Savarkar asserted, the very races and nations wherein the prophets of this school arose and preached their doctrines and where giant efforts were made to revolutionize all human institutions and recast them into this economical mould alone; religious, racial and national differences were assuming formidable proportions and were persisting to assert themselves in Germany, Italy, France, Poland, England, Spain, etc. in spite of centuries of the most intense propaganda to insist on an economical community of interest, was enough to prove that no nation could

[32] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, pp. 348-49.

altogether eliminate all religious, racial or national factors at a stroke, at a thought! *

Those who advanced the easy argument 'If but you persuade all to unite on the economic plane and to forget every other superstitious difference as the racial, cultural, etc.' forget themselves, argued Savarkar, that the very 'but' in their argument rebuts the practical utility at any rate, apart from its theoretical soundness. Consequently he warned the Hindus that they must in no case delude themselves with the belief that the economic programme alone would ever suffice to solve all cultural, racial and national dangers that threatened them throughout India. Taking into consideration the special circumstances prevailing in India and the stage of social progress, he thought, the only school of economics which would suit our requirements in the immediate future was the school of Nationalistic economy. He styled his economic policy the national co-ordination of class interests. This immediate programme of national co-ordination of class interests was being practised in free India by leaders like Pandit Nehru who were extolled to the skies for many years in the past as super Socialists.

* * *

Savarkar's India

In short, under the set of circumstances prevailing in India and in the context of the present world set-up, the following ideal is to be realized in the immediate future.

I

(*a*) In Savarkar's India all citizens would have equal rights and obligations irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion provided they avow and owe an exclusive and devoted allegiance to the State.

(*b*) All minorities would be given effective safeguards to protect their language, religion, culture, etc. but none of them would be allowed to create a State within a State or to encroach upon the legitimate rights of the majority.

* *Note.*—For quotations cited above without references, please refer to Savarkar's Presidential Addresses at Ahmedabad (Karnavati), Nagpur, Calcutta and Madura.

(*c*) The fundamental rights of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, of worship, of association, etc. would be enjoyed by all citizens alike; whatever restrictions would be imposed on them in the interest of the public peace and order or national emergency would not be based on any religious or racial considerations alone but common national grounds.

(*d*) One man one vote would be the general rule irrespective of caste, creed, race, or religion.

(*e*) There would be joint electorates.

(*f*) Services would go by merit alone.

(*g*) Primary Education will be free and compulsory.

(*h*) Every minority would have separate schools to train their children in their own tongue; their religious and cultural institutions would receive Government help also for these, but always in proportion to the taxes they pay into the common exchequer.

(*i*) The residuary powers would be vested in the Central Government.

(*j*) Nagari would be the national script, Hindi, the *lingua franca* and Sanskrit, the *Devabhasha* of India.

II

(1) People would first of all welcome the machine age. The handicrafts would, of course, have their place and encouragement. But national production would be on the biggest possible machine scale.

(2) As the peasantry and the working classes form literally the chief source of national wealth, health, and strength, every effort would be made to reinvigorate them and the villages which are their cradle. Peasants and labourers would be enabled to have their share in the distribution of wealth to such an extent as would enable them not only to live with a bare margin of existence, but with the average scale of a comfortable life free from wants. Nevertheless, it would be remembered that they being a part and parcel of the nation as a whole, would share common obligations and responsibilities and therefore would only receive their share in such a way as would be

consistent with the general development and security of national industry, manufacture and wealth in general.

(3) As the national capital is under the present circumstances mainly individual and indispensable for the development of national industries and manufactures, it would also receive due encouragement and recompense.

(4) The interests of both the capital and labour would be subordinated to the requirements of the nation as a whole.

(5) If an industry is flourishing, the profits would be shared in a *large* portion by the labourers. But on the contrary, if it is a losing concern, not only the capitalist, but to a certain extent even the labourers would have to remain satisfied with diminishing returns so that the National Industry as such would not altogether be undermined by the over-bearing attitude of the selfish class interests of either the capitalists or the workers.

(6) Every step would be taken by the State to protect national industries against foreign competition.

(7) The key industries or manufactures and such other items would be altogether nationalised if the National Government could afford to do so and could conduct them more efficiently than private enterprise.

(8) The same principle would apply to agriculture. Government would take over the land and introduce State cultivation if it could serve to train up the peasant class as a whole with the use of big machines and would cultivate on a large and scientific scale.

(9) All strikes and lockouts which are obviously meant or inevitably tend to undermine and cripple national industries or production in general or are calculated to weaken the economic strength of the nation as a whole would be referred to State arbitration and settled or in serious cases quelled.

(10) Private property would be in general held inviolate. In no case there would be on the part of the State any expropriation of such property without reasonable recompense.

Thus Savarkar's India would be a democratic State in which the countrymen belonging to different religions, sects or races would be treated with perfect equality and none would be allowed to dominate others or would be deprived of his just

and equal rights of free citizenship, so long as every one discharges the common obligation which one owes to the State as a whole.

Hindustan, the Motherland and Holyland of the Hindus, from the Indus to the Seas, would be an organic undivided State. The appellation of this Bharat Bhoomi would remain as Bharat or Hindustan.

In Savarkar's India none would dare convert Hindus by fraud or force. Everywhere the Indians would be respected as citizens of a great nation. In that India relative non-violence would be regarded as a virtue.

The Hindus would be a casteless society, a consolidated, modernised and up-to-date nation. Their marriage customs would be secularised and voluntary inter-caste marriages would be freely performed. Hindu corpses would be burnt in electric crematorium.

In Savarkar's India science would lead all material progress and things and would annihilate superstitions. There would be a *total* liquidation of landlordism.[33] All the land would belong to the State by and by. All key industries would be nationalized. Agriculture would be mechanized. India would be self-sufficient in respect of food, clothes, shelter, and defence.

Savarkar's India would have unbounded faith in a World Commonwealth as his political philosophy conceives that the Earth is the Common Motherland and humanism the patriotism of man, but his India would not go under during the process which leads to the welding of humanity into a World Commonwealth. In international politics Savarkar's India would help to build world peace and prosperity.

Savarkar's philosophy finds full expression in the Flag he has designed for the Hindus. It bears the symbol of *Kundalini* with the *Omkar* and *Kripan*.

Hindus have perfected the science of yoga. According to Savarkar, it is the highest blessing on human life; it is the contribution of the Hindus to mankind. This yoga means full development of man's internal powers. The symbol of that power is *Kundalini*. To attain the wonderfully supersensuous joy through the awakened *Kundalini* is, Savarkar opines, the

[33] When Savarkar discussed this chapter with the author he asked him to include it.

highest ideal of men, be he a Hindu or a non-Hindu. In short, the *Kundalini* * represents all the ultimate aspirations, feelings and powers of mankind. The *Kundalini* represents yoga, the highest spiritual attainment while the *Kripan* represents *Bhoga, Abhyudaya,* the worldly advancement. The red-orchard colour of the Flag indicates renunciation-*Tyaga*. And there is no renunciation without Yoga and *Kshema*-protection. Therefore the *Kripan* is for the *Yoga Kshema.*

The *Omkar* is the sacred symbol of the great One with Whom the liberated souls become one in the highest state of *Nihshreyas*-spiritual bliss.

It seems Savarkar was, with the exception of Aurobindo Ghose, the only first rate Indian leader who had experienced this super-sensuous joy. He had practised this yoga while in the Cellular Jail of the Andamans. So Savarkar was the only political philosopher who chose *Kundalini* on the Flag. The Swastik was added to the Flag later on by the Hindu Mahasabha when it accepted the Flag. Originally it was not there.

* At the base of the spinal cord (in *muladhar-chakra*) there is a marvellous power which is coiled up. It is called *Kundalini*.

CHAPTER 15

Attacks Gandhi and Jinnah

SAVARKAR'S main appeal to the Hindus was that they should elect only those Hindus, who could act openly, publicly and boldly as advocates of the Hindu Nation. The policy of the Congress party in power and in politics was entirely and grossly pro-Muslim. It encouraged the Muslims to be more and more communal, fanatical and overbearing. The actions of the Congress party were more anti-Hindu than their policy on paper, and they trampled upon even the most legitimate national claims and interests of the Hindus. One Congress Ministry asked the Hindus not to play any music whatsoever during the Moharam days. The Congress mutilated the Bande Mataram cowardly. In their zest to plead that their nationalism was above suspicion, they vied with one another to prove to the Muslims that the Congressite Ministries had always sacrificed Hindu interests, pandered to the Muslim prejudices and loaded the latter with weightages, posts and positions at the cost of the interests of the national majority. But the more the Congress fawned, the more the Muslims pretended to be oppressed and grew fanatic.

Savarkar therefore unscathingly attacked this unjust and unpatriotic, servile, senile and placating attitude on the part of Congressmen. To Savarkar trampling the legitimate and just rights of the national majority and favouring others with undue weightages was perverse communalism, false and destructive nationalism. Not that he was not for a fair compromise with the Muslims on a true national basis. He had appreciated the right step taken by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, in regard to the Shahid Gunj affair and said that it was wise for them all to bury the hatchet. Savarkar publicly appreciated the benevolent gestures shown by the Shias in Lucknow regarding the slaughter of cows and the playing of Music on public roads; and expressed the hope that if all non-

Hindus would adopt such an honourable, radical and accommodating formula of unity, that kind of mutual co-operation would develop into a common nationality, and common national State cemented with patriotic ties.

Two guiding principles inspired Savarkar through his political career; they were the Independence and the Indivisibility of India. These were the articles of faith with Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha. To Savarkar from the Indus to the Seas, India was one and indivisible. In his presidential address at the Hindu Mahasabha session at Ahmedabad in 1937, he stated that the very words, Portuguese India and French India sounded preposterous and insulting to us, and declared that the Hindustan of tomorrow must be one and indivisible, not only a united, but a unitarian nation from Kashmir to Rameshwar, from Sind to Assam. He believed that the Independence of India was in sight; but he sensed the danger to the integrity of India from the vacillating, servile, deceptive, and short-sighted lead and policy of the Congress in respect of the blank cheque offers, the Communal Award, the Simon Commission, the Census, the national script, the *lingua franca* and the national anthem.

And as foretold by Savarkar the anti-national forces through the Muslim League came out with a demand for dividing India into separate independent States, and the time for struggling against and suppressing the forces of vivisection came. The Muslim League, at its Lahore session in March 1940, declared "that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'."

The Congress had till then capitulated to the Muslim League in its communal demands. So Savarkar naturally suspected that it would yield to the demand for Pakistan. He, therefore, declared that a vote for the Congress was a vote for Pakistan and sounded a warning to the whole nation in April 1940: "A number of Congress leaders of eminence are very likely to go a long way in acquiescing even in this notorious demand of the Muslims to break up the unity and integrity of India and the Indian State, if the Hindus do not repudiate in time the claim of the Congress to speak on behalf of Hindudom as a whole."

But when a year after Savarkar told his audience at Lucknow

that there was a move for compromise on the question of Pakistan among the Congress High Command, the purblind Congress press discredited Savarkar for having suspected the peerless patriotism of their holy fathers, and declared with all the force at their command that Savarkar's assertion was an untruth, although subsequently Congress politics literally bore out Savarkar's assertions.

Savarkar never tolerated any unjust or unpatriotic political demands made overtly or covertly by the Indian minorities. When the Azad Muslim Conference, held at Delhi in April 1940, opposed the proposal of the vivisection of India, but resolved that the question of the nature and number of the safeguards must be dictated by the minorities themselves, Savarkar appreciated the first part, but denounced the latter part of the resolution as a demand for the pound of flesh. Savarkar believed that patriots fight for their Motherland they love as patriots, and not as mercenaries demanding their pound of flesh. When Rajaji came out with his sporting offer promising the Muslim League Pakistan if they joined a National Government, Savarkar replied indignantly that it was curious to see that "even the Congressite leaders like Rajaji should fail to perceive that the two terms 'Pakistan' and an 'Indian National Government' were in themselves self-contradictory and self-destructive and how typical it was of the Congressite conception of national unity that such eminent Congress leaders like Rajaji should have given an open assurance to the Muslims regarding Pakistan long before the British Government even dared to do so. The sportive offers of Rajaji were becoming as much a public nuisance as the inner voices of Gandhi were wont to be."

Not less infuriated was Savarkar by an article of Gandhi in the *Harijan* dated the 13th October 1940, wherein Gandhi stated that in case the British power was overthrown as a result of the war and an internal anarchy set in, "the strongest power in the land would hold sway over all India and this may be Hyderabad for aught I know. All other big and petty chiefs will ultimately succumb to the strongest power of the Nizam who will be the emperor of India." Gandhi also said in the article: "If you ask me in advance, I would face anarchy to foreign orderly rule whether British or any other. I would unhesitatingly plump for anarchy, say, the rule of the Nizam

supported by the chiefs becoming feudatory to him or supported by the border Muslim tribes. In my estimation, it will be cent per cent domestic. It will be Home Rule, though far, far from self-rule or Swaraj."

Savarkar replied [1] that Gandhi knew as little of Indian history as of Hebrew and stated that though the rule of an Allauddin or an Aurangzeb was also a cent per cent domestic rule, the Hindus detested it as veritable hell and added that any rule of Muslims in future would be similarly hated and overthrown by a new Shivaji, a Bajirao or a Ranjit. As for the Nizam, Savarkar reminded him of the fate of King Amanulla of Afghanistan. How anti-democratic and politically false was the spirit of Gandhi's article was well demonstrated eight years later by his disciple Sardar Patel, who attacked Hyderabad State and smashed the Nizam's ambitious role and his tyrannical un-domestic rule, vindicating the correct stand taken by Savarkar in regard to the Hyderabad State in 1939 when he challenged Nizam's autocracy and suzerainty.

After such a strenuous lightning and whirlwind propaganda from the northern to the southern ends of Hindustan, Savarkar's health began to deteriorate. He was down with fever with an attack of sciatica for over three months. The whole burden of the party, of propaganda, of co-operation, of correspondence, and of organization rested on him. The wonder was that a frail frame having gone through the ordeals of an unusually long torturous incarceration and rigorous hard prison life in the Andamans could stand such a mighty task! He was the only great leader, besides the two great Congress leaders Gandhi and Nehru, who could pour out political energy and vibrate every corner of India, but the hardships Savarkar suffered were incomparable. Savarkar had to struggle against heavy odds, against the greatest political organization in India, had to create his party funds and leaders, and had to suffer inordinately for want of press. The sciatic pain in his leg lingered for a long time.

In the last week of December 1940, the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Madura. Savarkar was unanimously elected president by all Provincial Hindu Sabhas

[1] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 239-58.

despite his ill-health and his repeated appeals to the contrary. He reached Madura by a special train with more than 250 delegates from Maharashtra. He was brought to the dais in a chair. In his address he dealt with the war situation and the doctrine of non-violence. Those were the days of Individual Civil Disobedience Movement started by the Congress. Some Mahasabhaites felt an itch for some sort of direct action against Government, and to that end a resolution was passed during the session against Savarkar's will. To Savarkar courting jail alone was no patriotism. He wanted Hindu youths to give impetus to the militarisation movement, and get themselves 'reanimated and reborn' into a martial race.

Savarkar presided over the Centenary celebrations of the Public Library of Nasik on January 19, 1941, and, after making a fitting speech in memory of poet Govind, his former colleague, he unveiled his statue. The Trimbak Municipality also gave him an address.

* * *

Towards the middle of March 1941, there was a move in the Liberal Circles to solve the deadlock in their own way. They held a Non-Party Conference on March 13 and 14, 1941, at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay. The Convener of the conference was the late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It may be noted here that a few days before this Gandhi had called on the ailing knight at his residence in Allahabad. Sir Tej was also in correspondence with Gandhi, and Dr. Jayakar had seen Savarkar in the preceding month. Intellectual and legal luminaries of India attended the Conference. Prominent among those who attended the conference were Sir Jagdish Prasad, Sir Nripendranath Sirkar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Loknayak Aney, Dr. Moonje, Pandit Kunzru, Dr. Jayakar, Savarkar and Dr. Mookerjee.

The conference was about to break up since some of the leaders were nervous about the representative character of the conference. At such a crucial moment Sir Tej requested Savarkar to speak on the point. Addressing the conference, Savarkar said that they had struck a note in the political history of the country. They had proved that the various parties in India could meet on the basis of a common programme though

they had allegiance to different ideologies. As president of the Hindu Mahasabha, he asserted his belief in India's right to absolute political independence; but although some of them in the conference were not prepared to go so far with him, he did not see why they should not travel together so long as they had a common journey. Thus by his calm and convincing arguments he gave a turn to the conference.

The conference then set to work and demanded Provisional National Government for India. And shrewd journalists said that the hand of a Kalidas was behind the resolution. At the conclusion of the conference Sir Tej expressed openly his gratitude to Savarkar and acknowledged that Savarkar's valuable guidance and spirit saved the conference from a debacle. It was at this conference that the Liberal leaders were indelibly impressed by Savarkar's intellectual and persuasive powers and rational and realistic approach to the political problems. About this time Srinivas Sastri happened to meet Savarkar. Later, while speaking at the twenty-third session of the National Liberal Federation held at Madras, Sastri referred to a meeting with Savarkar at Bombay and said that the speaker was not well acquainted with Savarkar and had met him only once at one of those infructuous, pacificatory teas, organized by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. On that occasion the speaker had expected to see a gentleman perverse, obstinate and loud, but found a thin looking, quiet Maharashtra chap, speaking slowly and deliberately, seldom raising his voice and always apparently in full possession of his mind and knowing exactly what he wanted. . . . Sastri further said that he at once conceived a great admiration for the man. Thus at one more political rally Savarkar captivated the intellectual luminaries and lofty brains of India by his reason, intellect and the uncommon range and quality of his intellectual and argumentative powers.

The reaction of Jinnah to this Non-Party Conference was notable. From Bangalore he declared that the conference was engineered by the agents of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, referred to the Bombay Non-Party Conference in his speech in the House of Commons in April 1941, and said that the conference had not been able to secure any kind of agreement on the scheme. Replying to the charges levelled by Jinnah and Amery, in a

statement Sir Tej stated that in his political life he had never been trapped by anybody and added: "I was more than gratified that men like Savarkar and Dr. Moonje, who were present at the conference, played the game and accepted the resolution. They were men of strong party convictions and yet, for the sake of settlement, they subordinated their party feelings to the common goal we had in view." [2] Sapru soon saw the Viceroy and was then "thinking, according to the Nainital correspondent of the *Statesman*, of a joint meeting of Gandhi, Savarkar and Jinnah or a small conference including these three leaders, convened by some persons of influence outside the League and the Congress." [3]

The Congress party had adopted a strange policy towards the Census. Savarkar believed then that for at least ten years to come, all constitutional progress and matters regarding public services, representation in legislatures, etc. would necessarily be indexed or determined by the figures and information registered in the Census of 1941. He, therefore, condemned the senseless policy of the Congress party in boycotting the Census and said that the Congress policy would hit the Hindus hard.

The numerical strength recorded in the Census of 1941 in respect of the Hindus and Muslims was going to affect political discussions in India as had the Census of 1931 affected the Act of 1935. On the eve of the Census of 1941 Savarkar issued a fervent public appeal to all Hindus including the Bhils, Santhals and all Animists to get themselves correctly enumerated. Savarkar announced: "Hindus, wake up; the hour of the Census strikes." With a great hope and sense of duty, he issued instructions to all District and Provincial Hindu Sabhas to co-operate with the Census authorities, to watch vigilantly the operation, approach the authorities and secure an assurance from Government that Muslim women's number would be scrutinized by Christian and Anglo-Indian lady Supervisors. In a special appeal, Savarkar exhorted the Arya Samajists, Lingayats, Jains and Sikhs that they might show their religion as Vaidic, Lingayat, Jain, Sikh, but they should at least see that they were recorded as Arya (Hindu), Lingayat (Hindu), Jain (Hindu), and

[2] The *Mahratta*, 2 May 1941.
[3] *Ibid.*, 9 May. 1941.

Sikh (Hindu) as their religions were of Indian origin, and as they regarded India as their Fatherland and Holyland.

The Congressmen boycotted the Census as they did in 1921 and 1931 and the General Secretary of the Congress, J. B. Kripalani, issued a statement on the eve of the Census of 1941 to the effect that the Congress refused to have anything to do with the Census as it was a communal question. Savarkar retorted that if it was so, how did the Congress beg for votes at the doors of the communal electorates at the time of elections? Not only that, they even filled in their own castes and religion in the nomination papers. Moreover, it was very strange that these very Congressmen gave recognition to the numerical strength of the Muslims while deciding the political questions of India.

The Congress-minded Hindus respected the Congress mandate and suffered terribly. No wonder then that the Census, which showed Hindus to form 53 per cent in the Punjab in 1881, showed their percentage to be 49 in 1921, 48 in 1931 and 47 in 1941 and simultaneously recorded a rise in the population of the Muslims during the periods from 47 per cent to 53 in the Punjab. In Assam, thirty years ago, the Muslim percentage was 26; in 1931 it rose to 31 and in 1941 to 33.7; and Bengal, which had already suffered a great loss in the numerical strength of the Hindus in the Census on the previous two occasions and had reaped the fruits in the form of the Communal Award, was at last declared in 1941 a Muslim majority province. What the incorrect Census had done to the Bengal Hindus was the result of the criminal negligence of their top-most Hindu leaders, foremost newspapers and illustrious personalities towards the solidarity and correct recording of the Hindu population under the ruinous influence of the Congress. The *Modern Review* in its issues of June and November 1941 disclosed the mischief played by the Bengal Muslim League Ministry in the Census affair, avowing that the Muslims were not in a majority in Bengal and that many Hindus especially the tribesmen numbering about 14 per cent remained unenumerated.

Students of history and politics may note that these very Congressmen who boycotted the Census of 1931 took the figures of the Muslim population as correct while discussing and deter-

mining the question of communal weightages, etc. in 1931. It was they who boycotted the Census of 1941 and yet again conducted later on their negotiations with Jinnah and the British Cabinet Mission for determining the issue of Pakistan on the basis of these very census figures the procedure and reliability of which was so doubtful.

* * *

Jinnah denounced the Hindu Mahasabha in his presidential address at the Madras session of the Muslim League held in April 1941 as an absolutely incorrigible and hopeless body, and threatened that if the British Government failed to create an independent group of Pakistan States, others would come and do it. Savarkar accepted Jinnah's remarks about the Hindu Mahasabha as an unalloyed tribute to the unalloyed patriotism of the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked the Congress party to read with open eyes the writing on the wall—the declaration of Pakistan—and warned them not to deceive themselves and to delude the masses by misreading and misunderstanding the demands of the Muslim League.

In his reply to Jinnah, Savarkar further retorted that if the State of the Croats was an ideal and a prototype of his Pakistan, he asked Jinnah to refer to history about the fate of the Croats, the Serbs and the Slavs, who had been victims of larger States. As for the threat from outside forces, Savarkar replied that the Pan-Islamic alliance would be resisted by a Hindu-Buddhistic alliance from Jammu to Japan and he warned Jinnah: "Then again, such parasite growths of the Pakistan type are no new experience to Hindudom. During the course of the last five thousand years of its continuous growth and consolidation, this gigantic Octopus of Hindudom has clutched and crushed within the formidable grip of its mighty arms and absorbed a number of Shakastans, Hunastans, and the Marathas swallowed and gulped down your very Mogul Empire entirely before it knew what was happening." "The same fate," asserted Savarkar vehemently, "shall these your petty parasites of your Pakistan States meet after a miserable existence for a time, even if they ever come into existence." He then concluded his historical reply to Jinnah, "History avers to the ever-abiding truth that in India:

'Pakistans may come and Pakistans may go
But Hindustan goes on for ever.'

Savarkar then put forth his formula for the formation of a united and powerful Indian State. He said: "There is, consequently, only one way for the Indian Moslems to secure their safety, peace and prosperity as a community in India; and that is to get themselves incorporated wholeheartedly and loyally into an Indian Nation which can only be done on the following basic principles: (1) Independence of India and Indivisibility of India as a Nation and State. (2) Representation strictly in proportion to the population strength. (3) Public Services to go by merit alone, and (4) the fundamental rights of freedom of worship, language, script, etc. guaranteed to all citizens alike."

After putting forth the basic principles for an honourable Hindu-Muslim unity and the formation of the Indian State, Savarkar reiterated his famous formula, which was the guiding star of self-respecting and rising nation: "On these terms and on these terms alone, if they come, with them, if they do not without them; but if they oppose, in spite of them, the Hindus are determined to continue the good fight for the freedom and integrity of Hindustan." [4]

Numerous meetings were held in the last week of May 1941, all over India to celebrate Savarkar's 59th birthday. When hundreds of persons and institutions demanded a message, Savarkar expressed his gratitude for the love of his countrymen and said: "It was but a forgetful fit of destiny, a freak of fate, that enables me today to be in my Home Land on my 59th birthday and to receive the kindest felicitations from my nation, instead of being in the cell of the Andamanese prison under lock and key on my 75th birthday as ordered and foretold by the British judges and jailors. And yet who knows what has the political future still in reserve!" [5] His birthday message was: "Hinduise all politics and militarise Hindudom." [6]

In the meantime, the direct action resolution was discussed by the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha at Nagpur and its operation was finally postponed on June 15, 1941, by the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha which met

[4] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 359-75.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 423.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

at Calcutta. Savarkar, who bothered not so much whether Democracy won World War II or Fascism won it and who wanted to fly at the throat of Britain, hesitated at this juncture to take action against Britain while she was in peril. When the direct action resolution came up for discussion, he much to the pleasant surprise of men like Sir Manmanath Mookerjee, said that revision also meant making no change if it was observed that the policy under review was correct. This was merely legal sophistry, a sort of escapism.

On this occasion of his visit to Calcutta, Savarkar performed the ceremony of laying the slab of the Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial in the Asutosh Hall. The Kali Mandir priests presented an address to Savarkar.

Then came the first breach in the stronghold of the Central citadel of the British Bureaucracy. Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy of India, reshuffled his Executive Council on July 21, 1941, making appointments of seven Indians. Savarkar opined that the change was a step in the right direction if it was to pave the way for further and rapid development of constitutional progress. He stated that the bitterness felt by patriotic parties in India could not be dissipated unless Britain granted India, if not full independence, at least equal partnership in the Indo-British Commonwealth.

In the wake of these political changes, a second session of the Sapru Conference was again held at Poona on July 26, 1941, wherein Savarkar got the United India resolution passed by the conference. At the morning sitting of the session on that day Sir Mirza Ismail was present, but he was conspicuously absent when the United India resolution came up for discussion in the evening. Savarkar, therefore, pertinently inquired of Sir Tej the whereabouts of his trusted Ismail and Sir Tej with a smile replied that it was true that Sir Mirza Ismail had not turned up as promised. Was the absence of a nationalist Muslim inexplicable at the time of such an important resolution?

Savarkar then left for Sangli accompanied by N. C. Kelkar, where he was given a great ovation and addresses of welcome, and where he addressed several meetings. Overcome with Savarkar's inspiring message, tremendous influence and powerful oratory which he likened to the power of radium, Kelkar wrote an editorial in the *Kesari* under his signature wherein

he sent forth a forceful appeal asking the Mahasabhaites and the Tilakites to stand by Savarkar irrevocably. On his return Savarkar addressed a mammoth meeting before Shaniwarwada at Poona on the impending calamity, Pakistan.

It did not escape the alert eyes of Savarkar that the Viceroy had not done justice to the claims of the Sikhs and the Depressed Classes and therefore he wired to the Viceroy urging him to nominate a Sikh leader on the Executive Council. The non-inclusion of a Depressed Class representative in the Executive Council was rightly resented by Dr. Ambedkar. Savarkar immediately supported the strong protest which Dr. Ambedkar had made in claiming a seat on the Viceregal Executive Council and the Mahasabha President said in his wire to the Viceroy that "the British Government could find no more capable a gentleman to fill that post than Dr. Ambedkar himself."

* * *

It was the belief of Savarkar that no belligerent nation in World War II was actuated by moral or altruistic considerations. He was far from wrong. Russia, the Socialists world over believed, was born to build up a new social order on the basis of peace and freedom. Under the pretext of her own security she gulped down the national freedom of Finland on March 12, 1940, and that of Estonia, Luthiania and Latvia in July 1940.

The U.S.A. also would not translate her slogans of democracy into action by forcing a democratic rule in India. To underline this truth Savarkar sent a cable on August 20, 1941, to the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, urging him to declare explicitly whether the Atlantic Charter which was announced by Churchill and Roosevelt on August 14, 1941, covered the case of India or not and whether America guaranteed the full political freedom of India within a year after the end of the war. Savarkar further asked President Roosevelt: "If America fails to do that, India cannot but construe this declaration as another stunt like the War aims of the last Anglo-German War, meant only to camouflage the Imperialistic aggressions of those who have empires against those who have them not or are out to win them!"

This was a direct hit aimed at President Roosevelt's pious

statement in which he declared to keep ablaze the flames of human liberty, reason, democracy and fair play.

This cable was broadcast throughout the world, especially in Britain, America, Germany, India, and other belligerent nations. Its implied assertion was fully exploited by Hitler's German propaganda to expose the hollowness of the allied professions of love for democracy! Mr. Churchill, the War-time Prime Minister of Britain, was in the end compelled to tear off with his own hand the cover of vague platitudes and pious protestations. Churchill declared with his usual blunt candour that the Atlantic Charter applied only to those countries which were then under the Nazi yoke. Savarkar did not leave the matter there. He again cabled to President Roosevelt on September 22, 1941, and asked the President of the great Republic whether he dared contradict Churchill's interpretation or played a second fiddle to Churchill's dictation by words or silence. President Roosevelt in fact kept silent on Savarkar's pointed question. It was a straight hit that exposed the altruistic motives of the Allies. This Savarkarian trap for the American President was described by the *Modern Review* as a statecraft.

A similar cable Savarkar had sent on April 23, 1939, to President Roosevelt, who had sent forth an appeal to Herr Hitler to ward off the impending colossal danger to the civilization. In this cable Savarkar had appealed to the American President: "If your note to Hitler is actuated by disinterested human anxiety for safeguarding freedom and democracy from military aggression, pray ask Britain too to withdraw the armed domination over Hindustan and let her have a free and self-determined constitution. A great nation like Hindustan can surely claim at least as much international justice as small nations do."

This cable underlined Savarkar's conviction that so far as war was concerned, India need not base her hopes on the professed war aims of the Allies. The Germans flashed this retort of Savarkar to the American President all over Germany as they had broadcast throughout their nation Savarkar's speeches on foreign politics. The frank exposition of this truth was very much appreciated by many candid American politicians one of whom M. M. Gross wrote to Savarkar from U.S.A. appreciating his cable to President Roosevelt: "Although there are many who believe as you and I, very few have the courage to

voice their feelings as you did. Keep up the work, there will be an international day of peace." Another American of note promised co-operation in publishing Savarkar's viewpoint before the American people.

Savarkar then toured Assam, the far eastern province of India, in November 1941. At Shillong, he was accorded a great ovation. There he was told that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's attention was drawn to the Muslim influx into Assam, when the Pandit replied that nature hates vacuum. Savarkar told his audience that Pandit Nehru, who was neither a philosopher nor a scientist, did not know that nature abhors poisonous gas!

Then followed in the last week of December 1941, the Bhagalpur session of the Hindu Mahasabha, the most momentous and eventful of the Mahasabha sessions. Government had put a ban on this session under the pretext of maintaining peace and communal harmony in the Province. Savarkar, who had almost withdrawn from the contest for the presidency of the Hindu Mahasabha, was provoked into accepting the presidential office, and he gave a fight for the civic rights and liberty of the people. A hundred thousand workers rushed to the scene, from rajas to raises, from millowners to millhands, from Sanatanists to Sikhs, from Jains to the so-called Untouchables, carried on the active struggle, and defended the honour of the Hindu flag, the fundamental civil liberties of freedom of speech and freedom of association of the people. Huge demonstrations were made, sudden open meetings were held in breach of the ban, invoking and facing lathi charges, armed mounted soldiers, floggings, bayonets, and imprisonment. Organised fury was witnessed in cities, towns and villages all over the six districts of Bihar which came under the ban.

Many prominent statesmen like Srinivas Sastri condemned this unjust ban. Gandhi could do it only after having a dig at Savarkar, for he thought that Savarkar had resorted to his weapon of satyagraha. But the other Congress bosses had nothing to say about it. They were busy contemplating help to China or Spain torn and afflicted by civil wars. Savarkar was arrested at Gaya *en route* to Bhagalpur and put in jail. And yet to the despair of the forces and fire of Government the session was held in Bhagalpur, when G. V. Ketkar, with the rebellious spirit of his grandfather, Lokmanya Tilak, rose to

the occasion and read out Savarkar's presidential address! All the thousands of civil resisters including Savarkar were released after a week. This session is important in many respects. The Bhagalpur Civil Resistance success proved to be a source of strength and self-confidence, and demonstrated that in spite of castes, creeds, sects and sections, Hindus did pulsate with a common national urge, proving that Pan-Hindu consciousness was a vigorous reality. Another aspect of the struggle was that it proved to the hilt that even the Hindus by themselves could launch a nation-wide mass movement in defence of the rights of the people.

Along with the militarisation, political and literary movements, the social movement for the consolidation of the Hindus went hand in hand, although not with the same revolutionary fervour. Throughout India Savarkar attended meetings and presided over conferences held in connection with the removal of untouchability. During his tours he visited societies conducted by and for the uplift of the Untouchables. He visited their localities, took water, refreshments and dinners at their quarters, inquired into their local grievances and encouraged anti-caste dinners which he had launched since 1928. At Chanda, Chalisgaon, Nagar, Poona, Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind), Sukkar and Delhi he attended anti-caste dinners. He presided over the Dayanand Dalitoddhar Parishad at Ferozpur (Punjab). At the time of the All-India sessions of Hindu Mahasabha, big anti-caste dinners were held in Nagpur and later on also in Cawnpore. At Monghyr he dined with the Santhals.

Another programme Savarkar attended whenever and wherever possible was his encouraging visits to the centres, gatherings and parades of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. He encouraged the R.S.S., patronised them, at times advised them not to fritter away their whole life-time under incrustation and asked them to fight for the realization of their ideal.

CHAPTER 16

Cripps Mission

THE popularity and influence of the Hindu Mahasabha was rising and the Hindu Mahasabha was now a force to be reckoned with. Noted politicians, authors and constitutional experts from abroad now interviewed Savarkar at his house at Shivaji Park, Bombay. Towards the end of 1941, Hudson, the Reforms Commissioner, then officially travelling in India to collect data for the future constitution of India, had an interview with Savarkar. Prof. Reginald Coupland of the Oxford University, who visited India for studying the political constitution of India, met Savarkar along with the Secretary to the Governor of Bombay on January 15, 1942. T. A. Raman, special correspondent of the North American Newspapers Alliance, saw Savarkar during the same month. John H. Magruder, representative of the *New York Times*, who was on active Naval service in Egypt, had come to India to join the American Navy. He saw Savarkar and discussed the Indian political situation with him. Sir Evelyn Wrench, a representative of the *Spectator*, London, who was on a political survey in India, interviewed Savarkar to acquaint himself with the Mahasabha view on the war situation and the Pakistan scheme.

At this time there was a grave crisis in the war situation for the Allies in the East as well as in the West. On February 11, 1942, Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek of China paid a meteoric visit to India. He was President of the Chinese Republic and it was said he had come to discuss with the Viceroy of India the war situation in the context of the political situation in India and if possible to persuade the Indian political forces to help the Allies unconditionally in the war. Savarkar greeted the Chinese leader on behalf of the Hindu Nation. In reply the Chinese leader and his wife thanked Savarkar for the good wishes.

Singapore fell shortly afterwards to Japanese forces. With the fall of Singapore and the destruction of the British warships, the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*, it seemed that Japan would smash the allied forces in the East. At this critical moment Savarkar issued a statement in which he reiterated: "Nothing now can rouse the Indian people with a war-like spirit to fight to a finish, but a bold and unambiguous proclamation on the part of the British Government that India is guaranteed forthwith a co-partnership in an Indo-British Commonwealth with other self-governing constituents including Great Britain herself. Every functional step to nationalise the Government in India and to materialise this proclamation must also be immediately and actually taken." Savarkar also warned the British Government: "If Japan is allowed to forestall the British Government in this case and to proclaim as soon as and if her invading forces reach the borders of India that their immediate objective is to free and guarantee the Independence of India, such a Proclamation on their part cannot but capture the imagination of the Indian people by storm and usher in incalculable political complications."[1] This statement was not a veiled threat. It was the outcome of the rare insight and political wisdom that was soon largely borne out by events.

Since 1940, the fissiparous tendencies in Indian politics had begun to assume a threatening aspect. In the first week of March 1942, Rajaji described the Muslim demand for vivisection of India into a brood of Pakistani States as a 'just and fair share in real power and stated that no Indian politician was interested in denying this.' Savarkar could not let this outrageous assumption go unchallenged. He condemned Rajaji's statement and said: "Rajaji's officiousness is only equalled by his audacity in presuming that he was entitled to play the role of a self-appointed spokesman of all politicians in India and secondly that all Indians who did not consider the demands of the Moslem League 'fair and just' were not politicians at all. The League demands that India should be vivisected into a brood of Pakistans. Does that amount only to a desire to have a 'fair and just' share in real power?" Savarkar warned the British Government that such compromises made by Congressmen were not binding on the Hindu Mahasabha.

[1] Statement, 17 February 1942.

By now the war situation had dangerously worsened for the Allies. With the fall of Singapore the Allied supremacy over the Eastern waters passed on to Japan. Taking advantage of this war situation, Savarkar cabled to the British Premier, Mr. Churchill, on March 7, 1942, urging him " to make a proclamation of the Indian Independence with co-partnership equal with Britain in an Indo-British Commonwealth " and demanded " immediate nationalisation of the Indian Government." The Premier of Britain acknowledged the cable through the Viceroy and thanked Savarkar.

About this time there was some talk of a Congress-League pact in which Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Chief Minister of the Punjab, figured prominently. Savarkar warned Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan that " any Congress-League pact would not be binding on the Hindus. If it was detrimental to the Hindu rights, it would be opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha."

But threatened as he was with a grave crisis in war, and with a view to impressing the American people with the genuine sincerity of British aims about India, Churchill announced on March 11, 1942, in the British Parliament his Government's decision to send Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Privy Seal, to India with proposals from the Cabinet. Accordingly, Sir Stafford Cripps came to India on March 23, 1942. The proposals put forth a mischievous scheme for the Indian nationalists. The scheme envisaged the creation of a new Indian Union which would constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom immediately after the cessation of hostilities. Secondly the scheme granted the right to any province in British India that was not prepared to accept the new constitution framed by the constitution-making body, to retain its then constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession, if it so desired.

Cripps interviewed important Indian leaders of public opinion and discussed his scheme with them. Accompanied by Dr. Moonje, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, Sir Jwalaprasad Srivastava and Lala Ganpat Rai, Savarkar had a memorable interview with Cripps. Though the first part of the Cripps Scheme was acceptable to Savarkar, he roundly condemned in the interview the second part of the scheme which virtually conceded Pakistan by granting the right of secession to the provinces under the

sweet name of self-determination. During the course of the discussion Cripps, the one-time Advocate-General of Britain, opined that the right of self-determination was not new in politics and was given to every unit in Canada before the formation of her federation. To support his case Cripps also cited examples from South Africa and other countries. Savarkar thereupon turned those arguments against Cripps himself by telling the British Minister that the Canadian States were already quite separate entities before they were called together to say whether they liked to form themselves into an organic State, Federal or otherwise. But here in India, continued Savarkar, unlike the Canadian States, the provinces were already welded into one Central unit and so there was no similarity between the two cases. Savarkar further said to Cripps: "The question before us today is not to form out of separate and independent States or constituents a new nation, or a federation or a confederation. India is already a unitarian State."

Cripps replied that India was never a unitarian nation. Thereupon Savarkar answered back: "To the Hindus, it is an article of faith that India, their Motherland and Holyland, is a cultural and national unit undivided and indivisible. Let alone the cultural unity which you may not grasp during this short period of the interview, but you will agree that politically and administratively the British Government admits it and calls the Government of India the Indian Government, the Army and Navy are called the Indian Army and Indian Navy, and Bombay and Bengal are called the provinces. All these factors prove that India is an undivided centralised nation and a State. And as for the principle of self-determination, it is a right to be given to a nation as a whole and not to a part thereof."

Savarkar's arguments were irrefutable. The effect was powerful. Caught in his own trap for the first time while conducting political negotiations with Indian leaders, Cripps who set Russia against Germany and enticed many Indian leaders like Pandit Nehru into his snare, hung down his head in silence. The suavity of his manners and sweetness of his tongue vanished. In his silence he accepted a defeat at the hands of Savarkar. The interview terminated and Savarkar came out with his face flushed, and he remarked to the pressmen: "We shall fight out Pakistan to the last." So crushing and complete was the defeat

inflicted on Sir Stafford Cripps by Savarkar that this interview became a topic among political circles at Delhi for many days. Even the *National Herald*, Pandit Nehru's mouthpiece, referred to this interview in its comments on the proposed retirement of Savarkar from the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha. The *National Herald* remarked:[2] "Profoundly as we disagree with Savarkar's politics, we freely admit that he is one of the few men of our age who have made history and contributed to a reawakening of our people. . . . He showed the old fire in him, when he took up the thoughtless challenge thrown to the Hindu Mahasabha by the Government of Bihar, and obtained a resounding victory at Bhagalpur. With Sir Stafford Cripps he crossed swords which the former will never forget." And indeed the voice of Savarkar must have rung in the ears of Cripps for several years.

Savarkar advised the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha to reject the Cabinet proposal *in toto* as it was to be accepted or rejected *in toto*, and he left Delhi for Bombay immediately. The Hindu Mahasabha was the first political organisation that rejected the Cabinet proposal entirely. Cripps wanted to have a talk with Savarkar a second time, but Savarkar felt that it was futile to see him and discuss the scheme while the secession clause stood there. Yet Savarkar was interviewed again at the Bombay Secretariat by H.E. the Governor of Bombay when Savarkar expressed his view that the Hindu Mahasabha would join the National Government if the secession clause was not binding.

The Muslim League rejected the Cabinet proposal as the freedom of separation was neither full nor clear, although it expressed its gratification that the possibility of Pakistan was recognised. The Sikh All-Party Conference rejected it protesting against the principle of provincial self-determination. The Congress party was willing to accept the scheme. Be it noted that in spite of the secession clause which it swallowed, after prolonged negotiations the Congress strained at the gnat of the Defence portfolio which was to remain in the hands of the British representative during the operation of war, and at last rejected the scheme. Gandhi described it as a post-dated cheque.

[2] Quoted in The *Mahratta*, 28 August 1942.

Thus it was Savarkar who first opened the Pandora's box brought by the wily, crafty and subtle Cripps full of artificial laugh, while the new expression self-determination had bewitched some men of Savarkar's camp, had accelerated the brainwave of the cool and calculating Sapru-type Liberals, and had visibly affected the spinal cord of the Indian National Congress. The Indian leaders were so thoroughly captivated that they quoted Cripps to silence their opponents!

It is worth mentioning here that eminent Liberal leaders like Srinivas Sastri, Sir V. N. Chandavarkar and veteran statesmen like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Ramananda Chatterjee had sensed the danger to the integrity of India through the suicidal policy of the Congress. Ramananda Chatterjee, who presided over a public meeting at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta, on August 22, 1941, said: "I am sure, if we are true sons and daughters of India, it shall never be divided." Speaking at a meeting at the Blavatsky Lodge Hall, Bombay, on the next day of Savarkar's historic interview with Sir Stafford Cripps, Srinivas Sastri appealed to the country to support the Hindu Mahasabha and said: "We all cherish the unity of India and we will all resist any attempt to break up what we take so much pride in. . . . Hindus whether they belong to the Congress, the Liberal Federation, or any other organization will express their sympathy with the Hindu Mahasabha. They should not only rest content with mere sympathy, but also go to the extent of extending their active political support to the Hindu Mahasabha." [3]

This is a great tribute to the invincible stand taken by Savarkar in regard to the integrity of India and this fervent appeal made by Sastri to all the Hindus for supporting the Hindu Mahasabha clearly meant that Sastri believed that the integrity of India was safer in the hands of Savarkar than in those of the Congress leaders.

* * *

What did the Congress leaders do?

Mesmerised by the false notions of the principle of self-determination and impelled by the craftiness of its president, Maulana Azad, the Congress High Command thrust the poisonous pill of provincial self-determination down the throat of the

[3] Quoted in The *Mahratta*, 3 April 1942.

Indian National Congress, the erstwhile protagonist of India's unity and indivisibility. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress proclaimed emphatically by a resolution at Delhi in April 1942, " that the Congress could not think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to join the Indian Union against their declared and established will." [4]

This historic resolution brought into bold relief the fact that the Congress favoured the provinces with the right of self-determination or secession and such secession was called by the Muslims ' Pakistan '. Dealing with the Congress resolution four years later, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya had to admit: " It is evident that the passage concedes the division of India into more than one State and gives the go-by to the unity and integrity of India." [5] Is any confession more shameful than this of Pattabhi? People of the Congress persuasion hoped that Pandit Nehru would oppose the principle of provincial self-determination. But self-determination was a new current of thought in Indian politics and Nehru who was ever on his wings to float with new ideas must fall in with the provincial self-determination. It was the shape of things to come and Nehru honestly fitted himself into it.

When this historic resolution of the Congress was out, Savarkar came out with a statement in which he said: " For the last three years or so I have been publicly warning the Hindus that there was every likelihood that the Congress would servilely surrender to the Moslems on the issue of Pakistan even as it did on the issue of Communal Award and would even have the crazy audacity of parading this treacherous act itself as an acid test of Indian patriotism. The Congressite Hindus continued to challenge and a large section of the non-Congress Hindus also used to doubt the accuracy of these assertions on my part. They wanted evidence to prove my assertions. Now here comes the evidence with a vengeance. Here is an authoritative declaration by the Congress framed in a resolution which they have passed, signed, sealed and delivered to the envoy of the British War Cabinet that they admitted the right on the part of the Muslim Provinces, nay, for the matter of that any provinces whatever,

[4] Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 635.
[5] *Ibid.*

to cut themselves off from Hindustan and create Independent States of Pakistans or any other *Stans* they choose." Telling the people to note the dangerous admission on the part of the Congress and its far-reaching treacherous implications, he declared: "The Congress which calls itself 'Indian National Congress' has in these few lines stabbed at a stroke the unity and integrity of the Indian Nation itself in the back." [6]

For a while there was a tug-of-war between the righteous and unrighteous flanks of the Congress over the anti-national resolution of the Congress. National honesty about the integrity and indivisibility of Hindustan seemed to move towards the righteous side. In Allahabad at the session of the All-India Congress Committee on May 2, 1942, the erstwhile Hindu-sabhaite, Babu Jagat Narayan, moved his Akhand Hindustan resolution, and it was passed with an overwhelming majority. The A.I.C.C. declared: "That any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component State or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of different States and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress therefore cannot agree to any such proposal."

Mark the pledged word to Mother India. Mark the holy promise of national honesty and national integrity. But the Hindu defender of Pakistan in Rajaji would not let the Akhand Hindustan resolution go unchallenged. He resigned the membership of the Congress Working Committee and moved a counter resolution recognizing the right of separation of certain areas from United India after ascertaining the wishes of the people of such areas. But this Pakistan resolution moved by Rajaji was thrown out on the same day by the A.I.C.C. by 120 votes against 15.

Another factor to be remembered about Babu Jagat Narayan's Akhand Hindustan resolution is that all the so-called Nationalist Muslim members of the A.I.C.C. opposed it in the A.I.C.C. session, and declared this brave act of theirs in a special statement. Yet the dishonest role of the self-styled saviours of India persisted in its vainglorious platitudes, high sounding words and hallucinations. When asked by Dr. Abdul Latif of Hydera-

[6] Statement, 21 April 1942.

bad, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru replied that the Delhi resolution conceding the right of self-determination to the provinces was not affected or modified by the Akhand Hindustan resolution![7] Had there been five honest, fearless and determined leaders in the A.I.C.C., they could have raised a voice of truth, a cry of righteousness against this violation of the Akhand Hindustan resolution. This dubious role of the Congress was not a whit less equivocal than the role played by it in regard to the Communal Award. Indeed, history was thus repeated once more.

Savarkar could not tolerate the sight of the poisonous dagger of provincial secession aimed at the heart of Hindustan. He was perturbed at the tragedy that was being enacted on the political stage of India. To Savarkar, unity and integrity of his Motherland and Holyland was an article of faith, a pious and precious sentiment. The Liberal leaders like Srinivas Sastri and Sir V. N. Chandavarkar and many other straightforward men, who perceived the danger to the national integrity, fully supported Savarkar and sounded a note of caution to the country. It was clear now that the goal of the Congress was the independence of a Divided India and the goal of the Hindu Mahasabha and Savarkar was the independence and integrity of India.

Savarkar was restless. He was striving to avert the tragedy. He even tried to focus world attention on the dreadful tragedy that was being enacted in India. The outside world expressed surprise at the Mahasabha opposition to the Cripps proposal. Savarkar, therefore, cabled to the editor, *New York Times*, to acquaint the outside world with the righteous stand of the Hindu Mahasabha that "the Hindu Mahasabha partially accepted the Cripps proposal and welcomed the promised grant of equal co-partnership with Britain; but the scheme made it all conditional on granting freedom to provinces to secede and break up India into a number of independent States with no central Indian Government." Savarkar concluded: "Americans in particular, who went to war even with their kith and kin on the question of secession and saved the integrity of their union, cannot fail to appreciate and uphold the Hindu opposi-

[7] *The Pakistan Issue*, edited by Nawab Dr. Nazir Yar Jung, pp. 116-119.

tion to the vivisection of India. Hindus are prepared to guarantee legitimate safeguards to the minorities, but can never tolerate their efforts to create a State within a State as the League of Nations put it." Savarkar also warned Sir Stafford Cripps not to depend upon any Congress-League pact as it would not be binding on the Hindu Mahasabha.

CHAPTER 17

Mahasabha Marches On

THE Akhand Hindustan movement was gradually gaining ground. Savarkar's voice was capturing the imagination of the people. Congress influence with the masses was at a low ebb. Even in England and in America the people and the press evinced interest and eagerness to learn more about the Hindu Mahasabha and its movement, its organization and its leaders. The Hindu Mahasabha was defeating Congress candidates in Municipal, Local and District Local Board elections and bye-elections to the Legislatures. In 1941 the Congress suffered a significant defeat in Maharashtra when Jamnadas Mehta, supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Congress candidate in the election to the Central Assembly. In Bengal where the opposition to the Hindu Mahasabha came from the Forward Block, the Congress being then a dwindling force there, Ashutosh Lahiri, the General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Forward Block candidate in the election to the Provincial Assembly. K. C. Neogy, supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Forward Block candidate, Mujumdar, in Bengal in the bye-election to the Central Assembly when a seat fell vacant due to the disappearance of Subhas Bose in January 1941.

At Khamgaon, Patna, Monghyr, Katihar (Bihar), Suri (Bengal), Poona, Mahad, Bhagalpur and Sholapur, there were glowing and growing successes for the Hindu Mahasabha in the elections; so much so that at some of these places there was complete debacle for the Congress candidates and Congressmen withdrew their candidature or fought elections in a personal capacity in order to save the prestige of the Congress in case of their defeats. In Assam the Congress could not even put up a candidate for a bye-election to the Central Assembly and the Hindu Mahasabha candidate, Anang Mohan Dam, was returned unopposed to the Central Assembly.

The Hindu Mahasabha observed the 10th May 1942, as an anti-Pakistan and Independence Day, with intense enthusiasm at the behest of Savarkar. Hundreds of meetings were held all over Hindustan, in almost all capital cities, Taluka and District towns, protesting against the principle of provincial self-determination and Pakistan. But strangely enough, while the Muslim Leaguers were allowed along with Rajaji to propagate the cause of Pakistan all over India even through public meetings, the Hindusabhaites denouncing the vivisection of India were arrested and gaoled at many places including Nellore, Patna and Arrah (Bihar) for holding anti-Pakistan meetings on that day.

History would record that Savarkar was the only great leader who raised his mighty voice against the internal disintegrating, disrupting forces as well as the external ones threatening India. Not to speak of the Congress leaders, but even Gandhi assumed a dubious role blowing hot and cold in the same breath. The virtual dictator of the Congress flattered himself with the belief that many pious Muslims had remarked that he was a better Muslim than most Muslims.[1] The symbol of truth and the apostle of Indian democracy advised his countrymen: "Let them (the Hindus) say to the Mussalmans 'have as big a share of the spoils as you want: we will be content to serve you'."[2] The man of justice, equality and universal love further said: "For as a Hindu, I should know that I have nothing to lose even if the referee gave the Muslims a majority of seats in every province."[3] On the one hand, the messenger of God stated: "Personally I do not want anything which the Muslims oppose," and on the other hand, the god-fearing man in him declared: "I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin."[4] In one voice he said: "Muslim rule is equivalent to Indian rule. I would any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule"; and in another he said: "For it (proposed Pakistan) means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation."[5] He once believed: "Partition

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *To The Hindus And Muslims*, p. 371.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 303.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 454.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

means a patent untruth," [6] and even did not falter to say: "Vivisect me before you vivisect India." [7]

Lastly, Gandhi openly declared: "Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of the British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them, for it would still be Indian Rule." [8]

Thus when Gandhi was so uncertain about the unity and integrity of India, his generals like the guileless, sincere and enlightened Dr. Rajendra Prasad naturally searched for the economic safety and stability and political definition of Pakistan instead of opposing the very idea of Pakistan! Dr. Rajendra Prasad honestly and bookishly believed that the riddle would be solved at a Round Table Conference by the policy of give and take. For all his life, his party had given up just claims and ground and taken nothing in return. So why should his party not have such a compromise even on this issue, he seemed to think.

Pandit Nehru declared earnestly that none would come in the way of self-determination of the Muslims after Independence. In his article specially written for the *New York Times Magazine* dated the 19th July 1942, Pandit Nehru said: "There is now a demand on the part of some Muslims for partition of India, and it must be remembered that this demand is hardly four years old. Few take it seriously." [9] If this is not an example of lack of realism, of a deceptive self-complacency and of an inherent incapacity to probe the depth of political problems, what else is it? Gandhi influenced many men, but all his influence thus sided with the Pakistanis in effect. It was such a formidable opposition from the adversaries of the unity of India against which Savarkar with his conviction and courage had to stand up for the cause of United India. A man of supreme courage, superb insight and spotless sincerity alone can irrevocably stand by a great ideal and Savarkar did it.

[6] Mahatma Gandhi, *To The Hindus And Muslims*, p. 415.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 438.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 410.
[9] Nichols, Beverley, *Verdict on India*, p. 187.

In the middle of May 1942, John Paton Davis, Second Secretary of the Embassy of the U.S.A., also attached to the General Commanding Army Forces, interviewed Savarkar. He expressed his opinion to the president of the Hindu Mahasabha that the American press and the people were realizing the rising influence of the Hindu Mahasabha. In the first week of June 1942, an American Negro leader saw Savarkar, gave him an idea of the Ethiopean movement in America, and narrated to Savarkar the disabilities the Negroes were undergoing in the U.S.A. In the second week of the month came the well-known journalist-author Louis Fischer, to interview Savarkar. He talked to Savarkar as if he had accepted a brief on behalf of the Muslim League whose Fuehrer he had met the previous day. Without any thought he asked Savarkar: "Mr. Savarkar, why don't you concede Pakistan?" Although the tone of the interviewer was impulsive and the manner quite irritating, Savarkar quietly asked Mr. Louis Fischer: "Why don't you grant Negrostan in the U.S.A.?" The American journalist rashly gave him an answer which Savarkar expected him to give, for Mr. Fischer said, "That will be anti-national!" "Exactly, Mr. Fischer, granting Pakistan will be anti-national and undemocratic in India as would be the granting of Negrostan in the U.S.A.!" answered back Savarkar.

Louis Fischer did not like the defeat in points of arguments and persisted more vigorously than before: "But you must not forget Panipat, if you refuse Pakistan to the Muslims!" Instantly Savarkar reminded Fischer of the debâcle in Dunkirk and Crete. The interview lost its charm and Louis Fischer had to listen to perturbed and fiery Savarkar armed with irrefutable arguments for his stand. Louis Fischer was embarrassed and never in any future articles did he mention Savarkar. Savarkar's truth was unpalatable to his mind freshly acquainted with the soft pro-Muslim attitude of the Congress leaders. The American journalist did not know that he was crossing swords with one of the greatest intellectual giants of Maharashtra. Where intellectual giants like Sir Stafford Cripps and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru were swept away, how could a journalist like Mr. Louis Fischer hold his ground?

In the same month, Mr. L. Brander, a representative of the British Broadcasting Corporation, London, had an interview with Savarkar. It was his desire to gain a first-hand knowledge

and information about the policy and principles of the Hindu Mahasabha.

In the month of May 1942, a Chinese Muslim Mission toured India, visiting the chief Muslim-majority cities, States and Muslim strongholds, and interviewed the highlights of the Pakistani movement including the Nizam. The Chinese Muslim Mission sent a message to the Nellore Muslims and openly promised help to the Indian Muslims after the end of the war. Savarkar reluctantly exposed the hidden motives of the Chinese Muslim leaders who were wooing the Indian Muslims and imbibing the virus of Pakistani movement. He also reminded the people of the recent visits of the Chinese Muslims to Turkastan and Egypt to initiate themselves into the Pan-Islamic mysteries and how they, on reaching India, had seen Jinnah and the Leaguers, and how they had abandoned their Chinese national dress and paraded the Fez. Savarkar was of the opinion that if the motives of the Chinese Muslims were not checked in time, they would develop in China in the near future separatist tendencies and would act as a pair of scissors on China.

About this time the Hur menace in Sind developed into a national calamity on the Hindu life, honour and property. Savarkar therefore strongly urged the Governor of Sind to stamp out the atrocious activities of the Hurs by any and every means.

Although routed at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Allahabad, Rajaji had now opened a Pakistan Front in the Madras Presidency. Rajaji declared that he had voiced loudly what the Congress High Command only whispered. No less a responsible politician than Dr. Khan Sahib had also averred that the Congress High Command had decided at Ramgarh not to oppose any province or provinces forming a separate independent State or States in India. Savarkar could not tolerate this. He reaffirmed his belief that Rajaji "was the only means of the design of the Congress High Command who were feeling the pulse of India and injecting the pro-Pakistani virus into the body politic of India. They were playing a double game. If Rajaji failed, it was his own failure. If he succeeded, the success was theirs." Savarkar then appealed to the Madras Province to lose no time in counteracting the nefarious movement of Rajaji by starting a counter propaganda for the unity and integrity of Hindustan as a nation and a state.

In 1942 Sir Mirza Ismail was appointed Prime Minister of Jaipur. Savarkar had numerous complaints against his past deeds as a premier in Mysore. He therefore said that even if Sir Mirza Ismail was a highly efficient administrator, he would oppose the appointment of Sir Mirza Ismail as the latter during the Dewanship of Mysore had silently packed the police, military and other important services with Muslims. Savarkar reiterated his belief that to give more to the Muslims than what was due to the Muslims on the basis of merits or population was nothing but robbing the Hindus of their legitimate, economic and political rights.

After the tragic failure of the Cripps Mission, the Viceroy expanded his Executive Council partly with a desire to meet the popular demand for Indianization of the Executive Council by appointing distinguished politicians of administrative experience and statesmen of proved ability and high calibre like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir J. P. Srivastava—a member of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha,—Sir Jogendra Singh and Dr. Ambedkar.

Savarkar appreciated this move of the Viceroy in spite of some glaring defects inherent in it and declared that Government must offer voluntarily so complete political freedom and power to India as to render it impossible for any enemy of Britain to offer anything more alluring to lead India astray. Savarkar congratulated Dr. Ambedkar, Sir J. P. Srivastava, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Sir Jogendra Singh. Sir Jogendra Singh said in his reply to Savarkar that he trusted that he would continue to enjoy the confidence of the Hindu community which, he added, was no less dear to him than his own community. Sir C. P. Ramaswami, too, thanked Savarkar for his congratulations which he specially appreciated.

* * *

On pressing request from the Hindu Sanghatanist workers and organizations like the Hindu Sikh Nava Javan Sabha, Arya Samaj, Mahaveer Dal, Sanatan Dharma Mandal, Savarkar visited Kashmir in the middle of July 1942. It was his first visit to Kashmir. On his way to Srinagar Savarkar was accorded grand receptions and addresses of welcome at various railway stations including Amritsar, Lahore and Vazirabad. In the presidential

party were Lala Ganpat Rai of Delhi, the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh, and Capt. Keshavchandra.

At Jammu on July 11, 1942, a very enthusiastic welcome was given to Savarkar by several institutions and organizations and nearly forty thousand Hindus and Sikhs participated in the procession taken out in honour of Savarkar. Next day Savarkar presided over the Hindu-Sikh Conference and addressed a mammoth meeting. After going through a crowded programme for three days in Jammu, he left for Srinagar and reached the capital of Kashmir on July 14. During his stay, a host of deputationists, delegations and interviewers waited upon him. He addressed three public meetings one of which was arranged exclusively for women and was attended by over twenty thousand women. He was presented with an address of welcome by the women of the land of splendour, sun and beauty. Next day he was taken out in another procession in spite of his indifferent health to the banks of the river Vitasta of Vedic and ancient fame. Experiencing the great waves of emotion and enthusiasm of the people, the spirit of Savarkar defied his fragility and he thrilled the vast multitude with his message and mission. To thousands of Hindus Savarkar appeared an incarnation of God. At that far end of Hindustan the Hindus evoked his blessings. Thousands touched his feet with devotion and kissed his hands in spite of his fervent disapproval of these things. Such thrilling scenes of devotion and deification were common features of all Savarkar's tours. And so was it in Kashmir. Savarkar left the capital of the Indian Switzerland despite public and private pressing requests to prolong his stay. Restlessness and not rest was an outstanding characteristic of Savarkar.

On his way back Savarkar made a brief halt at Rawalpindi. A big reception arranged there was abandoned, but he attended a grand party given by Sir Sitaram in his honour. It was at Rawalpindi that he told the press on July 17 that Rajaji was labouring under two fundamental errors, viz. that Pakistan would usher everlasting Hindu-Muslim unity and the outcome of a united demand for Indian Independence would be the withdrawal of the British power. Instead of allaying the Muslim hunger for power, Savarkar said, Pakistan would put them into a more effective position to make further demands. He further declared that the Hindu Mahasabha would never assent to sell

its birthright, the integrity of India as a nation and a state for the mess of pottage of the united Indian demand for Quit India.

The Working Committee of the Congress at its Wardha sitting by this time passed a resolution and agreed to the stationing of allied troops in India to ward off Japanese aggression. The two opposite stands taken by the Congress were inconsistent in Savarkar's opinion, and therefore he said that the Congress indulged in tomfoolery when it said to the British Government: "Quit India but keep your armies here." And indeed this meant reinstallation of the British military rule over India in its much worse form.

On his return to Bombay from the Kashmir tour, Savarkar issued a statement on July 27, replying to the president of Jammu and Kashmir Conference, a pro-Pakistani Muslim body which had presented him with compliments for his clear-cut and well-defined views as contrasted with other nationalist leaders. Since his democratic political convictions admitted of no half measures or mental reservation, the memorandum appealed to Savarkar to say whether he was prepared to apply his popular principle of the majority rule to the problem of Kashmir, and support the claim of the Muslim majority rule in Kashmir. The memorandum in fact was submitted to him when he entered Kashmir and he had boldly and fearlessly replied to the same at a public meeting. But for clarification and assertion, he issued this statement on the problem of Kashmir. Savarkar was not a slogan-ridden leader. He fearlessly, frankly and squarely answered that his principle laid it down that all citizens who owed undivided loyalty and allegiance to the Indian Nation and State would be treated with perfect equality. They would, he declared, share duties and obligations equally in common, irrespective of caste, creed or religion and representation would either be on the basis of one man one vote or in proportion to the population strength in case of separate electorates, and public services would go by merit.

But those who contributed, Savarkar affirmed, to the Pakistani creed or wished to secede from India had no right to the democratic principle of representation in proportion to the population. The Muslims of Kashmir had never publicly or privately declared their consent to apply the same principle of the majo-

rity rule to the States of Bhopal and Hyderabad. Further, it was Savarkar's view that although the Hindus were in a minority in Kashmir, they were a part of the national majority from whom they were not cut off. Thus the false democrats in Kashmir were exposed by Savarkar. Of course, in their slogans for the majority rule in Kashmir, they were supported in no small measure by Pandit Nehru whose attitude towards the Kashmir Maharajah and antipathy towards the Hindus were proverbial.

On the last day of July 1942, Savarkar tendered his resignation of the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha. Owing to the continuous strain for the last five years of the presidential duties and the whirlwind propaganda, Savarkar badly needed a rest. Unfortunately his resignation almost coincided with Gandhi's inauguration of the Quit India Movement. Savarkar now thought it fit to shift the burden and responsibility to some stronger and broader shoulders and entrust the leadership of the Hindu Mahasabha to worthy hands. Reviewing the work and prestige of the Hindu Mahasabha in his statement declaring his resignation, he said, "The Hindu has regained once more his national soul and self-consciousness. Witness for example what Prof. Coupland admits in his latest work, *The Cripps Mission*, published by the Oxford University Press. 'The Hindu Mahasabha has come to be a militant organization of the Hindus and has been growing fast in membership and influence.' Sir Stafford Cripps has himself written to me that so influential an organization as the Hindu Mahasabha cannot be left out on any account when constitutional questions arise. But the most eloquent compliment that can be desired is paid to the Hindu Mahasabha by Mr Jinnah when he said at Madras in his presidential address, 'The Hindu Mahasabha is an absolutely incorrigible and hopeless body, and I can have nothing to do with it'." Savarkar further asked the Hindus in his parting message to 'Hinduise all politics and militarize Hindudom.' He also promised that he would ever continue as a soldier in its rank and file and serve the Hindu Mahasabha in any capacity it wanted him to do in furthering the cause of the Hindus.

His resignation was shocking to the Hindu Sanghatanist public in India. Hundreds of letters and telegrams soon poured in Savarkar Sadan urging Savarkar not to leave them in the lurch. The Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha in its message said:

"Amidst the universal confusion and chaos you have been the one beacon-light to Hindudom and so long as you would be the president of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, the whole of Hindustan believed that the calamity of Pakistan would never befall their Motherland." Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee wired to Savarkar that his lead was essential in the prevailing national crisis. Meherchand Khanna from the N.-W.F.P. stated that Savarkar's guidance was essential to India at that critical time. In a frantic appeal Sir J. P. Srivastava said that Savarkar's resignation had come as a great shock to the Hindu Sanghatanists all over India and would injure the Hindu cause.

Rai Bahadur Harischandra of Delhi wrote to Savarkar: "It is entirely correct that but for your energy, determination and constant hard work, nobody would have cared or even cared to know about the Hindu Mahasabha in this country and its condition would have been as it had been more than a decade before you resumed the control." The late Raja Maheshwar Dayal from U.P. said: "You have always risked and sacrificed all even at the cost of health. You cannot refuse to guide the nation at this critical juncture." And it was a fact that only Savarkar could work the miracle. It is the man of strong will, says Swami Vivekananda, that throws, as it were, a halo round him and brings all other people to the same state of vibration as he has in his own mind. When a powerful individual appears, adds Vivekananda, his personality infuses his thought into us. This was true of Savarkar.

Despite the fact that there were great patriots of long service, great sacrifice and great learning like Bhai Parmananda, revolutionary leaders of great sacrifice like Ashutosh Lahiri, and representative Hindu leaders of long service and statesmanship like Dr. Moonje in the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar alone could vibrate entire India soon after he entered the political arena. In a vast country like India, to be a leader in the true sense of the term is a colossal feat of physical and mental capacity. This is given only to a few. Even the Congress organization during the span of sixty years of its life of service could produce few magnetic personalities who could be counted on one's fingers. They were Surendranath, Gokhale, Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas. Gandhi was all political organization, and Nehru all political energy for the Congress. But Tilak, Savarkar and

Gandhi were born leaders. Their class was original. Such leaders bring forth original thoughts. They make organizations great unlike others who are made great by organizations which they cling to. Subhas Bose was a born leader, but not a man of original ideas.

The role and responsibility which Gandhi and Nehru played and bore in the Congress, which arose over the talents and toils of Dadabhai, Surendranath, Gokhale, Tilak and Das, fell on Savarkar alone in the Hindu Mahasabha. Savarkar had to begin on a clean slate. There was no other electric personality like Pandit Nehru in the Hindu Mahasabha to strengthen the hands of Savarkar. Dr. Mookerjee was once considered to be so by many, but he was not treated by Savarkar with warmth and confidence as Nehru was treated by Gandhi.

* * *

The resignation of Savarkar from the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha was shocking to the forces of United India in view of the grave situation that was developing in Indian politics. The Individual Civil Disobedience campaign having failed to achieve any practical purpose or attract any attention, Gandhi was obliged to call it off. The Congress was fast approaching a critical situation. Its virtual dictator, Gandhi, prepared for a short, swift and final struggle for India's freedom. And the All-India Congress Committee awaited marching orders for an open rebellion called Quit India.

The Liberals deprecated the proposed Congress struggle as inopportune. Dr. Ambedkar despaired of it, and Jinnah construed it as a direct challenge to Islam! According to Savarkar, the declaration of "Quit India bag and baggage" was attended with colossal absurdity. Gandhi wished the Britishers to quit India, but agreed to the stationing of their army in India. On the eve of the August revolution, the late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru declared that none had the right to gamble with the lives and safety of 400 million people. Though he was not a believer, he said, in any separatist cry, he felt the necessity of coming to a settlement with the minorities; that the British should declare that India would have the fullest measure of self-government within a year after the war; that coalition Governments should be formed in the provinces; that Gandhi, Jinnah, Savarkar and

the leaders of all parties should meet in a conference and come to a settlement for the period of the war and set up a machinery for the framing of a constitution for the future and that the Congress should abandon the contemplated struggle.[10]

Lokanayak Aney, then a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, appealed to Gandhi and the Congress to convene a conference of leading political parties in the country with a view to presenting a united demand for freedom. Aney said in his speech at Tilak Mandir, Poona, a week before the outbreak of the August Revolution: "Tilak was a firm believer in the integrity and indivisibility of India. This was amply shown by his attitude towards the plan of partitioning Bengal."[11] But with all this Aney's subsequent attitude was quite inconsistent with Tilak's teachings. What must have been the magnitude of the agonies caused to the departed soul of Tilak when his brilliant lieutenant Aney afterwards wished Jinnah and Gandhi success in the travail of Pakistan. And what mental torments Aney's Guru and prophet must have undergone when his worthy disciple congratulated Jinnah on his becoming the first Governor-General of Pakistan carved out of the vivisected and bleeding Motherland of Tilak!

Savarkar's attitude to the Quit India Movement was clear. In his famous speech before Shanivarwada, Poona, on August 2, 1942, Savarkar complimented the Congress on its having come round to the view of the Hindu Mahasabha that communal unity was not a *sine qua non* for the winning of freedom. He also declared that the Hindu Mahasabha would join the Congress in the contemplated struggle provided that the Congress solemnly guaranteed that it would irrevocably stand by the unity and integrity of India, that the Congress would not make any pact with the anti-national Muslim League, and that the Congress would accept Hindi with the nagari script as the *lingua franca* of India. Savarkar, however, put it tersely on the strength of the unquestionable proof he had in his possession that the leader in Gandhi had always been vacillating and further said that it was his considered opinion that Gandhi would unquestionably agree not only to one Pakistan in India but to many. Then expressing his unfailing belief in the militarization policy

[10] The *Mahratta*, 7 August 1942.
[11] *Ibid.*

of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar said that if Gandhi pinned his faith on his fast to secure his demands, it would not be heeded at all by the British amidst the fire and booming of the war. This historic speech of Savarkar was considered to be so important that even the British Broadcasting Station broadcast it from London.

Although the terms laid down by Savarkar for co-operation were reasonable, the Congress and its virtual dictator stubbornly refused to have anything to do with these conditions. Instead, the A.I.C.C. at its fateful Bombay session on August 7, 1942, actually went on placating the Muslims by declaring that the residuary powers would be vested in the provincial governments in addition to the right of self-determination given to the Provinces to secede from the Central State. The climax was reached when Gandhi, the *de facto* ruler of the Congress, in an authoritative letter to Jinnah, said in all sincerity: "Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it today exercises, to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India including the so-called Indian India. The Congress will not only not obstruct any Government which the Muslim League may form, but even join the Government."

It is quite clear that in view of this unjust and unsympathetic attitude of the Congress towards the national maojrity, Savarkar did well in not identifying the Hindu Mahasabha with the all-out struggle of the Congress as its price and inevitable consequences would have been—and were in fact afterwards—the vivisection of India. Besides, Savarkar was of the opinion that in respect of tactical questions, the timing, the ways, the means, the methods of revolution and above all, the effectiveness which could depend on sane calculations, there was no elaborate planning in advance by the Congress at all. The truth of this remark was realized by many Congress leaders afterwards. Savarkar was not for mere mass upheaval. The historian-leader wanted a pre-planned revolution which would attempt to gain the support of the military. For, no revolution ever succeeded without the backing of the army. This reality was never visualized by the Congress, nor did it even dream of it.

Gandhi was to launch his all-out struggle for the overthrow of the foreign domination after the A.I.C.C. approval of his plan on August 8, 1942. But all the Congress leaders including

Gandhi were arrested the same night. As a result of their arrest, popular discontent, mass disturbances and their rigorous suppression by the British Government threw the country into a turmoil. Post offices and railway stations were damaged and destroyed by the Congress underground workers. Telegraph, railway and telephone wires were cut. Rails were removed and a few small bridges were wrecked by young men actuated by patriotic motives.

Yet the marked feature of the struggle was that it was predominantly Hindu and practically the whole of the Muslim sections, Muslim localities, Muslim majority towns and cities, the provinces of Assam, Orissa, the Punjab, N.-W.F.P., and comparatively Sind remained aloof from this revolution. Jinnah emphasised the Muslim aloofness from this movement when he declared in unmistakable terms that the Muslims were opposed to the August revolution, and urged the Muslims to keep away from it. He also warned the August revolutionaries not to meddle with Muslim affairs and provoke them into any counter-revolution.

Savarkar's stand was both patriotic and practical. In a statement issued on August 10, 1942, he said: "The inevitable has happened. The foremost and patriotic leaders of the Congress including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and hundreds of other leaders of the Congress party are arrested and imprisoned. The personal sympathies of the Hindu Sanghatanists go with them in their sufferings for a patriotic cause." He, however, strongly condemned the drastic measures adopted by the Government to quell the disturbances and warned the British Government that nothing but an immediate proclamation by the British Parliament granting India the status of a completely free and equal partner in the Indo-British Commonwealth with rights and duties equal with those of Great Britain herself and its immediate realization would solve the problem. He openly sympathized with the patriotic struggle of the Congress Hindus, and their sufferings and the untold calamities from detention to death they faced and underwent.

But despite the malicious and mad propaganda against Savarkar by the Congress press for his not joining the revolutionary struggle, his foresight and judgment could not drive him headlong and blindfold into the struggle, the outcome of which, he

conscientiously believed, would be detrimental to the interests and integrity of India. Nay, it was his firm conviction that under the lead of Gandhi, the Quit India Movement of the Congress was bound to end in a split India message. So he said he could not make a common cause with the Congress on a wrong issue that would ultimately lead to national dissolution and devastation, and he could not adopt a line of action for the sake of a united front. He pointed out that even the Congress and Gandhi never made a united front with the revolutionaries or with the Sanghatanists at Hyderabad or at Bhagalpur although the issues then were of national importance and interests. For Gandhi and the Congress in their own way believed sincerely that the line of action adopted by the revolutionaries and the Hindu Sanghatanists was detrimental to the interests of the nation.

Savarkar now exhorted fervently the Hindu Sanghatanists who happened to be Members of the Cabinet, Local Bodies, Legislatures, Councils, Government Committees, those serving in the Army, Air Force, Navy and those working in ammunition factories not to be led away by emotion and abandon their posts. He advised them to stick to their posts, and conserve their energies for the impending real fight for the national integrity and interests. He warned them that those very Congressmen would ultimately endanger the national integrity of India, and their Quit India Movement would thus end in the vivisection of India.

After the outbreak of the August revolution, Savarkar's views were heard with more concern and interest throughout the country and in foreign lands as well. The reputation of Hindu Mahasabha stood at the highest ever. Although Savarkar was not in favour of the line of thought behind the Congress struggle, he was ever insistent on the demand for Indian freedom. He sent a cable to the British press warning the British public that the British bayonets might suppress the violent outburst of popular discontent; but "bayonets can never appease national discontent or remove its cause."

Savarkar further stressed in his statement that India's willing co-operation could only be secured if the British Parliament made an immediate declaration to the effect that "(1) India is raised to the position of a free nation in the Indo-British Commonwealth having equal status with that of Britain herself, (2)

during the war period this declaration should be immediately implemented by Indianization of the Central Executive Council whose decisions would be binding on the Viceroy with the only exception of matters military and strategical in connection with suppression of any internal anarchy and defending India against external invasion, (3) military forces should be fully Indianized as early as possible, (4) Provincial Governors should also have Executive Councils similar to the Central, and (5) after the end of the war, a conference should be immediately convened to frame a national constitution for India so as to give full effect to the declaration referred to above."

This appeal issued by Savarkar to the British public, wrote the London Correspondent of the *Bombay Chronicle* in his despatch of August 26, 1942, was " prominently featured by the leading newspapers like *The Times, Manchester Guardian, Daily Herald, News Chronicle,* and the *Yorkshire Post* without comment." The correspondent added: " The appeal has been the topic of discussion among a section of the political leaders here and it is felt that an early initiative on the part of the British Government on the lines suggested by Mr. Savarkar is well worth making and with goodwill and co-operation on both sides, a satisfactory way out of the present Indian deadlock may yet be evolved." The correspondent concluded: " Mr. Savarkar's statement also came up for informal discussion among the Indian residents in London who gathered last night in a public meeting of the Indian League in the Central Hall."

But Winston Churchill, the greatest British imperialist under the sun, said that he had not taken office to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, was unmoved. On September 10, 1942, he assured the British Parliament in a statement on India that there was nothing serious about the Indian situation to cause them any worry and added that there were more British forces in India than there had ever been. Savarkar could not tolerate the British Premier's boast which he uttered in utter contempt for Indian national aspirations. So Savarkar reminded Churchill of the fate of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, who spoke in a similar boastful tone, while standing on the precipice of his mighty pride and power, and met his doom. Savarkar further remarked that the future of India did not lie in the lap of Churchill, but lay in the laps of war gods.

Though the British propaganda had duped Americans into believing the hoax to a very great extent, it became quite impossible for the British Government to misrepresent any longer in foreign countries the deteriorated Indian political situation and the deadlock. At this point the Muslim League resolved to send its deputation to foreign countries to propagate the ideal of Pakistan. Savarkar therefore resolved to counteract the Muslim League propaganda in foreign countries by sending a Hindu Mahasabha deputation to America and other countries to acquaint those countries with the political struggle and problem of India and to foil the false British propaganda and expose its hollowness which had misled the world opinion into believing that the Cripps Mission had failed not so much owing to unwillingness of the British to part with power as to internecine conflicts of the Indian people.

The idea of sending the deputation was subsequently dropped as neither the Muslim League members were, nor Rajaji was allowed to go abroad. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders, however, decided to set up a committee of the Hindu Mahasabha to conduct negotiations with all important Indian political parties and personalities on the three outstanding national demands which the Hindu Mahasabha had framed. The Committee consisted of Savarkar the President, Dr. Mookerjee, Dr. Moonje, N. C. Chatterjee, Raja Maheshwar Dayal, Rai Bahadur Meherchand Khanna and Prof. V. G. Deshpande. The national demands were as follows: (1) the immediate recognition of India by the British Parliament as an independent nation, (2) national coalition government with full powers during the war period excepting the military portfolio, so far as the operative part was concerned, (3) the holding of a constitution-framing Assembly as soon as the war ceased. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was the prominent figure that moved with interest and vigour so much so that the committee evoked a great wave of enthusiasm all over India and representatives of the British, the American, the Chinese press and also of other countries took interest in the developments, and gave wide publicity in their home countries to the move and efforts of the Hindu Mahasabha.

The second All-India great organization, to quote Lord Devonshire, the then Under-Secretary of State for India, succeeded in securing an agreement on the national demands and

a united appeal signed with unanimity by the foremost leaders of the Sikh brotherhood, the presidents of the Momin and the Azad Muslim Conferences and other prominent Muslim organizations, the presidents of the Christian Federation, the Nationalist League, the Liberal Federation and the ministers of Provincial Governments of Sind, Bengal and Orissa. The only party that did not sign the national demands was the intransigent Muslim League. Savarkar knew the Muslim League's attitude, and had strictly warned Dr. Mookerjee not to interview Jinnah unless the League leader himself expressed his desire to meet him. Still in his personal capacity, Dr. Mookerjee saw Jinnah who surprised him by quoting offhand extracts from Savarkar's presidential addresses and twisting them to support his own demand for Pakistan. It is true that in an unguarded mood Savarkar had said in his presidential address of 1937 that " there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India." He wrote that address in a hurry. His stand that the Hindus are a nation and the Muslims and Christians are communities in India was well known.

Savarkar forwarded the Memorandum containing these united demands on October 9, 1942, to Churchill, the Premier of Great Britain, urging the British Government to transfer power in accordance with the united national demands put forward by the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians; the Congress demand being more or less on the same lines. Churchill acknowledged through the Viceroy the receipt of the united demands and appreciated Savarkar's efforts in promoting unity among the several elements in Indian life, but observed that they had not so far resulted in any specific or constructive proposals enjoying the support of all the major parties. Savarkar then exposed the British Government by declaring that if the British Government could bestow the curse of slavery on India in spite of India's united will, why did the British not bestow the blessings of freedom in spite of her differences and dissensions? He also asserted that British Imperialism and not India's dissensions was the cause of India's misery.

The Hindu Mahasabha move for the united demand for independence flashed into the headlines. It had a very powerful effect on the public opinion in India and in foreign lands too. As a result of this, several press representatives and public

men, who came to study the Indian situation in general from America, China and England, tried to know more closely the Hindu Mahasabha ideology and policy. Even American filmmen got the presidential office at Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, and its routine work screened and the news reels were exhibited in America.

But the most important outcome of the move for the united demand for independence was that it proved beyond cavil or criticism the falsity of the dishonest criticism of the opponents of the Hindu Mahasabha that being a communal organization, it could not give a lead to national policy. The Hindu Mahasabha was in fact ever for a reasonable compromise. The Sind Hindu Sabha had honourably joined hands with the Muslim League in running a coalition Ministry. Dr. Mookerjee worked with Fazlul Huq successfully for a year or so in the Bengal Cabinet for the benefit of all communities; but he resigned the post when the Governor made it impossible for him to serve the people with self-respect. These steps sufficiently demonstrated that the Hindu Mahasabha endeavoured to capture the centres of power only in public interest and not for the plum of office.

When these monopolized reserves were utilized by the patriotic forces for the good of the people, the Congress press, circles and leading groups shed crocodile tears and condemned Savarkar for being pro-Pakistani, and betraying Hindu interests as if they themselves had turned overnight Hindu-minded, caring more for and guarding Hindu interests more watchfully than Savarkar did. Savarkar was amused with this accusation levelled by Congressmen and, saying that their anxiety for Hindu interests was quite laudable, he added: "The pity is that whether these very gentlemen would have any face to welcome their leaders when they would rush to the League-headquarters after their release, to sign the pact for the vivisection of India, and sacrifice the Hindu interests with a vengeance on the altar of the Congress fetish of pseudo-nationalism." What a prophecy! There never was a prophet so unfailing and so unrelenting in his prophecies! For all these gentlemen and journals did verily support, some with brazen faces and some with sunken heads, the anti-Hindu policy of the Congress leaders after their release from jails.

CHAPTER 18

The Writing on the Wall

In the meanwhile, attempts were made by leading pro-Pakistani Hindus, who were outside the jails, to capture the Hindu Mahasabha by *coup d'état* and make it accept the Pakistan scheme at least in principle so that the Hindu Mahasabha could be a handmaid to the Congress in supporting the latter's anti-national surrender to the Pakistani forces. K. M. Munshi had even attended a meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and Rajaji had almost captivated Dr. Mookerjee and Raja Maheshwar Dayal. In order to ward off that danger, expose and frustrate their designs, Savarkar resolved not only not to resign as already announced by him, but also to contest the election to the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha session which was to be held in December 1942. This was the only time when Savarkar actually contested the election to the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha; and backed by the wisdom and overwhelming confidence of its electorates, Savarkar was almost unanimously elected to the presidentship. The annual session was held at Cawnpore in the last week of December 1942..

In the presidential address, Savarkar fully dealt with the pros and cons of the self-determination issue, and, refuting the arguments put forth in its support, resolved all doubts. He said he stood for provincial re-distribution, but not for provincial self-determination. The grant of self-determination, he stated, to provinces to secede from the Central State would blow up the Central State. Savarkar further observed that the proposed Pakistan State would be militarily dangerous and hence it would be suicidal to hand over the natural frontiers to a hostile group. He warned that economically and financially the Pakistan Muslims would not starve as the cold and calculating pro-Pakistani Hindus guessed, but they would pounce upon the neighbouring

Hindu territories with fire and fanaticism. Did not the fate of Kashmir prove this truth?

Some of the pro-Pakistani Hindus whispered to Savarkar that after the liquidation of the foreign power, Pakistan would be browbeaten into submission, and, therefore, as a stroke of statesmanship Pakistan should be granted. Savarkar replied that even without a State the Muslims had grown into such a threat; then with a State they would be better organized and prepared and the wishes of the pro-Pakistani Hindus would thus prove to be the beggars' horses. Therefore he asked the statesmen and politicians to draw a line and say 'thus far and no further' at that very stage. Some, he said, foolishly argued that the question of Pakistan was just like the Ulster phase in Ireland. Replying to this argument, Savarkar said that Ireland had never recognized the principle of provincial self-determination, and he declared: "Hindustan shall and must remain an integral and powerful nation and a Central State from the Indus to the seas. Any movement to undermine her integrity, cohesion and unity would be treated as treacherous and would be suppressed as any movement for Negrostan would be punished in the U.S.A."

During the course of his presidential address Savarkar impressed upon the minds of the delegates that banishing untouchability was to win a major war for the nation.

An uncompromising and strongly worded resolution against the Pakistan scheme was passed at the session. The frustration of the outsiders, who expected Mahasabha consent to Pakistan, at this was so great that the Hyde in Gandhi bewailed through Rajaji: "Even those few leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, who more or less sympathized with my formula regarding the Hindu-Muslim Unity, fell a prey to crowd psychology at Cawnpore." Mahasabhaites wondered who these leaders were who sympathized with Rajaji's Pakistani formula. But there was no answer. When asked by some bold Poona youths about it, Dr. Mookerjee said that Rajaji might have referred to Raja Maheshwar Dayal, and in his turn the Raja said that it might be Dr. Mookerjee and shrewdly Rajaji had not mentioned any names. He merely wanted to drive a wedge into the forces of the Hindu Mahasabha. But he was sorely disappointed. Thus did Savarkar prove to be the despair of the pro-Pakistani Hindus and a disappointment to statesmanly Hindu politicians, who were pre-

pared to accept the principle of provincial self-determination.

Besides the Hindu Mahasabha session, December 1942 witnessed two other important events. In his speech before the Federated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta, Lord Linlithgow stressed the need for maintaining the geographical unity of India. Meherchand Khanna represented the Hindu Mahasabha opposition to the vivisection of India at the Pan-Pacific Conference in America where he was sent as the Indian representative by the Government of India.

On February 1, 1943, Savarkar visited Shirdhon, the birthplace of the Indian rebel leader, Wasudeo Balwant Phadke, who rose in an armed revolt in 1879 in Maharashtra and who breathed his last in the jail at Aden longing for the rise of a great Indian Republic. It was an appealing, thrilling and romantic sight to see the world-famous revolutionary leader in Savarkar paying homage to his brilliant precursor.

Much had happened in the meantime. The Congressites had travelled from a path of jail-seeking to a jail-breaking programme. The misplanned, ill-ordered August revolution almost came to an end after a few weeks of violent disorders, mass lawlessness and mob violence. By the end of 1942, sixty thousand two hundred and twenty-nine persons were arrested, 18,000 were detained, 940 were killed by police firing and 1610 were injured by military or police firing. Jai Prakash Narayan, its brilliant leader of action, admitted in his secret circular of January 1943, entitled " To all fighters for Freedom " the failure of the Open Rebellion. Therein he ascribed the failure to the absence of efficient organization of the national revolutionary forces and the absence of further programme before the people. And when it was too late, Jai Prakash realized and remembered " there was our work in the Indian Army and in the services! " [1] After frustration there came the revelation and realization for which Savarkar had clamoured since 1937. Had the Congress leaders supported militarization and enlistment of patriotic youths in the forces? Who was right, Savarkar or the Congress leaders? Now realizing the magnitude of the fiasco and failure of his movement, Gandhi began on February 10, 1943, his 21-day

[1] Government of India Publication, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 1942-43, p. 74.

fast which was nothing less than a tactical move to force his release from the Aga Khan Palace.

The whole nation was rocked. In the Indian political sky huge cries of 'Release Congress leaders' arose. But the British Government remained adamant on the issue of Gandhi's release. The Non-Party leaders assembled on February 19, 1943, to consider the situation which arose out of Gandhi's fast at the Aga Khan Palace, Poona. Savarkar's attitude to Gandhi, who differed from him in political matters, was charitable. He wired to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the President of the Non-Party Conference, on the 20th February "to issue a national appeal to Gandhi himself to break his fast in the interest of the nation." In the statement issued on the same day Savarkar said: "We must all turn our faces from the alien and unsympathetic doors of the Viceregal Lodge to the bedside of Gandhi, and entreat him to break his fast in the national interest to serve which he must have undertaken it. . . . No appeals, resignations or resolutions addressed to the Government can secure Gandhi's release. . . . This national appeal should be communicated to him without the loss of a single minute through any one of them who are allowed to visit him. His life, Gandhi himself may realize by such a national appeal, is not so much his own as it is a national asset, a national property."

At Delhi, the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution regarding Gandhi's fast wishing prayerfully that Gandhi's spiritual strength would enable him to survive the ordeal, but warned those concerned not to exploit the fast for political ends for bringing about constitutional changes and ending the deadlock without consulting the Hindu Mahasabha which would resist any encroachment upon Hindu rights or any scheme undermining India's integrity. Savarkar correctly sensed that if the fast was applied to resolving the political deadlock, it would result in a threat to the integrity of India. It was an historic reading of Gandhi's mind. And a year later India was stunned when Rajaji came out with his formula and declared that Gandhi had fathered it actually during this very fast at the Aga Khan Palace, a year before, and had authorized him to approach Jinnah for a compromise on that basis!

Now interested groups brought pressure on the members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy for tendering their

resignations as a protest against the policy of Government in keeping Gandhi in internment. Savarkar was of the opinion that the Members of the Executive Council should not resign on this issue. Dr. Ambedkar and Sir J. P. Srivastava withstood many hysterical appeals. But what about Aney and others? Aney, Sir Homi Modi, and N. R. Sarkar, resigned, but one of them surprised all with his worldly wisdom full of carking anxieties for his political future. And yet Aney was the very politician who had in a responsive manner not hesitated at all to concur with his colleagues in their decision regarding the arrest of all the national leaders including Gandhi, six months earlier. It is indeed an uncommon art to be able to butter both sides of one's bread. This partial evacuation of the Executive Council created a faint smile on the face of Gandhi fasting in the Aga Khan Palace.

Just then the Muslim League was pushing the Pakistan proposal ahead. Its Sind League Ministry passed the Pakistan resolution inside the legislature. The Hindu Ministers of the Mahasabha persuasion opposed the resolution. It is worthy of note that Alla Bux, the nationalist Muslim leader, had no heart or guts even to attend the Sind Assembly session and oppose the Pakistan resolution. Referring to this development, Savarkar warned the country against the impending peril in these memorable words: "Now the features of Pakistan delineated on the wall are so bold that even he who runs may read them. Only the blind and cowardly can still indulge in believing that the deadly serpent may yet prove to be a coil of rope." [2] Savarkar pointed out also the difference between those members who were of Mahasabha persuasion and those elected on the Congress tickets in regard to their political stand. The former opposed any anti-national scheme and proposals boldly and bravely, while the latter kept culpable silence at the time of solving any crucial and vital problem affecting the destiny of the nation such as the one mentioned above. But the short-sighted lead of the Congress, lacking as it was in historical perspective, failed to read the writing on the wall.

During the same month the Leaders' Conference was held in Bombay at the residence of Dr. M. R. Jayakar to explore the possibilities of Gandhi's release. Prominent among those who

[2] Statement, 10 March 1943.

attended the conference were K. M. Munshi, Rajaji, Bhulabhai Desai, Alla Bux and Devidas Gandhi. It was through the personal pressure of Dr. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who told Savarkar that something must be done to undo the injustice to the Hindu cause, that Savarkar attended the conference on March 9, 1943. When Savarkar entered the residence of Dr. Jayakar, he saw leaders sitting in groups and talking among themselves. He found that there was no such question as Hindu interest or Hindu cause and the burden of the talks and discussion was the release of Gandhi. When Jayakar and Sapru requested Savarkar to speak on the point of Gandhi's release, Savarkar insisted that not only the release of Gandhi, but also the release of all political leaders including Sarat Bose should be demanded. He further said that the British Government should be urged either to release all those patriots or put them on trial.

Those were the days when the Liberals felt very uneasy to approach the Viceroy. So they earnestly requested Savarkar to approach the Viceroy on whom he really had great influence, and press for the release of Gandhi. Next day, Savarkar could not attend the conference owing to toothache and a previous engagement with William Phillips, President Roosevelt's personal envoy, then on a mission in India. The interview covered a wide range of topics from the political situation in India to the future relations between India and the U.S.A. In the meanwhile, it was given out in the press that Savarkar had signed the appeal for Gandhi's release which Savarkar contradicted, to the leaders' great disappointment, by a statement declaring that he was not present at the conference on March 10 when the appeal was drafted and signed by its signatories.

Just then Jinnah, who was expecting a letter from Gandhi in the Aga Khan Palace, thundered that terrible consequences would follow if the Government meddled with his post. Savarkar said that the threat of Jinnah was more amusing than alarming, and wondered why the League Fuehrer did not capture the Viceroy and proclaim Pakistan at once!

By now, the Hur rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed by the Government and its ring leader, Pir Pagaro, was hanged. The Muslim League demanded that his property should constitute a religious trust. Upon this Savarkar came out with a state-

ment on May 4, appealing to the Government to compensate the Hindus for the losses they had suffered, from the proceeds of Pir Pagaro's property, which had been extorted in the main from the Hindus whom the armed gangs of the Hurs had looted and harassed.

There was a change in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. The Viceroy appointed Dr. N. B. Khare Member of the Executive Council in place of Aney. Savarkar appreciated the nomination of Dr. Khare. Dr. Khare was a staunch supporter of the militarization policy, a fearless patriot and a politician of hard stuff, who cared more for his conscience than for his career and who never changed his opinion for securing a post or for future success. And Dr. Khare proved his worth when in the capacity of Commonwealth Relations Member he patriotically and with his characteristic fearlessness attacked the Segregation Bill proposed by the South African Government. The Segregation Bill had engaged the attention of the world and especially of the Indian leaders. Savarkar condemned it as an "anti-Indian, unjust and oppressive measure," and appealed to Britain and America "to protest against the most callous and insulting Bill, which cut at the very root of the high-sounding aims of Britain and America which stood for the vindication of freedom and equal treatment for the depressed nationalities of the world."

* * *

On May 28, 1943, Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated all over India with great eclat and enthusiasm on a magnificent scale. Savarkar's birthday is an occasion for national celebration and jubilation every year to the Hindu Sanghatanists in Hindustan. It was natural therefore that on his happy and romantic sixty-first birthday, which dawned after Savarkar had faced bullets, chains, cells, and years of internment, the Hindus should display their nation-wide rejoicings with unbounded vigour and enthusiasm. Opportunists, careerists and arm-chair politicians do reach in the natural course the day of their Diamond Jubilee; but it is a freak of fate, a fit of destiny, if a De Valera, a Mazzini, a Garibaldi or a Savarkar reaches the day of his Diamond Jubilee. India's greatest patriot of his generation, Savarkar was to rot in a cell of the Andamans till his

seventy-seventh birthday and was to be released at the end of the year 1961, if survived!

Therefore on this unique day mass meetings were held in the capital cities of all provinces and were addressed by eminent and prominent personalities. Big functions were held at the district and taluka towns; various public, social, literary and religious institutions passed resolutions in appreciation of Savarkar's great patriotic, literary and social services. He was also presented with purses and public addresses as a token of gratitude and in appreciation of his great services in the cause of Freedom. The members of the Chitpavan Brahmin Sangh, Bombay, presented him ceremoniously with an axe (Parshu) and a red turban. They hailed him as a Parashuram! For a moment they were happy to live in the past.

On the evening of May 28, 1943, before a mammoth congregation at Poona, Savarkar was presented with a purse of rupees one lakh and twenty-thousand by the Savarkar Reception Committee, Poona, under the presidency of N. C. Kelkar. Savarkar was touched with the boundless love and gratitude his countrymen showered on a nation-wide scale on the day. Amidst pin-drop silence he said to the vast multitude: "I am really overwhelmed with the feelings of love and gratitude you have showered upon me which I cannot adequately express in words. Some sentiments are too delicate for words. It is a forgetful fit of destiny that I am amongst you today. Nobody could have predicted that I could survive the two transportations the severity of which on more than one occasion drove me to the thought of suicide. We lived in our veritable grave. Through fire and water we have stood by our noble resolve. And when I came out I was not my personal self. I was but a shriek of the distressed Hindutva." Next day, the Poona Municipality gave him an address of welcome. He told the meeting on the occasion that life for a century had no fascination for him. Striving terribly for the goal alone had given him the supreme joy of life. He wished that soldiers fighting for national independence should march over the bridges of the dead bodies of his colleagues and his own, and win the goal.

At Poona, on the same day, great ones of Marathi literature honoured Savarkar as a literary genius. The address solemnly stated: "It required Lord Krishna to say the Geeta to inspire

Arjun with the spirit of fighting. The Geeta has been since then the guiding pole-star and the beacon-light to the anxious world. Your place is among such authors of immortal fame. Unflagging is the pursuit of your ideal and conquering is your mission."

A similar function was held in his honour in Bombay at the Gowalia Tank Maidan on June 6, on a grand scale, under the presidentship of Sir R. P. Paranjpe, a former Principal of the Fergusson College from which Savarkar was graduated. Speaking on the occasion, Paranjpe appreciated the great services of Savarkar to the country, marvelled at Savarkar's unabated persistence in the national struggle and at his mental and bodily vigour even after such a dreadful incarceration and a long internment. The eminent Liberal leader then asserted that Savarkar's militarization policy was dictated by sound political realism, and appreciated Savarkar's great work of Hindu consolidation and his valuable work for the uplift of the Depressed Classes. Paranjpe blamed Gandhi for admixing religion with politics. He said that he could understand Savarkar's legitimate opposition to Gandhi's policy of appeasement at all costs and reminded the country of the fate of Chamberlain at the hands of Hitler.

K. F. Nariman, Jamnadas Mehta and Chandragupta Vedalankar were the other principal speakers on the occasion. Then a purse and a silver replica of the s.s. MOREA, from which Savarkar had escaped at Marseilles, were presented to Savarkar on behalf of the public of Bombay. In reply to the great honour done to him, Savarkar reiterated his belief that nationalism itself was a step to a Human Government, that the Hindus were the national majority of Hindustan, and that there should be an Indian State based on the principal of 'one man one vote' in Hindustan.

On behalf of the people of Berar, Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated on August 1, 1943, at Amraoti with great eclat under the presidentship of Babarao Khaparde. Savarkar was presented with a purse. In reply to the great honour paid to him Savarkar explained how he was fulfilling the mission of Tilak. Nagpur, too, celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Savarkar and presented a purse to Savarkar at a grand function. Dr. Varadarajalu Naidu was the main speaker on the occasion. Dr. Moonje presided over the celebration. On this great occasion Nagpur University conferred upon Savarkar a Doctorate of

Letters in appreciation of Savarkar's great literary powers. What a contrast to the attitude of the University of Bombay! It not only failed to show any gratitude for or recognition of Savarkar's services to the nation and literature by conferring any special Degree on him, but also did not care to restore Savarkar's B.A. Degree so unjustly wrested from him when he was fighting for Indian Independence. Oh ingratitude! is thy name political animosity of men in power in India?

A purse on behalf of the public of Ahmedabad was at a later stage presented to Savarkar at Ahmedabad on August 22, 1945. The purse had been subscribed on the occasion of Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee, but owing to the recurrent illness of Savarkar the celebration had to be postponed.

Except Tilak no other leader was similarly honoured in Maharashtra and the services of no Indian Leader except Gandhi upto that day were publicly appreciated on such a nation-wide scale.

The main thing about the purses presented to Savarkar was an unequivocal declaration by the organizers, promoters and workers that they were offered unconditionally for his personal use as a token of nation's gratitude to Savarkar for his untold sacrifices, unparalleled sufferings and unequalled services to the country. Still some politicians like Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who were not perturbed at the mismanagement of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, grew critical about the utility of the purse presented to Savarkar for personal use. And all this when Congressmen as a group had boycotted the purse. If they were unconcerned with it, why could they not purse up their aspersions within their lips?

In a special statement Savarkar acknowledged his debt to the gratitude shown by the whole nation for patriotic work, sufferings and sacrifice and said with a moving heart: "Still, even while I was moving on, loaded with garlands, through the pressing and cheering crowds on my 61st birthday, I continued to feel in a mood of aloofness that it was but a romantic accident on the path of life and I must be prepared to face a counter-transfer scene at any moment when all this blossom, silver and gold, might once again get transformed and hardened into iron and steel and fiery ordeal."

* * *

About this time Jinnah desired to capture power in Muslim-majority provinces. So he sought co-operation of Hindu Ministers to install ministries. Congressmen wanted the Hindu Ministers to give up the ministerships. Savarkar asked the Hindusabha-minded ministers not to resign. So Dr. Hemandas Wadwani refused to resign his ministership in the Sind Cabinet. Jinnah met Dr. Wadwani at a party. He requested Dr. Wadwani to ask Savarkar whether he would discuss with him the proposal for formation of Coalition Governments in Provinces.

Savarkar's main object in asking the Hindusabha-minded Ministers not to resign was that neither the British bureaucrats nor the Muslim Ministers should run amuck. So he directed the Hindu leaders to form Coalition Governments without committing themselves to any scheme detrimental to the interests and integrity of India. And when Dr. Wadwani met him in Bombay and handed over an invitation of Jinnah to tea, Savarkar said that he was prepared to meet Jinnah and discuss the question of Coalition Governments on the basis of any alternative scheme to Pakistan, but it was a national point and so Jinnah must come to him as he (Savarkar) was the leader of the majority. Jinnah replied through Dr. Wadwani that he was senior to Savarkar in age and in politics and as he was the first to invite, Savarkar should come to him. Savarkar said no. Then Jinnah suggested to Dr. Wadwani that Savarkar and he would discuss the question in a car. Savarkar's reply was in the negative. Thereupon Dr. Wadwani suggested that both should come to his room in the Majestic Hotel, Bombay. Both of them agreed. Jinnah expressed to Dr. Wadwani his high regard for Savarkar.

In the meantime, Dr. Hemandas Wadwani gave an interview and gave an idea of the proposed discussions between Jinnah and Savarkar. The proposal for Coalition Governments were discussed all over India in leading papers. Jinnah had seen the Viceroy and secured his consent to the formation of Coalition Governments. He had given up his demand for 50 per cent representation in Coalition Ministries and agreed to form them on the population basis as suggested by Savarkar.

Commenting on this new alignment, M. N. Roy's *Independent India* said that it would bring about a new alignment of political forces and would prove to be epoch-making. "It is refresh-

ing to note," said *Independent India*,[3] "that Mr. Savarkar, in spite of his deplorably long and forced absence from active political life, has not allowed his otherwise justifiable bitterness to vitiate his judgment. As president of the Hindu Mahasabha, he has of late given evidence of commendable realism. Under his guidance many Hindu Mahasabhaite legislators are about to join hands with the Muslim League in the formation of Ministries in various provinces. Mr. Savarkar is frankly opposed to the Muslim League ideal of Pakistan. But he has not demanded, as price of co-operation of the Muslim League, denunciation of that ideal. What he wants according to a recent statement is freedom for the Hindu Mahasabha to carry on agitation against Pakistan." *Independent India* was glad to state that this new alignment killed the myth that there could not be co-operation between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League.

But that was not to be. When Jinnah was anxious to meet Savarkar, Savarkar outdid Jinnah in resorting to delaying tactics and egoistic gestures. In the meantime, Jinnah sensed that the atmosphere was not congenial to the talks and he suspected some trouble. He told Dr. Hemandas[4] Wadwani that it would not be possible for him to come for the talks for two months. And immediately after, on July 26, 1943, Jinnah was attacked by Rafiq Sabir, a Muslim fanatic belonging to the Khaksar Organisation. Jinnah had a narrow escape from the murderous attack. Savarkar, who held that Indians should adopt constitutional means inside and revolutionary methods outside, issued a statement, although Jinnah belonged to a rival political party, and condemned the act saying that "such internecine, unprovoked murderous assaults—even if the motive be political or fanatical —constituted a stain on the public and civic life and should be strongly condemned." Savarkar's candid regard for purity of civic life was appreciated by Mr. Jinnah himself, who wrote to Bhide Guruji, Savarkar's Secretary, thanking Savarkar for his good wishes. That was the first and last occasion when a letter passed between these two great leaders.

The Mahasabha having now firmly held to its anti-Pakistan resolve, Savarkar resigned at the end of July 1943, the president-

[3] June 13, 1943.
[4] Dr. Hemandas Wadwani narrated the whole account to the author.

ship of the Hindu Mahasabha for the third time. This time, too, his resignation was not accepted; statesmen like Dr. Moonje said that it was unsafe to change the horse in midstream.

But in spite of indifferent health, Savarkar's vigilant eyes were surveying the moves of the Pakistanis. A difficult situation was arising in Assam. Long before, Savarkar had warned the Assam Hindus of the impending danger. This time also Savarkar invited the attention of the Hindus to the imminent dangerous fate Assam would suffer at the hands of the homeless hungry hordes of Muslims from Bengal and Orissa immigrating into Assam with a veiled plan of undermining the overwhelming majority of the Hindus in Assam and turning it into a part of their proposed Pakistan. Hindu leaders in the Congress party could not sense the danger. Though their leadership and nationalism depended for their life upon the strength of the Hindus, yet they pooh-poohed the calamity and ejaculated that it mattered not to them if there was a Muslim majority or a Hindu one in Assam. Savarkar bewailed the lack of foresight on the part of the Congress leaders, who failed to see that " that very difference measures the distance between Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan. It is the self-forgetting and suicidal mentality, which has smitten the Hindu race like a national curse and has been responsible in the main for the ills the Hindus are subjected to."

At this time an event of historical importance took place. In the month of June 1943, the League Ministry in Sind banned Chapter XIV of the *Satyartha Prakash*, the sacred work of the Arya Samaj. None was affected more deeply than Savarkar and he came forward to defend the religious liberty of the Arya Samaj. In an appeal to the Viceroy he stated: " I emphatically draw your Excellency's attention to the contemplated action against the *Satyartha Prakash* by the Sind Ministry. That book is the scripture of the Arya Samajists and is revered by the Hindus in general. Every scripture including the *Bible* has something to say against other sects or religions. But no Hindu Ministry ever contemplated any action against non-Hindu scriptures." Savarkar was the only great leader who strongly and boldly protested against the unjust ban on the *Satyartha Prakash*. And that is why the Arya Samaj leader, Ghanashyam Das Gupta, sought his guidance in the matter.

Neither the Congress press nor their leaders raised even their little finger against this, for they feared as usual that their Muslim brothers' sentiments would be hurt. It was a religious matter and that too concerning the Hindus! The Congress leaders were progressive men. And yet they were intelligent and progressive enough to struggle for restoring the Khilafat to Turkastan which she herself had banished. And this is not at all strange. Congressmen, who always walked on the tips of their toes to search for a Muslim grievance and to defend and appease it at the cost of Hindu interests and could later on move an adjournment motion in the Central Assembly over the execution of Pir Pagaro, did not feel an iota of sympathy with the Hindus for the unjust ban on their legitimate right of freedom of conscience. There was this method in their Muslim mania. They kept neutral over any problem affecting Hindu interests and their motto was either to keep mum over Muslim demands or to support them. And for this lack of sympathy and support on the part of the Congressmen to the cause of the Arya Samaj, the Arya Samajists themselves were in no small measure responsible. A multitude of the followers of the Arya Samaj had changed their holy faith for Gandhism for all practical purposes and adopted Gandhi as their godfather, who openly attributed narrow-mindedness to their prophet.

Then came the famine that smote Bengal, taking an unparalleled toll of human lives and reducing human beings and houses to dust. The Muslims tried to utilize the appalling situation for their worldly benefit. An organized Muslim campaign to convert hundreds of starving Hindu women and children to Islamic faith was reported to have been carried on during this man-made famine—a famine set in by a dark fanatic regime of the Muslim League Ministry. Savarkar attacked these nefarious active proselytizing designs of the Moslems. He shouted that the Muslims spent their funds on Muslim famine-stricken population alone. While as usual nationalist leaders like Sarojini Naidu sent a cheque earmarked for the Muslim sufferers, the Hindu funds and trainloads of foodstuff were distributed amongst all the sufferers in a cosmopolitan way. Savarkar said that the Muslims were not only fed doubly, but they also used their surplus for dragging Hindu children and women into their fold. So Savarkar urged upon the Hindu

leaders and organizations to help, rescue, feed, clothe and shelter Hindu sufferers alone and warned them publicly: "Let the Hindus remember that suicide is no humanity. Humanity that allows itself to be abused to encourage inhuman activities, is no virtue but a crime." Some sordid journalists of false cosmopolitan view and hue honestly decried this realistic attitude of Savarkar; but slurred over the point whether the basis of Savarkar's advice was real or not.

About this time the official Vatican Organ, *Observators Romano,* had declared: "The Christian light shines already in the subcontinent of India. We hope one day it will blaze forth in full splendour." Savarkar was amused at this mistaken belief of the Pope and cabled a statement to the United Press of America, Washington, retorting squarely: "Surely the Vatican could not have chosen more absurdly ridiculous a moment to wish India to blaze forth with Christianity than this one, when Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill, Roosevelt and the other leaders of almost all Christian nations are vowing vengeance against each other and singing hallelujahs to Moloch in churches meant for Christ and when the Vatican, the capital of the High Priest of the Prince of Peace itself which was only yesterday honouring Mussolini, is today blazing forth in full splendour under the bombardment from air and praying through the mouth of cannon to save itself!"

Savarkar hit the nail on the head when he further said, "Physician heal thyself," and pointed out to the Pope that "his clock was behind time; the Christian light had come to shine dimmer ever since the Shuddhi and Sanghatan movement had set in, belying the hopes of Macaulay, who wished India to pulsate with Christianity. The result was that thousands of Hindus, who had embraced Christianity, were now repudiating it and re-embracing the Hindu fold and getting re-assimilated into the Hindu Nation not only religiously but also culturally, politically and socially." This view of Savarkar was highly appreciated by the Jews in India and particularly their spokesmen at Madras.

In November 1943 a memorable event in the social history of Maharashtra took place. It was the centenary celebration of the Marathi stage. Savarkar was elected president and he presided over the functions at Sangli in the first week of Novem-

ber. It was a unique honour for a unique personality. The stage and screen luminaries, playwrights and *litterateurs* of Maharashtra did well in paying this unique honour to Savarkar, their foremost man of letters, poet and playwright. Savarkar presided over several literary conferences and functions but none so significant. It was, however, a pity that on this important occasion he delivered the address *extempore*. He had no time to study and prepare a suitable address to so important a gathering. Naturally his speech could not evoke favourable comments.

During the same week the second millenary of Vikramaditya the Great was celebrated at Sangli by the Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha. Savarkar addressed a memorable mammoth public meeting on the bank of the river Krishna at Sangli and spoke on the maker of history. He told the vast multitude that Vikramaditya lived for two thousand years in the memory of his race, not because he was merely a great king in whose peaceful reign, life and literature, art and learning prospered, but because he defeated, demolished, and drove out the Shaks and the Huns, the alien and non-Hindu invaders, and liberated the Bharat Varsha. The whole of Hindustan felt enthused, inspired and animated, said Savarkar, at the mention of the name of Vikramaditya as the *Shakari* and *Hunari*, the conqueror of the Shaks and the Huns.

December came and Savarkar was again elected for the seventh successive time president of the Hindu Mahasabha session to be held at Amritsar. despite his resignation pending before the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and his repeated requests to the contrary. But owing to a severe attack of bronchitis he was confined to bed and Dr. Mookerjee officiated in his place.

The political deadlock was still unsolved. The British Government was busy with the operations of the war and was not in a mood to discuss the deadlock. But efforts were made by some Liberal leaders in that direction. Sir Maharaj Kumar of Vijay Nagar expressed a desire to know the views of Savarkar on the All-Party Conference to be convened shortly thereafter to solve the deadlock. Savarkar replied to him that there was no harm in trying again. Sir Jagdish Prasad had an interview with Savarkar at Savarkar Sadan on February 24, 1944, and dis-

cussed current political problems. Early in the month, the Sub-Consul of the U.S.A. interviewed Savarkar to ascertain Savarkar's views on War and the Indian political situation.

In February 1944, Kasturba Gandhi died a glorious death befitting an Aryan lady in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona. Savarkar's political differences with her husband were quite well known. Yet the personal loss of Gandhi had his condolences and sympathies. In a telegraphic condolence message to Gandhi, Savarkar said: "With a heavy heart I mourn the death of Kasturba. A faithful wife, and an affectionate mother, she died a noble death in the service of God and Man. Your grief is shared by a whole nation." Such good feelings could come only from a heart devoid of any spite against Gandhi as a person.

But the followers of Gandhi afterwards dragged the deceased woman's name into an appeal for a fund in her name. It was not a fund which all partymen were to expend on a national cause in its truest sense. Again the nationalism of its trustees was likely to be the same for which the Tilak Swaraj Fund was utilized. Savarkar could not tolerate this politics in the good name of Kasturba especially as it was feared that the Fund was likely to be used for anti-Hindu purposes. So Savarkar asked the Hindu Sanghatanist public not to contribute even a pie to the Kasturba Memorial Fund and to supply the sinews for the propagandistic struggle of the Congress to be used against the Hindu Mahasabha. He reminded the Hindu Sanghatanists how the Tilak Swaraj Fund was utilized to kill the spirit of the Tilakites, the policy of Tilak and his party, and to aid the Khilafatists.

As for the idea of a memorial to the good patriotic woman, he appreciated it, but asked Congressmen whether they had ever cared for the thousand and one widows of the revolutionary martyred heroes, who had pined away in miserable widowhood. What Savarkar suggested to the people was that if at all they wanted to erect any memorial to Kasturba, they should also do so to the memory of the patriotic and pious souls like Madame Cama, Gopikabai Phadke, Satyabhamabai Tilak—who died while Tilak was at Mandalay—, Yashodabai Savarkar, ladies from the Parmananda family and numerous other ladies who were as patriotic as Kusturba. Savarkar also emphasized that the Kasturba Memorial Fund being a party fund might be used by

Gandhi at his sweet will for the propaganda of his ideals which Savarkar believed to be detrimental to the ultimate interests and the integrity of Hindustan. The good name of Kasturba which Savarkar honoured with due respect had nothing to do with the political propaganda of Gandhi. The history of the Kasturba Memorial Fund, it was said, proved to be not in any way encouraging from the point of Hindu interests and the integrity of Hindustan. Whatever the differences, Savarkar, having asked his followers to boycott the Kasturba Memorial Fund, should not have ungenerously raised a discordant note. He should have started a separate Fund for the memorial of the patriotic and self-sacrificing women. Thus he unfortunately gave a handle to the Congress press. Gandhi, who said that Savarkar left no platform to condemn him, was extremely sorry that Savarkar had descended to the level of attacking a dead woman,[5] which, in fact, Savarkar had not done.

In March 1944, the Congressmen, who were freshly filtered out of the jails after the abrupt failure of their Quit India Movement, began to realize the frustration of their boycott of the Central Assembly. They now attended the Assembly and outvoted the Finance Bill in collaboration with the Muslim League. Here was a combination of the august protagonists and their august antagonists. The Muslim Leaguers, who were smarting under the Viceroy's stress in his announcement on the geographical, political, military and economic unity of India, seized the opportunity of browbeating the Viceroy and so they used the Congress Assembly members as a cat's paw to serve their ends by throwing the Bill out. Savarkar's unfailing insight saw the danger in this event. So he endorsed the view taken by the Mahasabha M.L.A.s in the Central Assembly led by Jamnadas Mehta who did not support the League-Congress unholy alliance. The Congress party and papers severely criticised this non-co-operation on the part of the Assembly Members of the Hindu Mahasabha as a pro-British attitude. The stand taken by Savarkar in regard to this alliance was vindicated, as will be seen in the next chapter, with a vengeance by the disclosure of the Bhulabhai-Liaqat Ali Khan pact which was mooted by this alliance. The Congress party hailed the pyrrhic victory won by the alliance as a feather in their white caps. Sir Tej

[5] *Forum*, Souvenir Edition, 18 April 1948.

Bahadur Sapru characterised the white-feathered victory with his failing sight as the first rung of the ladder; but he must have soon discovered that the ladder was one that led to Pakistan.

Soon after this Gandhi was released on May 6, 1944, because of his bad health. Speaking of this event, Savarkar said that this action on the part of the British Government was a humane one. He also wished Gandhi speedy recovery and urged the Government to release Nehru and other leaders as well. What a patriotic sympathy for the compatriots! Had an iota of this sympathy been felt by Pandit Nehru and others for Savarkar, it would have added lustre to their patriotic selflessness. But they never did it; nor did they show any inclination to do so even when Savarkar lay in the hospital or was bed-ridden, not to speak of Savarkar's arrest at Gaya in 1941 when Nehru and his Civil Liberties Union kept mum.

Shortly afterwards Savarkar had to issue a statement in reply to a speech made by Jinnah at Sialkot. In his speech at Sialkot, Jinnah referred to a statement of Savarkar and told the Muslims that Savarkar and Moonje had instructed the Punjab Hindus to join the Muslim League in forming coalitions 'when it was inevitable to do so.' So Jinnah advised the Moslems to make it inevitable for the Hindus to co-operate with the League in forming the ministry. Upon this Savarkar replied that the report of his instructions as quoted by Jinnah was meagre and misleading; and if Jinnah construed it as an instrument to bend the Hindus to his will, then, he said, he should rest assured that the Hindus would never bend to the dictates of the League. Jinnah wanted in those days a Hindu leader to support his demands and his wish was father to the thought. What Savarkar in fact was driving at was that he was prepared to discuss any sensible, honourable and workable proposal for the Hindu Muslim unity.

One does not see in this any harm to national interests and one wonders why Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya should have twisted the statement of Savarkar in the history of the Indian National Congress. Savarkar had advised the Hindu leaders in the Muslim majority provinces to join ministries formed by the Muslim League without committing themselves to any scheme detrimental to the interests and to the integrity of Hindustan. In criticizing this stand, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in fact, blamed

Savarkar for having tried to apply a check to the Leaguers who were running amuck in those provinces. Small wonder that such a move could not but be a wrong strategy in the eyes of Gandhian politics in which Dr. Pattabhi had been steeped for two decades.

In the second week of June 1944, M. N. Roy paid a courtesy call on Savarkar with his wife, Ellen Roy. Savarkar was then unwell. Yet the talk between the two leaders became very interesting when it touched the Muslim problem in its rational and realistic aspect. Two giants well known for their rationalism crossed swords with each other, and the great theorist in Roy had to face hard realities respecting the Muslim problem from all points. During this month the Government of India appointed Sir R. P. Paranjpe High Commissioner for Australia. He was the first Indian to be the High Commissioner for Australia. Savarkar expressed satisfaction at this appointment.

Meanwhile a crisis was coming to a head in the Jaipur State. As expected by Savarkar, Sir Mirza Ismail in fact persisted in his pro-Muslim policy in Jaipur. He was stated to have stifled Hindi and the Nagari script, supported Urdu and demolished temples that came in the way of his town-planning, but left mosques untouched. There was a strong agitation in the State against his holding the office any longer. Pandit Ramchandra Sharma, a leader in that State, resorted to a fast in Delhi, protesting against the anti-Hindu rule of Sir Mirza Ismail. Savarkar upheld Pandit Sharma's demands and desired him to break his fast. After fifty-four days Sharma broke his fast with no small amount of success. For facts, figures and fairness had motivated his fast and they exposed the real state of affairs in Jaipur.

In the third week of June 1944, Savarkar had again an important interview with a personal representative of President Roosevelt, Lampton Berry. During the two-hour talk Lampton Berry discussed with Savarkar his views and policy towards the future Indo-American relations!

Towards the end of June the Bombay Government put a ban on the pilgrimage of the Hindus to Pandharpur and Savarkar successfully directed an agitation of the Hindu Sanghatanists for securing the religious freedom of the people.

By now the I.N.A. had made some progress in their fight for Independence. Its leaders were grateful to Savarkar, their

inspirer. The leader and the founder of the I.N.A. both addressed special messages to Savarkar on the Radio. In his message Netaji Bose said on June 25, 1944, at night on Singapore Radio: "When due to misguided political whims and lack of vision almost all the leaders of the Congress party are decrying all the soldiers in the Indian Army as mercenaries, it is heartening to know that Veer Savarkar is fearlessly exhorting the youth of India to enlist in the Armed Forces. These enlisted youth themselves provide us with trained men from which we draw the soldiers of our Indian National Army."[6]

Ras Behari Bose said in his Radio talk addressed to Savarkar: "In saluting you I have the joy of doing my duty towards one of my elderly comrades-in-arms. In saluting you, I am saluting the symbol of sacrifice itself." Paying homage to Savarkar's unexampled sacrifice, untold sufferings and matchless courage, he further said: "I can see God's divine hand clearly behind your unconditional release. You have once more proved your real greatness by propagating the theme that our politics must never depend upon the foreign politics of others. England's enemy must be our friend."[7] Ras Behari concluded with Bande Mataram, reiterating his belief that Savarkar's leadership was the greatest hope inside India. Is any further evidence necessary to prove that the very I.N.A. movement, which Savarkar's opponents exploited, was the outcome of his ideology, politics and his great book on '1857', which provided the I.N.A. with slogans, battle cries and vision, and inspired them to fight the battle of freedom? He was the spiritual father of the I.N.A.

The first thing Savarkar did after receiving the big purses was that he stopped receiving monetary help from Raja Narayanlal Bansilal and the Hindu Rashtriya Nidhi. The Kesari Trust also used to send him monthly help for several years, but Savarkar had stopped receiving it some months before. A man of patriotic and philanthropic heart, Bansilal sent monthly monetary help to the Savarkar brothers for years. No other single man spent so silently and unselfishly such a large amount of money on the Savarkar brothers. But having now ample money at his disposal, Savarkar did not think it proper to raise the monthly

[6] Ras Behari Bose's message to Savarkar quoted in *Indian Independence League's Publication.*

[7] *Free Hindusthan*, 27 January 1946.

pittance he paid to his private secretary Gajananrao Damle, his body-guard Appa Kasar and his secretary A.S. *alias* Bhide Guruji. Though poorly paid they all served him loyally. The private secretary and the body-guard suffered silently. But Bhide had his children to support. He was not being paid even a junior clerk's salary. So he requested his master to consider the question. But the master, who was always afraid that his family would come to want, blankly refused to do so, although on a previous occasion he had raised the pittance by Rs. 25. Bhide thereafter resigned his post from October 1, 1944, to start an independent political life and an English Weekly. Savarkar knew not the use of a good secretary or a good office. He gave interviews to eminent journalists and held discussions with statesmen in his bedroom which almost all visitors described as shabby. He was not used to a modern democratic set-up.

CHAPTER 19

Fight for A United India

Now we come to a very important chapter in the life of Savarkar. By now Rajaji, a former member of the All-India Congress Committee, released to the press his correspondence with Jinnah concerning his offer to the League leader which was fathered by Gandhi during his fast at the Aga Khan Palace. Rajaji had now advanced to the far end of the proposed Pakistan scheme. Speaking on the birthday anniversary of the Prophet at Bangalore, on April 12, 1943, Rajaji had said: "I stand for Pakistan because I do not want that State where we Hindus and Muslims are both not honoured. Let Muslims have Pakistan. If we agree then our country will be saved."[1] Jinnah in his press interview on July 30, 1944, referred to the correspondence with Rajaji and the proposal put forward by him and said: "As regards the merits of the proposal, Gandhi is offering a shadow, a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan and thus trying to pass off as having met our Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand." In one of his telegrams sent to Mr. Jinnah and now released to the press, Rajaji said: "Mr. Gandhi, though not vested with representative or special capacity in this matter, definitely approved of my proposals and authorized me to approach you on that basis. The weight of his opinion would most probably secure Congress acceptance."[2]

Mark the secret promise of the truth-seeker, Gandhi, who abhorred secrecy in any matter. Read this further confession of Rajaji in his statement of July 16, 1944, issued from Panchgani in which he said: "It is now *two years* since I started work, even though I had secured Gandhi's unqualified support to the scheme and it conceded all that the Muslim League had ever

[1] Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 507.
[2] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 31 July 1944.

demanded in its resolution of 1940."[3] Mark the words 'two years'. Was Savarkar's reading of the mind of Gandhi and his satellites incorrect, his foresight blurring and the charges he levelled against them false? Was Savarkar wrong in his devastating attack on Rajaji's role and Gandhi's goal when they were actually hatching the secret move against the integrity of India?

Rajaji's new offer contained the following terms: That the Muslim League should endorse the Indian demand for Indian Independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional Interim Government and conceded that if the Muslim majority provinces in the West and East decide by a plebiscite held on the basis of adult franchise in favour of a Sovereign Independent State separate from Hindustan, the decision should be given effect to; that in the event of separation a mutual agreement should be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce and communications and that transfer of population should be voluntary. In the meantime Gandhi wrote a letter to Jinnah asking him for an interview. Jinnah, who was well-drilled, like the German war machines, in conducting political negotiations, replied on July 24, 1944, from Srinagar to Gandhi's letter of 17th July from Panchgani that he would be glad to receive Gandhi at his house in Bombay after his return. Jinnah saw his life's opportunity. When the scheme was out, there was a flutter for a while among the Congress circles and press; but they were stunned to see that their holy father Gandhi was acting as the Godfather to the unholy scheme of partitioning their Motherland and thereafter they culpably kept silent on the nefarious move.

The Liberal leaders, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir V. N. Chandavarkar, described Rajaji's offer as a danger to India's security.

Savarkar, who believed that India had been a united whole through ages, curtly stated: "It is really unjust to look upon Rajaji alone as the villain of this tragedy. His fault is that he allowed himself to play as a willing tool in the hands of Gandhiji." Savarkar flew into a rage at this beginning of the end of the United India. He added that "the Indian provinces

[3] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 31 July 1944.

were not the private properties of Gandhiji and Rajaji so that they could make a gift of them to anyone they liked."[4] Savarkar further declared that the Quit India Movement of the Congress did ultimately end in the Split India Demand as foretold by him, issued an appeal to the Hindus in general and Hindu Sanghatanists in particular to denounce this nefarious proposal for Pakistan uncompromisingly and fundamentally, and asked the people to observe the first week of August 1944, as the United India and Anti-Pakistan week.

The tussle between the forces of United India led by Savarkar and the disruptive forces led by Jinnah and supported by Gandhi and Rajaji aroused keen interest among political observers abroad. The American papers sought Savarkar's views regarding Gandhi-Rajaji proposal. So Savarkar cabled to the United Press of America, Washington, that the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-India representative body of the Hindus, condemned emphatically Gandhi's proposal to vivisect India allowing the Muslims to form separate independent States, and added that the Hindu Mahasabhaites would never tolerate the breaking up of the unity of India, their Fatherland and Holyland.[5] The same message was cabled by Savarkar to L. S. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India. The political situation was worsening. Meetings supporting Rajaji's proposal at many places ended in pandemonium, huge demonstrations were held against his formula and dissatisfaction against it was expressed on a country-wide scale.

After a few days, Gandhi started to meet Jinnah at Bombay. The special train carrying Gandhi left Wardha for Bombay. It was guarded by the Khaksar Muslim volunteers and protected by British soldiers who 'happened' to travel in the same train. A batch of Hindusabha volunteers led by L. G. Thatte had picketed for two or three days before the hut of Gandhi at Sevagram and tried to prevent Gandhi from meeting Jinnah. But they were arrested. Bitter opposition to Gandhi was demonstrated all along the way.[6] At several stations, black flag demonstrations were staged by Hindu Sanghatanists and other

[4] Statement of 14 July 1944.
[5] Cablegram of 26 July 1944.
[6] Nathuram Godse never picketed at Sevagram. Pyarelal's account at page 86 of *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase,* Vol. I, is incorrect and malicious.

nationalists. And lo! On his arrival in Bombay, Gandhi and his commercialised press appealed to the country to observe restraint and the people were asked to pray for the success of the very talks which were dangerous to the unity and integrity of India. Papers like the *Times of India*, Bombay, that change their minds with change of the masters, went a long way in welcoming the readiness on Gandhi's part to concede the principle of Pakistan as 'a constructive contribution towards the Congress-League settlement' though the proposal was an avowedly destructive contribution to the Indian nation and to the integrity of India.

Throughout this period Savarkar went on doing his duty of cautioning the nation against the imminent tragedy. In a statement then issued he drew the attention of the people to the grevious political errors Gandhi and the Congress were committing, and amidst that bitter atmosphere he referred rather indignantly to the part Gandhi was playing: "The monomaniacal fit can hardly go further; nor sin could be darker. But the darkest sin of vivisection of our Motherland and Holyland is still going to crown his political career, and all this in the name of non-violence, truth and God!" [7]

Even with the strong opposition the nation demonstrated to his formula, Rajaji had the cheek to say that he found almost all important sections of the Indian people ready to support his Pakistani proposal except the Hindu Mahasabha which was determined to offer uncompromising opposition. He acknowledged publicly that he had derived inspiration [8] when he was young from Savarkar's book, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. Rajaji further referred to Savarkar's attitude to his formula and said: "Mr. Savarkar has stated that it is the duty of every Hindu Sanghatanist to denounce the proposals. Mr. Savarkar may thus define the duty of the Hindu Sanghatanists, but what about the duty of the Indian Sanghatanists whose aim is to be free and not only to be organized against the Muslims?" In his scathing and telling retort, Savarkar said: "This was a case of Rajaji against Rajaji." He added that Rajaji would bear witness to the undeniable truth that he who ushered the word Independence in political currency for the first time in the

[7] Statement of 13 August 1944.
[8] The *Bombay Chronicle*, 10 March 1943.

recent history of India by proclaiming absolute political Independence of India, rose in revolt and invested the question of Indian Independence with international importance, must be knowing at least something of what that Independence, freedom, and Indian Sanghatan really implied!" Savarkar proceeded in his master hit: "I do not know whether Rajaji's acquaintance with Sanskrit is on a par with that of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the knight-errant, who is now out to prove that the Arabianized and Persianized Urdu language and the Urdu script are better entitled to be the national language and national script of the Hindus than Sanskritized Hindi. But Rajaji is after all born in an Acharya family; it would not be far from truth if I presume that he must be knowing this much that the word Sanghatan means pre-eminently consolidation, integration, and unification and can never mean disintegration, dislocation, vivisection or decentralisation."

Savarkar further asked Rajaji whether the latter who supported the principle of vivisection of India was an Indian Sanghatanist or those who opposed vivisection, and disintegration were Indian Sanghatanists? Who could claim to be Indian Sanghatanists? Those who led a butcher's knife at the neck of the Motherland or those who wanted to ward off the murderous attack? Never did Rajaji dare look at Savarkar again through the press. So smashing was the hit—a Savarkarian stroke, telling and crushing!

The talks of Gandhi with Jinnah in the palatial building of Jinnah at Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay, lasted for about three long weeks in September 1944. Jinnah was stubborn but shrewd, ruthless but realist in his own way in his demand for the vivisection of India. The underlining theme of Gandhi's arguments was that the British Government should be ousted first and then the right of self-determination would be given to the Muslims. Jinnah insisted that the settlement between the Hindus and Muslims should be first made. Gandhi clearly agreed to the principle of Partition as between brothers and promised that though he differed from Jinnah on the general basis, he would recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation as contained in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore of 1940. In a letter to Jinnah, Gandhi said: "If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall

be agreed that those areas shall form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be constituted into two Sovereign Independent States." Lastly, Gandhi said: "The League will, however, be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate."

Thus the Muslim participation in the freedom struggle was nowhere guaranteed; but the partition of India was guaranteed by Gandhi to Jinnah. Gandhi paid nineteen visits to Jinnah's house without receiving a single in return, even observed his usual silence on Sundays instead of Mondays to facilitate the progress of the talks and returned with an unpleasant face from Mount Pleasant. The master diplomat in Jinnah knew that now the British Government was required to sign his nefarious plot against the Indian integrity. Thus Gandhi, who had regarded Pakistan as a sin, a patent untruth, a denial of God, and the undoing of the work of a good many ancestors agreed to lay the axe at the root of Hindustan and to cut off the holiest part of India for the mere asking of the Muslims.

Savarkar's heart was torn with anxiety; his anguish was unimaginable. A true son of India, he was grappling to save the neck of his Motherland from the knife of the butchers, fighting against the colossal betrayal by great leaders, against the long purses of the multi-millionaires who sided with those leaders and the great guilty press that saw the treachery being enacted, but shed no tears, not to speak of offering any opposition to it. Savarkar shouted: "Hark countrymen, the Indian National Congress, which was ushered into existence to consolidate the Indian Nation, has itself betrayed its sole mission, the very justification of its existence and falling a victim to the pseudo-nationalistic malady, has dealt the unkindest cut of all at the Indian national integrity." The keeper turned verily a poacher. As balanced a statesman as Srinivas Sastri said that it was impossible for a genuine nationalist to keep silent while the integrity of our Motherland was being bartered.

To all sensible politicians and the national-minded people in general who publicly protested against the Pakistani proposal, Savarkar fervently appealed in a statement to organize a whirlwind protest against the sinful designs of the Congress to break

up the integrity of Hindustan, and not to keep mum without raising a single word of protest against the political matricide. As a counter-move to the Gandhi-Rajaji formula, Savarkar contemplated to hold an Akhand Hindustan Leaders' Conference on the 7th and 8th of October 1944. He invited all those leaders to the Conference who had taken up a definite attitude to oppose any efforts aimed at breaking up the integrity of Hindustan as a Nation and a State on any grounds whatsoever, whether religious, cultural, linguistic or economic.

Accordingly the Akhand Hindustan Leaders' Conference was held on the 7th and 8th October 1944, at New Delhi. More than three hundred leaders including Master Tara Singh from the Punjab attended the conference. His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of Puri also was present and blessed the conference in a dignified Sanskrit speech. The Hon. Sir Jogendra Singh, Member for Education, the Hon. Dr. N. B. Khare, Commonwealth Relations Member of the Government of India, also were present. Inaugurating the conference, Jamnadas Mehta, denounced the concept of Pakistan and asserted in his brilliant style: "As a Hindu, I reject it; as an Indian, I repudiate it, and as an internationalist, I repel it." Mehta further called for an unrelenting war on the enemies of Hindustan which he said, were British imperialism, Muslim fanaticism, Congress wobblings and our own apathy. In his brief brilliant speech, Savarkar explained the object of the conference and dwelt on its representative character. He hoped that there would be no difference of opinion on the main resolution.

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, a renowned authority on Indian History and Politics, presided over the conference, and in his presidential address said: "A crisis of the first magnitude has been created in our national history by some great leaders who have convinced themselves that it is impossible for our mother country to attain her independence and the status which is her birth-right except on the basis of Hindu-Muslim unity."[9] He lamented the misreading of the national history and politics on their part and asserted that the Homeland of the Hindus through millenniums of their history had been nothing short of the whole of India. The man of vast erudition further said that Pakistan

[9] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 9 October 1944.

was a totally unacceptable scheme as a solution of the communal problem, as it sought to solve it at the cost of the unity of the mother country.

Master Tara Singh declared at the conference that the Sikhs were the gatekeepers of India. He said that he had not come to lend support, but to seek support for the Sikh determination to guard the Frontiers of United India, and sounded a warning that even if the majority of Hindus agreed to Pakistan, they had no right to force it upon the Sikhs. Several other leaders from Bengal, Assam, Madras, Jaipur, Meerut, Barreilly and Poona supported the main resolution which unambiguously declared its unflinching faith in the oneness and integrity of India and its firm conviction that the partition of India would be fatal to the best interests of the country as a whole and to every community.

Among the three hundred sympathetic messages received, those from Srinivas Sastri, Sir R. P. Paranjpe and Ramrao Deshmukh exhorted the Hindus to value the interests of the country more than those of a passing political party and wished the conference success.

The conference ended in great enthusiasm and determination of the nationalists to oppose Pakistan. This was the greatest demonstration of the nationalist opposition to the scheme of Pakistan during this period.

A little earlier Dr. Mookerjee had visited Poona. Savarkar appreciated his "recent condemnation of Provincial self-determination" and desired in a telegraphic message to L. B. Bhopatkar that the crown of thorns of the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha should be bestowed upon Dr. Mookerjee next year. The adjective 'recent' qualifying the word condemnation not only smacked of suspicion but also reflected the mind of Savarkar. That is how he marred the making of a great lieutenant and in the end alienated him. A leader who passes his days in the grooves of revolutionary methods often suspects the loyalty of his colleagues and sometimes describes and decries those who differ from him as spies or turncoats. Savarkar was no exception to it.

Savarkar once again announced in the second week of November 1944 his irrevocable decision not to accept the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha any longer. Dr. Moonje, who could

read the times with a clear foresight, appealed personally to Savarkar in all sincerity to reconsider his decision as he thought that there was no other force but Savarkar that could avert the coming disaster. But Savarkar's deteriorating health was now unequal to the strain and task and he told Dr. Moonje that his decision was irrevocable.

In the second week of November 1944, Savarkar appealed to the Viceroy and to the Governor of Sind to lift the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* and added that the proscription of the *Satyartha Prakash* was bound to result in a similar demand for the ban on the *Koran* all over India. In this connection he also saw the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, on November 27, 1944. But the Congress remained still unconcerned in spite of the suppression of the right of freedom of worship of the Arya Samajists. Not only that, but the Congressmen remained neutral when Bhai Parmananda moved an adjournment motion over the *Satyartha Prakash* ban in the Central Assembly and the motion failed for want of support.

Towards the end of the year the Hindu Mahasabha held its annual session at Bilaspur. Savarkar inaugurated this session over which Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee presided. In his brilliant and succinct address Dr. Mookerjee put before the people Savarkarism in a modified form although couched in the style of a brilliant university professor. The main features of the session were the elucidation of the economic policy of the Hindu Mahasabha and the adoption of a draft of the Future Constitution of India prepared by the Gokhale Committee.

At Bilaspur Savarkar presided over the Satyartha Prakash Conference at the time of the Mahasabha session and expressed his righteous indignation by declaring that had there been Hindu Sanghatanist ministries in all other provinces, the *Koran* would have been instantly banned till the *Satyartha Prakash* was fully restored in Sind. The influence of Savarkar on Hindusabhaites was mesmeric. To them his speech was always a feast. And Savarkar could not resist the temptation of addressing a vast gathering outside the pandal even when president Dr. Mookerjee was conducting the proceedings inside. Dr. Mookerjee was naturally perturbed by his leader's strange action.

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The year 1945 was a turning point in Savarkar's life in many respects. Owing to a serious breakdown in his health, his constitution that stood the hardships of the Deathland, the strain of the social work in Ratnagiri and since 1937 the whirlwind propaganda from one end of Hindustan to the other, was now refusing to stand the strain of active political life any more.

In the month of March 1945, Savarkar suffered a great bereavement. His elder brother Babarao Savarkar passed away at Sangli after a prolonged and painful illness. Savarkar's lifelong trusted elderly counsel, compatriot and heroic brother thus departed this world. No brothers in modern history stood more heroically by their brother through thick and thin than Babarao Savarkar and Dr. N. D. Savarkar. India's pioneer devotee of revolution, Babarao Savarkar was a patriot of heroic enduring, endless sacrifice and silent, selfless service. He had left Bombay for Jamkhindi and from there shifted to Sangli. Savarkar sent him Rs. 100 a month. The younger brother, Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar, attended the sickbed of Babarao at Sangli. Savarkar had seen the ailing brother a few days before the latter's death. His distant stay made him write in his anxious moments letters to his brother who was on his death-bed. Savarkar wrote to his dying brother: "Our life work (i.e. the work of the three brothers) was one. In our generation we have tried to repay our spiritual debt to our forefathers. No historian of modern Hindustan will fail to write in golden letters one separate chapter. Our political opponents have familiarized the title of that chapter as the Savarkar epoch. By giving the countrymen two battle cries, "Victory to the Goddess of Liberty" and "Hindustan belongs to the Hindus," we have thus been instrumental twice in bringing about a fundamental revolution in the nation's ideology and active political life."

"The Lord of Death, who is now standing by your side, is meeting you, not like a foe, but like a friend. You have lived up to your life's ideal. Never did even once you dream of abandoning the torch of freedom which in your boyhood you vowed to hold aloft. Great were your sufferings. Equally great have been your joys. You have bravely suffered the hardships of a political prisoner condemned to a life sentence in the Andamans. In sufferings as in happiness, never did you drop down the banner of Revolution."

The heroic fighter died thinking only of his country's welfare. An anxious enquiry on his lips an hour or two before his last breath was about the communist threat to Nepal! For, since his boyhood he regarded Nepal as his beloved Hindu Kingdom. Gandhi wrote a letter offering his condolences to Savarkar, but strangely enough sent it to Ratnagiri which Savarkar had left eight years earlier. Gandhi could send immediate condolence by a telegram to His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad on his mother's death, but he wrote a letter to Savarkar and that too to a wrong address. Can this wrong address on the letter be a mere slip of memory committed by the unfailing mind of Gandhi? Leaders, statesmen and newspapers from America, England, France, Germany and Japan knew that the residence of Savarkar was at Bombay. Be that as it may, Savarkar, however, thanked *Shriman* Gandhi sincerely in fluent Hindi, ending his letter with an inquiry about the health of Gandhi.

The first quarter of the year 1945 witnessed a great event. It was at this time the late Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congres party in the Central Assembly, who had seen the Viceroy, Gandhi and Liaqat Ali during the early part of the year, made a secret pact with Liaqat Ali Khan, the Secretary of the League Party in the Central Assembly, with the secret consent of the truth-seeker, Gandhi, who had always declared that there was no place for secrecy with him. This treacherous pact surpassed the Rajaji formula. It agreed to a percentage of fifty-fifty in all representations for the Hindus and the Muslims. The parity of the alliance of the Congress with the League in the Central Assembly now ripened into a reality.

Shortly after this Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, flew to London on March 21, 1945, with these proposals for the formation of an Interim Government at the Centre. This was a further loss of Hindu rights. This pact was supported also by the Sapru Committee's findings which were cabled to Lord Wavell in London simultaneously. There was a race, as it were, of betraying Hindu interests amongst all the Hindu leaders except the Mahasabha leaders. Though the Sapru Committee stood for a Union of India as also for adult franchise and joint electorates, it conceded parity of representation in the Central Assembly and the Union Executive between Muslims and Hindus other than the Scheduled Castes. The Muslims pocketed the parity proposals.

The British Government as usual accepted the parity, the worst part of the proposals, and threw away the proviso for joint electorates. The Hindu Mahasabha never hoped for any honourable settlement to come out of it. Dr. Moonje warned the Hindus not to expect too much of Wavell's visit to London.

Though Savarkar was keeping indifferent health and was hardly out of his bereavement, he had to direct some important features of policy regarding the Hindu States. So in response to the fervent appeals from the States' Hindu leaders like Anand Priya of Baroda, he presided over the All-India Hindu States Conference at Baroda in April 1945. Then in the month of May, Savarkar's only daughter Prabhat was married at Poona to Madhavrao Chiplunkar, the grandson of the brother of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar who was a brilliant colleague of Tilak and an eminent essayist of Maharashtra. During his stay at Poona Savarkar addressed the Hindu Rashtra Dal, then a new semi-volunteer organization aiming at the spread and propagation of unalloyed Savarkarism for the consolidation and all-out social and political revolution in conformity with its ideal, which could not be principally preached in any other Hindu organization.

While Lord Wavell was in London discussing the parity proposals, Germany surrendered and the war came to an end in Europe in the first week of May 1945. Still Japan was fighting in Asia. Churchill resigned in May 1945.

After a stay of nine weeks in London, Lord Wavell returned to India in the first week of June with the so-called Wavell Plan. At one stroke the three-year old deadlock was sought to be broken by the Viceroy through an announcement which he made on June 14, 1945. In his broadcast His Excellency the Viceroy proposed, with the full support of His Majesty's Government, to invite Indian leaders to take counsel with him with a view to forming a new Executive Council, more representative of organized political opinion. The proposed new Plan, he declared, would represent the main communities and would include an equal proportion of caste-Hindus and Muslims. There was no reference to the Indian States in the Plan, not to speak of Indian Independence. The Plan, however, presupposed full co-operation in the war against Japan by the leaders. Consequently, the 'Quit India heroes' were released

to take part in the Simla Conference. The Congress leaders were ready now to fight for British imperialism against the Japanese aggression and even against Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army as openly declared by Pandit Nehru.

With the blessings of the Mahatma and the betrayal of the nation sponsored by the Congress, Lord Wavell thus killed the last hope of democracy in India with his wicked Plan. The Muslims who formed only 22 per cent of the total Indian population were given parity in representation with the caste-Hindus consisting of 54 per cent of the total Indian population. Hindus who formed nearly 75 per cent of the total Indian population were thereby divided between the caste-Hindus and the Scheduled Classes. The Congress represented the caste-Hindus through its Muslim President, Maulana Azad. The Muslims were represented through the League President, Jinnah, the parties in the Central Assembly were represented through the leaders of their parties in the Central Assembly, and the Chief Ministers of the Provinces were also invited to attend the conference. The Sikhs and the Scheduled Classes were represented by their own leaders. The Hindu Mahasabha was the only political party that was deliberately ignored and dropped out of the Simla Conference. Even the mildest possible leader from the Hindu Mahasabha would not have stooped to agree to the anti-democratic, anti-progressive and unjust proposal of parity between the caste-Hindus and the Muslims.

The conference met at Simla on June 28, 1945. Within the first few hours the Simla Conference agreed to the basic aspect of the Wavell Plan, namely the prosecution of war against Japan. But weeks of open and private negotiations thereafter failed to produce an agreement on the personnel of the Central Government Executive and the Simla Conference ended on July 14, 1945, keeping on record the acceptance of the parity between the caste-Hindus and the Muslims. Thus the Wavell Plan failed according to plan, but assuring a further gain to the Muslims. Lord Wavell was pro-Muslim. Through him the Muslim League got the political parity transformed into communal parity.

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met in the meantime on the 24th and 25th June at Poona. At a mam-

moth meeting attended by over seventy-five thousand people on the grounds of the S.P. College, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee under the presidentship of Savarkar made a very stirring speech condemning the Wavell Plan. At the Working Committee meeting held on the same day, Dr. Mookerjee and the young leaders pressed the Working Committee for direct action, but unfortunately Savarkar and the other men accustomed to inaction threw cold water on their enthusiasm. A protest week, however, was observed from July 1 to July 7, 1945, at the behest of the Hindu Mahasabha all over India. Accordingly hundreds of meetings all over India simultaneously condemned the Wavell Plan as anti-Hindu, anti-national and anti-democratic. At a Bombay meeting during the protest week Dr. Mookerjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, described the Simla Conference as a combination of conspirators comprising British imperialists, Muslim Leaguers and the Congress leaders.

There was a sense of embarrassment and shame in the general feeling of the public for their nationalist leaders who had stooped so low. Some of the Congress leaders were ashamed in their heart of hearts for having supported the anti-national Wavell Plan. They had lost their face. Their Chief Ministers, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant and B. G. Kher, were seized for a time with a feeling of perturbation at the permanent reduction of the Hindu majority to a minority and at the elevation of the Muslim minority to the majority. But their repentant awakening proved to be momentary. Perhaps their Mahratta blood must have boiled at the crushing humiliation meted out to the national majority of Hindustan.

Savarkar condemned the parity between Hindus and Muslims as a negation of nationalism, and said that to honest thinking men, it was the pyre of Indian nationalism. Where was the leader of forward march and progress, Pandit Nehru? This defender of democracy, the dreamer of the shape of things to come, Pandit Nehru, was all the while a party to this anti-national Wavell Plan. After some time the Congress leaders and papers, who always held the prestige of their High Command to be more precious than the interests of the nation in general, were callous enough to say that the Wavell Plan was an interim arrangement and so it could be tolerated. This face-saving argument of the leaders of the Congress provoked a

crushing retort from Dr. Mookerjee who asked the Congress leaders: "Can you ever commit an interim suicide? If not, then suicide once committed can never be undone!"

The country-wide protests against the parity proposals envisaged by the Wavell Plan were growing daily. The Hindu Mahasabha intended to launch direct action against the Wavell Plan. As a first step, eminent Mahasabha leaders like Sir Gokulchand Narang, Raja Maheswar Dayal and Rai Bahadur Harischandra renounced their titles. But unfortunately the Mahasabha President, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, was not backed in turning the boiling opposition to good account and in launching any direct action in defence of democracy and the rights of the national majority—the direct action which the Hindusabha leaders once so much clamoured for. Had the Hindu Mahasabha done this, it would have risen in the eyes of the public. It must be admitted that Savarkar failed in his promise to resort to direct action at the opportune time. He said right things at the right time, but at this critical time failed to do the right thing. It was here that the rudder of the ship of the Hindu Mahasabha broke down and the ship was swept down along with the new captain into the trough of the popular estimation in the election held soon thereafter.

But the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha was the only political organization that stood stubbornly against the anti-national Wavell Plan will be recorded by history. Times needed a stronger action and efforts than they put in. Their protests were not powerful enough to bring down the prestige of the leaders of the Congress which had stooped to the anti-national, anti-democratic and anti-Hindu parity proposals as conceived by the Wavell Plan. Mere condemnation could not crush out the Congress misdeeds at the Simla Conference. It was thus that what the Hindu Mahasabha had won at Bhaganagar and Bhagalpur, it lost at Simla. The Mahasabha really missed the bus.

After the failure of the Simla Conference, there were bickerings among Congressmen for a while. It was rumoured that Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru were impatient of the moves taken by Rajaji and Bhulabhai Desai behind their back which had led to the proposals of the Wavell Plan. Patel was so indignant that at a meeting on the 9th August in Bombay he thundered: "If such diplomatic efforts are repeated, take it

from me that I would be out of the Congress." But the outcry and indignation was not the white heat, but a white-wash to save the party from an internal breakdown.

Savarkar was feeling the strain of the continuous whirlwind propaganda heavily. His health was fast deteriorating. With great efforts he could attend to important correspondence and allowed only important interviews in spite of medical advice. One of the most important interviews that took place in August 1945 was with the representative of Allama Mishraki, the Chief of the Khaksars, regarding some scheme the Khaksars had issued for discussion.

At this time there was a move by some leading men of the Hindu Mahasabha to throw open the Hindu Mahasabha to the non-Hindus. Savarkar advised the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha that they should keep the Hindu Mahasabha intact inasmuch as every political question in India was religious and every religious question was political. He further strongly affirmed that the Hindu Mahasabha must continue its mission even after Hindustan was politically free.

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During the pendency of the Simla Conference Britain went to the polls and there was a landslide against the Conservative party and the Labour party was returned to office on July 10, 1945, with an overwhelming majority. Almost simultaneously Japan having sunk under an atomic bomb, surrendered in August 1945 to the Allies in the East. Events moved with an electric rapidity. The Viceroy of India made a second trip to London in the latter half of August 1945 for a fresh examination of the entire Indian problem and returned to India after the middle of September 1945, to announce general elections to test the strength of the political parties, to break the ground for future political negotiations with the newly elected representatives, to hammer out a constitution and to negotiate a treaty with the Constituent Body.

Now all the issues, implications and intentions were to be clarified. Who represented the Muslims and who represented the Hindus? The Congress with its gigantic political machinery plunged into the election campaign heart and soul. Supported by the ' Pakistan ' purse, the Muslim League also entered

the election arena with 'Pakistan or Perish' as its slogan. The Congress manifesto stressed the Quit India demand and the Congress leaders and the press swore by an undivided India. The Hindu Mahasabha with its meagre purse and scanty press entered the field with the slogans 'Independence and Integrity of India,' 'By our way lies, O Hindus, your salvation, Congress way lies your destruction and ruin.' The Mahasabha leaders announced with some justification that 'a vote for the Congress was a vote for Pakistan!' Besides scanty press and a scanty purse, there was one more disadvantage from which the Hindu Mahasabha suffered. Throughout the election period the Hindu Mahasabha missed the iron and dynamic leadership of Savarkar, for he was unwell and made no move. There was no organiser to build up and consolidate his party. Nor did he ever show anxiety about it. As regards the Congress, it was the greatest political party in India, and had ruled over seven Provinces and had many opportunities to influence people. Besides, it had at its disposal a big press, big purses and big political wholetime machinery employed for the election campaign.

On top of it all came the somersaults of the Congress leaders that allured the people. Sardar Patel inspired confidence in the Hindu electorates by his anti-Pakistan outbursts and anti-League speeches. Congress was rapidly gaining confidence and the Hindu Mahasabha was swiftly losing its position. In the last week of September 1945, at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, Sardar Patel even demonstratively chastised a Muslim member, one Mr. Mians, in these words: "If you say that the Muslim League is a nationalist organization, why are you to be found in the Congress at all? Ever since the Congress abandoned unadulterated nationalism the mischief has grown. That was when the Congress accepted the separate communal electorates. There have since then been a series of mistakes. From minority representation we travelled to the fifty-fifty parity principle. Now it would never be repeated. Congress will never go to the Muslim League." What a confession vindicating Savarkar's charges against the Congress!

Pandit R. S. Shukla, Chief Minister of C.P. and Berar, declared that if Pakistan was established, Muslims in Hindustan would be treated as foreigners. In Calcutta, at Deshbandhu Park

Pandit Nehru thundered that there could be no truce with the Muslim League which had always opposed the Congress struggle. The Muslim League propaganda railed and rained. Liaqat Ali, the League Secretary, said at Delhi, "The Muslim is a born fighter. He may hesitate to cast a vote for Pakistan, but he would not hesitate to shed his blood." H. S. Suhrawardy, another League Leader, now notorious for his outrageous unconcern at the deaths of the Hindus in the Calcutta killing, challenged Pandit Nehru to win a single Muslim seat in the Central or Provincial Assembly. And his challenge was not unavailing, for not a single Muslim seat was won in the election by the Congress from the Muslim electorates. In this state, Savarkar persistently sighed from his sick-bed for Hindu wisdom. Ailing Savarkar said in a frantic and forlorn appeal to the Hindus that disaster would overtake India if Congressmen were elected to the Legislatures on mere promises. But the Congress leaders' sacrifice and their continual struggle against British rule had hypnotized the Hindu masses. With the stolen thunders and the borrowed Mahasabha slogans it seemed to win.

The most unfortunate aspect of the election affair for the Hindu Mahasabha was that its President Dr. Mookerjee lost his grit and confidence in the nick of time. There was a sudden breakdown in his health. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel who never showed courtesy of inquiring after Savarkar's health even during his serious illness, prepared the ground for further events when they all ran to Dr. Mookerjee to enquire after his health. The sudden rush and gush of their anxiety and interest in the health of Dr. Mookerjee was a pointer. He withdrew his candidature and gave up the struggle even before he joined the battle.

In the meantime, the question of the I.N.A. men's trial came to the forefront. In the first week of December 1945, Savarkar urged Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to release all the I.N.A. soldiers without any humiliating conditions as an act of grace by declaring a general amnesty in view of the general convention of international treatment dealt out to war prisoners and in view of the very deep discontent aroused in the public mind. The Hindu Mahasabha had also observed an I.N.A. day, but the Congressmen who had condemned the I.N.A. as 'rice soldiers' earlier now took their side, stole a march

over the Hindu Mahasabha, and fully utilized the political sympathy and energy emanating from the I.N.A. trials for their own party ends. Savarkar was bed-ridden; Bhopatkar and Moonje moved in the affair, but without response.

The interest taken by top-ranking leaders of the Congress in the I.N.A. trials may have been with an eye to the elections, as was evinced from the very ungenerous attitude they adopted towards the I.N.A. men after they were firmly installed into power. Similarly, the unflinching oaths taken by the Congress leaders to stand by united India were shamelessly betrayed afterwards and the Hindu Mahasabha slogans openly adopted as their own by Congress leaders like Sardar Patel, proved veritable bombshells on the popular support to the Mahasabha candidates, and the sentinels and defenders of United India were routed in their last ditch. But let it be recorded here that their heroic failure was more glorious than the pyrrhic success of the Congress candidates. The Hindu Mahasabha candidates, like Bhopatkar and Bhai Parmananda stood unflinchingly at the risk of their lives with an iron will as the sign-posts warning the Hindus: "Our way lies your salvation; Congress way lies your ruin!"

The Hindu Mahasabha was in the end completely wiped out of the political picture of India, so far as the election results were concerned. M. N. Roy's Radical Democratic Party and Dr. Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation also were routed in the elections. And what about the Congress? Oh! it also met its Waterloo in the fields held by Muslim electorates. History repeats. The Rajputs fought Maha Rana Pratap for the Moguls, and they also fought the Mahrattas for the Moguls. Here the Congress fought the Hindu candidates with terrific ruthlessness and routed them.

But by securing all the thirty-two Muslim seats in the Central Assembly, the Muslim League routed all the Congress Muslim candidates so completely that had not Asaf Ali been elected by a Hindu majority electorate at Delhi, there would have been no Muslim left even for adoption purposes for the self-styled Indian National Congress which boasted of representing the Muslims also. The victory of the Pakistani forces was so complete and great that Jinnah declared in Delhi that his victory was the victory of a nation and the Leaguers achieved what Hitler could

not. With the Congressmen playing the role of Chamberlain, his boast held much water.

One more point deserves attention. The Hindu Mahasabha was the only Hindu Organization that stood by its pledges to the Hindu Nation through fire and water. What were the Arya Samajists and the R.S.S. men doing? Let it be said to the credit of the small per cent of those defenders of the Hindu Nation from these two organizations that they did help the Hindu candidates far-sightedly enough, but let it also be recorded that the majority from these two great institutions of Hindu hope and faith kept culpable neutrality over such a life and death struggle in which the Hindu Nation was involved, while the majority of them were reported to have voted for the Congress.

This colossal rout accelerated the deterioration in the health of Savarkar so much so that in a telegram sent to N. C. Chatterji he bewailed. "My nerve system has been literally shattered for the last two years. It has now collapsed." Savarkar now realized from his sick bed the implications of the success of the Congress in the elections at the hands of the Hindu electorates. He realized that the battle for United India was almost lost and in future parleys his party would have no place. So great was the nervous exhaustion that followed this disaster that at times in his bed he showed signs of blurred memory and soon on expert medical advice, he was removed on January 1, 1946, to Walchandnagar in the Poona District.

With patriotic mind and reverential affection, Gulabchand Hirachand of Sholapur Martial-law fame looked after Savarkar's health. On January 20, 1946, Savarkar had a severe heart attack at Walchandnagar, but Dr. Sathe, who attended him for several years devotionally, prescribed for him and the close anxious attention of Gulabchand Hirachand helped his speedy recovery. For three months the Savarkar family were guests of Gulabchand Hirachand, a leading industrialist of India.

CHAPTER 20

From Parity to Pakistan

THE year 1946 opened with general elections to the Provincial Legislatures all over India. Congressmen used the same old tactics and reiterated the pledge of a United India. On January 14, 1946, Sardar Patel thundered at Ahmedabad: "Granting of Pakistan is not in the hands of the British Government. If Pakistan is to be achieved, Hindus and Muslims will have to fight. There will be a civil war. The Congress is no longer going to knock at the doors of the League. The Congress has tried to settle with the League many times. But it has been kicked every time." Such fiery speeches of the Sardar, the steam-roller of the power and prestige of the party that had ruled, and the press, purse and propaganda let loose by the greatest political organization in India, overran the Hindu Mahasabha candidates in elections. And the Hindu Mahasabha was entirely thrown into the shade. The League emerged as the authoritative mouthpiece of the Muslims and the Congress of the Hindus alone. The Muslim League won 427 out of 507 seats in the Provincial Legislatures. The Khan brothers tried to save the situation for the Congress in the North-West Frontier Province.

In the meanwhile, anti-British feelings reached a climax. A burst-up became inevitable. The I.N.A. trial gave rise to it; the Royal Indian Naval Ratings and the Royal Indian Air Force raised the banner of revolt in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. The backbone of the Imperial structure thus seemed to break down. The army, too, was feeling and experiencing the pangs of freedom.

The British Labour Party after coming into power sent a delegation of ten members of the British Parliament to India. The delegation had a four-week survey and talks with various leaders of all parties. They had invited Savarkar to meet them, but Savarkar was not then in Bombay. He was convalescing at

Walchandnagar. The Delegation returned to England on February 10. On February 19, Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, announced the intention of His Majesty's Government to send out a delegation of three Cabinet Members, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. A. V. Alexandar and himself, to discuss with the Indian party leaders on the spot the question of solving the political deadlock in the country. On March 15, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, declared India's right to attain full independence within or even without the British Commonwealth, if she so desired and in respect of the minority problem of India he said: "We cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority."

The British Cabinet Mission subsequently arrived in Delhi on March 24. Numerous interviews, discussions and deliberations took place in the Viceregal Lodge. On April 5, Pandit Nehru thundered: "The Congress is not going to agree to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan under any circumstances whatever, even if the British Government agrees to it."[1] And journalists were glad that Nehru had struck the last nail on the Pakistan coffin! What history records is quite the reverse! Only a few days after this warlike speech, a whole nation witnessed that Nehru pathetically enough ate his words in the end.

Another outstanding feature on the political scene was that Jinnah represented the Muslims, Maulana Azad represented the Hindus and the Nawab of Bhopal, the princely India. Thus the whole of India was represented by Muslim leaders! Jinnah was re-affirming his anti-Indian role, and refused to call himself an Indian even.

Jinnah's lieutenants were not lagging behind. Before the League Legislators' Convention held in Delhi, Gandhi's Shahid Sahib, H. S. Suhrawardy, declared on April 9, in Hitleric vein that Pakistan was Muslims' latest, but not the last demand and if the Britishers entrusted the destiny of India to Congress *Junta*, the Muslim League would not allow the Central Government to function even for a day. Another Muslim League leader, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, warned the British Government that the

[1] A Noted Journalist, *Hopes and Fears* (with a foreword by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya), p. xvii.

destruction and havoc that the Muslims would do in the country would put into the shade what Chengizkhan had done.[2]

While the discussions and deliberations with the Cabinet Mission were going on at Delhi, Savarkar returned to Poona on April 3, from Walchandnagar slightly recovered from the nervous exhaustion and was convalescing at the Poona Hotel. Bhopatkar saw Savarkar in Poona before he put a memorandum on the 15th April before the Mission along with Dr. Mookerjee on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. The memorandum stated " that geographically, politically and culturally India was one whole and indivisible. This integrity and indivisibility must be maintained whatever the cost and sacrifice be." The memorandum further warned the Mission that partition of India into two or more sovereign States under any guise or disguise would be economically unsound and disastrous, politically unwise and suicidal.

Political scenes were changing with rapidity. A Tripartite Conference consisting of the British ministers, the Viceroy, representatives of the Congress and the League, was held at Simla, on May 12, 1946, but it failed to arrive at any decision. The Mission then came out with a new proposal now known as the State Paper of May 16. This document repudiated Jinnah's claim for division of India, contemplated a Central Union although with powers restricted only to matters of external affairs, defence and communications, gave full autonomy to the provinces, and provided facilities for the provinces to form themselves into three groups two of which, B and C, were mischievously and evidently conceived as a concession to the League Lord. A Constituent Assembly was to be elected by the Provincial Legislatures for framing a constitution for the Indian State; an Interim Government comprising representatives of the major communities and important minorities was planned; and the States, freed from the crown paramountcy, were to join the Constituent Assembly for hammering out a Union of the provinces and the States. The electorate was divided into the General, Muslims and Sikhs. Thus in the land of the Hindus, there was no electorate named after them in the administration of India.

[2] A Noted Journalist, *Hopes and Fears* (with a foreword by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya), p. xxi.

The League accepted the State Paper on May 22, hoping to work out Pakistan through the proposed groups, and Jinnah proposed to hold out his hand of co-operation to the Congress. The Congress, too, accepted the Plan of May 16 as it stood, and declared its willingness to join the Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.

Towards the end of June 1946, the Cabinet Mission returned to London leaving it to Lord Wavell to work out the procedure and form an Interim Government. On July 10 Pandit Nehru told a press conference at Bombay that there would be finally no grouping as the Congress held that the provinces should be considered free at the initial stage to opt out of the section or group in which they were placed. This unstatesmanly statement of Nehru gave an opportunity to Jinnah to push his demands, and on July 27, 1946, the League Council resolved at its meeting in Bombay to resort to direct action, rejecting the Cabinet Mission proposal which it had previously accepted. Jinnah refused to discuss the ethics of violence and non-violence and the League Secretary declared their determination to employ every means in their power to achieve their object. The Sind minister preached destruction and extermination of every one who opposed them.[3]

Thereupon the Congress nervously ran to patch up this gulf, and reasserted acceptance of the State Paper fully! On August 24 the Viceroy declared his resolve to form an Interim Government of sixteen Members out of which six were to be the nominees of the Congress, five of the League and five representatives of the minorities. The Congress took office on September 2, 1946, gave one out of its six seats to the Depressed Classes and one more to a Muslim thus reducing mercilessly the national majority to a minority in the Cabinet, and all this when the Muslim League did not even co-operate in the formation of the Interim Government.

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The acceptance of office by the Congress put Jinnah in a trap. Jinnah rightly believed that the Congress under its historic

[3] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 29 July 1946.

leadership of Gandhi and Nehru would be nervous about the formation of an All-India Government without the co-operation of the Muslims. Two Muslims were appointed temporarily and one of them was almost stabbed to death at Simla, and he ultimately succumbed. To make the functioning of the Interim Government led by the Congress impossible, the Muslim League started its direct action on August 16, which led to an unprecedented holocaust in Calcutta, well-known now as the great killing, spreading the virus and holocaust over the Noakhali District in Eastern Bengal and followed by looting, kidnapping, forced mass conversions, forced marriages, arson and mass murders of the Hindus in villages and towns in the Eastern Districts of Bengal.

Acharya J. B. Kripalani, the then President-elect of the Meerut Session of the Congress, toured those affected parts of Bengal, saw those places of inhuman atrocities and mass murders, and declared in a shuddering voice that they were planned and preorganized by the Muslims. "War was not like this," wrote a military officer in the *Statesman*, Calcutta. The Congress leaders in power proved utterly unequal to the task of putting down the organized fanaticism of the Muslims. British imperialism had physically disarmed the Hindus, Gandhism had enfeebled them mentally, and the curfew Raj had done the rest for them.

Amidst such a confusion and chaos Jinnah shrewdly pushed on October 26, 1946, his lieutenants into the Interim Government without even raising his usual objection to the inclusion of the Congress Muslim in the Interim Government. And the fight for Pakistan thus began with renewed force and fire to smash the administration and sabotage the Mission Plan which aimed at setting up an All-India centre, which the Muslim League detested. With a view to dealing a fatal blow at the Plan, the Muslim League leaders including the five Muslim Ministers in the Interim Government spoke and wrote in fire and all this under the very eyes of Pandit Nehru and the Home Member, Sardar Patel. Ghaznafar Ali Khan, the Health Minister in the Viceroy's Interim Government, speaking at Lahore, said, "If Mohammad Bin Kasim and Muhammad of Ghazni could invade India with armies composed of a few thousands, and yet were able to overpower lakhs of Hindus,

God willing, a few lakhs of Muslims will yet overwhelm crores of Hindus."[4] On another occasion he asked the Hindus to embrace Islam and to save themselves from the holocaust. And yet this communalist upstart was allowed to continue in the Interim Government. Echoes of the terrific tragedies in Bengal were on the lips of even the dying Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at Benares. Moved by the multitudes of Hindu refugees, deprived of their homes, wives, children and everything in Bengal, the feelings of the Hindus ran high in every province. In Bihar, the Land of the Guptas, furious riots followed on a terrific scale, so much so that Jinnah bewailed that retaliation for Bihar would be a catastrophe. Dr. Moonje warned the Hindus at a meeting in Kurukshetra that the Hindus were facing a civil war.

Lord Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief and Nehru flew to the scene in Bihar. Patel resorted to drastic action. Nehru threatened the Bihar Hindus with bullets and aerial bombardment. The police opened fire on several occasions and all the Government forces suppressed ruthlessly the Hindu retaliatory riots in Bihar. Gandhi went one step further. He threatened the Bihar Hindus with a fast. Nehru said that if the Bihar Hindus wanted to kill the Muslims, they should first kill him. There was wide discontent among the Hindus at the well-meant but incompatible attitude of the Congress leaders who helplessly witnessed and heard about the massacres of the Hindus in Bengal. Even Congress-minded papers resented this attitude. The *Yashoda* in its weekly issue (Vol. VI, No. 4, 78 Gandhian era) observed in its editorial: "If Nehru's body must fall, it must fall at Noakhali. If Gandhiji is to fast, he should fast in Noakhali. The dark figures of the great tragedy enacted at Noakhali must be brought to justice." The *Yashoda* further observed in its News and Notes that Noakhali bled, and nobody went near the place till there was no more to bleed. And then the Viceroy and other dignitaries conducted post-mortem examinations and gave their verdicts so obviously devoid of truth that they could deceive nobody. The Weekly added in its last article: "But the role of Gandhiji throughout is as untenable as it is incredulous. Till the communal flare in Bihar, he was

[4] *The Free Press Journal*, Bombay.

passive. Only to Bihar he issues his clarion call for repentance and good behaviour on penalty of his penance to slow death." The Weekly concludes: "No other explanation can be offered for his guilty inactivity over the East Bengal affair."

All this account is narrated only as a matter of history. It is not necessary to justify the attacks made by the Hindus in Bihar on other religionists. However, the passive attitude on the part of the Congress leaders in power towards the atrocities committed by the Muslims elsewhere for the same reason was unbelievable; for violence, whenever, wherever and howsoever it occurs, must be condemned. That violence which provokes the subsequent violence must be curbed and condemned first. And without doubt Congress leaders lamentably failed in this sacred duty. If the forces of justice and humanity are real and potent in your breast, you cannot remain a passive spectator at one time and an active defender at another.

Savarkar returned to Bombay on August 5, 1946. By now Hindu-Muslim riots had become a daily occurrence in Bombay. The Hindu Sanghatanists were still valiantly defending the hearths and homes from the organized mass fury of the undeclared civil war by the Muslims in Bengal, Bihar, Bombay and the Punjab. Rajendra Roy Chaudhari, president of the Noakhali District Hindu Sabha, died heroically in defence of Hindu homes and Hindu honour. Hindu Sabhas all over India arranged for the relief of the Noakhali Hindu sufferers with the active aid of the perennial, patriotic and pan-Hindu sympathies of the Hindu leaders like Raja Narayanlal Bansilal, Bombay.

Soon after the Muslim League's joining the Interim Government, a first class crisis developed. After their entry into the Interim Government, the Leaguers refused to join the Constituent Assembly.

Sardar Patel became indignant and drove Pandit Nehru to the Viceroy. The Viceroy, who had, to quote the words of *The Times of India*, Bombay, made untiring efforts to get justice and 'even more than justice for the League,' was charged with conspiring with the League. Patel had thundered also at the Meerut session of the Congress that the League must either join the Constituent Assembly or get out of the Interim Government. There seemed no way out. So the British Government

invited Jinnah and Nehru to London for a conference for the solution of the legal points arisen out of the interpretations put on by the contending parties. Accordingly Jinnah and Nehru flew to London. There with his legal acumen Jinnah carried the day and the vociferous Pandit Nehru failed. This perturbed Sardar Patel and he thundered that the Congress would not accept the British Government's statement of December 6. But the All-India Congress Committee at its session on January 15, 1947, swallowed that bitter pill too when Sardar Patel helplessly remained absent. Now the decision given by the British Government threatened the legal existence of the Constituent Assembly. It meant that the constitution could not be valid unless it was approved by the Muslim League.

In the meantime, the Hindu Mahasabha session was held in the last week of December 1946, at Gorakhpur, under the presidentship of L. B. Bhopatkar. The Hindu Mahasabha reiterated its demand for a Sovereign Independent State and its faith in the indivisibility and integrity of India. In December 1946, the Constituent Assembly opened its session and Dr. M. R. Jayakar was heckled for his conciliatory attitude towards the League by those very Congressmen whose history was full of national surrenders and who within a few months of getting into power betrayed the nation's integrity. No less a personality than Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar vigorously castigated the Congress leaders in the Constituent Assembly 'for killing a strong Centre themselves.' The misunderstanding of the political issue, and the indecisive, short-sighted and vacillating policy on the part of the Congress leaders dismayed the political firmament.

In the midst of such a gloomy, grave and despairing situation came the realization of the correctness of the fearless, far-sighted and unbending lead that had been given by Savarkar. Dr. S. P. Mookerjee in his letter of February 10, 1947, wrote to Savarkar: "If the Hindus had only listened to your call, they would not have remained as slaves in the land of their birth." The confusion and the prevailing chaos had begun to trouble the mind of Savarkar. He gave a sigh of relief at the Pan-Hindu consciousness as regards self-respect which the land of the Guptas had shown and he, therefore, sent a donation to the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha 'for the relief of the heroic Hindu sufferers of Bihar.'

The British Cabinet was now fast turning the pages of history. In February 1947 the British Government announced their intention to take necessary steps to effect the transfer of Power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. The termination of Lord Wavell's wartime appointment and the appointment of Viscount Mountbatten as his successor were also announced simultaneously. The defeated forces of United India were now striving valiantly to rally again. In the first week of the following month, Savarkar blessed the Hindu-Sikh unity sponsored by Master Tara Singh in his forlorn attempts to maintain the integrity of India, and expressed the hope that "Guru Govindsingh would steel the hearts of the Hindu-Sikh brotherhood and strengthen the hands in fighting for the freedom and the integrity of India."

The undeclared Muslim civil war that disgraced the Indian brotherhood, nationhood and motherhood was still raging on. The big guns of the Congress had lost control over the situation. The Home Member, Sardar Patel, true to his soldierly frankness, described the grave situation when he said that almost every Muslim servant in the Government was Pakistani. His advice in a helpless mood was that everybody should be a policeman and protect himself.

By this time the Congress Working Committee proposed partition of the Punjab and the demand for a separate Province of West Bengal was being hotly discussed and debated in Bengal. The partition of Bengal, which was ruthlessly condemned forty years ago, was demanded now by the kith and kin of Khudiram Bose. What a queer fate! On March 22, 1947, in a statement Savarkar "supported the demand for a separate Hindu Majority Province in West Bengal owing loyal allegiance to a consolidated, strong and sovereign Central Hindustan State."

As declared by the British Government, Lord Mountbatten came to India on March 22, 1947, to turn over India to Indians and Lord Wavell made his exit from India the next day. With his suave personality and persuasive optimism Lord Mountbatten resumed the threads of discussion. Savarkar wired to the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, urging him to consult the Mahasabha president and Master Tara Singh before any fundamental changes affecting the Hindus were effected. Savarkar knew that India was fast approaching a momentous decision. He, there-

fore, urged the Bengal Hindu Sabha and the Bengal Hindus on April 4, 1947, to demand a separate new Hindu Province in West Bengal and to expel the Muslim trespassers from Assam at any cost. He also demanded that the contiguous Hindu Majority Districts of Sind should be joined to the Bombay Province. Savarkar concluded his statement by saying that the Muslim minority would be given the same kind of treatment as would be meted out to the Hindu minorities in the Muslim majority provinces.[5]

Savarkar feared that Assam which was tagged on to the eastern group of Pakistan would fall a victim to Muslim aggression. Assam was threatened by the Muslim Direct Action on the one hand and the Muslim influx into the province on the other. So he again warned towards the end of April 1947, Bardolai, the Chief Minister of Assam, and Vishnudas, the Revenue Minister, not to surrender an inch to the Muslims and asked the ministers to eject every Muslim trespasser, old and new, to a man. Both of them duly acknowledged the telegrams and with due assurance. In the same month Savarkar asked the Bengal Hindus 'to beware of Gandhiji's scheming platitudes avowing open hostility to the demand for framing Hindu majority Provinces in the East and West of India.' The new Viceroy interviewed the leaders of the Congress and the League and flew to London on May 18, 1947. On the eve of the Viceroy's departure, Dr. Mookerjee had put his demand for a separate Hindu Province in the West of Bengal.

Now the final decision was reached. Savarkar knew that the last moment to be or not to be had come. On May 29, 1947, in a fervent and forlorn appeal to the Congressites Savarkar urged them not to betray the electorates and India by agreeing to a scheme involving vivisection of the Motherland. He reminded them that they had not been elected to the legislatures on the issue of partition and their Constituent Assembly had also no right *ab initio* even to consider such a proposal. Hence he urged upon them to resign their seats and posts and to seek re-election on the clear-cut issue of Pakistan or a United India, if they were for the partition of India. Savarkar further suggested to the Congress leaders that they might demand a plebis-

[5] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, 6 April 1947.

cite to decide such a momentous issue involving the life and death of the nation and the destiny of future generations. But who was there in his senses in the Congress to consider such a proposal in a democratic way when the wordy Congress democrats were reeling in the drunken joy of party and personal power? What other country has witnessed such a betrayal?

The Congress leaders were now in a mood of speedy surrendering. Speaking at the U.P. Political Conference, Pandit Nehru declared on April 29, 1947: "The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it." Sardar Patel said on April 14, 1947, in Bombay: "If India should be partitioned, it could only be done after mutual discussion amongst ourselves and in a peaceful manner." Dr. Rajendra Prasad showed anxiety for the division of the defence forces. The Congress leaders spoke and acted as if the integrity and indivisibility of Hindustan was a matter of the past with them! So now unity and integrity of India was the concern of Savarkar alone!

The British Cabinet approved the blueprint of the Viceroy and also the swift procedure for its execution. The Viceroy returned at the end of May 1947, with the sanction of the British Cabinet for his proposal and on June 3, 1947, the Prime Minister of Britain from London and the Viceroy from Delhi announced simultaneously their new plan known as the June 3rd Plan. The New Plan contemplated the creation of one or two Dominions by August 15, 1947, provision for separate Constituent Assemblies, partition of the Punjab and Bengal provinces, referendum for Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Sylhet district of Assam to decide what dominion they would join.

Savarkar was now fighting a lost cause. But as he was the truest son of India, he tried to tap every corner, every source, every means to avert the political matricide. The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met at Delhi on the 7th and 8th June 1947. Savarkar sent a message to Bhopatkar on June 8, saying that the Hindu Sabhaites and the Sanghatanists could never willingly sign the death-warrant of the integrity of Hindustan. He hopelessly and frantically urged Bhopatkar to continue the struggle for re-annexing the revolting Moslem provinces and for creating Hindu majority provinces in any case—Pakistan or no Pakistan—in Bengal and the Punjab, and for

rejoining the contiguous Hindu majority Districts of Sind to the Bombay Province. In the interests of United India the Congressites, he said, should be called upon to resign their ministries and posts and seek re-elections forthwith on the issue of Pakistan, but they should not be allowed to concede Pakistan and to betray the electorates. He also urged the Sind Hindus and other minority communities in Sind to press on with all possible means for the separation of Hindu majority Districts in Sind and for the re-annexation of those districts to the Hindustan Union.[6]

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha also reiterated its belief: "India is one and indivisible and there will never be peace unless and until the separated areas are brought back into the Indian Union and made integral parts thereof." The Mahasabha Working Committee further demanded a referendum in the Hindu majority areas in Sind and in the Chittagong Hill tribes area in East Bengal like the one in the Sylhet District in Assam to allow the territories, if the majority in those respective areas desired, to accede to the Indian Union.

The Congress leaders were now well prepared for their final consent to the onslaught on the unity of India. In a written message read out after the usual daily prayer-meeting in Delhi, Gandhi declared on June 9, 1947, that he was not opposing the Congress acceptance of the new British Plan. Nobody wondered at this news. This was a foregone conclusion. And the All-India Congress Committee at its Delhi session on June 14, 1947, accepted the 3rd June Plan by a resolution supported by Nehru, the idol of the nation, who had unequivocally professed and declared in the vein of Lincoln to defend the integrity of India. This resolution was gladly upheld by the nationalist Muslim, Maulana Azad, now supporting with divine satisfaction the creation of a big Muslim State out of India. Azad described the Plan as the only way to settle India's problem as the Congress was committed, he recalled, to the principle of self-determination and was against coercing any unwilling areas to join the Union. But who got the Congress committed to that resolution? History would record that all these Congress brand nationalist leaders were at one in coercing the Hindus to accept Pakistan.

[6] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, 8 June 1947.

The Socialists in the All-India Congress Committee culpably remained neutral. They had no opinion to offer on such a vital issue in the life of the nation. The lonely opponent in the All-India Congress Committee opposing this nefarious black decision and deed was Babu Purushottamdas Tandon who appealed to the All-India Congress Committee that though the Congress Working Committee had failed them, yet the A.I.C.C. had the strength of millions behind them and they must reject the resolution the acceptance of which would be, he said, an abject surrender to the British and to the Muslim League. Sardar Patel's support to the partition of India was a complete transfer scene from sword to surrender.

Gandhi put an ultimatum before the A.I.C.C. He threatened them either to accept the resolution conceding Pakistan or to replace the old tried Congress leaders. He advised them to accept the Plan and added that it was their duty to stand by their leaders. To the Congress leaders their prestige was more important than the destinies of the nation and the fate of the millions. That was an unfortunate characteristic of the Congress leadership. Savarkar repeatedly exposed this fact and warned the people to remember that the Congress party and their leaders were not greater than the nation. Equally forcibly Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar told the Congress bosses in the Constituent Assembly that in deciding the destinies of a people, the dignity of the leaders or men or parties ought to count for nothing.

But Gandhi threw his whole weight in favour of the resolution, and the A.I.C.C. accepted the resolution which accepted the creation of Pakistan![7] And lo! Gandhi practised what he preached. Ten years earlier he had openly declared: "Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them, for it would be still Indian rule."[8]

Gandhi was a truth-seeker. Who is a truth-seeker? One who

[7] Full report of the A.I.C.C. meeting in *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 16 June 1947.

[8] Mahatma Gandhi, *To The Hindus And Muslims*, p. 410.

clings to truth and right even if the very heavens fall. But Gandhi, the voice of truth and the voice of non-violence, who considered even coercing or forcing one's views on others a sin, hit the last nail on the coffin of United India and the resolution was passed. According to Gandhi, Pakistan was an untruth and the truth-seeker became a party to untruth in broad daylight. To Gandhi Pakistan was a denial of God, but he deserted and denied God. The fundamental rights of the people, the demand for a nation-wide plebiscite, the call and voice of democracy were stifled to death by his unrelenting divine dictatorship. And describing this event next day, the *Free Press Journal*, Bombay, one of the chief spokesmen of the Congress, flashed in a full banner line the news 'Nation's Leaders Betray Country's Cause!' This was the return gift of the Indian National Congress to the Motherland which had suckled it at its breast.

There were two men in India who could have smashed the proposed scheme of the vivisection of India. They were Gandhi and Savarkar. But because of shattered health, want of 'direct action' at the proper time, a cruel misfortune, the perfidy and levity of those countrymen who regarded party above country, Savarkar failed despite the grim warnings he gave for a period of ten years. With the greatest party at his beck and call, Gandhi could have blown up the scheme of Pakistan had he meant it from the bottom of his heart. Gandhi believed that nothing was impossible for a Satyagrahi. He, therefore, could have easily declared with Luther that 'peace if possible, but truth at any rate.' But the unfortunate politician in Gandhi, who always failed and failed, got the upper hand and stifled the truth-seeker in Gandhi, and Gandhi too failed. On the one hand Gandhi proved the maxim of Voltaire who said 'he who seeks truth should be of no country' and on the other, he fulfilled the prophecy of his Guru, Gokhale, who foretold that Gandhi would exercise enormous influence on the common man, but when the history of political parleys would be written disinterestedly, he would go down in history as a great failure.[9]

M. N. Roy, leader of the Radical Democratic Party, said that he did not make a fetish of the unity of India. Unity of India

[9] Satyagrahi, *Graha and Tare*, p. 60.

not being an article of faith with his party, he asked his followers to work for the triumph of Democracy and preach the message of humanism in both the new States.[10] The Communist Party which had openly worked against the Congress during the war supported the Pakistan proposal blatantly and blusteringly.

The shriek of United India was not yet extinct. At the behest of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha an All-India anti-Pakistan Day was observed on July 3, 1947, to register a protest against the vivisection of the Motherland. There was a considerable response throughout India. Big cities like Bombay, Poona, Delhi and others almost suspended all market and business activities. Morning processions were taken out, protest meetings were held condemning the vivisection of India, black flags were hoisted denouncing the partition as a betrayal of the aspirations of the great patriots and great martyrs who had laid their lives at the altar of a great cause.

On August 2, 1947, Savarkar made a very pathetic and appealing speech before a mammoth meeting at Poona. He told the vast multitude of audience that in a way they were also partly responsible for the vivisection of their Motherland along with the Congress leaders because they did not repudiate their leadership at the proper time, and added that appeasement would never stop and satisfy the aggressor. He recalled how the Congress lead sacrificed democracy and nationalism for communalism. He began this appealing speech in a very touching tone and said: "Since you have gathered in thousands to hear a leader like me who have attained ill-fame owing to my unflagging resistance to the creation of Pakistan, I believe, there is yet hope, for the survival of this Hindu nation." But neither the British Government nor the Congress took note of his tragic shriek. They were unmoved. His slogans had withered and he was now in the doldrums. The Congress leaders had grown old. They were now thoroughly exhausted. The Congress carried on discussions with the Viceroy with many voices whereas the Muslim League through Jinnah alone. The British ultimately sided with the Muslims and the partition of India became a settled fact. 'Had Gandhi told us not to accept partition,' observed

[10] *Independent India*, 17 August 1947.

Pandit Nehru afterwards, 'we would have gone fighting and waiting.' [11]

Savarkar now accepted the defeat of the forces of United India. The battle was lost, but the war for united India was still to continue and Savarkar stood up for it. He thought it proper to record once again his protest against the vivisection of India. So a Hindu Convention was held on August 8, 1947, at Delhi. Savarkar went to Delhi by air. This was his first air flight. Dr. N. B. Khare, the then Premier of Alwar, was to preside over it and the Maharaja of Alwar, a staunch Hindu and self-respecting ruler was to inaugurate it. But owing to the treacherous revolt of the Meos in the Alwar State for a Meostan, both of them could not come to Delhi and so Savarkar presided over the convention.

In his presidential address to the convention Savarkar exhorted the Hindus never to accept Pakistan just as they never accepted the British Raj and asked them to continue their struggle for a United India. Savarkar warned the Hindus that if they did not rise and awake to the real danger ahead, there would be many more Pakistans thereafter. Indeed he must have had before his mind's eye some four crores of Muslims still remaining in Hindustan who had rioted and agitated and were responsible for the demand for vivisection of Hindustan in no small measure. Savarkar further declared that there should be no rejoicings on the 15th August 1947, since the Motherland would be actually torn asunder on that day and the results of the disintegration were likely to lead to bitter feelings and ill-will.

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha thereafter exhorted the Hindus not to celebrate the 15th August 1947, as Independence Day, in view of the untold sufferings that had been inflicted on millions of people in different parts of the country by the orgy of plunder, murder and conversion, and the indiscreet arrests and detention of leaders and workers amongst the Hindus in all parts of the country.

Highly prejudiced against the Congress leadership Savarkar now supported the Dewan of Travancore who wanted to declare independence of Travancore. According to the Indian Independence Act which was to come into effect on August 15, 1947,

[11] Mosley Leonard, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 248.

the Indian States were free to join either of the Dominions, India or Pakistan. Dr. Ambedkar advised the Travancore and Hyderabad States to merge their sovereignty in the Indian Union. From the point of view of unity and integrity of the Indian Union the step Savarkar took was rather unadvised.

One vital point, however, respecting the opposition Savarkar sponsored to the creation of Pakistan needs to be noted. It was the Hindu Mahasabha led by Savarkar that alone strove as best as it could to avert the vivisection of Hindustan. Let it be recorded that the Socialist party which then functioned in the Congress kept culpably silent at the time of such a historic, momentous issue in the life of the nation and remained neutral in the A.I.C.C. when the Congress passed the resolution conceding the vivisection of India. The Arya Samajists silently watched the vivisection of their Motherland. The R.S.S. remained mere passive spectators and refused co-operation, official or otherwise, to the Hindu Mahasabha even in peaceful demonstrations against the vivisection of the Motherland, as if nothing had happened in the life of the nation to which they pledged their blood, brains and bones morning, noon and night. A little later they went to jail; not for opposing the vivisection of their Motherland, but for protesting against the ban on their organisation.

* * *

The 15th August 1947 came, and was celebrated by the Congressites as a day of national rejoicing. And no doubt it was a great day in the history of the world as it saw the birth of the biggest Muslim State under the sun and as a great force was released in Asia in the form of Indian Independence. In his great and grand speech which Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, made on this occasion, he 'recalled in grateful remembrance the services and sacrifices of all those men and women, known and unknown, who with smiles on their faces walked to the gallows or faced bullets on their chests, who experienced living death in the cells of the Andamans, who preferred voluntary exiles in foreign countries to a life of humiliation in their own. . . .' It would have been an act of gratitude and noble gesture had the Congress party invited Savarkar and honoured him at the time of the inauguration of the Indepen-

dence for which he had struggled, suffered and sacrificed incomparably.

The Mahasabhaites hoisted only the Mahasabha geruwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini to display the asserting will of the Hindus. Savarkar hoisted the new tricolour flag of Free India with the Dharma chakra of Buddhism as well as the geruwa flag with Kripan and Kundalini; one State Flag and the other a symbol of United India.

Great must have been Savarkar's exultation at the disappearance of the Union Jack and the discomfiture of the Khadi flag with its Charkha and the coming up of the national flag. Through Savarkar, the Prince of the Indian revolutionaries, thousands of martyrs must have saluted the Flag of Indian Independence for which they had laid their lives. In saluting and flying the State Flag Savarkar showed his sense of and love for democracy. To his perturbed followers he said that they should hoist the Bhagwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini as the State Flag only after they could get it approved by the whole nation in a democratic way. Till then this new State Flag represented the Divided India and the geruwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini the United India and so he had hoisted both.

Savarkar proudly saluted the State Flag of Free India, but Gandhi did not approve the State Flag of Free India adopted by the Constituent Assembly; for the Dharma-Chakra had replaced his pet Charkha and the silk had replaced the rough Khadi. Gandhi expressed this in an article in the *Harijan* dated the 3rd August 1947 and lamented that the Congress flag, i.e. the tri-colour Khaddar flag with the Charkha on it had not become the national flag and added that if the new flag of the Union did not represent the Charkha and Khadi, it was valueless in his opinion! Gandhi did not reconcile to it. Savarkar's efforts to replace the Charkha by a Chakra were not fruitless. In a telegram to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, who happened to be the chairman of the Flag Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Savarkar had requested them to have at least a strip of the saffron colour and a wheel-Chakra instead of the Charkha on the State Flag. He did not expect the Constituent Assembly dominated by the Congressites, to adopt the geruwa flag with Kripan and Kunda-

lini on it as the State Flag. It may be recalled here that Madame Cama of the Abhinava Bharat had unfurled a tricolour flag as the flag of Indian Independence as early as 1907 at the Socialist Conference in Germany.

Savarkar's policy at this critical juncture was to consolidate the freedom and so he consented to Dr. Mookerjee's joining the cabinet and blessed him. The Right Wing of the Congress was at this time trying to win support of Savarkar. Mishra, Chief Minister of C.P., was trying through Ramrao Deshmukh to win Savarkar's support. Accordingly Deshmukh wrote a confidential letter to Savarkar on July 25, 1947. Obviously there was an unseen hand of Sardar Patel behind this. Ultimately the proposition, however, did not materialise.

Savarkar's warning that breakers were ahead came true with a vengeance. Simultaneously with the national rejoicings, a terrible wave of wholesale massacre and brutality spread over the Punjab and Sind. Unprecedented violence was let loose. Pakistan had not been established without any gruesome immediate effect. The tidings that came from the Punjab were grim and blood-curdling. The massacre of men, women and children went on unabated.

Millions were uprooted from their native soil, their hearths, their homes, torn from their dear ones and robbed of all their possessions. Nobody was sure of the morrow. Burnt houses, looted shops, broken skulls, smoking ruins, blood-smeared corpses, and mutilated bodies scattered all over towns and villages, spoke of the blood bath and barbarity unsurpassed in other times and climes. The country rang with horror.

In order to avert a civil war, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had proposed partition with complete transfer of population of the Muslims and Hindus from their respective zones. Like Lincoln, who faced a civil war to preserve the unity of the U.S.A., Savarkar was prepared to face a civil war for a while to preserve the unity of India. But the Congress leaders accepted partition plus massacres!

The visionary in Nehru was rudely shaken. He admitted in his broadcast on August 19, 1947, that 'nearly the whole of India celebrated the coming of Independence, but not so the unhappy land of the five rivers in the Punjab.' He also said that 'there was sufficient disaster and sorrow, arson and

murder, looting and crime of all descriptions.' Short-sighted Congressites were fiddling while the West Punjab was burning and bleeding. Nehru appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs of the West Punjab not to make mass migration, and he asked the people to desist from individual retaliation. He also declared that if it should be retaliation, it should be Government retaliation, which meant war. Pandit Nehru was not far away from the truth because in the upper half of India there was terrific retaliation as a result of insufferable repercussions and emotions evoked by the holocaust in the East and in the West.

During this crisis Pandit Nehru condemned with burning hatred everything that had the appearance of Hindu Sanghatan. In a Delhi speech he declared that he would even resign and fight out the Hindu Fascists who clamoured for a Hindu State and he further said that he was sure that those Fascists would go down the way the Hitlers and Mussolinis went. This was clearly an attack on Savarkar.

Replying to Nehru on all these points, Savarkar said:[12] "What were the thousands of Hindu-Sikhs to do when faced by an imminent danger of being massacred in cold blood, looted, burnt alive, forcibly converted, in short, of being exterminated as a racial and national being by the most barbarous attacks of an organized, dangerously armed and fanatically hostile foe and especially when the State as such was nowhere in evidence so effectively as to render any the least protection to them?" While in the West Punjab the dangerously armed Muslims in their thousands were parading in the streets, in towns and cities and raising terror-striking slogans 'Haske liya Pakistan, Marke lenge Hindustan,' and were planning to capture the East Punjab and Delhi, the Congressites, observed Savarkar, were celebrating their bloodless revolution brought about by the vivisection of India, although the Hindu Sanghatanists kept shouting that danger was ahead and that this was no time to rejoice when they were stranded on the top of a volcano already in eruption.

Savarkar then vehemently added: "Under these circumstances what wonder is there that millions of Hindu-Sikhs prompted by instinct of self-preservation and animated by the

[12] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, pp. 16-18; 69-71.

spirit of Pan-Hindu consolidation rose in arms in the East Punjab, in Bharatpur, in Alwar, in Patiala and in Delhi itself and responded to the best of their might and means so furiously and effectively as to checkmate the Muslim hoards from attempting an invasion of the East Punjab, threw them on their defensive and saved Delhi itself from being captured by the Muslims concentrated there. If Panditji and his Congressite comrades are still safe and secure in their seats, they owe it to this brave fight which the Hindu Sanghatanist and Sikh forces gave in the nick of time. And still it is he who unblushingly comes forward to deliver to them a sermon on the exclusive right of the State to retaliate. Had a Shivaji or a Ranjit Singh been at the helm of the State, he could have demanded with propriety that the people should leave the right of retaliation in his hands alone. But when the puny Pandit tries to demand it in the accent of Shivaji, it strikes as funny as it would do if a pigmy standing on his tiptoes tried to rival a giant in height."

As to the threats of resignation by Nehru, Savarkar said that if the Government was handed over to the Sikh-Hindu Sanghatanist coalition, a cabinet could be formed which would be not only more efficient than the present one, but also will prove to be absolutely indispensable to face the stark realities as noted above.

As regards the misrepresentation of Hindu Raj by Nehru and his hatred for everything that was Hindu, Savarkar said it was a stunt on the part of Gandhist ministers, leaders and papers to cover their dismal and disastrous failure in protecting the life, property and honour of our nation. Savarkar proceeded: "The demand for the Hindu Raj, these pseudo-nationalists say, is communal, stupid, medieval, theocratical, a menace to the progress of mankind itself! But they conveniently refuse to tell us what they precisely mean by Hindu Raj, before they characterize it in the above-mentioned vilifying terms. Nevertheless, assuming for the sake of argument that the demand for a Hindu State deserves this condemnation on all these counts, may we ask them: was not the demand for a Moslem State at least equally condemnable on these very counts? Did not the Moslems base their claims to own the Pakistani Provinces on the ground that the Muslims constituted the major community predominating there?"

Savarkar further replied to Nehru with equal force and fire: "But instead of fighting against that demand for a Moslem Raj you actually abetted the crime of cutting integrated India right into two halves directly on communal lines which the Anglo-Muslim conspirators perpetrated and handed over Pakistan to the Moslems so ceremoniously, with such ease and grace as you would hand over a cup of tea to a welcome guest! With what face now can you vilify the demand for a Hindu Raj on this very count even if it could be said to possess all the above traits?"

Savarkar went on: "A Pathani or Nizami Muslim Raj is to Gandhiji a cent per cent Swaraj. But a Hindu Raj! O no! It would be communal, fascist, anti-national and an anathema!" Savarkar further observed: "You contend further that our country and our State cannot be called Hindustan and Hindu State as some non-Hindu minorities too are citizens thereof. But how is that in spite of the presence of the Hindus, Christians, Parsis and other non-Muslim minorities in its territory all of you and Gandhiji in particular keep salaming and saluting that newly carved out Muslim Raj as Pakistan which avowedly and literally means a Holy Muslim Land, a Muslim State? Is it not a fact that almost all States and nations are called after the names of what the League of Nations termed 'National Majority' predominating in each? Nor have you yourselves ever felt any qualm of conscience in recognizing Baluchistan, Waziristan, Afghanistan, Turkastan or the Turkish State as such in spite of the presence of non-Muslim minorities there? How is it then that the very mention of the name of Hindustan or the Hindu State alone takes your breath out as if you were smitten by a snake-bite?"

As for the threat of Nehru that he would fight out those who clamoured for Hindu Raj as Hindu Fascists, Savarkar retorted: "The Hindu Sanghatanists cannot be terrorized by the threat of such carpet-knights as the Pandit and his clan." He concluded his historic reply to Pandit Nehru: "The choice therefore is not between two sets of personalities but between two ideologies, not between Indian Raj and Hindu Raj but between Muslim Raj and Hindu Raj, between Akhand Hindustan and Akhand Pakistan. The Hindu Sanghatanist ideology alone can,

therefore, save our nation and re-establish an Akhand Hindustan from the Indus to the Seas."

The Congress leaders in their zeal to carve out a secular State, which was in fact a noble ideal, fell to de-Hinduising Hindustan. They denounced Hindu Raj, but brought about a religious State, a theocratic State, Pakistan. They saluted and blessed Pakistan, but cursed with burning hatred the appellation Hindustan. They started to speak of the people by calling them Muslims and non-Muslims of India. Their speeches, addresses, statements and official announcements described and referred to the Muslims as Muslims and to all others as the non-Muslims of India. So burning a shame they felt for the term 'Hindu' and the appellation Hindustan that they dropped out those appellations as if the Hindus in their Homeland were a dying, vanishing race like the twentieth-century empires.

At a post-prayer meeting in Delhi on June 12, 1947, Gandhi proudly told his audience that Pandit Nehru refused to call the non-Pakistan areas as Hindustan and Gandhi further said: "The Muslim majority areas might call themselves Pakistan, but the rest and the largest part of India need not call itself Hindustan." Could the surrendering nationalism go further? Savarkar pitied this inferiority complex and the cowardly attitude on the part of the Congress leaders. Savarkar never said that he wanted to base the Hindu State on Hinduism.

The concept of Hindu Raj was not based on Hinduism but on Hindutva. And Hindutva and Hinduism were two quite different things. Honest critics would never say that Savarkar would stand for a State in which a Shankaracharya would be authorized to make laws and deal with justice. Is there such a degraded man as will say that Savarkar ever said that he wanted to deal with the so-called Depressed Classes and measure the ideals governing man and woman with Manu's rod?

According to Savarkarism, the word Hindu connotes nationality. You may be a Buddhist, a Jain, a Sikh or an Arya Samajist by faith, but by nationality you are a Hindu. The term Hindu State corresponds to the terms the German State, Japanese State, Afghan State, Turkish State. You gladly repeat the words Muslim State, Mogul rule, Pakistan, Turkish State. Where is the harm, said the Hindu Mahasabhaites, if you call the Bharatiya State the Hindu State? Moreover, Savarkar meant by the word

Hindu nation, a state grown out of the historical and cultural background, but having science and secularism as its two wings. His only point was that the national majority after whom the State is named must follow their bent, must grow according to their nature and blood by reconciling their past with the present, shaping their future in the light of science. None should, he said, hustle or terrorize the national majority into shaping their present or future.

Why should Pandit Nehru and his colleagues, said the Hindu Mahasabhaites, decry this kind of Hindu nation in which every citizen would be equal in the eyes of law? Pandit Nehru and Gandhi especially who started their political careers with a Theocratic Movement, the Khilafat and ended it in creating a Theocratic State, Pakistan, on the basis of religion should have any the least objection to it. And at last Pandit Nehru declared at Lucknow in October 1947: "Congress wanted to establish a secular democratic State in the country. Naturally in such a State the predominant culture and outlook would be governed by the great majority of the Hindus in the population." But according to Savarkar the culture of the majority in India was the culture of Rama, Krishna, Kalidas, Vikram, Bhavabhuti, Pratap, Guru Govindsingh, Shivaji and Vivekananda, and not the culture of Taimurlang, Mohamad of Ghazni, Mohamad Ghori, Babar, Aurangzeb and Tipu!

Just then the question of the national language came to a head. Savarkar had been struggling hard since 1908 for investing Hindi and the Nagari script with national honour. After the release of Savarkar in 1937 the Hindi movement gathered force and at last the promoters of Hindi purged the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Gandhian influence and won a resounding victory. Savarkar made a powerful attack on the cult of Hindustani during the annual session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held in Bombay in December 1947. Addressing the session, Savarkar warned the delegates against the threats of Gandhi and Nehru and asked them and the one hundred and fifty-one members of the Constituent Assembly, who had signed the pledge to support Sanskritised Hindi and the Nagari script, to achieve their object in spite of those threats. He added that the interests of the nation must be their sole concern and above the threats, fasts and fads of Gandhi and Nehru.

While these controversies were going on, confusion, fanaticism and retaliation were reigning supreme. It is necessary to reveal here as briefly as possible the significance of this insurmountable crisis as this was indirectly responsible for Savarkar being involved in the most heinous trial. Bred and brought up in the atmosphere of Gandhism, Gandhian leaders proved to be unequal to the occasion and historic necessities. People now realized that Gandhism was an illusion. Gandhi himself realized too late that what the nation followed was not non-violence but passive resistance. He expressed this at a meeting in Delhi. Nehru said that the nation had to wade through ocean of blood and tears.

Such was the crisis and such were the times that people showed a profound disbelief in and dislike of Gandhism which seemed till the previous day the ruling belief of the majority. The blood, tears, sighs and sorrow proved that Gandhism was a dream-land. The situation was utterly volcanic and it disclosed that the whole range of consequences was the outcome of those beliefs, opinions and actions. People seemed now unwilling to sacrifice their present ease or near convenience in the hope of securing higher advantages for others and honour of tomorrow. The magnitude of the issues and height of interests involved was such that there was a stirring shock in the realm of the national mind. Perturbed by the atrocities, imbecilities and the holocaust that marked the course of the period, even the great Congress leaders were chilled in their political beliefs. They now realized that mere height of aim and nobility of expression did not move the matter-of-fact world.

K. M. Munshi, who claimed to have followed the Mahatma, while reviewing the situation in the freedom special of his *Social Welfare*, observed:[13] "Last thirty-five years, we have been brought up on a slogan: naturalness and inevitableness of Hindu-Muslim unity. That this was a wishful thinking has been proved in Noakhali, Bihar, Rawalpindi—in a hundred villages, by tens of thousands of men, women and children fleeing for safety. The Muslim—a hard realist—knew and exploited the hollowness of the slogans; the Hindu cherishes it still. Hindus love words and ideals." What a melancholy epitaph on Gan-

[13] 15 August 1947.

dhism by a Gandhist! How fitting yet flagrant, how frank yet ferocious, how realistic though belated! The terrific shock also evoked a spontaneous remark from Babu Purushottamdas Tandon. Tandon declared while speaking at a meeting in Bareilly that Gandhiji's doctrine of absolute non-violence had proved to be useless and was greatly responsible for the partition of India.

Even the *Bharat Jyoti*, a well-known English Weekly and a strong spokesman of the Congress in Bombay, bewailed in its editorial dated October 26, 1947, under the caption 'Barter not Truth': "Today, Gandhiji is a living witness to the failure of his political mission. His failure is the measure of his departure from truth, in his implementation of truth." The editorial concludes: "Gandhiji resisted partition of India, but like Yudhishthira, by a play of words, secured the nation's ratification of Partition; he, like Yudhishthira, is witnessing hell's torments. Power of truth is great; lie's punishment is greater. So, barter not, truth."

People who were now filled with a sense and anxiety for security spoke in terms of strife and survival. A furious and reckless mob stoned Gandhi's residence at Calcutta twenty-four hours before the dawn of freedom! The furious mob even shouted "Gandhi, Go Back." Gandhi had become a bosom friend of Suhrawardy whom the Bengali Hindus called 'a murderer', as he was responsible for the massacres of Hindus a year before. As it was, a Muslim murderer gave no offence to Gandhi. In Delhi, Nehru and other Congress leaders were stunned to hear later on at the time of Gandhi's last fast the slogans of the angry crowds shouting 'Let Gandhi die'. The principle of absolute non-violence had gone with the wind. People were puzzled over the words and deeds of the Congress leaders. India was fighting Pakistan in Kashmir not with the spinning wheel or with cotton balls, but with deadly bullets and destructive bombs. Gandhi's prayer-meetings were now abandoned, disturbed, heckled and routed. Pickets had to be posted at Gandhi's residence in Delhi to protect Gandhi, the symbol of non-violence. Detectives in plain dress guarded Gandhi's post-prayer meetings. Savarkar had nothing to do either with these violent mob demonstrations or with the newspapers' smashing criticism of Gandhism. That was the growing opinion in the

minds of the people and the columns of the Congress press. Not that the people were in a mood to listen to Savarkar. There was confusion, indecision and misjudgment of the issues in the minds of the people and their leaders and their press.

Sardar Patel said plainly at the Calcutta and Lucknow meetings in the first week of January 1948 that those Muslims who were disloyal to India would have to go to Pakistan. A little earlier Gandhi told Patel that he had realised that Patel and he were two, although he formerly believed that they were one![14]

Such a crisis was capped by Gandhi's famous fast which he started on January 13, 1948, for the reinstatement of the Muslims in their houses at Delhi, for the restoration of desecrated mosques to their former use and for other five reasons. Pakistan had invaded Kashmir on October 22, 1947 and so Patel and Nehru thought that if money was paid to Pakistan, it would be helping her to carry on the war in Kashmir. Gandhi's fast aimed also at pressing them to make the payment and it was undoubtedly directed at Sardar Patel. And as a sequel the Government of India led by Congressmen was forced to pay Pakistan rupees fifty-five crores which had been loudly decried and refused. The *Modern Review*, a Calcutta monthly, famous for its balanced views all over the world, began its editorial notes in its issue of January 1948 with a pertinent question: "The time has come when our trusted leaders, including the Father of the Nation, have to be asked for a clear reply to a plain question. Where does the Hindu of the Indian Union stand today and what does freedom mean for him? Does he possess along with others the democratic birth-rights by which a State has to be ruled and administered for the greatest good for the majority, or is he there merely to serve as so much fuel for a burnt sacrifice—to be used for "conscience-fodder," so to say, by his leaders, just as the totalitarian Fuehrer used his people as cannon-fodder?"

The *Modern Review* proceeded: "It is the Hindu who did by far most of the fighting for liberty and offered by far the vastly greater part of the sacrifices. Then why should his interests be sacrificed at every emotional impulse of his elders and leaders?" The note put a query: "A state cannot be run on

[14] Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, p. 269.

the lines of a Passion-play, and what would avail the working of a miracle in the minds of the recalcitrant infinitesimal minority, if thereby the trust of the hundreds of millions of the majority be betrayed?" Referring to the fast of Gandhi, the *Modern Review* concluded its note in a grave judgment: " Mahatmaji's fast will, we are sure, attain its object for the time being but the results would be futile and disastrous in the long run, unless Pakistanis mend their ways. Indeed, this fast will enhance communal bitterness a thousandfold on this side when the people realize the futility of their sacrifices, and would make the ultimate and inevitable clash horrible and catastrophic beyond all measure, unless Mahatmaji can work his miracle in Pakistan as well."

In the midst of such an atmosphere of extreme gloom, confusion and disaster, Nathuram Vinayak Godse shot Gandhi with a revolver while Gandhi was going to the prayer ground in the compound of Birla House at Delhi in the evening at 5-30 on Friday, January 30, 1948, five minutes after the talks Gandhi had with Sardar Patel for settling the differences between Patel and Nehru on the question of Muslim loyalty to India. Gandhi was to go to Sevagram to stay there from the 3rd to 12th February 1948.

CHAPTER 21

Red Fort Trial

WITH the shots fired by Nathuram Vinayak Godse disappeared one of the greatest political figures from the stage of world politics. The act was committed in broad daylight, in a public place, in the sight of a multitude by a man dressed in khaki bush jacket and blue trousers. The newspapers described the assassin as a bachelor of thirty-seven with medium height, fair skin, square jaws, a resolute and sober face, serious flickering eyes, a high forehead, close-cropped hair, all giving the appearance of a man of serious purpose.

The news of the assassination of Gandhi spread like wild fire. It was indeed tragic, tearing and terrific. A wave of shock and grief passed over the whole country like an earthquake. Shops were slammed in, flags lowered, cinema shows cancelled. Vivisected and broken-hearted Mother India shed piteous tears for her great son, as does a mother for her son despite her own malady. He belongs to the ages, said the wise.

Depressed looked the whole world for a while. With wide mouth it paid its fitting tributes to the memory of the great man. The Indian minorities were distressed. The Indian Muslims said they were orphaned. The Anglo-Indians bemoaned the loss as never before. The Bohra head priest grieved, and the Afghan Sardars were moved.

The reaction of this terrific act on the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. was too severe and drastic, as the latter was regarded as a militant stormtrooper offshoot of the Hindu Mahasabha. In his early youth Godse was a worker of the R.S.S. and later, he was a prominent member of the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was a well-known journalist in Maharashtra and the editor of a Marathi Daily, the *Agrani*,—the *Leader*—changed to a new name, the *Hindu Rashtra—Hindu Nation*—at a later stage. Better known as

Pandit Nathuram Godse, this editor was a staunch Savarkarite, and was fairly known as the vanguard and lieutenant of Savarkar. But when the vivisection of Mother India was declared as a settled fact, in his fanatical love for the Hindu Nation, Nathuram Godse repudiated even the saner leadership of Savarkar. Alas! Savarkar had tried to impress on his lieutenants in his London days that killing any one for his honest differences of opinion and much less a man who was kith and kin, was a downright, demoniacal act and an unpardonable sin.

Now the attention of the hooligans was riveted upon men and institutions of his erstwhile association in Maharashtra. Furious crowds pulled down and burnt Hindu Sabha flags, destroyed Local and District Hindu Sabha offices, burnt printing houses and studios belonging to the Hindu Sabha leaders, and attacked persons of Hindu Sabha persuasion and particularly persons from the caste of Godse. Shops and houses of the Hindu Sanghatanists were in flames and at some places even personal and party enmity under this plea or that pretext was vented on men, women and children. And all this in the name of Gandhi whom they worshipped as the embodiment of peace, mercy, truth and non-violence.

Men of lesser mettle promptly declared their disassociation from the Hindu Mahasabha. Some office-bearers of Local or District Hindu Sabhas resigned and severed their connections with the Hindu Mahasabha. A dusk to dawn curfew was enforced in Poona, the city from which Nathuram Godse hailed. Wrath was on its round, malice on its wings, and political revenge on its prowl. In the Deccan States the long-awaiting disgruntled souls of some non-Brahmins saw their opportunity, and they poured out the vials of their vengeance in the name of Gandhi on Brahmins in particular and the Hindu Sanghatanists in general, who happened to be sympathizers, workers or leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha. There was trouble and tension in a few cities between the Hindu Sabhaites and the R.S.S. on one side and the violent crowds of Gandhian persuasion on the other; but the havoc wrought by the assaults committed by interested or incited gangs especially in the States of Kolhapur, Sangli and Miraj was terrific, unprecedented and unparalleled.

There was hardly any bloodshed or burning incident in other

Provinces, but the massacre of a whole family consisting of an old man, his son and his grandson for the fault of bearing the same surname as Godse and the atrocities, arson and looting committed in the name of Gandhi in Maharashtra were so dastardly and ghastly that these dark deeds of the so-called followers of Gandhi would put the inhuman crimes committed by the furious followers of Robespierre into the shade. Had it not been for the stern and efficient handling of the situation by Morarji Desai, the Home Minister, Government of Bombay, the rioters and looters would have turned Maharashtra into a veritable graveyard.

What about the first and foremost Hindu Sabhaite, Savarkar? On the morning of Saturday, January 31, 1948, at 10, fury was let loose in many parts of the city of Bombay, which destroyed Hindu Sabha offices, burnt their property, attacked the residences of the Hindu Sabha leaders and workers, and stormed and attacked the house of Savarkar known as Savarkar Sadan. The ringleaders of this furious mob of about 500 strong broke into Savarkar's house through a door on the rear side. They swept down into the compartments on the ground floor occupied by Bhide Guruji, a former secretary to Savarkar, a Hindu Sabha leader of note, and editor of an English Weekly, *Free Hindusthan*. This was the left-hand side block on the ground floor of the house of Savarkar. Savarkar was in his bedroom on the first floor. He knew what the mob meant towards him. In his youth, he had faced such wild drunken mobs in London streets when he was agitating for Indian Independence. The ringleaders of the mob were running amuck on the ground floor. But the presence of mind of two trusted Savarkarites, S.S. *alias* Bal Savarkar and Bhaskar Shinde, who were struggling to repel the mob, hoodwinked them and in the meantime the police arrived on the scene and a bloody scene was averted.

But what was the state on the first floor during this hour of attack? It was characteristic of Savarkar that he kept quiet, cool and collected in times of grave dangers. His courage rose with difficulties. Armed with courage and available legitimate weapons in his hands, Savarkar stood in his bedroom, his wife standing by his side. He asked his son Vishwas to seek safety somewhere while he defended the house. But true to his blood, the young boy refused to run away from the scene and save his

life. This was the time for Vishwas to show his mettle. In front of his father, on the threshold of the bedroom stood the young boy prepared to face the mob, determined to protect his father and to die in the action if necessary. Had Savarkar's body-guard Appa Kassar been present on the scene, crimson would have been the compound of Savarkar's house. But he was already arrested along with Gajananrao Damle, personal secretary to Savarkar, in the early hours of Saturday, eight hours after the assassination of Gandhi.

Defeated in its bloodthirsty designs, the mob set upon the residence of Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar in the same locality. Dr. Savarkar was stoned till he fell down in a pool of blood. He suffered severe head injuries and was admitted to hospital. His family was removed to a distant place.

Nathuram Godse's lieutenantship was bound to recoil upon Savarkar. A thorough search was made of Savarkar's house on January 31. Savarkar kept himself in his bedroom and the police minutely searched his residence. A police officer asked Savarkar to accompany him to a place of safety. Savarkar flatly refused to do so and told the officer that his person would carry unrest and agitation wherever he went. He told the police officer that he would not move an inch, and added that two armed guards were enough to scare away the mob; but if the police did not want to do so, then, said he, he was ready to lay down his life for his principles. Savarkar also issued a statement on January 31, in which he said that the news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi was too shocking and sudden and he appealed to the people to stand by the Central Government of Free India and maintain order in the country.

From February 1 to February 5 throughout the country there was a general round-up of the Hindu Sabha leaders and workers. The R.S.S. was outlawed and its leaders and workers were also arrested. Even R. K. Tatnis, the famous editor of the well-known Marathi Weekly, the *Vividhavritta*, Jamnadas Mehta and K. N. Dharap were put behind the bars though they had no active connection with the Hindu Mahasabha or the R.S.S. But Tatnis and Mehta had fearlessly opposed Gandhi and the Congress on the question of Pakistan, and Dharap was a legal celebrity of Mahasabha persuasion. All the three were, however, set at liberty by the High Court of Bombay on Habeas

Corpus applications on their behalf. Except L. B. Bhopatkar, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, G. V. Ketkar, Editor of the *Kesari* and *Mahratta*, Poona, and R. N. Mandlik, President of the Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha and Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, all prominent Maharashtrian Hindu Sabha leaders were put in jail. The total number of persons arrested in this general round-up in all the Provinces and the States was said to have exceeded 25,000. Such a huge round-up for a single act was never witnessed in India at any other time in her history.

On the night of February 4, the police officers got Savarkar medically examined. The doctor declared that Savarkar was keeping fit, though Savarkar had been suffering throughout the previous year from low fever and heart-ailment, and was even at that time running temperature. A few hours after this, in the early hours of February 5, came a police van to Savarkar Sadan. Savarkar was told that he was placed under arrest under the Bombay Public Security Measures Act. He nodded assent and said that before entering the van he desired to go to the lavatory. The officers hesitated. Savarkar smiled and said: "Do not be afraid. I am now an old man and you should not fear a repetition of Marseilles, nor is there any occasion for it." The officer inspected the W.C. after Savarkar came out of it, but could find nothing.

All sensible persons condemned the act of assassination. And a few hours before his arrest, Savarkar too had issued another statement endorsing the joint statement of Bhopatkar and some other members of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha regarding 'the gruesome assassination of Mahatma Gandhi' and said, "I, too, as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Hindu Mahasabha subscribe to their feeling and condemn unequivocally such fatricidal crimes whether they are perpetrated by the individual frenzy or mob fury." Savarkar concluded his statement with a warning: "Let every patriotic citizen set to his heart the stern warning which History utters that a successful national revolution and a newly-born national State can have no worse enemy than a fatricidal civil war, especially so when it is encompassed from outside by alien hostility."

Savarkar was lodged in the Arthur Road Jail, Bombay.

Now some of the local Congress-minded papers assumed the

role of justice, usurped the rights of the Court and wickedly enough described Savarkar as the brain behind the murder of Gandhi. Some openly flashed the news that Damle and Kasar had a hand in the plot. And all this when the whole affair as to how far Savarkar was the brain, Apte the brawn, and Godse the heart and hand was being investigated by the police.

The police officers led a blitz in a group on Savarkar, their combined wily and wild genius being at grips with the genius of Savarkar. Savarkar was calm and collected. Like De Valera, Savarkar was also put in prison after the birth of a Free State by the country for the independence of which he had striven and sacrificed his life for fifty long years. Savarkar was naturally overwhelmed with these feelings. He declined to avail himself of the facility of home food. No interview with him was allowed to his wife or his only son till March 23, and nothing was heard or known about him by the public except the volcano of obloquy let loose by hostile journals of Congress persuasion.

Amidst the all-round erupting volcano, one man with intrepid courage and vigilance devoted himself to the defence of Savarkar. That man was S. V. Deodhar, a local advocate of Bombay. He interviewed Savarkar on February 6 and took his instructions. He found that the arrest had affected him deeply. For a long time Savarkar was not charged with any specific offence. But on March 11, 1948, Savarkar was again placed under arrest in the Arthur Road Jail by the Delhi Police under a warrant from the Delhi Presidency Magistrate on a charge of being one of the conspirators in the assassination of Gandhi. When Savarkar was produced before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, for a further remand, the daring advocate moved an application for bail, but it was refused. Deodhar, however, secured permission for Savarkar's wife and son to interview him, and accordingly they saw him in jail for the first time on March 24. It was through the efforts of Deodhar that Savarkar could execute a general power of attorney in favour of his son, thus facilitating the arrangement of funds for his household affairs and for his defence.

Savarkar was now in full control of every nerve. On May 18 he made an important affidavit before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, regarding a group photograph that was

taken by the police with Savarkar in the centre and Godse and Apte on either side together with the other alleged conspirators who had been arrested on different dates in the first half of February and brought to Bombay for investigation purposes.

By now the leader and famous advocate in Bhopatkar was on the move with all his legal acumen and with all his moral courage. Mandlik also was bringing the issue of Savarkar's arrest to the forefront. At the time of the passing of the Budget, Mandlik severely criticized the Bombay Government in the Bombay Legislative Council for denying Savarkar even the freedom of interview with his family and counsel. On April 3, Mandlik asked the Home Minister, Morarji Desai, why the confiscated property of the Savarkars was not returned to Savarkar in appreciation of his past services in the cause of Indian Independence, as was done in the case of other patriotic sufferers of Congress persuasion of even recent period. The Home Minister replied that the Government did not propose to return the property to Savarkar and on a supplementary question, he added sarcastically, though Savarkar's case was now *sub judice*, that Savarkar's disservice at that time was greater than his past service. Upon this Mandlik sprang up and asked the Home Minister to define Savarkar's 'present' disservice to which the Home Minister had referred; but there was no reply.

Savarkar's must be a rare case, a case of one of the greatest patriots under the sun wherein the property confiscated by a foreign Government for his struggle for national freedom was not returned to the patriot even after the nation had become free. Men of lesser patriotism and later-day struggle were given back their confiscated properties by the Congress Ministries; but it seemed the Congressmen in the Ministry and the makers of their Ministries, who were not politically born, when Savarkar stamped the pages of world history with the cry of Indian Independence, were not even desirous of doing Savarkar bare justice, let alone honouring the greatest patriot of our day.

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Meanwhile, news appeared in the *Times of India*, Bombay, that Government were weighing evidence regarding Savarkar's complicity in the plot. After three months and a half, the preliminaries were completed. And at last, for want of proper

legal opinion, the Government of India were led to rope in Savarkar, one of the greatest political figures for all times, with the other alleged conspirators. A notification in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* dated May 15, 1948, declared the names of the nine accused among whom flashed the name of Savarkar as the eighth accused. The notification also announced that Atma Charan, I.C.S. was appointed a Special Judge to try the case in the historic Red Fort at Delhi. The trial was expected to begin towards the end of May 1948.

The tide of mob violence almost ebbed in April 1948. But the atmosphere was still full of dread. The Public Security Measures Act held its sway all over the Province. The defence of Savarkar was the uppermost thought for his family and the Mahasabha leaders of Maharashtra. The nerve of the Hindu Mahasabha leaders in Maharashtra did not give way. History has witnessed that in a great crisis, Maharashtrian leadership keeps its nerve and mind. So was it proved during the historic days of Rajaram and post-Panipat period. Bhopatkar, Ketkar and Mandlik rose to keep up the traditional spirit. Jamnadas Mehta, who had played an important role in effecting Savarkar's release in 1937, rose to the occasion and played a very effective role in this trial also. The part Gajananrao Ketkar played with his colleagues in solving the deadlock regarding Savarkar's defence was as skilful and courageous as it was spirited and masterly. It was through his qualities of head and heart that the issue of the Defence Fund was brought to the forefront, so that the Defence Fund was volunteered even by farmers, villagers and students in instalments of rupee one or two amounting to a lakh in the end. Hindu Sanghatanists in Bengal, Punjab, Madras and other Provinces, too, at a later stage joined the Defence Committee in collecting the Defence Fund as a token of their moral support.

Just before the commencement of the trial, all the accused, who were then in Bombay, were taken to Delhi on May 24. Savarkar was alone taken to Delhi the next day by air, accompanied by two medical experts and oxygen tubes. All the accused were lodged in a specially selected part of the Red Fort and it was declared to be a prison. It was also declared that the Court would hold its sittings in a hall in the upper storey of a building in the Red Fort, the famous Fort where

the Moguls held trials and where recently the I.N.A. leaders were tried. The Court was well furnished and arrangements for accommodation of the Court visitors and for the accused were specially made. The Court room was fitted with microphones for making the proceedings audible. Admission to the court was regulated by passes available on production of a certificate of fitness from a Magistrate or a Gazetted Officer. Passes were valid for one day only and visitors and even counsels were liable to be searched at the gate. The Court and its surroundings were guarded by a small police and military force.

The trial opened at 10 a.m. on May 27, 1948, the day on which Savarkar completed his fateful sixty-fifth year! C. K. Daphtary, Advocate-General of Bombay, led the prosecution and was assisted by four other counsel. L. B. Bhopatkar, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, an eminent author of many Law Books and a legal celebrity, led the Defence and represented Savarkar, accused No. 8. The principal accused, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, was represented by V. V. Oak, Bar-at-law, Bombay; Narayan D. Apte was represented by K. H. Mengle; Vishnu R. Karkare by N. D. Dange, Bombay; Madanlal K. Pahwa by B. B. Banerji, Delhi; Shankar Kistaya by H. R. Mehta (Government); Gopal Godse by M. B. Maniar and Dr. Parchure by P. L. Inamdar, Gwalior. G. K. Dua and M. B. Maniar helped Dange and Inamdar and Jamnadas Mehta, Lala Ganpat Rai, Delhi, K. L. Bhopatkar, Poona, J. P. Mitter, Calcutta, and N. P. Aiyar, Madras, assisted Bhopatkar during the trial in the defence of Savarkar.

The President of the Hindu Mahasabha was defending its former President Savarkar. Bhopatkar was then seventy and had to forego a lucrative practice at the Poona Bar for months. Political reactions to his brave defence of Savarkar were not without strain. A lesser man would have gone down in standing for such a daring defence which was nothing less than an opposition and resistance to a powerful unfavourable current then in its meridian in the country.

Out of the twelve persons cited in the charge sheet, the first nine were produced on the first day, the remaining three, Gangadhar Dandvate, Gangadhar Jadhav and Suryadeo Sharma were stated to have absconded. When the trial opened, Savarkar looked sober, self-collected, but pale and physically pulled

down; Godse, the central figure, wore a scowl; Apte, Karkare, Madanlal, Badge, Gopal Godse, Kistaya and Dr. Parchure were in good spirits and freely talked with each other in the dock. On the first day the Court acceded to the Chief Defence Counsel's request for a chair to be provided for Savarkar in the dock. Then deciding a legal point raised by Bhopatkar, the judge said that the trial would be treated as if the accused had already been committed to Sessions. The Court met again on June 3 to consider the timings of the sittings, the language of the proceedings, etc., and adjourned to June 22, 1948.

In the meantime, the Bombay Public Security Measures Act was made applicable by the Central Government to the Province of Delhi on June 2, 1948, under the provisions of the Delhi Laws Act of 1912 and came into force with effect from June 13, 1947. It was declared on June 14, 1948, that the Special Court at Delhi constituted under sections 10 and 11 of the Bombay Public Security Measures Act as extended to the Province of Delhi was empowered to tender pardon to an accused under a special ordinance XIV of 1948. Accordingly Digambar Badge was tendered the King's pardon on June 21, and Badge turned approver in the case.

On June 22 the trial resumed hearing in the Red Fort. The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Daphtary, in his opening speech charged all the eight accused in the dock with conspiracy, murder and offences under the Arms Act and Explosives Substances Act. The story of the prosecution was that Nathuram Godse was the tool, Apte the brain and Savarkar was the Guru and guide behind the murder of Gandhi. The prosecution stated that Savarkar was a very well-known name, a leader of a particular line of thought and President for a considerable period of the Hindu Mahasabha. The prosecution further said that his books were numerous and vigorous and were the text books for persons of certain views and thought and some of these books were published by Nathuram Godse and Apte. The Prosecution Chief added: "It has been well known that he has been no lover, to put it mildly, of either non-violence or of any policy of favouring the Muslim Party." The Chief of the Prosecution concluded: "Evidence is sufficient to prove not only that he had knowledge of what was going to be done, but that it could not have been done except with his complicity."

After the charges were read out and explained to the accused, all the accused pleaded 'not guilty' and claimed to be tried.

The recording of the prosecution evidence began on June 24, and continued till November 6. During the course of his deposition, approver Badge told the court that he had accompanied Apte and Godse to Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, on 14 January 1948, that Godse and Apte went inside with a bag containing the stuff leaving him outside the compound, and returned 5-10 minutes later with the bag containing the stuff. The approver further said in his evidence that on January 15, 1948, Apte asked him in the compound of Dixitji Maharaj, Bombay, whether he was prepared to accompany him (Apte) to Delhi and told the approver that Tatyarao (Savarkar) had decided that Gandhi, Nehru and Suhrawardy should be finished and had entrusted that work to them.

The approver also told the Court that on a suggestion from Nathuram Godse, Godse, Apte and Badge had been to Savarkar Sadan on January 17, 1948, to have the last glimpse (*darshan*) of Savarkar and while he was sitting in the room on the ground floor of the house, he heard Savarkar saying to Godse and Apte who were coming downstairs, "Be successful and come." On their way back, Apte told the approver, so went the story of the approver, that (Tatyarao) Savarkar had predicted that Gandhi's days were numbered and that there was no doubt that their work would be successfully finished. The approver said that he accompanied Apte and Godse to Delhi because Apte told him that it was Savarkar's command. It seemed this was all the prosecution evidence against Savarkar. Badge was subjected to a gruelling cross-examination by Bhopatkar when the approver said that he regarded Savarkar not only as the leader of the Hindus, but also God incarnate (Devata). He also said that Savarkar's birthday was celebrated every year as jayanti day like Shiva Jayanti and Krishna Jayanti and that he had seen Savarkar only once in 1943. Badge admitted that Bhide Guruji and Gajananrao Damle also resided on the ground floor of Savarkar Sadan.

Out of the few other prosecution witnesses produced to prove Savarkar's complicity in the plot, Miss Shantabai B. Modak, a Maharashtrian actress, who had given Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte a lift and dropped them nearby Savarkar Sadan,

on January 14, admitted when cross-examined by Oak that she did not see Apte and Godse entering the compound of Savarkar Sadan. The story of another prosecution witness, Prof. J. C. Jain, Bombay, was that Madanlal Pahwa, who met the professor before the assassination of Gandhi, had told the professor that Savarkar had patted him on the back for his work in the Refugee Camp and said 'carry on'. The Home Minister of Bombay, Morarji Desai, and one Angad Singh told the story as related to them by Prof. Jain. As far as Savarkar was concerned, there was no evidence against him except the alleged uncorroborated talk of this Madanlal with Savarkar in all these three depositions. The taxi-driver said in his evidence that he had taken Godse, Apte, Badge and Kistaya to Shivaji Park, Dadar, but he did not know the name of the owner of the house into which Godse, Apte and Badge went. The story of the trunk-phone call from the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan, New Delhi, to Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, was also narrated by prosecution witnesses. But the call was not meant for the inmates of Savarkar Sadan and so that point was also a failure.

* * *

After the examination and cross-examination of 149 prosecution witnesses in all, the statements of the accused were heard. On November 8 Nathuram Godse submitted his statement in which he frankly admitted that he fired three shots at Gandhi whom he considered to be the father of Pakistan. Godse and Apte both denied that they had either seen Savarkar or entered the compound of his house as alleged by the prosecution. Immediately, on the next day, Godse's 92-page statement was banned by the Central Government. Madanlal denied having seen Savarkar at all as alleged by the prosecution. Kistaya also stated that it was true that Nathuram Godse, Apte and Badge had been to a certain house in Shivaji Park locality, but he added that he did not know to whom the house belonged, nor was it true what the approver told that he (Kistaya) accompanied them to that house; as in fact he did not alight from the car when Badge and others got down and went somewhere in the locality.

On November 20 Savarkar read his 52-page statement in which he said he did not commit any of the offences with which he

was charged; nor had he any reason to do so. He solemnly asserted that he was never a party to any agreement or conspiracy as alleged by the prosecution; nor had he any knowledge of any such criminal design.

Savarkar proceeded: "Badge, the approver, alleges that I (Savarkar) had decided that Gandhi, Nehru and Suhrawardy should be finished. Apte and Godse both deny that they ever told it to Badge and they were never told by me any such things as alleged. There is absolutely no evidence to corroborate Badge's allegation. The first allegation of Badge is thus not only a hearsay, but an uncorroborated hearsay."

Savarkar added that as regards the second sentence which Badge said he had personally heard him (Savarkar) saying to Apte and Godse, "be successful and come back," it was only an inference that it might have been in connection with the conspiracy. Moreover, Apte and Godse, continued Savarkar, both asserted that the story of the visit of the three to his house and the allegation of his having uttered that sentence was but a fabrication and totally false. "Taking for granted," stated Savarkar, "that Badge himself is telling the truth when he says Apte told him that sentence, the question still remains whether what Apte told Badge was true or false. There was no evidence to show that I had ever told Apte to finish Gandhi, Nehru and Suhrawardy. Apte might have invented this wicked lie to exploit my moral influence on Hindu Sanghatanists for his own purpose." Savarkar further said that he had never predicted to Apte or to anyone else that Gandhi's hundred years were over.

Detailing his personal life and political line of thought since 1908, he narrated his association with Gandhi since 1908 and he read pertinent extracts from his public statements issued from time to time on the arrest of Gandhi and Nehru, regarding the murderous attack on Jinnah and pertaining to the sad death of Kasturba Gandhi. He also briefly outlined the object of the Hindu Mahasabha of which he was president successively for seven years.

He then referred to the fateful events in 1947 and said: "I had been foremost in leading the movement against the vivisection of India. But in the year 1947 our Motherland was at last divided. However, although Pakistan came into existence

yet to counterbalance that loss, by far the larger part of Hindustan succeeded in achieving its freedom from foreign domination." And when Savarkar came to the point of the vivisection of his Motherland, tears rolled down his cheeks and his voice was choked as he finished the sentence: "The fight for political independence in which as a soldier I too had fought, suffered and sacrificed for the last fifty years in no measure less than any other patriotic leader in my generation, was at last won and a free and independent State was born. I felt myself blessed to have survived to see my country free." He wiped his tears with his handkerchief and continued to read his statement in a low voice. The newspapers flashed the moving atmosphere of the court in these words: "Every one in the court seemed to share the emotions that overwhelmed the Hindu Sabha leader. The whole court was in pin-drop silence."

Savarkar then defined his attitude towards the Central Government. He observed: "No doubt a part of the mission remained unaccomplished, but we had not renounced our ambition to restore once more the integrity of our Motherland from the Indus to the Seas. For the realization of this ambition too it was imperative to consolidate that which we had already won. With this end in view I tried to impress on the public mind that first of all the Central Government must be rendered strong whatever party may happen to lead it. Any change in that lead however desirable, should be effected by constitutional means alone, for any act of violence or civil strife inside our camp was bound to endanger the state. Revolutionary mentality, which was inevitable and justifiable while we were struggling against an alien and armed oppression, must be instantly changed into a constitutional one if we wanted to save our State from dangerous party-strifes and civil wars. With this motto I wished that the two leading organizations, the Congress and the Mahasabha, which were in fact coming very close to each other, should form a common front and strengthen the hands of the Central Government of our State. To that end I accepted the new National Flag. Though ill, I went to preside over the All-Party Hindu Conference at Delhi and attended the Mahasabha Working Committee. The majority of the veteran leaders of the Mahasabha as well as some foremost Congressite leaders had also been striving to form such a common front in co-operation with

me. The Mahasabha Working Committee passed a resolution to back up the Central Government. Dr. S. P. Mookerji, the Mahasabha leader, was already included in the Central Ministry and the step was appreciated by all of us."

As regards the deposition of other witnesses in reference to him, Savarkar said that he did not know Madanlal. He had neither met him, nor had he any conversation with him at any time whatsoever, and since the evidence of Professor Jain, Angad Singh and Morarji Desai was hearsay testimony, he pleaded that it should be excluded entirely from consideration. He pointed out that Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte were men of independent nature as was revealed by the approver and they were not to be led by the nose. He also respectfully stated before the court: "Does it not often happen that some of the followers who actually try to exploit the moral influence of the leaders to further their activities which the leader had never sanctioned? In 1942, in the 'Quit India Movement' some leading workers, who had been close associates of Gandhiji as Congressmen and respected him, resorted to underground violence. I am not concerned here with the question whether such an underground movement against a foreign domination was or was not justified. It is enough to say that Mahatma Gandhi condemned all underground violence. But masses resorted under the lead of those workers to arson, sabotage and bloodshed, shouting all the while 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai'. But even the British Government did not put Gandhiji in the dock for their crime simply because the masses respected him and were doing those very criminal acts and shouting 'Gandhiji ki Jai' and therefore they must have had consulted him."

In the end, Savarkar pleaded that since not a word had been found to incriminate him in the 10,000 letters which the prosecution had seized from his house and since Badge's allegations were uncorroborated hearsay and uncorroborated inference, he prayed the judge to acquit him without the least blemish on his character and order him to be released forthwith.

The accused were then asked whether they meant to adduce evidence in defence. All of them declined to adduce evidence in rebuttal of the prosecution evidence or in support of the statements made by them.

After the statements of the eight accused were recorded, the

counsels' arguments were heard from December 1 to December 30, 1948. Nathuram Godse argued his case himself for about three days and laid stress on the point that it was a cold-blooded act of his own and was committed not in consultation or in conspiracy with anybody else and as he had shown no mercy to the man whom he had killed, he concluded, he did not want the court to show any mercy to himself. Mengle argued the case on behalf of Apte, Dange argued the case of Karkare, B. Banerji that of Madanlal, Mehta that of Kistaya and Inamdar those of Gopal Godse and Dr. Parchure. P. R. Das, a retired High Court Judge from Patna and brother of Deshbandhu C. R. Das, volunteered his services for the defence of Savarkar and argued the case in a powerful and masterful manner for Savarkar in particular and as regards the point of conspiracy in general. Sure of ultimate success, Das concluded that he did not doubt as to what would be the decision of the court regarding his client. He emphasized that he expected a clean acquittal for Savarkar without blemish on his character. It was a tribute to the broad-mindedness of Bhopatkar, Chief Defence Counsel, that although in no way unequal to the occasion in his legal acumen, he made sure of the acquittal of Savarkar, the only object of his heart and pride by adding strength and influence to the defence of Savarkar through his masterly and thorough cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses and then by putting forth the arguments through the legal genius of P. R. Das.

At last after eighty-four sittings spread over seven long months, the day of judgment dawned on February 10, 1949. Exactly at 11 a.m. the Special Judge, Atma Charan, commenced to deliver his judgment. In the course of the judgment, Atma Charan said: "Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his statement says that he had no hand in the conspiracy, if any, and had no control whatsoever over Nathuram Godse and Narayan D. Apte. It has been mentioned above that the prosecution case against Vinayak D. Savarkar rests on the evidence of the approver and approver alone. It has further been mentioned earlier that it would be unsafe to base any conclusion on the evidence of the approver as against Vinayak D. Savarkar. There is thus no reason to suppose that Vinayak Damodar had any hand in what took place at Delhi on 20-1-1948 and 30-1-1948."

The learned judge concluded: "Vinayak D. Savarkar: He is found not guilty of the offences as specified in the charge, and is acquitted thereunder. He is in custody and be released forthwith unless required otherwise."

Nathuram Godse was sentenced to death for his deliberate and calculated act. Narayan D. Apte was also sentenced to death as the real brain behind the murder, and the other five accused, Vishnu Karkare, Madanlal Pahwa, Gopal V. Godse, Shankar Kistaya and Dr. Dattatraya Parchure, who were found guilty of conspiracy and abetment, were sentenced each to transportation for life. As soon as the judge rose to depart, all the prisoners fell at the feet of Savarkar in the dock and raised shouts of 'Akhand Hindustan Amar Rahe; Hindu-Hindi Hindustan, Kabi Na Honga Pakistan'. It may be mentioned here that later, on June 21, 1949, Shankar Kistaya and Dr. Parchure were both acquitted by the Punjab High Court in an appeal as it was believed that Kistaya did no more than carry out his master's orders and the confession of Dr. Parchure on which his conviction was based, was found to be unreliable and unsatisfactory by the Appeal Court. The appeal of Godse, who had assumed sole responsibility of the murder of Gandhi, again argued his own case on the point of conspiracy and the appeals of Apte, Madanlal and Gopal Godse, were not granted and eventually Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte died unrepentantly on the gallows on the morning of November 15, 1949, in the Ambala Prison with the Bhagavat Geeta in their hands.

Savarkar did not enjoy the trial as he had enjoyed the Nasik Trial thirty-eight years earlier. At the fag end of his life he was put into a fiery ordeal. So he had to control every nerve, every muscle and every drop of his blood with his uncommon will power to outlive the obloquy and the ordeal. Like a yogi he wrote his plain letters to his son asking him to be self-supporting and consoling his wife that after the greatest catastrophe they had passed nearly twenty-five years in happiness. He himself had to suffer unparalleled mental torments and agonies and he felt all the while a year and a week the ingratitude on the part of his countrymen, who aimed at damning him in the eyes of the world. That was a burning ordeal. It was therefore quite natural for such a man of great will power and the burning emblem of sacrifice that not a muscle on his

face moved as he heard the decision of the Court in the Red Fort. He kept a straight face.

Savarkar's acquittal was a thunderbolt to his ill-wishers. What a shame! To Savarkarites and Hindu Sanghatanists all over India, his release therefore was an occasion for great rejoicings. Telegrams and letters of congratulations were showered on him from all parts of India and from abroad. Almost all Maharashtrian leading newspapers gave a sigh of relief at the acquittal of Savarkar, the great patriot and patriarch. So did the Hindu Sanghatanists and other unbiased straightforward newspapers all over India. Most of them were very sorry that without evidence such a great patriot and leader was implicated in the trial. A great tragedy was averted, they added.

But no sooner was the acquittal of Savarkar pronounced, than he was served with a notice under an order of the Delhi Magistrate prohibiting him from leaving the Red Fort area. It was a keen disappointment for the vast crowds that had gathered outside the Red Fort to give an ovation to Savarkar whom they wanted to take out in a procession. A few hours later, by another order under the Punjab Public Security Measures Act, Savarkar was externed and was prohibited from entering the Delhi area for a period of three months and was escorted under police protection to his house at Shivaji Park, Bombay. The train carrying him reached Dadar, Bombay, at 10-30 a.m. on February 12, 1949. The news of his departure from Delhi was kept a secret. Yet hundreds of Hindu Sanghatanist workers and leaders greeted Savarkar at the station. Savarkar was put by the police officer, who escorted him from Delhi, in a motor car waiting outside the station, and was driven to Savarkar Sadan. At his house his wife and some ladies waved auspicious lighted wicks around his face in the traditional Hindu fashion. Thus ended the Red Fort ordeal.

CHAPTER 22

Detention and Internment

No sooner was Savarkar released than L. B. Bhopatkar, Savarkar's defence counsel and president of the Hindu Mahasabha, issued a statement calling on Hindusabhaites to demand a Governmental inquiry into the question as to who were responsible for the sanction of Savarkar's prosecution in the Gandhi Murder Trial and also to request the Government to bring to book those who were responsible for it.

On February 14, 1949, Savarkar wrote to Bhopatkar expressing regret that such a hasty step should have been taken without consulting or even informing him beforehand. Since Savarkar held that there could not have been any individually vindictive motive which activated the Government in sanctioning the prosecution, he said that the legal advice given to the Government might have been hasty, misleading and even panicky under the shock of the great tragedy which they all deplored; it could not be intentionally malicious. So he desired that it was better in public interest that so far as he was concerned they should all let the curtain fall on the tragedy now that he had secured such a fair and honourable acquittal to which Bhopatkar himself had contributed more than anyone else.

The same day Savarkar wrote a similar letter to Morarji Desai, Home Minister of Bombay, stating that he had asked Bhopatkar to cancel his circular to Hindusabhaites and to withdraw the hasty step. He also said that he had already decided to retire altogether from public life, as his health, physical and mental, was shattered. It was better, he added, in the interest of the nation at the moment to let the curtain drop on the whole tragedy, so far as he was personally concerned, after such a fair and honourable acquittal as he had secured.

In the end he expressed his desire to see Morarji Desai and Balasaheb Kher, then Chief Minister of Bombay. Morarji

Desai replied that he would positively see him if he came on a day convenient to him. But Savarkar avoided meeting him saying that he would see him on his return to Bombay as he was then going out of Bombay to some health-resort for recouping his shattered health.

Immediately after this controversy, Savarkar wrote a letter to P. R. Das, his defence counsel, expressing his grateful thanks for his trenchant but now triumphant defence speech in vindication of his innocence in the Red Fort Trial. Das replied that Savarkar had won his case on merits and not through any advocacy on his part. Even if, Das added, nobody had appeared for Savarkar, the judge would have acquitted him. "I wonder," he concluded, "if the judge acceded to my argument that it was not sufficient to acquit you but it was necessary for him to say that you left his court without a stain on your character."

Savarkar also thanked Guy A. Aldred heartily for the immense moral help he had rendered him to get justice and added that it also reflected great credit on Aldred's selfless devotion to the cause of humanity. In the end he said that his acquittal had sent a thrill of joy in millions and millions of hearts in India. In this happy mood he sent a cheque for Rs. 500 to Lala Ganpatrai, advocate and eminent Hindu leader of Delhi, as fees for his legal services he rendered to Savarkar in the Gandhi Murder Trial. Ganpatrai cancelled the cheque and returned it to Savarkar saying that he returned the cheque not because the amount was insufficient but because he did not want to be deprived of the honour and the privilege of having served him without any honorarium!

Savarkar was not reconciled to Pakistan. Before he was arrested in the Gandhi Murder Trial he had replied to a questionnaire issued by the *Kirloskar*, Maharashtra's eminent monthly, that he treated Pakistan as rebel Provinces and not a *fait accompli*. Muslims in India should be given the same kind of treatment as Pakistan gave to the Hindus in Pakistan. Frankly, the Indian Union was a Hindu State as every nation was called after the name of its national majority. However, the Hindu Raj was not to be a theocratic state; it was not to be based on religious tenets. If the Muslims in India gave up hating the Hindus and were emotionally and loyally prepared for national integration a state without distinctions of caste and creed could

be established. In such a state, society would be reconstructed on economic basis and Hindu socialism would do the work. The tenets of Hindutva were consistent with democracy, and the Muslims, Christians and Parsis would be treated as equal citizens with the Hindus.

In the reorganisation the defence should have priority. The factories producing ammunition should be given top priority. Without proper arrangement for defence, no nation would be able to protect its industries. For some time India should be a member of the British Commonwealth, but the name of that organisation should be changed to Commonwealth or a federation of free nations. As regards the possibility of a war with Pakistan Savarkar said that India was already at war with Pakistan and it would go on until a United India had been established, he concluded.[1]

After taking rest for about a month at Bombay, Savarkar went to Bangalore for a few days for a change. On his way back, he heard the news about the accident to the aeroplane in which Sardar Patel was travelling and about his miraculous escape in the neighbourhood of Jaipur. On reaching Bombay, Savarkar immediately congratulated Sardar Patel on his safety and said in the course of the congratulatory telegram that " the Sardar's life constituted a national asset and his grasp of the realities and his firm hold on the helm had steered the ship of the newly-born Bharatiya State clear of many a rock and shoal ".

Savarkar was an admirer of Sardar Patel who had marched in the middle of September 1948 armed forces into Hyderabad which the Nizam wanted to keep an independent Islamic State. The Nizam's army was beaten and he surrendered to the Union Government. Prime Minister Nehru was hesitating to take action and had Gandhi, who had visualised Nizam's rule over India, been alive, Nehru's hesitation would have been transformed into opposition to the break-up of the Nizam rule. Savarkar highly appreciated the great work Patel had done in unifying India.

Savarkar was now much better and was in high spirits. He thanked G. V. Ramachari, advocate of Bangalore, for making his stay at Bangalore very comfortable.

[1] *Kirloskar Monthly*, February 1948.

On May 28 Savarkar's birthday was celebrated as usual by the District and Provincial Hindu Sabhas all over India. Their leaders spoke on the life and work and sacrifice of Savarkar and declared their intention to resume political activities. At Jullundur and Ambala 'Veer Savarkar Day' was celebrated at huge meetings despite the ban put by the Government of East Punjab. Gyani Pindidas, Hardayal Deogun and Captain Keshavchandra spoke stirringly at the Jullundur meeting and Prof. Om Prakash Kahol and Dayalsingh Vedi made impassioned speeches at the Ambala meeting.

On May 10, 1949, the first part of Savarkar's Marathi autobiography was published under the title *Mazya Athavani* (*My Reminiscences*). It covers his life from Bhagur to Nasik and casts a gripping light on his inspiring thoughts and youthful revolutionary activities. About twenty years earlier some parts of this book were published in the *Shraddhananda* weekly. But the Government was disturbed and the Collector of Ratnagiri told Savarkar angrily that his autobiographical writings would be treated as political writings and he would have to undergo the remainder of the fifty years' transportation!

Towards the end of May 1949, the Constituent Assembly passed an important article abolishing the separate electorates, reservations and weightages which were based on the invidious racial and religious discriminations. Upon this Savarkar, who was the first nationalist leader to demand this very thing years earlier, sent a wire to Sardar Patel congratulating him for having thus vindicated 'the genuine national character of our Bharatiya State' and hoped 'that the administration would boldly carry it into effect in letter and in spirit.' Thanking Savarkar in return, Sardar Patel said in his reply of June 2, that Government was already doing and would continue to do its best to act accordingly, "and now it is for communal organisations such as the one with which you are associated to catch the spirit and to think and act and make contribution accordingly."

In the middle of July 1949, Savarkar sent a telegram to M. S. Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., extending his felicitations on the withdrawal of the ban on the R.S.S. and on the release of the R.S.S. leader himself. In the telegram Savarkar further said: "Long live the Sangh, the valorous champion of Hindudom."

The R.S.S. workers and leaders suffered imprisonment not while defending the integrity of Hindustan but while protesting against the ban on their organisation. Had they made such sacrifices for that noble cause, they would have achieved something for which history might have given them credit.

The Constituent Assembly had by now far advanced in the framing of the constitution and now the question of the appellation of the country, the choice of the script and the lingua franca were being hotly discussed in the Assembly and outside. Savarkar wired on August 5, 1949, to the President of the Constituent Assembly his views on the subject. He said: "I am voicing the sense and sentiment of millions of our countrymen when I beseech the Constituent Assembly to adopt Bharat as the name of our nation, Hindi as the national language and Nagari as the national script." S. N. Mukerjee, Secretary of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, acknowledged the receipt of the telegram. A majority of the members of the Constituent Assembly were thinking in the same way. They chose the name of Hindustan as Bharat; but a battle royal was fought in the Constituent Assembly over the question of the national language and Hindi with Nagari script was declared to be the national language of India by a majority of one vote only.

About this time Savarkar learnt that N. Panchanathan Iyer, who had helped the defence of Savarkar in the Gandhi Murder Trial, died at Madras. Iyer was a leading member of the Madras Bar and was a Hindusabha leader. Expressing sorrow over his death, Savarkar wrote to M. V. Ganpati, advocate of Madras, asking him to convey his condolences to the bereaved family and sadly added: "In the darkest hour of my life N. Panchanathan Iyer volunteered to act as one of my defence counsel and went all the way to Delhi at his own expense."

Just then Master Tara Singh, who was interned since some months, was released. Savarkar offered him felicitations on his release as he considered that "Master Tara Singh was one of the few leaders who kept up the heroic spirit of our people of the Punjab in the dark days of the partition and saved the East Punjab at any rate for us." He also said that no one could appreciate more highly the services Tara Singh rendered to furthering the common cause than he did. In reply Master Tara Singh said that the relation between the Hindus and the Sikhs

in the East Punjab were very much strained at that moment and that caused him anxiety even in jail. "If Hindustan is run over by the Pakistanis," he concluded, "our religion, our culture and our sacred things will quickly disappear. It is therefore necessary for you to devote your whole attention to this serious problem; for you alone are in a position to save the situation. The Punjab Hindus are, at present, distrusting me, so I cannot do the job. Will you study the problem and think over its solution? I shall, of course, be at your service in doing this most urgent task." This speaks of the Sikh leader's faith in Savarkar.

In the same month Savarkar's younger brother Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar, passed away at the age of 61 on October 19, after remaining unconscious for a fortnight from an attack of paralysis. His illness and mental agony dated back to January 1948 when he was murderously attacked by a riotous mob of goondas immediately after the assassination of Gandhi and from which he never recovered completely afterwards. Next to none in national service, patriotic sacrifice, courage and intelligence, this silver-tongued orator of Maharashtra, who had been during the British regime a symbol of sedition, sacrifice, revolt and terror while his brothers were rotting in the Andamans, died with an uncompromising opposition to the anti-Hindu and un-Hindu forces. It was a cruel misfortune that Savarkar should witness the last of his brothers consumed by fire. Speaker of the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) G. V. Mavlankar was one of the numerous persons who sent condolences to Savarkar in his bereavement.

* * *

The Hindusabha leaders who got panicky and nervous after the murder of Gandhi suggested to the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha that they should change the definition of Hindu and alter the Flag also. Savarkar urged them not to alter the definition and the Flag and they yielded.

In the meanwhile, the scattered forces of the Hindu Sabhaites were preparing to hold the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Calcutta. The Hindu Mahasabha had suspended its political activities in February 1948. Their two great leaders Bhai Parmananda and Dr. B. S. Moonje had passed away, the

former on December 8, 1947, and the latter on March 4, 1948. After a pressing and fervent request from the veteran revolutionary leader, Upendranath Banerjee, who was a co-sufferer with Savarkar in the Andamans and was a Congressman for a long time, and had turned a Hindusabhaite after the Hindu Bengal had reaped the fruits of partition, and ardent appeals from Ashutosh Lahiri and Dr. N. B. Khare, Savarkar decided to go to Calcutta, and started on December 21, 1949, to inaugurate the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha.

Almost throughout the journey, Savarkar had to make brief speeches at several stations to respond to the greetings of the crowds that awaited his arrival. In Calcutta Savarkar was taken out in a huge procession along with Dr. Khare, the president-elect and L. B. Bhopatkar, the retiring president. Thousands of people participated in the procession. In the session, too, all attention was centred on Savarkar. His acquittal in the Red Fort Trial had now added colour and a further romance to his already romantic life. Hindu Sanghatanists from all parts of the country gathered in thousands at Calcutta to declare to the whole world that their accredited leader had at last come back to guide them.

When Savarkar entered the *pandal*, the huge congregation stood up as if electrified with his *darshan*. It became hilarious while shouting 'Veer Savarkar Ki Jai' when Savarkar stood before the mike with his palms characteristically resting on the handle of his umbrella and wearing his brimless black round cap. In his ninety-minute inaugural address to the session, Savarkar stressed first the point that the independence of India was a victory and not a political gift from the British. He asserted that the independence was not accomplished by the Congress alone, or the revolutionaries alone; it was, he said, the summation of the struggle, sacrifice and sufferings of thousands of patriots from 1857 to 1947 inside and outside India.

Savarkar emphatically told the Hindusabhaites that the need for the Mahasabha was greater in those days and it must continue its operation in the country to defend the cause of the Hindus as it had done in the past. There was blackmarket and corruption. There was nepotism and maladministration. But it was the character of the society that had reflected on the rulers; the level of the people and the rulers being the same.

It was not good that the Socialists should condemn the Congress whom they had helped to come to power. Congressmen were anxious to keep power to themselves. They did not look at things from the people's point of view. They did all things from the election point of view. They should take up the Hindu Code Bill if it really helped the nation. They should not take it up or drop it with an eye to elections, he added.

Savarkar affirmed that India was after all now a Hindu State established under a Hindu Flag with the Dharma-Chakra of the Hindu Race as its state symbol. He exhorted the Hindu youths to join the Indian army, navy and air forces in thousands. He also pleaded for the adoption of constitutional and democratic legal means for the fulfilment of their objectives and appealed to the Hindus not to take the law into their own hands. He suggested that there should be a policy of tit for tat in our dealings with Pakistan and declared: "It is the duty of our people to consolidate our position first, and if we are true to our Mother and Soul, by ten years' time we can restore the territories that have been torn away."

Welcoming the delegates to the session, Upendranath Banerji, Chairman of the Reception Committee, said that the people of India were then between the capitalist democracy of Anglo-America and the totalitarian communism of Russia. "It is only those who are true to the Indian genius and have confidence in India's spiritual destiny that can drag us out of this slough and despondency," he added.

The president, Dr. Khare, proclaimed in his usual fearlessness the re-entry of the Hindu Mahasabha into the field of politics with the ideology of a cultural state and the Hindu Rashtra as its guiding stars and affirmed that "but for the pressure increasingly applied by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Congress could not have abandoned separate electorates or adopted Hindi with Devanagari script as the national language."

The Hindu Mahasabha passed a special resolution expressing its rejoicings at the acquittal of Savarkar and denounced the Government for having implicated him in the Gandhi Murder Trial. A new slogan was given to the Hindusabhites. 'Give one more blow and destroy Pakistan'. The first blow was the one struck at British rule.

Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, the great stalwart, had resigned from the

Hindu Mahasabha. It was his opinion that the Hindu Mahasabha should convert itself into a socio-cultural organisation, or change its constitution, throw its doors open to all Indians and alter its name. Dr. Mookerjee was Minister of Industry and Supply in the Nehru Cabinet. But he later resigned from it on April 18, 1950, protesting against the Nehru-Liaqat Ali Pact and formed on April 28, 1951, the Jan Sangh, which is nothing but old wine in new bottles; the mixture as before.

On his return to Bombay from Calcutta, Savarkar wrote to the Home Minister, Bombay, that the report that he said in his speech at the Calcutta session of the Hindu Mahasabha that "they wanted to hang me, but fortunately they were foiled and I was acquitted" was baseless.

On January 26, 1950, was inaugurated the Sovereign Democratic Bharatiya Republic under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Savarkar issued a statement to the nation on this occasion to commemorate the emancipation of our Motherland from the British bondage. He also congratulated Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his becoming the first President of the Republic. In his congratulatory telegram, he 'placed his services entirely at the disposal of the Republic in any national undertaking and hoped that the foremost task of creating the strongest possible Bharatiya army, navy and air forces to defend our new-born Republic would receive his immediate attention.' Savarkar ended his congratulatory message with the words 'Long live Akhand Bharat.' In his reply of February 1, 1950, Dr. Rajendra Prasad most warmly thanked Savarkar for his kind message of congratulations which he deeply appreciated.

In a statement he issued on the Republic Day Savarkar exhorted the Hindu youth to join the land, sea and air forces in millions. "Our national strategic borders are still in the hands of our enemies. We cannot achieve their friendship by singing sonnets of high-sounding principles alone. If we follow such absurd policies we might lose whatever we have attained after a long-drawn-out and bloody struggle. The only way to keep up our existence is by acting in the same way in which the others act towards us. Tit for tat is the only policy which can guarantee our survival and success," he added.

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In the last week of March 1950, Savarkar blessed G. V. Ketkar, who had decided to marry Miss Redmond in the first week of April 1950 against the will of the leading Hindu Sanghatanists of Poona. Savarkar wrote to Ketkar that if he thought that the marriage would turn to be happy from his personal point of view he should go in for it. From the point of social reform and Hindu Sanghatan there was nothing wrong in the proposed marriage as he was converting the spouse to Hinduism. It was surely a bold act on the part of a leader like Ketkar to give practical effect in popularising Shuddhi by his own example. It was a better act than the empty words of the Hindu Sanghatanists who clamoured for Shuddhi and did nothing tangible. Such actions lead to the progress of social reforms. Those who supported Miss Miller's marriage with Holkar must support him. In the past social reformers advocated social reforms at the cost of others. A leader like Madhavrao Ranade, who preached social reforms, did not marry a widow even when there was an opportunity to practise what he preached. The suicidal religious policy which allowed Hindu girls to be converted to other religions must change. Non-Hindu girls should be converted and married and assimilated. This new dynamic Hinduism must be adopted.

About this time Sardarsinghji Raoji Rana wrote a letter to P. S. Kulkarni, assistant editor of the *Kesari*, asking him whether his cablegram congratulating Savarkar on his acquittal had reached him. Rana said he was in India from December 7, 1947, to April 23, 1948, and added: "I was eagerly looking forward to meeting Savarkar to whom I said good-bye at Paris Station in 1910. Meanwhile tragic events happened which prevented me from going to Poona and I felt confused and overwhelmed with sad thoughts. I am glad to learn that the clouds have passed over but doubt if I shall ever meet my old Comrades Savarkar and Bapat in this life. I am aging. I shall be eighty next April. So far as health goes I am keeping well but solitude weighs much on me."

Patriot Rana was a great friend of Tagore, Lajpat Rai, Sarojini Naidu and Vithalbhai Patel. His German wife died in 1931. During World War I he was deported to Martinique Island when he bore misfortunes and hardships with fortitude. During World War II Rana was thrown in the concentration

camp by the Germans. On the arrival of Subhas Bose in Germany, he was released and asked to work for Germany against France. He refused to do so. For his loyalty, the French Government proposed to confer on him the French Legion of Honour which was deferred till May 1951.

Writing to 'My dear and revered Ranaji', Savarkar said: "I am here today enjoying the most unexpected delightful moment of writing a letter to one of my dearest comrades and friends in the stormy days of the revolutionary struggle during the first decades of the century. You are about the only veteran of this brave land of Indian patriots in Paris and London who is surviving at this hour." "Well those forty years have passed. The struggle is fought to a finish and the British are driven out of our Motherland. Our Bharat *Bhoomi* stands free and independent. The Abhinava Bharat is born," he added. He further said that no nation became free in its entirety at a stroke. Neither Shivaji nor Garibaldi, nor Washington could realise their dreams in their entirety at a stroke.

Savarkar fervently urged Rana to write his recollections. The publication of his life was not only important from his personal point of view but also extremely important from the historical point of view to India and Revolutionary Party as he was about the only person who would and could tell the story of the Indian revolutionaries in the two World Wars and as he was one of those who would go down in history as a prominent one. It was, Savarkar concluded, Ranaji's last and most patriotic duty to add the golden page to our Indian history.

In March 1950 the East Bengal burst into a conflagration. The Noakhali tragedies were ruthlessly repeated. As foretold by Savarkar, the birth of Pakistan endangered the peace and prosperity of Hindustan, led the Indians to agony, misery and sufferings, and Pakistan 'sought every opportunity for expansion.' Moved by these tragedies in the East Bengal, even leaders like Jaiprakash Narayan suggested that our forces should be sent to the disturbed areas if nothing else could stop the carnage. The general opinion in the press seemed to favour the adoption of some such drastic step.

At this critical moment it was announced that Savarkar was going to attend the East Punjab Hindu Conference at Rohatak in the second week of April. Savarkar was to break his journey

at Delhi where the people had planned to accord him an imposing reception.

About this time Pandit Nehru in good faith thought it fit to try his method of negotiations to solve the Bengal problem and invited Liaqat Ali Khan, the Premier of Pakistan, to Delhi for a parley. The Premier of Pakistan at Karachi in his speech before his Parliament levelled an attack against the Hindu Mahasabha and attributed the East Bengal tragedies to its propaganda and to a Calcutta speech of Sardar Patel in February 1950. And as if to create a calm and quiet atmosphere for his delicate negotiations with the Pakistani Premier, Savarkar who was out of active politics and who had placed his services at the disposal of the Bharatiya Republic, was arrested at Bombay in the early morning of April 4, 1950, under the Preventive Detention Act, hundreds of miles away from Delhi where the delicate negotiations were being spun and was put in the Belgaum District Jail. L. B. Bhopatkar, G. V. Ketkar, Mamarao Date, K. B. Limaye, G. M. Nalavade, and others were also put in prison.

This action on the part of the Government was resented and condemned by almost the entire press, political leaders, and freedom-loving organizations like the Civil Liberties Union of Bombay. Condemning this action, the *Free Press Journal*, which had never shown even an iota of sympathy for the Hindu Mahasabha, observed: "The offensive against the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. leaders and workers has only one implication. That is, that, Premier Nehru has elected to appease Pakistan and imperil the integrity and the independence of India. The offensive against the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. has a two-fold purpose; one is to divert India's attention from the policy of appeasement; the other is to create a panic that there is a Hindu conspiracy and rally the progressive elements in support of the policy of appeasement of Pakistan." [2] And all this took place in a democratic India where the fundamental rights of the freedom of speech and of association are guaranteed by the Constitution itself!

Nehru then amidst a secular atmosphere signed an Agreement called the Delhi Pact with Liaqat Ali Khan on April 8, 1950,

[2] The *Free Press Journal*, 5 April 1950.

providing for the right of the refugees to return to their original places and guaranteeing the recovery of abducted women and the right to transfer all movable property and to dispose off immovable property and the non-recognition of all forced conversions during the period of disturbances. Nehru reared the Pact and Liaqat Ali reaped its fruits.

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On April 8, 1950, Bhopatkar and others were informed in Yervada Prison by the District Magistrate of Poona that "you were engaged in a conspiracy to commit acts of violence against ministers of Government." They all made their representations to the Bombay Government denying the charges and their vicious implications categorically. The District Magistrate made two affidavits in the Bombay High Court. In neither of them was it even remotely suggested that there was a plot on the life of any minister of India. The grounds given for Savarkar's detention were that he was inciting Hindus against Muslims. This was clearly a trumped-up charge; for, since his acquittal in the Gandhi Murder Trial he had not made any speech in Greater Bombay or issued any statement on the Muslim problem and given the Commissioner of Police any excuse to twist his speech or statement.

From Belgaum jail Savarkar made a representation to the Government of Bombay on April 26, 1950, refuting the Commissioner's baseless charges and requested the Government to order his release unconditionally as he had all along held and preached patriotic and constitutional views. Ever since March last, the representation added, Greater Bombay had been free from communal strain and had been peaceful and that he believed that the pact with Pakistan might restore peace all over the country as well. Further, he would certainly try his best to exhort the people to observe its terms in the spirit it was meant to be acted upon.

But in case Government was not inclined to grant the request for unconditional release, Savarkar urged that he should be released under the condition that he would not take part in current politics for any period Government might lay down just as Government had done in the case of Dr. Khare and other Hindusabha leaders. Savarkar added that it was a matter of

public knowledge that he had been already contemplating to retire shortly from the political field.

On May 28, 1950, Savarkar's birthday was celebrated in leading towns all over India, and resolutions demanding Savarkar's release were passed. At a Bombay meeting Jamnadas Mehta said that no Congress leader was nearer to Savarkar in sacrifice and courage and added that the Congress leaders had vindictively implicated Savarkar in the Gandhi Murder Trial and Government was following the same wicked policy in regard to Savarkar, their great opponent. At Buldhana Pandit Dinkarshastri Kanade, Deputy Speaker of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, said that Savarkar should be prosecuted if there was any evidence against him in the possession of the Government or he should be released forthwith.

Dr. Gokulchand Narang said at a Delhi meeting that Savarkar was the Prince of Indian revolutionaries. At the meeting concluding 'the Savarkar Week celebrations' R. N. Mandlik said that he was giving vent to Savarkar's sincere regret when he said that the R.S.S. had not fulfilled the expectations of Savarkar. Dr. Hedgewar's relations were very cordial with Savarkar and the founder of the R.S.S. attended the Hindu Mahasabha sessions. It was surprising, he added, that although the aims and objects of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. were the same, the R.S.S. was inclined more to the Congress which vivisected Bharat. A week after this Madhavrao Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., said that the detention of Savarkar in his extreme old age and ill-health was a sad thing. His detention was a disgrace to national honour. He added that even the foreign press had expressed surprise at the detention of Savarkar, who was the defender of the nation.

The habeas corpus petition filed by Savarkar's son Vishwas Savarkar came up for hearing before the Division Bench of the High Court of Bombay on Wednesday, July 12, 1950. The Division Bench suggested that Savarkar should be released on his giving an undertaking. The Advocate-General C. K. Daphtary informed the Court that he would consult Government and consequently the hearing was postponed to Thursday. Next day when the petition came up for hearing before the Chief Justice M. C. Chagla and Justice Gajendragadkar, the Advocate-General informed the Court that he was authorised to state that

if Savarkar would give an undertaking that he would not participate in political activities and would remain at his own house in Bombay, Government would agree to his release. Their Lordships made the order of release on July 13 on an undertaking given by K. N. Dharap, who appeared on behalf of Savarkar, that Savarkar would not take any part whatever in political activity and would remain in his house in Bombay. This undertaking was to last for a period of one year or upto the next general elections in India or in case of India being involved in any war, whichever event took place first. N. D. Dange and D. P. Dhupkar also appeared on behalf of Savarkar. Savarkar was released on the same day.

Next day the *Times of India*, Bombay, observed that the latest judgments of the Bombay High Court re-emphasised the need on the executive's part to take the utmost care in applying the Preventive Detention Act. The Bombay Government dominated by Morarji Desai was, it seemed, making up the loss it suffered in its prestige in the Gandhi Murder Trial. Savarkar also fared no better at this trial. He said against his will and principles that he would exhort the people to observe the Nehru-Liaqat Ali pact. For a moment the physical agonies must have overpowered his stubborn will.

On his way back Savarkar was given a warm reception at Poona station by Poona Hindusabhaites and the people. People also gave spontaneous receptions to Savarkar at several stations such as Lonavla, Talegaon, Kalyan and others. A huge crowd was eagerly awaiting his arrival at Dadar station till 10 p.m. Replying to the reception at the station, he said he had not expected to see the light so soon and to meet the people who so dearly loved him. He expressed his grateful thanks for the warm reception his countrymen and admirers had accorded him. He said he could not accept any reception of political nature. He looked terribly pulled down and was thoroughly exhausted.

Followers, admirers and sympathisers of Savarkar heaved a sigh of relief. Congratulations came but not so enthusiastically. Jamnadas Mehta wrote that Savarkar's release, though conditional, was a triumph for him and for democracy. The conditions imposed on him were simply meaningless and intended only to save the face of the Government, he added.

Shortly after his release Savarkar resigned from the Hindu Mahasabha. In a letter to Dr. N. B. Khare, president of the Hindu Mahasabha, he said: "In view of the restrictions imposed on me by Government (which I mean to observe), preventing me from taking part in politics for a specific period, I must inevitably resign even the primary membership of the Hindu Mahasabha." Afterwards he was to the Hindu Mahasabha what Gandhi was to the Congress even though they were not even primary members of their respective organisations.

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The Independence Day was drawing very near and so Savarkar asked Government whether his hoisting a national flag on his house on August 15, 1950, would be construed as a political act. The Home Department informed him that he could do so without making a speech! Savarkar humbly obeyed the order of his Government while his Government gagged and humiliated him.

As Savarkar was prohibited from taking part in politics, he turned his attention to social, script, and calendar reforms by writing articles in newspapers, publishing books and delivering speeches at different localities in Bombay.

On September 16, 1950, he said at a meeting that untouchability was abolished and the Article 17 of the Constitution declaring that "untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law," should be inscribed on a pillar like the Ashoka pillar. It was a golden day in the history of humanity and the Hindu Sanghathan. He expressed great pride and satisfaction over this unique achievement.

The Constituent Assembly had passed that clause on April 29, 1947. It was, Savarkar said, one of the good things that had happened during the last three years. The society that reformed itself lived longer. The Hindus had expitiated for their national sin of observing untouchability. It was the last attack on untouchability. The subjunctive mood of the order was changed to imperative mood. It was one step ahead from the viewpoint of humanism. And the beauty of it was that, he observed, it was done at the hands of Dr. Ambedkar, a great one

among the men of learning, a jurist and a great pandit well versed in Shastras.

Although the law was passed, Savarkar added, untouchability was lingering in the minds of individuals and so it must be rooted out. Anyone acting against it should be brought to book with the help of government, which he expected to implement the law rigorously. The gasping untouchability should be buried in ten years' time so that the Scheduled Castes might not be tempted to demand reservations for a further period of ten years. In America slavery was abolished but they fought a war to impose its abolition on the Southern States. It was not so in India, he concluded.

The national and international press rang with praise for Gandhi for this great achievement in India. Gandhi was the uncrowned king of the Congress and the Congress party declared the abolition of untouchability. Naturally no foreign journal mentioned Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's name, whose motive power above all had driven the nation to perform the deed. When this was the fate of Dr. Ambedkar, it was not surprising that tributes were not paid to Mahatma Phooley, Swami Dayananda, Swami Shraddhananda and Savarkar for their great services to the removal of untouchability. Yet Savarkar said that the achievement was the outcome of the work and teachings of a host of social reformers, blessings of saints and the efforts of Mahatmas.

Savarkar's warning however was not heeded by the Hindu society. Besides, the approach of Savarkar to this problem was void of economic aspect. Savarkar gave no emphasis on the economic aspect of the problem of Untouchables. It was not enough for the caste Hindus to remove untouchability outwardly and consider themselves absolved of the main duty. The Untouchables were kept low down in the social and economic scales. It was, therefore, incumbent on the government and the society to advance them in the economic and educational spheres so that they might stand on their own feet. Mere removal of untouchability was an external prop, which was not much helpful.

In October 1950 Savarkar advised women not to regard kitchen and motherhood as a curse. It was a boon. The aim of man and woman, he observed, was to serve society, humanity.

Woman was the fountain-head of godly happiness. She was the river of life. Their children were new pictures of life, pictures of god. It was necessary to stop giving birth to diseased and defective children.

About this time Savarkar felt the necessity of defining a Hindu once again. On the eve of the Morley-Minto reforms the question arose as to the definition of a Hindu. There was no vagueness about the definition of a Muslim. In those days Natesan and Co. published a booklet containing 101 definitions of a Hindu. Savarkar solved the puzzle. He defined a Hindu as one who regarded India from the Indus to the Seas as his fatherland and holyland. He had published his famous work *Hindutva* early in 1923.

Tilak defined Hinduism as faith in the Vedas, variety in the means and diversity of the objects of worship. Tilak's Hinduism excluded its tributaries like Jainism and Buddhism. And while Tilak's definition desired every Hindu to have faith in the Vedas, seventy per cent of the Hindus had no right to listen to, much less to study, the Vedas. According to Savarkar's definition the Sikhs, Buddhists, Aboriginals, Vedics and Jains are Hindus. The reason why Savarkar again defined a Hindu was that some interested brains had some time back tried to father Savarkar's definition on Loknayak Aney. Aney, however, expressed his regret over the misunderstanding and frankly admitted that Savarkar was the author of the definition. Government has indirectly accepted Savarkar's definition.

Savarkar was one of the few men who tried to reform the Nagari script and the movement to reform the Nagari script owes much to Savarkar. Savarkar reduced the number of types from 250 to 80. He told his audience at a Bombay meeting that the Nagari was the most scientific script from the viewpoint of phonetics and the press.

Just at this time Savarkar's son Vishwas made a petition to the High Court to secure temporary relaxation of the restrictions imposed on his father. He wanted to enable his father to participate in the forthcoming session of the Hindu Mahasabha which was to be held at Poona in the last week of December 1950.

Appearing for the petitioner, K. N. Dharap, a leading lawyer of the Bombay Bar, stated that the general elections were

declared to be held in or about October 1951 and that the electoral rolls had been published at the beginning of November last. The publication of the electoral rolls by government amounted to fulfilment of the undertaking given by Savarkar. He, therefore, should be permitted to attend the Poona session by modifying the undertaking.

The High Court asked the government pleader H. M. Choksi to ascertain from government whether Savarkar would merely be allowed to attend the session without making speeches. But Morarji Desai, the Home Minister, adamantly stuck to the conditions. The Congress held its session at Nasik in September 1950. They had Savarkar in their possession. Why should they let him off? The petition was, however, rejected not because the Congressmen were afraid of Savarkar's coming out in the election arena. They knew well that the strength of Savarkar's party from the viewpoint of elections was very weak. But they took every opportunity to cripple him as did their predecessors in government.

The Hindu Mahasabha session was held at Poona in the last week of December 1950 under the presidentship of Dr. N. B. Khare. Because of the absence of Savarkar the session did not arouse much interest or attract the usual vast crowds. Savarkar's wife Yamunabai was honoured at a huge function held by the Poona women and was given a purse of Rs. 10,000. In reply to the honour done to her, Yamunabai Savarkar said that she was like a flower dedicated to the feet of God. Whatever merits the flower acquired were due to the dedication. She said she had taken the oath and vow in her youth as a member of the women's branch of the Abhinava Bharat and later underwent ungrudingly the suffering and hardships that fell to her lot. The honour they were doing to the flower was really the God's and not the flower's.

Not accustomed to making speeches in public, Yamunabai got her speech read by a woman. She had been all her life a symbol of suffering and devotion.

Previously Yamunabai had no occasion to make speeches as Savarkar never took her to any function, nor did he allow her to sit by his side in public enjoying the pleasures of processions and functions held in his honour. She really looked after the

kitchen and her two children and stood all her life by the fire which had been burning and bursting for years.

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The year 1951 witnessed many stirring events. Jogendranath Mandal, leader of the Depressed Classes, who as Minister in Pakistan had asked the Depressed Class Hindus to wear a badge indicating their association with Pakistan, was himself disillusioned. He was denounced by Pakistani papers as a thrice born slave! Dr. S. P. Mookerjee made very powerful speeches in Parliament and attacked the Nehru Government for its weak-kneed policy towards Pakistan.

The restrictions on Savarkar still continued. He was gagged politically. He made a speech here and there, at a school or an institution. He wrote in May 1951 two articles in the *Kesari* on the need for a national calendar. Some scholars had been discussing for the previous three years the question of national calendar. While reading Carlyle's French Revolution in 1907 he had read how the French revolutionaries threw off the Christian Calendar which was then current in France and evolved one suitable calendar for the worldly needs and later the French Constituent Assembly made it applicable to France. The maker of that calendar was Rommo. Savarkar had advocated the need for a national calendar for Bharat, which, he said, had nothing to do with the Christian Calendar. It was imposed upon Bharat by British rule, just as the Muslim rulers had imposed their Muslim Calendar on Bharat. The Christians or Muslims, Savarkar continued, should use their own calendars but those calendars were out of tune with the national traditions of the Hindus and were full of many absurdities.

There should be the feeling of oneness, unity and integration among the people of Bharat and in order that it should be a strong political unit like the other states in the world India should have one constitution, one army, one national language, one script, one currency and common measurements. India had accomplished all except the national calendar, he said.

Of course, Savarkar observed, some twenty and odd prominent Hindu calendars were current in different parts of the country and it was difficult to select one from among them. Those calendars, he said, struck dogmatically to their own astrological

theories and adopted an uncompromising attitude whenever any such attempts at having one common calendar were made by social reformers. Those calendars related to religious observance of the people and rightly or wrongly their followers had come to regard them as sacred.

Savarkar therefore urged the Indians to take a leaf out of the book of the French Revolutionaries and evolve a common Bharatiya calendar. He gave some broad outlines for a national calendar.

Savarkar stated that the history of India could be traced back to five thousand years, and so the samvat of our national calendar could be adopted as 5,000. All those sakas and samvats such as Shalivahan and Vikram, which were current in different parts of the country, might continue their existence side by side with their religious calendars. For national calendar Bharatiya samvat commencing the first year with 5,000 should be adopted, keeping the tradition of the ancient land unbroken. According to Yudhishthir Samvat, the current year would be 5,001. So it was better the new year was taken to be the starting year.

Our Hindu Calendars, Savarkar continued, like their Christian counterpart, observed twelve months of the year such as Chaitra, Vaishakh, etc. They were based on the rotation of the moon. They were changeable and hence unsuitable for the purpose. Another reason for their unsuitability was that Hindus in different provinces counted the beginning of the year from different months and there was likely to be great confusion. So the best way out was to name the months serially as first, second, third, etc. upto the twelve months.

"The days of the first eleven months will be 30 each, the twelfth month having 35 days and after every four years the twelfth month will be of 36 days. The French had adopted this system which has proved very useful. The Parsi Calendar also follows the same system. The days of the week will continue to be seven. Their names will be retained as they are but, unlike the Christian Calendar, the period of 24 hours will be counted from sunrise to sunrise and not from midnight to midnight," he added. Thus the eventful day, he concluded, that would herald the birth of a national calendar for the Independent Sovereign State of Bharat would be written as Dinank 1, Pratham Mas, Bharatiya Samvat 5,001.

The Union Government, however, adopted the Saka era, which is seventy-eight years behind the Christian era. The Calendar Reform Committee, appointed by the Government of India in November 1952, submitted its report in 1955. The National Calendar was adopted with effect from March 22, 1957, corresponding to Chaitra 1, 1879 Saka. The five months following the month of Chaitra consist of 31 days each and the last six months have 30 days each. Chaitra has 30 days in common years. It has 31 days in a leap year.

A big function was held in Bombay when Savarkar's portrait was unveiled at the Brahman Sabha, Bombay. Presiding over the function K. N. Dharap, who had conducted Savarkar's case in the High Court, said that just as Krishna was rendered the first honours at the time of Rajasuya sacrifice, so also Savarkar should be paid the first honours as he was the prince of the revolutionaries, who fought for the Indian independence for the past hundred years. Acharya M. V. Donde, an eminent leader and educationist in Bombay, said that the young generation of India was not knowing to what extent Savarkar had influenced the previous two generations. Savarkar's *Mazzini* was a religion with those generations and his ballads were daily chanted like mantras. Greatness and popularity, Donde added, sometimes did not go together. Savarkar was a patriot whose thrilling life was matchless not only in the history of India but also in the history of the world. Donde concluded that he bowed before a man whose main qualities characterised him as a leader of thought. In May 1951 Savarkar got his son Vishwas married to a Chitpavan Brahmin girl. He had married his daughter to a Chitpavan Brahmin youth who was a professor and not a military officer. The ceremony was almost a private and personal affair. Only a handful of persons from closer circle attended the wedding. There was no room for display or gaiety. A great social reformer, Savarkar had not performed the thread ceremony of his son. No priest would dare ask this question to Savarkar.

In the same month Savarkar sent a message to the Konkan Uplift Institution, exhorting them to speak and talk and write about the Arabian Sea as the Western Sea or the Sindhu Sagar and to describe the Eastern Sea as the Ganga Sagar. Otherwise

he said complications would arise some day on account of our carelessness in that behalf. The British rulers described the Western Sea as the Arabian Sea and so that appellation should not be binding on the Indian Union. He reiterated this view many a time.

CHAPTER 23

Memorial to Martyrs

IN July 1951 the restrictions on Savarkar were automatically removed. So, attending a public meeting in August 1951, he informed Prime Minister Nehru that his last will was that he should die defending Bharat against the aggression of Pakistan. In the next month he was taken ill but he felt better after taking a rest. Towards the end of the year 1951, almost on the eve of the general elections, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that Hindu Mahasabha was responsible for the murder of Gandhi. P. R. Das, who had defended Savarkar in Gandhi Murder Trial, replied to Nehru that his statement was quite baseless and added that " the Advocate-General of Bombay who is now Solicitor-General of India never made such charges during the course of the whole trial of Gandhi assassination." [1]

After the removal of restrictions on him, Savarkar devoted some months to collecting funds for the erection of a memorial to the Indian revolutionaries. The revolutionaries, whom their enemies called anarchists, although their aim was not anarchy, did the work of arousing the nation even at the sacrifice of their lives. The Congressmen, whose sacrifice appeared paler before the sacrifice and patriotism of the revolutionaries, naturally ignored the idea of the memorial to them. Admirers of the revolutionaries always said that Congressmen hated Savarkar because he wanted them to fight like heroes. They loved Gandhism because Gandhi had made them feel like heroes.

Early in the year 1952 the general elections were over. Savarkar's Hindu Mahasabha fared worst in the election field. Savarkar had never tried to organise his party. Strangely enough he always held that a militant group would be enough for the purpose of guiding the destiny of the nation. About

[1] Dr. Khare, N. B., *My Political Memoirs*, p. 459.

3,800 seats were to be filled both in Parliament and in the States. Out of 489 seats in Parliament the Hindu Mahasabha got only 3 and later Dr. Khare was elected to Parliament. The Jan Sangh of Dr. S. P. Mookerjee got only 3. Although more than half the total votes were registered against the Congress it won 363, the Socialists 12, the Communists 16 and K.M.P.P. of Kripalani 9. Dr. Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation got only 1, and he himself was defeated at the polls.

In the elections to the States' Assemblies, Savarkar's party, except for its little success in the Madhya Pradesh, was routed as were M. N. Roy's Radical Democratic Party and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation. Savarkar had issued a statement on the eve of the election appealing to the voters to vote for those candidates who frankly, openly and courageously stood for defending Hindu interests. But strangely enough he had personally supported the Congress candidate N. S. Kajrolkar who opposed Dr. Ambedkar and thus unnecessarily gave him offence.

At this point Master Tara Singh declared that he would agree to the decision Savarkar gave on the Hindu-Sikh problem. Master Tara Singh believed in the political honesty of Savarkar. Some years before Savarkar had declared that he would welcome a Sikhistan instead of a Pakistan in the Punjab. Excluding the idea of the creation of a separate province, Savarkar would have agreed to any proposal as a compromise formula. The Sikhs had faith in Savarkar. They had no faith in Nehru who had opposed the partition of Palestine and accepted the partition of India. Kripan was a point of honour to both the organisations. Both Tara Singh and Savarkar had supported the new state of Palestine.

In February 1952 Savarkar delivered some speeches on the food problem of India which was in the grip of near-famine condition. The Congress had failed to fulfil their promise of sweeping land reforms. Although they had been in power since 1946 the material condition of the people was worse than what it was at the end of Second World War. People helplessly said that British rule was better than the Swaraj government. This attitude of the people who were helplessly struggling against their poverty and misery, agonised Savarkar who said that the people should not entertain such miserable and suicidal

thoughts. They should find out ways and means to tide over the food crisis.

Savarkar had now grown pale and feeble, but his face had more or less the lustre as before. A great revolutionary leader and social reformer, he again gave a shock to the orthodox when he said: "If all the Hindus including the Brahmins and Buddhists, Jains and Lingayats, Vaishnavas and Varkaris changed their food habits and take to eating flesh of animals and birds and fish, the food problem of at least of five crores of people would be solved. We would be taking a great step towards lessening the grip of food crisis which is causing great concern to us."

"What man should eat and what man should drink," Savarkar continued, "is not for religion to decide. In this respect one should follow the dictates of medical science. Whatever food that conduces to the health, to the betterment of one's health, if one likes it and could digest it, one should safely eat. One need not forsake it simply because the commands of Dharmashastras are otherwise."

Savarkar further said that the Hindus waxed eloquent on religion and philosophy so much so that they had become the laughing stock of the whole world. They believed that it was sin to kill monkeys, locusts, rats, rodents and other pests who destroyed as much as twenty-five per cent of the food produced in the country. If they killed them it would save food several times the volume of their annual food import. This was colossal national waste. In 1952 there was a report that 75 per cent crop in the Patiala state was destroyed by locusts, but Hindus did not kill them. It was their belief that it would be an unpardonable crime in the eyes of God if they killed them.

"Can stupidity go further? This type of argument clearly indicates how excessive virtuouness leads to vice. It is quite true that as human beings we should do no harm to monkeys, rodents and other pests. But there is a limit to such sort of humanitarian thinking; for if tomorrow we give free scope to all the savage beasts like tigers, lions, wolves and jackals and other carnivorous animals and birds, human beings would be out from the face of this world."

Other remedy, and rather an effective one, of meeting the food crisis, he observed, was to take to eating fish and eggs.

"We have vast seas around our country. They are enormous stores of fish of all kinds. They contain millions of tonnes of fish. Why not change our food habits and eat fish? Rains or no rains, fish would go on multiplying. Take advantage of these natural resources. We are to blame ourselves for shortage of food and consequent lack of stamina of our people. Remember the fish and eggs have much life-giving qualities. People from all parts of the world have made it their main food. Even a tiny state like Israel has sensibly started developing fish fields and sand fruits and because of that they are able to meet the needs of the countless immigrants who would have otherwise half-starved. The Jews are a brave and intelligent people. And although their State looks like a child before our great state of Bharat, we must emulate its example. Some Shastras prohibit people from and others advocate eating of flesh. The Hindus should act according to the needs of the time."

Savarkar expressed the hope that if not his generation, the rising generation at least should think along such national line and should take to eating fish, flesh and fowl and should emerge like a brave people to live nobly on the earth, accepting the challenge which Nature and their enemies threw to them and prove that they were the fittest to survive in the world.

It is said that in India 50 per cent of the total farm output worth Rs. 4,600 crores goes waste. This colossal waste can be avoided by effective storage and control of infestation. In view of this critical situation Savarkar's suggestions were pertinent and deserved attention.

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At the instance of Savarkar a Committee was set up to hold a three-day celebration at Poona from May 10 to 12, 1952, to pay national homage to all the martyrs, heroes and workers in the revolutionary movement from 1857 to 1947 who fought for the freedom of the country and to declare the dissolution of the Abhinava Bharat Society—a secret revolutionary party started by Savarkar at Nasik in 1899. But for the restrictions on Savarkar, the celebrations would have been held in May 1951. Vast crowds enthusiastically received Savarkar at Poona station on the evening of May 9, 1952. Thousands of people witnessed

the celebrations and offered flower-petals to the memory of the revolutionaries.

Keshavrao Jedhe, an eminent Maharashtrian leader, inaugurated on the morning of the 10th May at Tilak Mandir an exhibition of rare portraits and pictures of the revolutionaries, who fought for the freedom of India ever since 1857. Addressing the vast gathering, Savarkar said that in the exhibition there was the picture of Shivaji who made Maharashtra a great nation. Then there was Tilak, Father of Indian unrest, which inspirited the revolutionaries to do great deeds. There was also the picture of Jotirao Phooley. Although a social revolutionary, in his youth he was a political revolutionary.

The specific object of the Abhinava Bharat Society, that of absolute political independence of the country from British rule, was achieved and hence it was in the fitness of things that the revolutionary society should cease to exist. But there was greater need at the moment than ever before of the spirit of service and sacrifice which was the soul of the revolutionary movement. He was more fortunate, he said, than Shivaji and Tilak to see the independence. No doubt it was a great fortune to be able to enjoy the position of the President of the Indian Republic. Yet it was no mean fortune to renounce all, like Arya Chanakya who renounced power and pelf after enthroning Chandragupta, and to lead a life of contentment like an ordinary citizen after initiating and leading great movements.

The armed insurrection, Savarkar said, was the last resort of fighting an alien rule. It was impracticable in an independent and democratic India. Senapati Bapat, who had played an important role in the revolutionary movement, was sitting by the side of Savarkar on the platform. It was at this meeting that Jedhe declared that he had renounced party politics.

The same evening Savarkar made an impassioned speech at Krantismriti Nagar in Poona where a pillar was raised in memory of the warriors, martyrs and revolutionaries from 1857 to 1947. The proceedings started under the presidentship of the portrait of Subhash Bose, but the working president was Senapati Bapat. In his speech Savarkar said that it was necessary to declare frankly and gratefully for the sake of truth and history that the patriotism of those who embraced gallows and died while fighting with the Britishers was most praise-worthy

and sublime. At the mention of Subhash's name, he added, the Congressmen got nervous, and felt inferiority complex before the courage and sacrifice of Subhash Bose. The revolutionaries bravely did the work of sappers and miners.

Savarkar proudly announced that the heroic deeds of Abhinava Bharat and the Bengali revolutionaries were responsible for the awakening among the Indian masses. The Abhinava Bharat claimed the heritage of all previous revolutionaries, who, since the revolutionary war of 1857, had tried in their own way to liberate India from British rule. It was the Abhinava Bharat Society that gave India a national flag and brought India's conditions under the British Imperialists before the eyes of the world.

All the reforms, Savarkar asserted, introduced by the British rulers in the constitutional and political fields could be directly traced to the ramifications of the activities of the revolutionaries right from Vasudeo Balwant to the strike of the naval ratings in Bombay in 1946 which made the British quit India. Efforts might be made, he added, to suppress that part of history, but truth could not be kept in dark for all the time.

In the end Savarkar said that about three-fourths of the land was liberated, but the Sindhu on whose banks were written the sacred works and sacrifices performed remained to be liberated. Without the Sindhu there could not be the Hindus! It would be a word without a meaning; a body without life. "If others forget you, O Sindhu, the *Sursarita*, the river of Gods, how can we forget you? The Maharashtrians will rise and liberate you!" he concluded with a touch of great pathos. At this meeting M. S. Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., made a speech appealing to the youth to work for the nation with the spirit and sacrifice of the revolutionaries.

On the third day a civic reception to Savarkar and some of his former colleagues marked the end of three-day celebrations. Addressing the gathering, Savarkar said that the people voted the Congress although they had misruled to some extent previously. But having done so a second time, the people had no right to condemn them. The defects would have been there and the mistakes they committed would have been perhaps committed even if the rulers had been chosen from the Hindu

Sanghathanists or the Socialists; because they also sprang from the same society that had those defects.

Savarkar sounded a warning that it was true that the rulers did some bad things and did some things that were prejudicial to the interests of the nation. Yet to say that British rule was better than the Swarajya rule resembled the treacherous attitude of Jayachand. No other enemy was so dangerous as anarchy. For a moment even anarchy would be tolerable but the rule of any foreign power—British, Russian, or, for that matter, even the rules of God—should not be tolerated. Whatever system of government might be chosen, there would be difference of opinion. There was no harm in holding different opinions. If the differences had sprung from selfless and patriotic motive they were welcome. Only care should be taken to see that the ballot boxes had no cracks at the bottom.

Savarkar expressed a desire that in India the opposition parties should be called minority-view parties. In Britain they understood the meaning of opposition party, but in India it was likely to be misunderstood. The minority-view parties should oppose the government whenever it was committing blunders or taking wrong decisions harmful to the interests of the nation, but should support the government when it passed any legislation beneficial to the interests of the nation. They should not oppose the government for the sake of opposition.

Concluding his speech in a moving tone, Savarkar appealed to the youth of the country that they should not think that they had the independence at their disposal for enjoyment. For next ten years they should make greater sacrifice, work harder and do more valorous deeds in order to make their nation mighty and invincible. At that moment the world stood on the grounds of nationalism and armament. It had not gone beyond that.

The Indian lead at the moment was weak. It had not taken even the first step from the viewpoint of defence. It was mere stupidity and childishness to say that because India cherished no aggressive motives against any nation, no nation, however armed with atom bomb, could invade India. To say it was to remain in clouds. Those who thought that leaders like Hitler, Tojo and Mussolini were defeated in the end because they believed in force, forgot, Savarkar retorted, that they were defeated by

superior force, the atom bomb and not by reciting or raining Germany or Japan with the copies of the Bible and the Dhammapada. The big three nations about whom they heard and read every day were big because they had superior arms, force and atom bombs.

Savarkar, therefore, urged the youth to get the leadership of the country changed if it did not conform to the needs of the defence. They should introduce compulsory military education in schools and colleges and train about one crore Hindus who would form up-to-date air, land and naval forces. Then alone it would be worthy of them to say that the Indian government would be neutral or remain non-aggressive. Otherwise the talk of world peace without military preparations was pompous and useless. It was quite ridiculous to say that they would not be aggressive when the fact was that they themselves were weak and could not defend their country.[2]

Those who heard Savarkar were thrilled with the message. Some of the Congress-minded newspapers were glad from the bottom of their heart that Savarkar had dissolved the revolutionary party as its aim was fulfilled. The Congressmen, however, were annoyed at his message which made the nation conscious of its military unpreparedness, and reminded the nation that the Congress leaders were grossly neglecting the defence and the frontiers. Gandhian leaders still believed in changing the world by heart-force even when they had miserably failed everywhere. Their self-complacency was to receive a still greater shock to awaken them to the stark realities of life.

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On August 26, 1952, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, who was president of the newly founded Jan Sangh, saw Savarkar at his house at Shivaji Park and requested him to bless the Jan Sangh and be a member of it. Savarkar blessed the Jan Sangh and said that he could not be a member owing to his illness. He, however, said the philosophy and the programme of the Jan Sangh was the same as the Mahasabha. He warned Dr. Mookerjee that the tragedy of the Congress would overcome the Jan Sangh also, for Muslims would remain Muslims first and Indians never. When

[2] All these Marathi speeches are published in a booklet.

Dr. Mookerjee said that the Muslims and Hindus lived in harmony in Bengal, Savarkar replied that it was strange that Dr. Mookerjee should cling to the idea in the light of the massacres and ghastly tragedies and colossal sufferings of the Hindus in Calcutta and in Eastern Pakistan. He told Dr. Mookerjee that it was wrong to apply international tests to national problems and to apply national tests to communal problems. He also told the Jan Sangh leader that it was unwise on the part of Jan Sangh to set up candidates against Hindu Mahasabha candidates as it did at Gwalior and other places.

A few days later Savarkar performed the inauguration ceremony of the picture 'Sureli' planned by the famous Indian singer, *Swar Samradnyi* Lata Mangeshkar. Her father Dinanath was a leading singer and actor who dominated the Marathi stage for nearly a decade and who performed brilliantly Savarkar's play *Sanyasta Khadga.*

On November 30, 1952, Savarkar began delivering a series of lectures on the glorious chapters of Hindu history. Acharya P. K. Atre had the honour of delivering the inaugural address. Atre humbly said that the appellation Acharya was conferred on him by Savarkar. In India the creed of non-violence was responsible for the greatest violence in history, he added. Savarkar delivered the first lecture on Chandragupta, who defeated the Greeks. Next week he delivered the second lecture on Pushya Mitra, who routed the Greeks. In those days, Savarkar said, brave generals and leading statesmen did not pester the aggressors with ridiculous messages such as, 'We do not want war. Hope you will wish us well!' Fortunately, in those days the rulers had no pandits as advisers. They had real statesmen as their advisers, he concluded.

During the third lecture on Vikramaditya, who routed the Shakas, Savarkar said that although Ashok was humanity personified and was one of the few great ones of India, his edicts proved disastrous to India. When Savarkar delivered the fourth lecture on December 29, 1952, he spoke on Yashodharman, who annihilated the Shakas. Bhausaheb Hiray, Revenue Minister of the Bombay Government, attended the lecture. Referring to Hiray, Savarkar jokingly said that it was good that (Hiray) the diamond enhanced the beauty of the meeting! Then coming to the topic, he said that personally he was a great admirer of

the Buddha, but it was a fact that Buddhism was wiped out from India because the Buddhists of those days were traitors to the independence of Bharat. During this last speech he asserted that relative violence was a virtue and absolute non-violence was a sin. The lesson from the history was: "The victory of good over evil does not come if the good is not backed up by force. Without Sudarshan Chakra the Ashok Chakra will not succeed. If in times of danger the Ashok Chakra does not assume the role of the Sudarshan Chakra it will roll in the dust."

In November and December 1952 Savarkar delivered a series of lectures on history in Bombay and at many other places, collecting funds for the Memorial, which he wanted to erect at Nasik, to the memory of the revolutionaries. At Kurla he said that history should not be written to suppress facts as was being done by the speakers and writers of Congress persuasion. Their constant tirade that India won independence without bloodshed was all bluff, a blatant lie, he said. At Dadar he exhorted girls to marry young men from air, land and navy forces. He said at Dombivli that if God were to ask him to beg for a boon, he would pray him to bless India with a Chandragupta or a Shivaji to wipe out the despondency prevailing in the minds of the young generation and make the nation valorous and great. He said he preferred a rule of a benevolent great leader like Shivaji to an ignorant weak-kneed democracy.

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The first quarter of the new year 1953 witnessed Savarkar delivering several speeches in order to collect money for the Memorial. He made speeches at Kalyan, Thana, Dadar, Girgaon, and Lalbaug. Making a thrilling speech at Kalyan, he told his audience not to expect prosperity for the next twenty-five years. He reiterated his view that the administration was full of corruption and nepotism. If the government would be run by honest and selfless men for about ten years, the people would see better days. Otherwise there was no hope for prosperity for another twenty-five years. On both sides of the Northern borders the enemies were ready for an attack. So the strength of the army should not be neglected; it should be raised. Government should be run with proper caution and precautions. He told his audience at Goregaon that if Ralph Bunch went on the

mission of peace-mongering to Russia and in his own country he would serve a great cause; for there was the need for preaching peace and not in India which was already a weak nation militarily and overstocked with peace-mongers for decades. Ralph Bunch was the first Negro to earn a Ph.D. degree in political science and was presented with the Nobel Peace Prize for 1950. Speaking on the occasion of the fifth death anniversary of Gandhi in Bombay, Ralph Bunch had said that Gandhi's message of non-violence could alone save the world from catastrophe.

In April 1953 Savarkar coined and propagated some new Marathi words for television, High school, three dimensions and underground railway and popularised the word *Mahapour* for Mayor, and *arthasankalpa* for budget. He praised R. T. Masurkar's work who had conducted the Lokmanya Seva Mandal at Lalbaug, Bombay, and celebrated the diamond jubilee of his institution. Masurkar was a staunch leader of Mahasabha persuasion and a great admirer of Savarkar.

On May 10, 1953, Savarkar was to unveil the Memorial at Nasik which the Abhinava Bharat Memorial Society had set up. The society had purchased the building at Nasik which was hallowed by historical memories and in which the Abhinava Bharat Society used to hold its secret meetings and from which it conducted its operations. From here went the first shriek of the slogan "Oh hail to the Goddess of Liberty!" in India in those days when it was dangerous to utter the word Swarajya and when men of learning and light in the country were praising British rule as divine dispensation.

Savarkar had delivered about a hundred speeches in Greater Bombay and in other cities. He impressed upon the minds of the people the historic importance of the philosophy of armed revolution and the noble sacrifices of the revolutionaries were brought in bold relief to the people. Purses amounting to thirteen thousand rupees were collected for the Memorial from all classes of patriotic people belonging to all parties. On a marble slab on one of the four facets the following was inscribed:

Hail to the Goddess of Liberty!
In the war of independence with the British

From 1857 to 1947 to those that engaged in armed conflict
All sons of Bharat who have departed
Martyrs and heroes this faithful homage is dedicated.

Savarkar and his party reached Nasik on May 8, 1953, by train. He went through a crowded programme that day, paying visits to institutions and making a speech in the evening. Next day he addressed a women's meeting at the Vijayanand Theatre under the presidentship of Godutai Khare, one of the early members of the Women Branch of the Abhinava Bharat. Describing the hardships and sacrifices the revolutionaries had to undergo, he said that the brave women of those days had their share in the sacrifice and hardships. He gratefully honoured the wife of the martyr Deshpande and one of the members of the Women's Branch of the Abhinava Bharat.

Savarkar consoled his colleague Mahabal Guruji who had lost his son a little earlier. Accompanied by Mahabal Guruji and Shridharpant Vartak he went on foot to the Memorial having a glance at the old houses and recollecting the history of his colleagues and inquiring about the old relations of his colleagues. A thrill of joy and honest pride went through them all. Savarkar was happy to see the Memorial. He asked the volunteers to remove his portrait as he himself was alive. The families of Datar and Barve warmly invited Savarkar to tea. Then he visited the Samadhi of Dr. Moonje and placed a wreath on it. He exhorted the students of the Bhonsala Military School to fight for the defence of the country as nobly as did the revolutionary fight for winning the independence.

Savarkar then addressed a very big meeting at the Jackson Garden held under the auspices of the Nasik Municipality. Unveiling the statue of Shivaji, he declared that the name of the Jackson Garden was changed to Shivaji Garden. One of the gates of the Shivaji Garden was to be named after Kanhere but the proposal had failed. Savarkar felt sorry for it and expressed his desire that some day the proposal would be carried out and the second gate would also be called Deshpande Gate. He further said that the Indian statesmen should follow the tactics and policy of Shivaji, who was the real statesman.

The last but the most important meeting was held under the presidentship of Ganpatrao Nalavade, the Mayor of Poona.

Savarkar told the vast crowds that the Congressmen distributed lands among themselves and he referred to an announcement made by the Madras Government "to give five acres of government land each to all political sufferers who had participated in the struggle for freedom since 1921 as a mark of recognition of their services in the cause of the country." They erected statues of Congressmen of lesser courage and trifling imprisonment, but they were not noble enough to raise statue to the brave men like Kanhere who embraced gallows selflessly for the cause of independence. Thousands of people dedicated gratefully and with noble emotions flower-petals to the memory of the martyrs. Thunders of applause went up in the sky.

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On the morning of May 10, 1953, vast crowds attended the function held at the Memorial. Savarkar started on foot hilariously giving slogans to the people and asking them to repeat loudly. "British Raj is destroyed!" He visited the house of martyr Karve and told his relatives that because of the sacrifice of such heroic youths the dawn of freedom came. He dedicated a garland to the old mother of Karve. Then led by bandsmen and musicians Savarkar walked serenely towards the Memorial. He entered the lane where not only houses but the land and lane surrounding it had been dug by British soldiers. The atmosphere glowed with pride and patriotism and sublime sacrifice. Slowly and calmly did he enter the Memorial building amidst sky-rending slogans and unveiled the Memorial. He was now very happy and his face lustrous and shining. A chain of sweet memories of the deeds and heroes crowded his mind. Their voices must have re-echoed amidst the atmosphere of the Memorial building.

At a press conference Savarkar told the newsmen, who asked him about the key to his long life, that on account of jail life and tours he could not observe regularity as regards his meals. He ate whatever and whenever he could get. And yet he wondered he could live to such a ripe age. But much depended, he thought, upon the will-power. At a formal discussion held by the Hindu Sanghatanists he said that it was possible for all the parties owing allegiance to Hindutva to form a united front. In the evening he addressed a meeting under the presidentship

of Babarao Khaparde. Savarkar's bust and portrait were unveiled at the meeting.

On the evening of May 11, Savarkar visited his birth place Bhagur. On the outskirts of this little town Savarkar took the *darshan* of the Goddess and then he was taken out in procession. The Municipality presented him an address. From there he entered the old house which belonged to his family but now in the possession of another person. The British rulers had sold it out after his property was confiscated. For a few minutes Savarkar silently sat in that house. A host of recollections gathered in his mind. For a moment he was overpowered by emotions. He said that he should come some day to celebrate the fulfilment of the vow he had made in his boyhood before the family deity Durga in the santuary of the house. Then at a public meeting an address was presented to him. Replying to it, Savarkar said that he was now on the wrong side of seventy and it was his last visit to Bhagur. So in a moving tone he said good-bye to the people. He then visited the depressed class locality. He said there that he fought for their equal rights, political, religious, social, and still if they felt that they would be more benefited by embracing any other religion they were free to do so. But, on conversion, if they found that the Hindu society was better the doors were open to them.[3]

[3] Report of the Nasik speeches in the *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, 18 May 1952.

CHAPTER 24

The Menace of Christianstans

IMMEDIATELY after his Nasik tour, Savarkar issued a statement requesting his admirers and devotees and the general public not to celebrate his 71st birthday that year as the people were hard pressed and in the grip of famine.

A big zamindar of Bihar offered a thousand acres of land to Savarkar. Savarkar politely declined the offer and requested the zamindar to conduct a Hindu institution on the model of Shraddhanand Mahilashram, Bombay, and to utilise the income of the land for the maintenance of that institution.

Just at this time Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, who was then agitating for the integration of Kashmir into India, was arrested on May 11, 1953, as he entered Jammu without the permission of the Kashmir Government. Dr. Mookerjee was aware of the necessity of such a permission, but he broke the restrictions intentionally as he thought it wrong for the Kashmir Government to impose such restrictions upon an Indian citizen since Kashmir was an integral part of India. Dr. Mookerjee died on June 23, 1953, in the prison of Sheikh Abdullah, the then Prime Minister of the Kashmir State.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was at Cairo admiring the dictator Neguib and returned after two days. All bewailed the great national loss. Expressing his grief, Savarkar said: "The news of the passing away of Dr. Mookerjee was so shocking and sudden that I could not believe it till thrice confirmed. In him Bharat has lost one of the foremost patriots, a politician and a born parliamentarian. May his martyrdom shield the cause of inseparable and total integration of the whole of Kashmir into Hindustani Republic. *'Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan* and *Ek Nishan'* was the motto for which he fought and laid down his life."

"Let us take up," Savarkar added, "the cry and carry on the

fight to a success. This alone can be the real monument to commemorate the death of the great leader. All Bharat and Hindudom in particular can never be too grateful to his memory who has served them so much and so long. To me it is not only a national loss but a personal one, of a respected comrade and a friend."

The whole nation demanded an inquiry into the causes that led to the death of Dr. Mookerjee. But the Government of Jawaharlal Nehru did not fulfil the wish of the people. The death of Dr. Mookerjee will be an eternal shame on the Nehru government. It was an irony of fate that Nehru had to arrest on August 9, 1953, Sheikh Abdullah, the Prime Minister of Kashmir, whom he had been supporting all along and whom Indian journalists had been boosting for some years. He proved to be a symbol of disruptionism and maladministration and nepotism; the man who swore by Nehru and his secularism.

On November 10, 1953, Master Tara Singh met Savarkar at Savarkar Sadan in Bombay. They discussed many problems concerning the Hindu-Sikh unity for over two hours. The demand for the linguistic province of the Punjab was mainly discussed. But neither issued a statement.

Savarkar spoke on November 14, 1953, on his poem 'To the Sea' which was prescribed for the S.S.C. students of that year. The lecture was organised by Prakash Mohadikar, a man gifted with novel ideas. Speaking on his own poem, Savarkar said that he wrote the poem in Marathi breaking the slavish mentality of the Indian students who wrote their thoughts in English and were ashamed of their mother-tongue. He went to England to study British people and their government and know their enemies, just as Shivaji went to Agra to study the government of Aurangzeb whose rule he wanted to overthrow. The hardest heart was often the softest. So in a helpless condition he gave expression to his patriotic feelings. The sea was free and the British hegemony over the sea was at an end.

In the end Savarkar said that he saw the fulfilment of his aims. His generation brought the science of bombs to India. Bombs were then considered a terrific weapon just as atom bombs were considered in their days. He exhorted the younger generation to bring the secret and science of atom bomb to the nation and to make India a mighty nation. The big three—

America, Russia and England—were called so because they possessed the mighty weapon, the atom bomb.

Savarkar went to Poona on December 11, 1953, for a two-day visit. The most important speech he delivered during the visit was on 'Change of religion leads to change of nationality.' He began his speech as if he were bidding farewell to the Poona people. He said touchingly that it would be perhaps his last visit to the Poona people with whom he had spent much of his life. The last time if he ever came it would be for the cremation of his body at Omkareshwar, Poona.

With a touch of sadness he added that he had been warning the nation since the days of separation of Sind. In those days the Sind leaders Ghanashyam and Jairamdas thought that it was a Maharashtrian dodge to keep them under the Bombay Province. It was unfortunate that the Sindhis had to wander here and there in Maharashtra for shelter as refugees. They came to Bharat on account of their deep love for Hinduism. He was ready to apply the dust from their feet to his forehead. But had they listened to him at that time they would not have now come to grief. Those who were mad after the Hindu-Muslim unity had proved to be its false prophets, he added.

"But," he said in a sad tone, "what have you to do with me now? You should cease having any relations with me. I have nothing to do with Bharat also. I have nothing to do with any province, any city, any village or with even an acre of land. What is required is a little piece of land of six and a half feet of land for the cremation of my dead body."

Savarkar further said that they should preserve what they had achieved. It was the policy of Shivaji. The Britishers were driven out, but another enemy was making a dreadful aggression on them in the form of Christian Missionaries. He had been telling them about it for years. The Nagas of Assam, Savarkar continued, deserted Nehru's meeting when he objected to their demand for an independent state. Because the Nagas showed their claws to Nehru he said that he would not allow foreign missionaries to do the work of conversion. That Nehru, the advocate of secularism, should admit so much was surprising enough. The Hindu Sanghathanists tried their best to put a stop to conversions. But the Congressmen had been apathetic all along. What religion, they said, was to do with their poli-

tics? The Muslims inflated their number during all census operations and on the strength of those false, inflated figures the partition of Bengal and the Punjab was demanded. Those Hill-tribes, Savarkar added, who were under the influence of Christianity were denationalised and they were demanding separate states. So was also the Dravida Kazagam, a disintegrating force aiming at the division of India.

When Cardinal Gracias, on his appointment as Archbishop of Bombay, came to Bombay, the Governor of Bombay and the Congress leaders went to receive him. Did they ever receive any Shankaracharya? he asked. Cardinal Gracias criticised Nehru and Katju for the attitude they had adopted towards the missionaries. The other day the Hindu Sanghatanists drove out missionaries from Poona. That was the proper step, Savarkar added. Geeta was the embodiment of the three qualities, viz., harmony, motion and inertia in proper proportion. Hindus should be tolerant of what was right and should be intolerant of what was wrong and unjust. The Hindus should boycott the Christian schools and hospitals, for they were being groomed as prospective converts.

* * *

Savarkar asked all the Hindu Sanghathanists to watch the activities of the Christian Missionaries for change of religion led always to change of nationality. Proselytization paved the way for national disintegration and disloyalty. The converts changed their culture and traditional ties. It deflected the converts from Indian history and nation and national convictions and beliefs. Christian Missionaries proselytized Hill-tribes, the sons and daughters of these converts, the Nagas on the Eastern frontiers of India, the Uraons and the aboriginals in Central India who were converted to Christianity and the Christians in Travancore and Cochin were demanding separate states such as the Nagaland State, the Jharkhand, etc. So Savarkar appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj, Jan Sangh to launch a frontal attack on the religious-cum-National aggression of the Christian Missionaries and save India from the menace of Christianstans.

At the meeting organised by the Militarisation Mandal, Poona, Savarkar said that every Hindu family should give at

least one man for the defence of the country. The independence was in the cradle. No nation became prosperous immediately after its independence or revolution. He exhorted a meeting of about 15,000 students at the Amphitheatre of the Fergusson College to take a vow to die while defending their motherland rather than to fast unto death. To eat, drink and be merry was not the goal of life. It was given to man to cherish noble ambitions. They, therefore, should give expression to their inherent qualities. To make life noble and add to the prosperity of the nation was the real goal of man.

Savarkar told the students at Hingane that people on the earth would be united when the people from some other globe such as Mars or Venus invaded the earth. Otherwise every nation would go on expanding its religious and political influence and territory as usual. So the Hindus should propagate their religion and nationalism and make their country greater and stronger. At another meeting he said he was in favour of a united Maharashtra as it was a logical conclusion of the principle of reorganisation of provinces on the linguistic basis. But he said that he did not like the slogan, Andhramata Ki Jai, or Maharashtra Ki Jai. The love for Maharashtra or Andhra should be subordinate to Bharat.[1]

Savarkar was right in sounding a warning to the nation against the Christian aggression which apparently looked religious but was mainly political. Dr. Verier Elwin had already warned India as early as 1944 that the danger was coming through the conversion of Hill-tribes to Christianity. Dr. Elwin said: "At the present rate of progress the entire aboriginal population will be converted. It will be turned into a querulous, anti-national aggressive minority community with none of the old virtues and few of the new, which will be a thorn in the side of the future government of India." [2]

* * *

The Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee appointed by the Madhya Pradesh Government observes in its report on the Christian Missionary activities: "But the idea of

[1] Report of these Poona speeches in the *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, 21 November 1953.
[2] Quoted by the *Kesari*, 12 December 1953.

change of religion as bringing about change of nationality appears to be originated in the missionary circles. . .. . Thus while the census officer isolates certain sections of the people from the main bodies, the missionaries by converting them give them a separate nationality so that they demanded a separate state for them." [3]

The Enquiry Committee quotes a speech of Alexander McLeish who said at the Fellowship of International Missionary Society Conference held in June 1948 that " recently our Indian Christian leaders have seen the vision of *evangelising India* and have issued a call to evangelise systematically in the next ten years the 600,000 villages of India." [4]

The actual increase in the Christian community was found to be 34,74,128 approximately in the decade 1931-1941.[5] Godfrey Edward Phillips in his *Untouchables' Quest* observes that during the decade ending 1931 the Christian community showed a natural increase of about 5,000 per mensem while there was an increase of 7,000 per mensem by conversion in village groups. In 1920 the Hindus in Travancore were 83 in proportion to the total population and the Christians were 12.4. In 1941 the proportion of the Hindus sank down to 60.5 while the Christians rose to 32.3.

The strength of the American personnel of foreign mission has increased by 500 since 1957. The Indian Constitution gives freedom to propagate religion to Indian citizens subject to public order, morality and health. But the right is not given to foreign missionaries.

So it is the primary duty of Government to conduct orphanages as the State is the legal guardian of all minors who have no parents or natural guardians. Any attempt by force or fraud, or threat of illicit means, or grants of financial aid or by fraudulent means or promises, or by moral or material assistance, or by taking advantage of any person's inexperience and confidence, or by exploiting any person's necessity, at altering the faith should be prohibited.[5] Otherwise the menace of

[3] Report of the Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee, Madhya Pradesh, p. 51.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Christianstans such as the Nagaland, the Jharkhand and the other in the South will come true and once again Savarkar will unfortunately prove to be the prophet. If the blind and partial god of secularism blesses India for another two decades, so say the Hindu Sanghatanists, Christianisation of India will advance to a dangerous point.

Savarkar's apprehensions and anxieties will be appreciated when one knows how the India of Gandhi and Nehru was eaten out even by the enlightened Aga Khan. He boasts in his Memoirs: "As I look back, there is one memory, one piece of self-knowledge, which gives me the utmost satisfaction. I was myself personally responsible for the conversion to Islam of some 30,000 to 40,000 caste Hindus, many of them the upper and professional classes. They had been people without a faith, and they found a faith. Neither my father nor my grandfather had attempted a religious task of this magnitude." [6] This is a sad commentary on the blind secularism.

[6] The Aga Khan, *Memoirs of Aga Khan*, Prologue, pp. 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 25

Old Age

SAVARKAR was now seventy years old. The story of Savarkar was the history of resistance, strife, struggle, sufferings and sacrifices for the cause of political, social and economic emancipation of India. His was a political career extended over fifty long years. How many of his great contemporaries could see pioneers from Ranade to philosophers like M. N. Roy, could strive for independence of India and yet have the good fortune to see the sun of freedom rise over India? An active political leader who either saw, talked or discussed politics with thinkers from Ranade to Roy, leaders from Surendranath to Subhas, from liberator Tilak to fighter Achyutrao Patwardhan. No other life on the political stage of India was marked by so many vicissitudes, punctuated with raging storms and lightning and tantalized with gaping gallows. This was a political life chequered with romantic threads of sufferings and was fringed with sacrifices. Woven with recollections of the sea and the steamer, it was interspersed with hell-like prison life and was lined with historic arrests, trials and releases. Even one single incident from the matchless drama of Savarkar's life was long, charming and thrilling enough to provide the span for a play of immortal fame.

From his early youth to the evening of his life Savarkar lay bruised, bleeding, burning and bursting. The evening of life shone like a rainbow, a myriad-coloured picture. The sea is never tired of rivers. So was Savarkar never tired of sufferings and services. Perhaps no other freedom movement produced such an indefatigable fighter with such an undying love for his country. Who would be prepared to undergo such unimaginable sufferings, untold sacrifices and face formidable dangers for the mere love of his country? But it was this very characteristic of the forgetful fit of the destiny of this man that though all the

while storms kept raging round him, be it rainy season or spring, yet the sun in Savarkar always broke forth.

Savarkar was a great man of mission and action. His majestic forehead at once reminded you of the forehead of Napoleon who was also a victim of the British imperialistic wrath. One look at the crown of his head and you would at once find a crown in the middle of his head bequeathed by nature herself. His face possessed the effulgent beauty of gold, his frame strength of steel, and his head was a store of the hymns of revolution. His small luring and penetrating eyes hollowed in the high cheek-bones probed into the lessons of the past and they unfailingly warned the Hindus every time against the tragedies of the present and the impending catastrophes of the future. The eyes shone like a lighthouse indicating the unfailing direction to the ship of the nation for its movements in order that the horrors of the approaching wreck might be averted.

The square jaws witnessed his suppressed thoughts, his burning mission, unfulfilled aims, unflagging industry, frustrated plans, stormy life and unexampled sacrifice. His short, proportionate handsome figure looked like an image carved out of the bones, blood and brains of the great Hindu thinkers and martyrs from Hindu History. His head bald and glistening but lined with black hair, his chest broad and invincible, his waist lion-like, his neck short, his palms small with an excellent rosy colour, his height five feet two and a half inches and his ivory-white flat feet with rosy shades; all this a marvellous creation of God and earth.

Did you hear this typical Mahratta leader at any mass meeting? Dressed in immaculate white, with a brimless black round cap on his massive head, a black umbrella in his right hand and a fresh newspaper in his left, the deep, long whiskers on the sides of his lustrous serene face and eyes encircled in gold-rimmed spectacles, Savarkar's personality was at once outstanding in any vast multitude. What a vast difference in Savarkar, the lonely giant in his solitary room and Savarkar, the leader and ruler of the masses! The orator and prophet got the upper hand and Savarkar was always a hero even to his valets!

Orators feed themselves on history. From it they derive inspiration. They draw their own conclusions from history. History develops their visions, heroes feed them on heroism

and their incomplete dreams fan their emotions. Demosthenes, Pitt, Burke, Daniel Webster, Hitler, and Churchill belonged to this type. Savarkar, too, belonged to the line of this immortal race of orators.

Whenever Savarkar entered a mass meeting, he came to the platform walking the gait of a hero; his way opening before him in an anxious sea of masses. He bowed to the masses. The masses moved with waves of emotions as if the moon were in the sky. He rose to deliver his message. He seldom came with a set speech. He usually spoke on the spur of the moment, but unfailingly reserved a certain time for a peroration. He was like quick-silver. One listened to him in pin-drop silence or missed the train of his arguments. His voice was a great asset and had a peculiar ring. His eyes glittered and glowed when he became animated.

Savarkar mercilessly overthrew the fallacies in the foggy logic of his opponents. His opponents were bewildered at the torrent of his eloquence. At every sentence you felt an opponent reeling. His speech tore the mask of shams and confronted you with naked realities. His speech had the whirl of a storm. His humour was merciless. He threw logic and reasoning at you through emotion. The audience thrilled. It clapped. It moved. His eyes flashed fire. His face glowed with the mission that burnt bright in him. The masses marked the stout heart and watched the steel frame, iron will, majestic forehead and the boundless sincerity of a personality that had heralded an era into the history of Indian political struggle and social revolution.

Savarkar's remarkable political speeches and masterpieces were delivered before Shanivarwada, Poona, on the Ghats of Cawnpore or in Delhi. They struck his critics dumb, and cleared doubts and dusty thoughts. It was characteristic of Savarkarian speeches that they sounded as though the Muse of oratory danced, played and wept with the feelings, joys and sorrows of Savarkar! His masterpieces began with such earnest and gripping sentences in a deep sonorous voice and ended with such a dramatic touching rise and fall in his voice and moving tone that old men shed tears, youths were filled with unbearable pathos and women piteously sighed. His magnificent oratory, clear-cut thoughts and inspiring messages often sealed and

unsealed historic decisions. Before the Sholapur Conference of the Arya Samaj in 1939, he defeated and left a wreck of Gandhi's draft resolution advising the withdrawal of the Hyderabad struggle. His concluding speech at the Nagpur session of the Hindu Mahasabha delivered with a heart-force and a burning mission inspired the inter-provincialists and new-comers. Leaders like Dr. Mookerjee were magnetized during the course of one of such speeches at Calcutta. Not only leaders, lawyers and literary figures listened to him spell-bound, but foreigners also were enchanted with the magic wand of his oratory. While Savarkar was on his way to Shillong, an Englishman travelling in the same train, heard the deafening greetings of the people to Savarkar at every station. At one station the Englishman requested Savarkar through his secretary to make a short speech; for he had heard in England, he said, that Savarkar was one of the greatest orators. He heard Savarkar speak before a crowd at the next station, introduced himself to Savarkar and wishing him all success went away.

Fortunate were those who heard him speak on the 'War of Independence of 1857' after his release in 1937. Those who heard his presidential address at the Marathi Literary Conference in Bombay were lucky. Those who attended the Non-Party Conference in Bombay and Poona needed no introduction to understand why Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru came to Savarkar's chair at the time of the Bombay Non-Party Conference, thanked Savarkar from the botton of his heart and said: "It is you who saved the Conference." Of Savarkar the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, said that Savarkar was a man of Mission. The *Sunday Standard*, Bombay, described him as an orator of the first order. It added: "Few others in the whole of India can thrill and sway his listeners as this simple-looking Hindu leader can. He is an orator of the first degree; and it is a pleasure to hear him speak, his eyes flashing, his lips quivering, his weak body trembling with emotion."

India enjoyed the scintillating speeches of Srinivas Sastri, the sweet flow of Jayakar, the roarings of the tireless Satyamurthi, the powerful appeal of Maulana Azad, the high-flown emotional speeches of Devi Sarojini Naidu, the sweet seriousness of the visionary in Pandit Nehru and the chattering train of Rajaji,

but India witnessed the culmination and perfection of oratory in Savarkar, rightly called the Indian Demosthenes.

* * *

If you want to study the history of the Indian Revolution, the history of the social revolution in Maharashtra, and the history of the literary movement launched to purge the Indian languages of foreign influence and words, and keep our lingua franca undefiled, you must study Savarkar. Modern Maharashtra did not produce a more volcanic brain than Savarkar, a leader whose outlook was absolutely rational and up-to-date. According to him, rational outlook must obtain control over the political, social and military life of India, if India is to survive the struggle for existence. Savarkar welcomed the machine age, believed in mechanized agriculture and modernized industry. He wanted India to prepare and equip herself physically, mentally, technically, mechanically and militarily, not with the object of enslaving other nations, but for liberating the enslaved peoples of the world from all kinds of shackles, superstitions and imperialism.

During the last four decades no leader waged more ruthlessly an unrelenting war against the barriers of caste system in schools and in public places, in intercaste dinners and in social intercourse, and suffered, toiled and faced dangers and dispraise and even curses than Savarkar in the annihilation of untouchability. That is why they called him a fusion of the great Mahratta leaders of modern times who heralded a new epoch in the history of India. The spirit of Nanasahib who fought the War of Indian Independence of 1857, the sweep of Wasudeo Balwant Phadke who first raised an armed revolt in Maharashtra for the establishment of an Indian Republic, the mental force of Chiplunkar, the reformative zeal of Agarkar, the sacrifice and struggle of Tilak, the service of Gokhale and untiring work of Kelkar, all these find an echo in the alchemy of Savarkar.

Savarkar was a Hindu among the Hindus, but of the Chitor type. He was proud of his heritage and grateful to it. He found his guiding star in Lord Krishna, the glory of Hindustan. He saw in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the fount of inspiration. He regarded Rana Pratap as the fire of patriotism, Guru Govind Singh the sire of martyrdom, and Sadashiv Bhau the righteous

sword of Hindustan. To defend, to enliven and to raise the Hindu Nation was to him a national, patriotic, righteous, just, human and a sublime cause.

Savarkar did not hate you because you were an Englishman or a Mohammedan or a Jew! He paid glowing tributes to the skill and might of the Britishers. Savarkar was the only leader in India, who envisaged a State for the floating race of the Jews ever since 1908, and in 1923 he wrote in his famous work *Hindutva* that 'if the Zionists' dreams were realised, if Palestine became a Jewish State, it would gladden us almost as much as our Jewish friends.'[1] Since his release in 1937, he had been a staunch supporter of the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and in 1947, no Indian leader was as happy as Savarkar except possibly Master Tara Singh to see the emergence of a Jewish State in Palestine.

As for the Parsees and Christians, Savarkar had no grudge against them. He not only appreciated their co-operation and patriotic outlook, but also cherished hopes of building with them an Indian State in which the religion, culture and language of the minorities would be preserved. He never cherished to impose disadvantages upon the non-Hindus. That is why he met and discussed problems in a frank, free and accommodating spirit with the leaders of the Parsees, the Jews and the Christians who wanted to remain in India as loyal citizens enjoying equal rights with the Hindus.

But as Savarkar rightly suspected the separatist tendencies and extra-territorial ambition of the Muslims, he was not prepared to give them an inch more than they democratically deserved, and for this outspokenness he was called a communalist by those who were pro-Muslim. However, events proved now the correctness of Savarkar's stand and the futility and falsity of the appeasing policy of the pro-Muslim patriots who claimed the appellation nationalists for themselves.

It was, however, a fact that Savarkar was an echo of the unjustly suppressed, exploited and disturbed soul of the Hindus. His soul was synchronized with the sorrows and joys of Hindudom, the Hindu world. Whenever something harmed or jeopardized the interests, property, honour and lives of the

[1] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 112.

Hindus, he grew restless. So perennial was his love for the Hindus, so eternal was his hope of their great future and the role of the Hindus in the building of the peace and prosperity of the world, that he was infuriated whenever he heard that the Hindus were suppressed and their just rights denied; and when that feeling was on him, he showed signs of a violent dislike for those who trampled upon Hindu rights, oppressed them and made aggressions on them.

Savarkar waged war since his early youth. His war was against those who trampled upon the just and fundamental rights of the Hindus in their Homeland. His war was against those who defaced and disgraced humanity in this land. His was the war of a Nation against all intruders, disruptive men and bogus World Federalists whose practice was divorced from their professions and whose actions led to the break-up of the solidarity and the integrity of Hindustan. And therefore Savarkar was a terror to tyrants, a foe to injustice, an antidote to anti-nationalists and an unforgiving critic of the pro-Muslim politicians in India. To him a disruptive patriot or a Pakistani Hindu was synonymous with a pretender or a traitor respectively and literally. Savarkar was opposed to Pakistans as heat is to cold. His political philosophy was as different from Gandhism as chalk from charcoal. He wanted a place for the Hindus on the map of the world as Bharat or Hindustan and so he said that Hindustan belonged to the Hindus. What was wrong in it? Could the Hindus rightfully say that Britain, Germany or Turkastan belonged to them?

Savarkar was an electric powerhouse. None could touch it. His conversational gift was nothing less than dictatorial, but tinged with utmost rationalism. To begin with, he would patiently listen to you with some pertinent queries and then would do most of the talking. Looking to the force of his arguments, logic and reasoning, some said he was vain and egoistic. But the fact was that by temperament he was assertive, unyielding and dictatorial due to a feeling of superiority complex and overestimation of himself, a belief in the rightness and justice of his cause and due to his strong convictions and mellowed thoughts. And strong personalities are always so. Bernard Shaw once silenced his critics who charged him with vanity and egoism. He told his critics that had any of them

gone through the trials and hardships which he himself had undergone, he would have been hundred times more vain and egoistic than Shaw himself. One-tenth of Savarkar's trials, tribulations and talents, and the critics would have been ten times more egoistic and vain than Savarkar.

Savarkar's logic was curt, his humour caustic and his whipping electric. He was a stern mouth-stopper. During his Chief Ministership Fazlul Huq boasted that the Muslims were tigers and lions and they would harass the Hindus. Savarkar hit him back: "The history of creation proves that it is men who have reclaimed the earth and lions and tigers had to retire to the obscurity of the forest. We Hindus are men. One man with a whip in his hand controls scores of lions and tigers in a circus and these beasts obey wonderfully well." The same Muslim leader said that Malabar was a part of Arabia. Savarkar pulled him up by replying that if it was so, then Arabia must be annexed to India! To the Pakistanis and their supporters who said that because in some provinces the Muslims were in a majority, they wanted Pakistan, Savarkar replied with equal ruthlessness that because in Hindustan the Hindus were in a majority, Hindustan belonged to the Hindus.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad said during the Biharsharif riot days that he advised the Hindus as his *own* people. Savarkar asked Dr. Rajendra Prasad as to when he had deserted his Indian Nationalism and condescended to call only the Hindus his own people. A wordy Socialist once asked Savarkar whether he had read Lenin. The upstart was silenced by Savarkar with one stroke: "Had Lenin read Savarkar?" Not that he had neglected literature on Communism. The author has seen some books on the subject in Savarkar's small personal library read, underlined and with remarks made in the margin by Savarkar at the proper places, especially on books by Lenin and Trotsky. Savarkar read many books on the subject before his release and he often directed his men to buy the latest books on Socialism. But what he hated most was blind babbling of foreign phrases and blind worship which totally disregarded the conditions, traditions and the history of our country.

Savarkar was a unique combination of a dreamer and a doer, a prophet and a warrior, a realist and a revolutionary all in one man. In him you will find a Washington who unsheathed

his sword for freedom; a Thomas Paine who wielded an inspiring pen, and a Mazzini who ushered in a revolutionary epoch and started the war of Independence. Soaringly imaginative yet severely logical, erudite yet perspicuous, Savarkar was not merely a great writer, but a very great one. Describing Savarkar's place in the domain of literature, one of Gandhi's Maharashtrian biographers wrote: "It is admitted on all hands, including his political opponents, that Mr. Savarkar is a rare genius. He is a pen of fire. He wields pen and pistol alike. Patriotism and Poetry run through the veins of his literature. England may be proud of her statesmen writers like Morley and MacDonald and Russia may well boast of Tolstoy and Gorky; but India surpasses all these countries in having Mr. Savarkar who is a writer, a statesman and a warrior. His pen would have shaken the world from its bottom but for the narrow scope of the Marathi language, through which mother tongue he masterly expresses himself." [2]

In India Savarkar as an author was a class by himself, for Savarkar wrote in blood lines with his blood and the bones of martyrs. It is the characteristic of all immortal authors that they cannot write in artificial pruned lines with their stomach at ease, for there is no halfway house for positive personalities. Savarkar's writings raise a storm of emotions and shake your intellect. His pen arouses fierce hatred and fierce loyalties. You feel a storm has passed over you or some power has dashed against you. All his writings, both poetry and prose, preach resistance to tyranny, inspire you with courage and direct your energies towards the liberation of mankind from all bondages. Savarkar was a great poet, a poet of great, grand and epic poetry. His poetry was logic on fire, as all great poetry is, and satisfied the intellect and emotions of the reader. His epic genius gave the people high ideals, his great pen infused an irresistible spirit of independence into the people, his supreme courage and unparalleled sacrifice aroused their patriotic feelings, his words made them feel the spirit of nationality and realize the solidarity of the nation. Savarkar educated the illiterate, motivated the educated and activized the learned.

Savarkar was a great social reformer. Neither talkative nor

[2] Shikhare, D. N., The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

fashionable reformers could measure Savarkar's worth and work in purging the society pitilessly and fearlessly of its ills, ignorance and superstitions. According to him science was the real religion of man in this material world. In the light kindled by the cotton wicks only the darkness of poverty, slavery and famine would be seen. If at all the dust from the feet of any man was to be borne on the forehead, it should be from the feet of man who produced wealth by his toil for the society. The society lived on the toils of such men. Dust from the feet of the idle hypocrite, who passed for a saint, should not be borne. If at all pollution was caused by the touch of any man it was this man who lived in society as a parasite, he exhorted.

Many were a bell-ringer to social revolution, a few worked actually in the field, but few had the unfailing courage and the genius of a practical social reformer. A social reformer requires a certain amount of courage, conviction and a stout but elastic heart to achieve his goal. And Savarkar's courage and heart had well shaken the world. His strong conviction, dauntless courage, endless faith, enduring capacity for work, unremitting industry, untiring energy, invincible determination and a volcanic pen belonged to the type of men like Luther, Knox, Mazzini, Rousseau, Voltaire and Carlyle, who represent the moral force of the world and stamp their mind upon their age.

But the outstanding characteristic of Savarkar was that he was a great iconoclast, one of the greatest idol-breakers Asia has ever produced. A strong will, a volcanic pen, a powerful hammer, a fiery heart, a scathing contempt for hypocrisy, Savarkar was a born iconoclast, who despised and scorned hypocrisy in religion, society, and politics. He did not strut off as an agent of God descended down to herald a new era, nor did he pretend to possess an inner voice. His was the voice of reason and science. Therefore he ruthlessly routed and pitilessly hammered out all kinds of superstitions, bondages, sanctimonious hypocrisy in society, in religion and in politics. From bigoted Sanatanists to bogus saints, dead or alive, none escaped the strokes of his hammer! He possessed all the attributes, tests and elements of greatness. According to Dr. Ambedkar, a Great Man is he who acts as the scourge and scavenger of society. Savarkar was a really Great Man, who was motivated by the

dynamics of a social purpose and acted as the scourge and scavenger of Society.

Savarkar was a hero at many points. The hero as poet in Savarkar was extolled to the skies in Maharashtra; the hero as a man of letters, he was claimed to be an immortal author by litterateurs; the hero as patriot in Savarkar was deified all over India; but the hero as revolutionary prophet in Savarkar was not appreciated by many outside his party. The business of a prophet is to see and teach. A prophet possesses three main qualities. They are insight, courage and sincerity. As to courage and sincerity, Savarkar's name is now a legend. Savarkar proved the unfailingness of his insight on several occasions. Savarkar predicted as early as 1925 that the separation of Sind from Bombay Province for appeasing the Muslim mind would be a disastrous precedent, would destroy the Sind Hindus and would pique the appetite of the anti-national Muslims. In 1938 he declared to the surprise of the whole nation that the Congress led by Gandhi would betray the nation and would destroy the unity of India by conceding Pakistan. In 1940 he warned the Assam Hindus that if they did not check the Muslim influx into Assam, Assam would meet the fate of Sind and Bengal. Congressmen then laughed at him. However, in 1947 they owned his prophecy, for Assam was almost tagged to Pakistan, but was fortunately saved through the vigilance of the leaders who at last realized the danger after the frantic and hoarse cry of Savarkar. The warning sounded about the fate of Kashmir in 1938 went unheard and the Kashmir Hindus paid for it and ultimately Hindus all over Hindustan had to pay crores of rupees and pour their blood for defending Kashmir against the onslaughts of the Pakistanis. Did not the Nizam, too, suffer the fate as predicted by Savarkar?

When World War II broke out and Russia joined it, Savarkar at once remarked that the crafty Britain had saved her throat, and now she would swallow the whole of Africa. At the time of the battle of Stalingrad, Savarkar said that if Japan failed to attack Russia from the Eastern side, both Germany and Japan would lose the war and Japan would have to pay for her folly in the long run. What actually did happen is too well known to be recounted.

Men of prophetic vision never try to please the masses. They

aim at guiding them. They always look to the larger interests of the people, not only of their own generation, but of future generations as well. So they are many a time not as popular as they should be. They never pander to popularity, nor do they sacrifice their conscience for success. The masses do not understand the prophetic visions of these men because what these prophets see is beyond their horizon.

* * *

The shades of prison life dominated the citizen Savarkar, and affected to a great degree the politician Savarkar too. Those shades and shadows often obscured his social intercourse with his partymen and public men. Moody and erratic, he could not create a certain warmth that was needed in a party chief towards his colleagues, partymen and followers. For the consolidation and success of a political party, the wings of the soft heart of the party chief must reach at least the connecting hooks in the link. The chief must be cordial enough to enquire about the difficulties of his lieutenants and arrange to help them so as to enable them to devote their best to the cause and service of the people. Except the rare names of Ranade, Tilak and Gandhi, no other party chief could bring himself to this much-needed accommodating frame of mind. Tilak ran to distant places even for settling the marriage of a daughter of his disciple, or could advise a farmer in the matter of his legal problems even from Mandalay Prison. Gandhi could tear out his heart, what of purse, to soothe the grief and troubles of his party leaders.

But the case of Savarkar, the political leader, was quite different. He could not respond to the enthusiasm or warmth of other leaders, who sought his interviews or valuable guidance, or those who even passed valuable information on to him secretly. The fate of interviewers and foreign visitors was no better. The glamour of the furniture of Jinnah, the warmth and hospitality of the special guest-house of Tilak for political leaders and eminent guests, the living interest and paternal inquiries of Gandhi into the personal affairs of his lieutenants, and Pandit Nehru's abiding hospitality to foreigners, or friendly invitations for dinners to eminent men, admirers, or party leaders, or a casual invitation to his inter-provincial visitors or

an appreciative call to the pressmen, all these could not impress Savarkar, the political leader. Cynically disinterested, he did not feel any inward urge for these things.

Savarkar's ideas and beliefs of patriotic duties and national obligations were purely and supremely patriotic and selfless. His motto was duty irrespective of any consideration of fruit. And this was the noble motto of all those early selfless revolutionaries. Savarkar expected every Indian to do his duty by his Motherland who pined for freedom. This highly cold and disinterested mental make-up came in the way of the modern set-up of propaganda, which depends upon much give and take. This adversely affected the destiny of the party and his leadership.

But in spite of such restricted sense of warmth in the social intercourse and lack of sympathy for his party men, lieutenants and followers, due to the legacy of his long prison life and shattered health, and stingy nature, Savarkar gained the devotion of hundreds of youths who were prepared to lay down their lives for his principles. This was due to Savarkar's unrivalled genius, selfless patriotism, unparalleled sacrifice and dynamic, mighty and mesmeric personality.

So, lonely and restless, Savarkar breathed flames of undying faith in spite of an unsympathetic and unsound constitution that had withstood unimaginable horrors, terrors and tortures of the Andamans. "A long exile in the Andamans wrecked his health early in life, and it is amazing how he has regathered his strength and carried on so long in public life," remarked the *National Herald* while commenting on the retirement of Savarkar in 1943. So much unsound was his constitution that sleep was always forced on him by means of bromide. Writing about the lonely and restless Savarkar, a writer in the *Hindusthan Times*, Delhi, described Savarkar as an ascetic and inward looking man who in his youth almost set the Thames on fire, and observed: "Savarkar is strange. He may not glitter. His attitude may not please you. He is mesmeric with a capacity to infuse in an observer a sense of cold aloofness." For almost thirteen years he was companionless and was forced to gulp down jail food with cruel punctuality, at the same place and the same quality and kind of food prepared with the matchless prison skill and medical care. This made him what he was

in his old age. His isolation was partly due to circumstances and partly due to his temperament. He lived alone. That giants must live apart and kings have no company was true, literally true of Savarkar.

Savarkar, the promoter of science and secularism and advocate of modernism, lived a very simple life. Wonderstruck at the homely and rough simplicity of his little house known as Savarkar Sadan, once Srinivas Sastri asked: "Savarkar, is this the house you live in?" "Yes," replied Savarkar. "Why, is this not more comfortable than the cell in the Andamans?" And Sastri was struck with a strange emotion. After much consideration and many visits of world-famous men to his house, there were slight additions, which he would call considerable, to the equipment and establishment of his house by way of furniture. It was a plain middle-class life of complacent contentment, which yearned not for what it did not have.

Savarkar had no friends. Almost all his brilliant colleagues of early days perished in foreign lands; others were by now dead and gone. His new colleagues and co-workers could not understand exactly what he was. Even older politicians like Dr. Moonje talked with Savarkar with due care and awe and none tried to be familiar with him. As to the relations, there were few who ventured to be on visiting terms with the family and none lived with him. It is generally the case with all revolutionary leaders that they live almost estranged and segregated from their friends and families as the circumstances and nature of their work demand. In normal course none would be willing to cast in one's lot with a revolutionary and that too a revolutionary leader, and incur the displeasure of the authorities. And Savarkar was such a name! Terrific, towering, volcanic, panoramic, mesmeric and historic! What of living and staying with the person, the fire, those who have played with the name quailed and were haunted throughout their lives and it sat upon their chest like nightmare! Because of ever-attending dangers Savarkar stayed alone with his small family consisting of his wife and only son and sometimes his married daughter on a visit to her father. His brother Dr. N. D. Savarkar resided with his family in the same locality. Savarkar was blessed with a wife of a great Aryan type representative of the traditional loyalty and endless devotion that stood the long

period of 18 years full of trials and sufferings. Sober, deep, obedient and enduring, she was a prudent housewife and a noble soul. The household affairs were smooth and regular. There was no question of choosing food or eatables. Simple food and fruit, bare necessities and no waste was the rule of the kitchen. The kitchen was not bothered about the likes and dislikes. No complaints, no worries whether some vegetables had less salt or more of spices. Often bhajis and curds and at times icecream and *shrikhand* were welcome. That a man should not be addicted to anything, but should be accustomed to many things was the rule. During a railway journey, he would take fried fish, eggs-curry and seldom mutton, but no smoking. He had sometimes taken wine during his London days and in his old age sometimes a peg of whisky after his seventy just to keep up stamina and keep off cold. Savarkar did not like a hot meal; almost cold eatables he relished which one might call a legacy of the Andamans.

When Savarkar was in a happy mood, he might indistinctly hum to himself a line or two from his poems. In a happy mood and when alone, he would stretch his legs a little, give a gentle push to his cap if it is on, and hum a tune. Chocolates and Jintan were relished by him. Snuff was his companion; scent his abiding luxury. His one hobby was gardening and the poet was seen in communion with plants and flowers. Regular light physical exercise in the evening was a habit. He had no love for music. For art he had respect. When in jail he had three companions to give him comfort. The Bible, the *Sedition Committee Report* which he jokingly called his governmental biography and the *Patanjalayogashastra.*

Grief, pain, worries and anger he would not give expression to. Neither would joy giggle over his face. When in anger he sometimes tore papers to pieces. Those who served him observed precision in details, for his cross-examinations were testing and inseparable and to some extent worrying, even the slightest deviation being immediately detected. None could hide facts from the penetrating and searching eyes. It was true that he was not easy of access. You had to fix up an appointment beforehand. Strict adherence to this rule saved him much harassment, but also estranged many. Travellers, business magnates, eminent leaders and even princes had to go back

because they did not fix up the interviews beforehand. If a person came to Bombay on some business and came to Savarkar Sadan in his hurry to leave Bombay, Savarkar would not see him even if he had time to do so. So many gave up visiting Savarkar the leader and stopped courting insult at his door. And yet Savarkar proudly styled himself an organiser of the Hindus. A great liberal luminary once rightly remarked that it was easy to see the King Emperor or the Viceroy but not Savarkar.

The house of the great Tilak was always open even to a poor shepherd but the house of Savarkar was closed even to statesmen and his partymen. His former colleague Mirza Abbas wanted to see him when he came to Bombay. Senapati Bapat requested Savarkar to allow him to visit Savarkar Sadan. But Savarkar frankly refused to see him. Ram Hari, who on his release from the cellular jail, recited Savarkar's Marathi poems to his brother, saw Savarkar once when he came to Bombay. Savarkar's watchman turned him out when he came a second time. One of martyr Kanhere's old relatives came to pay him respects. He was driven out. His admirers and devotees like Seth Gulabchand Hirachand, Bhalji Pendharkar, an eminent figure in the Cinema world of Maharashtra, P. B. Bhave, a leading figure in the literary field of Maharashtra, and many other such admirers were sent back. The great Hindusabha leader Bhai Parmananda also was once sent back while some women visitors had free access. This unfortunate diversion consumed much of his energy and time.

Savarkar's handwriting was small, slanting and spread over every corner by and by. As with time so with paper. He used it sparingly. No letter would be ready for being posted unless the important lines therein were underlined. One might love to see him reading a newspaper. He held the newspaper in the left hand and, lifting his spectacles a little with his right thumb, he went on reading and commenting briefly.

Savarkar got up at about seven in the morning. His breakfast consisted of eggs and tea. Then he perused newspapers, attended to his correspondence, and gave interviews to his visitors between 9 a.m. and 11-30 a.m. About noon he took his bath and then meal in the kitchen almost all by himself. Between the meal and the bath he would often sit like a Yogin

for an hour or so as if in a trance which he called concentration of mind. At such a time his food would become cold, his wife waiting silently in the kitchen. At noon he had siesta. In the evening came the reading of important letters to be replied, detailed reading of newspapers and select books. After tea and a talk with female visitors, if any, he went downstairs for a stroll in his garden with some gardener's tools accompanied by the watchman who assisted him. Then followed the daily regular physical exercise. After supper he devoted generally an hour or so to important office work and retired with some regular dose of medicine.

After the Red Fort Trial the correspondence decreased. There was no regular office. The bodyguard Appa Kasar and the personal secretary Gajananrao Damle, after their release from detention for over two years, were unceremoniously asked to care for themselves. Thereafter Bal Savarkar, editor of the *Hindu* Weekly, Bal Jere and N. M. Datar rendered him in their own way devotional service.

One point more and quite interesting. As was typical of revolutionary leaders, Savarkar talked very slowly about his personal and home matters. To him secrets were treasures. He was too great a veteran revolutionary leader. None could screw out from him what Dr. Schatt, the German Finance Wizard, told him on the eve of the outbreak of World War II, nor the source he received the letters of Ras Behari Bose from Japan during the course of World War II, nor the full details of his meeting with Subhas Bose.

* * *

Savarkar was majestic in his misery and serene in his sorrows. He clung to the state of his things with the pride of a king. Where politics and policy were concerned, money meant little or nothing, his ideal everything. Savarkar would not march with anybody and everybody, be he a kingly Kuber or a moneyed Mahatma. Men of mission never rotate around others like satellites. They are creators of dynasties and makers of kings and kingdoms. They never sacrifice their conscience for worldly success; nor do they care for a passing phase of life, of fame and of happiness. So was Savarkar. What position Savarkar could not have achieved which eminent Liberals, moderate

politicians and opportunist leaders could achieve? Was there any talent superior to Savarkar in the first Cabinet of Free India in intellect, in sacrifice, in mental and oratorical powers, in patriotic service, in intellectual honesty and political strategy? Where his lieutenant leader, Dr. Mookerjee, could ascend with his blessing and without compromising principles, he could have easily walked into such positions. But Savarkar did not compromise his conscience for the success of personal gains and cheap popularity. He sacrificed all the great honour that could have easily fawned at his feet, or else " our dream of an Indian Republic with Vinayak Damodar Savarkar as its first President " [3] would have been realized.

But life for a cause, for a faith and not for power, Savarkar loved most. That life might be surrounded by a storm, or a volcano or the gallows. For, to refuse to betray one's conscience to the last, in spite of a general defeat and humiliation and stand for a fight against the world, bearing a cheerful face and the cross of sacrifice as freely as the sunflower gives its bosom to the rays of the sun, was the creed of Savarkar. Savarkar was a patriot, who fought losing battles and had the spirit of martyrs who faced defeats and death amidst the shouts of enemies. Naturally, to Savarkar the greatest sacrifice a man could make in his life was that of cheap fame. Times without number he told his co-workers, his lieutenants and followers in Hindu Mahasabha that those who had people's welfare at heart should never pander to popularity. Kant also said the same thing. He said: " Seek not the favour of the multitude, for it is seldom got by honest and lawful means." And although Savarkar pitilessly hammered the so-called gods, godmen and superstitions out of the temples of society, religion and politics, his popularity was tremendous, extraordinary and abiding.

He was one of the very few Indian leaders who were presented hundreds of civic addresses by cities, towns and villages throughout India, and whose marble statues and pictures were unveiled at public places.

Countless heads bowed down before Savarkar, lakhs of believing multitudes fell at his feet with devotion in spite of his resisting unwillingness on rational grounds. Male and female

[3] Pal, Niranjan, The *Mahratta*, 27 May 1938.

octogenarians regarded him as an incarnation of God, the Patit-pavan, and a few even breathed their last in tranquillity after having a look at his picture which they believed to be divine. In the emulation of their devotion to Savarkar many brilliant youths like Maokar of Nagpur risked their lives. Many threw out pictures of false gods and so-called godmen after a visit to Savarkar. His old colleagues and veteran public men wriggled in their death-beds awaiting his impossible *Darshan*—glimpse—and some died with his name on their faltering tongue and wavering lips instead of the call of *Ramnam*. Several revolutionaries, many patriots and some poets bore the dust from his residence on their foreheads with devotion. To thousands he was nothing less than a God. To lakhs he was an art of eloquence. To millions he was a saga of patriotism, a picture of sacrifice and to poets he was an acted epic.

Such a fiery, positive and forceful personality was bound to be brutally frank in his criticism of historic and contemporary personalities. Of Tilak he ever spoke with reverence. He had defensive love for Kelkar, reverence for Ranade, high respect for Gokhale, Nana Shankarshet, Dadabhoy Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, B. C. Pal, Srinivas Sastri, Sir C. P. Ramaswami, M. R. Jayakar and Vijayaraghavachariar. For Lajpat Rai, Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Ras Behari Bose, Bhai Parmanand, and Moonje he had a deep love. He had a great regard for Subhas Bose. He described Vivekananda as a world genius, Dayananda as a Yogi, a seer and a spiritual teacher who worked like a giant for the uplift of mankind, and described Dr. Ambedkar's towering personality, erudition and capacity to lead as an asset to the nation. He described Ramananda Chatterjee as a great patriot, who defended the legitimate rights of the Hindus and whose humanitarianism and nationalism, he said, were of the purest ray serene. When Rajaji propagated the ideal of Pakistan, Savarkar described him as a subtle mad Mulla though he had once described Rajaji as the best Chief Minister. He called Azad crafty; Pandit Nehru sincere but flamboyant. He wished well of Sardar Patel as to him the Sardar was the only man in the Congress 'who has steered the ship of our newly born Bharatiya State clear of many a rock and shoal.'

Savarkar was Sir C. V. Raman's bright Diamond. Millions hailed him as *Swatantryaveer*—the hero of Independence. To

Rajaji Savarkar was a symbol of courage, bravery, fearlessness and intense patriotism and a pioneer who strove and struggled for inflaming the aspirations of the Indian people.[4] Gandhiji paid tributes to Savarkar's patriotism and fearlessness and said that sacrifice was the common bond between them.[5] Jayakar said that to honour Savarkar was to honour patriotism and sacrifice. M. N. Roy described him as his inspirer and a fearless man and appreciated his sacrifice and intellectual honesty.

Srinivas Sastri hailed Savarkar as 'a great and fearless patriot and added that volumes could be written about Veer Savarkar's yeoman services in the cause of Indian freedom.' K. F. Nariman described Savarkar as a colourful, picturesque and romantic personality. Bhai Parmananda said of him that Savarkar was the fusion of Burke and Mazzini. According to S. R. Pather, Bar-at-law, South Africa, and one-time colleague of Savarkar, India owed her present advanced position to Savarkar's early struggle in the cause of freedom. To historian Dr. Pattabhi, Savarkar was one of the noble characters that devoted their life to this noble and patriotic task (emancipation of Motherland) and who worked according to their lights and according to the lights of the times for the emancipation of India. To Guy A. Aldred, editor of the *Word*, Glasgow, he was a prophet, and deserved a place in the line of prophets!

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But what about the aims and ideal for which Savarkar stood and fought? Reviewing this eventful life, one finds two notes of action, which had filled the skies at the time of Savarkar's birth and boyhood, echoed through the life story of Savarkar. The rebellious force of Wasudeo Balwant, the spiritual and social renaissance set in by Dayananda on the one hand, and the wave of Hindu-Muslim riots and the consequential bifurcation in the political ideal of the Hindus and Muslims on the other. The revolutionary urge and the Hindu-Muslim problem clung to Savarkar's life throughout. Savarkar took a vow while in his teens that he would fight out the British power and make his country free, independent and great. His political ideal

[4] Rajaji, Message to the *Lokamanya*, dated 26 June 1937.
[5] Shikhare, D. N., the *Chitramaya Jagat*, November 1944.

was: "India must be independent. India must be united. India must be republican. India must have one common tongue. India must have one common script. That script is Nagari; that Language is Hindi; that republic is that national form of Government in which the sovereign power—whether it be exercised by a monarch or by a President matters not much—must rest ultimately and uncompromisingly in the hands of the Indian people." This was the ideal for which the Abhinava Bharat stood. This was the ideal for which the Hindu Mahasabha stood. There is scarcely any other historic figure under the sun that has gone through such epic ordeals as Savarkar has done for fulfilling his vow.

The idea of bifurcation conceived by the historic Muslim mind and started on its foot by Sir Syed Ahmed was instinctively supported by the Muslims, was accepted by the Congress leaders and ended in the vivisection of India. As Savarkar saw independence in sight, he grew restless about the unity and integrity of India, the concept and ideal of which to men like Savarkar was noble, sublime and divine. But during the period of Savarkar's long incarceration and internment, the Gandhian lead betrayed a woeful lack of self-confidence in the conduct of the national struggle, ultimately discredited the power, prestige and patriotism of the Hindus, the national majority, undermined their confidence and mortgaged the destiny of the country to the anti-national forces. Savarkar's insight perceived this danger and he forewarned the people and applied all his energies to averting the colossal disaster which was brought on by the Gandhian lead. But with all his efforts he could not avert the vivisection of the Motherland.

The Hindu Mahasabha lacked full-time workers. The party was not well organised. The millions of people, who attended Savarkar's meetings in order to pay homage to the symbol of revolution, were wrongly considered to be in favour of his party. The party had no dailies to back up their propaganda and leaders. There were few weeklies at District places, but they also suffered for want of active support. The culpable boycott of the so-called nationalist but in fact commercialized press and the Press Agencies on Savarkar's statements and speeches was no less responsible for this fate. The news agencies that could give full and roaring publicity to Jinnah's anti-national out-

bursts, statements and speeches, suppressed intentionally the views, speeches and statements of Savarkar and whenever they broadcast them, they dropped out most pertinent criticism of the Britishers and the Congress party and his constructive and valuable advice to his countrymen. And when these fabricated extracts came down to the commercialized papers, they did the rest to Savarkar's statements and speeches. The ignorant and superstitious masses were not knowing what was happening.

In fact, those capitalists and moneyed men who had contributed heavily to the Congress press and propaganda for years, were not now prepared to lose all investment by incurring the displeasure of the ruling party in the country.

In such a state of affairs and for want of any direct mass-action on his part, Savarkar's warnings went unheard and he lost his battle for a united Hindustan. That way his fate is no better than the fate of Burke and Demosthenes, the two great pathetic figures in the political history of the world. In his brilliant essay on Edmund Burke, John Churton Collins observed: "Both (Burke and Demosthenes) animated by the purest motives, patriots to the innermost fibre, with no thought, with no aim, but for the public good, wore out their lives in leading forlorn hopes and in fighting losing battles. Both were prophets with a curse of Cassandra upon them, to be found wiser after the event, to be believed when all was lost." Add the third name of Savarkar to the line of these great orators and read the lines again. Telling his readers that Demosthenes saw Athens at the feet of Macedonian despot, and Burke saw England dismembered of America, Mr. Collins goes on to say: "Of the superhuman efforts made by the great Athenian to retrieve the disasters in which the neglect of his warnings had involved his countrymen, there was not one which was not thwarted either by a cruel fortune or by the perfidy and levity of those whom he was striving in their own despite to save."[4] Savarkar strove his utmost to avert the greatest betrayal in Indian history and the colossal disaster, but was thwarted by the perfidy, levity and betrayal of his contemporaries. Never-

[4] *Twentieth Century Essays And Addresses*, edited by W. A. J. Archbold, p. 175.

theless, his failure was more glorious than the ignoble success of his political opponents.

As for the Independence that came, it did not come as a result of the Congress struggle alone which was fought out by the Socialists in 1942. The final victory was won when politics was carried into the Indian Army, when patriotism took fire in the ranks of the Indian armed forces, when militarized Indians thus inspired with a great ideal rose in revolt under the lead of Ras Behari Bose and Netaji Subhas Bose. The British Imperialists, considerably weakened by World War II, realized that it was impossible to keep India in bondage any more for they had no faithful army. The army, that was entrusted with the work, had turned their guns towards their heads. The Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Attlee, stated before the House of Commons on March 15, 1946, on the occasion of making a declaration of the proposed transfer of power to India, that the national idea had spread right through, not the least perhaps among some of the soldiers who had done such wonderful service in the war. Mr. Fenner Brockway, the Political Secretary of the Independent Labour Party of England, gave three reasons for the transfer of power by Britain to India. He said that the Indian people were determined to achieve Independence; secondly, there was the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy and that the Indian forces could not be relied upon for serving Britain's purposes, and thirdly, Britain did not want to estrange India which was a market and a source of foodstuffs for her.

Although Brockway did not mention directly the I.N.A., it was clear that the revolt in the armed forces had bent them to the inevitable. Then who had truly worked towards that end, the carrying of the fire of patriotism into the ranks of the Indian army ever since 1908? And who made heroic attempts despite the curses of the Congressmen and Congress journals to preach militarization and impress upon patriotic youths the importance of entering the Army, Navy and Air Forces? It was Savarkar and Savarkar alone. At last the destined leader, Netaji Subhas Bose, seized the opportunity, and reaped the fruit of the pioneer efforts of Ras Behari Bose and the militarization policy of Savarkar. History will record this. Viewed in this light Savarkar had achieved his goal. The heroic war

inaugurated by the heroes of 1857 for winning back the independence was fought out successively by the revolutionaries of Ram Singh Kuka, Wasudeo Balwant, the Abhinava Bharat, the Anushilan Samiti and other Bengali organisations, the Ghadr; by the pioneering efforts of the Liberals, the valiant fighters of the Party of Bhagat Singh, the heroic fighters and patriots in the Congress and finally by the war of Netaji Subhas Bose and the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy.

CHAPTER 26

Warning Against Aggression

ON January 25, 1954, the revolutionary philosopher, M. N. Roy, passed away at his residence at Dehradun. Long before he had wound up his Radical Democratic Party and his thoughts and vision had gone beyond communism. Savarkar held him in high regard and once said that there was almost nobody in the Congress Working Committee with whom he could discuss rationalism. According to Savarkar, Roy was the only politician with whom he could hold discussions on rationalism. Roy sometimes met Savarkar at Savarkar Sadan, and light and enlightening discussions would follow. On one occasion Roy entered Savarkar Sadan eating grams. On casual enquiry Savarkar came to know that Roy was eating grams. Roy said with a laugh that even gods had eaten grams. "Surely," said Savarkar, "like gods, Roy also had undergone great sufferings and achieved godhood." He wondered Roy had at least that much Hindutva left in him! After Roy's death Savarkar said that one of the great thinkers had passed away.

Dr. Raghuvir, who was entrusted with the work of preparing a dictionary of new Hindi terms and expressions, met Savarkar at his place. Dr. Raghuvir felt encouraged by Savarkar's appreciation of his great achievement and by the frank discussion he held with Savarkar on the new terminology. About this time the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad visited the Andamans and on his rounds he saw the room in which Savarkar was caged.

In the middle of March the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Hyderabad. Savarkar did not attend it although he was much pressed to do so. Savarkar's old colleague M. P. T. Acharya died at Bhatia Hospital on March 20, 1954, in a miserable condition. A great patriot and a great journalist, M. P. T. Acharya remained a political suspect all his life and had to undergo great suffering. He had met Savar-

kar at his place, but Savarkar was not moved even when he saw his former colleague in great distress. That was the bane of Savarkar's political organisation. It had not much to do with human relations.

Ever since the Peoples' Government of China came to power, its leaders decided to liberate Tibet. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Indian Government was interested only in preserving its cultural and commercial relations with Tibet and told the Chinese Government that Tibet should maintain the autonomy. He, however, did not challenge or deny the suzerainty of China over Tibet.

While Nehru was explaining in the Indian Parliament [1] the difference between the suzerainty and sovereignty and knew not from whom the Chinese were going to liberate Tibet, the Chinese armies marched into Tibet in 1950. Nehru saw the tragedy being enacted in Tibet, but could do nothing to stop the rape of Tibet by China. On the contrary he made an agreement with China in April 1954 after the goat of Tibet had been completely digested by Mao. That agreement contained principles which Nehru called 'Panchsheel'. These principles were recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference, equality and mutual benefits and peaceful co-existence. When the members of Parliament referred to the 'melancholy chapter of Tibet' Nehru replied: "We put up with these things because we would be, without making any difference, merely getting into trouble." [2]

Two great Indian leaders warned Nehru and the nation against the impending danger which would come on as a result of the liquidation of Tibet's independence. One was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the other was Savarkar. With his unfailing foresight Savarkar sounded a warning to the nation in an interview which he gave to the representative of the *Kesari* of Poona and which appeared on January 26, 1954. "When China, without even consulting India, invaded the buffer state of Tibet, India should at once have protested and demanded the fulfilment of rights and privileges as per her agreements

[1] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *India's Foreign Policy* (The Publications Division), p. 302.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

and pacts entered into with Tibet. But our Indian Government was not able to do any such thing. We closed our eyes in the name of world peace and co-existence and did not even raise a finger against this rape of Tibet. Neither did we help this buffer state of Tibet when her very existence was at stake. Why? The only reason that I visualise is our unpreparedness for such an eventuality and/or war."

"That is the reason why after swallowing the whole of Tibet the strong armies of China and Russia are now standing right on our borders in a state of complete preparedness and on the strength of the above, China is today openly playing the game of liquidating the remaining buffer states of Nepal and Bhutan. Not satisfied with this, China has now come out with a claim on our own territories from Gangotri right upto Badri Kedar which are rationally, traditionally, culturally and rightfully ours. We have not been able to put before her an army which can match the strength of her armies on these borders of ours even today. This is precisely the reason why China dares come forward with such an unabashed claim on our territories."

"In the very six years," Savarkar observed, "we criminally wasted, China had equipped her. whole nation with most modern and up-to-date arms, and without in the least caring for the feelings and sentiments of India, had completely overrun Tibet and destroyed the only buffer state so as to strengthen her vast borders. By this act of hers, China had with one stroke came right on our borders by force and prepared the way for an open aggression against India whenever she felt like it. Britain, when she was ruling over India, had by careful planning, pacts, treaties and agreements created a chain of buffer states like Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan in order to strengthen the borders of India and to safeguard it from China and Russia. Afghanistan also acted like a buffer state on the other side. Britain had on behalf of the Government of India, directly or indirectly taken upon herself by various pacts, charters and agreements even the guarantee of continued existence of these buffer states. Immediately on attainment of independence all these rights were transferred to the independent sovereign Republic of India."

With the signing of Pakistan-America Pact India was completely encircled by her enemies and the invading armies of Pakistan were now ready on the side of the border. He also

warned the nation against the trouble of Portugal in case India was engaged in a fight with Pakistan.

Forgetting the rape of Tibet, Nehru welcomed Chou En-lai, Prime Minister of China, at Delhi on June 26, 1954, hoping that India and China would stand for peace and would live amicably together and co-operate together in the interest of peace and human advance. The slogan given to the country by Nehru was '*Hindi-Chini bhai bhai*'—Indians and Chinese were brethren.

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Asked to give his opinion on the pact, Savarkar told the reporter of the *Kesari* that in politics the enemy of our enemy is our best friend. Enlightened self-interest is the only touchstone on which friendship in political dealings could be tested, since there is no such thing as real and selfless friendship in the political arena. If the meeting between Chou En-lai and Nehru, he said, angered the U.S.A., Indians should not mind it as the U.S.A. did not care to pause and think that India would be dissatisfied or would feel insulted if America entered into a military pact with Pakistan. All the policies of India must be dependent on what was good or bad for India herself. If it was advantageous to India she should not in the least worry or care whether anyone felt enraged, insulted or irritated.

When questioned about the outcome of the visit of Chou En-lai, Savarkar said: "The general principles that are being propagated as fundamental in this visit are very good and sound, so far as their language is concerned. Nothing is lost in proclaiming wishes for world peace, prosperity and brotherhood. But so long as India does not have any effective practical remedy or measures to check the transgressions, such visits have no more than a formal status."

Further, Savarkar pointed out that while crying from the house-top about these principles it was worth noting that China, by swallowing Tibet, had ruthlessly trampled those very principles of world peace, brotherhood and peaceful co-existence. That was the most funniest part of the whole deal, and it at once raised doubts in Indian mind about the *bona fides* of China and Chou En-lai. There was at that time a political party in Tibet aiming at independence. It was curious and in

a way most astonishing that after preying on and swallowing the mouse of Tibet the Chinese cat was talking of going on pilgrimage. That was exactly the role that the Chinese Premier Chou En-lai and President Mao Tse-tung were playing.

"China, Russia, Britain or even the recently established Pakistan," Savarkar continued, "all talk of high-sounding principles, but they do so as a step towards diplomatic measures to achieve their own ends, and for the success of their own political objectives. In the present state of human relationship it should be just so; but of all the countries India alone has for long been in the habit of preaching sermons of high principles to others and unilaterally bringing them into practice, which ultimately proves disastrous to the interests of India. I only hope that this does not happen in this case of five principles, *Panchsheel* that are said to have been enunciated."

"What I feel," Savarkar observed, "is that if at all China uses India as a spring board or a handle to push forward her own territorial aims and interests, India should also primarily safeguard her own interests and if these moves do not go against her interests then alone take part in it. So long as China is looking to her interests alone, India should also follow the same footsteps and use the good wishes of China only in so far as they help to push the interest of India forward. We should believe in their good faith and good intentions as much as and as long as they believe in ours." "One fact must be made clear here and it is that," Savarkar concluded, "U.K., U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and China can force India to bring into practice all these principles because they hold the upper hand, being in possession of atomic and nuclear weapons of warfare. But can India do the same? Can India force these nations to see that they follow the principles that they profess to preach? This is the most important question. It is no use having political or diplomatic fellow-feeling or friendship with either China or Russia on this basis. We must immediately undertake to see that military potential and preparedness of the Indian armed forces with modern and most up-to-date weapons of warfare is not being neglected and that we too can produce atomic and nuclear weapons just as these nations can. If China can erect plants and factories for the manufacture of atomic weapons of warfare in Sinkiang and other places we should also be able to do so.

There is nothing difficult in it. Our scientists and laboratories might be able to invent and manufacture such weapons in a year or two or they might invent even more destructive ones."

"But so long our weak and impotent Government at the Centre does not take even one step to achieve these objectives it is no use talking of high principles and running after the mirage of world peace, peaceful co-existence, world brotherhood and prosperity, and nothing good can come out of such so-called good-will visits. High principles must have sound armed strength behind them to see that they are brought into practice by those who talk eloquently about it. Taking all these things into consideration I feel that the time has come now when the Central Government must immediately take steps to increase the armed might and the military potential of India." [3]

Referring to the principles of Panchsheel Dr. Ambedkar said in the Rajya Sabha on August 26, 1954, that the principles were adopted without much thought on the part of Prime Minister Nehru, who, by helping the Chinese to bring their border down to the Indian border, had exposed India to aggression and the people who were in the habit of committing aggression would commit it. He added that Mao had no faith in the Panchsheel as there was no room for Panchsheel in politics and secondly not in the politics of the communist country.

And what were the consequences of Panchsheel? India unilaterally observed the Panchsheel and later China invaded India. Under the lead of Nehru India remained self-complacent and under the illusion paid heavy price for the Panchsheel which had no strength to punish the transgressor of its terms. It shows how the policy of both Savarkar and Dr. Ambedkar was full of realism, a typical characteristic of Maharashtrian leadership.

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The Hindu Sabhaites began making demonstrations in conformity with the policy laid down by their leader against the foreign Christian Missionaries. The Poona Hindu Sabhaites made demonstrations in May 1954 against the Kedgaon mission raising the slogans 'foreign missionaries should quit India'.

[3] *Thus Spake The Prophet*, pp. 1-6.

Another batch of Hindu Sabhaites was led by Bal Savarkar, Savarkar's personal secretary and editor of the *Hindu* weekly. Their march towards the centre of the missionary in Bassein, was greeted by the people. Several demonstrations were staged at different missionary centres in Maharashtra. H. B. Bhide played a leading part in these activities.

About this time Savarkar issued a statement encouraging the patriotic fighters who were fighting for the liberation of Diu, Daman and Goa. They should carry on the fight if they felt themselves quite prepared to do so. They should not take any notice of the elusive, selfish and arrogant proposals put forth by Britain and Portugal. The Government of India had no legal or constitutional right to hold them back. The Government should not take any part in negotiation until Portugal agreed to recognise the independence of all the Portuguese possessions in Bharat, he added.

In July and August the people of India liberated Mahe from Goa under the lead of the Mahajan Sabha. When Savarkar heard the news of the liberation of Mahe he was overjoyed at the good news. In the telegram he sent to the president of Mahajan Sabha he congratulated the fighters who liberated Mahe after a fight and put an end to the separation of three hundred years between the brothers. After some time the fighters liberated Dadra and Nagar Haveli also.

The Government of India appointed the Backward Class Commission on January 29, 1953. One of its members, N. S. Kajrolkar, wrote to Savarkar in October 1954 asking his views on the problem. Savarkar replied that untouchability must be rooted out in the following way: Abolition of untouchability should be enforced by a very ruthless law, for example, had there been as stringent and ruthless a law as was the law to effect prohibition and its enforcement would have been as rigorous as in the case of prohibition, untouchability would have been rooted out in villages also. To observe untouchability was now a crime. To refuse to give treatment of equality to the members of the Scheduled Castes should be declared by Parliament a cognizable offence. If they did so then all the states would be bound by it. The police would then be authorised to take legal action against the offenders and bring them to book. Police protection should be given to the mem-

bers of the Scheduled Castes. When such cases would be going on in courts such drastic laws would provoke some resentment, but it should be faced squarely. In a year or so such resentment would die out. He also said that the Scheduled Castes should be made aware of their rights.

The reservations and special rights which were meant for the Scheduled Castes must not be extended to the Christians and Muslims who boasted that their communities did not observe untouchability based on birth. By so declaring they had converted thousands of Scheduled Caste Hindus. They therefore should be ashamed to ask for such preferential treatment. The backward classes should be given assistance on the basis of their poverty and illiteracy. But the special privilege given to the Scheduled Castes should not be extended to any other class. The Scheduled Castes should abolish untouchability among themselves as between Mahars and Mangs and others.

On November 7, 1954, Savarkar's former colleague Niranjan Pal came to see him. After Savarkar's transportation Pal had turned a playwright. He wrote many English dramas and one scenario, the Light of Asia. There he married an English lady. He came to India in October 1929 to see his father Bepin Chandra Pal, who was very ill. He died in May 1932.

In London Niranjan Pal had achieved success as a film director and playwright. As a playwright he had gained eminence on the British stage for his plays *The Goddess, What a Change* and the *Blue Bottle*. The film *The Light of Asia*, of which he was a screen-play writer and director, was the first Indian film to see the light in Europe and it broke all records during its three months' run in London.

While Niranjan Pal was in London Himanshu Roy, who later became a famous film producer, came in contact with him. Pal wrote many film stories like Acchyut Kanya and produced a documentary film for Bengal Government and was for a time with the Film Advisory Board as its script-writer.

Pal paid a second visit to Savarkar in the first week of December 1954 when Savarkar expressed his desire that the detailed film version should be made of his book *The Indian War of Independence—1857*.

Savarkar reiterated his views on the cow. He said there should be a ban on cow-slaughter from the viewpoint of agri-

culture and economy, and even old cows should not be handed over to slaughter houses from the viewpoint of humanity. Just as it was no religion to raise the cow to the pedestal of godhood, so also it was no religion to sacrifice the cow in the name of god believing that He liked the sacrifice.

Early in the new year 1955 Savarkar blessed a marriage between a Brahmin youth named Deshpande and a Mahar girl by name Abhang. In the first week of February 1955 Savarkar visited Ratnagiri. As he was visiting the place after seventeen years thousands of people from the district gathered to give him an enthusiastic ovation. The municipality gave him an address. The main function was held at the Patit Pavan temple to celebrate its silver jubilee. The temple had attained name and fame in the history of social reforms of India. Speaking at the celebration, Savarkar exhorted the Hindus to abolish casteism and make India a powerful nation, militarily and socially.

Savarkar then paid visits to and blessed many institutions in Ratnagiri. But he specially visited the houses of his former colleagues Khatu and Malushte and others who helped to promote the revolution of social equality in Ratnagiri. The author also had a unique opportunity of welcoming Savarkar to his house in Ratnagiri, his home town. On his way back Savarkar visited Chiplun where an address was presented to him by the municipality. He made a brief halt at Guhagar where people gave him a colourful welcome celebrating his arrival by lighting lamps on either side of the road in the traditional way.

On February 7, 1955, Jamnadas Mehta died in Bombay. Savarkar had just arrived in Bombay from his tour of Ratnagiri. He grieved over the death of Jamnadas, who had been a staunch supporter and a great admirer of Savarkar all his life. He was a great parliamentarian. On one occasion he said that if Savarkar was Lord Shankar he was his Nandi and on another occasion he said that no other memorial to Gandhi should be set up as Pakistan itself was Gandhi's real memorial.

The annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Gonda, but Savarkar did not attend it.

Early in August 1955, although Savarkar was ill he gave an interview to H. M. Joshi who wanted to get some points clarified relating to history of the freedom struggle. On August 21,

Savarkar attended a shuddhi function held at Kitte Bhandari Hall, Bombay, where forty Christian fishermen were reconverted to Hinduism. Shankaracharya Yogeshwarnandji presided over the function. Addressing the people who attended the function, Savarkar said that if the Hindus had attended to shuddhi earlier, there would have been no problem of Kashmir or Goa in their time. The Kashmir Muslims were the former Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islam. They appealed to the Maharaja of Kashmir for their reconversion, but their appeal was turned down by the orthodox heads of Hinduism, although the Maharaja Hari Singh was prepared to accept them in the Hindu fold. The result was that a new Muslim problem developed in Kashmir.

Savarkar also said that if Goanese population had been entirely Hindu the Portuguese would have left India long before. If only Hindus spent as much on shuddhi as foreign missionaries spent on their conversion work, they would establish a real Hindu nation in a few years. Blessing the forty fishermen reconverted to Hinduism, he said that shuddhi was of great importance to India and he therefore wished to be reborn for carrying on the shuddhi movement. Some four months earlier about six hundred Christians were reconverted to Hinduism in Bihar. Savarkar was glad to note the invaluable work of the Arya Samaj and so he again gave an impetus to the shuddhi movement at this time.

The arrival of foreign Missionaries had annoyed the Central Government also and their policy for the time being seemed to check a further flow of foreign Missionaries into the country. But in her speech Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Health Minister of India, at a meeting of Indian Christians in New Delhi, declared that left to herself she would double the number of foreign Missionaries in the country. Her remark praising the good work done by foreign Missionaries among the Nagas and the Kushai Hills also ran counter to the view held by the Ministry concerned. Most of the political troubles in those areas including the cry for an independent Nagaland were attributable to the influence of foreign Missionaries.

Emotionally disturbed, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, an eminent disciple of Gandhi, held forth as a champion of Christian community. Naturally a sensation was caused in political quarters

by her speech when she described the policy as Hindu resurgence and complained of reconversion of Christians to Hinduism.[4] It should be noted that when the Missionaries or Maulavis carried on the work of conversion of Hindus no great contemporary of Savarkar in the Congress ever raised his little finger against the fraudulent conversions which went against the solidarity and security of the nation. But the work of reconversion displeased and irritated the so-called nationalist leaders. This was quite clear from the outbursts of the Congress leaders like Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

In November 1955 Savarkar paid a visit to Senapati Bapat's residence to felicitate him on his birthday. He did honour to Senapati Bapat and Bapat eminently deserved it. Bapat humourously said to Savarkar that he had been to Goa in quest of Death but he could not find Him there. To go to any leader and to congratulate him or to encourage him was not a matter of practice, pleasure or pride with Savarkar. But he did this special honour to one who was his former colleague and a selfless patriot.

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The new year 1956 opened with a pressing demand for the creation of a united Maharashtra on the linguistic basis. Savarkar, who never gave emphasis on such internal problems, supported the demand for a united Maharashtra. He had also hoisted black flag on January 10, 1956, as a protest against Government which was opposing the demand made by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti.

About this time Savarkar once again opposed the merger of Hindu Mahasabha with Jan Sangh. He warned the Hindu Sabhaites that the Hindu Mahasabha was absolutely necessary in the interest of Hindudom. There should be an organisation manned by Hindus only to represent Hindudom as a whole and to protect the interests, political, social, cultural and economic, of the Hindus. The Hindu Mahasabha should form a united front for election purposes provided those bodies did not affect any way the existence and freedom of the Hindu Mahasabha.

Dr. P. C. Khankhoje, one of the former revolutionaries, was honoured by the people. Savarkar sent a message to the recep-

[4] The *Mahratta*, 4 March 1955.

tion committee in which he said that he joined it in honouring Dr. Khankhoje who fought rifle in hand against the British to liberate his motherland. Dr. Khankhoje, after his revolutionary career, became an authority on agriculture and acted as an adviser to the Mexico Government. In his old age he had returned to India.

Savarkar also congratulated M. S. Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., on his birthday. In his telegraphic message to the reception committee he said that Golwalkar was a pillar of the Hindu nation.

The Prakash Mandal at Poona was celebrating the anniversary of Shivaji. In his message to that institution Savarkar said that India wanted Shivaji and not Buddha.[5] It was not a question of comparison. A particular medicine was to be prescribed for a particular disease. For a serpent-bite medicine should be prescribed to counteract the poison. The danger that was threatening India required the policy, tactics and spirit of Shivaji and not the teachings of the Buddha.

Early in May 1956 Savarkar sent a message to the King of Nepal greeting His Majesty on his coronation, as king of Nepal, the only independent Hindu state in the world. These greetings, which went on for years, looked apparently a waste on His Majesty, but Savarkar did the homage as his patient, sincere duty.

It was the year of birth centenary of Lokamanya Tilak, the Father of India's Freedom Struggle. All parties formed a reception committee at Poona and invited Savarkar to deliver the main speech at the celebrations. The centenary was celebrated throughout India. The main function at Poona was presided over by Tilak's great lieutenant Lokanayak Madhavrao Aney. Addressing the mammoth meeting, Savarkar appealed to the youth of the nation to enter the military forces and make the country invincible from the viewpoint of defence. The dream of Tilak had been realised and it was the duty of the youth to imbibe the qualities, physical, mental and military, so that they might be able to make the independence of the country everlasting.

Savarkar further said he was glad that all the parties had

[5] The *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, 14 May 1956.

come together to celebrate this great event. He was very happy to see the people of Maharashtra united on that golden occasion in the history of the nation. But he said that the Tilak birth centenary should have been celebrated with great pomp and pride at Delhi, the capital of India. It was unfortunate that the main function of the birth centenary of Lokmanya Tilak, whose sacrifice and ceaseless efforts were responsible for drawing near the independence of the country, was not held at Delhi. In Tilak's honour a salute of twenty-one guns should have been fired. That was the proper way to pay honour to the great maker of India, he concluded.

During the middle of the year Savarkar's wife Yamunabai had been confined to bed. She was lying in the clinic of Dr. Talwalkar at Dadar. She was brought home in the middle of October 1956. The first part of his book *Saha Soneri Pane (Six Golden Pages)* from the History of Bharat was published on May 10, 1956, and he was now thinking of writing the second part of the book. The first part of the book throws a flood of light on the ancient history of Bharat. Savarkar gave a new orientation and meaning to the events which hitherto several historians had not seen in the proper perspective.

On October 14, 1956, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his followers embraced Buddhism. Savarkar, who was not so much responsive to this change, expressed his views on the event saying that the Buddhist Ambedkar was Hindu Ambedkar. He described Dr. Ambedkar's entry into the Buddhistic fold as a sure jump into the fold of Hinduism. He had embraced a non-Vedic but Indian religious system within the orbit of Hindutva. So Savarkar declared that according to him it was not a change of faith. According to his definition of a Hindu, the holy land and father land of the neo-Buddhists was India. When Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar died on December 6, 1956, Savarkar said that India had lost a really great man.

From November 10 to 12, 1956, the annual session of Hindu Mahasabha was held at Jodhpur. On persistent invitations from Mahasabha leaders Savarkar attended the session. Blessing the Hindu Mahasabha session, he said that he was on the wrong side of seventy and his health was deteriorating. He was however happy to see that the younger generation was full of enthusiasm for promoting the cause of the Hindu nation. His

comrades and he himself had fought for the independence of the Hindu nation, for they wanted to make the Hindu nation strong, independent and prosperous. Because he fought for the interests of the Hindu nation he had even incurred the displeasure of the majority of the Hindus. And then in a moving tone he said: "I am now infirm and have one foot in the grave. If after my death you set up any memorial over my ashes and write any epitaph I would like you to prefer 'Savarkar, the organiser of Hindus' to 'Swatantryaveer Savarkar' on it. For all my efforts towards independence were intended to achieve Hindu unity and to establish a strong independent Hindu nation. He exhorted them to carry on, like Rana Pratap, their struggle ceaselessly for the Hindu nation.

They should Hinduise all politics and militarise Hindudom. It meant, he added, that they should look at politics, internal and international, from the viewpoint of Hindu interest alone. India recognised almost all nations in the world except Israel, which was recognised by England, Russia, China and the U.S.A. India was not recognising Israel because, it was said, it would be regarded as an anti-Muslim act.

"But bear in mind," he said, "that if tomorrow there breaks out a war between Pakistan and Bharat almost all Muslims will be arrayed on the side of Pakistan in opposition to us and their enemy Israel will be our only friend. Therefore, I say that Bharat should give an unequivocal recognition to Israel. If we desire to safeguard the independence of Bharat we should be militarily strong." "The message of peace and Panchsheel," he observed, "is not adequate. Those nations which are armed with atom and hydrogen bombs are called big nations. Russia, who signed the Panchsheel, invaded Hungary and Nehru said that Egypt and Russia did not consult us. Why should they consult you? They care not a jot for your Panchsheel because your Panchsheel consists of beads of the rosary while their Panchsheel consists of tanks, submarines, guns, bombers and atom bombs. Today the nation is run by pen alone. It must be run by the sword in the main. So my message to you, young men, is that: Make the army and the navy and the airforce up-to-date. If the other nations prepare hydrogen bombs you invent oxygen bombs. Thereby you will make Bharat a strong and prosperous nation and you will be able to live with self-

respect. Let a thousand of your fighters and airships and jets fill the sky in their flight and let your warships be ready to protect your coasts from the aggression of the enemies by sea. This is my blessing to you all."

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The year 1957 dawned and the whole nation prepared herself to pay national homage to the great heroes of the war of national independence of 1857. Savarkar was the first historian and Indian leader to give the message of those heroes to India and to turn the tide against the British, and to change the psychology of the nation. While the nation was in a mood to celebrate the centenary some Indian historians like Surendra Nath Sen and R. C. Majumdar, who lost the meaning and spirit of the epoch and had no strong wings to soar, wrote their histories of 1857 as taught by the British historians in their day. What Savarkar said of the Hindus was true also of the Indian historians. They knew not the victory even when they were victorious.

The British newspapers like the *New Statesman and Nation, The Times,* the *Guardian,* came out with special articles on 1857 and the historians agreed that the Indian view was brilliantly represented by Savarkar. They admitted that both sides were equally responsible for the massacre.

A Centenary Celebrations Committee was set up at Delhi and it invited Savarkar to deliver the main speech on the occasion. A deputation of the Celebrations Committee waited on Jawaharlal Nehru also and requested him to participate in the centenary celebrations in Delhi, at which Savarkar was the main speaker. Declining the invitation very politely, Nehru said: "Savarkar is a brave man, a hero, a great man. When I was a student in England we were inspired by his book on 1857. It is a great book which has inspired many Indians. But it is hardly history. We have differed on several problems and it would be embarrassing to him if I speak in a different tone. I have great respect for Savarkar and I would have certainly liked to meet him. But speaking on the same platform would be unjust for both of us."[6]

[6] An account given by Prof. V. G. Deshpande.

The Congress leaders were compelled to celebrate the centenary, which Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabhaites had been celebrating as anniversary of that War of Independence for years. Country-wide celebrations were planned for the 10th of May 1957 by various parties. A public meeting organised by the Congress Party was addressed on Ramlila grounds by Nehru on May 10. The Communists, the Praja Socialist Party organised mass rallies and processions in Delhi to celebrate the centenary. All-India Radio broadcast programmes commemorating the centenary on May 10 and 11.

In response to the invitation of the Centenary Celebrations Committee, Savarkar went to Delhi. This was his first public visit to Delhi after independence and the people were very enthusiastic to give him a colourful reception. Although his body aged and ravages of time were visible on his once handsome face, the revolutionary fire in his eyes glowed as brightly as before. The spirit was unbent.

On his arrival in Delhi Savarkar was taken in procession from the station to Chandni Chowk where warriors of 1857 were hanged by Britishers in those days. Savarkar devotionally placed wreaths on the posts amidst sky-rending cries of victories to the martyrs and to Savarkar by the vast crowds of people. Speaking on the occasion, Savarkar said that the war which began on the 10th May 1857 was carried on from sire to son with the spirit of the dictum 'a revolutionary war knows no truce, save liberty or death'. And it was brought to a successful end. It was now the duty of the youth to defend it against any aggression and make it militarily a first class nation. Among the nations that were coming on the horizon India was the most important of them all. The revolutionaries fought for the independence of a united India. The object remained to be fulfilled by the young generation.

Savarkar, with the revolutionaries Raja Mahendra Pratap, Ashutosh Lahiri, V. B. Gogate, Lala Hridayram of Hardinge bomb-case fame, Lala Hanumat Sahay and the mother of Bhagat Singh and the widow of Ajit Singh, was given a reception by the Celebrations Committee. The function was attended by prominent citizens of Delhi and members of Parliament. The chairman of the Centenary Celebrations Committee Lala Hansraj Gupta welcomed the guests and the citizens. Lala Hriday-

ram described how Savarkar's deeds and words echoed in those days throughout young India.

Replying to the honour done to them, Savarkar said that it was a fitting deed the Delhi people performed in celebrating the centenary of 1857. He described before the gathering how it was a war of the people and was fought in the name of religion and freedom. All revolutions whether ancient or modern were the work of a determined militant minority. Dr. Gokulchand Narang, scholar and patriot, who had witnessed the first function in 1907 in London performed by the revolutionaries of the Abhinava Bharat, said that it was Savarkar who gave that unique message of armed revolution to the nation. Savarkar impressed upon that generation that it was not enough to die for the freedom, it was necessary to kill the aggressors in defending the independence.

On Ramlila grounds a mammoth meeting was held on May 12, where Savarkar the scholar, historian and the hero of independence declared that the struggle of 1857 was not merely a sepoy revolt, nor was it led by a set of ex-rulers who had some personal ends to square. It was a national war for the independence of India. The question was asked whether the world should choose Buddha or war. India should be cautious and should defend her independence. The call of non-violence and peace was not a new thing to India. It had been preached to the Hindus since the Vedas, after every Vedic mantra the Hindus invoked peace. But because those mantras could not protect them they took up the arms. They should of course struggle to attain prosperity and more production, but they should not forget to prepare the nation for the defence; since for want of proper defence their plans for prosperity and more production would be of no avail. The rising generation of Hindus should invent more dreadful bombs than the atom and the hydrogen bombs and then and then alone would they be able to survive in the struggle for existence.

Russia, while pretending to count the beads of rosary of Panchsheel, was inventing destructive and dreadful weapons. It was a war waged by Subhas Bose that gave the last stroke to British rule and it collapsed. The mammoth meeting then in a solemn and devotional mood offered flower-petals and the red powder to the memory of the great heroes and warriors of 1857.

The mammoth meeting was thrilled with the message of Savarkar. This meeting was double the size Nehru addressed on the same grounds on the 10th May. They said they were fortunate in hearing Savarkar on 1857. A journalist, Kishoram Sabarval, who had escaped to Japan in 1915 as an Indian revolutionary, was overwhelmed with emotions when he saw Savarkar. He exclaimed to a fellow journalist D. B. Karnik[7] that it was a great and unique coincidence that the centenary was celebrated at the sacred hands of Savarkar who was the first leader to impress its historical role upon its countrymen. Savarkar was, Kishoram Sabarval added, the most fortunate hero in India at the moment. And indeed Savarkar was as happy as were the Pandavas after performing the Rajasuya sacrifice.

At a press interview in Delhi, Savarkar said that all wars started through small causes. The social conditions of those days should be taken into consideration. The princely order and feudalism represented the will of the people. The French revolution had its origin in the call for bread and the 1857 started apparently through the opposition to the greased cartridges. To desire to protect religion from desecration was a good enough cause for a national uprising a hundred years before. All great revolutions had their origin in trifling things. The motive power behind the salt satyagraha was the love for independence. There was nothing wrong in the movement being laid by the princes. They should not be blamed if they fought for their kingdoms. For hundred years before they symbolised the will, aspirations and ideals of the people. People had forgotten their religious differences and fought shoulder to shoulder to drive out the British. Bahadur Shah had declared that he would welcome a confederation and abandon his power.

Savarkar was very happy that the Government and the various parties had ultimately recognised the significance of the 1857 struggle. Surendra Nath Sen, the official historian of the Government of India, wrote his history of 1857 from the point of view of the British and found heroism in the act of the most terrible and fanatical British butchers. R. C. Mujumdar, too, in

[7] The *Kesari*, 19 May 1957.

a different way, underrated the patriotic Indian effort to restore India's sovereignty.

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Savarkar's view was that it was not merely a soldier's revolt but also a peoples' war in which hundreds of thousands of people had taken part and fought. Justin MacCarthy in his *History of Our Times* says that the quarrel about the greased cartridges was but a chance-spark flung among all the combustible material. The mutiny was transformed into a revolutionary war . . . into a national and religious war. In his *History of Indian Mutiny* (Vol. II, p. 572) Charles Ball, the British historian, said that it became a rebellion of the whole people. Citing these opinions, Savarkar published on May 10, 1957, a special article[8] on 1857 and quoted from Charles Ball's book the last letter of Nanasaheb to the British Commander Hope Grant. Nanasaheb said: "What right have you to occupy India and declare me an outlaw? Who gave you right to rule over India? What! you firanghees, the kings! and we thieves in our own country!" This was Savarkar's last reply to Indian historians who had lost the spirit and significance of the war of independence of 1857.

During this visit to Delhi the Arya Samaj presented him an address in which it described Savarkar as *Hinduhridaya Samrat*. Replying to the address, Savarkar said that he was the real follower of the seer Dayananda as he believed in the reconversion movement. Hindus should not neglect this movement. They should do whatever was just, beneficial to the Hindu society in spite of derision. The Arya Samajists had done an exemplary work in the field of reconversion and they should carry it on despite frowns or fear.

The Maharashtra Samaj of Delhi gave a hearty welcome to Savarkar under the presidentship of N. V. Gadgil. Savarkar was honoured as a valorous son of Maharashtra. Savarkar had, Gadgil said, struggled and sacrificed for decades, and although he had no governmental power, nor was any national honour done to him he showed greatness of his mind in giving a call to the youth of the nation to build it up. Savarkar was beyond a state of happiness or sorrow. The nation was in need of his blessings.

[8] The *Mahratta*, 10 May 1957.

Replying to this welcome, Savarkar said that Maharashtrian youths should enter the defence forces and do their duty by their motherland. They should serve the country with the strength and strategy which was peculiar to the Maharashtrian leadership. Their courage and bravery should be accompanied by realism and tactics.

Savarkar gave a farewell party to the leaders and workers of the Hindu Mahasabha at the Janpath hotel where he stayed. He said with a streak of light and tears in his eyes: "I know you came to Delhi all the way to see me. I am grateful to you for your abiding love and faith and devotion. I shall never forget you. During my public life of about fifty-five years, four generations worked with me. To those who accepted my leadership and regarded me with devotion I could give nothing. My followers and lieutenants are neither respected nor benefited in any way. On the contrary a life of poverty, insults and hardships is their lot. They have lost everything and what is worst, the future is filled with grim disappointments. Yet with your noble aim, unflinching courage and irrevocable faith you are determined to carry on the mission. When I see this my mind is full of hope. Remember, you have been suffering defeats, but you are really the victorious party in the land. Some of my colleagues faced gallows; others perished while struggling against British rule in foreign lands. And now you are ready to champion the cause of the Hindus bravely without regard to fruit and self. Do not betray the Hindu cause. The ultimate success is yours. I give you my blessings."

Prof. V. G. Deshpande, a fearless and youthful leader, promised Savarkar on behalf of the leaders and workers of Hindu Mahasabha that they would never desert the flag and the interest of the Hindus.

It was the desire of some persons that Savarkar should call on the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The appointment was fixed, but Savarkar showed his disinclination to see the President, who did not invite him officially. The ruling party was not fully reconciled to him as he was their harsh critic. Govind Vallabh Pant, Home Minister of India, had informed Dr. Khare a few days earlier that it was not open to the Central Government to order the remission or cancellation of the forfeiture of Savarkar's property. Not only that, Savarkar's books

or books on Savarkar were not reviewed on radio. On May 28 Savarkar's birthday was celebrated as usual all over India in important cities and towns, but his name remained a red rag to the then radio authorities.

The great patriot Rana breathed his last on May 26, 1957, at Veraval in Saurashtra at the age of 87. He was the leader to preside over the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the War of Independence of 1857 held in London in May 1907. He was happy to see the centenary of the War of Independence being celebrated all over India. In his telegraphic condolence message to Rana's son Natawarlal, Savarkar said that India lost a great revolutionary and a patriot and a trusted colleague of his.

A few days earlier the second part of Savarkar's Marathi autobiography was published in March 1957 under the title *Purvapithika* (*Antecedents*). It describes the political situation of India at the time of Savarkar's entry into Indian politics.

About this time Raja Mahendra Pratap introduced a Bill recommending to Government to recognise the services to the country of Savarkar, Birendra Kumar Ghose (brother of Arbindo Ghose) and Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta (brother of Swami Vivekanand). The Bill proposed to pay in recognition of their services five hundred rupees a month for life from the Government. At the time of the introduction of the Bill in Parliament on November 22, 1957, by Raja Mahendra Pratap, Asoke Sen, Minister of Law and B. N. Datar, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, took objections to the introduction of the Bill on the constitutional grounds. They said that a Bill entailing expenditure could not be considered by the House without President's consent. The Deputy Speaker, Sardar Hukam Singh, overruled the objections. Just then the Speaker came and called upon Raja Mahendra Pratap to beg leave of the House to introduce the Bill. But the motion was declared lost by 75 votes to 48 with 2 abstentions. Almost all members of the opposition had walked out of the Lok Sabha protesting against the Government's objections to the introduction of the Bill. The Socialist members and some independents remained in the House.[9]

Just then a controversy was going on in Uttar Pradesh over the picture of Nanasaheb Peshwa, whose statue was going to be

[9] The *Times of India*, 23 November 1957.

erected by the U.P. Government. Savarkar wrote to Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of U.P., on June 7, 1957, stating that the picture they had selected for the model of the statue was not only false but fraudulent. To meet the pressing demand of the British public for the picture of Nanasaheb, Savarkar added, a picture of an Indian merchant by name Ayodhya Prasad was published in the *Illustrated News* of England with the connivance of that merchant's solicitor. Sampurnanand gratefully thanked Savarkar for the picture of Nanasaheb he sent and the references.

The Union Government and State Governments officially celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 1857 struggle on August 15, 1957. In his broadcast to the nation the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, said the 1857 movement was not accidental and there was little wonder, therefore, if writers and historians had described the movement as a national War of Independence.

A Citizens' Committee in Bombay set up to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Indian Struggle for Freedom was to celebrate the anniversary on August 15, 1957. Savarkar was elected Vice-President. Although Savarkar could not attend meetings, he was urged by Acharya Donde, Mayor of Bombay, to attend the function which Savarkar could not do as he was ill. At the celebrations held on August 15 by the Government of Bombay, Yeshwantrao Chavan, Chief Minister of Bombay, paid high tributes to Savarkar for his patriotic fight against British rule. It was well-known in Maharashtra that in his youth Yeshwantrao Chavan, like S. A. Dange and S. M. Joshi, was inspired by Savarkar's patriotism, sacrifice and undying spirit, and he had gone all the way from Karhad to Ratnagiri to meet him.

Savarkar wrote a letter to Tarkatirth Laxmanshastri Joshi, who played a very important and enthusiastic role in the re-establishment of the image of Somnath, congratulating him on his being appointed to translate the Indian Constitution into Sanskrit. In his usual appealing and propagandist way Savarkar urged him to use the words *Vidhi, Nirbandh* and *Dandak*. In his reply to Savarkar Laxmanshastri Joshi said that he had used the two words *Vidhi* and *Nirbandh* but he could not use *Dandak*. The translator was not allowed much freedom. He had to use the words selected by the Committee. He said he

had used the term *Sanad,* but if Savarkar suggested him a better word he would put it before the Committee.

The Central Government and the Maharashtra Government have independently accepted the principle of coining new words. They appropriated several words from the mint of Savarkar but without acknowledging their debt. Yet Savarkar was happy with the divine joy he got through this mute success!

CHAPTER 27

Nation Pays Homage

POONA decided to set up a Public Hall in the name of Savarkar in a befitting way. The admirers of Savarkar built a hall and named it Swatantryaveer Savarkar Sabhagriha. Its opening ceremony was done by Dr. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar on February 19, 1958. He also unveiled a picture of Savarkar on the same day. Inaugurating the hall, Dr. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar said: "Nowadays he who calls himself a Hindu is denounced as a communalist. Savarkar is a defender of Hindus, but his opinions are not orthodox and regressive. He is a progressive Hindu. His Hindutva is not based upon the hatred of others. From this viewpoint alone Savarkar opposed the partition of the country. His object was to preserve the geographical and social unity of the nation. I believe that Savarkarian principles and his way of thinking would bring prosperity to the nation."

About this time the Hindusabhaites of Bombay formed a committee called Swatantryaveer Savarkar Amrit Mahotsav Samiti to collect funds for the propagation of Savarkar's ideology. Its president was A. S. Bhide alias Bhide Guruji. They collected about Rs. 30,000, part of which was later spent on the service of Savarkar and on the propagation of his ideology and literature.

In May 1958 a Citizen's Committee was formed by S. S. Mirajkar, Mayor of Greater Bombay, to celebrate the 75th birthday of Savarkar. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay also resolved to present an address to Savarkar on the occasion of his (Amrit Mahotsav) 75th birthday. The Bombay Municipal Corporation was in those days dominated by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and so the atmosphere of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay was patriotically broader and more liberal as there was a united front. The Congress leaders including Pandit Nehru had lost hold over the Bombay people.

The pictures of Gandhi and Nehru were angrily torn to pieces in those days.

Mirajkar informed Savarkar about the passing of the resolution by the Municipal Corporation and trusted Savarkar would be pleased to accept the address. In reply Savarkar said that he would gladly receive the address which was unanimously and so heartily offered by his countrymen.

On the day of the Municipal function, which was held on May 28, 1958, at Kamala Nehru Park, hundreds of people thronged the approaches leading to the Park. Vast crowds shouted full-throated slogans wishing their leader Savarkar a long life. The Mayor, Mirajkar, welcomed Savarkar and said that the country was grateful for his dauntless fight for freedom. The Mayor presented him a civic address in casket made of sandalwood. It read: "The world knows you as a poet of revolutionary realism, as a historian, as a learned critic and commentator, and as a crusader in the cause of abolition of untouchability. Your herculean efforts in the cause of freedom and the untold sufferings and sacrifice you cheerfully bore will ever remain a shining example in Indian history and will continue to inspire millions."

Replying to the civic reception and address, Savarkar thanked the Municipal Corporation for having given him an address in Hindi. He regretted that militarisation of the nation was neglected by the government and said that India would not be respected by other countries unless she became a strong military power. "I hope," Savarkar said, "that India will be a strong power like Russia in my lifetime." He expressed hope that the partition would be undone one day. He emphasized the unity of the country at all cost and deprecated the fissiparous tendencies. He warned against the danger of provincialism and called upon the people to consider themselves Indians first. He, however, felt that once the principle of linguistic states was accepted, there was no logic in denying the same status to Maharashtra and Gujarat. He expressed the view that Hindi had been the national language for centuries and English could never replace it.

The Committee formed under the Mayor to celebrate Savarkar's 75th birthday consisted of eminent citizens belonging to almost all parties. The Committee presented Savarkar a purse

of Rs. 11,111 on July 5, at Cowasji Jehangir Hall in Bombay. The Mayor, Mirajkar, presided. He welcomed Savarkar and the people. To begin with, Savarkar garlanded the Mayor as he was the first citizen of Bombay and an old revolutionary and said that the Communists, Socialists and all other parties should unite in defending the country. The only important thing that happened during the past ten years was the unification of India by Sardar Patel.

The Government could have liberated Goa as they had done in case of Hyderabad. The Portuguese Government should not have been given time to make pacts with great powers. The Nagas were creating trouble in Assam with the help of Pakistan. It was wrong to say that the rising generation was aimless. They proved their courage, grit and aim in Goa.

Savarkar added that the rising generation should promise the vanishing generation that they would fight against any invading army and defend independence of the country. The idea that once the country was free the independence would go on as a matter of course was wrong. They should be always watchful and prepared. If Pakistan aided by America invaded India, India should seek help from Russia and fight Pakistan back. The Arabian Sea should be renamed Sindhu Sagar. In the end he expressed his wish that greater men than he be born in the country to make her stronger and greater and prosperous.

Earlier, B. F. Bharucha, an old Congress leader, told the citizens at the meeting that had Savarkar, to whom Tilak, Pherozshah Mehta, and Madame Cama and Gokhale looked with great expectation, been released before the advent of Gandhi, India would have made much progress.

Bharucha expressed his opinion that the Government of India should take help of Savarkar, who was loved by the Hindus and Sikhs alike, to solve the problem of the Punjab; but he feared that their hatred for Savarkar would not allow them to do so. He said it was unfortunate that no Minister was present at the function. The Congress leaders were too ungrateful to recognise the debt of gratitude they owed to Savarkar. The only reason was that Savarkar was a Maharashtrian. The blackmarketeers, white-caps and illicit distillers were patriots for Congressmen. Acharya Donde said that Savarkar was the prince of revolutionaries and so it was the fitting occasion to pay

homage to the symbol of revolution. Acharya Atre said that it was most opportune that the great man was honoured in Bombay while the flag of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti was fluttering over it. On the occasion of Savarkar's 75th birthday Sir R. P. Paranjpe, sending his blessings and warmest greetings, said in his letter to Savarkar: "Your life has been so eventful that everybody who knows you has the warmest regards for your dauntless courage and sacrifice. As a friend and former teacher of yours I wish you the best of luck in future." Three months earlier when Paranjpe had completed his 80th year Savarkar had congratulated his great teacher. Paranjpe said he prized the congratulations as it came from a patriot like Savarkar.

In almost all important towns all over India the Amrit Mahotsav of Savarkar was celebrated and numerous men of learning and patriots spoke on the occasion appreciating the mission, message and greatness of Savarkar.

As regards the change in the name of the Western Sea, Savarkar wrote to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, and to Govind Vallabh Pant, Home Minister of India, and requested them to change the name of the Arabian Sea to Sindhu Sagar. He added that they should follow the example of Iraq which changed the name of Persian Gulf to Arab Gulf as soon as Iraq became independent. Savarkar knew it well that Nehru, who always lost territories, would not worry himself for a mere change in the name of a sea. And as expected Nehru did not even reply to Savarkar. It was a change which had something to do with a Muslim name and he must have taken fright at it. During the year 1958 *Savarkar Sahitya Navaneet*, a book giving the essence of nearly what Savarkar wrote up to that year was published.

Savarkar paid a two-day visit to Poona on November 6, 1958. The reports of the celebrations of his 75th birthday were fresh. So vast crowds greeted him at Poona station and it took him almost an hour to come out of the station.

Savarkar was given a reception at the Poona Nagar Vachanalaya. There he told the audience how he had ushered in a movement to purify the Marathi language and how the movement had achieved success and the principle had come to stay. He exhorted the Poona people to remove all names and symbols and statues connected with foreign rule. Kunjavihari Bhopat-

kar, who was one of the counsel of Savarkar during the Red Fort Trial, told the audience that during the Trial Savarkar received letters of sympathy from all corners of the world. When Sudhir Phadke, a famous singer of light music, sang Savarkar's poem *To The Sea*, Savarkar was visibly moved.

In the evening the Poona Municipal Corporation gave a civic reception to Savarkar at a special function held at the foot of the Parvati Hill. The address expressed gratitude for the glorious part Savarkar played in the freedom struggle of India, appreciated Savarkar's guidance to Subhash Bose and his contribution to the Hindu Sanghatan. In reply to the address Savarkar said that the first and foremost citizen of Poona was Shivaji. Poona produced several great men. Poona had its traditional and historic conflict with Delhi. That was why in his day also the Delhi leaders took dread at the mention of Maharashtra.

Democracy was good but at times military rule was helpful to the nation. Shivaji did not fight elections. He would never have been victorious in an election. His constitution was the Bhawani Sword, and his tiger claws. Dictatorship of a benevolent ruler was helpful and welcome to a nation when the nation was in the need of it. He had read the constitutions of all nations. He had written many books. But he believed that great men framed constitutions or changed them suitably and defined them as they liked.

He regretted that the Delhi of his day was engrossed in the festivals of dramas, films and tamashas, and the Government had neglected the problem of defence. Mere protests were worthless. That surrendering attitude would endanger the freedom of the country. People were not attracted to valour. No weekly or monthly issued any special number on military subjects and problems. The Poona Municipality should think of starting a military school. If their rulers neglected the military preparations they should be pulled down, he added.

After sending protest after protest against attacks on India, Nehru put the eastern borders in the charge of military. This was quite a sensible step Nehru took. So Savarkar was happy that at last, though inordinately late, the realisation came upon Nehru. He sent a congratulatory message to Nehru in which he said: "Hearty appreciation of and support to your courageous

step putting our eastern borders under military charge. Punitive and prohibitive military reprisals in kind and measure can alone restore our lost prestige. Let us follow up with compulsory military training of youths and repeal the Arms Act."

Savarkar supported the Communist Government of Kerala, which was facing a crisis over the enforcement of the Education Act. It aimed at annihilating the power of the Christian Missionaries by liberating education in Kerala. Savarkar issued a statement on July 6, 1959, exhorting the Hindu Sanghatanists in Kerala to render all possible support to the Communist Government led by E. M. S. Namboodripad in their struggle which they were bravely carrying on against the United Front of Christians, the Congress and the Muslim League all of whom were sworn enemies of the Hindu cause.

The Hindu Sanghatanists could not forget, Savarkar said, the religious and political persecution to which the Congress Government in Kerala led by Christians had subjected them and from which they got liberated by the advent of the Communist Government alone. He also asked the Hindu Sanghatanists to back the Communist candidates in absence of the Hindu Sabha candidates if elections were held on the enforcement of the Education Act. He advised the Communist Government not to resign under pressure of the Central Government.

V. R. Krishna Iyer, Minister for Law, Kerala Government, thanked Savarkar and said that his advice to the Communist Government asking them not to resign under pressure was sound. He added that the enforcement of the Education Act was necessary in Kerala whether the Church liked it or not.

Savarkar's policy was guided by responsive co-operation because it helped the Hindus in Kerala to get rid of the Christian domination in the education field. But he did not make it clear how it would have helped to make Hindus free in the educational field after the installation of Communist rule in Kerala. The inner soul of Savarkar that hankered after secularism must have felt glad about the liquidation of the Christian religious domination in the education field. Savarkar always told his followers that they should not be afraid of communism. They should absorb what was good in it, but keep their individuality intact. In the end, however, Nehru liquidated the

Communist Government in Kerala and put Kerala under Governor's rule.

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The Poona University resolved, at its meeting held on the 3rd and 4th April 1959, to confer the degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) on Savarkar in recognition of his eminent position and attainment. Savarkar could not attend the convocation held on October 4, 1959. In his address to the students Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Republic, exhorted them to emulate the qualities of Gandhi and the patriotism of Savarkar. Sri Prakasa, Governor of Bombay and Chancellor of Poona University, declared that a Doctor of Letters was conferred on Savarkar *in absentia.*

On October 8, 1959, Professor D. G. Karve, Vice-Chancellor of Poona University, Dr. R. N. Dandekar, Dr. V. R. Dhamdhere and K. H. Dhamdhere and Secretary V. H. Gole of the University of Poona came to Savarkar Sadan and presented the degree and the academic gown to Savarkar. He was happy to receive the degree and the gown, but asked the University authorities why they were not presenting a shawl in the traditional fashion instead of a gown. He said with a smile that the honour which should have been conferred upon him in his youth was given him in his old age. So the evening of his life was in a way a second youth.

Savarkar was pleased with the degree as it came with the approval of eminent men like Sir R. P. Paranjpe, his one-time teacher and Principal. He said Paranjpe did his duty in those days and he himself did his own duty of inaugurating a revolutionary party. It was the right of a youth to rebel. He hoped that India would be a great power and its valiant men would go to the Venus if other nations went to the Moon. He said that in international politics self-preservation was the predominant motive. Khrushchev praised Nehru as the bulwark of peace and America did in the same terms. They knew that Nehru, who was militarily of no consequence, felt flattered.[1] And Nehru came to think that he was really a power in the world. So he hushed up the attacks made by Pakistan on India and gave every time a different colour to them as he wanted to pass

[1] The *Kesari,* 11 October 1959.

himself off as a peace-maker and a defender of humanity. The nation that was prepared for aggression survived. The nation that kept defining within itself aggressions and non-aggressions went down.

Savarkar's old colleagues were one after another bidding farewell to the world. Niranjan Pal died on November 9, 1959, in Bombay. Savarkar wrote to his bereaved wife that he regretted the apathy and ungratefulness shown by the new generation to the demise of Niranjan Pal and added that while the death of a Congress cat or a rat was announced on the radio the demise of such a noted patriot, an artist and the son of Bepin Chandra Pal could not find a prominent notice in government-controlled means of publicity and press. He was confident that history would pay its due homage to Niranjan Pal, the youthful revolutionist missionary of Abhinava Bharat in London. In the end Savarkar said he could find no adequate words to give expression to his mournful thoughts.

In a statement issued to the press Savarkar said that his close associate and veteran fighter of the freedom movement in armed struggle against the British and a renowned cine-story writer in English and Hindi, Niranjan Pal passed away at the age of seventy in a hospital in Malad leaving behind his English wife and a son.

The president of the Gujarat Hindu Sabha, Maganlal Vyas presented Savarkar with a purse. Vyas was a fearless and trusted champion of Hindus in Gujarat and a staunch promoter of Savarkarism.

On December 21, 1959, the 50th anniversary of Kanhere's death was being celebrated at Nasik. Savarkar called upon the youths of Maharashtra to swear by the blood of Kanhere that they would valiantly defend their country against any aggression and make it invincible. This was the only way to commemorate the memory of Kanhere, he said.

Savarkar's health was now deteriorating. He was very weak in body. From his bed he watched the happenings and guided the nation. The Government of India decided that Gujarat and Maharashtra be two independent states. It was an outcome of great popular movements. Savarkar urged the leaders of Gujarat to change the name of Ahmedabad to its original name Karnavati, which was changed by Sultan Ahmedshah. He

also appealed to the leaders of Gujarat to change the name of the Western Sea, which washed the coast of Gujarat, to Ratnakar or Sindhu Sagar and to get rid of the disgraceful alien name Arabian Sea. He also expressed his desire that they should call their new capital, if they built one, Vallabh Nagar after the name of Vallabhbhai Patel, whose strong will and hand did so much for India.

In March 1960 Savarkar was confined to bed as piles grew very painful. Dr. Baliga was ready to operate but Savarkar declined. He was on diet for the whole month. Just then P. R. Patel, an independent Member of Parliament, moved a bill in the Lok Sabha recommending the rescission of the law under which the British Government confiscated the property of Indian patriots. The Lok Sabha passed it. The old law was repealed but it applied only to the case of Raja Mahendra Pratap. When Savarkar was asked about the restoration of property by Government to Raja Mahendra Pratap he said that he himself did not fight against the British for his personal property. He fought for the liberation of the country. The liberation of Bharat included his property. The man who was at that time owner of his house and property might enjoy it. He was happy the owner of his property was enjoying it as the President of Indian Republic enjoyed his position and power.

On April 24, 1960, L. B. Bhopatkar died. From his sick bed Savarkar said that Maharashtra lost the last of its old guard.

By now two Indian universities, Nagpur and Poona, had conferred Honorary Doctorates on Savarkar. Bombay University was at this hour awakened to its responsibility by its dutiful and patriotic members and compelled it to do at least bare justice to Savarkar if not to confer an honorary doctorate on Savarkar, who was a great literary figure and a man of high eminence in India. The University, on long discussions, rescinded on April 30, 1960, their resolution of July 1, 1911, under which Savarkar's B.A. degree was cancelled and restored the degree of Bachelor of Arts to Savarkar. In doing so Bombay University saved itself from adverse criticism. That was all.

On the eve of the inauguration of Maharashtra on May 1, 1960, Savarkar gave a fitting message to the people of Maharashtra and the State. He expressed his desire that Maharashtra should become the sword-arm of India. He further said that

it might turn out that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra might hoist the flag of free and independent Bharat once again on Attak and become the Prime Minister of India.

A few days earlier, Yeshwantrao Chavan, Chief Minister of Bombay, who was now to become the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, wrote a letter to Savarkar inquiring after his health. He expressed high hopes of Chavan's future and he often said that Chavan was a rising star and the proper sort of statesman with grit and realism.

Maharashtra took its place on the political map of India on May 1, 1960. The dream of a unilingual state of the Marathi-speaking people became a reality.

The fluttering of the leaves indicate the direction of the wind. During these days Savarkar had written to Balasaheb Desai, then Education Minister, that they should introduce military education in High Schools and Colleges. Desai, with the approval of Chavan, sent a scheme to the Central Government for approval, but the Nehru Government turned it down.[2] Forewarned is forearmed was not the motto of the Nehru Government. Nehru based his defence on the illusive pillars of Panchsheel.

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This year Savarkar's birthday celebrations assumed a new significance as his followers, well-wishers, admirers and vast number of devotees decided to celebrate December 24, 1960, as the *Mrityunjay* Day, the day on which Savarkar would have completed his fifty years' transportation had he been in jail. The whole of Maharashtra was enthusiastic about it. The idea struck A. S. Bhide alias Bhide Guruji who was formerly Savarkar's Secretary.

Savarkar was very weak and had no strength to receive the greetings of the people. On the eve of his birthday he therefore declared that he would not be able to see anybody on the day. He, however, gave a message to the youth of the country that they should make India a matchless country in respect of military power. People celebrated his birthday with great enthusiasm and even in the Andamans people garlanded Savarkar's picture in the cell wherein Savarkar had been caged for

[2] The *Mahratta*, 29 May 1965.

eleven years. Pyare Mohan, a Municipal employee in the Andamans, exhibited proudly a note-book presented to him by Savarkar at the time of his departure from the Andamans. M. V. Rajwade, who was at this time Commissioner of the Andamans, took much interest in commemorating the memory of Savarkar's stay in the cellular jail.

About this time R. K. Nagarkar, Savarkar's devotee and confidant, made a present of Savarkar's books to President Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The President expressed his desire that all the books of Savarkar should be translated into Hindi. He also made kind inquiries about Savarkar's health. Previously there was another confidant by name G. B. Parmekar. But he dropped out after the Red Fort Trial.

Savarkar congratulated Yeshwantrao Chavan on his conferring the poet-laureateship of Maharashtra on Poet Yashwant and on his starting a military school at Satara. He also congratulated the Maharashtra Government on its inaugurating Marathi as the medium of its administration. He coined two Marathi words, *doordarshan* for television and *doormudrak* for teleprinter.

V. B. Gogate asked the Government some questions regarding the restoration of Savarkar's confiscated property, but Chavan replied that it was in the possession of a third party. Thereupon some people said that if there was a will, there was a way. The lands of the farmers of Bardoli were confiscated and sold to a Parsi zamindar. But these were restored to the original owners. It might be that Yeshwantrao Chavan was helpless at the stiff attitude the Nehru Government had adopted towards Savarkar's case.

On the eve of the *Mrityunjay* Day celebrations several institutions, Municipalities and District Boards passed resolutions expressing their good wishes and grateful homage and requesting Government to restore Savarkar's property. Some public meetings expressed their desire that Government should confer Bharat Ratna on Savarkar. Some said that it was no use describing a lion as a lion. A lion is a lion by birth. So the Government of India should confer the title 'Savarkar' on future victorious sons of India.

At Calcutta the *Mrityunjay* Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The special feature of the programme was a drama

in Bengali *Savarkar the Volcano* written by Manuj Chandra Sarbadhikari. It was staged by the film-star Premanshu Basu and his party and the meeting was presided over by the famous revolutionary leader Lokanath Bal and was addressed by revolutionaries like Abirath Chandra Bhattacharya and Bhupendranath Basu.

On the morning of December 24, 1960, vast crowds gathered at Savarkar Sadan and stood in a long queue for hours together shouting *jays* to *Mrityunjay* Savarkar and that Savarkar must give them *darshan*. Savarkar stood in the balcony of his house and received the greetings of the people. A group of women felicitated him in the traditional fashion. He then came downstairs and people went in one by one. People showered garlands, flowers and sweatmeats on him. In the evening a meeting was held at Shivaji Park under the presidentship of Acharya Donde. He said Savarkar was a unique fusion of emotion and reason. As long as there was an intelligent society Savarkar's name would be immortal. Acharya Atre said that Savarkar was an oracle. At another meeting Bhide Guruji said that to praise Savarkar was to hold candle to the sun. At the Delhi meeting Hiren Mukerjee, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Bishanchandra, Pandit Brijnarain and Pandit Brajesh spoke and passed a resolution denouncing the radio authorities for not taking note of Savarkar's *Mrityunjay* Day. Whatever the opinions of the radio authorities, they were afraid of the reactions of their Delhi bosses. So they were culpably silent on this great historical event.

Rajagopalachari, paying tributes to Savarkar, said on this occasion: "Veer Savarkar is one of the heroes of India's struggle against British and he will ever be held in esteem and loved by us all, as an *abhiratha* in the long battle for freedom."

Hundreds of newspapers brought out special numbers which unanimously said that Savarkar was the symbol of patriotism and sacrifice. He was the Ganga deeply flowing with heroism, patriotism and sacrifice. He was the image of oratory and liberty. There was only one Lokamanya and that was Tilak: there was only one Swatantryaveer, hero of independence, and that was Savarkar. Someone compared him to Promethean Fire, the fire with which Prometheus quickened into life his clay images.

At this time in an interview Savarkar said that it was foolish to ask the question: After Nehru, what? No one was indispensable. It was sheer madness to imagine for a moment that the country would go to pieces after Nehru. A country that produced Chandragupta, Vikramaditya, Shalivahana, Chanakya and Shivaji would never be politically bankrupt. Nehru was Bajirao II. Any man with ordinary common sense would have done less harm to the country than Nehru had done.

The *Mrityunjay* celebrations came to an end on January 15, 1961, at Poona. There was a mammoth meeting to celebrate the event. President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Vice-President Dr. Radhakrishnan, Yeshwantrao Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and several other eminent men had sent messages of good wishes. Senapati Bapat, who presided over the function, said that his leader was Savarkar and he obeyed his orders. S. M. Joshi, India's eminent socialist leader, said that in his youth he was inspired by Savarkar's call for absolute political independence of India and he had issued a statement in those days saying that the spirit of Savarkar was not dead. Savarkar's thinking had profound impact on millions of his countrymen. He was the first leader to give India the message of freedom. With equal force and fearlessness he attacked the social ills. Joshi added that none acted up to the principles of great men. Nobody followed Gandhi either. So there was an atmosphere of despondency.

Savarkar was garlanded profusely and the garlands contained saffron coloured flowers. He was presented with a purse also. The mammoth meeting prepared itself to hear Savarkar. Sitting on a chair he began his speech. He said that he was too weak to speak. If he continued for some minutes it gave rise to collic. Upon this a wave of sadness passed over the mammoth crowds. Gradually then the mist disappeared and the sun in Savarkar shone brilliantly. He said that achievement of Independence was the happiest moment in the life of the nation and the rising generation, and above all the happiest moment in his life. He did not wish to regain his confiscated property or to be adorned with Bharat Ratna. If they elected him President he would make India within two years stronger and mightier than the Russia of Khrushchev and take out the shoe to the world as did Khrushchev. He said military power

was the only criterion of the greatness of a nation. He would prefer Hitler to the Democracy that was cowardly and yielding to every aggressor. He said India should modernise the armed forces and invent newer and more destructive weapons of warfare—a hydrogen bomb. Even a model democracy would fall and crumble down if it lacked the strength of the army.

Savarkar called upon the youths to join the N.C.C. as exhorted by Yeshwantrao Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra. As long as Nehru did not object to that training, Chavan should go on enthusing the people with military spirit. Chavan was a brave Maratha and so he desired that Maharashtrians should again shine gloriously in the history of India as a great martial race. Savarkar said that he was appealing to Maharashtrians because they could galvanise the whole nation with their martial spirit. China could not march her armies against Formosa, or Macao. Poor miserable Nehru, he was completely hypnotised by Chou En-lai because he spoke of high sounding principles of world peace and co-existence. If Nehru was not aware of the fact that China was building military highways and railways he was unfit to be a Prime Minister. If he knew, he was guilty of holding the information from the nation. He should have sent our armies forthwith and protected our borders. So long the world was aggressive, India must also be aggressive.

The Naga hostilities would have been wiped out within a week had not Nehru ordered the army to receive bullets instead of shooting the rebels. When Nehru openly declared in Parliament that he would not wage war at any cost, it was an open invitation to our enemies. The only thing our Government was capable of was protest notes, strong, stronger and strongest! India failed to give the lead to Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. They reluctantly turned to China. He added that India should raise military potential along with the economic development and meet the challenge of the enemy on his ground.

In the end Savarkar appealed to Maharashtrian youths that they should be the sword-arm of the nation and if at all they possessed atom bombs, the whole world should rest assured that they would be dropped on the enemies of India and so long they continued to be her enemies.[3] This was the last public speech of Savarkar.

[3] *Thus Spake the Prophet*, pp. 11-26.

The liberation of Goa was drawing nearer. The inner struggle in Goa and outer pressure were mounting and people were fighting. All Indian leaders were of the opinion that the freedom of India would not be complete till Goa became part and parcel of India. Just at the time of the liberation of Goa some Brahmins, who were performing some sacrifice in Bombay, went to Savarkar for a message. Thereupon Savarkar asked them why they were sitting on grass with crossed legs and feasting while the goddess of battle was performing a fierce sacrifice in Goa. They should go to Goa and fight sword in hand while killing the enemies of India. If they did so they would secure the merit of *Sahasrachandi*. People had forced a war on the Indian Government and it speedily liberated Goa on December 20, 1961. When the Indian forces marched into Goa Savarkar hoisted the Republic Flag on his house. Goa was liberated after about 450 years. A thorn in the side of India that had caused so much distress was at last removed.

* * *

Savarkar was confined to bed. He refused interviews and refused to have correspondence also with anybody. Yet he was invited to bless on April 5, 1962, the inauguration of the memorial which was raised to the memory of Dr. K. B. Hedgewar, the founder of the R.S.S. In his letter of 16th March 1962, M. S. Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., said that it was the desire of them all that Savarkar should attend the function and bless it as Savarkar had a high regard for Dr. Hedgewar who had his blessings also in his great work. Golwalkar added that he himself had the rare fortune of being worthy of his esteem. So he was pressing the invitation on him. He prayed God that He would enable him to undertake the journey and to attend the function. Illness had crippled Savarkar. So he declined. He however sent a message to Golwalkar in which he said that they should go forward with the work and should not feel any regrets for the absence of one like him for whom it made no difference whether he was in this world or not.

Sri Prakasa, Governor of Bombay, paid a visit to Savarkar Sadan on April 15, 1962, and made kind inquiries after his health. His father Dr. Bhagwandas was a friend of Babarao Savarkar. Sri Prakasa thought that it would be proper on his

part to pay him a visit before he relinquished his charge the next day. They discussed all sorts of problems for an hour and a half.

On the eve of his 80th birthday Savarkar issued an advance statement requesting his followers and well-wishers not to press their greetings on him personally as it was quite impossible for him to see them either individually or collectively. In deference to his wishes no visitor was allowed to see him. His grateful thanks were conveyed to his well-wishers through his personal secretary. He was feeling very weak and was unable to move without help in the house. Telegrams and letters poured in Savarkar Sadan expressing gratitude to and long life for Savarkar. *Alamgir,* one of the leading Marathi weeklies, said that there was increase in the pension of the retired President, but men like Savarkar whose efforts resulted in installing the President in his Gadi were treated with indifference in this land.

Acharya Donde wrote to Savarkar that his whole life was a great work on patriotism and it should be studied by all. What people like him thought in their student days about him still made them happy and proud of those recollections. Donde said he was confident that Savarkar's name would be immortal in the history of India.

Just then the trouble with China over the border issue was developing fast into a crisis. Chinese duplicity and deceit which had been going on since April 1954 proved to be beyond the high moral principles of Nehru's Panchsheel. Mao, who believed that there was no third road and neutrality was merely a camouflage, had no faith in the high-flown principles of the Panchsheel. China had a border dispute with India, but Nehru chose to remain silent on it although the Chinese were creating trouble intermittantly and occupying the border region of India. Nehru was living in the paradise of the Panchsheel as he signed Panchsheel declarations with China, Indonesia, North Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Cambodia, Soviet Russia, Poland, Laos and Nepal.

From the beginning of the Bandung Conference of 1955 Mao's suave tactics had begun to eclipse Nehru's prestige in Asia. Mao shrewdly and sedulously made treaty with Indonesia in 1955, with Nepal in April 1960, with Afghanistan in August 1960, with

Burma in January 1960 and an agreement with Pakistan in May 1962 and thus isolated India.

Nehru thought that the Communist China would not attack India because he was more inclined to communist countries than to Western democracies. Before Nehru's committing to agreement on Tibet in April 1954, the Secretary-General of External Affairs, Girja Shankar Bajpai, had urged him to secure recognition by China of the McMohan Line.[4] Nehru had also rebuffed military advisors who tried to warn him against China. In July 1962, Krishna Menon, the then Defence Minister of India, had dismissed the possibility of war with China.

In the Lok Sabha Nehru declared in August 1962 that it was quite absurd to talk of China invading India. Strengthening of the military defences was therefore treated with contempt. Menon was more inclined to receive military aid from communist countries rather than democracies. Leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad,[5] President of the Indian Republic, speaking at a meeting of the Gandhi Peace Foundation on June 16, 1962, had expressed his sacred desire that India should disarm unilaterally. At that meeting Jayaprakash said that India should not use atomic energy for military purposes. Acharya Kriplani and Rajaji also made speeches at the meeting. In reply to them Nehru said it was not possible for a nation to live without the army. Yet Nehru's policy lacked political realism. His credulity about China's policy and his negligence towards military preparations made India quite vulnerable.

And when a third World War was likely to break out over Cuba between the United States and Russia, Chinese troops attacked on October 20, 1964, along the McMohan Line and in Ladakh Savarkar's prophecy came true. Because of the wilful and tragic blunders of Nehru the ill-equipped Indian forces, although they fought bravely, had to retreat and the whole nation was humiliated. Britain and the United States ran to the succour of India. The pillars of Panchsheel were swept away by the onrush of the Chinese forces. On the night of November 20, China unilaterally announced cease-fire abruptly and India stood humiliated.

When the war came on, the visionary in Nehru was awakened

[4] Frank Moraes, *Nehru, Sunlight And Shadow*, p. 108.
[5] The *Times of India*, 19 June 1962.

to reality and he admitted that India had been "out of touch with reality in the modern world and living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation. We have been shocked out of it, all of us whether it is the government or the people, some might have felt it less and some more". None should forget that the pronoun 'we' included Nehru alone, who, "being out of touch with reality in the modern world and living in the artificial atmosphere of 'his' own creation," was responsible for the tragedy of India. And the better the man, the greater the tragedy! Nehru proved to be Chamberlain II as foretold by Dr. Ambedkar and brought on disaster as foretold by Savarkar. Nehru tried to appease the people by demoting Krishna Menon and promoting Yeshwantrao Chavan.

Two years earlier Chavan with his political realism had proposed a scheme for the introduction of compulsory military training in high schools and colleges, but the Nehru Government had turned it down. Savarkar had been warning since the day of independence to militarise the northern borders and to strengthen the military and modernise it. He also advised the Government to introduce military training in colleges and high schools and to give top priority to military preparations. But he was decried as a warmonger by the peace-mongers who relied more on high-flown principles and bogus peace and neglected the defence. Savarkar had said that if Ashok Chakra could not transform itself into a Sudarshan Chakra in times of danger it would lie in the dust and his words came true with a vengeance.

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Savarkar had been confined to bed for almost the whole year. He watched with anguish the helplessness of the Indian army. The Indian soldiers bravely faced the Chinese forces but were outnumbered and overpowered. This sorrow weighed too heavily on his heart. Helpless as he was he wept bitterly on December 14, 1962, for over an hour or so. In his life-time his son had never seen him weeping before. His warnings went unheard and the country ruefully paid the price for it.

In the 1st week of April 1963 the second part of his Marathi book *Saha Soneri Pane* (*Six Golden Pages*) from the history of Bharat was published. The book contains Savarkar's mellowed

thoughts on Indian history. It claims to have established some new points and provides a new interpretation of historic events from the viewpoint of his theory of Hindu Nation. In his extreme old age harassed by a chain of illness he devoted whenever possible some time to reading the material, writing, correcting, revising and pruning the manuscript and completed the book after six years.

The early months of 1963 witnessed Savarkar lying in his bed and requesting his doctors not to prolong his life. Man should not live longer, he said, if his ill-health made him unfit to move and work. He tried to impress this viewpoint on his doctors. In May 1963 people celebrated his birthday more enthusiastically because they now knew that his warnings had come true. In Bombay the Hindu Sabhaites celebrated the Savarkar Week and invited General Cariappa, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, N. V. Gadgil and M. S. Golwalkar to make speeches during the militarisation week they had observed. Declining the invitation, Nehru said in his letter of April 5 to Pandit Bakhale, president of the Bombay Hindu Sabha: "I send my good wishes on the occasion of your celebrating the 81st birthday of Veer Savarkar."

During the militarisation week specially observed on the occasion of Veer Savarkar's 80th birthday, N. V. Gadgil, ex-minister of Central Government and ex-governor of the Punjab, made a speech eulogising the work, patriotism and sacrifice of Savarkar. The R.S.S. Chief M. S. Golwalkar in his speech on May 15 said he found the principles of nationalism scientifically explained in Savarkar's great work *Hindutva*. To him it was a text-book, a scientific book.

Golwalkar also said that the book *We* which was read by the R.S.S. was the abridgment done by him (Golwalkar) of the work *Rashtra Mimansa* of Babarao Savarkar. He added that he had translated Babarao Savarkar's book into Hindi and handed it over to a certain man. He said that it was most befitting on his part to acknowledge publicly the debt of gratitude.[6]

General Cariappa, who had incurred displeasure by making a speech at a club in Madras in which he was said to have paid tributes to Savarkar's sound policy regarding the defence of

[6] Tape Recorded Speech on the occasion.

India, made a very fine speech during this militarisation week in Bombay and praised Savarkar for his lead and guidance to the nation. He said Savarkar was keen on military training since his youth. Had the nation listened to him and adopted his policy of militarisation and prepared herself she would not have been placed in this predicament.[7] General Cariappa was the first Indian Brigadier and the first Indian Commander-in-Chief. The Indian Army owed much to him for unity and discipline.

At Belgaum V. S. Khandekar, Maharashtra's eminent novelist and litterateur, said in a speech on the occasion of the celebrations of the birthday of Savarkar that Savarkar was great not only in one field but also in the fields of poetry, courage, literature and in several others. His greatness had the colours of the rainbow. They were all Lilliputians before him.[8]

Speaking on the occasion, the silver-tongued orator Nath Pai said that Savarkar's personality was myriad-sided. His fate was no better than that of Socrates, Christ, Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi. The Union Government should have invited him to Delhi and honoured him. But that much generosity the Union Government did not show. The nation was going after fireflies and turning its back on the sun of the nation. The nation would pay a very high price for it. With great fortitude Savarkar stood by his principles. Had there been a little departure from his ideals, he would have been the Prime Minister of India. It fell to his lot to see India divided. The defeat of the Indian Army in Nefa must have caused him great anguish and his sorrow on that account might have been greater than the sorrow of the Ministers concerned. To repay his gratitude the award of Bharat Ratna to Savarkar would be an inadequate honour. It would have been a great honour to the National Academy had it published Savarkar's literature, Nath Pai concluded.[9]

During his stay in Bombay General Cariappa tried his best to see Savarkar. But Savarkar, for reasons known to him, declined to meet him. He wrote one or two letters to Savarkar, but Savarkar did not respond. Later he said that Cariappa was

[7] The *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, May 1963.
[8] *Maharashtra Times*, 30 May 1963.
[9] *Ibid.*

an experienced and expert general, but he should not have sued the *Organiser*.

It was an irony of fate that while the nation was celebrating his birthday Savarkar broke the thigh-bone of his left leg on the morning of May 29. He was removed to Dr. Talwalkar's clinic in consultation with Dr. R. V. Sathe and Dr. Date, heart specialist. On May 30 Dr. A. K. Talwalkar operated on the thigh. Savarkar's mind was now beyond pain and pleasure. In a light mood he joked with Pandit Bakhale. He said to him that Bakhale had concluded his birthday celebrations on the previous day and he had now commenced the journey to death. All the doctors and nurse Champutai Tendulkar served him devotionally. He recovered his health to some degree but lost for some months the use of his leg.

The day of returning home dawned. It was the new moon day. Superstition seized some of his followers who were in charge of him. Savarkar said when he should go home was the concern of the doctors and not the concern of astrologers. It pained him to see that when a Russian woman was soaring in the space and the United States and Russia were striving to land on the Moon and Mars, some of his followers were superstitiously consulting astrology about his returning home. He said it was ridiculous and irrational to do so. Nothing would happen to him even if he returned home on an astrologically inauspicious day, he added. He returned home on June 24, 1963. When after three months he could walk a little with the help of nurse and staff, his wife was taken seriously ill. He got her removed on October 16, to Dr. Talwalkar's clinic at Dadar, but he was not in a mood to see her even when she so much devotionally insisted on her bidding him farewell. Savarkar promised her through his nurse that he would go to see her at the clinic. She wriggled in her bed. He could not go to the clinic. She insisted that she should be taken back home as she preferred to die in the house by the side of her husband. At last she departed this world on November 8, 1963 at the age of seventy-six. The news of her death fell heavily on him. He calmly said that her dead body should be carried in an ambulance to the electric crematorium at Chandanwadi without making it a matter of public sorrow. He said that after his release from the Andamans she led a happy life with him for

over forty years. She had the pleasure of fondling her grand children. So her dead body should not be brought to the house. Any meeting should prove to be the last one. No use lamenting over the dead body. Her life was a success, he added. A few selected batch of persons attended the funeral. A few persons including Prof. V. G. Deshpande and A. S. Bhide spoke. The papers took note of her death with great awareness. Next day Savarkar said to Bal Savarkar that in a year or two he would have to go to the same electric crematorium.

Condolence messages came in. Several meetings were held to mourn her death. A message of condolence came from His Eminence Athenasins Joel S. Williams, Archbishop and Primate of the Indian National Church. He said: "We share your grief in this sad bereavement. The demise of Shrimati Yamunabai is the worst blow not only to you, our beloved Veer Savarkar, but it is a national calamity."

Savarkar refused to perform any religious rites as he was not a believer in the obsequies and in oblations to the dead person through the crows. L. G. Thatte offered satyagraha at Savarkar Sadan for compelling Savarkar to perform the obsequies. He was arrested. Savarkar did not yield.

A poor widow tried to persuade Savarkar to perform the obsequies. He gently told her that the world was changing. She herself was growing hair although the shastras prohibited her from doing so. She had set aside an outworn custom. The offering of oblation to crows was likewise an ignorant and outworn tradition. It must go.

Savarkar's son Vishwas, however, relieved himself from mental tension by silently performing the obsequies. Whether it was with his father's knowledge or not was not known. In doing so it seemed he exercised his right. Savarkar was not against his freedom of action. Savarkar gave away some money to deserving social institutions in the name of his wife. That was his way to commemorate the deceased.

During October 1963 Savarkar told the author that Aravinda was a great philosopher. By his works he made a great contribution to philosophy. Vivekananda's *Rajyog* was a masterpiece. Gandhi, with his unscientific and unscholarly mind, was the most unfit man to interpret the Geeta.

The national thinking was reassessing Gandhism and the

Indian revolution. Prof. N. S. Phadke, eminent novelist in Maharashtra, said that Savarkar had been warning since 1947 the nation that if they wished to defend the freedom of India they should stop eulogising the principle of absolute non-violence, should guard the frontiers and strengthen the military forces. Gandhism would lead India to ruination said Padmashri N. S. Phadke.[10] N. G. Goray, a prominent leader of the Praja Socialist Party and one who was noted for his political and social thinking, said at a meeting in Bombay in December 1963 that after Agarkar Savarkar gave the Hindu society proper guidance.[11] Some months earlier Mahamahopadhaya D. V. Potdar said at a symposium that whatever one's differences with Savarkar, one should bow before him. In the prevailing conditions of the world no society or nation was taking sides with the Hindus or interested in their defence.[12] It was therefore a good thing that a heroic personage like Savarkar stood for the welfare and defence of the Hindus and that it was good that he should hail from Maharashtra.

Guy Aldred, Editor of the *Word*, Glasgow, who had been supporting Savarkar since 1910, died on November 4, 1963. Savarkar was grieved to hear of the death of Aldred who was the first Briton to court jail for supporting the cause of India's freedom struggle. Savarkar said that India should be grateful to Guy Aldred for his love and support.

Just then elections were held in Goa. Goa showed its affinity with Maharashtra. The protagonists of United Goans Party dominated by Catholics were said to have shouted the slogan 'Salazar Zindabad'. They wanted Goa to remain a separate State. Savarkar said it proved his thesis that change of religion was change of nationality.[13]

Acharya P. K. Atre met Savarkar on December 20, 1963. Savarkar told him that he lost the bus for the other world. He suggestively told Atre how Dnyaneshwar, Ramdas and Tukaram ended their earthly pilgrimage after their mission was over. In the last week of December, Defence Minister, Yeshwantrao Chavan, was elected to Parliament unopposed. The whole of

[10] The *Navakal*, Diwali Special, 1963.
[11] *Maharashtra Times*, 30 December 1963.
[12] The *Kesari*, 20 January 1961.
[13] The *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, 15 December 1963.

Maharashtra was jubilant over the unique honour the electorate bestowed on Yeshwantrao Chavan. Savarkar was also pleased with the result and he congratulated Yeshwantrao Chavan on his unanimous election to the Lok Sabha. "In fact you represent not only the Nasik-Igatpuri electorate but also the whole of Maharashtra. It is your personal triumph," he added.

Just then N. C. Chatterji was elected to Parliament in a by-election from Bengal. Savarkar congratulated Chatterji on his success and said that the Hindus would find an indomitable advocate to defend the Hindu cause in Parliament. Savarkar said that the Hindus from East Pakistan should be allowed to come to Western Bengal and an equal number of Muslims should be sent to Eastern Pakistan even by force. Prompt reprisals, military or otherwise, should be adopted by India for every aggressive step taken by Pakistan. But when a few days later N. C. Chatterji came to see him, he saw him after sending him back once because he came to see him without an appointment, and told the Bengal leader that things would not militarily improve unless Nehru was out of power. Seeing the provocation and violence in his talk, Chatterji shuddered.

Poona University resolved about this time to set up a Veer Savarkar Military Studies Chair. A Committee was established to collect funds for it. Wishing success to the Committee, which issued a special number for the purpose, Lieut.-General Thorat said that there was dearth of military thinkers in the country at the time and he had confidence that the study would fulfil a long-felt want. Maharashtra, on which Gandhian principles of non-violence could not have any effect, could alone think in terms of the defence of the country. The Committee donated Rs. 1,00,000 to Poona University.

The thoughts of self-immolation or surrendering the self to death were often coming into Savarkar's mind. He wanted to end his life the way Kumarila Bhatt, Ramdas, Dnyaneshwar, Eknath, Chaitanya and Tukaram did. Even he once asked his personal secretary Bal Savarkar whether he could help him to go deep into the sea. Once or twice he had cast a longing look at the sea in Bombay.

When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, died on May 27, 1964, Savarkar did not issue any statement.

He was silent on the death of Nehru. Savarkar's birthday which fell next day was however not celebrated.

In August 1964 Savarkar made his Will and he bequeathed the major portion of the property to his daughter and the rest to his son Vishwas. Bal Savarkar was given the rights of publications of his books. Bal Savarkar served him with great devotion for over fifteen years. Some provision was made for the daughter of Vishwas. He also laid down some instructions regarding his funeral.

During Lal Bahadur Shastri's regime Government began reconciling to Savarkar. Although the Government spokesmen did not admit in so many words they now realised the value of Savarkar's realism and warnings. They now decided through the good offices of the Maharashtra State to give Savarkar monthly aid. Savarkar would not receive it unless they said that they were giving it in token of his patriotic services to the nation. The Maharashtra Government graciously accepted the suggestion and Savarkar received the aid from October 1964. The Government also included Savarkar's famous Marathi song *Jayostute Swatantrate,* 'Hail to thee the Goddess of Liberty', for the broadcast on Poona radio. The blackout on his name gradually disappeared.

CHAPTER 28

The Eternal Hero

In February 1965 Sukhdeo Vishnu Dayal (Bissondoyal), Minister for Local Government and Co-operative Development in Mauritius, and its Prime Minister Dr. S. Ramgoolam visited India. Dayal belonged to a family which had contributed much to the spread of Indian culture in Mauritius. He was leader of the Independent Forward Bloc. He expressed his desire to see Savarkar whose life had tremendously influenced youths like him in Mauritius and other countries in South-East Asia. He saw Savarkar on February 5, at Savarkar Sadan, Bombay. He said he had read Savarkar's famous works *Hindutva* and *Indian War of Independence—1857*. He told that nearly 350,000 Indians in Mauritius knew Hindi and he sometimes addressed political gatherings there in Hindi. Although ill Savarkar had an interesting talk with him and expressed satisfaction over the work of Sukhdeo Dayal.[1]

The aid to Savarkar by the State Government exposed some nationalist Muslims. On March 12, 1965, supplementaries were being answered in the Rajya Sabha about the relief given by the Government to Savarkar and other former freedom-fighters now in difficult circumstances. Abid Ali observed that not all of them could be said to have continued to do great service in recent years. He asked if it was not a fact that whatever Savarkar might have done in the past, the Government of Maharashtra had objected to his later activities. Opposition members and even Congress members strongly disapproved the derogatory remark made by Abid Ali.

Thereupon Jaisukhlal Hathi, Minister of State for Home Affairs, who had earlier informed the House that the Union Government had made over an *ad hoc* grant of Rs. 2,000 to Savarkar, pointed out that this was done on the recommendation of the State Government. The Chairman, Dr. Zakir Hus-

[1] The *Hindu* (Marathi) Weekly, 7 February 1965.

sain, said: "Obviously, the Maharashtra Government does not agree with Mr. Abid Ali." Mohan Dharia said that the State Government paid a monthly grant of Rs. 300 to Savarkar and added that it did regard Savarkar as a national hero. A. B. Vajpayee strongly urged that Savarkar's property confiscated during British rule should be restored to him.

I. K. Gural, who suggested the use of the term national hero in place of political sufferers, said that a Commission should be appointed to look into the problems of the national heroes.[2] Nobody tried to hide the tail of Abid Ali's nationalism.

When these questions were asked and answered in the Rajya Sabha, the Delhi people thought that they should do their duty by their revered leader. So Kumar Narendra, who was editor of *Veer Arjun*, a daily in Delhi, sponsored a fund and handed over to Savarkar a cheque for Rs. 51,000 early in July 1965. Savarkar appreciated the work and devotion of the Delhi people and especially the youthful and spirited editor.

This year Savarkar's birthday was celebrated with more enthusiasm and pride. Against the background of the invasion by and defeat of Pakistan it loomed large on the horizon of India. Felicitating Savarkar, the Head of the Indian National Church, said in his letter to Savarkar: "You have been all along a great inspiration to our countrymen and we are grateful to God for having spared you in order to inspire the nation unto victory and glory. Your sacrifices and services for the freedom of our Motherland have moved so deeply as to rebuild India's independence and national church. We thank you for the light and lead your distinguished personality has given us all in the Indian national church so that we may continue the struggle for the complete freedom of Christianity and their church in India from foreign denominational administration."

In August 1965 Savarkar's illness took a serious turn. There was prolapsus of the rectum. There was swelling in the stomach. He was advised liquid diet for two weeks. The pain was unbearable. Yet he stood it with his usual fortitude; but appealed to his doctors to put an end to his life. But his family doctor Subhash Purandare would not listen to him. Like his father Dr. Vasudeo Purandare and his father's old uncle Dr. Yadnyeshwar

[2] The *Times of India*, 13 March 1965.

Purandare, the young doctor served him devotedly. Savarkar was also tired of convincing Dr. R. V. Sathe of his desire to die. He too would not agree to it. So when he came in August 1965 to examine him, he did not call him upstairs. He got annoyed and left. He had attended him devotionally for over 25 years. Next day Savarkar asked his personal secretary to call him and he examined him.

In the last week of August his condition became very serious. His illness caused anxiety to the doctors attending him. On August 28 the A.D.C. to the President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, inquired on the telephone about the health of Savarkar and said prayers were being said for his speedy recovery. He asked the relative of Savarkar whether Savarkar was kept in touch with the daily happenings in Kashmir. The Bishop of the National Indian Church, His Eminence Williams, paid a visit to Savarkar Sadan and made anxious inquiries about the health of Savarkar. He said that prayers would be made in the national churches for his speedy recovery. P. K. Sawant, Minister for Agriculture, and the old leader K. M. Munshi and his wife visited Savarkar Sadan and made anxious inquiries. The Mayor of Bombay, M. Madhavan, paid a visit and as a special case was allowed to talk to Savarkar. Gradually he felt better in the first week of September.

By now his fears and prophecies had come true. Pakistan invaded India on September 1, 1965, although raiders had been shelling the Indian frontiers since August 5 and the Indian jawans were repelling the attacks with equal force.

But instead of offering the other cheek in Gandhian and Nehruite fashion, the nation came out to beat back the aggressor. Defence Minister, Yeshwantrao Chavan, made on September 6, 1965, an announcement to a packed Lok Sabha that the Indian Army had entered the Lahore sector in a three-pronged offensive. Savarkar always said the best way to win a war was to carry the war into the enemy's land.

Savarkar was glad and he felt better with the items of the news of victories which acted as potent medicine for his health. He congratulated the Government and Defence Minister Chavan on his courageous lead and firm policy and declared that irrespective of what anybody might say India should dash on without any hesitation. The Indian jawans, with rare daring and

bravery, exploded the myth of Pattons and F-86 Sabrejets and won victory after victory. The stain of the defeat inflicted by China and the humiliation brought on by the Kutch agreement in June 1965 was at last washed out.

India showed a unique patriotic unity. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India, and Yeshwantrao Chavan turned a new leaf and Gen. J. N. Chaudhuri adopted marvellous technique and won two decisive battles, the battle of Assal Utter sector and the battle of tanks in the Sialkot sector. The Indian Army destroyed to a considerable extent the war machinery of Pakistan. At last at the intervention of the United Nations a cease-fire was accepted and war came to an end.

Thousands of Indians in every state paid their grateful homage to Savarkar and said that his words of sound advice were discarded and so the nation had to pay the price for it. What he said came true. The rulers who became a little realistic and wiser became conscious of Savarkar's realism and foresight. They whispered so but did not give expression to their grateful acknowledgement in public.

Just after the Pakistan War, General Cariappa said in a message to Krishna Bhatia for his *Mrityunjaya Savarkar* special issue: "Please convey to the great leader my greetings and my prayers to God to keep him in good health for many more years to serve our country as he has been doing all these years. May his selfless service to our Motherland be an inspiration to the youth of India who are the leaders of tomorrow, and may his devoted service be emulated by our youth in everything they do to make India the brightest star in the world which she can and will be if all of us serve her as true loyal Indians in the manner the great Savarkar has been doing."

In September 1965 the third part of Savarkar's Marathi autobiography was published under the title *Shatruchya Shibirat, (In The Enemy's Camp)*. The book deals with the political conditions of India and the views of his contemporaries when he went to London. As Savarkar was ill he could not complete the book. His personal secretary Bal Savarkar completed it under his directions. Late in the year 1966 the Government of Maharashtra declared a posthumous prize for the book. The main object in writing the second and the third part of the autobiography was to inform and enlighten. In these two parts

Savarkar shed no light on the inner quality of his soul or on the collusion of the inner and outer life as he had done in *My Transportation.*

During the last quarter of the year many persons came to visit Savarkar. M. S. Golwalkar was sent back twice, but his boundless respect for Savarkar persisted and he succeeded in seeing him. The old mother of Mohan Ranade, one of the heroes of Goa struggle, came to see Savarkar. She was sent back. She angrily said while leaving Savarkar Sadan that he should be caged in a glass cupboard and kept for *darshan.* Upon this some other lady said he would place a handkerchief over his face and disappoint all. So a third man suggested that the Government should arrest him and keep him on view at a public place.

People were eager for his *darshan.* But he would not allow them. Such was the sternness Savarkar acted with that neither the personal secretary nor his son would step in unless he was called in. Once he called Pandit Bakhale to tell him that he could not see General Cariappa. Bakhale said softly that it would have been better had he given that much time to Cariappa. After the operation on his thigh-bone, Savarkar had employed three nurses who attended on him right round the clock. He had to spend about Rs. 2,000 a month. That arrangement went on for a year or so. The chief nurse Miss Mahadwar looked after his health for a year or so.

During the year 1965 the nursing staff was reduced. But again at the end of the year special arrangement was made as the severity of the illness grew. Dr. Arvind Godbole and Dr. Subhash Purandare, in consultations with Dr. R. V. Sathe, were taking precautions. But at the end of the year 1965 Savarkar gradually gave up taking even medicine.

In the beginning of January 1966 the condition of Savarkar's health was as before. He had given up food and medicine as he had developed digestive trouble. He could not get up without any support. He could do so with the support of a wall. He now could not stand the agonies. He desired that life should come to an end. A year earlier he had published an article in which he had given an indication of the end he visualised.

He said in the article that "those who destroy themselves

due to utter despair and distress and frustration were said to commit suicide. Those who surrender their self with a sense of fulfilment and divine satisfaction are said to have done self-immolation and self-dedication. In the ever-changing and evolving world nothing was absolutely perfect. After achieving their objects, the blessed ones surrender their souls as did Kumarila Bhatt, Chaitanya, Dnyaneshwar, Ramdas, Eknath and Tukaram."

"Even after the goal of life is relatively fulfilled and there is the feeling of blessedness the body lingers and becomes a nuisance to the self. Faced with such conditions those who end their life by entering a cave or by fasting unto death or by entering a consuming fire or by entering the sea or by yoga or samadhi are said to do self-immolation or dedication of their self, aptly singing:

> Blessed am I; blessed am I.
> No obligation remains for me to fulfil.
> Blessed am I; blessed am I,
> Whatever is to be achieved is all achieved here and now."

When Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, went to Tashkent to negotiate peace with Pakistan Savarkar said he had his fears that Shastri would be hoodwinked into taking back the Indian forces. He said that Pakistan's inhuman and barbarous acts such as kidnapping and raping Indian women would not be stopped unless Pakistan was given tit for tat. Two years earlier Savarkar had expressed his opinion that the liberal policy adopted by Shivaji in case of Muslim women was wrong as this cultured and human treatment could not evoke in those fanatics the same feelings about Hindu women. They should have been given tit for tat, he observed frankly, so that they might have realised the horrors of those brutalities![3]

On January 11, 1966, Lal Bahadur Shastri died at Tashkent. The nation sank into sorrow. Savarkar was perturbed at the pact and the loss of the advantageous positions India had gained with so much loss of blood of her dear sons. So he neither made comments nor said anything about Shastri's demise.

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[3] *Saha Soneri Pane II*, pp. 64-65.

Savarkar now retired into himself and decided to fast unto death and surrender his self. He began it on February 3, 1966. From this day he gave up taking tea and remained on water as vitamins were mixed up with his tea. Inquiries were made from all parts of the nation about his health and prayers were said at some of the famous temples and at the national church in India.

His daughter Prabhat and son-in-law Madhavrao Chiplunkar with their daughter came to Bombay. He called his daughter next day to his bed-side and said slowly and softly that man is mortal. If one felt like mourning the loss of one's relatives a whole life would not suffice to do so. He was going the way life must ultimately go. She should not try in vain to persuade him to take tea or medicine. His resolution was irrevocable.

On February 4 the condition was the same. On February 5 there was swelling in the throat. Dr. Subhash Purandare examined him. From Bangalore Violet and Joachim Alva, both Congress M.P.s said in their telegraphic message to the ailing leader: "As the sun closes on your great patriotic career we humbly salute your unforgettable daring achievement—Swimming the ocean and regaining freedom—will long be cherished in the pages of freedom struggle. Respectful regards."

On Sunday, February 6, the fourth day of the fast he took a little quantity of water. The swelling had subsided a little. He had no temperature. He was growing weaker. His voice was sinking. A. B. Vajpayee, M.P., M. S. Golwalkar, Narayanrao Kajrolkar, M.P., and others expressed their anxiety by telegrams. On the fourth and fifth day the condition remained the same. Hundreds of people began to rush to Savarkar Sadan every day for inquiry. On the sixth day, Sunday, February 8, Dr. R. V. Sathe and Dr. Subhash Purandare examined him. There was no improvement in the condition. Balasaheb Desai, Home Minister of Maharashtra, expressed his desire to see Savarkar, but he was told at the last moment that medical advice was against disturbing Savarkar.

On February 9 there was swelling on the feet. No temperature. He could take little water. Weakness was growing. On the next day the condition was the same. Telegrams wishing that God should save Savarkar taking their lives were sent by many devotees. On February 11 the condition was unchanged.

The next day his voice was sinking. He had no temperature. The swelling on feet looked subsided. He took some teaspoonfuls of water. But as usual he could not read all newspapers, telegrams and letters. Pandit Satawalekar, himself a centenarian, expressed by a telegram his anxiety for Savarkar's health and prayed God to save Savarkar for the nation.

On February 13 swelling on feet remained unabated. He had cramps in the stomach. He took a little water. He was fully conscious. Next day weakness grew. Swelling on feet and in throat was as before. He took only a little water. He had no temperature but he felt a little giddy at noon. All the press agencies and radio made inquiries. On February 15 the swelling in throat and on foot remained as before. No temperature. He took some teaspoonfuls of water.

Next day he had sleep. Weakness was growing. Voice began to be indistinct. Jagjivanram, famous leader, in a telegram to Savarkar said: "Much concerned about your health. Pray God early recovery." Hindusabha workers offered prayers at Shimoga. More telegrams came in. On February 17 he was terribly weak. He was unable to speak. He took a little water. No temperature. Dr. Sathe and Dr. Purandare examined him. That day he sent a telegram to Sir R. P. Paranjpe congratulating him on his 91st birthday. He said to his Guru in his telegram: "You wish to live and so you may live a long, happy and healthy life."

On February 18 he felt weaker. No temperature but swelling as before. Telegrams and trunkphone inquiries increased. Lokanayak Aney inquired about his health by a telegram. Next day the condition was unchanged. Dr. Sathe examined him at 9 p.m. and said he was sinking. In the morning he had dictated a telegram thanking Aney and asking him not to pray. All-India Radio announced that Savarkar's condition was critical.

Savarkar had a premonition that he would die on February 20, the new moon day as did his parents die on a new moon day. He was sinking but Dr. Purandare gave him Coramine and he revived. On February 21 he would not allow the doctors to step in his room although they were keeping vigil right round the clock in the adjoining room. When Dr. Sathe promised Savarkar that no medicine would be administered him

against his will, he allowed the doctors to examine him. Dr. Arvind Godbole, Dr. Subhash Purandare, Dr. Vasantrao Kale, Dr. Shrikhande, Dr. Avinash Godbole and Dr. Sharad Marathe watched him on February 21 right round the clock. They declared his condition was critical. He could not take even water. Congress leaders of Bombay visited Savarkar Sadan and made anxious inquiries.

On February 22 the condition of Savarkar continued to be critical. The Poona leaders, G. M. Nalavde, V. B. Gogate and B. D. Killedar, Mayor of Poona, visited Savarkar Sadan and made anxious inquiries. So did Acharya Atre and Adam Adil, the General Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, visited Savarkar Sadan. Acharya Atre said at Savarkar Sadan that D. R. Mankekar's *Twenty-Two Fateful Days—Pakistan Cut to Size* was very interesting. Bal Savarkar narrated the gist of Atre's talk to him.

Gulzarilal Nanda, Home Minister of India, sent Rs. 1,000 to the ailing Savarkar. The first instalment of that amount was paid by an assistant secretary of the Maharashtra Government on the evening of February 22. With Savarkar's approval the money was received by Savarkar's son Vishwas and the officer was asked to thank Nanda on behalf of Savarkar. In the evening some Brahmins chanted the Mrityunjaya maha mantra wishing speedy recovery of Savarkar.

On February 23 the condition remained critical. No medicine. He took a sip of water with sleeping pills. M. Madhavan, Mayor of Bombay, Dixitji Maharaj, and some leaders of Gwalior and Indore paid visits to Savarkar Sadan for inquiries. Some prayed at Poona in temples for one who was not a believer in God and prayer. Bal Savarkar read to Savarkar Mankekar's book *Pakistan Cut to Size* for some time in the morning. Divate, President of Bhagur Municipality, paid a visit to Savarkar Sadan.

On February 23 his barber, Sadashiv Pawar, came as usual at 10 a.m. and shaved his chin the last time. Dr. R. V. Sathe stated at night that Savarkar's condition had further deteriorated. His pulse was feeble, 50 a minute. Volume and tension were low. His blood pressure was 80/60. His mouth and tongue were dry; his right salivary gland was painful and swollen. He found it difficult to swallow. Leaders from Poona and the General

Secretary of Swatantra party Madhu Mehta came and inquired about his health.

On February 24 Bal Savarkar asked his master in the morning whether he should read Mankekar's book again. He said No. He made signs to the nurse to go out and bade farewell to Bal Savarkar and to all concerned in the words of the saint-poet Tukaram:

> "We are going to our native Home
> Accept our good-bye,
> Now there can be no give and take,
> The speech itself is stopped."

The next two days he did not call his private secretary Bal Savarkar.

On February 24 the doctors' bulletin said: "The condition of Veer Savarkar is grave. There is a painful swelling on the right side of the face. He has extreme difficulty in talking. A panel of doctors is attending on him right round the clock." On February 25 the bulletin said that his condition had further deteriorated. He was having fever and cough. Swelling on the face continued. Jayantrao Tilak, Bachharaj Vyas, leader of the Jan Sangh, Dadarao Apte of *Hindustan Samachar* visited Savarkar Sadan.

On the night of February 25, his condition became very critical. Next day, February 26, he awoke at 8-30 a.m. Nurse cleansed his mouth. But he could not take even water. Fever was persisting. Death, whom he had challenged since his early youth and was afraid to face him, now stood at the corner of the bed. Savarkar was now happily surrendering himself to Him. He was also ashamed to sweep on him. He waited. Vishwas's daughter Vidula and his sister's daughter Madhuri were beside themselves with grief. Savarkar's daughter lay sobbing at his feet; his son and daughter-in-law Sunder both stood near the bedside speechless but full of sorrow. His son-in-law Madhavrao Chiplunkar was bewailing. At 10 a.m. Savarkar became cyanosed with shallow respiration. His radial pulse was not palpable and brachial feeble. Blood pressure was not recordable. One of his fingers was moving. Immediately the doctors applied methods of artificial respiration and cardiac massage was

given. He was given mepheneine. With this treatment he showed signs of improvement. His condition however worsened after some minutes and he could not be revived. He surrendered himself to death at 11-10 a.m. at the age of 83. A life without regrets!

The doctors said that he was a challenge to medical science. In spite of severe dehydration which could not be corrected, he had no serious complications whatsoever. He was conscious to the last hour. He never suffered the pangs of dehydration. They were surprised that he could survive for twenty-two days with little or no medicine, taking only five or six tea-spoonfuls of water every day. It was the result of the yogic powers he had attained.

* * *

The radio and trunkphones and news agencies spread the news of Savarkar's death. Thousands of people rushed to Savarkar Sadan to have a last glimpse of one of the great makers of modern India. In a supreme gesture of good will and love for the people whom he loved and served all his life, Savarkar observed in his Will which he had made in August 1964 that nobody should observe hartal or close his business to mourn over his death. This was to avoid inconvenience to the people.

Savarkar also stated in his Will that his body should be cremated in an electric crematorium without any religious ceremonies. At best Vedic hymns could be chanted at the time of cremation. He expressed his wish that *shraddha* or *pindadan* should not be performed. He further stated in his Will that his body should not be carried to the crematorium on human shoulders, or on animal-drawn vehicles. Only mechanised transport should be used to do so.

The body was kept on the ground floor of his house for public homage from 4-30 p.m. People stood in a long queue from 4-30 p.m. on Saturday, the 26th February, to 3-30 p.m. on Sunday, the 27th February 1966. More than two lakhs of people filed past the body paying their homage to the departed leader. The police arrangement was perfect and most helpful in directing the huge crowds. People stood in a queue even at the early hours of Sunday and there was no break in the line. People placed wreaths and money on his body and shed their

tears at his feet. His daughter fainted, so also his former body-guard Appa Kasar. Some bewailed loudly and bitterly. Thousands of wreaths were placed on the body of the great liberator. Chief Secretary, D. R. Pradhan, placed a wreath on behalf of the State Government. Savarkar's grandson Prafulla Chiplunkar came from Delhi by air. He was deeply grieved.

Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Congress and Opposition leaders, trade union leaders, veteran leaders of freedom struggle and other leading men in social, educational and political fields who had grown revering Savarkar as the prince of Indian Revolutionary Movement rushed to pay their homage to the departed inspirer.

Raj Bahadur, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, S. A. Dange, Chairman of the Communist Party, Dr. K. M. Munshi, George Fernandes, the Mayor M. Madhavan, Gangaram Joshi, Sheriff of Bombay, Madhu Mehta, N. G. Goray, Fr. Williams of the Indian National Church, Pratap Singh, Lata Mangeshkar, P. K. Sawant, Agriculture Minister, N. M. Tidke, Labour Minister, Madhusudan Vairale, Deputy Irrigation Minister, visited Savarkar Sadan and paid their homage to the eternal hero.

The procession started on Sunday, 27th February 1966, with about 50,000. Acharya Atre, Mayor M. Madhavan, Jayantrao Tilak, V. Shantaram, Nitya Narayan Banerjee, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, Baccharaj Vyas, President of the Jan Sangh, V. B. Gogate, leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council, and B. D. Killedar, Mayor of Poona, were slowly walking along with the procession.

A saffron-capped horse-rider took the lead. Slogans such as Savarkarji Amar Rahe and Hindu Rashtraki jai were all along the route. Abhangas were sung by Snehal Bhatkar and poems of Dnyaneshwar were sung by Sudhir Phadke and Sopandeo Chaudhari.

The body, with its head raised, had been placed on the raised bier on the truck. The eternal hero wore his customary black cap in his eternal sleep also. His face was serene. The truck was decorated with war motifs by V. Shantaram, a leading figure in the film world of India. The procession of the torch-bearer of India's freedom wended its way through the streets carrying the mortal remains of the departed leader. Tens of

thousands of men, women and children belonging to different communities lined the route of the procession, at Ranade Road, Tilak Bridge, Parel, Lalbaug, Arthur Road, Bombay Central, Girgaon, Thakurdwar and Chandanwadi. Several thousands joined *en route* and it took nearly six hours to reach the crematorium at Chandanwadi, six miles away. Thousands along the entire route showered flower-petals and wreaths on the slowly moving lorry. When the procession passed by the Arthur Road Jail the prisoners shouted their homage from inside.

The mammoth procession caused considerable traffic hold-ups at many junctions. While the volunteers guided by Pandit Bakhale, Padmakar Dhamdhere, Eknath Khanolkar and L. R. Satelkar controlled the processionists, the police controlled the traffic and crowds. More than a lakh of people joined the procession. At Bombay Central, 2,000 Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh volunteers lined up the route and sounded the last post. The crowd that gathered at the electric crematorium was the biggest in recent times. Several thousand women had joined the procession.

In his funeral oration when Acharya Atre said that no minister of the State was present on the occasion to pay homage to Savarkar, one of the greatest revolutionaries produced by India, people raised shouts of 'shame'. Nitya Narayan Banerjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, said that Veer Savarkar was one of the greatest sons of India whose voice had been a voice in the wilderness. He had advocated a militant approach in the solution of national problems. He urged the nation to pledge itself to work for the achievement of Savarkar's goal. B. D. Killedar, Mayor of Poona, B. S. Vyas, President of the All-India Jan Sangh, and S. G. Sardesai, Secretary of the Maharashtra Branch of the Communist Party of India (Right), also spoke. Thus ended the earthly pilgrimage of a man whose life was an inspiration to millions of his countrymen and whose death closed one of the golden chapters of modern India.

All over India the press noted his death with celerity and paid glowing tribute to Savarkar. The *Times of India*, Bombay, said in its editorial: "Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a rebel and a revolutionary till his last breath. He relished controversy which he enlivened with his glowing patriotism and sense of dedication. History will salute him as a remarkable

Indian, a man whose faith in the destiny of his country remained undiminished till the end despite so many vicissitudes. His life reads like a legend. He matched his words with deeds. That is why the British raj never took to him kindly. . . . He insistently raised his voice in favour of strong Central Government which would be able to keep divisive tendencies under check and implement national policies and programmes vigorously. Savarkar's most noteworthy contribution to Indian political thinking was his emphasis on the defence of the country's frontiers. Though the term he used 'militarisation' was not a happy one, his main concern was that India should guard against internal and external weakening. His dauntless spirit will stir generations to come."

The *Free Press Journal* said that Savarkar would be remembered and revered for long. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in its editorial said Savarkar passed away at a mature age leaving a trail of daring patriotic activities with the uncommon brilliance in the pages of nation's history of freedom struggle. The *Leader,* Allahabad, described him as one of the outstanding leaders of India's freedom struggle. The *Tribune,* Ambala, said that Savarkar appeared to be a born revolutionary. But he gave to the Hindu Mahasabha what was meant for the entire country. There was, however, no doubt about the sincerity of his stand or the honesty of his convictions. *The Times,* London, said in the obituary note that Savarkar was among the first and most articulators of Hindu nationalism and added that his death had been widely noted in India.

The National Herald said that Savarkar was essentially a patriotic revolutionary whose conception of Hinduism was as radically latitudinarian as Gandhi's and as inherently rooted in a lively awareness of the need to reform, and added that though a secularist to the bone, Savarkar was concerned to impart militancy to Hinduism and because of this and his association with the Hindu Mahasabha, the communalist label stuck to him all through his life.

The *Indian Nation,* Patna, said that men like Savarkar were patriotism personified. The *Nagpur Times* said that Savarkar combined in him so many qualities that he easily stood head and shoulders above great men known to history.

* * *

The nation's leaders mourned Savarkar's death. Rajaji said Savarkar was his first revolutionary idol who declared rebellion against British rule and caught the imagination of all. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said: "A steady and sturdy worker for the Independence of our country, his career was for many youngsters a legendary one." The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said Savarkar's death "removes a great figure of contemporary India." Describing his name as a by-word for daring and patriotism, she further said that he was cast in the mould of a classic revolutionary and countless people drew inspiration from him.

S. A. Dange, Chairman of the Communist Party of India (Right), said: "The death of Veer Savarkar removes from the scene of Indian history one of the great anti-imperialist revolutionaries." Defence Minister Yeshwantrao Chavan said that in his death the country lost an old freedom fighter who defied British rule. V. P. Naik, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, said that Savarkar was in the forefront of Indian revolutionaries who worked with the constant devotion for the freedom of the Motherland. D. B. Bandodkar, Chief Minister of Goa, said Savarkar was one of the greatest leaders whose contribution to Indian freedom had a special place in the annals of Indian history. S. M. Joshi, President of the All-India Samyukta Socialist Party, said that Savarkar inspired millions of people to work for freedom. Jan Sangh leader, Balraj Madhok, said that it was an irony that one who deserved to be the first Prime Minister of India or President of Free India had to undergo sufferings in jail even after freedom.

H. V. Pataskar, ex-Governor of Madhya Pradesh, said that India had lost her bravest son, a great literary genius, an inspiring poet and a great orator. M. S. Golwalkar, Aney, Gulzarilal Nanda, hundreds of Municipalities, some Legislative Assemblies and Councils, Zilla Parishads, some State Governments, several literary and social institutions mourned the death of Savarkar.

On February 28 Prof. Hiren Mukerjee (Communist) and U. M. Trivedi (Jan Sangh) suggested in the Lok Sabha after question hour that the House pay homage to Savarkar in recognition of his services to the nation. Hiren Mukerjee said that although Savarkar was not a member of the Lok Sabha, there should be some way in which the House should register its

feelings on the death of a great leader. Kapur Singh (Swatantra) said that while Savarkar was a great leader who had dedicated his whole life to the nation it would be difficult to draw a line in future if the House paid formal homage to Savarkar. The Speaker, Hukam Singh, agreed with Kapur Singh. If such a precedent was set, the House might expose itself to charges of discrimination. But he would convey the sentiments of the House to the bereaved family, he added.[4]

Kapur Singh and the Speaker did not tell the House whether Mahatma Gandhi and Stalin were members of the House. When C. R. Das died the Central Assembly had referred to his death.

The Secretary of the Lok Sabha wrote Vishwas Savarkar informing him that the Speaker gave on February 28, 1966, expression to the deep sense of loss occasioned by the passing away of Shri Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. The letter added that the Speaker had assured the House that its sense of deep loss and grief would be conveyed to the members of the bereaved family.

On March 4, 1966, Union Ministers, Opposition leaders, Hukum Singh, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and leaders of various political parties paid homage to Savarkar at a condolence meeting organised by the Delhi Citizen's Council. Satya Narayan Sinha, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Communications, who presided, said that Savarkar would continue to inspire the coming generations. He was a combination of many qualities besides being a social reformer. Defence Minister Chavan said that Savarkar displayed a unique combination of nationalism, bravery and social unity and said that they could not but salute him for his immense nationalism.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said that all those who lived in India were Hindus whatever their religion. M. C. Chagla, Education Minister, said that history should be written from the point of view of the illustrious sons of India like Savarkar who was a great patriot, and added that he believed that anyone living in this country who loved and drew inspiration from the great heritage of India and was loyal to India was a Hindu. The country should not forget revolutionaries who had the same burning love for the country as Mahatma Gandhi had.

[4] The *Times of India*, 1 March 1966.

Revolutionaries like Savarkar created the atmosphere which made it possible for Mahatma Gandhi to succeed. It would be unpatriotic if the people of India failed to give Savarkar a prominent place in the history of India, he concluded.

Prof. Hiren Mukerjee, while totally differing with certain views of Savarkar, praised the potent brand of nationalism that he championed. He said he was one of the architects of modern India. He infused a sense of manhood in them. It would be unfair to consider him a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha only. Hukam Singh thought that the Hinduism preached by Savarkar was all-embracing. Prakash Vir Shastri and the Hindu Mahasabha leader Nitya Narayan Banerjee spoke at the meeting.[5]

A resolution adopted at the above-mentioned meeting demanded that a suitable memorial to Veer Savarkar be raised and a commemorative postage stamp issued.

According to his instructions in his Will, obsequies were not performed. His ashes were immersed privately in the sea at Dadar Chowpaty by his son. Not a grain of ashes was given to anybody for public immersion or deification.

* * *

What the *Times of India* said of Savarkar was an unalloyed truth. He was a rebel and a revolutionary to the last breath. He was the first Indian leader to give the message of absolute political independence and unity to the nation. But the tragedy of Savarkar was that although he was a secularist to the backbone, a great lover of science and a sturdy rationalist, he was cruelly represented as an orthodox leader by those who were partial to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. And Gandhi and Nehru as his disciple, who led the theocratic Khilafat Movement which bred and fomented the religious fanaticism of Indian Muslims and whose appeasing policy culminated in creating a theocratic state, Pakistan, were described as real representatives of nationalism and progress while Kemal Pasha denounced the very Khilafatists and its protagonists as the proteges of the British and castigated them openly as the breakers of Turkey nationalism.[6]

[5] Report of these speeches appeared in the *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, the *Statesman*, New Delhi, and the *Organiser*, Delhi.

[6] The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 April 1947.

Savarkar was the first Indian leader to give India the message of secularism and modernism before the advent of Nehru and Roy on the political scene of India. But the tragedy of Savarkar was heightened by his own inner contradictions also. Though he declared that the Hindu Mahasabha was a political organisation and not a Hindu Dharma Sabha and his Hindutva included the Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, he allowed his followers to shout the slogan 'Hindu Dharma Ki Jai'. Jinnah never allowed his followers to shout the slogan 'Islam Zindabad'. He said he was their political leader.

Savarkar was more rational than Gandhi, Cripps, or Jayprakash Narayan and as rational as Roy and Nehru. He was an epic poet and a great rationalist. He was a great author and the Demosthenes of his age in India. His impact on Indian freedom struggle, Indian politics and history of modern India and Indian languages is profound. His *Hindutva* is a great contribution to Hindu thought, philosophy and history. What is more, his political realism and foresight proved to be correct and unfailing. He foretold that the political leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, which according to him lacked historical perspective, would end in dividing India on the basis of religion. His prophecy came true. He said that if once Pakistan came into being it would raise its army and always disturb the peace, industrialisation and the progress of India. It came true. He said that Mao hoodwinked Nehru over Tibet and China would pull down the pillars of Panchsheel at any moment.

And what is the history? China invaded and humiliated India. Great men are sometimes obsessed with one idea. They carry the world on to progress but they are usually men of single purpose. They are called world-betterers by some. Likewise Savarkar was obsessed, his critics say, with the idea of Hindu militarisation. He did not use the term in the sense Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini used. He was not an imperialist and therefore not a militarist in that sense. It was his sincere desire that having suffered slavery often, India should not fall a prey to any militarist and aggressive country.

Savarkar was the foremost Indian leader to welcome the machine age and he understood that economic equality and social justice were the inevitable outcome of the machine age. As regards social equality, none of his great contemporaries

except Dr. Ambedkar, not even Jawaharlal Nehru, actually fought orthodoxy with such ruthlessness as did Savarkar. He bore the brunt alone. But it was his misfortune that while he languished in jail and internment for over twenty-seven years, two generations had gone ahead with Gandhi and Nehru. It was also strange that Savarkar the rationalist and secularist advised pacts, although for election purposes, with rank reactionary parties like the Ram Rajya Parishad. The Congressmen hated the Muslim League, the Socialists detested the Muslim League, but they made pacts with that communal organisation for election purposes. This was the bane of Indian politics. Likewise, the bane of Savarkar was that he compromised with the Sanatanists and the social revolutionary in him was cabined.

Savarkar was dubbed a communalist because he said that the principle of one man one vote should be followed and because he opposed the Muslim Maulavis and the Christian Missionaries to convert the illiterate and ignorant and poverty-stricken Hindus. He thus gave offence to Muslims and Christians and to those who posed themselves as tolerant men and worshippers of true nationalism in spite of this gross injustice and fraud. Had Savarkar, like Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas and Roy, remained neutral in respect of the conversion of the Hindus to other faiths or remained indifferent to it he would have passed himself as a cent per cent secularist.

According to Savarkar, national freedom and security were the pre-requisites for inaugurating schemes concerning land, labour and industry. But the modern youths, the labourers and peasants did not understand why Savarkar's party remained unconcerned whenever there was unrest and agitation in respect of agrarian reform and strike in the labour area. It was not a fact that because Savarkar had thrown all his might and main for averting the national disaster, viz., the division of India, he had no time to pay attention to the labour and agrarian problems. The fact was that basically there was no urge in his ideology for economic equality and hence he never gave emphasis on solving labour and agrarian problems and also on the removal of untouchability from that point of view. The labour and land problems were coming to a head and these affected the destiny of political parties and leaders in India. Just as the labour problem affected Mazzini's leadership in his old age, so

it affected also Savarkar, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, although Savarkar was in favour of the mechanisation of agriculture, liquidation of landlordism, nationalisation of key industries and industrialisation of India on a broader scale. But he advocated top priority to defence and said that every other thing should be adjusted to suit it.

As regards integration with the Muslims, Savarkar said that it would come when the Muslims sincerely desired it. He was prepared to welcome and treat as brother-countryman a Muslim like Mr. M. C. Chagla who loved India nobly and was prepared to die nobly for her independence. But how many Chaglas are there among the Muslims to love and die for Bharat. Nehru said with no less concern: "We have forty million Muslims who are in India and they voted for Pakistan." [1]

Savarkar chose to work on a lower plane of Hindu nationalism although he admitted that Indian nationalism was a nobler ideal. But that higher plane on which Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale and Surendranath Banerji worked, was vitiated by Gandhi by introducing religious questions into politics and placating the Muslims. Can those who dubbed Savarkar a communalist because he fought for the unity and solidarity of the Hindus, honestly say that Gandhi and Nehru were also the leaders of the Indian Muslims in the accepted sense of the term?

The promoters of secularism perhaps do not know what is secularism or rather they have not taken trouble to define secularism. It is not known whether by secularism they mean religious neutrality or tolerance or impartial aid to all religions or a state separate from religion. A pure secular state exists nowhere. Gandhi, who was religious-minded, was eulogised as a promoter of secular state because he was extra tolerant to other faiths despite their wilful aggressions on Hindus and not because he was a lover of science and rational outlook. Savarkar, who struggled to defend the Hindus from aggressions and to consolidate them, was called an orthodox leader though he was godless and a lover of science and rational outlook and was not religious-minded in any form. Nehru was called an Indian secularist who never bothered about the orthodoxy of the Indian Muslims. His secularism did not bother about Mus-

[1] Taya Zinkin, *Reporting India*, p. 207.

lim marriage laws or their inheritance laws. He dared not adopt a uniform civil code. So he also proved to be a Hindu secularist. Savarkar who wanted the Hindus to be up-to-date and modernised and to follow science and secularism was unfortunately described as a politician out of the track.

Savarkar has given a message of survival to the nation. If India wants to avoid again political extinction she must take the message seriously and should not follow the pacifism of the peace-mongers who are mortally afraid of science and physical forces. These pacifists and peace-mongers cannot arrest the course of history, the forces of the physical world and the energy of modern science and so cannot restore the world to previous patterns.

In every age man has been suffering from the fear of extinction as soon as there is an advance in the knowledge of the physical forces and science. In every age the nation that had accession to superior force defeated the nations that had not that advantage. The Iron Age Man defeated the Bronze Age Man because he discovered a superior weapon. David slew Goliath because he had a superior device. Carthage fell through failure to match Roman arms. The Persian Empire fell before Alexander because he had superior weapons.

Savarkar was the only leader in India who openly said that India should have accession to a superior device, weapon or force. The law of accession to superior force lays down that "any accession to superior force in one nation immediately sets up a reaction in other nations. In order to maintain their relative positions they must equal or surpass the superior force which has been acquired by the newly energised nation."[8] They will preserve their political identity if they match the newly energised nation. They will decline if they fail.

Savarkar held that justice would go down if it was not backed by a superior force. A nation, however tolerant, just and cooperative would go down if it would not approximate the power of the surrounding nations. It may do so with alliances and discovery of new devices. India should believe in noble principles for the progress of humanity but keep her superior weapon ready for her own survival. This was the message of Savarkar to India.

[8] Ernest Cunio, *Science and History*, p. 213.

Savarkar was an eternal hero, one of the greatest Hindus for all times. He believed in India's aeonic enduring vitality. He represented the heroic virtue of the Hindus. He burned up warning the Hindus. He was a born Bharat Ratna and was one of the makers of modern India. Like a truly great man, he scourged the society, purged it from its social ills and tried to give a broader foundation to the society by changing the old values. He proved his claims to greatness not only by his noble aim, his untold sacrifice, his matchless courage, his burning sincerity but also by the continuity and intensity of his thoughts. The measure of a man's greatness, said Ludwig Wittgestein, would be in terms of what his work cost him. Savarkar paid heavy price for his work and mission. No modern Hindu leader loved the Hindus more intensely than Savarkar. He had dedicated all his love, pen and speech to his motherland whom he loved very dearly.

Life had been to him very thrilling. He was one of the rarest personages of India who always stood on the verge of life. He enjoyed life to the brim, receiving the salute of millions of people of three generations. Indeed he is a hero who would be saluted by every new generation.

For he was gifted with a volcanic personality and was blessed with a life full of extraordinary achievements and undying episodes. He moved among men and among his mighty contemporaries, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, M. N. Roy and Subhas Bose as a mighty mesmeric man. He was the first Indian student who was rusticated from the hostel of an institution aided by the British Government and the first Indian political leader who publicly performed a bonfire of foreign clothes. He was, as mentioned above, again the first political leader of India to daringly proclaim absolute political independence of India as her goal at a time when the mere word Raj or Swaraj spelled ruin for the speaker. Savarkar was the first Barrister, who was refused the degree on account of his political line of thought by the British Government and was the first graduate to lose the degree of an Indian University for his love for independence. Savarkar was again the first Indian leader to invest the problem of Indian Independence with international importance. He was the first Indian author,

who earned a distinction in the domain of world literature as his work was proscribed by the Governments of two countries even before it was printed or published. Savarkar was also the first rebel leader of India who refused to recognize the authority of the British Court of Law. Savarkar was the first political prisoner in the history of the world the issue of whose arrest was fought out in the International Court at the Hague. Savarkar was the first political prisoner in the political history of the world, who was sentenced to half a century's transportation. Savarkar was the first poet in the world, who, deprived of pen and paper, composed and wrote his poems on the prison walls with thorns and pebbles, learnt by heart with Vedic tenacity more than ten thousand lines of his poetry for years till they reached his country through the mouths of others, and showed how since the dawn of humanity the great Aryas kept the sacred Vedas circulating from one generation to another by word of mouth. Indeed, the legend of the memory of Macaulay, who could repeat all Demosthenes by heart, all Milton and practically the whole of the Bible, would find a formidable rival in Savarkar.

Savarkar wanted that India should follow her bent and must represent the culture of the national majority. He wanted a place on the map of the world for the Hindus. According to Savarkar, the Republic Flag and the state symbols are Hindu. And if India becomes a mighty nation as envisaged by Savarkar, his another dream would be realised. He said some twenty-five years earlier:

> "If you wish, O Hindus, to prosper as a great and glorious Hindu Nation under the sun, and you well have a claim on it, that State must be established under the Hindu Flag. This dream would be realized during this or coming generation. If it is not realized, I may be styled a day-dreamer, but if it comes true, I would stand forth as its prophet.
>
> "I am bequeathing this legacy to you."

If in the history of modern India there was any great leader who neither pursued fame nor followed fortune, nor individual greatness, discarding national interests, national integrity and

national honour, that great leader was Savarkar and as such he would carry influence with posterity. As he was not a party to the vivisection of India, which is a heritage of sorrow and disgrace to posterity and the greatest betrayal ever known in Indian history, Savarkar, one of the makers of modern India, would be a beacon-light of hope, guidance, inspiration and courage.

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