

## Chapter I

### **The Test of Gandhism and Factionalism in Bengal Politics; The Swarajist Phase**

The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi in the 1920s as the guiding spirit of the Indian National movement has since been a subject of scholarly discussions. A good number of historical literatures have devoted itself in examining Gandhi and his 'ism' from different point of views. But it can unanimously be said that at the beginning of 1920s largely because of the all pervading leadership of Gandhi, the various isolated movements against the British rule came under the banner of a strong national organization although some indefeasible controversies soon came up to the popular front on the questions that how far the re-oriented Gandhian Congress would be successful in mobilizing the conflicting interests of the country including regional, sectional and communal by a settled political ideology. This heresy of politics soon acquired a hold over the regional sphere and in Bengal, politically the most advanced province, 'Gandhi seemed to have been challenged mainly on ideological grounds'<sup>1</sup> In this perspective it is important to look over the key tenets of this new type of politics on the basis of which Gandhism was put on a test in Bengal.

In Bengal a large number of Congress followers became attached with some minor political parties which were more less Gandhite in attitude

but more Bengali in nature. Some of these parties were formed on an all India basis; however, its activities were shaped up in Bengal. In this line the Swaraj Party first appeared in 1923 as 'the minority challenging faction within the Congress and an organization running candidates for the legislature outside the preview of the Congress.'<sup>2</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi moved the Non-Cooperation resolution under the Presidentship of Lala Lajpath Rai at the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta (1st September, 1920). Although it was approved over a qualifying amendment from Bipin Chandra Pal,<sup>3</sup> severe opposition came from Chittaranjan Das who was of view that the Congress should not boycott the reformed councils but use them as instruments of struggle.<sup>4</sup> At Nagpur (December 1920) C R Das tried his best to go up against the ratification on non violent non cooperation but Gandhian charisma won him over. A group of Bengali Congress leaders including C R Das and Bipin Chandra Pal let Gandhi have a test of his political principles. This shift was not a smooth one and a microscopic study is required for a proper understanding of the political heartbeat of the then Bengal. It is true that when Gandhi appeared in Indian politics the spirit of nationalism was more articulate and well groomed in Bengal than in any other parts of India. Long before the advent of Gandhi a strong spirit of militancy arose in the national paradigm of Bengal. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the spirit of nationalism it received a kind of institutional expression all the way through the formation of a large number of local *samities*. They were convinced that independence could never be realized without a well spread national struggle and without it, the programmes of national development would be a futile one. They in general carried the

tradition of extremism and their ultimate aim was to attempt complete independence by any means. Gandhi wanted to merge the Indian national movement with his experiment with non-violence because according to him it would help in building up a new social system –the primary requirement for India the objective of attaining independence by hook or crook. Gandhian philosophy of non-violence had little to do with the established militancy in Bengal and unlike the rest of India this characteristic continued in Bengal for a long period of time and gradually passed from ideological level to the institutional level of party politics. It is easy to assume the basic points on which the militant nationalists differed from Gandhi but it is difficult to conclude why the nationalists in Bengal showed a kind of un willing acceptance towards Gandhian model of politics and at institutional level a kind of tumult had emerged purely on methodological ground. In fact Gandhi himself was aware that the people would follow him on tactical ground at first, but the spirit and efficacy of his ideas would soon convert them to a believer not merely a follower only. He admitted in 1942 that, “ If I had started with men who accepted non violence as a creed, I might have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean”.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtly Gandhi introduced what the historians call, the face of mass movement in Indian national movement as well in the Indian national Congress because according to Copland the Congress was synonymous with Indian nationalism.<sup>6</sup> Bengali nationalists found the new Congress to be used for a nation wide struggle against the British but Gandhian model of politics offered them little than the expectations they already dreamt off and in

the succeeding decades a set of parallel struggles overshadowed Bengal politics in relation to the struggle against imperialism.

Mahatma Gandhi's rise to the Indian National Congress inverted the balance of regional leadership in Indian politics from Bengal and Maharashtra to a wider distribution among the north Indian provinces. The long standing religious and political tradition as has been engineered by the ideas of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobinda Ghosh almost acquired a populist character in Bengal and it provided the support base for a nationalist struggle based on national extremism and liberal rationalism.<sup>7</sup> The imperial stereotype of weak and effeminate Bengalis was out of fashion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the cult of *shakti* was developed into a motivation for the freedom fighters of Bengal. The Gandhian politics 'did not appeal to them except in so far as they were effective in launching a militant mass movement.'<sup>8</sup> The Bengalis being proud of their cultural achievements searched every possible corner to carry on its exclusiveness but failed to check the tide of Gandhian notions of politics, which reversed the established status quo in politics largely controlled by the Bengal Congress leaders. After 1907 ideological heterogeneity affected Bengal Congress to a greater extent and in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chittaranjan Das became able to occupy a pivotal position by successfully employing Bengal's cherished tradition of political preponderancy.

It is likely to be noted that the British system of land tenure, lack of industrialization to a greater extent helped in the formation of the Bengali middle class who in virtue of their English education monopolized every

field of public life in Bengal. These people commonly known as *bhadralok*<sup>9</sup> in Bengali parlance were hailed mainly from the upper caste Hindus and they maintained considerable distance from the agricultural production group. The social stratification in Bengal was largely contributed by the conditions imposed under colonial rule and these classes had a definite impact on the process of political mobilization in Bengal. On the other the disproportionate development of Hindus and Muslims resulted in unique political tensions that the economic grievances of the Muslim peasants gradually obtained an unexpected character. The British consciously drew local factional rivalries into broader communal antagonism by opening up channels for the selected community and caste based units into the metropolitan political world. It can not be ignored that the momentum generated by the Non Cooperation and *Khilafat* movement enabled the Bengal Congress under C R Das to put together a coalition of several distinct forces<sup>10</sup> including Calcutta based politicians to the rural leaders from the both the communities and revolutionaries as well. This indicated a kind of political pragmatism and it offered some alternative discourses to link up the political activities of two different political domains<sup>11</sup> by meticulously drawing the series of alliances between Calcutta aristocracy, revolutionary terrorists, rural *bhadralok* with small renter interest, popular peasant leaders and most notably the new Muslim leaders coming out from the wave of *Khilafat* agitation. In this perspective J. H Broomfield pointed out that the period from '1918-1925 was the high point in Muslim involvement in Indian nationalist politics in Bengal.<sup>12</sup> But after the death of C R Das in 1925, the alliance of diversified political interests failed to sustain its impact on Bengal and the political language of Bengal came to be expressed in a

conflict between metropolis and its hinterland in the form of a power politics between Calcutta based politicians mainly from the Hindus and the local Muslim leaders who were searching for a faithful ally among the low caste politicians from the districts. Its true that the gap between metropolitan politics and that of the local one was threatened with factional disputes while the growing ideological and methodological clashes between the Indian and provincial leadership failed to sustain the basic elements of common Bengali viewpoint and eventually a second partition of Bengal became inevitable, if not unavoidable. But one cannot deny that with the emergence of C. R Das new experimentations with politics set in motion in Bengal. The Bengal Congress under the leadership of C R Das went on its own path for launching a revolutionary mass movement far beyond the Gandhian model of Non-Cooperation. Das in any angle was not anti Gandhi or his movements rather Das's own approach towards the movements not only exposed the charisma of long intellectual and exclusive tradition of his soil but also his recorded credentials to form a mass political organization.

### **Gandhism at Crossroads**

In a special session of the Congress at Calcutta it was declared that the goal of the Congress should be the attainment of *swaraj* by legitimate and powerful means. Mean while Gandhi negotiated with the *Khilafat* leaders and chalked out a programme of Non-Cooperation including boycott of the new reformed council. These programmes were not welcomed with acclamation in Bengal, except the support of some staunch *khilafatists*. It is interesting to note that according to one report, out of a total of a total

5873 registered delegates only 2753 voted and of the Bengal delegates 551 supported his resolution and 395 opposed.<sup>14</sup> In fact Das had received the prize of his Muslim alliance that the report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry committee referred, "In the Subject committee all Mohammedan members except Mr Jinnah voted with the Mahatma, while many prominent non Muslim nationalists supported Mr Das who led the opposition to Mahatmaji."<sup>15</sup> On the other, Gandhi managed to command preeminence through his non Bengali support that the *Bengali* wrote "... the small majority in favour of Mr. Gandhi's resolution was determined by the votes of Marwari and Hindustani communities."<sup>16</sup> Though this Calcutta session proved to be a triumph for Gandhi but it was not a defeat for the Bengalis because they only compromised on some fundamental points of Gandhi's programmes like a non-violent Non-Cooperation movement against the British. At the regular Congress session held at the end of December 1920, Das and Gandhi came to a more concrete understanding.

From the Nagpur Congress Gandhi became what Jawaharlal Nehru called the 'permanent super president of the Congress'.<sup>17</sup> But C R Das started his journey on an independent path with an assurance from Gandhi that he would be free to pursue his own political programme.<sup>18</sup> that he could shape the non-cooperation campaign in whatever way he wanted to do in Bengal. In fact the Nagpur session accepted the resolution based on the terms of Das-Gandhi pact.<sup>19</sup> It contained Das's proposal of making *swaraj* the goal of the impending struggle and organizing peasants and labourers under the Congress with the withdrawal of the council boycott clause. What C.R Das and his followers opposed was basically the

methods by which Gandhi wanted to start his Non-Cooperation movement. They found no justification on the sacrifices of the professional and service classes instead of the big business merchants and the common masses as a whole. The main point of difference between this two centered round the question of using mass campaigns as a weapon to reach the goal. What Gandhi wanted, was to push the government institutions in redundancy by restraining *satyagraha* but Das wanted to “work out the principle of non cooperation from within the councils” and for this purpose “work should be under taken in all directions to that a call for the enforcement of the complete programme may be made within the shortest time.”<sup>20</sup> Gandhi’s victory in the Calcutta session resulted in the withdrawal of twenty-four Bengali nationalists under Das’s leadership from the council election, indifferent to the resolution passed by the Congress. Das and his followers never wanted to divide the nationalist spirit emerged under the Gandhian leadership and Das tried to mobilize opposition to Gandhi on the basis of a more radical programme judged by its practicability. His intention was to modify Gandhi’s non-cooperation programme according to the norms of a strong diplomatic political action by reducing the moralistic touches from it. In opposition to Das a small Gandhian group emerged in Bengal in around Jitendralal Banerjee and Shyamsundar Chakrabarty whose attraction was more to Gandhi than to other regional leader in Bengal. Other Ghandhians included P C Ghosh, Suresh Banerjee and Nipendra Chandra Banerjee. This last man being a Gandhian by heart always retained doubted about non violence and he believed that it was difficult for a Bengali *shatka* to follow Gandhi from teeth to toe.<sup>21</sup> It was obvious that many of the Gandhites in Bengal never became free from the

ambivalence on non violence because the spirit of militancy prevailing in Bengal politics from pre Gandhian period had always put a question mark before the policy of non violence in Bengal. At the time of the special session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920 the Gandhians of the Bengal Congress gained the support of a section of middle class who were attracted to the policy of opposing council entry after getting being affected by the post war economic depression. The faction under Jitendra Lal Banerjee and Shyam Sundar Chakrabarty managed to gain the Marwari support against Das in the coming session at Nagpur, but Das did not give them a walk over and secure on his behalf the support of the revolutionaries mainly from the *Dacca Anushilan Samity* and this alliance became one of the most land marking decision in the subsequent politics of Bengal Congress.

Das's alliance with the revolutionaries backed him to stand against Gandhi in Bengal. Gandhi on his part showed tremendous farsightedness in implementing a compromise with C R Das thereby overlooking the anti Das stand of Shyam Sundar Chakrabarty, Jatindra Lal Banerjee and the Ali brothers because Das's support was essential for the success of his non-cooperation agenda. Thus for that time being Gandhi's calculated intervention pacified the growing animosity between the two factions of the Bengal Congress. It is noteworthy that Das never surrendered before Gandhi rather he mobilized the masses according to his line of action even sometimes in opposition with Gandhi. Bengal Congress divided between Das and J.L Banerjee failed to provide the basic impetus for a easy progress of the Non Cooperation movement. It was noticed that a very small extent the different items of the non cooperation programme

like giving up offices, titles, boycotting foreign goods, promoting *swadesi*, came to be fulfilled in Bengal <sup>22</sup> and in the middle of 1921 when Das's main opponent Jitendra Lal Banerjee resigned from the Bengal provincial Congress committee, Non Cooperation movement entered into a new phase in Bengal. This phase was basically mastered and supervised by C R Das who successfully consolidated his position over the Congress machinery by drawing up new elements under the orbit of the Congress in Bengal. Under his leadership new currents of Bengal politics seemed to get galvanized when a new group of Muslim leadership was brought into focus along with a growing localization of political tides.<sup>23</sup> Under this network, new political fronts were opened up among the peasants and the laborers. But the abrupt curtailment of the Non-Cooperation movement by Gandhi suddenly altered the entire facade of the movement and Das's efforts faced a halt in Bengal.

This present study does not provide scopes to deal with why and how this movement was left unfinished in Bengal. Without exaggerating this issue one may conclude that the mass campaign which C R Das had done during the movement provided him with a strong support base in Bengal. In spite of a numbers of shortcomings during this movement, Bengal Congress gradually established an unequivocal mastery over the rural electorate of Bengal. The subsequent developments in Bengal politics proved to be successful in organizing what it called the era of representative politics by bringing together two least familiar worlds of politics. The coming phase of council politics scored its success upon this political union specially when the Bengal Congress went under radical changes to fit with a new political environment. In this new age of

council politics the dialect of factionalism began to be shaped not merely on the lines of mutually beneficial patron client network rather a strong sense of ideological pragmatism became the chief operator in manipulating electoral gains.<sup>24</sup> The first minor political party i.e. the Bengal branch of the Swaraj Party was established on the second model where the clients or the followers supported it not for petty personal benefits, but in response to the ideology of a particular leader like C R Das. A close look at the Das' recruits in Bengal would expose that three of his young lieutenants Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta (J M Sengupta) of Chiagoing, Birendranath Sasmal (B N Sasmal) of Midnapore and Subhas Bose of Calcutta worked as a second rank leadership under Das. Although Sen Gupta had a great adherence to Gandhim and Subhas Bose, he had shown strong inclination to militant revolutionary spirits. despite his professed obedience to the Gandhian ideology of non violence<sup>25</sup> Both of them were seen to make use of the revolutionaries to reinforce their organization in Bengal.

It is likely to be mentioned that after Das's death (1925) the factional fight between Subhas Bose and J M Sen Gupta became too much acute and the sudden death of the later offered Bose a single walk over in Congress, However, the factional political trends had never lost its significance as far as the Bengali village politics was concerned because here the ideological rift between pro Gandhi and anti Gandhi rural political workers continued for a long period of time. It may be pointed out that the waves of factionalism what C R Das had balanced and checked very diplomatically during his lifetime, now went out of control after his death and this sort of factionalism what Gallagher<sup>26</sup> had made

responsible for the decline of Congress in Bengal, persisted for long in Bengal. Even it remained very much active behind the emergence of different minor political parties in the coming decades in Bengal. This factor to a large extent also engineered the course of Muslim politics in Bengal though the paradigm was different in case of this backward majority.

The birth of the Swaraj Party might not be viewed as a dramatic one. The spirit of forming a separate party was culminating when Congress entered into a new genre of political action in the 1920s. Immediately after the Gaya session of the Congress (1922) C R Das declared his resignation of the office of the Congress President and on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1923 the Swaraj Party was organized within the Congress with C R Das, as President and Motilal Nehru as the secretary of the party. The vulnerability of Das's politics at the Gaya Congress was counterbalanced by the revolutionaries of Bengal but why and how C R Das gained their support was at that time a mystery<sup>27</sup> This nexus, according to the Government was happened to be the 'most dangerous development in Bengal politics.'<sup>28</sup> The emergence of the Swaraj party made the no changer Gandhians upset and serious efforts were made on their parts to have a compromise. The draft was finalized and ratified by the Swarajist leadership at the All India Congress Committee meeting at Allahabad 1923, declared that the minority party would cooperate with the majority party for the constructive programme.<sup>29</sup> The goal of the party was the attainment of *swaraj* and with the slogan of 'speedy attainment of full Dominion Status.

In the manifesto adopted at Allahabad on 22 February, 1923, it was stated that:

The immediate object of the Party is the speedy attainment of full Dominion Status... The party will set up national candidates throughout the country to contest and secure the seats in the Legislative Council and the Assembly.... They will, when they are elected, present on behalf of the country, its legitimate demands as formulated by the party... for their acceptance and fulfillment within a reasonable time by the Government. If the demands are not granted... occasion will then arise, for the elected members of this Party, to adopt a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction within the Council with a view to make the Government through the councils impossible..<sup>30</sup>

Das moved to win over the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and ‘ by the third quarter of 1923 C R Das had succeeded in capturing the Bengal Congress.<sup>31</sup> The triumph of the Swarajist in the election of Bengal Legislative Council late in 1923 made the Bengal Congress virtually swamped by the pro- changers that the *Statesman* wrote “ Bengal had declared itself Swarajist. In every kind of Bengal constituency, the Swarajists have triumphed”.<sup>32</sup> However, the rapid advancement of a minor political party like the Swaraj Party was not possible by one-man leadership only. The composition of this party demonstrated that its success story was written by many yet the actual plot came from C R Das who himself was from the section of upper middle class. Like the other parts of India the more sophisticated upper middle class people drew closer to the Swarajists in Bengal. The so called Big Five Tulsi Goswami, B C Roy, Nirmal Chander Chunder, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Sarat Chandra Bose were the supporting pillar of this party along with some young politicians with hidden potentials. The social homogeneity in its

leadership fortified the party but an unusual and mysterious combination of landed aristocrats, big businessmen, and lawyers proved to be fatal for this party in a long run. This Party paid true attention to the peasants and labour causes. Das's vow of 'swaraj for the 98 percent' attracted a good number of Congressmen both from the cities and *mufussil* but to what extent the lower middle classes were won over is a point to be discerned. It was beyond doubt that C R Das moved for incorporating the new Muslim leadership into the arena of Swarajist politics and it helped to remove an aged social stigma in Bengal. Over fifty percent of the Muslim seats in Bengal council were won by the Swarajists in 1923 when the famous Bengal pact had not even been materialized. The bulk of the rank of the party was supplied by the revolutionary parties. With the emergence of the Swaraj Party these people found new avenues of action for a total exploitation of their enthusiasm. C R Das by heart was not a supporter of militarism but he found in the revolutionary groups a readymade source for supplying cadres for his party while the revolutionaries of Bengal had taken the Swarajist political activity as a coat-of-nail to carry on their programmes. In this case both of the sides were benefited. The revolutionaries on the one hand tried to use the Congress as a camouflage to fulfill their dream, the Swarajists on the other hand became indebted to the revolutionary parties for the success of the Swaraj party at the Bengal council. Das's intimacy with these people never gave his party a clean chit as far as the suspicion of the government was concerned. To what extent Das was successful in channelising these people remained less important whereas his alliance with this people became the headache of some Congress leaders that a certain amount of misunderstanding grew between Das and Gandhi who was not at all

ready to spare the violent activities even if they selflessly sacrificed their lives in various occasions.

The differences between Das's faction and Gandhian faction in the Bengal Congress became heightened in various occasions. When at the Cocanada Congress in December 1923 the proposed Bengal Pact was placed as a national one, serious controversies came to pass in and outside the Congress. Unfortunately at this point in time Bengal once again found her voice choked before the mainstream of national movement because a large number of Bengali Congress leaders scared to get out-of-the-way if the proposal which was made particularly on the interest of Bengal, would not get proper consideration from Gandhi. The Gopinath Saha resolution again moved up some sort of resentment between the two. The Government hold Das responsible for the insurgencies in Bengal particularly for the Gopinath Saha incident.<sup>33</sup> When the Bengal Provincial Conference at Sirajganj paid homage to the self sacrificing martyr Gopinath Saha, European community became very much sure that the Swaraj party had encouraged and was encouraging political assassinations and intimidations.<sup>34</sup> Not only the Europeans but criticism also arose from different corners of the Gandhian Congress also. As a result, at the All India Congress Committee conference at Ahmadabad, Gandhi threw an open challenge to the Swarajists holding offices in the Congress.<sup>35</sup> and had published his own Gopinath Saha resolution, which defeated Das's amendment on the resolution by a short margin of eight votes. This voting according to Gandhi was an eye opener to him even if the amendment in his opinion 'was in breach of the Congress creed' and 'the policy of non violence'<sup>36</sup>

he apprehend, was wearing down of soil beneath his feet at least in Bengal.

At the end of 1924 some agreements were permitted between Das and Gandhi on the basis of the Calcutta Pact and it allowed both the factions to work from the Congress organization in their own ways though on the point of council entry differences persisted. Realizing the futility of the boycott Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, "I am just as keen a believer as ever in the five boycotts, but. ... Whilst we maintain them in our persons, there is no atmosphere for working them"<sup>37</sup> In fact very tactfully Gandhi organized the All India Spinners Association for the orthodox followers to carry on the programmes like *charkha* and other constructive programmes while maintaining enough place for the Swarajists on the official platform of the Congress. This changing approach of Gandhi surprised many leaders of Bengal including Subhas Bose for whom 'it may be that he found that the position of the Swarajists to be too strong in the country to be able to over through them and so he bowed to the inevitability'<sup>38</sup> or Gandhi realized the call for a change in tactics in changed circumstances. Gandhi's growing closeness with Das turned the wind in Bengal and after his visit in Bengal his influence began to rise undoubtedly, as pointed out by D G Tendulkar, "He own the hearts of every section of the society"<sup>39</sup> Time was changing rapidly and the no changer devotees of Gandhi found no justification in this policy of compromise because the Swarajists according to them were neither faithful in constructive programme, nor in non violence, therefore any sort of adjustment with this party would change the course of Gandhian politics in Congress. Gandhi tried to mitigate this criticism of his

followers by issuing statements at the Belgaum Congress in favour of his action <sup>40</sup> but it failed to satisfy neither the orthodox Gandhians nor a section of the allies of Das particularly the revolutionaries who were anxious of seeing Das surrendering to Gandhi. A section of the leading newspapers openly paid their concern for this 'artificial' and 'inorganic' union between C R Das's *swaraj* which 'is essentially a political concept', while the concept of *satyagraha* as enumerated by Gandhi 'is essentially a religious ethical movement'<sup>41</sup> The effort of reconciliation between this incompatible elements was to ruin the Congress ultimately because the *Bengali* repented, 'He (Gandhi) had sold the Congress as a political organization to the Swarajists.... he has killed the Congress'.<sup>42</sup> Whatever might be the actual nature of the situation, it offered some best suitable solution for C R Das who after getting vary much 'anxious for an early settlement with the Indian political problem,'<sup>43</sup> tried to have a better constitutional system favorable for political settlements. In his own word 'we are determined to secure swaraj and political emancipation of India on terms of equality and honorable partnership in the empire'.<sup>44</sup>

C R Das was neither a rebel nor a opportunist and he was acquainted with it well that, what he had done after the Gaya session, 1922, was to strengthen the Congress as an organization. It was not acceptable to everyone. Being very pragmatic in policy and methods, he did not forget to make the proper diagnosis of the existing political situation and prescribed a suitable medicine for a constant revitalization of the Congress. He recognized that unity rather than rivalry could alleviate differences between these two fraternal organizations and a sense of fellow feeling only could heal the injuries increasing day by day upon the

Congress. Clarifying his stand in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1925, he said, "We want to construct a system which can be work with success and we enable us to do good to the masses."<sup>45</sup> When asked about the intention as to why he preferred to destroy the council, he said "this rotten structure is occupying the place where a beautiful mansion may be erected... we want to destroy in order that we may be able to build up"<sup>46</sup> Das expected to get some positive response from the British but no complete announcement had made about constitutional reforms in India. In his presidential speech at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Faridpur(1925) Das stood for Dominion Status, denounced revolutionary violence, supported Gandhian sculpt of constructive programme and promised cooperation with the Government on the basis of some considerations.<sup>47</sup> By welcoming Das's speech Gandhi wooed the Swarajists while the Congress circle turned out to be apprehensive that "Gandhi by a series of obiter dicta adopted the Swarajists as his attorneys and political representatives... yielded more and more...that he effaced himself and a complete surrender".<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless the compromising mood of Das was however condemned by the revolutionaries. His offer of friendship to the British received cold reaction and at the Faridpur conference revolutionary leaflets were circulated in criticism of Das and his party.<sup>49</sup> The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1925 described his policy as a 'neo moderate' policy and Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay described Das's speech as a triumph for the Moderates in an article published in the monthly journal *Basumati* (*Asad*, 1932 B E).<sup>50</sup> It can not be denied that the opposition of the revolutionaries lobbed him in poor health that it was somehow not viable for him to retain control over the revolutionaries at a time maintaining cordial relationship with

the British. After realizing the real nature of mere obstructionist tactics useless in keeping the lawlessness and repression on check, Das 'speeded up the drift towards constitutional opposition and cooperation in the Swaraj Party'<sup>51</sup>. But with his untimely death in 1925 the escalation and development of the Swaraj Party came to a standstill. His death coincided with an epochal change in Bengal politics that the fragile balance of power between the different political groupings, so far had been trapped under his personal capabilities, now came to be bankrupted into fragments and very soon simmering factionalism broke out in more virulent form. In Broomfield's opinion the Swaraj Party which was 'itself largely *Bhadralok* in composition' builded up a popular following by providing accessible symbols to the masses without offending the *Bhadraloks*<sup>52</sup>, now fall into a 'sudden expose of a status group (*Bhadralok* elite) to political extinction or in the disruption of balanced social aggrements.<sup>53</sup>

After the demise of Deshbandhu the Swaraj Party own an undiluted victory in moving the entire national organization under them. But they were not in a position to carry with them this newly gained potency of continuing Non-Cooperation into the Legislature with extra vehemence. Infact their previous performances were not at all satisfactory in terms of making the Government tense or stirring reactions among the public. It is here necessary to have a quick look over the earlier functioning of the party in Bengal. With the coming of Mahatma Gandhi all shades of people representing various classes and sections of the Indian society come up to the fold of the Congress. Gradually some groups and factions, the goal of which was the same to achieve freedom, came to get operated

within the Congress during Gandhian era. The Swaraj Party emerged, as a protest movement against Gandhi by C R Das and Motilal Nehru in front, however, in every respect Gandhi was considered to be the worthiest exponent of freedom in Bengal also. What stuck Das most was the limit of Civil Disobedience as to the unlawful laws, instituted under the guise of 'law' and order; and he thought that the cause of justice could be served better by challenging those legislations from within the council. The stand of the Swarajists produced deep fissure in the Congress rank and the conference of the AICC at Gaya and Das declared, "I have no other alternative, as I can not associate my self with most of the resolutions passes in the last session of the Congress....it is my duty to tender my resignation."<sup>54</sup>

A severance within the Congress was almost definite. Gandhi's disappearance along with his discredited magic brought some more sensitive elements like the no changers, the pro changers and the responsive cooperationists in the political forefront.<sup>55</sup> Moulana Azad tried for an concurrence between the two parties but it was in vain. The position of Gandhi was quite interesting. In June 1922 Gandhi preferred for a declaration of the original boycott programme so that those who did not uphold the council boycott plan were required to resign from the AICC. Das being the Congress president in 1922-23 failed to mould the Gandhian opponents on the line of his Swarajist programme. Gandhi in 1924 admitted that the Swarajists represented a very strong body of public opinion in favor of council entry and the 'no changers should believe that the proper place for the Swarajists is inside the councils and not outside.'<sup>56</sup> In spite of these, Gandhite Congress men in Bengal

opposed Das in each single way and in July 1924 some of them formed their own organization, the Bengal Non-Cooperation League. After the establishment of the Swaraj Party, rural Gandhians who strongly believed in the reconstruction of the villages became busy in local *khadi* centers and other constructive works, far away from the city based electoral turbulence. Here one thing must have to be cleared that the Gandhians were not a homogenized consolidated group against the Swarajists rather differences existed among them. The Gandhian constructive works characterized by a degree of difference in patronage, local bonding, pattern of works were under taken by different rural Gandhian centers <sup>57</sup> If this was the picture in the country side the educated city based Bengalis as mentioned earlier remained less enthusiastic about Gandhian programme and the so-called leaders tried their best to capture the control over Bengal Congress. These 'Gandhians' had capitalized the political vacuum created after the arrest of Das during the visit of the Prince of Wales at Calcutta. In the long run Das tactfully mobilized the AICC, which extended its hand towards Das thereby leaving the Gandhian no changers in disarray. This success of Das was further emphasized by the defeat of most of Moderates in the election of 1923 and Lord Litton faced serious difficulties while searching for some popular personalities for the post of the ministers because 'there were no personality whom all the members of the Moderate party – if party it could be called- accepted as leaders'. <sup>58</sup> This decline of the Moderates definitely gave some new impetus to the Swarajists and their understanding with the Independent Nationalists <sup>59</sup> and it was proved to be beneficial in near future.

The absence of any Hindu minister moved two Moderated in favour of the Swarajists on the question of rejecting the salaries of two Muslim ministers and when discussions were tuned in high on the issue of implementing the Bengal Pact (that is giving 60% of all government posts to the Muslims once self government would be attained) not only the Muslim Swarajists voted with their fellow Hindu *Swarajits*, but H S Suhrawarthy, a Muslim Independent Nationalist defended Das and his goodwill. Though the Independent Nationalists did not endow with full-fledged support for a Hindu Muslim Pact, they assisted the Swarajists on other issues in the council. The consensus between the Swarajists and the Independent Nationalists helped in counter balancing the vicious circle against Das and his action to a greater extent.

This adjustment of the Swaraj Party with the Nationalists though not on ideological basis but on the basis of need, made Das able to safe and sound an absolute majority. This confidence accelerated the actions of his party in later years, like the control of the Calcutta Corporation in 1924. Indeed Das monopolized a measure of support from the politically conscious Muslims, the stimulus of which came from the alliance of the Swaraj Party with the *Khilafat* Committee in Bengal. Although such a alliance was necessary for the then Bengal, it came to be shattered after the closing down of *Khilafat* in 1924. This adjustment between two 'strangers' however was not politically in correct and it failed to sustain its earlier success that the Swaraj Party could not get the Muslim masses on their side while campaigning against the new Bengal ordinance.<sup>60</sup> C R Das asked on the floor of the council, 'Does the application of this lawless laws, these repressive orders, executive decrees – can it possibly

put an end to revolutionary movements? In the history of the world has revolution been ever checked by repressive legislation?'<sup>61</sup> The Swarajists won the battle at last but it had left the Muslim question exposed. Sectional or sectarian symptoms were already appearing on the communal physis of Bengal, now the question of numerical preponderance being a standard of attaining political power hit the structure upon which the communal symphony was composed in Bengal. What is interesting that none of the sections representing the Muslims from both in and outside Calcutta were united on principle rather factional disputes was as common like the Congress among these groups. A concordance between conflicting interests achieved among the non Swarajist members in the council could have been resolved in a tendency for using numerical superiority as a mere passport to get political domination. Surprisingly the Government encouraged their efforts as J.H Broomfield points out 'in the hope of securing tactical advantages in its own political defence.'<sup>62</sup> The support of the Muslim Swarajists and the assistance of the revolutionaries acted as the two main pillar of this party in its earlier stage. Gradually the signs of disintegration became evident and new crisis began to change the priorities of Bengal politics. The phase of Gandhian challenge was almost in decay at least on methodological grounds, the heresy of council entry was on the way to get resolved. What now amplified the crisis was the tripartite contest between B. N Sasmal, Subhas Chandra Bose and J M Sen Gupta for the domination of Calcutta Corporation. Whether caste or any other aspects as such catalytically ruined Sasmal's chance of becoming the chief executive officer of the Corporation was an overrated subject, still a question of mark could definitely be put before the entire episode as why

Das had shifted his stand when Sasmal was pushed back and why he failed to give any satisfactory answer to Sasmal when was asked for some justifications for the humiliation he passed off. <sup>63</sup> This type of 'authoritarian', 'inflexible' politics of the Hindu *bhadralok* smashed the reputation of the Swaraj Party as well as of the Bengal Congress. The discrepancy between high caste elite and the rising low caste *bhadralok* in and out side Calcutta gave way to the rural -urban dichotomy resulting in another tried of factional dispute inside the Corporation. There were faction within factions <sup>64</sup> and Das successfully managed to keep the ball rolling so that the factors like caste, community or place of origin could not get a foothold in the course of decision-making process in Bengal politics. But this was nothing more than a momentary engagement because very soon the Corporation was converted into a bargaining bag in which every one was looking for their share. The contemporary language of politics could easily be utilized by sectarian forces in maneuvering the majority of the Muslims that they had done a mistake in joining the Swaraj Party. <sup>65</sup> Their discontentment was augmented further when the party failed to satisfy the demands of the Muslims regarding appointments in the Corporation <sup>66</sup>, in terms of the statutory provision for representation in Municipalities as envisaged by the Bengal Pact. According to *Muslim Hitaishi*, the Muslims should for the time being detach themselves from the main stream of struggle and should extort all their rights from the Hindus by taking a separate stand. <sup>67</sup> An under guised wicked mechanism was on the way of disrupting the Swaraj Party. The political mandate, which this party received from the electorate, did not have any connection with communal and religious matter and it was expected that the party would function just on the basis of which it had

fought the election. On the other the craze for government services was not over. The spirit of non-cooperation with the legislature came to be proved idealistic because the advanced community already had shown to what extent they could go for maintaining their political dominance in Bengal. The preeminence of the Calcutta based high caste politician limited the sphere of a mass political party at the cost of a smooth but speedy alienation of the provincial politicians particularly of the low castes in origin.

Whenever the popularity of a city based mass leader began to push him into the courtier of city politics, the difficulties and inner tension of urban politics seemed to have been poignant enough to expose the inherent weaknesses of city centrism. It was unfortunate that the support base of a provincial leader time to time was going to be converted in a 'reservoir of numbers' from where the materials of popular support could easily be extorted whenever there was a need to demonstrate it.<sup>68</sup> Europeans on the verge of this problem drew local factional rivalries into the broader arena of caste and class antagonisms that was getting a communal colour rapidly. CR Das being a master in the art of forging alliances and making understandings among various interests put together a coalition of several forces including high caste professionals from Calcutta, rural leaders of popular movements, business magnates, labour organizations and the revolutionary cadres. The status quo was maintained by giving representation at the Swarajist camp. The inner deficiency of the frazil alliances was impending to get exposed and when the clock started moving back, the Europeans desperately jumped to take advantage of the condition. They manipulated those elements which were thrown to the

edge of frustration resulting from the on going clash of city and *muffosil*. The Europeans banked on this clash to gain a readymade support against the Congress by drumming up the alienated elements. The Muslims and the lower caste Hindus<sup>69</sup> were victimized to an extent that the communal riots of 1926 soon spoiled the process of nationalist coalition carefully constructed by Das. Bengal was passing through the most unpleasant moment within a year of C R Das's bereavement. The power catcher cliques centering round the leadership in Congress brought out in the open the hollowness of Bengal Congress vis-à-vis the Swaraj Party.

### **Swarajists on the popular fronts**

The weakness of the Swaraj Party in representing the interest of the peasants and laborers had worsened its practicability as a mass political organization. Before going into this episode it is important to have a glance over the Gandhian model of mass politics on the basis of which later developments received its core impetus. The three movements (Ahmedabad, Kheda, Champaran) Gandhi led in 1917-18 were 'sub political' according to Judith brown<sup>70</sup>, they on the whole proved to be the harbinger of Gandhian mass politics. A deeper insight into this period focused on the streams of forces which were concomitant in channelising the mass politics in the early twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If one may be categorized as Gandhian model of mass politics under the banner of a all India organization, the second received its stimulus from the international Communist movement which emphasized that the salvation of India was nothing less than a proletarian revolution.<sup>71</sup> But these men were astonished to see the defects of an abstract idealism on which the Gandhian Congress was moving. Neither it had any economic

programme to carry on the masses with them, nor did it hesitate to give shelter to the *zaminders* and millionaires thereby overlooking the interests of the poverty stricken workers and peasants. In Bengal confusion and controversies devoured the political mind that the idea of mass involvement was soon to come into clash with land and industrial interests. The commercial and trading classes rose to prominence after the rise of Gandhi and it clashed with the long-standing supremacy of the Bengali intellectuals lacking any actual commercial interest. Gandhi's contact with the business community aggravated difficulties for those energetic cadres who already had opted for organizing pickets and *hartals* against the will of the commercial populace. Gandhi's cautious move regarding the participation of the peasants and laborers into any political action ruined the hopes for a joint stand and different socio political ideologies were put across the unfinished work by simply moving the toiling masses around itself. C.R. Das tried his best to carry on the task of channelising the cultivating and working class in a proper way, but in a province like Bengal where the majority of the peasantry and a large section of mill laborers were Muslims, the success of his attempt was likely in a blue moon.

The non-cooperators definitely utilized the grievances of the workers and formed trade unions to give expression to them. The non-cooperators themselves were benefited by proving their worth as leaders of a mass movement but lack of experience in controlling the labor unrest shifted the forces of their movement from their real interest of the laborers to a mere political agitation. Gandhi himself had strong conviction about using the labor causes for political ends that they did not want to include

the strikes within the network of non-violent non-cooperation. During the Chandpur affair C R Das actively scored a high energy in channeling the railway and steamer strikes for a national purpose though these 'strike mania' as noticed by F Andrews pushed eastern Bengal on the very border line of violence. C.R Das accounted for a natural merger of the sectarian labor movements in the national movement represented by the Congress and hoped for a synthesis between the clashing interests of capital and labor.<sup>72</sup> He had good faith in organizing workers within the Congress. In clear cut way Das approached his fellow Congressmen to organize the toiling forces under a strong workable committee unless the laborers and peasants would set up their own organization by disassociating themselves 'from the cause of *swaraj*, which will inevitably bring them within the arena of peaceful revolutionary class struggle.'<sup>73</sup> Some scholars may find here the narrowing down of labour politics by determining their course of action within the *bhadralok* nationalist paradigm where the workers were denied to be represented by themselves rather by their propertied countrymen.<sup>74</sup> In India from the very beginning the leadership of the workers' movement was taken by the petty bourgeoisie intellectuals and it is a undeniable fact that these leaders contributed to the development of trade union movement in India. Even though Das and Gandhi both reacted differently to the need of mobilizing workers for nationalist cause they were determined to avoid all forms of a class conflict as far as possible. Gandhi had no belief in class analysis. To him all evils were within the machine itself hence neither he considered capitalist ownership as a curse on the society with industrial advance nor he justified any forms of class antagonism because any miss understanding between the labour and the owner could be

solved, he believed, through arbitration. It is here that the trade unions could function in a positive way and when the all India Trade union Congress came into being, he endeavored to keep aloof this association from any kind of activity that would lead the workers into violent politics and in class conflicts.<sup>75</sup> C R Das on the other wanted to politicize the workers for using them as a base in institutional politics. During the non-cooperation movement C R Das promoted the workers by involving them into strikes in European concerns while the Gandhians in Bengal tried to minimize the sphere of workers' politics within the jute mills. The Bengal Central Labour Federation or BCLF was established with the initiative of the *Khilsafatists* in 1921 and this organization in an true Gandhian fashion offered to settle strikes in the mills all the way through negotiations. In consequence with the all India politics as framed by Gandhi, the BCLF leaders like Shyam Sundar Banerjee, Jitendra Lal Banerjee and Md Mashin opposed the participation of workers in political struggle and condemned the Chandpur strike in east Bengal backed by C R Das. They in fact considered the workers totally 'unfit' for non violence struggle because of the evil effects of the industrial civilization where the charm of free simple pastoral life had replaced by the 'brutalized conditions in mills and factories where passions and prejudices find full play'<sup>75</sup>. In reality the workers did not sit dumb, they exacted pressure on the leaders to consider their strike as a part and parcel of the movements toward *swaraj*, but what they expected brought nothing satisfactory and gradual mass upsurge among the workers alienated themselves from the Gandhian trade unionists.<sup>76</sup> The detachment between the workers and Gandhi-led BCLF made the situation easier for CR Das and by the middle of December 1921 a huge

number of jute workers started courting arrest under the leadership of Das. <sup>77</sup>The large-scale participation of the workers in the nationalist agitation doomed the prospect of the BCLF, while the panic of a unbridled mass uprising threatened the elite leadership in the Congress. Despite the rapid decline of communal amity at the level of elite leadership in post Non-Cooperation era, the workers marched for defending their interests by fitting themselves into the Communist political avenues.

National Congress in India never considered the working classes as the most potentially charged force to be properly used against capital and imperialism rather they paid a very scant attention towards this vast unrecognized mass. Even when the first all India organization of the Indian labor, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was formed, the Congress showed nothing but negligence towards this organization and it became evident from the fact that the Nagpur Session (December, 1920) of the Congress, held after two months from the formation of the AITUC remained silent on the organization and tried to determine the labour question from their own view point. Gandhi's dislike and his aversion towards AITUC limited its scope of getting all round acceptability, although a change of mind very soon altered the situation when in 1922 a committee was formed to help the AITUC in expanding its activity among the labourers. J M Sengupta the leading man <sup>78</sup> from Bengal joined this committee. The Congress connection with the AITUC was not a natural affair. As soon as the leaders like CR Das, Subhas Bose or Jawaharlal Nehru became involved with the AITUC, the seeds of later day contradictions began to mature in the form of a ideological conflict

between their principle of class collaboration and the in-style philosophy of class struggle. C R Das sought to utilize his new political rhetoric 'swaraj for 98%' to get the labourers in confidence when at the conference of the AITUC in Lahore; he announced 'labour represents 98% of the population of India when we consider that labor also includes the peasants'.<sup>79</sup> Das's strategy of popularizing his policy of council entry among the masses hit the target and he swept the poll in 1923 including those constituents where the electorate constituted a good number of mill employees like in the industrial belt of Barrackpore where Swarajist candidate Dr B C Roy defeated well known Moderate Surendranath Banerjee with large margin. In spite of strong orientation for the labour issues the Swaraj Party failed to identity itself with the labor causes and in reality turned its attention towards the organized world of institutional politics where 'elite conflict' soon paved the path for a wider sectarian conflict.

Indian political scenario in the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had exposed to a peculiar ambivalence of the doctrine of class being parochially resolved in some readymade justifications. The inadequacy of the Bourgeoisie party in legitimating the class question precipitated a through change for cultivating the worker peasant causes in an autonomous way. But as this mean unleashing a horizontal movement of the worker peasant masses against the imperial lords and against the stereotypes of stern exploiting pattern drafted by the foreign and native capitalist class along with the feudal allies. It was however a sumptuous risk for the higher class leadership to emboss the revolutionary activities of the workers and peasant masses. The Swaraj Party experienced the same sort of fate. They

were energetic enough in breaking the post non-cooperation dead lock, but their physiological bankruptcy in legitimizing the worker peasant question in side and out side the legislature enervated their movement of 'swaraj for 98%'. As soon as the British Government realized the isolation of the party from the masses they looked for every possible chances of exercising their imperial motives. In the post Non Cooperation era, situation in Bengal as well India was very much ripe for experimenting Socialism when the Communist party of India sent a programme at the Gaya session of the Congress in 1922. In relation to this it is here important to refocus on why and how this emerging party first stepped in the official politics of India. It was definitely M N Roy who first lit the lamp of an Indian Communist Party, but the Communist movement was not at all a one-man show because the other Indian revolutionaries who had connection with Moscow were Birendranath Chattopadhyay, Dr Bhupendranath Dutta and Abani Mukherjee and many others.<sup>80</sup> One of the foremost emissaries of Roy in India was Nalini Gupta about whom one secret imperial record referred, " It was through his efforts that the Communist center in Calcutta came into being."<sup>81</sup> Not only this, the so-called father figure of Bengal Communism Muzaffar Ahmed, as these sources mentioned, was converted to Communism when Gupta second time visited India in 1922 and made contact with Ahmed,<sup>81</sup> although Ahmed discarded any kind of influence of Gupta in him while entering into the camp of Communism.<sup>83</sup> In 1922 infact two streams of thought was centering round the embryonic Communist movement. One was to carry on a definite struggle and the other was to function within the Congress as a separate socialist trend. Whether the Bengal revolutionaries were genuinely mesmerized by the

creed of Communism or they were the just fortune seekers that to obtain money and arms from Soviet Russia, remains a matter to be resolved, but the links of the *Yugantar* and *Anushilan* members with Roy added a great stimuli to the rank and file of the emerging Communists in Bengal and vice versa. Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukherjee helped in relating the small Communist bodies with the Comintern and at the Ahmadabad Session of the Congress a new idea was vented with the distribution of the Roy's manifesto.

The Leninist theory of 'alliance of worker with peasants' constituted one of the chief postulates of Roy's thesis and in C R Das he found the person he was searching for influencing the economic programme of the Congress. The rise of the Swaraj Party appeared to him as a milestone in the development of leftism in Congress political platform. M N Roy was moved by the charisma of C R Das whose liberal ideas were already developed even before the Russian Revolution. Das's speeches <sup>84</sup>, his involvement with the labor movements and above all his close proximity with the revolutionaries styled him in a Communist fashion at least in the eyes of Roy. In reality Das was opposed to Communism at a time retaining real interest in organizing the working class movement. The rejection of Roy's programme for a progressive economic reform at the Gaya session as well as the defeat of the Das's faction indicated the failure of the first Communist attempt to capture and move the Congress for a new methodological experimentation.<sup>85</sup> Roy's critic of Gandhi met with some new dimensions after the abrupt curtailment of the Non Cooperation movement, the real reason behind was the emerging clash of

interests among the diverse elements within the Congress which was silently marching towards a struggle between the classes. The then situation in India offered Roy a stronger conviction upon which Lenin once differed with him. His justifications for why in India and in other relatively advanced colonial countries bourgeoisie force could not be a revolutionary force began to get weightage within the dialectic of Indian society under which the Gandhian version of politics got formulated. The very settled and at a time opportunist rhetoric of the dominant class was bound to determine the actions of Gandhi whose being imagining as *Mahatma* opened up avenues, according to Roy, for him to impose his 'reactionary ideas' on an 'objectively revolutionary movement composed of backward masses.'<sup>86</sup> The sudden abandonment of the Non-Cooperation movement opened up two paths of the national movement. One could be council entry or could be a wide spread mass struggle, the later was steered by Roy and accordingly at Gaya session Singaravelu Chettair endeavored to publicize Communist programmes as the first Communist speaking at a Congress session. An emerging minor political party vehemently sought the support of a major party in implementing a different course of action. With sheer disappointment , Roy in an article at *Inprecor* , confessed ' we sought to strengthen the hand of the left wing but only succeeded in frightening it.'<sup>87</sup> Roy aimed to give a twist in the Congress policy in a fashion of trial and error, a risk factor was prevalent from end to end. In a letter to Singaravelu before the session he avowed 'My plan is to have the programme complete before the Congress at Gaya and struggle for its acceptance there. If we succeed in this we will have the Congress. If not we will have to adopt a new line of action, vis the organization of a new mass party.'<sup>88</sup> Even after the Gaya

session, the dilemma of Roy was not over. He was still hopeful to persuade C R Das to make a return from the policy of council entry to the original idea of 'swaraj for the masses'.<sup>89</sup> Later when Das formed the Swaraj Party Roy characterized it as 'neo constitutional' thereby condemning C R Das as 'declassed'. All of these events indicated the need for a 'left wing party with a clear consciousness of its social nature' and a second split in the Congress was necessary according to Roy, to separate 'revolutionary forces from the embrace of the right wing'.<sup>90</sup>

## Notes and References

1. Gitasree Bandyopadhyay, *Constraints in Bengal Politics; 1921-1941, Gandhian Leadership*, Calcutta, 1984, p.ix.
2. Leonard Gordon, *Bengal; The Nationalist Movement*, Delhi, 1974,p.191
3. Bipin Chandra Pal moved the amendment. It proposed a mission to England to present the Congress demands and it asked for the formation of a representative committee to devise a non-cooperation programme suitable to various provinces. C. C Biswas, *Bengal's Response to Gandhi*, Kolkata, 2004, p.80
4. In this connection Jawaharlal Nehru has argued that Chittaranjan Das led the opposition not because of any apathy towards the spirit behind the resolution but because he 'objected to the boycott of the new legislatures.' Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, New Delhi, 1962, p.64
5. N. K Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, Ahmadabad, 1975, n, 10, p.44
6. R Copland, *The Indian Problem*, New York, 1944, Part III, pp.23-24
7. For details see Papia, Chakrabarty, *Hindu Response to Nationalist Ferment*, Calcutta, 1992, pp.3-7, pp.65-100

8. Leonard Gordon., *op.cit*, p.296

9. This group of people commonly known as *bhadralok* was drawn mainly from the three upper castes of *Brahmin*, *Baidya* and *Kyastha*. The contemporary British administrators defined *bhradralok* as 'disposition of caste tempered by matriculation'. This definition does not reveal the socio economic background of *bhadraloks* and the alternative term offered instead – 'the middle class'. See Bidyut Chakraborty , *Subhas Chandra Bose and Middle class Radicalism, A study in Indian Nationalism : 1928-1940*, 1990. S.N Mukherjee, *Bhadaralok in Bengali Language and Literature; An Essay on the Understanding of Caste and Status*, in *Bengal Past and present*, Vol.181, 1976. J H Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society; Tweenth Century Bengal*, Barkley, 1968.

10. Rajat Kanta Roy, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal; 1875-1927*, New Delhi,1984, p.375

11. Here two different political domain indicate the organized world of government, parties legislature etc and the unorganized world of politics i.e. politics of the common masses particularly of the peasant communities. The organized world of politics incorporates the processes around the state while the unorganized world of politics lies outside the institutional state apparatus. See Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal Politics and the Muslim masses, 1920-1947* in *Journal of the Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 13,1, March 1982 and Bidyut Chakraborty, *op.cit*, pp.5-6

12. J H Broomfield, *The Social and Institutional Bases of Politics in Bengal, 1906- 1947*, p.139 in Richard. Van. M Baumer (ed) *Aspects of Bengali-history and Society*, New Delhi, 1976
13. Leonard Gordon, *op.cit*, p.298
14. *Bengalee* , 10 September, p. 298
15. This committee was formed by the All India Congress committee after the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement in order to consider the question whether the Congress could accept Civil Disobedience in any form after the suspension of aggressive activities
16. *The Bengalee*, Editorial, 10 September 1920
17. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Towards Freedom*, Boston, 1958, pp.110-111
18. Prithwis Chandra Ray Choudhury, *Life and Times of C R Das: The Story of Bengal's Self Expression*, London, 1927
19. *Ibid*. Also see Gopal Krishna, *The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organization in Journal of the Asian Studies*, Vol.25, n.3, 1966.

20. See Hemendranath Das Gupta, *Chittaranjan Das*, Delhi, 1960, n.41, p.48
21. Nipendra Chandra Banerjee, *Crossroads*, pp.216, 300-301, cited in Leonard Gordon., *op.cit*, p.176
22. I B 1920, Non Cooperation Movement in Bengal, January 1921.
23. For details see Goutam Chattopadhyay,*op.cit*,pp.68-88
24. See Bidyut Chakrabourty, *op.cit*, pp.101-105
25. *Ibid*, p.102
26. Gallagher John, *Congress in Decline; Bengal 1930-1939*, in *Modern Asian Studies*, 7.3, 1973, p.281
27. GI, Home Department, Political File No.61 of 1924.
28. GI Home Department, Political File no.379/VII (part-II) of 1924
29. AICC File No.14/1923, NMML, New Delhi
30. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol.1, PP.254-55

31. Goutam Chattopadhyay, *Bengal Electoral Politics and Freedom Struggle; 1862-1947*, Delhi, 1984, p.55
32. *The Statesman*, Calcutta, 1 December 1923
33. *Indian Annual Registrar*, 1925, Vol. I, p.87
34. At the Bengal Council J .M Sengupta clamored for an early repeal of the ordinance otherwise he declared, the *Swarajists* would continue their wholesale opposition. The 1925 Bill that replaced the ordinance increased the power of the Government to suppress the terrorists. *Indian Annual Registrar*, 1925, Vol. I, pp.174-176
35. Gandhi's statement on Congress organization issued at the AICC session at Ahmadabad declared that the executive organization of the Congress should not contain members of legislative bodies because who, according to Gandhi, do not believe in Congress policy should set out of the executive bodies. *Indian Annual Registrar*, 1924, I, 604 (a), See Leonard Gordon, *op.cit*, pp.198-99
36. *Indian Annual Registrar*, 1924, I 629, see Leonard Gordon. *op.cit*. p.201
37. 'The Realities', in *Young India*, 11 September 1924
38. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, 1920-1948, n.21, p.102

39..D.G Tendulkar, *Mahatma; Life Of Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi*, n.16, Vol. II,New Delhi,1988 p.187

40. Referring to the agreements between the *Swarajists* and himself, Gandhi stated ‘ many no changers regarded it as a lapse if not a betrayal....it is in the interest of the country to give the Swaraj Party the fullest possible chance of working out its own programme without let or hindrance from no changers. The later are not bound to participate in its activity, if they do not like it...the Swaraj Party is a party of orderly progress. It may not swear by non violence as I do but it accepts non violence as a policy and it discountenances violence because it considers it to be useless, if not even harmful.’ For details see D G Tendulkar, *op.cit*, n.16, Vol,II, pp.166-168.

41. *The Bengalee*, 3 January 1925, cited in C .C Biswas, *op.cit*, p.116

42. *Ibid.*

43. According to the biographer of Das, he wanted to utilize the machinery of government in the service of the people. Regarding the council entry Gandhi expressed that he would follow constructive methods to get some profitable out put in spite of following the policy of opposition, if he enter the council. One may find proximities between Gandhi and what Das actually was experimenting at that time but it is in vague whether Das was influenced by Gandhi or not. Hemendranath Das Gupta, *op.cit*, n.41, pp.118-119 see also C. C Biswas, *op.cit*, p.117, n.162

44. P C Roy, *Life and Times of C R Das*, London, 1927, p.201

45. M R Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, Bombay, 1959, Vol II, p.587, cited in Gitasree Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit*, p.105

46. A leaflet called *Babbar Katha* accused the party in the way that, to safe guard their own existence and to hide their own miseries, they have brought a means of compromise –they have not got the power to disobey the law and they are not willing to admit their failure either. The leaflet condemned the party for not helping those people who ‘lent their power and influence to the Swaraj Party’ and ultimately have been incarnated without any trial’. GB, I B 1925, Bengal Provincial and other Conferences at Faridpur. File No.585/29.

47. Dilip Kumar Chatterjee, *C R Das and Indian National Movement; a Study in His Political Ideas*, Calcutta, 1965, p.165

48. Leonard. Gordon holds that the pacts and alliances, which Das made during the 1921-1925, were based on his personal sincerity than on party machinery. During his lifetime vicious attempts had been made to crush the communal harmony of the province. As Broomfield noticed from 1924-1926 the Government of Bengal tried to take the communalists in confidence so that no compromise could be ensured between the two communities. Das checked the detraction of communal ties but after his death the prospects of a united action even on a limited basis ended. For details see J. H Broomfield, *Elite conflict in a plural Society; Twentieth Century Bengal*, California, 1968, p. 274

49. Broomfield, *Ibid*, pp.242-43

50. Paul Greenough, *The Death of an Uncrowned king C R Das and political crisis in Tweenth century Bengal*, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol 28, no.3, 1986, p.437

51. Dr P Sitarammya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, ,*op.cit* p. 259

52. J.H Broomfield, *op.cit*.pp.242-43

53. *Ibid*.

54. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Calcutta, 1964, pp.82-83.

55 It was in the form of a Congress Democratic Party was established in 1920 changed its name Responsive Cooperation Party in 1926 to suit the newly created conditions within the Congress. Its eminent leaders were pt Madan Mohan Malaviya ,Dr B S Monjee and B.Chakrabarty. The aim of the party was the attainment of *swaraj* by peaceful means. R K Parashar, *Party Politics in Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 2002, p.78

56.In a speech at the session of the AICC held at Bombay Gandhi clarified certain doubts lurking in the minds of the no changers. S R Bakshi, *Swaraj Party and Gandhi*, Delhi, 1995, pp.157-58; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.25, pp 349ff

57. National education, *khadi* and agriculture were at the pivotal place in Gandhian centers at Bankura. Local *zamindars*, big *jotedars* patronized these efforts at Sonamukhi, Patrasayar, Gangajalghata, and Jaipur. Rich *mahajans* financed the *Swaraj Sevak Sangha* at Barisal in the works like *charkha*, tree planting and national education etc. At Sutahata in Midnapur Gandhians participated in agitation politics and arranged *jatras* on patriotic subjects. See Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal, *Dakshin Paschim Banglai Jatiyatabadi Andolan*, in *Chaturanga*, Vaisakh-Asad, 1384/1977, Hiralal Das Gupta, *Swadhinata Sangrame Barisal*, Calcutta, 1972, Tanika Sarkar, *Bengal; 1928-1934, The Politics of Protest*, 1987, pp.26-31

58. After the first election in 1920 Surendranath Banerjee and his Moderate followers formed a ministerial party including Hindu and Muslim members. After 1923 the Muslim moderates began to get divided into groups and factions. When the *Swarajists* refused office Lytton found that almost every member of the Moderates both from the 11 Hindus and 18 Muslims wanted the office without even recognizing a well accepted leader of their own. Lytton, Earl of, *Pundits and Elephants*, London, 1942, pp.45-46.

59. Byomkesh Chakrabourty organized the Independent Nationalist Party consisted of 19 members by March 1924. They were ready to accept office on their own terms. Kumar Shib Sankar Roy, representative of the Rajshahi land holders became the president of the council after HEA Cotton. Das asked them to oppose the reserved subjects of the government in every occasion in lieu of his assistance to the nationalists in any matter of the transferred subjects. But they could not form the

ministry and allied the Swarajists. *Atmasakti*, 19 December 1923. For details see E. A. Lytton, *op.cit*, p.45 and Rajat Kanta Ray, *op.cit*, p.318

60. The revolutionary connection of the Swaraj Party was basically responsible for such doubts and apprehensions. It was an open secret and the Government became cautious on it. Several front rank leaders including Subhas Chandra Bose, Chief Executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation were arrested partly under Regulation III of 1818 and under the ill-fated Bengal Ordinance of 1924 the repeal of which became the main slogan of the Swarajist councilors.

61. *Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings*, 25 January 1925

62. Broomfield, *op.cit*, p.317

63. Rajat Kanta Ray, *op.cit*, p.262

64. When the Muslims under the Swaraj Party did not get the desired posts reserved for them in terms of the Bengal pact, the candidates expressed their will to leave the party and to organize the Muslim community on this issue. Hemamta Kumar Sarkar, *Deshbandhu Smriti*, p.49, cited in Rajat Kanta Ray, *op.cit* p.332

65. *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 5 June 1924

66. *Moslem Hitaishi*, 4 January 1924. This paper fanned the fire in a oppressive tone, 'Those who are stoutly opposing the pact should bear in

mind that the Mohammedans will not hesitate to take by force what they are at present demanding in gentle terms.' Papia Chakrabarty, *Hindu Response to Nationalist Ferment*, Calcutta, 1992, p.156

67. Cited in. Broomfield, *op.cit*, p. 324

68. *Ibid*

69. Judith .M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power; Indian Politics 1915-1922*, Cambridge, 1972, p.352

70. *Ibid*.

71. The first noted converts to Communism were the ex revolutionaries Virendranath Chattopadhyay and Narendranath Bhattacharya. Narendranath Bhattacharya better known as Manabendranath Roy founded the Communist Party of India in Taskhand in 1920. Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukherjee shouldered the responsibility of spreading Communism in India and at the Gaya Congress in 1922 Mukherjee contacted with the Congress leaders in accordance with the policy of changing the bourgeoisie nationalist movement in the direction of Communist revolution. See G. Adhiikari, *Documents of the History of the Communist Party; 1917-1922*, Delhi, 1971, p.157 and Goutam Chattopadhyay, *Communism and Bengal's Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, 1917-1929, Delhi, 1970

72. Rajat Kanta Ray, *op.cit*, p.335

73. Presidential Address, Gaya Congress, 1922, Quoted in Sanat Basu, *Labour Journalism in the early 1920s; A Case Study of Bengali Labor Journals*, in *Social Scientist*, Vol II, no.1, January, 1983, p.35.
74. Subho Basu, *Does Class Matter, Colonial Capital and Workers Resistance in Bengal; 1890-1937*, Delhi, 2004, p.174
75. Sukomal Sen, *Working class of India; History of Emergence and Movement; 1830-1970*, Calcutta, 1977, pp.136-137
76. A letter by Gandhian leader Shyam Sundar Chakrabarty in *The Karmi* (English version) 1<sup>st</sup> year, March, 1922, Vol I, No. 7, p.85
77. Ali Ahmed, a tramway worker brought allegation against the leaders that the demands of the poor workers were not getting sufficient attention and he pointed out that without the cooperation from the workers the idea of *Swaraj* would not be materialized. *ABP*, 5 November 1921.
78. The Congress took a resolution that a committee would be appointed to assist the Executive Council of the All India Trade Union Congress for organizing the Indian labor both agricultural and industrial. Besides Sen Gupta S.N Halder, C F Andrews, Swami Dinanath, Dr Sathye and Singaravelu Chettiar were appointed P Lakshman, *Congress and Labor Movement in India*, in *Economic and Political Research Department*, All India Congress Committee, Allahabad, p.19.

79. G.Adhikari, *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, vol. II 1923-25, New Delhi, 1974, p.72.

80. *Ibid*

81. Home Department, Note on 'Bolshevik Activities in India, No 184 D, Simla, 23 June, 1923

82. *Ibid*

83. For details see Muzaffar Ahmed, *Amar Jiban o Bharater Communist Party, (Myself and the Communist Party of India)* Vol. I, 1920-29 and Vol II incomplete, 2006, pp.94-100

84. To cite example one can refer to a few lines from Das's speech at Bengal Provincial Conference, 1917, 'Do we invite them (unsophisticated countrymen) to our assemblies and our conferences? ..... Is a peasant a member of any our committees and conferences? .... Hence our political agitation is unsubstantial divorced from all intimate touch with the soul of our people.' *Deshbaqndhu Chittaranjan, A Collection of His Speeches*, 1926, pp.9-10. In 1922 Das spoke at Dehradun ' I want *swaraj* for the masses not for the classes. I don't care for the bourgeoisie'. See Overstreet G D and M Wind miller, *Communism in India*, California, 1959, p.47 .Das's speech in both the cases has a resemblance with the doctrine of Communism as brought forward by the *Vanguard*.

85. It was stated that 'the necessity of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses demands the adoption of an economic programme in the addition to the political programme... By leading the rebellious poor peasantry against the reactionary and loyalist aristocracy, the Congress will.... strike its roots deeply into the masses...' Muzaffar Ahmed, *op.cit*, p. 456

86. For details Overstreet G. D and M Wind miller, *op.cit*, pp.44-58

87. M N Roy, *Origin of Radicalism in the Congress*, *op.cit*. p.19

88. *Ibid*

89. *Ibid*

90. Overstreet G. D and M Wind miller, *op.cit*, pp.44-58