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Jubilee—1876-1952



Surendranath Banerjee  
Inspirer of the Indian Association Movement

1953

# INDIAN ASSOCIATION

JUBILEE 1876-1952

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13 JAN 1969



# Our Symbol

## As Printed On The Cover

Vola Chatterjee

The figure of geometrical form delineates a rectangular space coloured green and over it is laid horizontally a parallelogram with a field marked yellow. There are also shown the concentric circles or wheels, the letters A and I in combination, and the design of a crystalline formation in a quadrilateral, bordered white. Within this quadrilateral is drawn the device of a hatchet or spear-head.

This complete figure of simple outline is conventional in character and at the same time is emblematical. Thus the green space represents India in prosperity. It alludes to the Sanskrit words "*Sujalam*" and "*Sasya Syamalam*" appropriately used by Bankim Chandra in his famous hymn. The colour green symbolises fertility and plenty. The concentric circles refer to the emblem of time; and the colour yellow signifies wisdom and endeavour.

The crystalline form or the definite shape which a mineral assumes when it is allowed to crystallise from a molten condition alludes to state-craft in India since the days of Asoka the Great. Further this quadrilateral by its intersections forms a number of angles and a regular solid Tetrahedron which in turn denotes a platonic body expressing the elements of fire. The colour white is emblematical of purity and charity. The letters I and A are the initials of the name of the Indian Association which worked in the cause of national independence for the last 76 years. The device of the hatchet on the yellow field represents suffering, strength, and power.



Dr. H. C. Mookerjee  
Governor of West Bengal  
Vice-President of Indian Association, 1948-51

# Foreword

English education opened the flood-gates of Western democratic ideas in India in the early nineteenth century. Years rolled on. As education spread, Indians not only claimed a share in the administration of their Motherland, but looked forward to a Parliamentary system of Government. These demands had not what may be called a favourable reception. Instead of acceding to them, the British authorities here as well as in England tightened their grip on the country.

It was not long before it was realised that the educated sections of the community stood in need of cohesion and unity in order to present a united front to the Government and that they must be organised. This want was supplied by the foundation of the Indian Association in Calcutta, then the metropolis of India.

The Indian Association, by reason of its national outlook and country-wide activities, attracted the attention of the leaders of the other provinces almost immediately. The Civil Service question, the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on an elective basis, educational problems, and the separation of the Executive and the Judicial functions in the administration of Justice were some of the subjects for the consideration of which the Indian Association strove hard and strenuously for ten years. This was before the inception of the Indian National Congress. It vindicated its epithet "Indian" by its activities which were on an all-India and national scale.

In Bengal, the Association gradually turned into something like a mass organisation. According to its rules, both the classes and the masses could become its members. The Association justified this aspect of its character by organizing mass meetings in the mofussil districts in connection with such questions as Local Self-Government, Bengal Tenancy Bill and the excise policy of the Government. The Association's activities during 1881-1885 remind one of those of the Congress under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership between 1921-1925.

From the establishment of the Congress upto 1917, the Indian Association acted in concert with it. For many years, the Association conducted the organisational work of the Congress on this side of India. Leaders of different provinces organised associations after the model of the Indian Association for the discussion of provincial matters.

The leaders of the Indian Association were also the leaders of the Swadeshi movement, the prelude to the Freedom movement in India.

Our leaders became divided, parties grew up. Revolutionaries made their appearance. The Administration used all its weapons to stifle our national growth, but the Indian Association continued to provide the forum where all people met hammering out means for the nation's onward march, regardless of Governmental frowns or favours.

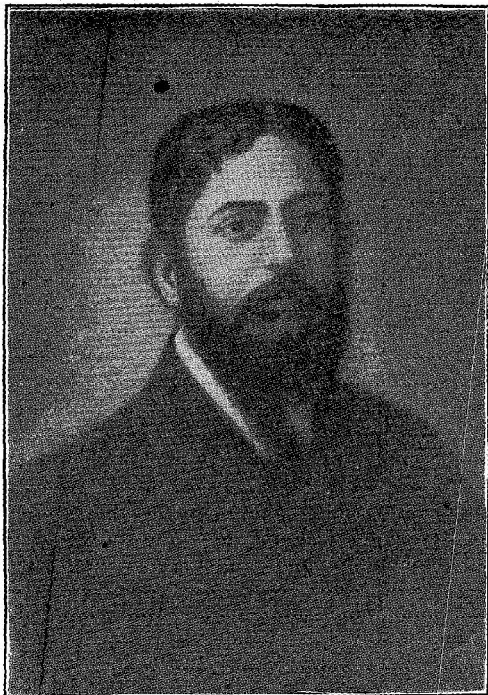
From 1919, the Indian Association turned into a Liberal Organisation concentrating on constructive activities. During the Round Table Conference, it held the ideal of Nationalism aloft. Since the attainment of Independence in 1947, the Association has directed its attention to constructive and nation-building work. Now that the struggle for freedom is over, we can appreciate the great work it has done in this field.

In this Foreword, I offer my homage to those Pioneers who founded this great political Institution, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose, Siva Nath Sastri, Monmohan Ghosh, Lal Mohan Ghosh, Dwaraka Nath Ganguly, Krishna Kumar Mitra and others. These are names which the country will ever cherish for their devoted and selfless service to the nation.

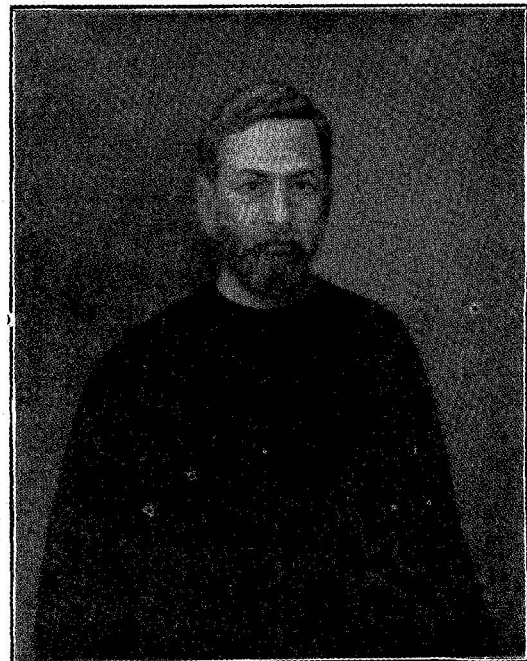
RAJ BHAVAN  
CALCUTTA,  
6th JANUARY, 1953.



Governor of West Bengal



Ananda Mohan Bose  
Founder Member, Indian Association  
and First Secretary, 1876



Rev. Kali Churn Banerjee  
President, Indian Association  
1906-1907



Raja of Vizianagram  
Gave a princely donation for the  
erection of Indian Association Building.



Lal Mohan Ghosh  
First Delegate sent to England on a  
political deputation by Indian Association

# Introduction

The Indian Association celebrates its Jubilee on the completion of its seventy-six years. During this period the Association has rendered remarkable service for the advancement of the nation. It has infused the idea of all-India unity. Divisions and jealousies had brought about the downfall of India, that was how Surendranath Banerjea, the inspirer of the Indian Association movement, read the lesson of our long history. It has worked for harmony among the different communities of India. Even at that distant period it held aloft the ideal of Representative Government for India, and strenuously strove for the acceptance of the principle that India must be governed by the children of the soil. It was not an Association of the upper classes, its membership was open to 'bona-fide tillers of the soil' and to artisans as well. It fought the British Government, whenever its policy went against the interests of the people. It fought for the freedom of the Press in 1876, when no other Association dared to do it; and the same spirit of not surrendering to the will of the foreign Bureaucracy was manifest in its leadership of the anti-Partition and Swadeshi Movement thirty years after during 1905-06. It worked not only for political objectives; economic, social, educational, moral and cultural improvement of the nation were within its comprehensive outlook and activities. The leaders of the Indian Association believed in progress, but necessarily not through chaos. By constant striving, through moral regeneration, they believed, a New India would be born; and British statesmanship, guided by enlightened self-interest, they thought, would proffer its hand of fellowship and co-operation to such regenerated India. The failure of farsight amongst our erstwhile rulers naturally weakened in late years the effectiveness of the policy and programme of the leaders of the Indian Association and also of the Indian National Congress prior to Non-co-operation movement. The work of the Indian Association must be judged in the light of this basic fact of modern India's political life.

We are no longer under foreign rule. But Independence has saddled us with new responsibilities. We have yet to fight against poverty and ill-health among the people; we have to advance in quick strides for a better people's India, socially, educationally and economically; a new sense of social well-being must be engendered among us, so that we may be raised to a higher moral stature. Freed from foreign subjection, the Indian Republic must help India to grow into a powerful modern nation, working for amity among the different communities and states of India, and peace in the world. The nobility and self-sacrifice of

## INTRODUCTION

the pioneers of the Indian Association should inspire us to engage ourselves in this much-needed work of national reconstruction.

In this Jubilee Souvenir an attempt has been made to present a record of the activities of the Indian Association from 1876 till our time. The period is eventful in the history of our modern struggle for freedom. It witnessed the birth of a new political consciousness, to which the Indian Association had perhaps the largest share of contribution, and prepared the ground for the birth of the Indian National Congress a decade after it came into being. It was during this period that the movement of political emancipation grew in volume and in intensity, wherein hundreds sacrificed their lives and thousands suffered imprisonment, penury and starvation till freedom was won. The inspiration of the old leaders worked in them and shaped and moulded their lives for such supreme self-sacrifice for the good of the nation. The last words of Ananda Mohan Bose, a founder of the Indian Association, spoken to his countrymen from his sick chair on the occasion of the Federation Hall meeting in 1905 were: "Enter you, my friends, what I might call the Order of the Motherland; and with characters unstained, aims that are placed high and spirits that are pure and noble and absolutely self-forgetful, serve the land, and suffer for the land of your birth." These words have a living message for us even now.

Many persons of note have sent us greetings on this occasion. They include messages from our Prime Minister, Ministers of the different States of the Indian Republic, Governors, and leaders of public opinion. We are thankful to them for their good wishes. Our thanks are also due to our contributors and to others who have helped us in the production of the Souvenir volume.

*Ananda Mohan Bose*

SECRETARY.

Indian Association

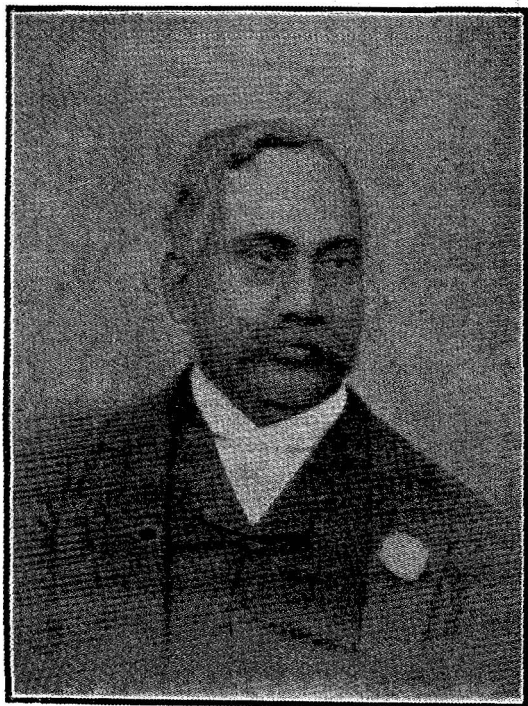


Shivanath Sastri  
Member, First Executive Committee,  
1876.

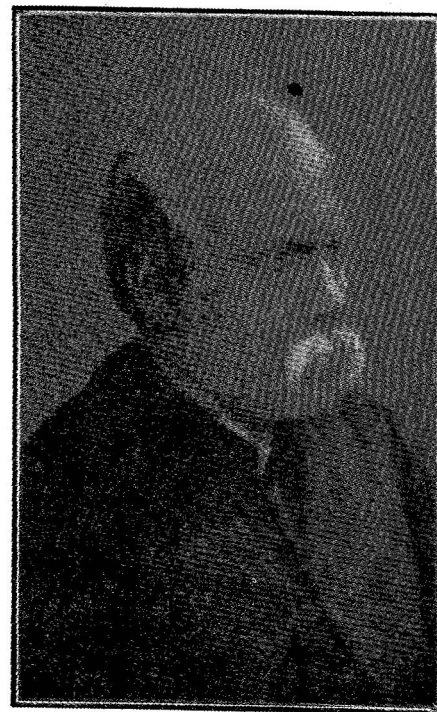
Jubilee—1876-1952



Nil Comal Mitter  
Member, First Executive  
Committee. 1876.



Mono Mohon Ghose  
Chairman, First Committee,  
Indian Association, 1876



Dwarka Nath Ganguli  
Assistant Secretary, Indian Association,  
1882-1898

# The Objectives of The Indian Association

*The First Annual Report (1876-77) says :—*

## POLITICAL BODY OF THE PEOPLE

“The Indian Association was established on the 26th. July, 1876, with the object of representing the people, of helping the formation of a healthy public opinion, and of promoting by every legitimate means the political, intellectual and material advancement of the people.”

## REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE

“A Committee was appointed to manage the affairs of the Association. The Committee was taken from all sections of the people. There were zemindars, there were advocates of ryots' interests, there were lawyers, there were medical men, there were gentlemen belonging to the education department.”

## DEMOCRATIC RULES

*The following extracts from the Rules forming the Indian Association show its democratic character :—*

“The Indian Association shall be open to all natives of India, without distinction of race or creed.”

“The Association shall seek to represent the people, to help in the formation of a healthy public opinion on all questions of importance, and to promote, by every legitimate means, the political, intellectual and material advancement of the people.”

## MEMBERSHIP

“Every member shall be required to pay a subscription of not less than five rupees a year, provided that in the case of Artisans, Munduls and other heads of villages, and *bonafide* tillers of the soil, the minimum rate of subscription be reduced to one Rupee a year.”

*The first clause and third clause were amended in 1879 as follows :—*

“The Indian Association shall be open to all natives of India without distinction of race or creed, and to all those who have residence in India, and who are interested in the welfare of the country, provided they have completed their age of 18.”

“Every member shall be required to pay a subscription of not less 2 rupees a year, provided that in the case of artisans, mundles and other heads of villages, and bona-fide tillers of the soil, the minimum rate of subscription may be reduced to one rupee a year.”

1876

## First Leaders of the Indian Association

*The following is a List of Members of the First Committee of the Indian Association, as printed in the First Annual Report of the Association, 1876-77 :—*

Raja Shyama Sanker Roy Bahadur.

The Hon'ble Nawab Mir Mohamed Ali.

Babu Shama Churn Sircar.

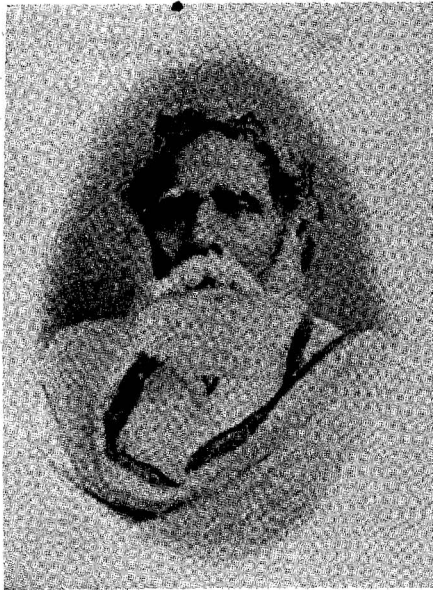
M. Ghosh Esq., Barrister-at-law.

Babu Rajnarain Basu.

- „ Guru Doss Banerjea, M. A., D. L., Tagore Law Professor.
- „ Gopal Lal Mitter, Pleader, High Court.
- „ Kali Nath Dutt, Zemindar.
- „ Chunder Nath Bose, M. A., B. L., Pleader, High Court.
- „ Krishna Bihari Sen, M. A., Editor, "Indian Mirror."
- „ Bama Churn Banerjea, B. L., Secretary, Orterpara Hitakari Sabha.
- „ Kissen Mohan Mullick, Secretary, Seal's Free College.
- „ Joygobind Shome, M. A., B. L., Editor, "Indian Christian Herald."
- „ Sharada Charan Mitter, M. A., B. L.
- „ Prosad Doss Mullick, Secretary, Family Literary Club.
- „ Nobo Gopal Mitter, Editor, "National Paper."
- „ Rajkrishna Mukerjee, M. A., B. L.
- „ Nagendra Nath Chatterjee.
- „ Omesh Chunder Dutt, Editor, "Bharat Samskarak."
- „ Surya Kumar Sarbadhicary.
- „ Brajendra Kumar Sen.
- „ Rameswar Mallia, Zemindar, Searsole.
- „ Nilcomal Mitter of Allahabad, Merchant.
- „ Surendra Nath Banerjea, B. A.
- „ Bhol Nath Chunder.
- „ Dwarka Nath Ganguli.
- „ Shiva Nath Shastri, M. A.
- „ Khetter Nath Sen.
- „ Aghore Nath Coomar.

A. M. Bose, Esq., Secretary.

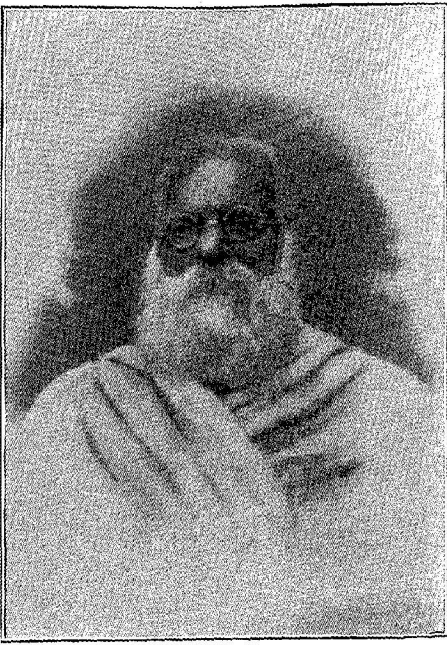
Babu Jogendra Nath Banerjea, M. A., Editor, "Aryadarshana" and  
„ Akhoy Charan Sircar, B. L., Editor, "Sadharani," Assistant Secretaries.



Rajnarain Basu  
Member of the First Executive Committee  
(1876-77)



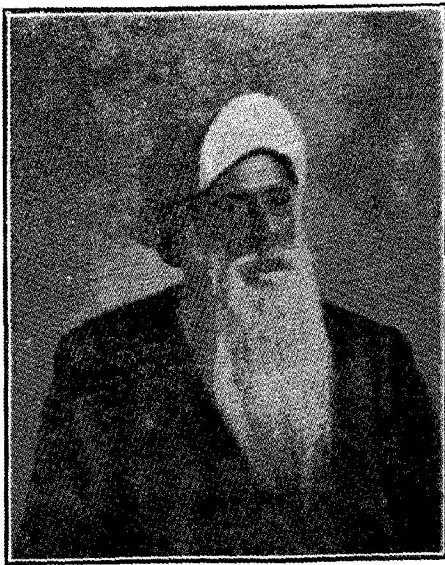
Rev. K. M. Banerjee  
First President of the Association (1878)



Krishna Kumar Mitra  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1918-1920 & 1927-1936.



Jatindra Nath Basu  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1934-1946.



Ambica Charan Majumder  
President, Indian Association, 1913-16.



Rash Behary Ghosh  
President, Indian Association, 1908-12.



# Messages

ACHARYA VINOBA BHABE

लोकनागरी लीपी ।

स्थात्री पता : गांधी आश्रम,  
हज़ारतगंज, एकनम्रू,  
पड़ाव : बारा, ता : १६-५-५२ ।

अंडीयन असोसिएशन का पचहत्तर साल की पुरती में महोत्सव होने जा रहा है, यह सुखी की बात है। श्री सुरेंद्र नाथ बनरजी और आनंद मोहन बोस जैसे महान् पुरुषों ने जोस्की स्थापना की थी और जोसने हींदुस्थान की जाग्रत करने का काम कांग्रेस के पहिले ही शुरु कीया था, उसका उच्चार हम कैसे भूल सकते हैं ? अंडीयन असोसिएशन ने एक तरह से अरुणोदय का काम कीया है, जोस्के परीणाम-स्वरूप बाद में कांग्रेस का उदय हुआ था। मुहरे उस समय पूना की सार्वजनिक सभा याद आ रही है, जोसके पीछे नयाय-मुरती रानाडे की परेरणा थी। उन दीनों की बंगाल और महाराष्ट्र की ये दो संस्थाएँ देशके दो सोरों पर एक साथ लोक-जाग्रती का काम कर रही थी।

आप लोग जानते हैं की अीस समय में भूदान-यग्य के सौलसिले में उत्तर प्रदेश की पैदल-यात्रा कर रहा हूँ। अीसी तरह अगर परमेश्वर ने चाहा तो देश भर पहुँचने की आँचका है। यात्रा में से ही यह श्रद्धांजली मैं भेज रहा हूँ।

(Free Translation of Above)

It is a matter of great pleasure that the Jubilee ceremony of the Indian Association is going to take place on completion of 75 years of its life. How is it possible for us to forget the patriotic works of the Indian Association founded by Sri Surendra Nath Banerjea and Sri Ananda Mohan Bose, the two great souls of India, and the efforts made by the Association towards the awakening of nationalism in India even before the birth of the Indian National Congress? In a sense, the Indian Association performed the work of re-orientation, as a result of which the Indian National Congress came into existence. At this time I am remembering the Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona which had at its back the inspiration of Nyaya-



*murti* Ranade. During those days these two Associations of Bengal and Maharashtra performed the task of awakening the national consciousness of the people of India from both ends of the country.

You know that at this time, I am travelling on foot throughout Uttar Pradesh on account of "*Bhudan Jajna*". If God so wishes, then I shall travel throughout the length and breadth of the country. During my travel I am sending my words of heart-felt regard.

SRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Prime Minister of India.*

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru sends his best wishes for the Association which has played such an important part in Indian political life for a large number of years.

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

*Vice-President of India.*

I am aware of the great service which the Indian Association has rendered to the political progress of this country during the seventy-five years of its existence. Those connected with it have played a notable part in the public life of this country, and it is only fair that when we are a free country we must recognise in gratitude all those who worked for the realisation of political freedom. Among these, those belonging to your Association are prominent.

SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

*Chief Minister, Madras.*

An Association founded by great Surendranath Banerjea in 1876 is a historic monument, which all India should regard with love and veneration.

SRI G. V. MAVALANKAR

*Speaker, Lok Sabha, New Delhi.*

It is in the fitness of things that we should keep our memory green in respect of our institutions, particularly those which are very old. They not only



give us the history of the times, but inspire us by bringing fresh to our mind our great leaders like the late Shri Surendranath Banerjea, the late Shri Ananda Mohon Bose and others.

I wish your celebrations all success, and hope they will inspire us and the later generations with the same spirit of selfless service as was displayed by the older generations of our patriots.

## RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

*Minister for Health, Government of India.*

I send my best wishes to the Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Association.

On all such occasions one's mind naturally travels back to the ideals with which the Institution was founded and to the names of the illustrious departed who brought inspiration and glory to its work.

The great State of Bengal has lagged behind none in the number of true patriots that it has produced and in the lead these worthy sons took in the freedom movement right from its commencement.

Now that the political freedom has been achieved the work of the Association naturally takes on another garb, as it were. But there is ample need for work which will consolidate the hard-earned freedom and lead our people to the promised land. To-day, more than ever, is needed that spirit of service, sacrifice and unity which the founders of the Indian Association and the long list of patriots who joined it later had in such abundant measure.

May the Association continue to inspire to-day as it did in the past.

## DR. B. C. ROY

*Chief Minister, West Bengal.*

I wish the function all success.

## DR. SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE, M. P.

*President, Jana-Sangh.*

The Indian Association has played a historic part in the building up of the national life of the country. With it have been associated great patriots



who truly laid the foundation for Indian freedom. Today India has become politically free. New problems have arisen and they relate to the great and gigantic task of national reconstruction in every field of activity. True functioning of democracy is hardly possible unless public opinion remains eternally vigilant. I hope in future the Indian Association will play its worthy role in building up a democratic national life for the benefit of India's teeming millions.

DR. RAGHUNATH P. PARANJPYE

*Poona.*

I was much interested to hear that the Indian Association is soon celebrating the completion of 75 years of its life.

The Indian Association, together with its sister associations like the Bombay Presidency Association, the Madras Mahajan Sabha, and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, is entitled to the gratitude of all patriotic Indians as the pioneer of Indian nationalism. Its great leaders, who are now being almost forgotten, laid the foundation of our national freedom and deserve being remembered even now after the attainment of freedom.

Surendra Nath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose, the founders of the Indian Association, were our heroes when we were boys. I came later to know them personally and my admiration for them rather increased than diminished on closer acquaintance. I was a volunteer at the Poona Congress of 1895 when Surendra Nath was its President and I had the honour of reading the address which Poona students presented to him. Ananda Mohan Bose was the first Indian Wrangler at Cambridge in 1874 and we in Cambridge always felt proud of him. I first met him there about 1898. Both of them, besides being great political leaders, were great educationists, being the founders respectively of two celebrated colleges, the Ripon Colleges and the City College.

I have therefore held both of them in great respect and on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Indian Association. I, reverently salute their memory.

SRI P. KODANDA RAO

*Servants of India Society.*

The Indian Association, like the Sarvajanik Sabha and the Deccan Sabha in Poona, is among the oldest political organisations of Indians, and is associated with such towering personalities like Surendra Nath Banerji and Ananda Mohan Bose,



who rank with Dadhabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale among the pionering patriots of India. To appreciate the services rendered by the Indian Association under their leadership it is necessary to view them in historical perspective.

Considering the background, their outlook was daring to a degree, and their work was of the highest order. They knew that, in the words of Gokhale, it was given to them to serve India by their failures rather than by their successes. But that did not dismay them, or cool the ardour of their patriotism. They worked with all the devotion and zeal which the hope and the certainty of success would inspire in others. Their work and personalities dispelled any pessimism for the future of India. India was not lost as long as she had such patriots to serve her. Now that she is independent, she remembers with pride and recalls with gratitude the unequalled spirit of service that the Indian Association and its leaders displayed. The goal is changed but not the need for such service.

With all good wishes for the success of the celebrations.

DR. M. R. JAYAKAR

*Vice-Chancellor, University of Poona.*

I am sending you a very short message of the appreciation of the work the Indian Association has done in Calcutta. I remember the few occasions when I have been able to attend important public meetings held at the Indian Association and can recall meeting there some of the oldest leaders of Calcutta, who, unfortunately, are not amongst us at the present date. I congratulate you on the occasion of the Association's Jubilee, on completion of 75 years, and I send you my greetings and best wishes for a further continuance of the good work which the Association has done in the past.

SRI B. G. KHER

*High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom.*

I am happy to know that the Indian Association will celebrate its 75 years of completion, and send my cordial greetings and good wishes.



SRI JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

*Governor of Assam.*

My best wishes for the Jubilee Celebrations. Time moves on creating changes in all things and so nothing remains static. May the Indian Association, with its memorable past, carry its traditions forward into the future, fitting its activities with the new spirit of the times.

SRI MAHARAJ SINGH,

*Ex-Governor, Bombay.*

On the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations to commemorate seventy-five years of its service to the country, I send my greetings to the Indian Association. I personally knew one of its founders, Shri Surendra Nath Banerjee, a patriotic Indian and a great orator. I trust that the Association will continue to strive in its best traditions to achieve the noble objects for which it was founded.

SRI K. SANTHANAM

*Lieutenant-Governor, Vindya Pradesh*

Sri K. Santhanam, Lieutenant-Governor, Vindhya Pradesh, sends his good wishes to the Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Association.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO

*Director, The Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi,*

I take the opportunity of sending you my congratulations on the completion of 75 years of continuous and useful work done by the Indian Association and my prayers that the Association may be granted many more years of useful service to the nation.

JUSTICE P. N. SAPRU

*Judge, Allahabad High Court.*

The foundation of the Indian Association represented a step of considerable significance in the freedom struggle of this country. Throughout its existence, the



Association has maintained the high tradition of patriotic work inherited by it from such stalwart leaders of the National movement as Surendra Nath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose. The freedom for which the early founders of the Indian Association struggled, has been realised by this country in as much as it has achieved its political independence. It is now for the Association to help forward the implementation of plans and schemes which will make for the happiness of the common man. It will be the earnest prayer of every patriotic citizen on this happy occasion that the Indian Association may succeed in playing a constructive role in the solution of those problems, upon which the prosperity of our country and its greatness depend.

DR. JADUNATH SARKAR

*Calcutta*

To-day an old man of eighty-two remembers the feelings of wonder and hope which the foundation of the Indian Association aroused among his elders. To-day it may be the fashion to laugh at this Association as a "back number" in the life of the nation. But let us not forget that with this Association true Democracy entered British India,—democracy in the old and honoured sense of government by the "elect", the leaders of the people, whose claim to leadership was a natural one derived from intellectual pre-eminence and disciplined character,—the same qualities which marked the Senators of Republican Rome. No longer was Indian life and thought to be guided by mere land-owners, the heirs of hoarded wealth, but by men who had risen from the ranks, the new "aristocracy of the intelligentsia",—who worked their term in raising the people, and now see the completion of their mission in the transfer of power to representatives directly elected by the people in the mass.

Against what odds Surendra Nath and his fellow-workers had to struggle in those "pioneer days" of our freedom a sympathetic English Liberal, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, has graphically described in his *India Under Ripon: a political diary*. We, their heirs, should not forget what we owe to them.

SRI SRI PRAKASH

*Governor of Madras.*

The Governor of Madras wishes the Jubilee Celebrations every success.

Jubilee—1876-1952



SRI S. V. BAPAT

*Secretary, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.*

We all the members of our Sabha are pleased to note that you are celebrating the Jubilee celebration on the completion of 75 years of your Association.

PROF. SATYENDRA NATH BOSE

*University College of Science, Calcutta.*

On the occasion of the Jubilee of your Association, I offer my sincere felicitations and best wishes for its prosperity. Your Association is associated with the glorious name of late Surendra Nath Banerjea, who in his days fought hard and ably for the attainment of freedom. Now that political freedom is at last achieved, your Association should continue to work for the betterment and progress, and for intellectual and economic freedom of our country.

May your association continue long to do useful work in our midst, and thus contribute significantly to our culture and our national happiness.

SRI S. M. BOSE

*Calcutta.*

As son of one intimately connected with the foundation of the Indian Association, it is my proud privilege to send it this message of greetings and good wishes for a further period of prosperity and of devoted service to the cause of our dear Motherland. May His blessings be showered on it, is my earnest prayer.

SRI ATULYA GHOSH

*President, West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee.*

On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Indian Association, I pay my respectful homage to the memory of the Indian stalwarts from Surendra Nath Banerjee (affectionately known as Surrender-Not) and others who brought into being, nurtured it with fostering care, and developed it into a sturdy institution. The galaxy of eminent Indians who have been associated with it have made it grow from strength to strength.

The *mantra* of Swaraj chanted years ago has borne fruit, and our country became free from alien political bondage five years back.

It is fitting, therefore, that the completion of the 76th year of the useful existence of the Indian Association synchronises with the celebration of the fifth year of India's Republic.

Indian Association



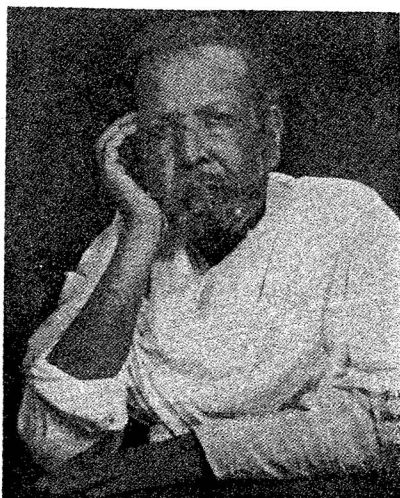
Shyama Charan Sarkar  
Member, First Executive Committee (1876-77)



Dr. Gurudas Banerjee  
Member, First Executive Committee  
( 1876-77 )



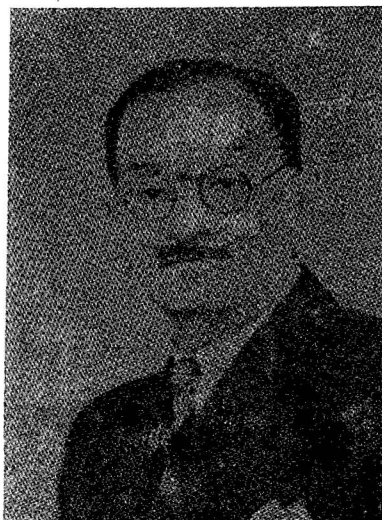
A. Chowdhury  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1908-1911 & 1921-1923.



Col. U. N. Mukherjee  
Vice-President,  
1908-1913.



Rev. B. A. Nag  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1934-1936.



B. K. Basu  
Asst. Secretary, Indian Association,  
1916-1917.

# Joseph Mazzini:

## The Ideal of the Indian Patriot

Surendra Nath Banerjea

[ Surendra Nath Banerjea delivered an address on Joseph Mazzini at a meeting of the Utterpara Hitakari Sabha, Calcutta, on the 2nd April, 1876, from which the following excerpts are given. This was part of the "preparation" for creating a patriotic sentiment among the younger generation, that was to make the Indian Association movement successful.]

To succour the needy, the distressed, and the indigent, to be the father of the fatherless, the friend of the poor, to work for the promotion of the education of our women, whose noble susceptibilities, if properly developed, would materially contribute to the advancement of our country, are objects which must commend your Sabha (Utterpara Hitakari Sabha) to the sympathy, the consideration and the respect of all right-thinking men. But patriotic as you are, and noble and lofty as your aspirations may be, I think you cannot but feel the deepest interest in the life and character of one of the sublimest spirits that ever graced the ranks of humanity, one of those shining lights that bursting forth from amidst the impenetrable gloom which enveloped the fate of his native country, rose to lead his countrymen to a higher type of national existence, and to exhibit in his

own life and character an example of heroic self-sacrifice, of noble self-endurance, of burning love for mankind, of steadfast hatred for tyranny such as have covered the name of Joseph Mazzini with immortal glory, and has made that name the watch-word of freedom, the symbol of down-trodden races, and the rallying point of dispersed nationalities.

\* \* \*

I feel that Mazzini's is a life which my countrymen ought to be in possession of, for that life is full of lessons of the deepest importance to us all. The Italians were degraded, down-trodden and oppressed. Under the influence of Mazzini's teachings, they achieved their unity and nationality, and now they are on the highroad to the climax of national greatness. As the Italians were miserable and degraded, and as

they rose, so might we rise, though fortunately in our case from the favourable circumstances of our position, through far different means. It is because the life of Joseph Mazzini presents in a striking manner those traits of character which we ought to imitate, and which secure national greatness that I have ventured to introduce this subject to you tonight.

\* \* \*

Joseph Mazzini was born at Genoa in the year 1805. His father was a physician, his mother was a woman of great talent and deep affection, and she appears to have exercised a profound influence on the mental and moral character of the future hero of Italian independence.

\* \* \*

The political life of Joseph Mazzini may be said to begin in 1821. He saw a number of Italian refugees. They had risen up in arms against one of the corrupt Governments of Italy; they had been defeated. The sight of the Italian patriots, in the last extremity of distress and poverty, made a deep impression on the mind of young Mazzini, and from that day he resolved to dedicate his life and energies to the salvation of his country.

\* \* \*

Mazzini was brought up for the profession of law, and in due course of time became an advocate. To his parents it was a day of great rejoicing, when their gifted son for the first time put on the advocate's gown. But they were doomed to bitter disappointment. The son had already made up his mind to dedicate his life and

energies to the accomplishment of Italian unity. Mazzini loved his parents, but he loved his country more.

\* \* \*

Mazzini had already joined the Carbonaris. The Carbonaris formed a secret association. There comes a period, gentlemen, in the history of a nation's development when these secret associations abound. When a nation having passed through a preliminary stage of moral preparation, is on the eve of entering into a contest with the object of subverting the Government under which it lives, the Government being opposed to the tendencies of the time and suppressing freedom with a high hand, then is it do we find these secret societies starting up on all sides around in prolific abundance. The Government has to be overthrown, and had to be subverted. The Government will resist, if it has the power. Consequently, all such attempts against the Government of the country must necessarily be carried under the seal of solemn secrecy. Thus you will find in the history of modern Greece, that it was a secret society, the Heitaria, which prepared the Greeks for that contest which culminated in the independence of their country. It was the secret society of the "United Club of Irishmen" which prepared the Irish for the great struggle of 1798; and finally it was the secret society of Young Italy founded by Mazzini, which by evoking the sentiment of national unity and national independence helped very materially towards the consummation of Italian unity and Italian independence.

## OF THE INDIAN PATRIOT

The Carbonaris had laid down that Italian unity and Italian independence were to be effected by means of foreign help. No, said Mazzini, if Italy was to be united and free, that great object must be accomplished by her own unaided strength, by the power of her own right arm. Italy must learn the great lesson of self-reliance, and self-dependence before she could run the higher race for national unity and national independence. Foreign aid must be systematically eschewed. From within the walls of his prison (he was imprisoned in 1830) he formed the idea of establishing an association which was to supersede the Carbonaris, and which was to embody this great principle of absolute, thorough and complete self-dependence.

Emerging from his prison wall, he seriously directed his attention to the task of founding the association he had resolved upon. Already he had been exiled from his country; already Italy had ceased to be his home. But he was a man of broad views and broad sympathies. He made the world his home; wherever he was that was his home. Exiled from his country, he established himself at Marseilles; and it was here that he established the association of Young Italy.

Young Italy was a secret association. The objects which it proposed to itself were the establishment of Italian unity and Italian independence, under a Republican form of Government. Having placed these objects before him, the great apostle of Italian unity set

himself to the task of accomplishing them. And first the Italian mind must be roused to the necessity of Italian unity, Italian independence and the establishment of an Italian Republic.

Moral Revolution must precede the accomplishment of the material Revolution which he had sketched out in his mind. The moral Revolution of Italy was sought to be brought about by means of tracts and journals. At the same time Mazzini published a body of instructions for the guidance of the members of Young Italy. Some of the lessons which he endeavoured to enforce in these instructions are of the deepest importance, and embody principles of wide-spread application which we would do well to bear in mind.

Well, then, gentlemen, in the first place, Mazzini taught that the purification of the soul by virtue is necessary for the attainment of any holy enterprise. He taught that moral regeneration must precede the accomplishment of national greatness.

There is another principle of universal application which Mazzini lays down in his instructions for the guidance of Young Italy.....Mazzini says, the feeling of nationality is necessary before a nation can exist, that, in fact, the desire for national existence must precede the achievement of nationality.

Gentlemen, Mazzini lived and died for Italian Unity. He rightly judged

that Italy would never be great, unless the different Italian peoples were united together by the bonds of a common nationality and common institutions. Might we not see in this much to guide and to instruct us? Is Indian greatness possible unless we are thoroughly welded together into a compact mass? If the question of uniting the varied nationalities of India may seem chimerical, why may we not try and establish at least a bond of sympathy, of fellow-feeling and brotherly love, between the varied races that inhabit this vast continent? Are not Bengalis, Madrasis, Mahrattas, the people of the Punjab, of Oudh, of Central India, all brothers? Why should it then be so difficult to establish between them that feeling of sympathy which nature with her own hand has pre-ordained?

Let us learn, gentlemen, to feel for a brother's griefs and sorrows. If trials and sufferings overtake the Madrasi, the Mahratta, or the Punjabi, let us as brothers stretch out to them the hand of sympathy and fellowship. And when the whole of India comes to be bound in this treble chain of love, sympathy and esteem, the day of Indian greatness would not be distant.

\* \* \*

But these are not the only lessons which the great apostle of Italian unity taught and for which he lived and died. Mazzini taught the great doctrine of self-reliance. May we not here also learn a lesson of the utmost practical importance? I firmly believe, gentlemen, that if India is ever to be great and prosperous, it could only be brought about by the aid of our own resources.

## Effect on Youthful Intellectuals

"...I inculcated with all the emphasis I could command, the enduring lessons of his (Mazzini's) noble life, lived for the sake of others, his lofty patriotism, his self-abnegation, and his heroic devotion to the interests of humanity. It was Mazzini, the incarnation of the highest moral forces in the political arena—Mazzini the apostle of Italian unity, the friend of the human race, that I presented to the youth of Bengal. Mazzini had taught Italian unity. We wanted Indian unity. Mazzini had worked through the young. I wanted the young men of Bengal to realize their potentialities and to qualify themselves to work for the salvation of their country, but upon lines instinct with the spirit of constitutionalism. ...I soon popularized Mazzini among the young men of Bengal."

—SURENDRANATH BANERJEA  
"A Nation in Making".

"The greatest and the most inspiring message of Surendra Nath's early propaganda was delivered through his lectures on Mazzini and the Young Italy Movement. Mazzini's life and particularly his extreme sensitive patriotism which so worked upon his youthful imagination that even as a school boy he refused to join in any form of gaiety of his family and his community in the face of the bondage in which his country lay under Austrian domination, drew out all the latent passion for national freedom in us. The tyrannies of the Austrian army of occupation who showed scant regard for the ordinary rights and liberties of the Italian people and treated even the Italian intellectuals of the middle class as members of an inferior race, ...made a profound impression upon our sensitive mind."

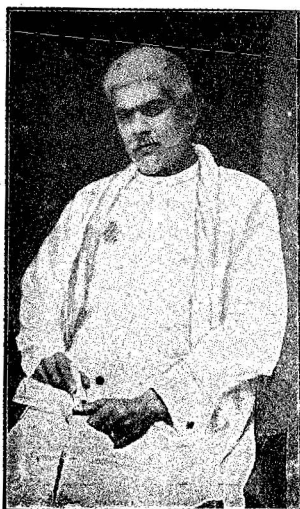
—BIPIN CHANDRA PAL  
"Memories of My Life & Times".



Baikuntha Nath Sen,  
President, Indian Association,  
1917-1920.



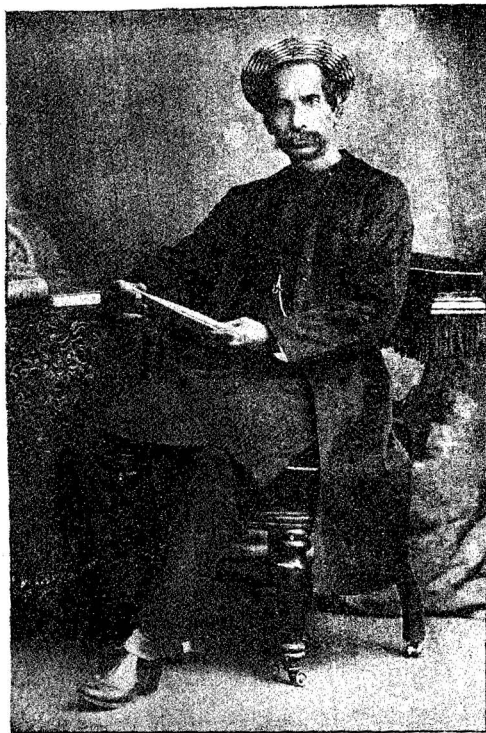
A. Rasool,  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1916-1917.



Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhuri,  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1906-1917.



Devaprosad Sarvadhikary,  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1919-1920.



Mahesh Chunder Chowdry  
Member, Executive Committee, (1877-78)



Akshay Charan Sircar  
First Assistant Secretary, (1876-77)

# Awakening of India and The Indian Association

Hemendra Prasad Ghose

The history of India for the hundred years extending from 1850 to 1950 is the history of events and movements of universal interest to the teeming millions of the country and of great significance to the East. It is a record of triumph through terror, of "sublime events moving to their birth", of the cruel sweet pangs of birth resulting in the victory of nationalism, of the achievement of self-rule by a people under subjection for a long time, of the quickening of the atrophied veins of a great people with the life-blood of liberty.

Among the land-marks of the struggle for our birth-right is the establishment of institutions from which the conception of collective responsibility has radiated. One such institution is the Indian Association, which is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee. It does not claim to have been the only institution of its kind but it certainly can claim to have been one of the pioneer institutions in India for preaching the gospel of Nationalism.

## THE MODERN PERIOD IN INDIA

The Indian Association, which was established in July, 1876, must be regarded in the background of conditions

prevailing in the country created by various factors and aggravated by the disruptive tendencies of decaying dynasties. History has agreed to adopt the date of the battle of Plassey (June, 1757) as the beginning of the British Empire in the East, which came to an end in 1947, proving that fleshly arms and the instruments of war are but a fragile tenure, "and soon to nothing brought" when opposed to the interests and will of an enlightened people.

Since 1757 the British had been consolidating their possessions in India and exploiting the country. The great famine of 1769-1770 in Bengal was like a convulsion of nature. It extinguished most of the prosperous industries of the province and provided the British with the opportunity to capture the Indian market for their products. India was reduced to an agricultural country.

Yet the respite from chaotic conditions which peace brought with it was taken advantage of by the Indians. In Calcutta, the first English school was established in 1817, while the foundation stone of the Hindu College was laid in 1824. In 1823, Raja Ram Mohan Roy addressed a letter to Lord Amherst, then Governor-

General, urging that "European gentlemen of talent and education" should be employed by the Government—"to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful sciences which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection—that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world."

### CENSORSHIP ON THE PRESS

The first English newspaper in India was published in 1780. The officers of the Government regarded the innovation with suspicion and abhorrence. When in 1823 the Government established a censorship on the Press, six Bengali gentlemen—Chander Coomer Tagore, Dwaraka Nath Tagore, Ram Mohon Roy, Hur Chunder Ghose, Gowree Churn Banerjee and Prosunno Coomar Tagore lodged a protest against it in the Supreme Court of Calcutta. On its rejection by the Supreme Court, Ram Mohan Roy addressed an "Appeal to the King in Council against the Press Regulations." But the Privy Council rejected the appeal.

Dwaraka Nath Tagore, a friend and associate of Ram Mohan, left for Europe in 1841 and returned in 1842 having induced George Thompson, a liberal Englishman, to come with him to India. Prior to his coming to India, Thompson had formally established a British India Society in London which had been inaugurated in 1839 by Lord Brougham. His advent was welcomed by the English educated community, especially youngmen, who had received their education in the Hindu College.

At the time there was no political body in the country to canalise the ideas of youngmen of education and culture, and in Calcutta there was not a convenient place in the Indian quarter of the town for holding meetings. The use of the garden house of Sree Kissen Singh at Maniktola in the suburbs of the city was secured and there Thompson began to initiate our youngmen into the mysteries of political agitation. Among those who were attracted by Thompson were the cream of Bengali Society—Ram Gopal Ghose, Dakhina Ranjan Mookerjee, Tara Chand Chukraburty, Peary Chand Mitter, Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Kissory Chand Mitter, Chandra Sekhar Deb and others.

### BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

It was under the aegis of Thompson that the Bengal British India Society was established. Later on, this Society was amalgamated with the Bengal Landholders' Association, established by Dwaraka Nath Tagore, to be known as the British Indian Association (October, 29, 1851, with Raja Radha Kanta Deb as President, Debendra Nath Tagore, as Secretary and Raja Digambar Mitter, as Assistant Secretary. It was the pioneer political institution in the country and was for years the most powerful centre of Indian public opinion.

The spirit which manifested itself in establishing the British Indian Association was evident in most of the other parts of India which was undergoing unprecedented changes. There was feverish activity everywhere.

In the meantime steam and electricity had been annihilating distances and

## AND THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

bringing the people of various provinces closer.

The people of India had been feeling the pressure of foreign administration and the exhaustion created by its exploitation. The administration was top-heavy and it militated against the self-respect of the people. As a result of the exploitation, as calculated by Montgomery Martin in 1838—£ 3,000,000 and upwards were yearly transmitted to London as tribute.

The extinction of their industries had been impoverishing the people and famines had begun to recur with the periodicity of climatic changes.

### THE SEPOY MUTINY

Indian opinion throughout the country was in a ferment. The numerous dethroned princes, or their heirs were ready to take advantage of the disaffection among the people. The situation was pregnant with poignant possibilities.

Suddenly in 1857 across the sky flashed the red meteor of rebellion. The Sepoy Mutiny, the first revolt of the Indian people against British rule, set many parts of the country ablaze. Those who had risen against the British were, however, defeated. A pall of fear hung over all the land. But repression—bare and grim—could not kill the spirit of the people. The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, established in the year of the Mutiny, gradually became the centres of the new education in the country. It was soon proved that a new India has dawned.

That ruthless repression had not been able to crush the determination of the

people to secure their rights was amply demonstrated by the first passive resistance movement in India organised by the raiyats of Bengal in 1860 against the indigo planters. Taking advantage of the British administration of the country. English planters had established large-scale indigo plantations in Bengal, and also in Bihar, reducing our farmers to the condition of helots. Inhuman oppression was perpetrated on them to make them agree to be actual slaves in order to satisfy the greed of the unscrupulous planters. Evidence of popular excitement in the districts would be forthcoming from the following minute of the 17th September, 1860, written by the then Lieutenant Governor, after his return from an excursion to Sirajgunj on the Jamuna river, proceeding along the Kumar and Kaliganga.

### INDIGO CRISIS : FIRST MOVEMENT OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

#### IN BENGAL

“Numerous crowds of raiyats appeared at various places, whose whole prayer was for an order of Government that they should not cultivate indigo. On my return a few days afterwards along the same two rivers, from dawn to dusk, as I steamed along those two rivers from some 60 or 70 miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of villagers, claiming justice in the matter. Even women of the villages on both banks were collected in groups by themselves, the males who stood at and between the riverside villages in little crowds must have collected from all the villages at a great distance on either side. I do not

know that it ever fell to the lot of any Indian officer to steam for 14 hours through a continued double street of supplicants for justice; all were most respectful and orderly, but also plainly in earnest. It would be folly to suppose that such a display on the part of tens of thousands of people,—men, women and children,—has no deep meaning. The organisation and capacity for combined and simultaneous action in the cause, which this remarkable demonstration over so large an extent of country proved, are subjects worthy of much consideration."

The situation was so serious that Lord Canning wrote to the Lieutenant Governor—"I assure you that for about a week it caused me more anxiety than I have had since the days of Delhi" (i. e., the Mutiny), and from that day I felt that a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter might put every factory in Lower Bengal in flames".

The calamity was averted—not by the tact of the Government, nor because of good sense prevailing amongst the planters but by the grim determination of the people of Bengal to remain peaceful but ready to die, if necessary, to achieve the end in view. The people triumphed. The indigo trade of the Province, yielding nearly—£ 2,000,000 sterling a year to the foreign planters gradually decayed and became dead.

#### THE POWER OF THE INDIAN PRESS

The Sepoy Mutiny, which had assumed the alarming proportions of a great upheaval, was a test of statesman-

ship. Lord Canning stood that test, because he paid no attention to the deranged counsels of the Anglo-Indian hysteria, and to no small event did Hurish Chandra Mukherjee contribute to the success of the policy of the Governor-General to follow a middle path by writing, week after week, in in the "Hindu Patriot" interpreting the true relation of the ruler and the ruled. Hurish Chandra rendered even grater service to his countrymen during the indigo crisis, when he took up the cause of the raiyats against the indigo planters. He exposed the oppression of the planters, drafted petitions for the raiyats and even fed and clothed them. His house in Calcutta became an asylum for them and he died of over-work, penniless but satisfied at the success of the efforts insecuring the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the grievances of the people. The "Hindu Patriot" demonstrated the power of the Press in the hands of a master.

When the Mutiny broke out, the Press had firmly established itself in India—not only in Bengal but in Bombay and Madras as well. The first English newspaper in Bombay was published in 1789—nine years after the publication of the first English newspaper in Calcutta. Madras was not slow; though the "Hindu" was not started till 1878, at least two Indian-owned newspapers "Native Public Opinion" and the "The Madrasee" had been in existence when the "Hindu" was started. The Press in India played a very important part in the political progress of the people. The influence of the English papers was

## AND THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

confined among a comparatively small section of the people. But the influence of the Indian language newspapers was extensive.

With the spread of education the eagerness of the people to secure their natural rights increased.

When peace was established in the country after the Mutiny and the promise of settled Government given, the freedom movement gained more strength. So rapid was the change in the ideas and ideals of the people that the British Indian Association which was established in 1851 was considered to have outlived its period of utility by the eighties of that century.

### IDEALS BEHIND THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Surendra Nath Banerjea stated that when the Indian Association was founded, (in 1876), the ideals that had taken definite possession of his mind were—

1. "The creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country.
2. The unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations.
3. The promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Mohamedans.

And, lastly, the inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day."

"They were" he has said "in the air and the possession and property of every thoughtful and patriotic Indian."

The establishment of the Presidency Association in Bombay in 1885, the Mahajana Sabha in Madras in 1884, the Sarvajanic Sabha in Poona in 1870 testify to the correctness of the

statement. The preparations for the first two were in progress for a decade or so earlier before they were formally established.

### MOVEMENT OF FREEDOM : POLITICAL, SOCIAL & RELIGIOUS

The freedom movement was not confined to the political sphere. And it is a significant fact that most of the pioneers of the movement were also social and religious reformers. Thus in Bengal, the stalwarts of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj—Ananda Mohan Bose and Shiva Nath Shastri—were with Surendra Nath Banerjea in founding the Indian Association, while Mon Mohan Ghose was their friend and adviser in the work. Members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj—Nagendra Nath Chatterjee, Dwaraka Nath Ganguli, Kali Sankar Sukul and Krishna Kumar Mitter, among others were Surendra Nath's co-workers and contributed to the success of the Association in its various activities. In his autobiography Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri has described in detail how their work in connection with the Samaj went hand in hand with the work of the Indian Association.

### INDIAN ASSOCIATION'S DEMOCRATIC ROLE

The object of the Association was "to represent the views of the educated middle class community and inspire them with a living interest in public affairs". Surendra Nath supported the establishment of a new Association thus :—

“There was, indeed, the British Indian Association, which, under the guidance of the great Kristo Das Pal, who was then Secretary, patiently upheld the popular interests where necessary; but it was essentially and by its creed an Association of the land-holders. Nor did an active political agitation, or the creation of public opinion by direct appeals to the people, form a part of its registered programme. There was thus the clear need for another political Association on a more democratic basis, and the fact was indeed recognised by the leaders of the British Indian Association. For some of its most distinguished members, such as the Maharaja Narendra Krishna, Babu Kristo Das Pal and others, attended the inaugural meeting of the new Association, and encouraged its formation by their presence.”

But the fundamental difference between the principle and policy of the new Association and those of the old could not be kept concealed for a long time. For, when the Indian Association launched an agitation against the obnoxious Vernacular Press Act, the British Indian Association parted company with the Indian Association and thereby lost the sympathy of the people.

### UNITED INDIA : DREAM OF THE NEW INTELLIGENTSIA

India at the time was more a continent than a country. But the conception of a united India or at least “of bringing all India upon the same common political platform” had taken firm possession of the minds

of the younger section of political leaders and workers of Bengal. This ideal found expression in the speech of that savant Rajendra Lala Mitter, who in his address delivered as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in 1886 said :—

“It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together; that instead of living merely as individuals, we may some day so combine as to be able to live as a nation.”

It was this desire that had made the organisers of the Indian Association shed provincialism and name the new organisation the Indian Association—the sign and symbol of the unity that was their dream—a dream, alas, destined to be shattered by rank communalism fostered and fanned by British Imperialism—reminding one of the prophetic words of Rabindranath uttered in 1949 :—

“The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their century’s administration runs dry at last what a waste of mud and filth will they leave behind them! I had at one time believed that the springs of civilisation will issue out of the heart of Europe. And to-day when I am about to quit the world, that stubborn faith had gone bankrupt altogether.”

### INAUGURAL MEETING

Before the date fixed for the inauguration of the Indian Association, a new organisation, however, with almost an

identical object, had been launched by Sisir Kumar Ghose, founder of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika", with the co-operation of some friends. Thus was established the Indian League which, Surendra Nath has said, "did useful work till it ceased to exist and some of its leading members joined the Indian Association."

Surendra Nath had reasons to believe that there would be an opposition offered to the establishment of the Indian Association at the inaugural meeting. His anticipation turned true. "Babu Kali Churan Banerjee who next to Rev. K. M. Banerjee was the foremost Indian Christian leader of his generation, and who subsequently became President of the Indian Association, opposed its formation, chiefly on the ground that a similar Association under the name of the Indian League, had been established a few months before." Surendranath replied to the arguments adduced, and the public meeting ratified the resolution creating the Indian Association. On the day of the inauguration of the Indian Association, Surendra Nath lost his son. But true to the call of public duty, he attended the meeting in spite of his personal sorrow.

The inaugural meeting was held at the Albert Hall on July 26, 1876. This Hall deserves a passing notice, as, for years, it was the most popular meeting place in Central Calcutta. It was founded by Keshub Chandra Sen in 1875 in commemoration of the visit of the then Prince of Wales. Unfortunately the Hall has passed out of the hands of the public and has now become private property.

#### REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Indian Association had its office first in the part of a small house—93, College Street, Calcutta. That house has disappeared to make room for the play-ground attached to the Calcutta Medical College. Ananda Mohan Bose became the Secretary of the Association, Akshoy Chandra Sarkar and Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan—Joint Assistant Secretaries. The Rev. K. M. Banerjee—an erudite scholar and master of several languages, was subsequently elected President. Of the members of the first Executive Committee, mention should be made of Dr. Gooroodas Banerjee and Sarada Charan Mitter, two eminent lawyers, who were later appointed Judges of the Calcutta High Court, Mono Mohan Ghose, who ultimately rose to be one of the leaders of the Calcutta Bar, Shyma Charan Sarkar, a brilliant jurist, Raj Narain Bose, "the grandfather of Indian Nationalism" and the philosopher of militant nationalism, Nobo Gopal Mitter, better known as "National Nabogopal", Krishna Behary Sen, Editor of the "Indian Mirror," the only English daily in Calcutta conducted by Indians at that time, Nilcomol Mitter, the well-known business magnate of Allahabad, Umesh Chandra Dutta, Principal, City College, and Dwarka Nath Ganguly. Dwaraka Nath's "co-operation in the organisation of New Association," writes Surendra Nath "was of great value."

Bhola Nath Chunder was also there. He was a man of unique intellectual equipment who diagnosed the growing poverty of India as the result of the

policy of the British. Years before the word "boycott" had been coined in Ireland, he advocated it for India,—not for political but for economic reasons.

"Without using any physical force, without praying for any legislative succour, it lies quite in our power to regain our lost position. It would be no crime for us to take to the only but most effectual weapon—moral hostility—left to us in our last extremity. Let us make use of this potent weapon by resolving to non-consume the goods of England. Let us always remember that the progress of India rests with the people themselves, and that her material prosperity must spring more from their own energy, perseverance and self-reliance than from any modification of the existing laws."

#### PART OF A GENERAL RENAISSANCE

There was renaissance in most parts of country—especially in Bengal, Bombay and Madras—centres from which influence radiated.

The situation in Bengal was thus described by Sri Aurobindo Ghose :—

"Of an ardent and imaginative race, long bound in the fetters of a single tradition, he had suddenly put into his hand the key to a new world thronged with beautiful and profound creations of Art and Learning. From this meeting of a foreign Art and Civilisation with a temperament differing from the temperament which created them, there issued, as usually does from such meetings, an original Art and an original Civilisation. Originality does not lie in rejecting outside influence but in accepting them as a new mould into

which our individuality may run. This is what happened in Bengal.....The first impulse was gigantic in its proportions and produced men of an almost gigantic originality."

These men were—among others—Ram Mohan Roy, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Debendra Nath Tagore, Raj Narain Bose, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rajendra Lala Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjea and Keshub Chandra Sen.

In Bombay, Dr. Rama Krishna Bhandarkar dived deep into the ancient history and culture of India; Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade churned the ocean of statistics to establish his opinion about the social degradation and the growing poverty of the people; Justice K. T. Telang rendered great service as an educationist, as a politician, as an orator and as a writer; and Dadabhai Naoroji became a whole-time political propagandist; and all worked for a new awakening in India.

In Madras, the new spirit manifested itself in the work of Ranga Charlu, Muthuswamy Aiyar, Gopal Rao and others. In Madras Gazulu Lakshmi Narasu Chetty financed and started in 1843 a newspaper "The Crescent" with one Mr. Harley as editor. The object of the paper was declared to be "the amelioration of the condition of the Hindus". The Madras Native Association was founded in 1852.

In most cases, the renaissance was marked "like its European prototype, though not so startling to an extent, by a thawing of the old moral custom". And every where rose a new social spirit and

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a new political spirit. There was the realisation of what Mazzini has said—"Do not be led away by the idea of improving material conditions without first solving the National question".

### CIVIL SERVICE AGITATION

The Indian Association was scarcely a year old when Lord Salisbury reduced the limit of age for the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service from twenty-one to nineteen. "It was regarded as a deliberate attempt to blast the prospects of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service." Here was an opportunity to unite the English educated classes in all parts of India through a sense of common grievance and the inspiration of a common resolve.

Surendra Nath Banerjea undertook a tour of the principal cities of India to appeal to the whole country. The Indian Association resolved upon organising an All-India movement which was destined to awaken a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people. After a meeting in the Calcutta Town Hall, presided over by Maharaja Narendra Krishna Deb, in which even the great religious and social reformer Keshab Chandra Sen took part, the agitation commenced—extending from Calcutta to Lahore and from Lahore to Madras—demonstrating clearly, as had never been before demonstrated, that all India, in spite of differences of race and religion, was capable of being united for a common political purpose.

The tour undertaken by Surendra Nath Banerjea must be recorded as the first successful political tour of a Nationalist in India. In every centre

Surendra Nath visited, public meetings were held and at Aligarh, Sir Syed Ahmed, the founder of the Aligarh College, presided over the meeting—endorsing the Calcutta resolutions, among which was one in favour of simultaneous examinations, in India and England, for the Indian Civil Service. The success of the tour encouraged the Association to depute Surendra Nath on the same mission to Western and Southern India in 1878.

A deputation to England was also decided upon. But a deputation to England was a costly affair. Surendra Nath applied himself to the task of collecting subscriptions. In the matter of the selection of a representative to go to England, the choice fell on Lal Mohon Ghose. Lal Mohon "met with phenomenal success". His marvellous gift of oratory drew the admiration of Englishmen. A meeting was held at Wills's Rooms, which was presided over by John Bright. "The effect of that meeting was instantaneous. Within twenty-four hours of it, there was laid on the table of the House of Commons, the Rules creating what was subsequently known as the Statutory Civil Service".

It was a victory of the Indian Association, a victory for India, a victory of justice over injustice.

### FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE VERNACULAR PRESS

Lord Lytton, who came as Viceroy in 1876, was a reactionary of the worst type. His administration became very unpopular in India. The people considered his Afghan War as unjust, and to burden India with its expenditure as

unfair. The pompous pageant of the Durbar of 1877 to proclaim Queen Victoria Empress of India in the face of a great famine was disliked by the educated community. The Vernacular Press was very outspoken in its protest against the policy and actions of the Viceroy.

Lord Lytton wanted to muzzle the Indian languages newspapers, which circulated largely amongst the masses. A Bill was passed in 1878. By this Act the Government put its seal of sanction on the invidious distinction between one section of the Indian Press and another, exempting the Anglo-Indian papers from the operation of a law which militated against the freedom of the Press. The educated community all over the country considered the Vernacular Press Act a slur on them, an insult to Indian Nationalism and an attempt to clog the wheel of progress in the country.

Lal Mohon Ghose had been sent to England again. Through his efforts and those of the Association he represented, Gladstone took up the cause. When in 1880, the Government in England was changed and Gladstone came to power, he appointed Lord Ripon Governor-General of India; the latter came with instructions to repeal the obnoxious Act. It was repealed in 1882.

Lord Ripon readily secured the co-operation of the people, who expected much from him. Unfortunately he was able to accomplish little of permanent value chiefly because he laboured under the defect or weakness, of not surrounding himself with those whom he knew to be in sympathy with his policy.

## THE ILBERT BILL AGITATION

One of the principal measures with which the new Viceroy was identified was the Ilbert Bill. "It was thought anomalous that, while natives of India were admitted to the Covenanted Civil Service and held competent to discharge the highest judicial duties, they should be deemed incompetent to be the Justices of Peace and to exercise jurisdiction over European British subjects outside the Presidency Towns." To remove this anomaly, the Native Jurisdiction Bill was introduced by Sir C. P. Ilbert on the 2nd February, 1883. This Bill proved as the proverbial red rag to the bull for the European community. A public meeting of the European community was held in Calcutta in which even the English members of the Bar abandoned the noble traditions of their profession, and violently attacked Indian manners and customs, hurled insults on Indian character and even abused the women of this country. The indignation of the educated community was at white heat. Barrister Branson, who led the attack on India, was boycotted by the Attorneys of the High Court, and he had to leave India. Lord Ripon, however, had not the courage to face the united opposition of his countrymen in India and the measure was virtually dropped.

But the result of the agitation over the Ilbert Bill had far-reaching effects on the political future of India. Educated Indians felt that in their country they were treated by foreigners as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water', a humiliation they grew determined to get over. They also learnt that the triumph of the

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Europeans was due to their power of combination for a common cause.

### CONTEMPT CASE AGAINST SURENDRA NATH

For India, the year 1883 was a year crowded with events of far-reaching consequence besides the Ilbert Bill controversy. Prominent among them were—the first prosecution of an Indian journalist for contempt of court and the holding of the first All-India Political Conference in the bosom of which the Indian National Congress was born.

Devoting himself to politics, Surendra Nath Banerjea soon felt the want of an organ and in 1879 purchased the right of "The Bengalee" for Rs.10/-. A leaderette in the paper of the 7th April, 1883 offended a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, and Surendra Nath was charged with Contempt of Court. Of the five Judges who constituted a Bench, the only Indian Judge thought a fine would suffice. But the European Judges inflicted the sentence of imprisonment for two months.

As Ananda Mohan Bose observed in the Report of the Indian Association for 1883 :—

"That 'good cometh out of evil' was never more fully illustrated than in this notable event. It has been demonstrated by universal outburst of grief and indignation which the event called forth, that the people of the different Indian provinces have learnt to feel for one another; and that a common bond of unity and fellow-feeling is rapidly being established among them. And Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea has at least one consolation, that his misfortune awakened,

in a most marked form, a manifestation of that sense of unity among the different Indian races, for the accomplishment of which he has so earnestly striven and not in vain."

One outcome of this event was the creation of a National Fund.

### FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Indian Association arranged a National Conference in 1883 which met at Calcutta for three days from December 28th. There were delegates from most of the great towns. The presence of these delegates was significant of the change that had already come over India.

The leaders of public opinion were determined to educate the masses politically. Not only did the leaders of the Indian Association agitate against the "Outstill" system to save the people from the effects of cheap liquor by appeal to the people to avoid drink and to the Government to abolish the system, and establish night schools to educate the labourers, but they also applied themselves to the task of reforming the system of land tenure to improve the condition of the cultivators.

The Marquess of Ripon left India in December, 1884. "The date of his departure", remarks Cotton, "is the natal day of a New India." "The journey from Simla to Bombay was a triumphal march such as India has never witnessed." This spontaneous expression of people's gratitude to Lord Ripon had a political significance. It showed "clearly that the germ of nationality had already sprung into life."

BIRTH OF THE INDIAN  
NATIONAL CONGRESS

The desire for a larger share in the Administration, and an effective voice in the counsels of the nation by the establishment of representative institutions was growing in intensity and volume among the educated classes.

The situation was developing into a crisis. Some European officials saw the impending danger and one of them A. O. Hume tried to meet it. "He went to Simla (then the summer capital of British India) to make clear to the authorities how almost desperate the situation had become. It is probable that his visit made the new Viceroy Lord Dufferin realise the gravity of the situation and encourage Hume to go on with the formation of the Congress."

Before seeing the new Viceroy, Hume had met some Indian politicians in Madras and discussed the situation with them. Hume's original scheme was one of "peaceful penetration"—to bring leading Indian politicians together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another. Wrote W. C. Bonnerjee:—"Hume's idea further was that the Governor of the Province where the politicians met should be asked to preside over them and that thereby greater cordiality should be established between the official classes and the non-official Indian politicians."

The shrewd Viceroy realised that Hume's scheme "would not be of much use". He said:—"There was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's

Opposition did in England.....It would be desirable in the interest as well of the rulers as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved."

This scheme was accepted and the Indian National Congress was established in 1885—Hume's own conception of its role being thus expressed:—"A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed and no more efficacious safety valve than our Congress movement could possibly be devised." This was what Hume wrote to Colvin in their controversy over the Congress.

Lord Dufferin's intention was—as Palme Dutt has said—"to build up a basis of support for the Government by separating the 'loyalist' elements from the 'extremists', though the extremists of those days were only a potential danger. What the Viceroy actually wanted was clearly set out in his speech on the demands of the educated classes in 1886:—

"India is not a country in which the machinery of European democratic agitation can be applied with impunity. My own inclination would be to examine carefully and seriously the demands which are the outcome of these various movements, to give quickly and with a good grace whatever it may be possible or desirable to accord, to announce that these concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten or fifteen years, and to forbid mass meetings and incendiary speechifying.

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"Putting aside the demands of the extremists...the object even of the more advanced party are neither very dangerous nor very extravagant...Among the natives I have met there are a considerable number who are both able and serviceable, and upon whose loyal co-operation one could undoubtedly rely. The fact of their supporting the Government would popularise many of its acts which now have the appearance of being driven through the legislature by force; and if they in their turn had a native party behind them, the Government of India would cease to stand up, as it does now, an isolated rock in the middle of a tempestuous sea, around whose base the breakers dash themselves simultaneously from all the four quarters of the heavens."

### LORD DUFFERIN'S ATTACK ON CONGRESS

The Congress in its infancy outwardly had the sympathy of the highest officials of the Government. When the second Congress met in Calcutta in 1886, a garden party was given by the Viceroy to the delegates of that body. But the British Bureaucracy soon become nervous of the possibilities of the Congress as the people's organisation. And we all know of Lord Dufferin's attack on the Congress before he left India—his description of the step taken as "a big jump into the unknown." Wrote Surendra Nath :—

"It is curious that Lord Dufferin, who encouraged the idea of an Indian National Congress and sympathised with its aspirations at the outset should have, before he laid down the reins of office, described the educated community as a 'microscopic

minority'. Indeed while, he was condemning the Indian National Congress at the St. Andrew's Dinner at Calcutta, he was writing a secret despatch supporting its recommendations for the reform of the Councils. Strange are the ways of statesmanship."

The key to Lord Dufferin's attack was accidentally placed in our hands when on purchasing Black's "The Marquess of Dufferin and Ava" from the library of the late Eardley Norton, we found an elaborate note fixed with it in Norton's own hand-writing in which we found the following asking, if the biographer knew nothing—"Of Lord Dufferin's desire to be accorded a send-off from Calcutta which should vie with the spontaneous and splendid good-bye the Indians accorded Lord Ripon at Bombay—of the covert approach to Bonnerji and Monomohon Ghose—of the bitterness engendered by their refusal that they could not manufacture the native applause—of his vituperative attack upon dear old Allen Hume and the Indian National Congress at a banquet in Calcutta."

The testimony of Eardley Norton is of importance not only because he was one of the stalwarts of the Congress but also because he was requested by the Congress leaders to write out a reply to Lord Dufferin's attack and the reply must find a prominent place in the Congress literature.

### LAL MOHAN GHOSE : CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

Other important events for India took place in 1885. One was the nomination of the first Indian to stand for a seat in

the British House of Commons. Lal Mohan Ghose was invited by as many as three British constituencies to seek election to represent them in the House. He stood for Deptford in the Liberal interest and was supported by Gladstone. "If it were not for the Irish vote that went against him, almost at the last moment, he would have been entitled to the high distinction reserved for Dadabhai Naoroji, of being the first Indian Member of Parliament. He did not succeed. But there are defeats which are more glorious than victories. And Lal Mohan's defeat was one of these."

#### SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE & FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS

The second event was the holding of the second Indian National Conference at Calcutta in the organisation of which the British Indian Association and the Central Mohemmadan Association joined with the Indian Association. The Conference met for three days, December 25 to 27. Not only was Bengal represented, but delegates attended from several towns in Northern India such as Meerut, Banaras and Allahabad, while Bombay was represented by Visvanath Narayan Mandlik.

Whilst the second National Conference met in Calcutta, the first Indian National Congress assembled in Bombay and held its sittings on the 28th, 29th & 30th December. W. C. Bonnerjee presided over it.

#### MORE ATTACKS ON CONGRESS

"The Times" (London) wrote an editorial on the Congress which concluded thus :—

"It was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed, in whatever hands the Govern-

ment of the country may be vested. If we are to withdraw, it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword. It would, perhaps, be well for the members of the late Congress to consider their position from this very practical point of view."

This shows the attitude of conservative British opinion on the policy and programme of the Congress even in those early days.

The Indian National Conference was merged into the National Congress, which had been a modest affair in 1885, but acquired a really representative character in 1886 in Calcutta. It daily grew in strength. Attacks were made on it from various quarters, some outwardly Indian. That these last were often inspired was manifest even to British statesmen. About 1890, Sir Charles Dilke in his "Problemse of Greater Britain" wrote as follows :—

"By far the ablest work in the anti-Congress literature is a pamphlet which bears the name of Oday Pertap Singh, Rajah of Bhingra, a land-owner in the North-Western Provinces of Rajput race. ...It is the fashion throughout the Civil Service to declare as an article of faith that the Rajah of Bhingra wrote his pamphlet with his own hand, but as no declarations on this subject have been sufficient to remove my doubts, I think it better to state them. At all events the pamphlet is there, and forms a most able English essay against the Congress. The title 'Democracy not suited to India'—a phrase which in itself seems to have the ring of a Lieutenant Governor's study."

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### GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE STIFFENS

In 1890, the Government of Bengal issued a circular to all Secretaries and heads of departments subordinate to it, pointing out that under orders of the Government of India, the presence of Government officials even as visitors at Congress meetings was not advisable and their taking part in the proceedings of its meetings was prohibited. But on a reference to the Government of India, the Congress was told that they considered the Congress to be 'a perfectly legitimate movement'—'representing in India—what in England would be called the more advanced Liberal Party, as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it.'

The Bureaucracy, however, succeeded in weaning away the landholding class and a section of the Mahomedans from the Congress, at least from active participation in it. The Congress became the representative political organisation of the educated middle class in India.

The all-India activities of the Indian Association were now practically merged in the Congress, and it meant a great accession of strength to the Congress also. From now on, the Indian National Congress engrossed the attention of political India. Social questions were deliberately eschewed by the leaders of the Congress as likely to develop disruption and disagreement amongst the different sections of the Indian people.

### PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

During this period, the political associations in the provinces got ample oppor-

tunities to engage themselves to a greater extent to local questions. Thus in 1896, when a severe famine overtook the Bombay Presidency, the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha, of which after Ranade, B. G. Tilak was the guiding spirit, took upon itself the task of acquainting the people with the concessions allowed to them by law during famine, and to inform the Government of the real wants of the people.

In Bengal, the Indian Association launched an attack on the Outstill system, which was responsible for the spread of drink habit among the people; it began to agitate for the amelioration of the condition of the tea garden labour in Assam; helped in establishing schools for the poor and the labourers in the mills and factories; organised meetings of the peasants in the moffusil for the improvement of their condition, to rebut the charge that the work of the Association was confined to a few "educated Babus". It sent Dwaraka Nath Ganguli as its representative to study the grievances of the 'coolies' in the tea gardens of Assam, who were treated as dumb-driven cattle and in many cases kept as pigs in the sty. The meetings organised in the moffusil areas had a far-reaching effect. These were open-air meetings, attended by thousands of peasants and workers.

In Bengal, a movement was started on lines parallel to those of the Congress, but less] comprehensive in its scope, and dealing only with provincial problems. The first Provincial Conference was held in 1888. "Problems of sanitation, education and local self-government differed in different provinces, and it was for the

representatives of the province in conference assembled to discuss and to deal with them. Such were the reasons that determined the holding of the first provincial conference in Bengal." The example was accepted in the other provinces of India.

### PLAGUE IN BOMBAY : GOVERNMENT PERSECUTION

From July 1896 when the existence of plague in Bombay was first suspected, a new terror was added to India. With the appearance of the Plague in Bombay the authorities began to enforce sanitary measures to prevent its spread. They betrayed a callous indifference to the sentiments of the people and employed European soldiers to enforce anti-plague measures with the result that barbarities were perpetrated on helpless men and women. The sufferings of the people were so exasperating that on June 27, 1897, Mr. Rand, an Indian Civilian, who was President of the Poona Plague Committee, and Lieutenant Ayerst, were shot down in Poona by a Marhatta youth named Damodar Chapekar.

G. K. Gokhale was then in England to give evidence before the Welby Commission, appointed to enquire into Indian affairs. In England Gokhale received reliable information about the tyranny of medical police in Bombay and could not help making a statement to the press there. The statement gave the authorities in India mighty offence and they decided to arrest him on his arrival at the Bombay port. Alarmed at this decision, some friends somehow sent the news to Dinshaw E. Wacha at Aden,

I believe. Wacha and Gokhale were travelling by the same boat to India. Wacha was told by Gokhale that his (Gokhale's) information had emanated from no less a person than Mr. Justice Ranade. They held that they could not endanger Ranade, and his letters were burnt. As the steamer entered the port of Bombay, the police went on board, and Gokhale was constrained to offer an apology for the statement he had made.

The Government of Bombay took repressive measures to crush opposition to their policy—to strike terror into the hearts of the people. The Natu brothers, as leading citizens, had formally appealed to the Government to remove the grievances of the people. They were deported under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827, corresponding to Bengal Regulation III of 1818, and their property was taken charge of by the Government.

### LOKMANYA TILAK CHARGED WITH SEDITION

While the Natu brothers were deported, B. G. Tilak was prosecuted on a charge of sedition for an article published in his "Kesari" and convicted. He was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. This was the first case of sedition against an Indian editor which was fought out, the first case—that against the "Bangabasi" in Bengal having been compromised. The Congress meeting at Amraoti in 1897 passed a resolution about the deportation and the sedition trial. It was moved by Surendra Nath Banerjea, who said in course of his speech:—"We regard the quartering of the punitive police at Poona as a mistake. We regard the imprisonment of Mr. Tilak and of the

Poona editors as a still greater mistake. For Mr. Tilak my heart is full of sympathy. My feelings go forth to him in his prison house. A nation is in tears..."

The use of the Regulations "the rusty sword", as Lord Morley called them, was the manifestation of a new repressive policy undertaken by the British in India, which was the root cause of the organisation of the Physical Force Movement.

## ECONOMIC HELPLESSNESS

The repressions of the Government made the people feel bitterly their political serfdom. Their growing poverty made them more and more conscious of their economic helplessness. The economic drain had been bleeding India white, and as already noted, she was being subjected to recurring famines. A wide-spread famine of great intensity occurred in 1896-97. The number that had to be given relief in the months of the acutest distress was as high as 3,000,000 people.

The placid slumber of the educated classes was rudely disturbed by the disquieting dreams of their responsibilities. The Indian National Congress organised industrial exhibitions to make the people industry-conscious. In Bengal, an Association had been established mainly through the efforts of Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, to send deserving youngmen to Japan for industrial education. The *Swadeshi* spirit was taking hold of the educated classes. Wrote Lethbridge :—

• "India is awakening—as Japan has already awakened—to the consciousness of her own greatness and her inherent capabilities...They rightly demand protection for her (India's) nascent industries. Rebuffed and irritated by British "Free Trade" fanaticism they are blindly groping

after some alternative form of protection in the shape of "*Swadeshi*"—the voluntary abstention from the use of commodities not made in India..."

The urge of political necessity to adopt the boycott of British goods was already in the offing. India was awake and interrogative when Lord Curzon came to this country as Viceroy in 1898. He came at a time when all Asia was astir, though very few people then understood that they were in the presence of the beginnings of a great world-movement.

Lord Curzon had an extension of his term of office in 1903. In opposing the proposal of the presentation of an address of welcome to Lord Curzon by the Bombay Municipal Corporation on the occasion of his arrival in that city to take upon himself the duties of the second term of his office, Pherozechah Mehta gave expression to the feeling of the Indians, when he said :—"that he could not help that he sorrowfully deplored with the rest of the country that the most important measures of Lord Curzon's administration had not been in conformity with his utterances. The curtailment of the Municipal franchise in Calcutta, the inauguration of a similar policy in Madras, the passing of the Official Secrets Act, the withdrawal of competitive tests for entrance into the Provincial services and, above all, the tampering with the declared policy of the Crown for the government of this country, as in the time of Lord Lytton, by misconstruing the words of the great Proclamation of 1858, were the measures which they keenly deplored as most retrograde, reactionary and unwise."

### LORD CURZON'S PARTITION OF BENGAL

Lord Curzon had a fatal genius for misplaced energy. In his address to the "cream of intellectual India" he spoke of truth as a Western virtue, and more than hinted that the Orientals, like the Cretans, were liars, and that they were given to flattery, and other degrading vices. He was hoisted with his own petard when Sister Nivedita quoted a passage from his book "Problems of the Far East" to show that he had not spared himself to indulge in lies and flattery.

His Universities Act was bitterly resented because it removed popular control from the first great educational institution in the land. The Partition of Bengal was the last straw on the camel's back. The people, as a protest, declared a boycott of British products. The first among our leaders to propose it, was Krishna Kumar Mitra, intimately connected with the Indian Association.

### BENGAL'S HEROIC STAND

In his presidential address at the Banaras Congress G. K. Gokhale said of Bengal :—

"Bengal's heroic stand against the oppression of a harsh and uncontrolled Bureaucracy has astonished and gratified all India, and her sufferings have not been endured in vain, when they have helped to draw closer all parts of the country in sympathy and in aspiration. A great rush and uprising of the waters, such as has been recently witnessed in Bengal cannot take place without a little inundation over the banks here and there. These little excesses are inevitable,

especially when the movement is from darkness into light, from bondage towards freedom,—and they must not be allowed to disconcert us too much. The most outstanding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance, and for this all India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal."

Surendranath Banerjea became the leader of the constitutional agitation against the Partition, and Bengal took the following vow :—

"Whereas Government has thought fit to effect the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So help us God."

On the 16th of October, 1905, the foundation stone of the Federation Hall, the sign and symbol of unity between the two Bengals, was laid by Ananda Mohan Bose, who had to be carried to the site from his sick-bed, which, to the great sorrow of the nation, became his death-bed.

### EXTREMISTS & MODERATES

The Partition agitation brought out prominently the difference in ideal and methods between the advance Nationalists or Extremists as they were called, and the old leaders of the Congress, who called themselves Moderates. With difficulty, the Extremists succeeded in getting the resolution declaring that the "Boycott Movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of the Province was, and is

legitimate" passed at the Congress of 1906, in Calcutta. They also had the Swadeshi resolution altered by calling upon the people to use indigenous articles 'even at a sacrifice.' The passing of these two resolutions and that on National Education was a bone of contention between the Extremists and the Moderates. Throughout 1907, the agitation against the Partition, which the British administrators treated as a 'settled fact', was carried on. But the difference between the Extremists and the Moderates increased.

#### EFFECT OF THE RENAISSANCE

The reason why Bengal was more advanced in Nationalism or Extremism than most of the other provinces is to be found in the general movement of renaissance in Bengal, of which the *Swadeshi* upheaval was only a political phase. Wrote Ramsay Macdonald in his 'Awakening of India' :—"Bengal is perhaps doing better than making political parties. It is idealising India. It is translating nationalism into religion, into music and poetry, into painting and literature."

The process of this translation was commenced by Vivekananda. The Report of the Bengal District Administration Committee said that "the advocates of Indian independence were assisted by the influence of the famous Vivekananda, who before his death in 1902, had, with his *Guru* Ramakrishna, originated a great revival of Hinduism. Numerous hostels and students' messes afford evidence to confirm the assertion of reliable witnesses, that Vivekananda's books were extremely popular with the

youth of Bengal. Their attraction lies in fact that.....his preaching gave rise to Nationalism with a religious tendency." His words, wrote Lovett in his *History of Indian Nationalist Movement* inculcating nationalism and religion had sunk deep into the minds of many of the educated classes, and not long ago might be seen printed as texts on the wall of the rooms of the students in Bengal." Vivekananda's dream was of an India conquering the world with her spirituality. And he preached the gospel "all men's good,"—in which there was no place for caste, hatred and meanness. "So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, (he said) I hold every man responsible, who having been educated at their expense, pay not the least heed to them"

#### AUTONOMY : THE NEW CRY

In Bengal, the new thought, popularly called Extremism, had for its philosopher and prophet Sri Aurobindo Ghose, who with his colleagues preached the new ideal through the columns of the *Bande Mataram*, for its poet Rabindranath Tagore, for its preacher and orator Bipin Chandra Pal and others. In Bombay Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the leader. In the Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai towered above his colleagues. In Madras Chidambaram Pillai was most prominent. They differed in details, but the common bond which kept them together was the desire to see India enjoy, not self-government within the British Empire, which was the creed of the Congress of the time, but absolute autonomy free from foreign control. Just as there were some Extremists who had faith in the violent methods

of revolution, so there were some Moderates who really believed that India was not yet fit for complete self-government. Just as there were among the Extremists men who were impatient idealists so among the Moderates there were overcautious men. But the difference in political ideals and methods between the Extremists and the Moderates were too fundamental to be reconciled.

In 1907, the Congress met at Surat. The Surat embroilment is the saddest episode in the history of the Congress. Denouncing the other side with red-hot violence was freely indulged in, and the Congress meeting had to be adjourned. The Congress under the Moderates prepared a creed at the Convention at Allahabad in April, 1908, and decided that every delegate "shall" express in writing his acceptance of the object of the Congress as laid down" therein.

#### THE SURAT SPLIT

The split between the two parties was complete. An article headed "New Conditions," written to our knowledge by Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, was published in the '*Bande Mataram*' the organ of the Extremists. It concluded thus: "The times are thickening already with the shadow of a great darkness. The destruction of the Congress begun at Surat and accomplished at Allahabad, is the prelude for the outburst of the storm that have long been brewing...the disappearance of the old Congress announces the end of the preparatory stage of the movement, the beginning of a clash of forces whose first full shock will produce chaos. The fair hope of an orderly and peaceful revolution of self-government which the first energies of a new move-

ment fostered has gone for ever. Revolution, bare and grim, is preparing her battle-field, mowing down the centres of order which were evolving a new cosmos and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall, and a mighty new creation. We could have wished it otherwise but God's will be done."

#### MOVEMENT OF VIOLENCE

Immediately after this, came the news that a bomb had been thrown at Muzzaffarpur in April, 1908, which though intended for the local magistrate Kingsford, hit the carriage in which the wife and daughter of an English resident were driving. At Calcutta a conspiracy was unearthed which went to show that the physical force movement had become widespread. Sri Aurobindo Ghose was one of those arrested in this connection.

Then followed a period of ruthless repression by the Government and reprisal by the followers of the path of violence.

#### ENGLAND TRIES TO RALLY THE MODERATES

In the meantime, the Government in England were trying to rally the Moderates by introducing new measures of political reforms. The policy of the Congress politicians was to accept what was gained and to press for more. In 1909, the Congress passed the following resolution:—"This Congress while gratefully appreciating the earnest and arduous endeavours of Lord Morley and Lord Minto in extending to the people of this country a fairly liberal measure of constitutional reforms as now embodied in the India Councils Act of 1909, deems it its duty to place on record its strong

## AND THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion and regrets that the Regulations framed under the Act, have not been framed in the same liberal spirit in which Lord Morley's despatch of last year was conceived".

The creation of separate electorates was the root of the evil which subsequently resulted in the division of the country.

### PARTITION ANNULLED

In 1911, King-Emperor George V paid a visit to India and two important announcements were made, viz. modification of the partition of Bengal and the removal of the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi. This modification of the partition of Bengal was a concession to the sentiments of the Bengalees—a triumph of popular agitation. The two Bengals were united and Bihar and Orissa created as a separate province.

The Congress, at its meeting at Calcutta, while expressing satisfaction at the annulment of Partition, prayed "that in re-adjustment of the provincial boundaries, the Government will be pleased to place all the Bengali-speaking districts under one and the same administration." Unfortunately for Bengal, this legitimate demand was not granted during British rule, and what is more unfortunate, has remained unattended to under the National Government which has succeeded the Government of the British.

The failure of the Minto-Morely Reforms to bring any substantial measure of real self-government to India was manifest ere long. A sense of frustra-

tion was overtaking the educated middle class, and they saw little hope of securing political and economic freedom under the aegis of British overlordship; they were losing faith in the methods of constitutional agitation of the Congress. The Congress, deprived of the support of large sections of the educated classes, was growing weaker, causing anxiety to its leaders.

### EFFECT OF FIRST WORLD WAR

In Europe, in 1914, broke out the Great War. India was utilised for the purpose of the War by the Allies as a British possession. Lord Hardinge, India's Governor-General at the time, admitted that she was "bled white." As President of the Congress (1914), Bhupendra Nath Basu took the opportunity to declare that in the matters of Indians' right to carry arms, to form volunteer corps, and to bear commissions in the army, the British Government in India had erred, and said :—

"One cannot help thinking that under different circumstances, England could have put to-day on the battle-field of Europe, not seventy thousand Indian soldiers, but a wall of men against which German militarism would have hurled itself in vain."

But there were Indian revolutionaries who did not delay to take this opportunity to attempt to strike a blow at British supremacy in India with the help of Germany. They made arrangements to secure arms and ammunitions from Germany and use them against the British. A party of Bengali youngmen fought a miniature pitched battle against the British in Balasore. There were

Indian organisations in America, Germany and other places to help the Indian revolutionaries.

### A UNITED CONGRESS

As already noted, the Congress had been weakened, as the advanced Nationalists, the party of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others, had been out of it since the Surat split in 1907. The British Bureaucracy exploited the difference between the Extremists and the Moderates to continue their irresponsible hold on the political and economic life of the country. The need for a union of the political parties of India was increasingly felt.

So, the leaders arranged for a reapproachment, and at the Lucknow Congress in 1916 the President, Ambica Charan Mazumdar, in welcoming Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Moti Lal Ghose and "other brave comrades separated from us at Surat" said :—

"After nearly ten years of separation... both the wings of the Indian Nationalist Party have come to realise the fact that united they stand, but divided they fall."

It was at this session that the Congress demanded the granting of reforms "contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reforms Committee, appointed by the All-India Moslem League. It was a concession to the Moslem demand for separate consideration as a community different from others.

The War came to an end in 1918, leaving the Allies victorious. The trend of events in India had been watched by English statesmen who were convinced

that to retain British supremacy in the country further Reforms should be granted to India. On August 20, 1917, the Secretary of State for India made the following announcement in the British House of Commons :—

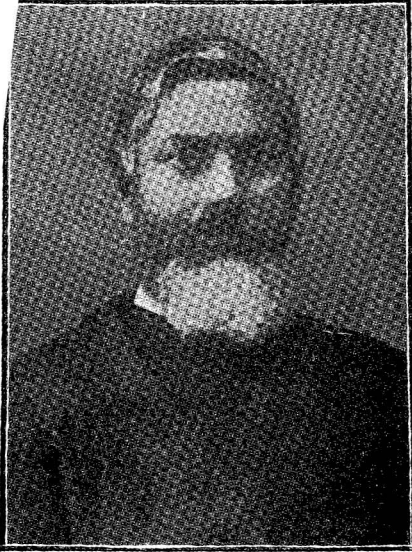
"The Policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of the Administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

A Committee was formed to consider how to implement this policy. The Committee, submitted its report in April, 1918, stating in its concluding paragraph—"far greater issues still hang in the balance upon the battle-fields of Europe. It is there and not in Delhi or Whitehall that the ultimate decision of India's future will be taken."

### FAILURE OF MONTAGU REFORMS

With the conclusion of the War, the time came to make an attempt to give effect to the policy laid down in 1917, and a Proclamation was issued practically reiterating the scheme of Reforms foreshadowed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. It was crystallised into an Act of Parliament.

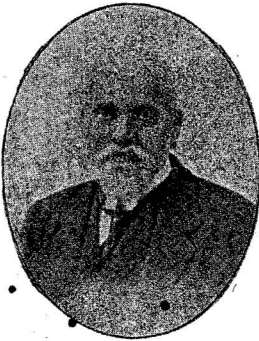
The Royal Proclamation, issued on the eve of the session of the Congress in 1919, was conciliatory in tone. But the Reforms scheme and the Proclamation failed to have the desired effect because of the happening of certain very



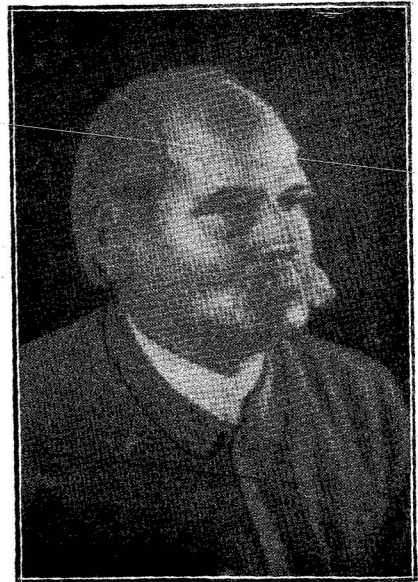
Debendra Chandra Ghose  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1913.



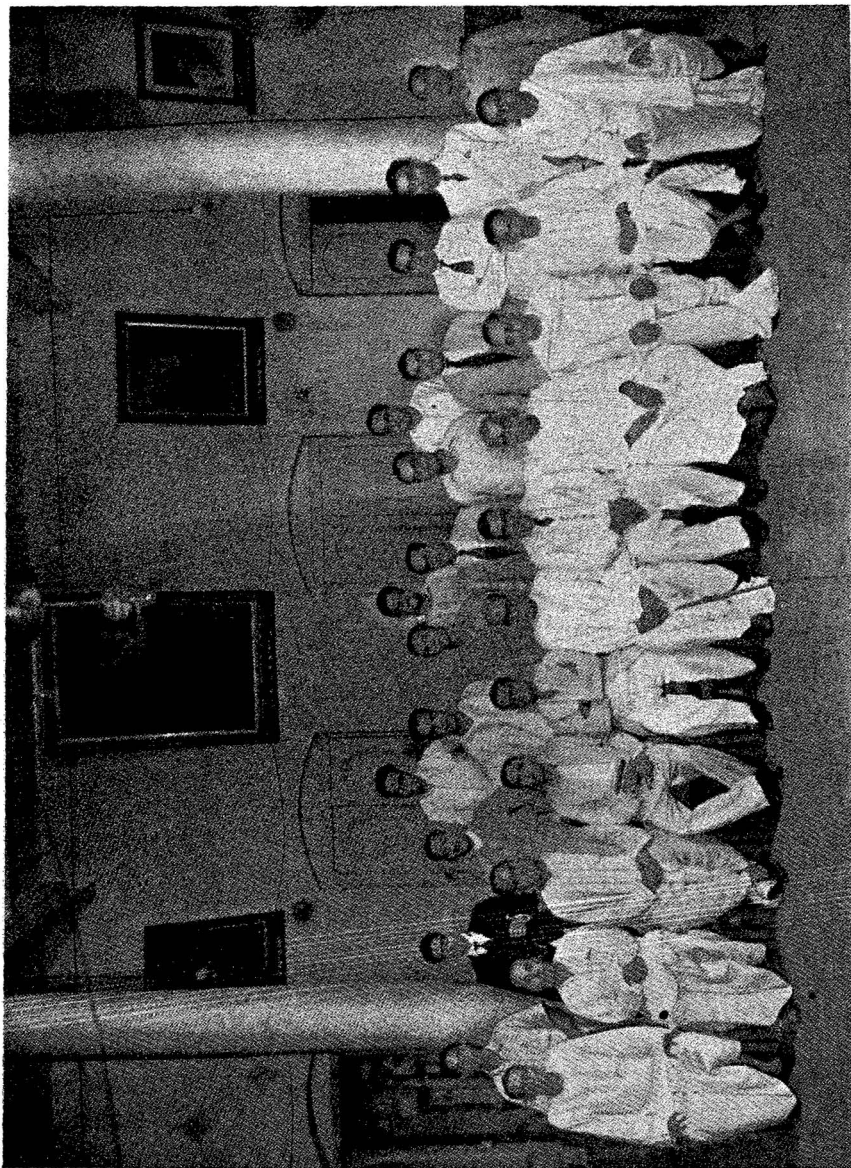
J. Chowdhury,  
President, Indian Association,  
1937-1942.



Bhupendra Nath Basu,  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1914-1917. •



Heramba Chandra Moitra,  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1918-1938.



Council 1951

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unfortunate events before the Amritsar Congress.

The Extremists, who had practically captured the Congress after 1916, characterised the Reforms proposal as unworthy of England to offer and unworthy of India to accept. The first special session of the Congress was held in Bombay, 1918, and the Reforms proposal was declared as unsatisfactory and disappointing.

### ROWLATT BILLS

After the Delhi session of the Congress, December 1918, the British Government introduced into the Imperial Legislative Council (February, 1919) two legislative measures, known as the "Rowlatt" Bills—so called after Mr. Justice Rowlatt, the President of the Sedition Committee. The first Bill was framed to enable anarchical offences to be tried expeditiously by a special court "with no right to appeal"; while the second made the possession of a seditious document with the intention to publish or circulate the same punishable with imprisonment. V. J. Patel called the Bill "inopportune", and M. K. Gandhi came forward to lead a passive resistance or *Satyagraha* movement if the Bills were passed. On March 1, 1919, he published a pledge regarding the Bills which said: "We solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."

Gandhiji's action was opposed, among others, by Dr. Annie Besant, as it might result in the release of forces whose potentialities for evil were incalculable. Non-official members of the Legislative Council—prominent among whom were Surendra Nath Banerjea, M. A. Jinnah, V. J. Patel, G. S. Khaparde and others, denounced the Rowlatt Bill vehemently, the second having been dropped. But it was passed with the standing official majority.

### JALLIANWALLA BAGH MASSACRE

Troubles began, accentuated by the deportation of two prominent leaders of Amritsar, Doctors Kitchlew and Satyapal, and there were demonstrations of mass resentment.

On April 13, General Dyer marched to the scene of a public meeting in Jallianwalla Bagh and without a warning opened fire on an unarmed crowd, creating loss of at least 379 innocent lives. The result was disastrous for Britain and India. Its consequence would be understood from the following remarks in the Despatch from Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India in May 1920, on the report of the Hunter Committee appointed to enquire into the "Punjab Disorders":—

"The instances cited by the Committee gave justifiable ground for the assertion that the administration of the martial law in the Punjab was marred by a spirit which prompted, not generally, but unfortunately not uncommonly—the enforcement of punishments and orders calculated, if not intended, to humiliate the Indians as a race, to cause

unwarranted inconveniences amounting on occasions to injustice and to flout the standards of propriety, which the inhabitants not only in India in particular but of the civilised world in general have a right to demand of those set in authority over them."

The Minority Report of the Hunter Committee said of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre thus:—"The story of this indiscriminate killing of innocent people not engaged in committing any act of violence but assembled in a meeting, has undoubtedly produced such a deep impression throughout the length and breadth of the country, so prejudicial to the British Government, that it would take a good deal and a long time to rub it out."

## NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT LAUNCHED

The Moderates decided to work the Reforms. But the Congress held a special session in Calcutta (1920) after the ordinary session at Amritsar (1919) in which Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. The resolution supported the boycott of the Legislative Councils under the new Constitution. In the Calcutta resolution the actual feeling of the people was reflected.

The Congress, which held its ordinary session in Nagpur in 1920, decided that the Indians should take no part in the reception to be given to the Duke of Connaught, who came to India to inaugurate the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly, created under the new Constitution. The Duke of

Connaught admitted that "the shadow of Amritsar has lengthened over the fair face of India."

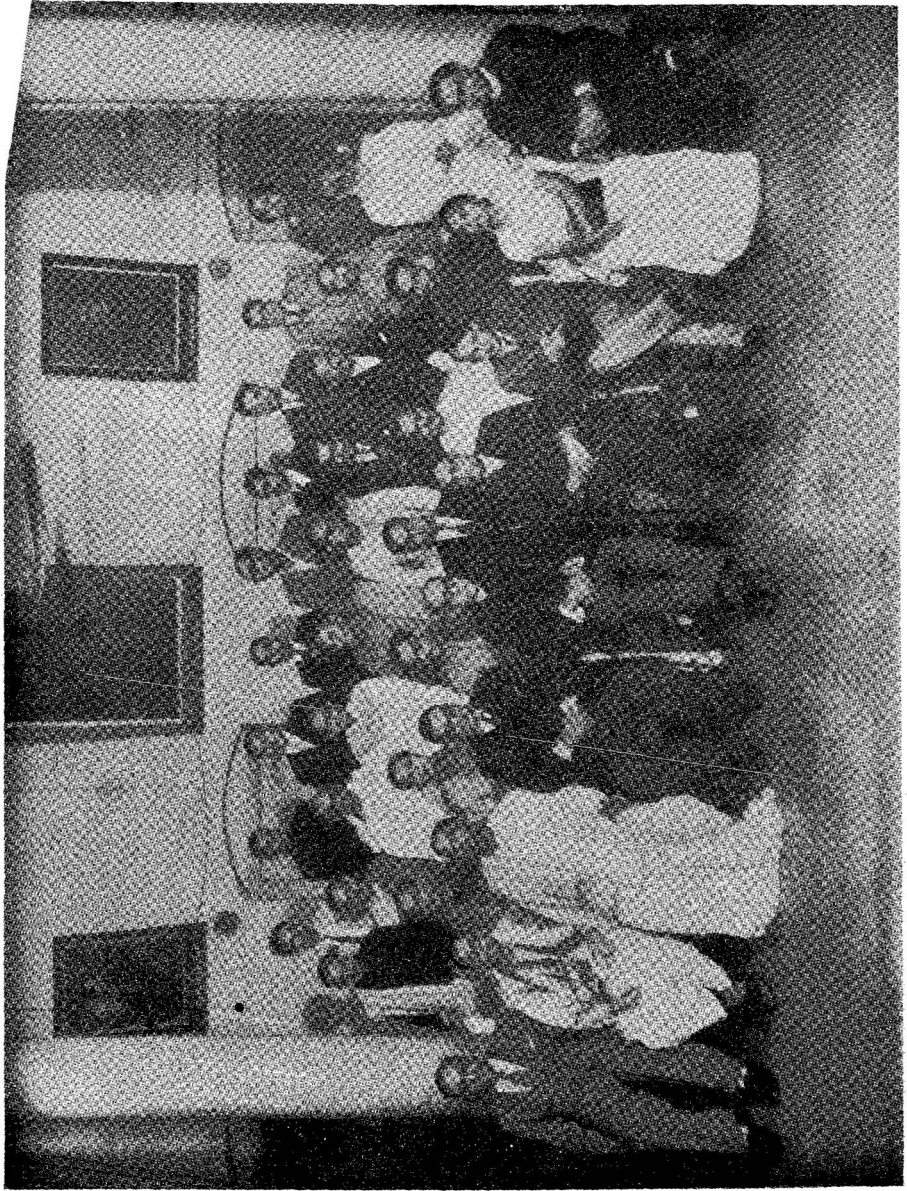
Because of the feeling of the people, the Non-Co-operation movement spread quickly.

In the meantime, those who had decided to work the Reforms tried to do what useful work was possible through the legislature. In spite of the disadvantage of a Dyarchy, they got the Calcutta Municipal Act passed, which was meant "to invest the Municipal Commissioners with real power and responsibility."

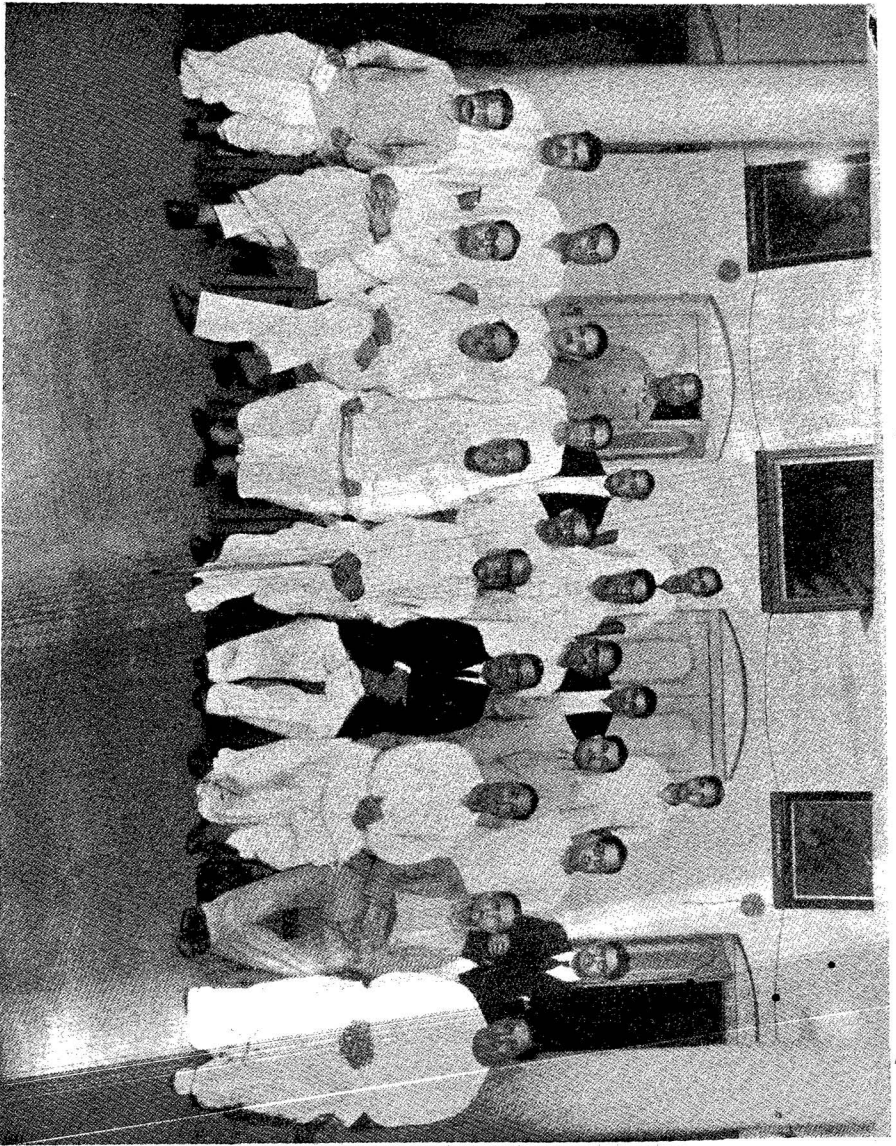
Those who had implicit faith in the policy of non-violent non-co-operation as laid down by Gandhiji, began to find, however, weak links in the movement. On the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales, (November 17, 1921) in Bombay, an attempt was made to boycott the welcome. Gandhiji was personally present there. Disorder broke out and he said that the outbreak of mob violence convinced him that his hope of reviving mass civil disobedience was illusory. "The Swaraj I have witnessed during the last two days have stunk in my nostrils"—he said. Then again on the eve of the declaration of the launching of Civil Disobedience at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces, twenty-one policemen and rural watchmen were murdered by a mob of infuriated peasantry. Gandhiji suspended the movement. His action, however, was not supported by many of his followers.

## CONGRESS SWARAJYA PARTY

Defection also appeared in the ranks of the non-co-operators. Chitta Ranjan



Council, 1952



Jubilee Committee

## AND THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Das was one of those who felt that by boycotting the Legislative Councils, the people stood to lose. His idea was to attack the British Bureaucracy from outside as also from within the fortress of the Administration. Chitta Ranjan Das was elected President of the Gaya Congress (1922), where his view was opposed, and his proposal turned down. He raised the standard of revolt and founded the Swarajya Party within the Congress which was joined by Pandit Motilal Nehru, Srinivas Aiyengar and others. A special session of the Congress was held in Delhi where the original resolution of the Congress was changed to suit the convenience of those who supported Council entry. Gandhiji was then in jail. On his release he did not attempt to oppose the "protestants."

In Bengal, Chitta Ranjan Das became the leader of the Congress, wearing, what was called, the triple crown of the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and Mayor of Calcutta.

The alienation between the Administration and a large section of the people went on increasing. In 1923-24, the Swarajist leaders with the help of the Independents inflicted a series of defeats upon the Government in the Legislature. The defeats of the Government had a damaging effect on their prestige.

### DEATH OF SURENDRA NATH BANERJEA

Surendra Nath Banerjea died in 1925. The Father of Indian Nationalism did not live to see his dream fulfilled. For

many years he had towered like a magnificent column above the waste of Indian politics; and to the last, he remained one of those whose greatness had been best ascertained and best proved.

### NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The year 1924-25 saw a recrudescence of activities by the revolutionaries. Large scale arrests and detention without trial took place under a new Ordinance by the Government. Among those arrested were the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation and two members of the Bengal Legislative Council. The Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation was Subhas Chandra Bose, destined later to play a unique part in India's struggle for independence.

Attempts were made to arrive at a compromise between the British rulers and the Indian people. Even serious attempts in this direction failed because, on the one hand, the British were not ready to relinquish real power, and on the other, there was sharp division in the ranks of the Nationalists in India. In the Congress there was a trial of strength between Gandhiji and his followers on the one part, and Subhas Chandra and his following, on the other. In spite of Gandhiji's opposition, Subhas Chandra was elected President of the Congress in 1938. In 1939, he was re-elected President of the national organisation, but the opposition managed to bring about a crisis which made him resign. The Forward Bloc was established as a new Party. Subhas Chandra left the

Congress, and continued his political work for complete independence of India. In January 1941, it was revealed that Subhas Chandra had mysteriously disappeared from his Calcutta residence.

### SECOND WORLD WAR : INDIA GAINS INDEPENDENCE

The breaking out of the second World War and the attainment of political freedom by India is recent history, and need not be dwelt in length. This War had far-reaching effect on India. For India it had more serious consequence than the first. Japan, which had joined the Allies in the first Great War, joined Germany in the second. India was made one of the principal war-bases for Great Britain and America. Though Japanese bombing of Calcutta was not severe, the denial policy adopted in Bengal had a disastrous effect. Famine overtook Bengal; the situation was mishandled by men in power; and about 25 lakhs of men, women and children died of starvation and malnutrition.

The second World War came to an end in 1945. But the power and prestige of the British were materially crippled,

and she was no longer able to retain her old supremacy over India. The Quit-India Movement of 1942 and the I. N. A. Movement under Netaji Subhas Chandra demonstrated the strength and volume of the spirit of Independence that had possessed the Indian people. Britain was constrained to shed her Imperialism.

India got her independence; but the canker of communalism which she had hoped to cure, reappeared with renewed violence; and the two-nation theory, given currency to by designing British politicians, rose like a hydra-headed monster. Gandhiji had said to the members of the Cabinet Mission in 1945—“Pakistan which connotes division of India will be a sin”, and “the two-nation theory propounded by Mr. Jinnah is absurd.” But ultimately the Congress had to agree to divide India into Pakistan and the Indian Union. The lone voice of Sri Aurobindo was heard from Pondicherry—

“India is free, but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom.”

## Elementary Education of the People

The first leaders of the Indian Association were conscious of the need of imparting primary education to the masses. At a public meeting held under the auspices of the Association on 29th. July, 1879, the following resolution was adopted :—“That this meeting convinced of the importance of elementary education for the masses of the people of this country,—as the great means for the elevation of their character and the improvement of their condition, and as the true basis of all national progress—hereby resolves to organize a movement which shall seek to diffuse elementary education among the masses by establishing schools for their use in Calcutta and elsewhere and by other means calculated to promote the same end.”

# Lest We Forget

How it could be made possible in the situation and surroundings in the seventies of the last century under the then all powerful but the unsympathetic British rulers? They never cared to show any regard to the sentiments or interests of Indians in relation to the acts and measures adopted by them, affecting the rights, liberties, legitimate claims for justice of the people, by keeping them forcibly muzzled as a subject race.

This roused a sense of necessity for creating public opinion, and led some of the then intellectual giants like the Rev. K. M. Banerjee, Shyama Charan Sarkar, Surendra Nath Banerjea, A. M. Bose, Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Monmohon Ghose and others to establish, in 1876, an Association for the redress of grievances. With such acute difficulties confronting them, the Indian Association at once took up the agitation in some matters of moment, at that time, touching public interest, and soon succeeded in enlisting the co-operation and sympathies of many distinguished persons from different and distant parts of India. It thus gradually gained solid strength and was able to create unity amongst all people of classes and of all creeds living in the entire Hindusthan.

This attracted the attention of the suspicious British as will appear from some of the measures taken by them. This was quickly followed by organising the Indian National Congress in the middle of the eighties (1885). The British Parliament noticed all these successive quick developments with searching eyes. There was also promulgation of highly unpopular orders; but the constitutional method in which the deliberations were held by the organisers of this Association, or the Congress, and the mode of their bold approach were observed with anxiety by the Britishers in England as well. Deputations ready with all facts and materials waited upon the authorities, both here and in England, inviting them to openly enquire and ascertain the facts and afford prompt and proper relief to avoid disturbances with the risk of leading to what might perhaps be called disloyalty to the British Sovereign.

With the passing away of the founders of this Association, continuously manned by leaders of public confidence and held in high esteem, it has all along continued its activities—unceasingly in all matters of public interest till India was declared in 1947 a free country, though sadly divided into two parts e. g. the Indian Union and the Pakistan. This Association has the proud record of noble achievements for the benefit of the people on many occasions and even of unsettling settled facts. The history of the Association which is being published will

disclose to any reader the almost insurmountable difficulties that had to be faced by these unforgettable stalwarts from time to time, who worked with great patience, at considerable personal sacrifice and suffering, always inspired by a sense of service to the country and the justness of their cause. This Association still now works with the objects with which it was started and has not failed to take up any cause or interest affecting the people. The main objective was and is Freedom of India, freedom under the laws, and freedom of development under the State. After 70 years, the dream of the founders of this Association has materialised and today we all remain responsible for better government, betterment of education, sanitation, health and social and economic condition of the people, their peace, prosperity and happiness through our National Government in its democratic form and Constitution, for the attainment of which it is expected that proper regard for public opinion and enforcement of popular measures will always be aimed and never neglected.

We should not forget the persistent endeavours under critical conditions during the time of our great predecessors and the course followed by their successors and the thoughtful procedure adopted, the force of their character, and their far-sightedness. This ought to be preserved as a source of strength and wisdom acquired from the experience of the past, and as an inspiration and guide in future.

With the change of times and ideas there has grown a number of parties with the common object of doing good to the Motherland, though in their youthful energy they sometimes show signs of impatience.

I was born very near the time of the foundation of this Association. I had first opportunities of serving as a volunteer in my student life when the session of the National Congress was held in this city. I was impressed with the attractive personality, courage, sense of service and sacrifice and the mode of presentation of problems affecting us for consideration by many eminent persons not only of Bengal, but of other parts of India and from different platforms. I joined this Institution several years ago, and I love it. I had the privilege of being associated with many great men whose memories I still cherish, and I always think at this old age how the youth of the present day and the generation, that will follow us can be made to remember the lives and works of the departed great, to inspire them for patriotic service to the country and humanity at large.

JAI HIND.

Sati Nath Roy

*President.*



Bharat Sabha Bhaban •

# An Edifice FOR Constructive Work

*On the completion of the new Building of the Indian Association, Surendranath Banerjee spoke as follows in 1915 :—*

“The old leaders have passed away but their mantles have fallen upon you. Where are Ananda Mohon Bose, Monmohan Ghose, Dwarakanath Ganguli, Dwarakanath Ghose, Bhairab Chandra Banerjee, Bama Charan Banerjee, Rajani Kanta Gupta and Jogendra Vidyabhusan? I am about the last survivor of the band of devoted men who founded the Association, and before many years have elapsed, my turn will come to join them in that land from whose bourne no traveler ever returns. May their spirit dwell in us and stimulate us to work in their footsteps. We in the Association have never been critics; we have been workers. A broad spirit of charity and toleration has always prevailed in our deliberations. May this Association be the temple of peace and not of controversy, the home of solid and united work never more urgent than now. We are on the eve, as I believe, of great changes. We must close our ranks, sink our differences and unite for the uplifting of the Motherland to the position suited to her dignity, the prestige of her ancient civilisation and the breadth and compass of her aspirations. To me who has watched this Association from its birth, has nursed it in its cradle and has helped it on to its maturity and manhood, it is a matter of unspeakable pleasure to find that we are housed in this splendid mansion. Let our work be adapted to our external environments; and let this day be remembered by us as a day of peace and reconciliation, of solemn league and covenant entered into by all of us to continue the noble and patriotic work which has been bequeathed to us by our predecessors in the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice by which they were inspired. Their spirits are present with us. I feel the breath of their God-like fragrance. May they guide us in the onward march and lead us to the promised land. May this Hall be the symbol and the starting point of a fresh era in the history of the Association of renewed activity and devoted work which shall recall, confirm and extend the best traditions of this Institution, associated with the honoured names of some of the most illustrious sons of Bengal.”

# The Leader as I Saw Him

Santosh Kumar Basu

(*Ex-Mayor of Calcutta*)

When the edifice stands in all its beauty and grandeur, people are apt to forget the architects and builders who worked and toiled at its foundation. Such were those pioneers in our national movement whose efforts and achievements are enshrined in the annals of the Indian Association. They held aloft the torch which lighted up the entire Indian scene and pointed the path which has led us to their cherished goal.

The freedom of the nation from the yoke of a foreign rule deeply entrenched in physical and economic might had to be won by a steady but gradual process. The Indian Association was the nerve centre in those early days when the spirit of protest and constitutional resistance was born and was nurtured by a generation of giants marking the dawn of a new era.

And it was in the early years of this century that I had the high privilege of close and intimate association with one of the greatest of those giants at the time, late Surendranath Banerjea. He was then the ideal of the students of Bengal.

As his pupil in the Ripon College and as the Assistant Secretary of the Students' and Youngmen's Union of which he was the President, it fell to my lot to come into daily contact with him. Throughout the progress of the anti-Partition and Swadeshi movement, in a hundred meetings and processions and

conferences in Calcutta and the mofussil as well as in personal interviews and discussions, unique opportunities were afforded to me to observe his great qualities of leadership. It was that leadership which gave us the first taste of a stupendous popular victory in the annulment of the partition of Bengal.

The students of those days, like their successors in later years, took a major part in propagating the movement and had to bear the brunt of repression in both parts of Bengal. When the Carlyle Circular in West Bengal and the Risley Circular in East Bengal were promulgated banning participation of students in any form of political agitation, I remember it fell upon me to address the first meeting of protest in Calcutta. Surendra Nath stood by us and Government thought it prudent not to provoke an open conflict over the affair.

While addressing the need for confining the agitation within constitutional limits, Surendranath would nevertheless stretch out his helping hand to every victim of bureaucratic wrath.

In 1906, the Congress Session was held in Calcutta with the late Dadabhai Naoroji, as President. Partition of Bengal and the boycott of British goods figured prominently in the agenda of the Congress. But it was clear that with the exception of Tilak, and a few others belonging to his school of thought, there was hardly any front rank

## AS I SAW HIM

leader from outside Bengal who came to support the defiant popular movement as it had developed in this province. So it was a great personal triumph for Surendranath, supported by Bipin Chandra Pal and the members of the new school, that in the Subjects Committee after considerable effort Bengal's view point was appreciated and resolutions were passed in the open session extending the support of the great national organisation to the agitation against the partition and in favour of Swadeshi.

I remember the visit of Mr. Valentine Chirol, who came to have a look at disturbed Bengal near about that time. He wanted to meet some students of Calcutta and I was asked to invite some of my fellow students. The meeting took place in the Indian Association Hall in the presence of Surendranath Banerjea and others. The great Tory journalist, who later produced his book "The Indian Unrest", had thus his first-hand acquaintance of Bengali students of whom he had heard so much as a turbulent lot.

I remember two other members of the British House of Commons who also paid visits to the Indian Association, Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr Ramsay Macdonald. The rough miners, leader, Mr. Keir Hardie dressed in a simple unconventional manner, was the leader of the Independent Labour Party and was noted as a sturdy champion of the Indian cause. He was given an ovation at the Howrah Station and was brought in a procession to College Square where in front of the Sanskrit College I read an address of welcome on behalf of the Students' and Youngmens' Union and

another address later on in the old Ripon College on behalf of the students of that College. Surendranath presided on both the occasions and Mr. Keir Hardie gave inspiring replies.

The Indian Home Rule agitation by Mrs. Annie Besant threatened to bring about a split in the Indian National Congress over the election of the President of the Calcutta Session in 1917. Mrs. Besant was the nominee of the Home Rule Party and the Raja of Mahmudabad, who was a Moslem Congress leader, was chosen by the Reception Committee of which Baikunthanath Sen of Berhampur was the Chairman. This caused a split in the Committee in which the pro-Besant Party elected Poet Rabindranath as the Chairman, who, however, himself desired peace and harmony. The Congress ranks were torn by violent feuds and no settlement seemed to be in sight. The younger sections, who had worked under Surendranath's leadership during the great Swadeshi upheaval of the earlier years, found themselves in a dilemma. I addressed a letter to Surendranath, making a fervent appeal to him to assume the unquestioned leadership of the entire province as he had always done before. I suggested that he might take the lead in securing a settlement of the dispute by supporting Mrs. Besant for the Presidency of the Congress with Baikuntha N. Sen as Chairman of the Reception Committee. I did not venture a personal discussion on the subject but was gratified to find some days later that Mrs. Besant had been elected President by the Reception Committee under the chairmanship of Baikunthanath Sen.

During the agitation against the Partition of Bengal, Surendranath acted in close co-operation with other leaders of Bengal who were the centres of strength and influence in their respective districts. They combined and collaborated with the Calcutta leaders in jointly deciding upon a course of action; and joint manifestoes on important occasions were issued signed by Aswini Kumar Dutt of Barisal, Ambica Charan Majumdar of Faridpur, Ananda Chandra Roy of Dacca, Anath Bandhu Guha of Mymensingh, Kamini Kumar Chanda of Sylhet, Baikuntha Nath Sen of Murshidabad, Nalinakshya Bose of Burdwan and K. B. Dutt of Midnapore.

Surendranath's patriotism and devotion to his country was inspired by a sincerity in which his God-gifted eloquence was deeply rooted. As an orator in the English language he had hardly any equal. On return from one

of his visits to England, he narrated to us how after listening to his speech in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, the then Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Alverstone, had declared:—"Such a speech was never heard since this hall was built."

But the great wonder about his eloquence was his superb speeches in Bengali fairly late in life as the inspired prophet of the Swadeshi movement. He carried Bengal in one mighty sweep in his numerous speeches to huge audiences when words and ideas instinct with his burning faith came in torrents and overwhelmed his hearers.

Surendranath Banerjea remained the life and soul of the Indian Association. To its eternal credit will remain in the organisation of the great national movement in Bengal which was the inspirer and precursor of the great freedom movement in India.

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## INTERCOURSE BETWEEN PROVINCES

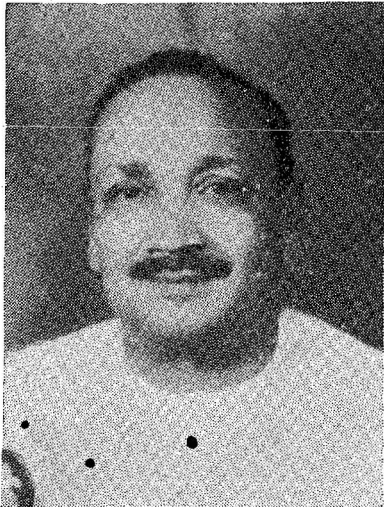
"It is my earnest hope," wrote Surendranath Banerjea in his report of the first political tour of Northern India, "that the intercourse between the people of Bengal, and the people of the Punjab, and the North-Western Provinces, and indeed the people of the other Presidencies of India should go on increasing, and that we should know one another much more intimately than is the case at present. The surest and most stable hope of an Indian regeneration must be founded upon this increasing intercourse, upon the augmented sympathy which is sure to follow, and the steadfast desire to make united efforts in all questions of national importance." (Report 1876-77)



Nibaran Chandra Roy  
Secretary, Indian Association,  
1927-1942.



Byomkesh Chakravarty  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1914-1915 & 1917.



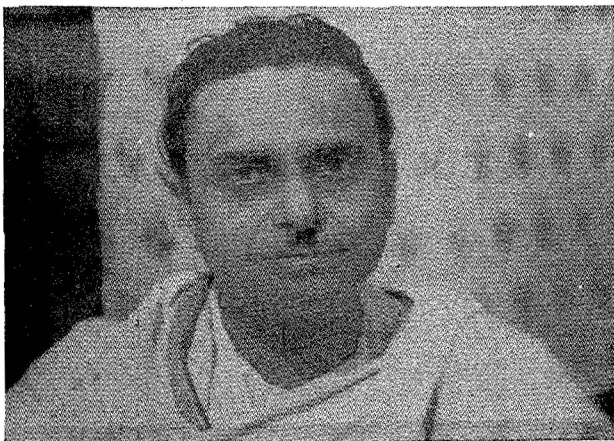
Nagendra Nath Rakshit  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1949.



B. C. Mitter  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1918-1928.



Sri Hem Ranjan Bose  
Librarian, Indian Association,  
1952.



Sri Sudhir Kumar Bose  
Treasurer, Indian Association,  
1949-1952.



Sri Ajoy Hriday Mitra  
Deputy Librarian, Indian Association,  
1952.



Sri Arjun Krishna Ghose  
Asst. Secretary, Indian Association,  
1952.

# Branches and Affiliated Institutions

## FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

Formation of a healthy public opinion was declared as one of the chief objects of the Indian Association.

“It is not enough for the Indian Association to confine its efforts to Calcutta, Nor is it sufficient that it should content itself with sending Memorials to Parliament...It has to perform the important duty of influencing public opinion, and partly of leading and guiding it, in reference to the most momentous questions affecting the interests of the people...”

“One of the most important means by which this great object might be attained is by the periodical deputation of agents to different parts of the country, who shall seek to give a healthy turn to public opinion in regard to important National problems”.

The Report of the Indian Association for 1878—79, from which the above excerpts are taken, says that “agents of the Indian Association (including Surendra Nath Banerjea and others) visited different parts of the country with a view to establish branch and affiliated Associations, to collect funds, and generally to create interest in the public mind in regard to the objects of the Association.”

## FIRST BRANCHES

As a result, we find the following branch and affiliated Associations were formed by 1878—79.

1. The Indian Association of Lahore.
2. The Indian Association of Cawnpore.
3. The Indian Association of Allahabad.
4. The Bogra Association.
5. The Mymensingh Association.
6. The Indian Association of Meherpore.
7. The Indian Association of Bhazanghata.
8. The Contai Association.
9. The Senhatty Association, Jessore.

10. The Indian Association of Faridpore.
11. The Kumarkhali Association.
12. The Hitasadhini Sabha of Jubbulpore.
13. The Indian Association of Krishnagore.
14. The Indian Association of Hosseinpore ( Mymensingh ).
15. The Indian Association of Midnapore.

The number of affiliated institutions and branches increased from year to year. In 1882 it rose to 30 ; in 1883 to 39 ; till in 1895—96 it reached the figure of 121, including quite a large number of Village Unions.

### POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE

The Report for 1880-81 says :—

“It has been the constant endeavour of the Indian Association to spread political knowledge throughout the country. Indeed, in their opinion, this portion of the programme of their work is of greater importance than the mere criticism of any passing measure of Government. On entering office, therefore, they lost no time in sending agents to the mufussil to carry out this object, and to form organisations amongst the people, wherever practicable.”

### WORK CONTINUES IN THE MUFUSSIL

The Report of the Indian Association for 1895—96, the year when the Association completed 20 years of its existence, says :—

“The Indian Association has always attached very great importance to the work of the Association in the mufussil. It has been a special feature of our work to organise public opinion in the mofussil and to seek to place it in touch with the public opinion of Calcutta.”

### PROVINCIAL CONFERENCES

The Report continues :—

“The first important work of the year (1892) was the organisation of the Provincial Conference. The idea of holding a Provincial Conference originated with the Indian Association. With an occasional gap here and there due to unavoidable circumstances, the Committee have persistently worked to give effect to this idea by holding Conferences from year to year ever since its first conception...With a view to stimulate public opinion in the mufussil, it was decided that the meetings of the Provincial Conferences instead of being confined to the Metropolitan City should, if possible, be annually held in one or other of the mufussil towns. The honour of holding the first Conference in a Provincial town belongs to Berhampore (1895)”.

# Surendranath Banerjea

## A Critical Estimate

Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha

[This article was specially written by the late Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha for the Indian Association.]

No name was, for many generations, better known to politically-minded Indians than that of Surendranath Banerjea, who was justly regarded by his educated fellow-countrymen as the life and soul and guiding spirit, of the nationalist movement which culminated in the establishment of the Indian Congress in 1885. There can be absolutely no doubt as to his great oratorical gifts, or of his powers to move large audiences by most effective appeals to their feelings.

Born in 1848, Surendranath graduated in 1868, and went in the same year to London to compete for the Indian Civil Service, in which he succeeded in securing admission in 1871. After working as an Assistant Magistrate in Sylhet for two years, his career took an unexpected turn. He was unjustly relieved of his office on what was at best a technical error.

But he diverted his extra-ordinary energies in a different direction. He became, what he proudly called, a "teacher of youth". Surendranath had always been extremely popular as professor, and students flocked in hundreds to any institution where he taught and the Ripon College, which he founded, soon became a self-supporting

institution, due entirely to the great popularity of its founder.

In 1878 Surendranath took charge of *The Bengalee* and raised it from a moribund condition to one in the front rank among the then Indo-English journals in the country. It was conducted from the nationalist stand-point, with very marked ability. It was in connection with a comment in this journal that there was launched against him, as its editor, the celebrated contempt case, in 1883, in the Calcutta High Court. The popular agitation, that followed it, was so intense that the Calcutta correspondent of the London *Times* cabled to that newspaper, that "if the agitation goes on increasing, as it has been doing, it will prove a serious embarrassment to Government." But Surendranath himself comments on it as follows in his memoirs, called *A Nation in Making*: "The contempt case operated as a unifying influence, strengthening the growing bonds of fellowship between the different provinces."

That the above comment by Surendranath is perfectly just will appear from the fact that a tremendous wave of excitement passed over the length and breadth of India on his trial and conviction.

As a strenuous political reformer Surendranath worked through the instrumentality of the Indian Association. He had been a member of the Calcutta Corporation ever since the introduction of the elective system, and that body recognised his services by returning him to the provincial legislative council. His work as a councillor was highly satisfactory. For over forty years he was one of the greatest exponents of that new spirit of Indian nationalism that is now suffused throughout the country. His first lecturing tour in Northern India, early in the eighties of the last century, was so great a success, that it was specifically mentioned in Sir Henry Cotton's *New India* as a conclusive proof of the growth and expansion of a spirit of nationalism in India. Similarly he undertook (as a Congress delegate) a lecturing tour in Britain, in 1890, where he made an uncommonly good impression on the minds of the British working-classes on the subject of Indian grievances.

Surendranath lived all his life in a village, a few miles to the north of Calcutta. But he used to be in his office, in Calcutta, every morning for the business of the day, and went home at dusk. He was for generations one of the most familiar and popular figures of Calcutta society, and was justly regarded a remarkable example of success achieved by overcoming unprecedented difficulties, by means of indomitable will and strenuous energy. When he began his career as a public man, he met appalling obstacles on every side, but his unflagging perse-

verence broke them down and the future historian will record it as a fact that public opinion, in its present form, owes its existence, especially in Bengal, chiefly to his monumental efforts to focus and organize it for political purposes.

As a journalist Surendranath edited the *Bengalee* for over four long decades, which witnessed the fusion of diverse elements in Indian politics into one homogeneous and compact national party. As editor he exalted his office position and dignity. His attitude towards antagonists was scrupulously fair and he never lapsed into a petty provincial groove. The ceaseless battles he fought with the bureaucrats, whenever they encroached on the liberties of action and speech, will be gratefully remembered by posterity.

As a professor Surendranath, for about forty strenuous years, worked at the text-books in college class-rooms. He revelled in his task as a teacher. "It was with the greatest reluctance that I ceased to be a teacher, for I loved the students and I rejoiced in their company" he writes in his autobiography.

For over fifty years Surendranath's supremacy as the most eloquent Indian orator, in English, remained unchallenged. His implacable energy, the heroic strength of ideas, a Spartan sense of duty, the extraordinary compass of his mind, amazing vivacity, and variety of appropriate gesture, "the vibrating voice now rising to an organ peal of triumph, now sinking to a whisper of entreaty," swayed vast masses

## A CRITICAL ESTIMATE

of his fellow-countrymen, thrilling their imagination and holding it spell-bound. On the qualification of an orator let me quote Surendranath's own remarks: "The qualifications of an orator are moral rather than intellectual. It is the emotions that inspire the noblest thoughts and invest them with their colour and their distinctive character. Let no one aspire to be an orator who does not love his country, love her, indeed with a true and soul-absorbing love. The equipment of the orator is thus moral and nothing will help him so much as constant association with the master-minds of humanity, of those who have worked and suffered; who have taught and preached great things, who have lived dedicated lives—consecrated to the service of their country or their God." No one could have put it better.

By universal consent Surendranath's two Congress Presidential addresses—at the Poona session of the Congress of 1895, and the Ahmedabad session of 1902—were record performances. Each of them took utmost four hours in its delivery, and I marvelled not so much at his rolling and rounded periods of sublime rhetoric, as at his absolute independence of notes to assist his memory, and also his sonorous intonation which neither failed nor flagged in the long ordeal.

All through his life he was in the vanguard of political activities—always at the prow. He never deserted any public cause, or sunk to the rear. He never felt like a derelict ship drifting on the sea, and her captain lost in doubt and uncertainty. Fervent hope, unyield-

ing courage, and radiant optimism, ever upheld him, even in the hour of repulse and rout.

It has been observed with truth that one who wishes to direct the affairs of the country must live in the moment intensely, but be bigger than the moment and see beyond it, how it would fit into the existing pattern of national life, and what part of the past it would hereafter become. Surendranath always took long views of our public life. All his life he preached action, and was labelled a firebrand, an upheavalist, a stormy petrel, and yet (paradoxical as it may seem) at the basis of his character lay deep conservative instincts. With all his vehemence, with all his volcanic explosions, with all his pronounced revolt against the accepted systems, he loved the evolutionary expansion of life, the ordered progress, freedom broadening from precedent to precedent, never the wild and reckless oscillations of the pendulum. As he himself puts it in his autobiography:—"I have always preferred to build upon old foundation; throughout my life, and in all my undertakings, I have fought shy of the new."

By one of the caprices of fortune the acceptance by Surendranath of the office of a Minister, in the Bengal Government in 1921, brought about the most sensational collapse of a career of unrivalled dramatic brilliance. And yet as Surendranath himself remarks (in a short passage in his autobiography) the truth of which cannot be doubted by any one in the know: "In my public life I never allowed myself to be

daunted by the frowns or seduced by the smiles of power. And even when the dispensation of favour lay in the hands of friends or colleagues, I acted on the same principle, and was not to be deterred from my purpose or from fulfilling the behests of my convictions by threats or by inducements."

• As a Minister his star was no longer in the ascendant. In spite of his having endowed Calcutta with an advanced system of municipal administration which should have made his term of office as a Minister memorable, he was ignominiously defeated at the next general election, and was forced into retirement.

He died in 1925, at the advanced age of seventy-seven, still in the full vigour of his intellect.

None will, I am sure, differ from me that great, very great, public services were rendered to the country for a period of half a century by Surendranath in various capacities—as an educationist, journalist, publicist, politician and orator. It is these which had made, for years and years, his name one to conjure with in the country, and it is the memory of these which will keep his name alive, in the grateful recollection of posterity, as a devoted servant of India.

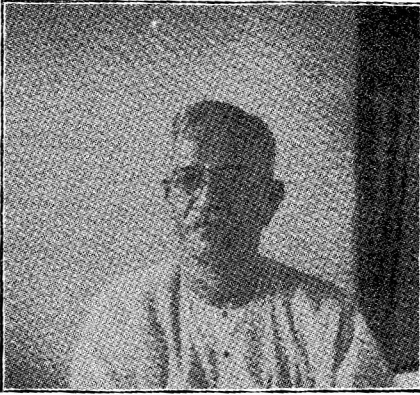
And when the history of this ancient land comes to be faithfully recorded by the impartial and critical historian, a very prominent place, indeed, will be assigned in it to the political work and achievements, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of Surendranath Banerjea, as one of the greatest tribunes of the Indian people.

## Against the Arms Act

Besides the Vernacular Press Act, Lord Lytton's administration was responsible for the passing of the Arms Act, (1878), depriving Indians to bear arms like free citizens of a civilised nation. The Indians felt it bitterly, as it deliberately aimed at 'emasculating' the people. The Indian Association voiced this Indian feeling immediately it came into existence, and agitated for its repeal. That was about 1877-80. The Memorial which the Indian Association submitted to Parliament, in 1878, declared against the Arms Act as follows:—

"The Arms Act which has practically deprived whole populations of peaceful inhabitants of their means of defence against the attacks of wild beasts, has cast an unmerited slur upon the loyalty of the people of India: while the invidious distinction which the Act countenances between Her Majesty's Indian subjects, who come under the operation of the Act, and Europeans, Americans and Eurasians to whom the Act does not apply, is wholly opposed to the traditions of British rule in this country, which have never recognised distinctions of race, colour or creed as the basis for special laws and special enactments."

The Act, they pleaded, should therefore, be immediately repealed. But it was not repealed; though Lord Ripon repealed the Vernacular Press Act.



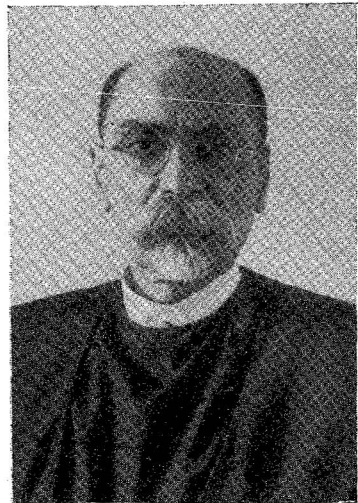
Dr. Nares Chandra Sengupta  
Asst. Secretary, Indian Association,  
1914-1915.



Dr. Pramatha Nath Banerjea  
President, Indian Association,  
1944-1949.



Sri N. C. Chatterjee  
Vice-President, Indian Association,  
1949.



Sri Sati Nath Roy  
President, Indian Association,  
1950-1952.

## SOME EARLY ACTIVITIES :

### CIVIL SERVICE AGITATION

*(In the following few pages a short summary of the principal activities of the Indian Association is given during the first ten years of the Association's life. With the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the leaders of the Indian Association joined it with enthusiasm. The Congress represented to them, as it were, the realisation of their ideal of Indian unity, and of a democratic organisation to help the people to attain self-government through the establishment of representative institutions. The Indian Association from now on became, what might be called, perhaps, an informal wing of the Congress, and remained so for a long number of years. The Association, from 1876 till the birth of the Congress, worked almost singly, particularly in Bengal and Northern India, to rouse national consciousness among the people. In this view, it might be said to have sown the seed of a modern People's Democracy in India.)*

#### THE IDEA THAT MOVED IT

“The Civil Service Question is indeed a national question. There is everywhere a strong feeling connected with it. Who does not wish that his own countrymen should rule over him? Who does not feel the exclusion of his race, of his kith and kin, from the most responsible offices under Government? What would be the feelings of Englishmen if a handful of Prussians ruled over them, excluding them from the Cabinet, excluding them from Parliament, excluding them from the army and the navy, excluding them from the control of the departments under Government? Human nature is everywhere the same. Centuries of oppression may have cowed down our spirits; but what Indian is there who, while holding silent communion with himself, does not condemn, from the

bottom of his heart, a system of administration which limits the ambition of his countrymen to the rank of Deputy Magistrates and Subordinate Judges?”

—*From the Special Report on the Civil Service Question to the members of the Indian Association by Surendranath Banerjea—1877.*

#### THE REAL OBJECT OF THE MOVEMENT

Writes Surendranath: “The Indian Association resolved upon organizing a national movement. This meeting (on the Civil Service question) was one of the biggest public demonstrations held in Calcutta... The agitation was the means; the raising of the maximum limit of age for the open competitive examinations were among the ends; but the underlying conception, and

the true aim and purpose of the Civil Service agitation was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India. It was accordingly resolved to appeal to the whole of India and bring the various Indian provinces upon the same platform (a thing that has never been attempted before), and to unite them through a sense of common grievance and the inspiration of a common resolve—"A Nation in Making."

#### THE RESULT OF THE AGITATION

As a result of the agitation, Rules were framed creating the Statutory Civil Service. It was, says Bipin Chandra Pal, "a considerable advance upon the

previous order of things." He continues: "But the general effect of the success of Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh's deputation to England was far greater than what was indicated by the action of the Secretary of State for India, who tried to meet the demand half-way by the institution of the Statutory Civil Service. It was far more moral than political. It added considerably to our pride and strengthened our conceit of intellectual equality with our foreign masters. It also revealed the possibilities of organised political agitation in India with a view to bring educated Indian opinion to bear irresistibly upon the policy and action of the British Government in the country."—"Memories of my life and times."

### Against the Vernacular Press Act

The growth of a new political consciousness in India very materially contributed to the development of a powerful vernacular press, patriotic, independent and outspoken in their criticism of the action and policy of the Government running counter to the interests of the people. The various measures of Lord Lytton, particularly his Afghan War, were subjected to scathing criticism by the vernacular press of this country, particularly the Bengali journals. To gag them, the Vernacular Press Act was passed in 1878. Writes Bipin Chandra Pal:—"Though Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act applied to all India, the real cause of offence came from the Bengalee press. The *Sadharanee*, edited by Babu Akshay Chandra Sarker (who was an Assistant Secretary of the Indian Association), and published from Chinsurah was

at that time the most powerful organ of educated public opinion in Bengal. I still remember a remarkable article on Lord Lytton's speech at the Delhi Durbar of January 1877, headed "*Bhik nehi mangtehe ham, ehi dushman bolale*," meaning "call back this malicious brute, I do not want any alms." It was a reply to the grant of honours and titles and promise of concessions to the people on the occasion of the assumption of the title of Queen Empress by Her Majesty Queen Victoria. She was the Queen of England, a constitutional monarch but as the head of the Indian administration she was henceforth to be designated as the Empress of India,—not constitutional monarch but something like an "Oriental" despot...The Indian intellectuals did not appreciate this idea. This new title practically repudiated

## PRESS ACT

their claim to rights of equal citizenship with Her Majesty's British subjects. It was an open reversal of the fundamental principles and ideals of the proclamation of 1858. The spirit of the Disraeli-Lytton policy provoked this remarkable reply from the *Sadharanee*."

### SPURIOUS LOYALTY

The British bureaucrats characterised this critical attitude of the vernacular press as prompted by disloyalty. Against this the *Sadharanee* had an article headed "Spurious Loyalty" which concluded thus: "If it amounts to disloyalty to point out this contradiction (between the declaration of the Queen's Proclamation that all appointments would be given to the natives of the country if they were qualified for them and the present policy that all high executive offices are to be given to Englishmen only), and if for this the Government chooses to punish us, then we, with tens of millions of Her Majesty's subjects, are prepared to be punished with Surendranath."

Besides the *Sadharanee*, prominent Bengali journals, which included

*Bharat Mihir* Mymensigh, *Som Prakash*, (the premier Bengali weekly), *Hindu Hitaishinee* of Dacca and others, wrote more or less in the same strain against the retrograde administration of Lord Lytton. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* "was the most outspoken in its criticism of public policy."

### GROWING STRENGTH OF MIDDLE CLASS

The Indian Association strongly felt that criticism of public policy must not be allowed to be stopped by executive action. It organised a demonstration against it, even against the opposition of the leaders of aristocracy in the land. Writes Surendranath in his *A Nation in Making*: "It was one of the most successful meetings ever held in Calcutta. It sounded the death-knell of the Vernacular Press Act, and what is even more important, it disclosed the growing power of the middle class...It indeed marked a definite and progressive stage in national evolution; and was the creation of the builders of the Indian Association...One of the earliest acts of Lord Ripon's administration was the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act."

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### MEETING OUTSIDE LEADERS

"On the 9th. March, 1879, the Committee (of the Indian Association) convened a meeting to give a public reception to Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Sheriff of Bombay, then on a visit to this city (Calcutta). The cultivation of friendly feelings between the people of the different provinces in India is an object which the Indian Association has steadily kept in view and which it has always sought to promote. The meeting in honour of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang was held at the Albert Hall and was attended by the leaders of the Calcutta community and was in every respect a decided success." (Report of 1878-79.)

## For Improving the Condition of A

The agricultural community, in the opinion of the Indian Association, formed "the basis and the foundation of the social fabric", but "unfortunately (it said) that community or at least a majority of them, had no organ or organisation to voice their feelings or advance their interests." The Indian Association took up their cause with its characteristic vigour. When a change in the rent law was sought to be made in 1876, the Indian Association appointed a sub-committee to consider the proposal, and issued a questionnaire on the subject.

The report for 1880-81 said: "The views of the zemindars on the question of rent had been very ably represented by the British Indian and the other Associations in different parts of the country under the management of the zemindars. But the ryots had no such means of representing their views on the question. In order, therefore, to be able to come to an impartial decision,...the Committee thought it necessary to send agents to the mufassil to collect all available information bearing on the question and to ascertain the views of the ryots in connection with it." With this object,

meetings were held at Burdwan and Nadia. These meetings were attended by the ryots in spite of the opposition of the zemindars and in some instances by the Police." The Indian Association said "that while respecting the interests of the zemindars and the ryots generally, full regard must be paid to the interests of the practically voiceless class, which it is to be the tillers of the soil. It may be said to form the backbone of the community."

The earnestness with which the Indian Association took up the cause of the ryots evoked considerable interest in different quarters. "In some quarters (say in 1883) that the Indian Association was of a national in character, the Raiyats' Association, a duty is to promote the interests of the raiyats."... "How would the Association," it asked, "further the cause of the ryots by establishing branches in the Punjab, where the condition of the raiyat is very different from Bengal?"

## The Study of Indian History

"The study of the history of our own country furnishes the strongest basis for the loftiest patriotism. I ask, what Hindoo is there, who does not feel himself a nobler being altogether, as he calls to mind the proud and illustrious countrymen, graced by the thrice-immortal names of Krishna and a Vyasa, a Panini and a Patanjali, a Gautama and a Sankhya. For ours was a most glorious past. We were great in literature and in war, but above all, great in morals.—*Surendranath Banerjea.*

## Representative Government

Though the earliest activities of the Indian Association were naturally turned to the redress of immediate grievous wrongs, as the new Civil Service Regulations, reducing the age-limit of candidates from 21 to 19 to debar talented Indian youths to successfully compete for the higher services in the Administration, or the Vernacular Press Act, or the drain of Indian revenues for an unjust Afghan War, the creation of Representative Government in India was within their policy and programme, even from the beginning.

The third annual Report of the Association (1878-79) says: "The great question of the future is the question of representative government for India. The Association has already taken up this question, and at the annual meeting recently held, a special committee was appointed to draft a scheme. The Committee cannot think that the question will be decided in a way beneficial to the interests of the country before many years have elapsed and before the most strenuous efforts have been made." An appeal will have to be made to public opinion in this country and to the enlightened sentiments of our rulers in England. The agitation in connection with this question must extend over years, and the Association have resolved to raise a fund for purposes of agitation; and the Committee now appeal to their educated countrymen for contributions and they feel persuaded that the appeal will awaken a ready response."

The fourth annual report (1879-80) has the following:—

"The concluding paragraph of the last annual report contains the following passage:—'The great question of the future is the question of representative government for India'. These words were not forgotten by the Committee in commencing their work for the session under review. At the annual meeting a committee was appointed to draft a scheme of representative government. The Committee applied themselves with zeal to the important work with which they had been entrusted. They lost no time in opening communications with men of thought and eminence, both here and in England and they have been able to collect a considerable body of useful information bearing upon the question of representative government.'

Schemes were received from Mr. S. Stewart, of the Bombay Civil Service and Pandit Luchmi Narain, a member of the Oudh Bar. The former advocated 'a consultative assembly for the whole of India'; Pandit Luchmi Narain pleaded for 'two separate houses of representatives somewhat on the model of the American Chambers.'

"The labours of the Committee, however, were not confined to the mere collection of materials. The Committee may be said to have already begun their work. Feeling that local self-government must precede national self-government, the Committee have issued a circular letter addressed to the district

towns throughout Bengal, inviting them to petition the Lieutenant-Governor,... for the introduction of the elective system in the constitution of their Municipalities."

The Circular letter said :—

"...The Committee are fully persuaded that local Self-Government must precede national Self-Government and that the people must have a voice in the management of their local concerns before they should aspire to have a hand in the administration of the affairs of the province by means of a National Council. This view has forced itself upon the attention of the Committee with considerable force from the recent utterances of the Viceroy, when in reply to an address presented to him by the Municipality of Dehra Dun, Lord Ripon declared that he had it 'in charge from Her Majesty the Queen Empress to look into the Municipal administration of the country, for there the political education of the people begins'. The Committee have accordingly resolved to appeal to the patriotic and enlightened community in the district towns of Bengal to commence an agitation with a view to secure for those towns the inestimable boon of local self-government."

In the report for 1880-81, we find the following statement on Local Self-Government.

"The most important question which occupied the attention of the Committee during the last year was the question of Local Self-Government. The Indian Association had long begun to move in reference to this important question... The Committee had already been earnestly agitating on the question of Local

Self-Government, when the Resolution of the Government of India on the subject was published...In the opinion of the Committee there were some features in the scheme, which would practically in a great measure neutralise the advantages which His Excellency might have in view to confer on the people of this country."

The Committee collected the opinion of the people in the mufussil, where meetings were held and the leaders of the Indian Association, Surendranath Banerjea, Dwarakanath Ganguly and others, toured these areas and addressed the people.

"Having in this manner ascertained the opinion of the people on the scheme of the Viceroy, the Committee drafted a memorial on the subject and convened a public meeting at the Town Hall (18th. February) for its adoption. So great was the interest felt by the people on the question of Local Self-Government that the spacious hall was literally crammed, the audience including some Bengali ladies."

The resolution adopted at the meeting represented the opinion of all classes not only of Bengal but of the whole country, as "telegrams and letters supporting the objects of the meeting were received from the Punjab, the N. W. Provinces, the Central Provinces, Assam and the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay."

The following resolution was unanimously adopted :—

"That this meeting feels deeply grateful to His Excellency the Viceroy, for his recent Resolution which seeks to confer upon the people of this country the inestimable boon of Local Self-

## GOVERNMENT

Government and ventures to express its earnest and confident hope that the measures adopted by His Excellency for the purpose will be of such a character as to secure a fair and satisfactory working of the scheme. And with this view this Meeting would respectfully beg to make the following recommendations:—

- (1) That the constitution of the Local Board and of the Municipalities should be based on the elective system.
- (2) That their Chairman should be an officer elected by them and on no account be the Magistrate-Collector of the District.
- (3) That the functions and powers vested in the existing Committee should be increased in view of their amalgamation in the proposed Local Board."

The sixth annual report of the Association, for 1882, remarked on this subject: "The Municipal Bill and the Local Self-Government Bill are now before the country and though undoubtedly they

promise substantial concessions, they are yet capable of much improvement."

The first National Conference which was convened by the Indian Association in 1883, discussed the question of Representative Councils.

The Government's measures for local self-government largely fell short of the results expected of them as they did not form part of a sincere attempt at national self-government. But the agitation for real self-government, both local and national, was helpful in creating new aspirations among the people for Swaraj. Surendranath remarks in his *A Nation in Making*: "We not only wanted to be members of the bureaucracy and to leaven it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it and shaping and guiding its measures and eventually bringing the entire administration under complete popular domination".

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## Indian Unity

*(From Surendranath Banerjea's Address on Indian Unity, 1878.)*

India is inhabited by peoples separated by languages, religion, by manners and customs. Is their intellectual, social, moral union possible? I say such a union is possible—is practicable; and I appeal to the facts of history in support of the statement. In spite of the differences of language and religion, Switzerland is a united country. Belgium is a united country in spite of religious and linguistic differences. Let us take Germany. Germany is united in spite of strongly marked religious differences in her people. The unification of Italy was effected notwithstanding dialectical differences.

There comes a time in the history of a nation's progress, when every man may verily be said to have a mission of his own to accomplish. Such a time has now arrived for India.

Let us raise aloft the banner of our country's progress. Let the word Unity be inscribed there in characters of glittering gold.

# Ananda Mohan Bose :

## His Service to Nation

"One of the purest of mortals", was how Surendranath characterised Ananda Mohan Bose. It is high praise but true. Purity of character and purity of motive were Ananda Mohan's noblest virtues. It raised him to a position in our public life attained by few even of his great contemporaries.

Ananda Mohan's contribution to the growth of our new national life has been of immense value. He inaugurated the Students' Association in Calcutta. With him, in this work, was associated Surendra Nath. Together they "resolved to foster a new spirit and a new atmosphere" among the youthful students who were receiving English education. The birth of the Students' Association of Calcutta is thus described by Bipin Chandra Pal in his *Memories* :

"On his way from England, Ananda Mohan had spent a few days in Bombay to study the educational and social reform institutions of the Western capital. In Bombay he found an Association of youthful students, which was practically leading a new movement of female education among the middle classes of the Hindu community. From Bombay he brought the idea of organising a similar movement among the students of his own University. Within a few days of his return to Calcutta, Ananda Mohan established the Calcutta Students' Association. Surendra Nath, almost immediately after his appointment as

Professor in the Metropolitan Institution, joined Ananda Mohan in the leadership of this Students' Association and became at once the very life and soul of it. Ananda Mohan continued to be the President of the Association."

Ananda Mohan's reputation as one of the most brilliant Indian scholars and as a man of high character had made him the idol of the student community in Bengal. Of an unassuming type, he enthusiastically welcomed Surendra Nath's association in the work. "Surendra Nath's eloquence and his burning patriotism lent to it a new strength and inspiration."

The Students' Association attracted the most prominent scholars of our University in those days. Its first Secretary was Nanda Kishore Bose, "who was the first to be appointed to the Statutory Civil Service", after its institution as a result of the agitation of the Indian Association. Among other members were Surya Kumar Agasti, Byomkesh Chakravarty and Girish Chandra Bose ; Swami Vivekananda was one of those who "regularly attended" the lectures of Surendra Nath to the student community of Calcutta. This was about 1875. •

Surendranath Banerjea's lectures in those days were instinct with an "under-current of religious and social idealism." The subjects he chose for his early addresses will bear this out. His first

lecture under the auspices of the Students' Association was on the "Rise of the Sikh Power." His next lecture was on the Chaitanya Movement in Bengal. He delivered addresses also on "Indian Unity", on Lessons of History and on the life and teachings of Joseph Mazzini. Intellectual and moral regeneration of the people were the main theme and emphasis of these lectures. And Ananda Mohan had not only sincere appreciation of the worth of such propaganda, he whole-heartedly co-operated also with Surendranath in this.

## INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOUNDED

Working together, Ananda Mohan and Surendranath soon found the need of organising a political Association of the new educated middle class. In this, they had another collaborator in Pandit Siva Nath Shastri, the leader of the younger section of the Brahmos. Ananda Mohan had already been drawn to the social and religious freedom movement of the Brahmo Samaj. Siva Nath and Ananda Mohan took up the leadership of the younger Brahmos and withdrawing from Keshub Chandra Sen's congregation, founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Lovers of freedom as they were, they immediately joined Surendranath in his political freedom movement also.

The Indian Association was established in 1876 and Ananda Mohan became its first Secretary. If Surendranath's burning patriotism and unequalled eloquence were largely responsible for spreading the movement of the Indian Association and the ideal of a rejuvenated India, Ananda Mohan's scholarship, large humanity, strong moral sense and

love of country crystallised and consolidated that movement. It was a unique partnership, none sparing himself and both working for the good of the Motherland, each contributing the best he possessed. And this partnership lasted till the last days of Ananda Mohan Bose. It was a remarkable testimony of the love and esteem his countrymen bore to him, that Ananda Mohan even in his sickness had to be carried to the historic federation hall meeting in 1905 —'the symbol of unity',—as a protest against the partition of Bengal, to preside over it and deliver his message and his appeal to the people to work undaunted for a united national life. Surendranath read the address and he characterised it as "one of the noblest orations to which it has been one's privilege to listen."

Whether be in India or in England, Ananda Mohan always worked for a better India, a regenerated India—socially, economically, educationally and politically. The Congress asked him to preside over its deliberations in 1898 at Madras. Though not in good health, he responded to the call; and in the words of Surendranath "inspiring earnestness and penetrating conviction lay behind every utterance" of his presidential address.

Such in brief were the nobility of character and patriotism of one of India's greatest sons.

Ananda Mohan was born in 1847 in a village in Mymensingh district and he breathed his last in Calcutta in 1906.

# Early Leaders of Indian Association

## RAJNARAIN BOSE

Rajnarain Bose was an esteemed member of the first Committee of the Indian Association. He was born on 7th September, 1826, in Boral, 24 Parganas. He embraced Brahmoism under Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. His English translations of the Upanishads were highly appreciated.

Intensely patriotic, Rajnarain Bose was aptly called the "Grand Father of Indian Nationalism". Though he was eager to gather all that was good in Western culture and was full of enthusiasm for the reform of his own society, he was keen and ardent about the revival of all the noble aspects of ancient Hindu culture.

As early as 1861 he proposed the formation of a 'Society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal', and in 1867 took a prominent part in the organisation of the Hindu Mela. His writings on Hindu religion and culture, particularly his remarkable essay entitled "The Superiority of Hindu Religion" materially helped our English educated youngmen to turn to the past glories of their own civilisation. Among his other well-known works were "Ekal O Sekal" and "Briddher Asha" or the Old Man's Hope, about which last a reviewer of the "Times" said ; "Patriotism of the highest type pervades every syllable of the old man's thought and utterances."

His ascetic nature and love of man and country reminded one of the ancient seers or *rishis* of our country. He died at Deoghar in 1899 at the ripe old age of 73.

## Rev. K. M. BANERJEE

Rev. Dr. K. M. Banerjee, was elected first President of the Indian Association, and he continued to be the President of the Association till his death in 1885. It was a unique tribute to his character, scholarship and public spirit. Though old,—he was over sixty at the time of the birth of the Indian Association,—he was an active President, presiding over public meetings and guiding the discussions at important committee meetings of the Association. He was born in Calcutta in 1813. At the age of eleven he was sent to the Hindu College, where he came under the influence of Derozio and became a rationalist and a free thinker.

In 1829 he became a teacher at the Hare School, but his services were dispensed with on the representations of the Hindu guardians of the pupils. He became acquainted with Rev. Dr. Duff and embraced Christianity. In 1837 he was ordained Deacon and became pastor of the Christ Church in Cornwallis Square. In 1852 he joined the Bishop's College as a professor but resigned for some differences with the authorities in 1868. In 1876 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Law in recognition of his high literary attainments. He was a master of eleven languages and had to his credit valuable publications, such as the *Encyclopaedia Bengalis*, both in English and Bengali (13 volumes) and six philosophical systems of the Hindus, etc. He gave away in charity what he earned from his writings, irrespective of caste or creed. He died on 11th May, 1885.

## SHIVANATH SASTRI

No history of the freedom movement of modern Bengal and India can be complete without a recognition of the many-sided activities of Shiv Nath Sastri for it. He was the leader of the progressive youngmen of the Brahma Samaj, and his character and inspiration shaped and moulded their lives. Uncommonly gifted, he did not use his intellectual powers for personal advancement; his life was dedicated to the cause of moral, social, religious and political regeneration of his people.

Writes Bipinchandra Pal in his autobiography: "To Shiv Nath belongs, in a special measure, the credit of realising the impossibility of attaining the moral and spiritual objective of the Brahma Samaj without a radical reconstruction of our social life and political government, as well as the impossibility of reaching the political goal of democratic self-government unless our national politics was wedded to the ideals of spiritual and social freedom for which the Brahma Samaj openly stood."

It was, therefore, nothing unnatural that he should be one among the founders of the Indian Association, which aimed at political and intellectual advancement of the people. He was on the first Committee of the Indian Association. And though not openly associated always with the political struggle, the inspiration of his life worked amongst the youthful Brahmos of whom he was the leader, and made them devote their lives for India's progress and freedom. Bipinchandra Pal was one among them. Modern women's education in Bengal is largely indebted to him, so

is also Bengali literature. His poems, essays, novels and his own autobiography in Bengali are among the valuable assets of Bengali literature.

He was born in a village in 24-Parganas in 1847, and died in 1919.

## MONOMOCHAN GHOSH

( Born 1844 ; Died 1896 )

A founder-member of the Indian Association and the first Chairman of its Committee, Monomohan Ghosh's connection with the Association from the date of its inception till his death, was very intimate; and he always took a leading part in all the affairs of the Association. He was also a 'zealous friend' of Indian National Congress, and was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the sixth Congress held in Calcutta in 1890.

Monomohan passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in 1859 and in the next year published a series of letters in the *Hindu Patriot* on the Indigo cultivation and its attendant evils which led to the appointment of the Indigo Commission by Government. Monomohan Ghose attended several sittings of the Commission held at Krishnagar and took notes for the *Hindu Patriot*.

In 1861, he joined the Presidency College, Calcutta and while still a student published the *Indian Mirror* and edited it till March, 1862. Going to England, he qualified himself for the Bar and started practice as a Barrister at the Calcutta High Court. He was very successful as a criminal lawyer, always defending the weak and the oppressed. He was the first man to

invite public attention to the system of domestic slavery then prevalent in Eastern Bengal.

He never ceased to agitate for the separation of the judicial and executive functions of the District Officers under the British administration. A staunch supporter of female education, he became the Secretary of the Bethune School in 1873, and continued to hold the office, with occasional breaks, till his death. He was a member of the Indian Science Congress and contributed liberally to its fund.

### NAGENDRANATH CHATTERJEE

Among those who had joined Surendra Nath Banerjea in his work for political freedom, were many of the front-rank members of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. Nagendranath Chatterjee, "who represented the intellectual force" of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj movement, was a founder-member of the Indian Association.

Surendranath was accompanied by him in his memorable political tour of northern India in connection with the Civil Service agitation, in 1877. Nagendranath was "a most eloquent speaker in the Bengali language,"—writes Surendranath in his autobiography.

Nagendranath was born in 1843 at Bansberia in the Hooghly district. Of a family of well-known Sanskrit scholars, Nagendranath had his early education at Bansberia; he then joined a school in Calcutta. Though he had no opportunity for higher University education, he, by private study and ennobling social and political works, became a recognised

Bengali writer and an effective speaker on social, political and religious subjects. His "*Dharma-Jijnasha*" or inquiry into religion, writes Bipinchandra Pal, "is one of the best books of its kind not only in Bengalee but perhaps even in English". His life of Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengali is one of the standard biographical works in that language. Of his powers as a speaker, Bipinchandra Pal writes in his *Memories*: "Nagendranath Chatterjee was one of the most powerful Bengalee speakers of his day. Not an orator like Keshub Chandra Sen or Shivanath Sastri, Nagendranath, however, always drew crowded houses by the fascination of his wit and the incisive logic of his discourses."

### DWARKANATH GANGULI

"Associated with us in our efforts to organize a new Association upon popular lines was a devoted worker, comparatively unknown then, and, I fear even now, whose memory deserves to be rescued from oblivion. Dwarkanath Ganguli began life as a teacher, and while yet young embraced Brahmoism. In the schism that took place between the two wings of the Brahma Samaj, he sided with the dissentients and actively promoted the establishment of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. An ardent lover of what he believed to be the truth, when he took up a cause, he threw his soul into it. His co-operation in the organization of the new Association (Indian Association) was of great value to us; and so long as health and strength spared to him, he worked in the cause of the Association with an energy and devotion, the memory of which, now that he is dead, his friends

## EARLY LEADERS

cherish with affectionate gratitude."

These words of Surendranath, written nearly forty years after the birth of the Indian Association, is a great tribute to the work of Dwarkanath Ganguli for the organisation of the first popular political institution in modern India.

Dwarkanath was born in 1844 in a village in Vikrampur, Dacca. He is recognised to be the "pioneer of liberal female education in Bengal." In 1869, he started a journal for female emancipation, named *Abala-Bandhab*. He joined the Banga Mahila Vidyalaya, started by Ananda Mohan Bose and Durga Mohan Das (an uncle of Deshbandhu C. R. Das), as a teacher and soon became the life and soul of this institution.

An active founder-member of the Indian Association, he was its Assistant Secretary from 1882-1898. A remarkable example of Dwarkanath's earnestness for the cause he took up was his stay for a considerable time among the tea garden labourers of Assam to gain first-hand knowledge of their pitiable condition. It was mainly through his efforts and those of his Association, that the amelioration of the condition of tea garden workers was possible.

### AKSHAY CHANDRA SARKAR

(Born 1846; died 1917.)

Akshay Chandra Sarkar was a member of the first Committee of the Indian Association. Akshay Chandra commenced his legal profession in Berhampore where his father was a

Munsiff. After some time Akshay Chandra returned to Hooghly and undertook editing a weekly paper, entitled *Sadharani* and a monthly journal named *Navajiban*.

When the Indian Association was formed in 1876, Akshay Chandra Sarkar was elected one of its Assistant Secretaries with Jogendranath Vidya-bhusan. His activities in that capacity were helpful in consolidating the new movement. He made valuable contributions to Bengali literature and was an intellectual leader of the Hindu revival movement. He was intimately connected with the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, and presided over the Bengali Literary Conference at Chittagong.

### LAL MOHAN GHOSH

"Of Indian gentlemen who have gone to England within the last few years on a political mission, none has been heard by Englishmen with more genuine delight and greater respect, than Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh of Calcutta." With these words C. L. Parekh begins his life-sketch of Lal Mohan Ghosh, in his book called *Eminent Indians on Indian Politics*, published in 1892. It was an extraordinary achievement for an Indian to be able to woo, almost successfully, an English constituency, as a candidate for a seat in the British House of Commons. The credit of this belongs to Lal Mohan Ghosh. Writes Bipin Chandra Pal in his *Memories* (Vol. II):—"Lal Mohan was deputed to England once again (1884) by the Indian Association. It was

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during this visit that Lal Mohan Ghosh was invited to contest a Parliamentary election in the Liberal interest in Deptford. And but for the Irish vote that went against him at the last moment, Lal Mohan would have been the first Indian member of the British House of Commons.'

Even before this, when the Indian Association decided to send a Deputation to England in 1877, in connection with the Civil Service agitation, Lal Mohan Ghosh was placed in charge of the Memorial. Lal Mohan's was the first political deputation to England.

To quote from Bipin Chandra Pal's *Memories* (Vol. II) again :— "Lal Mohan met with phenomenal success. He addressed an influential gathering of the members of Parliament at Willis' rooms, and he at once established his claims to be classed with the greatest English orators of the time. The meeting was presided over by John Bright, himself the greatest of English orators of his day, and Lal Mohan spoke with a power and eloquence that excited the admiration of all and evoked the warmest tribute from the President." "The effect of that meeting was instantaneous," as Surendranath said ; and the Rules creating the Statutory Civil Service were promulgated.

Lal Mohan was born in Krishnagar in 1849. Like his illustrious brother M. Ghose he also had qualified himself as a Barrister. His energies were, however, mainly devoted to political and patriotic activities ; and as a recognition of his valuable services he was elected to preside over the Indian National Congress in 1903. He died in 1909.

## BAIKUNTHA NATH SEN

(Born 1843 ; died 1922.)

He was one of the intimate and active members of the Indian Association and was its President from 1917-'20. He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress at its session at Calcutta over which Dr. Annie Besant presided.

Enrolled as a Vakil, Baikunthanath started practice at Berhampore in 1866, and soon became the leader of the Bar.

From 1855-1894 he was the Chairman of the Berhampore Municipality. He was a member of the Red Cross Society, and the President of the Murshidabad Association. He was an active member of the Indian National Congress and was the Secretary of the district Congress Committee. He was elected a member of the Bengal Council once in 1899 and again in 1910. At his instance the session of the Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Berhampore on three occasions. He presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Hooghly.

## JOGENDRA N. VIDYABHUSAN

One of the first Assistant Secretaries of the Indian Association Pandit Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan was a reputed scholar, a patriot and editor of "*Arya Darshan*." He was also the author of several books, and his biographies of Joseph Mazzini and Garibaldi in Bengali were very popular in those days. Writes Surendranath in his autobiography :— "I persuaded Babu Jogendranath Vidyabhusan and Babu Rajani Gupta, both distinguished Bengalee writers, to translate into our

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language the life and work of Mazzini in the spirit of my addresses, so as to place them within the reach of those who did not understand English." He was for a period Vice-President of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.

Jogendranath was born in 1845 in a village in Nadia district; and he died in 1904.

### SHYAMA CHARAN SIRCAR

A great jurist, and respected by all, Shyama Charan Sircar presided over the meeting at the Albert Hall on 28th July, 1876, which inaugurated the Indian Association. He was also elected a member of the first Committee of the Association.

Shyama Charan started his life as a clerk. He was very keen after knowledge and soon became proficient in Persian, Latin, Greek, French, and English. He was appointed a teacher at the Calcutta Madrassa, and subsequently at the Sanskrit College. In 1857 he became Chief Interpreter in the Supreme Court. He was appointed Tagore Law Lecturer in 1872, the first Bengali to occupy the post. In 1878 he was elected a Fellow of the Calcutta University.

Besides being a great scholar, he was loved by all for his social and humanitarian activities.

### Rev. KALI CHURN BANERJEE

Born 1847; died 1907.

Rev. Kali Churn Banerjee was in the front of the political freedom movement initiated by the Indian Association and the Indian National Congress. Soon after the formation

of the Indian Association, he became a member of its Executive Committee, and became its President in 1906-'07. There was no movement, religious, educational, moral or political, in which he did not take an active and prominent part. Kali Churn Banerjee, writes Bipinchandra Pal in his Memories, was "the finest specimen of the Bengal school of oratory, who made his mark both at the High Court and at the Calcutta University, of which he was a Syndic for many years, and became, towards his closing days, its Registrar. With his friend Jay Govinda Shome, he founded the weekly, "Indian Christian Herald", of which he was the editor. "He was a well-known figure at the Congress, and would most probably have been elected President of the Congress session at Ahmedabad in 1902, but for an extraneous consideration, which made Surendranath's selection essential.

### GURUDAS BANERJEE

( Born 1844; died 1918 )

A great scholar, Gurudas Banerjee was well versed in the literature of the East and the West. The result was a beautiful synthesis of India's ancient culture and modern Western culture in his life and teachings. He was a Bengali writer of note, and was among the founders of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and the National Council of Education, Bengal.

He took a keen interest in the activities of the Indian Association, of which he was a founder-member, and also one of the Vice-Presidents in 1887.

## KRISHNA KUMAR MITRA

(Born 1852 ; died 1936)

Krishna Kumar's was "a saintly character," as was truly said by Surendranath. His estimate of Krishna Kumar in *A Nation in Making* is worth preserving: "One of the worthiest and most selfless among his contemporaries." Krishna Kumar was "essentially a man of religion, politics was a part of his religion...Every good endeavour finds a responsive echo in his heart. There was no stauncher friend of the Swadeshi movement, or more unflinching opponent of the Partition of Bengal, than Krishna Kumar Mitra and he suffered for his devotion to the cause of his country by his deportation."

Krishna Kumar Mitra was intimately associated with the Indian Association in 1876, when it was founded. He started his life as a teacher of the City School and then became a Professor of City College, Calcutta. He edited the Bengali weekly *Sanjibanee*. He founded the "*Nari Raksha Samity*" (Association for the protection of women).

## KALISANKAR SUKUL

Surendranath Banerjee delivered an address on India Unity in 1876 under the auspices of the Students' Association in the Medical College Theatre, Calcutta. In the gathering was a young student, together with his friends. He came forward and spoke. "It was an effective little speech which made an impression on the audience". This was Kalisanker Sukul. Surendranath thought, and rightly too, that "the young man had stuff in him". "Our acquaintance", writes Surendra-

nath in his autobiography the above anecdote thus began, ripened ship."

Kalisankar Sukul ed with the activities tion, almost from was one of the night schools for work started under the at Association.

In 1881 he led Indian Association Law revision, and Union for the redress

Kalisankar Sukul of the editorial board

## ABDUL

With a bright Mr. Abdul Rasul in 1889 and took the the St. John's College. called to the Bar and the Calcutta High Cou

But to amass a fortune as a lawyer was evil Abdul Rasul's life. the country occupied as his profession." believer in Hindu-Muslim during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal in an active part to neutral of the move of the British to divide the Hindus. He presided over political Conference at which the Government lathi-charge. His president Barisal concluded with "United we stand, div

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an adage which is most applicable to our case”.

He was closely associated with the activities of the Indian Association and was one of its Vice-Presidents for 1914, 1916 and 1917.

### AMBICA CHARAN MAZUMDAR

Surenranath writes in his autobiography :-

“Among the distinguished men who identified themselves with the Anti-Partition and Swadeshi movement and supported it throughout, was Ambica Charan Majumdar. He was rightly called the grand old man of Faridpur, (his native district), and of East Bengal. In intellectual eminence, in the possession of the gift of eloquence and in his devotion to the Motherland he stood in the forefront among the leaders of Bengal....He was associated with the Congress almost from its birth and was the President of one of the most memorable Congresses ever held, that of 1916, which adopted the Lucknow Convention.” He wrote a notable book on the Congress entitled “Indian National Evolution.”

Ambika Charan was also closely associated with the Indian Association and was its President during 1913-16.

### Dr. RASHBEHARI GHOSH

• (Born in 1845 ; died in 1921.)

Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh was actively connected with the Indian Association, and was its Vice-President for 1906-07, and President for 1909-12. A great lawyer and jurist, he held a high position among our public men for his intellectual

eminence and patriotic service. He was President of the Congress in 1908, which held its session in Madras, after the Surat split. He gave away almost his entire life's savings, amounting to several lakhs of rupees, to the cause of higher scientific education in Bengal. He made a princely donation also to the Banaras University.

### ASUTOSH CHOUDHURY

Asutosh Choudhury was born in 1859. In politics he was a Nationalist and was associated with the Indian National Congress.

He was one of the founders of the Bengal National Council of Education. He was actively connected with the Indian Association for a long time and was a Vice-President for two terms from 1908 to 1911 and from 1921 to 1923.

He presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Burdwan and made the significant pronouncement—“a subject nation has no politics.”

### BYOMKESH CHAKRABARTY

Byomkesh Chakrabarty was actively associated with the Indian Association for long, and he was one of the Vice-Presidents for 1914-15 and for 1917.

After a brilliant educational career Byomkesh went to England in 1881 with a Government Scholarship, to study Agriculture. He, however, qualified himself also as a Barrister and returning to Calcutta soon built up a large practice at the High Court. In 1907 he defended Sri Aurobindo in the *Bandemataram* sedition case. He was President of the National Council of Education, Bengal.

He was a Nationalist in politics and an ardent follower of Surendranath. He presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Comilla. In 1925 he became a Minister in the Bengal Cabinet.

### RAI YATINDRA NATH CHAUDHURY

Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhury belonged to the Munshi family of Taki in the district of 24-Parganas.

He joined the Indian National Congress soon after its inception and was also closely associated with the Indian Association as its Vice-President from 1906 to 1917. A devoted friend and follower of Surendranath, he was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. A man of liberal culture, he was closely associated with the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and elected President of the Bengali Literary Conference at Midnapur.

### DR. HERAMBA CH. MAITRA

For twenty years, a Vice-President of the Indian Association (1918-'38), Dr. Heramba Chandra Maitra was one of the finest products of the Calcutta University, which he also served for long years as a Fellow and a Syndic.

After his initiation into Brahmoism, he joined the City College and served it first as Professor of English literature, then as its Principal. On his death in 1938, Ramananda Chatterjee wrote in his *Modern Review*: "A man of notable and spotless character, guileless, sincere and earnest in all that he said and did, he could not but influence the character and conduct of those who came into close, personal contact with him."

### Rev. B. A. NAG

(Born in 1869; died in 1937.)

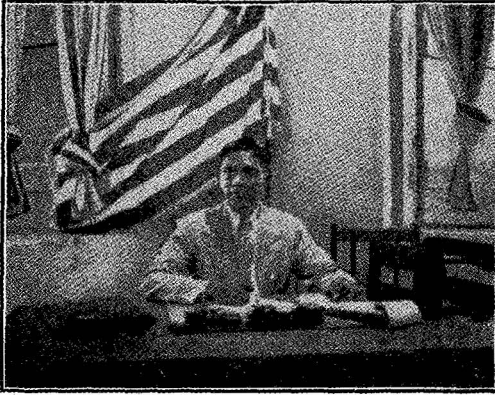
Rev. B. A. Nag was an active member of the Indian Association for about 30 years, and one of its Vice-President during 1931-36. In politics he belonged to the Moderate or Liberal group. When the Liberal Party was formed he became its first Secretary. He represented the Indian Christian community in the Bengal Council during 1929-37. He was an official of the Baptist Missionary Society. The Students' Hall at College Square, Calcutta, is a standing monument of his work among the students. He represented India at the World Baptist Conference in Berlin in 1936.

### DEVAPRASAD SARBADHIKARI

An eminent educationist, lawyer and social leader, Devaprasad hailed from the well-known Sarbadhikari family of Khanakul-Krishnagar in Hooghly. After a brilliant academic career he became an Attorney-at-Law; and he earned great reputation in the Calcutta High Court.

He was a trusted lieutenant of Surendranath. In 1926 he led the Indian Deputation to South Africa. He was the only Asiatic representative at the Moral Education Conference at the Hague.

He was connected with the Indian Association for a long time and was one of its influential office-bearers, being one of its Vice-Presidents from 1918 to 1927. He was also closely associated with the Calcutta University, being its Vice-Chancellor for some time.



Sri Binoyendranath Banerjee,  
Secretary, Indian Association, 1947.



Sri Sudhir K. Ghosh,  
Asst. Secretary,  
Indian Association, 1952.



Sri Fani Datta,  
Asst. Secretary, Indian Association,  
1948.



Sri Ramratan Bose,  
Asst. Secretary,  
Indian Association, 1948-1952.

passed resolutions on proper management of Devasthanams and of improved village administration by the association of non-officials with the village munsiffs.

In a nutshell, it may be said that the lines of work adopted by the Sabha were generally speaking, those indicated by the Indian National Congress and consisted mostly in making representations to Government on questions of local and national importance and in organising public meetings to give vent to the feelings of the public on important questions.

The deportation, without trial, of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh during the wadeshi movement of 1905-07 roused strong feelings of resentment throughout the country and the Sabha took the foremost part in the Madras Presidency in voicing such resentment.

For a long time after the establishment of the Congress, the Mahajan Sabha continued to be the Standing Committee of the Congress in the Madras Presidency, which elected delegates to that body from the province.

The Mahajan Sabha adopted a new scheme in 1910 for the more factual working and appointed 5 sub-committees make intensive studies dealing with following subjects :—

- (a) Education (b) Local Self-Govt.
- (c) Public Finance and Economics
- (d) Public Health (e) Miscellaneous.

This system continued for a long time thereafter, and resulted in various reports and memorials. In short, it may be stated that in all important questions, such as the organisation of the public services, the separation of judicial from the executive functions, finance and currency, extension

of the legislative councils etc the Sabha took an active interest and placed before the authorities the views of the people.

Under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, the object of the Indian National Congress was defined at Nagpur as the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. This change in the Congress objective and methods also reflected itself immediately in the Madras Mahajan Sabha. In 1921 it resolved to adopt this Article of the Congress Constitution as its object. Thereafter, the connection between the Congress and the Sabha became very close. When as a result of policy of direct action of the Congress, thousands were sent to jail, the Sabha kept the flame of agitation alive. During the days of Salt Satyagraha in 1930, the Sabha took a prominent part in agitating against the police excesses.

During the 'Quit-India movement' as many as six members of the Executive Committee of the Mahajan Sabha, including its President and one of the Vice-Presidents, were imprisoned by the British Government.

Besides, political activities, the Sabha since 1930 applied itself to social and educational works. In this regard its activities may conveniently be described under the following heads :—

1. Organisation of Exhibitions ;
2. Promotion of the study of Hindi ;
3. Development of the Library movement.

A review of the activities of the Mahajan Sabha will show that the Sabha has rendered great public service in all those spheres apart from its contribution to politics.

# Poona Sarvajanik Sabha

N. C. Kelkar.

*(We reprint this article on the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha by N. C. Kelkar from the Jubilee Number of their Quarterly Journal, April, 1920.)*

The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was formally established on the 2nd of April, 1870. For four years before, the Association was working in an embryonic condition, so that the Sabha may be now said to be a public body over fifty years old. The aims and objects of the Association are clearly stated in its constitution. It was "deemed expedient that there should exist, between the Government and the people, some institution in the shape of a mediating body which may afford to the latter facilities for knowing the real intentions and objects of Government, as also adequate means for securing their rights by making timely representation to Government of the real circumstances in which they are placed."

It will be apparent from the above wording that the Sabha was conceived mainly as a political Association. It was a time when education had not yet made any appreciable progress. The first generation of our University-men had hardly been well settled in life and the official administration in the country was still in a nebulous condition. The old order had been completely changed, but a new order was yet to take its place. Yet even in this period of uncertain light, half twilight, half dawn, the glimmerings of a nascent public were already visible. Corresponding to the unspecialised form of official administration, the native public life too did not make any distinc-

tion between official and non-official. In fact, native officials were then the recognized, as they were also then the natural, public leaders. And it is interesting to note that among the names of the leaders of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, at least in the early years, the names of prominent officials, like the late M. G. Ranade were freely mentioned in the Sabha's official papers. The present caste of the pro and anti-Government men had not yet been created, so that the chiefs and Sardars of the Deccan could freely and openly take part in the work of the Sabha along with the public-spirited commoners. The country had no political propaganda of any particular description and the highest water-mark of popularly approved public life could be reached by formulating a carefully mildly-worded petition or representation relating to what may now be regarded as minor matters of administration.

It was, in fact, the day royal of petitions and memorials; and looked at from this point of view, the Sarvajanik Sabha had discharged its role as a mediating body between Government and people with the greatest credit to itself. The Sabha had, by common consent, a glorious career of twenty-five years, when in 1897 the era of cataclysms first dawned in the political life of Western India; and the Sarvajanik Sabha was among those institutions which were nearly swept by the flood of official wrath.

## POONA SARVAJANIK SABHA

For reasons which we need not dwell upon or discuss in this place, the Bombay Government were pleased to declare that "the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha, as at present constituted, must cease to be recognised as a body, which has any claim to address Government on questions of public policy." The first effects upon the public of this blight of Governmental disfavour were only such as might be expected from a condition of political life in which official recognition was regarded as the only justification of the existence of public bodies. The public knew no angle or vision other than the one which brought themselves directly under the kindly light beaming from the official eye. And the punitive declaration of an enforced end of relations between the Government and the Sabha was invested in the opinion of the public with an inexpressibly dreadful character.

This unhappy contretemps had, however, one desirable effect. The mind of the Sabha was turned inside and it dawned upon them that they owed a duty as much to the public as to the Government in discussing public affairs and in formulating definite opinions upon them. In withdrawing recognition from the Sabha, Government had practically taken away nothing from them. It is, no doubt, a great advantage to the public, if Government could be drawn into a discussion of the merits of their measures with some one competent to represent the non-official view of things. But even from this point of view, the gain so far had been not very substantial. For any reader the previous volumes of the Journal of the Sabha will find, that the

section devoted to the publication of "Proceedings of the Sabha" contains comparatively but a few detailed and well-reasoned replies from Government to the memorials or representations submitted to them by the Sabha. These "Proceedings" are for the most part an one-sided affair, their chief value lying not so much in the declarations of policy elicited from Government as in the memorials themselves of the Sabha, which were as a rule very ably written, and embodied the best and the most well-informed opinion on the non-official side.

The history of the relations between Government and the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha during the course of nearly a quarter century, is brief and no thinking person will say that it discloses a very encouraging view of the result of this particular method of being in communication with and enlightening Government on public questions; especially when it is remembered that the Sarvajanic Sabha was the only public body of its kind and importance which could engage the attention of Government in the Presidency, having among its members and at its back some of the most highly educated persons and the most influential leaders of society.

It is certainly not meant by all this apparently captious comment that the day of petitions and memorials is spent or gone. Petitions and memorials by a subject people come into being with the birth of civilized political administration and they must also last as long as such Government itself lasts in any country. But with the changing time it is absolutely necessary to remember that if petitions and memorials have a proper place in public life, they have also only a limited

## BOMBAY PRESIDENCY ASSOCIATION

place therein and that if they have a value, they have only a subjective or self-regarding value.

The Sarvajanic Sabha, however, deserves credit for supplying a keenly-felt need of the times. It set a high and dignified standard of drawing Government into a controversy and putting them on their defence; in fact, it served the exact purpose, on a small scale and in an indirect manner, that is now served by the Legislative Council.

One aspect of the Sabha may be specially adverted to in respect of the democratic character of its constitution. The very name of the Sabha means that

it is an association working not only for the public weal, but an association whose membership could be claimed by any one who conformed to its regulations, according to which the enrolment of the person in question as a member depended not upon the votes of those already in, but upon the ability of the person himself to get the votes of a fixed number of people.

The fountain-heads of democratic institutions are always meagre and obscure; but the endeavour to investigate them is always well rewarded. The first thought of public men, politically minded men, in the Deccan was democratic; and democratic may their thoughts remain, so long as their race endures.

### Bombay Presidency Association

In 1852 was established the Bombay Association, "the first political association in the Bombay Presidency" in which Dadabhai Naoroji was also present. The Bombay Association did not live long, though it did some useful work by drawing up a petition to the Parliament for better government of India.

A branch of the East India Association was established in Bombay in 1869 through the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji and others. Under the auspices of this Association Dadabhai Naoroji undertook a lecturing tour of different parts of the Bombay Presidency.

But by the eighties of the last century, the need for a more democratic and vigorous organisation for regular political work was felt. The Bombay Association "had ceased to function." And the Bombay Branch of the East India Association "had outlived its utility. In the absence of

Dadabhai, the East India Association had deteriorated; it lacked not only its former vigour but also the warmth of its feeling for India."

The reactionary regime of Lord Lytton and the sympathetic administration of Lord Ripon, had roused public sentiment,—one by its repressive policy and the other by its liberal attitude—and political movements started in different parts of India. A public meeting was held in Bombay on January, 31, 1885, when the Bombay Presidency Association was formally established. The efforts mainly of three eminent men of Bombay, K. T. Telang, Budruddin Tyabji and Pherozshah Mehta were behind it.

The Association started work energetically. "By resolutions, memorials and public meetings it focussed the general feeling of the community on all matters of common interest."



# Messages

( Continued From Page 12 )

DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMYIA,

*Governor, Madhya Pradesh.*

The Indian Association is perhaps the oldest Association in India which directed its attention to a study of public affairs and its habitation, 62, Bowbazar Street, had become famous as the venue for the Hindu-Muslim negotiations in October, 1916 when we all met in its spacious hall and hammered out almost the whole of the Lucknow concordat except in relation to two points on which agreement was reached later at the open session of the Congress in Lucknow. These public Institutions are *chiranjeevi*. They only know their date of birth but know no end of their good work.

DR. BHAGAVAN DAS,

*Banaras.*

I wish most cordially every success to the function of the Jubilee celebration of the Indian Association on the completion of its 76th year.

DR PRAFULLA CHANDRA GHOSH,

*Calcutta.*

Indian Association is holding its Jubilee celebration from the 29th of January. I wish the function all success. When the Association was founded India was not free. Free India now requires a different kind of service from our people. I hope Indian Association also will play her part in this.

SRI RATHINDRA NATH TAGORE.

*Santiniketan.*

Sends his sincerest wishes for the success of the celebrations and for the future prosperity of the Indian Association.

SRI ANIL KUMAR CHANDA,

*Deputy Minister, Govt. of India, New Delhi.*

The Indian Association has played a very significant part in the public life of our people and I hope that it will continue with its great work as in the past.

MESSAGES ( Contd. )



Dr. SYED MAHMUD,

*Patna.*

Indian Association has been doing good work during its useful life of three quarters of a century. I am sure it will continue to do good work in future also.

DIWAN CHAND SHARMA

May your Association grow from strength to strength. Please accept my hearty congratulations on the occasion,

Dr. S. N. SEN,

*Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University.*

Wishes the Association every success.

SRI B. K. SEN,

*Commissioner, Calcutta Corporation.*

Wishes the Association a long life and prosperity.

SRI P. C. BOSE, M. P.

*Jharia (Bihar).*

Indian Association has served the cause of the public for more than three quarters of a century. I wish the Jubilee function every success.

SRI P. M. LINGESAN,

*President, Madras Mahajan Sabha.*

Our sincere feelings of fraternity and best wishes for the success of the function are with you. Kindly accept this our message of hope, love and fraternity.

SIR C. P. RAMSWAMI AIYAR,

*Ootacamund.*

Please let me convey my congratulations and my good wishes to the Indian Association on the occasion of its Jubilee celebrations. The Association has been one of the pioneers of Indian progress in many directions.

I wish the celebrations all success and the Institution all prosperity.



DR. N. C. SENGUPTA, M.A. D. L.

*Calcutta.*

I wish to send my cordial greetings to the Indian Association on its completing its seventyfifth year.

As the first truly national political organisation of India, embodying the life work of the father of Indian politics, Surendra Nath Banerjee, associated with names of distinguished pioneers of the national movement like Ananda Mohan Bose and others, and the forerunner of the great Indian National Congress, it is worthy of an honoured place in the grateful memory and affection of the nation, now happily freed from foreign domination.

My association with the Indian Association commenced about half a century ago in the hectic days of the anti-Partition agitation and, for some years thereafter I had the honour and privilege of working as a Joint Secretary under Surendra Nath Banerjee and to render the best of my humble services to the political life of the nation. Those days will ever remain a sacred and cherished memory in my life.

For years now I have been out of touch with active public life. But I still have a warm affection for the institution along with all other organisations seeking the good of the Nation. I hope and trust that in the hands of its present management, the Association is fulfilling its mission of clean and faithful service to the Motherland, true to the traditions of its great founders.

SRI JOACHIM ALVA, M.P.,

*Bombay.*

The name of the Indian Association was known to me over three decades ago, as a student in the Madras State where the sound of the oratory of those valiant patriots—Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and that of the select few, was heard with lasting effect. The Indian Association was in the front of the battle in those days though we do not hear about it here now. It was obviously a body built by the labours and sacrifices of many of the distinguished leaders as well as by men both known and unknown.

We send our sincerest greetings to you all on the 76th Anniversary and may it live to hit a century by the end of which the troubles of an Independent and Free India, especially of a divided Bengal, may be ended and thus, the sacrifices of an immortal leader like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose may not be in vain.

Jai Hind.

## Movement to Help Tea Garden Labour

The earlier phase of economic exploitation of India by British merchants with the help of the foreign political power, was inhumanly cruel. The recruiting of labourers for work in the Assam tea gardens was by a method, which denied practically the free will and choice of the recruited. Illiterate, poor and helpless, the agents could dupe them easily, and, transported to the tea gardens of Assam, the recruits found themselves in a condition of unspeakable misery from which they had no chance of escape. Legislation was enacted to help the planters to grow rich through the misery of the helpless workers, and these included both men and women. Tales of their pitiable condition sometimes reached the outside world.

The Indian Association exerted themselves to help the 'coolies', as they were called, if possible. But they must know the extent of the horror which the occasional tales, that leaked out, suggested. The report of the Association for 1886-87 says:— "The Indian Association was the first to organise a regular movement for the amelioration of the condition of the Assam coolies. The Association in its address to the Viceroy called pointed attention to the condition of Assam coolies, and in the course of the year under report Babu Dwarakanath Ganguli was sent as the delegate of the

Indian Association to enquire into the condition of the Assam coolies. He collected a vast mass of valuable material which appeared in the newspapers, and the attention of the Secretary of State for India had been called to the matter."

The report of the next year (1887-88) has the following:—"There was another question of very great importance in regard to which the Committee now for the first time formally addressed the Government. In 1886, they deputed their Assistant Secretary to Assam to make personal enquiries into the subject, and as the outcome of those enquiries, the Committee were more than ever convinced that the worst anticipations of those who had objected to the enactment of the Coolie Act of 1882 had been more than fully realised...No action had been taken inspite of the persistent disclosures in the columns of newspapers which revealed a ghastly tale of horror and a condition of things which practically amounted to a species of slavery thriving under the protection of British laws and sanctioned by British Government."

The agitation for the amelioration of the condition of labourers in the tea gardens of Assam continued, till Sir Henry Cotton, as Chief Commissioner of Assam (1896), took the matter up, and relief was given to the labourers.

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*The Swadeshi movement did not come into birth with the agitation for the reversal of the Partition of Bengal. It was synchronous with the national awakening which the political movement in Bengal had created.—SURENDRANATH.*

## SECRETARIES

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1876-84   | Ananda Mohan Bose                                     |
| 1885-1920 | Surendra Nath Banerjea                                |
| 1921-26   | Krishna Kumar Mitra                                   |
| 1927-42   | Nibaran Chandra Roy                                   |
| 1943      | Kshitish Chandra Neogy                                |
| 1944-46   | Basanta Kumar Chaudhuri                               |
| 1947      | { Basanta Kumar Chaudhuri<br>Benoyendra Nath Banerjea |
| 1948-49   | { Basanta Kumar Chaudhuri<br>Harendra Nath Mozumder   |
| 1950-52   | Harendra Nath Mozumder                                |

## ASST. SECRETARIES

|           |  |         |                                    |
|-----------|--|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1876      | { Jogendra Nath Banerjee<br>Akshoy Charan Sarkar | 1919    | Satis Chandra Chatterjee           |
| 1882-1898 | Dwarkanath Ganguly                               | 1920-23 | { Satyendra Nath Basu<br>Erfan Ali |
| 1898-1905 | { D. N. Basu                                     | 1922-23 | Basanta Kumar Chaudhuri            |
| 1918-19   |  | 1924-42 | Fanindra Lal De                    |
| 1906-1913 | Dr. P. N. Banerjea                               | 1927-29 | Santiram Chatterjee                |
| 1914-15   | Dr. Nares Chandra Sengupta                       | 1930    | Birendra Binode Roy                |
| 1914-15   | { Sachindra Prasad Basu                          | 1931-33 | Suresh Chandra Basu                |
| 1918-33   |  | 1934-46 | R. C. Ghose                        |
| 1915      | { Nibaran Chandra Ray                            | 1943-49 | Anil Chandra Dutt                  |
| 1917-26   |  | 1943-44 | Subodh Kumar Sen                   |
| 1916-17   | Bejoy Krishna Basu                               | 1945    | Patit Paban Chatterjee             |
| 1916      | Jitendra Lal Banerjee                            | 1946-47 | Nirmal Chandra Sen                 |
| 1918-23   | D. C. Ghosh                                      |         |                                    |

## ASST. SECRETARIES (Contd.)

|         |                          |         |   |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|---------|---|--------------------------|
| 1946    | Subimal Pal              | 1949-50 | } | Dhanapati Basu           |
|         |                          | 1952    |   |                          |
| 1947-52 | Kamal Krishna Palit      |         |   |                          |
| 1947-48 | Gouri Prasanna Mukherjee | 1949    |   | Bijoli Mohan Mukherjee   |
| 1947    | Amiya Chandra Mukherjee  | 1949    |   | Bhowani Sankar Choudhury |
| 1947-51 | Anath Bandhu Dutta       | 1950-52 |   | Birendra Nath Mukherjee  |
| 1948    | Parimal Kumar Roy        | 1951-52 |   | Radhika Prasad Banerjee  |
| 1948    | Fani Datta               | 1952    |   | Sudhir Kumar Ghosh       |
| 1948-52 | Ramratan Basu            | 1952    |   | Arjun Krishna Ghose      |
| 1949-51 | Bijesh Chandra Sen       | 1952    |   | Kanai Lal Bhattacharya   |

## TREASURERS

|                    |                          |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1914               | Provash Chanura Mitter   |                    |
| 1915-17            | Basanta Kumar Bose       |                    |
| 1918               | Kumar Arun Chandra Sinha |                    |
| 1919-22<br>1923-28 | }                        | Jatindra Nath Basu |
| 1929-36            |                          |                    |
| 1937-48            | H. K. Ghosh              |                    |
| 1949-52            | Sudhir Kumar Bose        |                    |

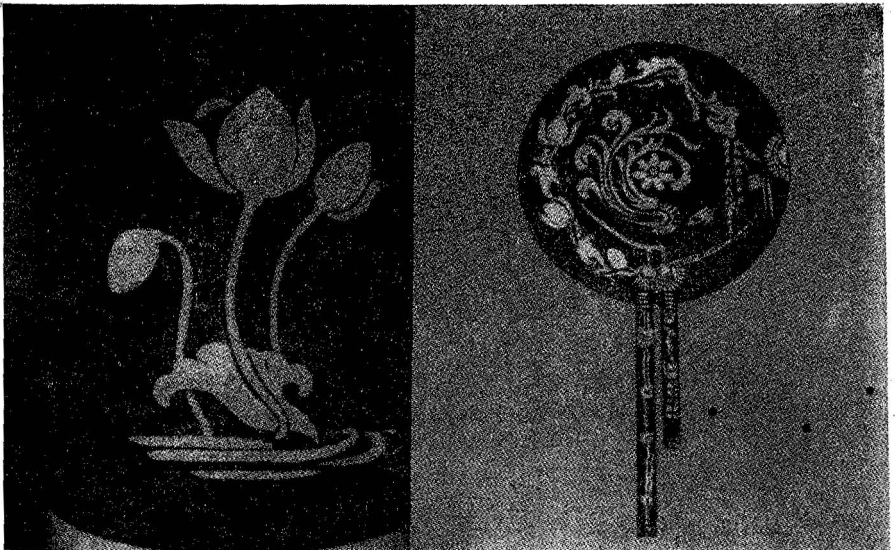
## AUDITORS

|                 |               |                       |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1906-17         | Srikali Ghosh |                       |
| 1918-19         | }             | Subodh Chandra Roy    |
| 1920            |               |                       |
| 1921-22         |               | Sati Nath Roy         |
| 1923            |               | Himangshu Mohan Bose  |
| 1924-29         |               | Priya Nath Chatterjee |
| 1930-42         |               | Barada Kanta Bose     |
| 1943<br>onwards | }             | Paid Auditors         |
|                 |               |                       |





Inaugural Function of the Jubilee Celebration, 29th January, 1953.



Some of the Decorations in the Hall on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebration—Jan. 29 to Feb. 1, 1953.

## Jubilee Celebration

The Indian Association celebrated its Jubilee on completion of 76 years of its life by organising a four-day programme from 29th January to 1st February, 1953. The functions were inaugurated by Dr. H. C. Mookerjee, Governor of West Bengal, and the distinguished gathering was addressed by Sri C. C. Biswas, Minister, Government of India, Sri Santosh Kumar Basu, Dr. N. C. Sengupta, Sri Probbat Ganguly, Srimati Lotika Ghosh, Dr. R. Ahmed, Sri H. C. Naskar, Ministers, West Bengal Government, and others. After the welcome address by Sri Satinath Roy, President of the Association, Sri Sudhir Kumar Bose, Treasurer of the Association, read out the messages received from the leaders from different parts of India. Sri Harendra Nath Mazumder, Secretary, in his address, made a short survey of the main activities of the Association during a long and useful life, and suggested new lines of constructive national work as the programme of the Association's future activities. Dr. H. C. Mookerjee suggested that the Association should acquire the residence of Surendranath and preserve it as a permanent memorial to the Father of Indian Nationalism and the inspirer of the Indian Association movement. The function began with the singing of *Bande-Mataram*, and ended with an orchestra playing the National Anthem, *Jana-gana-mana*.

30th. January was observed as the anniversary of the death of Mahatma Gandhi, and the meeting in the evening was presided over by Prof. Priyaranjan Sen.

A symposium on the "Five Year Plan" was held on the 31st. January, at 2-30 p. m., in which Dr. Meghnad Saha, Sri Bimal Chandra Sinha, Sri S. K. Dey, Development Commissioner, West Bengal, Dr. Bhabatosh Datta, Dr. P. K. Bose, Sri K. M. Purakayastha and Dr. Naliniaksha Sanyal, Vice-President of the Association, took part. It was followed in the evening by a guitar orchestra, and *Gambhira* songs.

The celebrations ended on 1st. February, with an International Fellowship gathering, which was presided over by Sri B. P. Singh Roy, and those who spoke included Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Sri D. N. Banerjee, and the representatives of U. K., U. S. A. and others. It was followed by a dance-drama called 'Basanta Kumar' directed by Sm. Amita Ghosal.

There was a miniature poster exhibition at the entrance to the Hall of the Association; the Hall was tastefully decorated; the bust of Surendranath, garlanded, was placed under a beautiful porch, and straw gates made by the teachers of a rural school added to the beauty and dignity of the decorations. The whole building was also pleasingly illuminated. The functions created a new enthusiasm for continuing national constructive activities by the Association, which had such a glorious past.

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*Two vital points  
in*

# BLOCKS

**QUALITY AND DURABILITY**

**BE SURE  
TO  
HAVE IT FROM**

*Modern Process Engravers*

DESIGNERS PROCESS-ENGRAVERS. ART PRINTERS, SLIDE  
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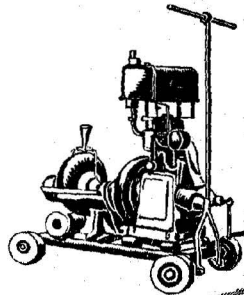
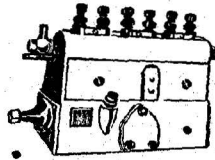
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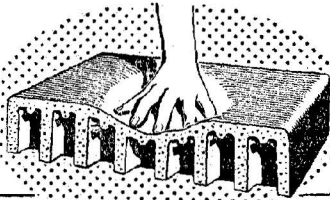
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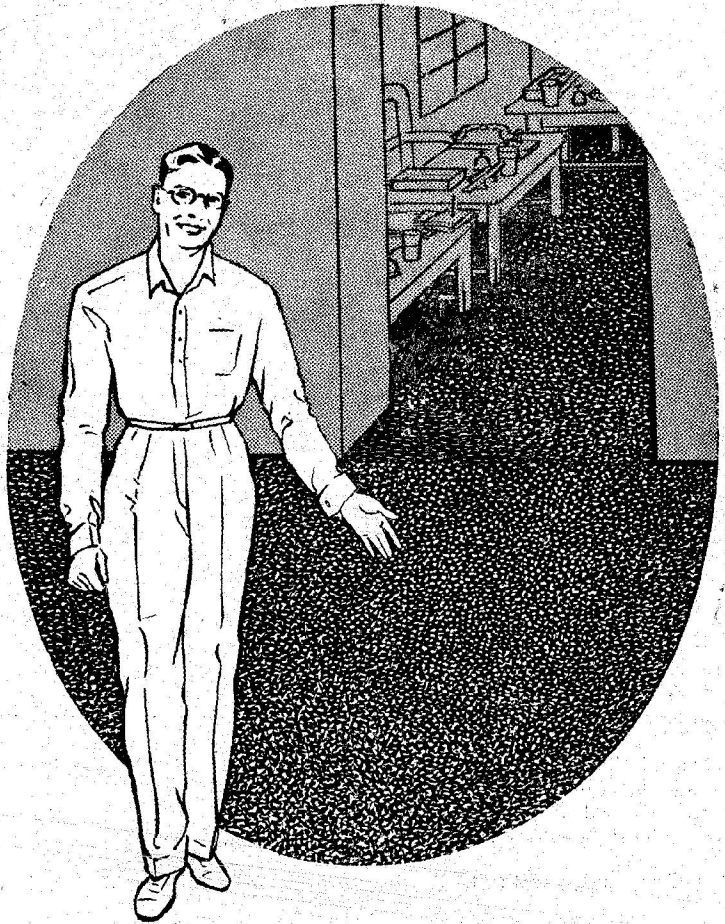
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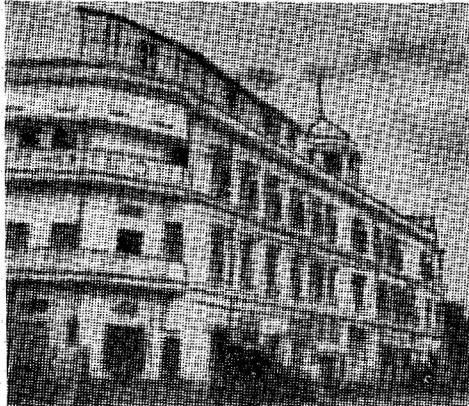
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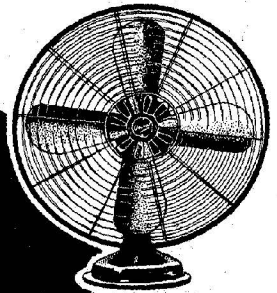
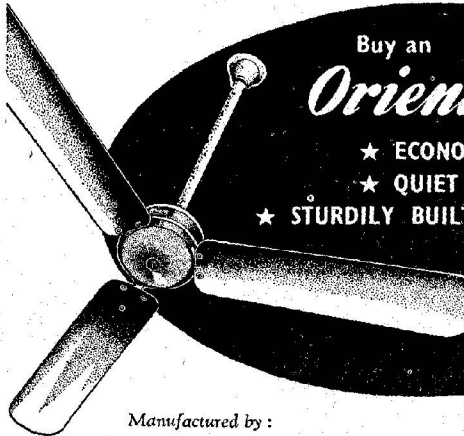
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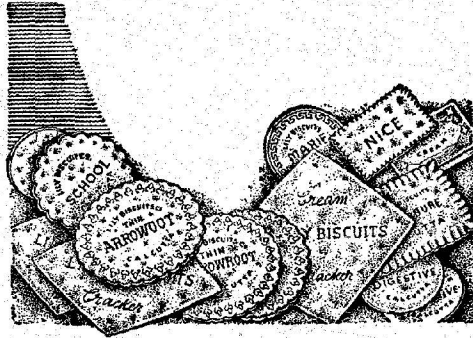
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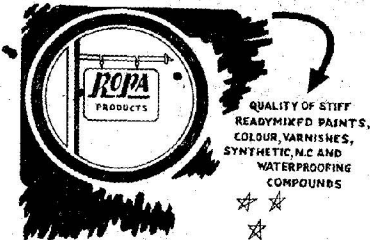
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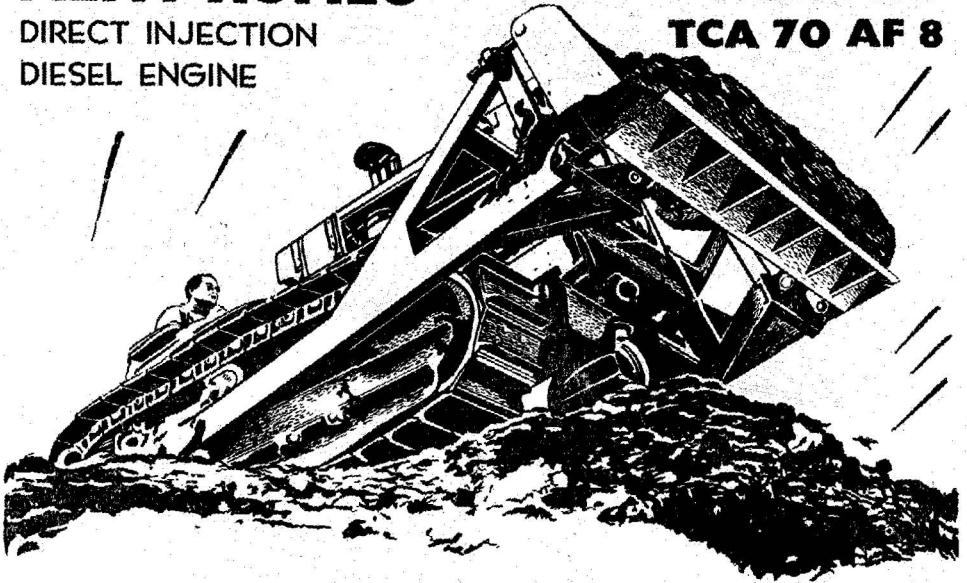
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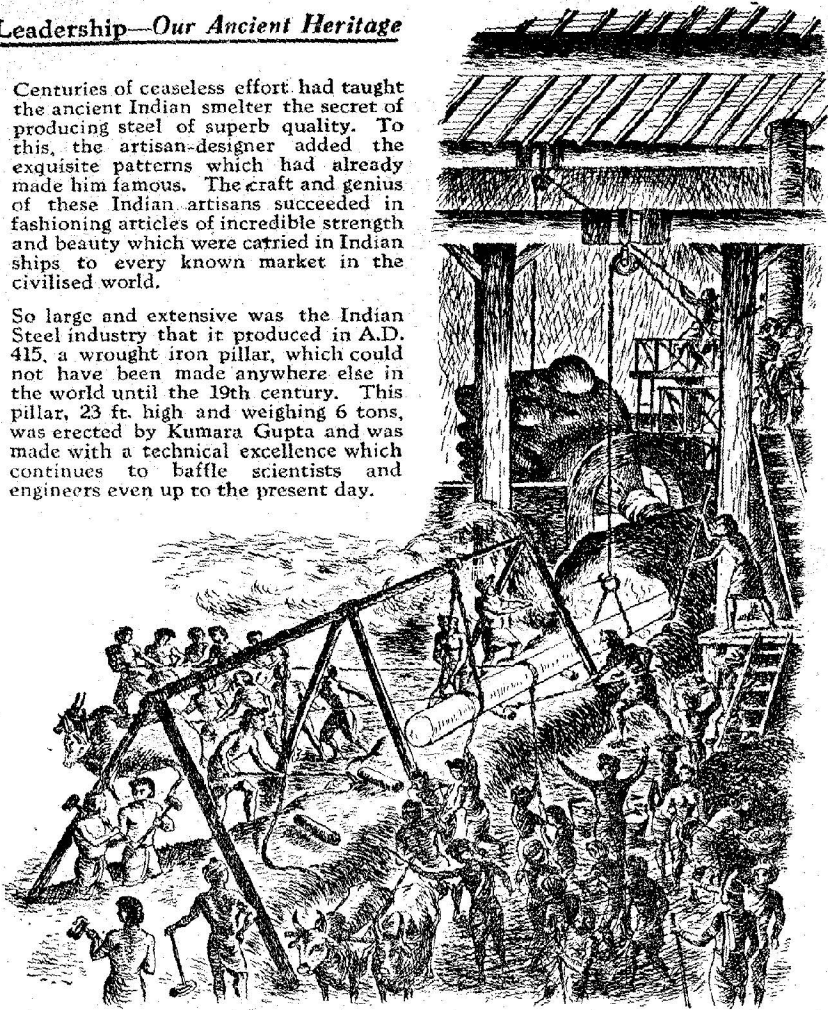
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