

The Action That Focussed World's Attention On India

Savarkar In London

Savarkar Pays The Price For His Love Of Liberty!

The Man And The Historian

(By M. P. T. ACHARYA.)

While the Indian National Movement was considered as dating from the Congress foundation, Savarkar gave historic background to it (supported by documents from English sources) that it was developing since 1757, if not even earlier. His theory was the Maharattas took over the leadership from the Moghuls and the British wrested it from the Maharattas—or at least wanted to wrest it with the result that the whilom enemies united against the new dangerous enemy. Even if one is not willing to accept the theory, there is nothing to controvert it.

(By BHAI PARMANANDA.)
Very few of the present generation know that in 1888 Lord Dufferin got the Indian National Congress started in order to turn the Indian efforts to attain freedom into constitutional channels. After the 'Sepoy Mutiny' of 1857, every five or seven years there was one secret movement or another aiming at the expulsion of the foreigner from the country. There was the movement of the Namdhari Sikhs in the Punjab in 1871 to re-establish the Khalsa Raj. A few years later the flag of independence was hoisted by V. B. Phadke in the Maharashtra.

Path Of Constitutionalism
For twenty years the Congress walked the path not only of constitutionalism but of moderation. The late Lokamanya Tilak wanted to turn the Congress away from this path. By 1906 he had created a strong nationalist party within the Congress. In 1907 occurred the historic split at the Surat session of the Congress. The sitings of the Congress were suspended. Doctor Moonje, then the right hand man of Lokamanya Tilak, invited the Congress to Nagpur, but the Government banned it. Next year the Lokamanya was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for sedition. There was an outbreak of revolutionary crimes in Bengal. The moderate leaders met in a Conference in Allahabad and decided that the membership of the Congress would be open only to those who would be faithful to the Government.

Thus was ended the Lokamanya's nationalist party. Thus did the moderates re-establish their ascendancy in the Congress. Some time before these events took place, the Lokamanya had sent out a brilliant young man to England. This young man was Savarkar. He had become a faithful disciple of the Lokamanya while yet a student in the Ferguson College in Poona.

The India House
In London he stayed at the India House. As early as 1906 he raised India's flag of freedom in England. The India House had been bought by Pt. Shyamji Krishan Varma, and used by him to house Indian students in London so that it would be the centre of movement for India's freedom. I stayed for sometime in the India House. Mahatma Gandhi at this time came to London as a member of the deputation to present the case of Indians in South Africa. He also stayed in the India House. But at that time Mahatma was the disciple of Dadabhai Nawroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale and was a confirmed moderate. He did not like either the talks with Pt. Shyamji Krishan Varma or the atmosphere of India House. So he shifted from that place and went to a hotel.

The movement of India House gathered strength. The British Government became alert. They came to know that Savarkar was the undisputed leader of this movement. Savarkar was then in his early twenties. He was not only qualifying himself for the bar, but was doing research work in the British Museum for writing his 'War of Indian Independence' which was later on proscribed by the Government.

But over and above being a student, Savarkar was the editor of the young Indians in London. Many were the young men who became the votaries of the Goddess of Liberty by coming into contact with Savarkar.

Murder Of Sir Curzon Wylie
After some time Sir Curzon Wylie was murdered by a Punjab student by the name of Dhingra. Sir Curzon was in charge of the Indian students in England on behalf of the India Office. He was shot down in a social party. Savarkar was suspected to have complicity with that crime but there was no evidence available to the British Government. Savarkar's elder brother, Ganesh, was at that time in Nasik. A case was instituted against him for printing a book, and he was sentenced to transportation for life. After this case was over, the Collector of Nasik was shot dead by some young men. One of them was hanged and the rest were sent over to the Andamans. During the course of this trial, an approver stated that the revolver with which the crime was committed, had been sent by Savarkar from London.

Savarkar In Poona
At the time the approver made his statement Savarkar was in Paris. When Savarkar wanted to come to London, his friends in Paris advised him against that step, as they thought that his arrest was unavoidable. But he would not listen to them. He came back to England and at the Railway station in London was arrested by the Bombay police who had come over to England for this very purpose. His movements in Paris had been under strict watch and the Police evidently knew of the time of his arrival in London. Savarkar raised the question of the legality of his extradition in the British courts, but he could not succeed in his plea.

While this question was before the courts, the Paris Indians sent word to Savarkar that during the course of his journey to India, he should manage to touch the

I had some indirect connection from India with Barrister Savarkar in London through Messrs V. V. S. Aiyar. In the India House he never hoped or even dreamt of joining their company. But circumstances brought me into touch with him in London.

Generally politicians are morose people but in spite of being very severe and hard in politics V. V. S. Aiyar was a pleasant and humorous man in private as well as a lecturer, conversationalist and writer. His personal charm was such that a mere shake-hand could convert to his views such obstinate men as V. V. S. Aiyar and Hari Dayal—not only convert but even bring out the best out of them. Sincere men always become attached to him whether they agreed with or differed from him.

NOT only men in ordinary walks of life but even those, aspiring to high offices, recognised the purity of purpose in him—although they were poles apart from him, and deadly opponents as regards his political objectives. They even opened their purse for his propaganda. That means Savarkar had a rare tact in dealing with men of every variety. In fact, he was the leader among Indians in London while Krishnavarma could not deal with them in spite of his age and experience. Savarkar had no personal interest in converting and convincing others and he even agreed with the French to continue in their career-hunting

French soil at Marseilles, that their agents would be there to help him and that they would ask for the protection of the French Government.

Escape From The Ship
When the ship carrying Savarkar touched Marseilles, he decided to carry out the plan. He went into the bath-room of the ship, and through a hole in the room slipped out into the sea. He swam for half-a-mile, chased by the police in a boat, and not only caught the French soil but reached and stood on the French mainland. But alas! No help was there. His Paris friends evidently wanted to save the few pounds which would help him to Marseilles would have meant. The intrepid Savarkar sought the protection of a French policeman but what did he know of international law? This policeman made him over to the British police. Savarkar was caged all the more strictly and taken to India.

Significance Of The Escape
Savarkar's escape at Marseilles focussed the world's attention on India's problem. No other single act of an Indian had ever before or has ever since been instrumental in bringing the Indian case before the bar of world opinion. The Indians in Paris made representations to the French Government and the French Government demanded back the body of Savarkar, as they held the arrest of Savarkar by the British Police on the French soil to be illegal. The matter was referred to the International Court at the Hague. The Court held the arrest as illegal, but decided that once Savarkar was under the custody of the British through whatsoever

adding that his work would only help them to rise. They saw his fanaticism did not interfere with, but even helped in their personal objects. Savarkar was practical. "What is the use of preaching unalloyed nationalism to these fogies—get something done by them!" That requires great self-control in a man burning with hatred against every prop of British rule.

But the great work of Savarkar in London was to give his political propaganda and pamphleteering. We used to post him one after another political pamphlets written by him in closed envelopes to find out why should we not fear the much vaunted British freedom to do things which were taboo in India? After all we were "one in the Empire" as British subjects. But using freedom meant ruin for life!

SARKAR'S austerity was itself a discipline to others, which easy-going people hated and shunned. England was a country for amusement and most people wanted to make the most out of it. He studied all available documents at the India Office library to find out what was the truth about the so-called Indian Mutiny. Out of the materials, he found that the mystery about the Mutiny was—it was a regular war of princes and people to eject the British out of India. The use of greased cartridges was only the immediate cause of the explosion—the materials for the war which lasted 3 years had accumulated since the battle of Plassey.

means, the French Government could not demand his return.

In India, Savarkar was tried and sentenced to transportation for life. He remained in the Andamans for fourteen years. When the penal settlement in those Islands was given up, Savarkar was interned at Ratnagiri in the Bombay Presidency and passed another fourteen years there. He was released by the orders of the Interim Ministry, of which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta was a member, last year. He had gone to jail at the age of twenty-six; he became a free man once more at the age of fifty-four. He has paid for his love of liberty by himself being in confinement during the best years of his life.

Savarkar's Vision And Greatness
Such is the man whom the Punjab was called upon to honour in the first week of May. The flame of patriotism burns in him as brightly in 1938 as it did in 1906. As a young man in his twenties, he risked his all for the sake of his country at a time when the Congress leaders were swearing allegiance to the established Government. He does not think in the time-honoured old grooves. Like a true leader he does his own thinking and creates his own following. At a time when high-

SARKAR'S Hinduism was political first and religious afterwards. That is why patriotic Muslims clustered around him—even when they thought or suspected that he remained a Maharata and Hindu Nationalist at heart. In practical matters he was ready to collaborate intimately with anyone who stood for India's liberation. Why should he otherwise admit Muslims like Asaf Ali into his Abhinav Bharat Society?

At a time when the 1857 affair was considered as a Mutiny, he had the courage of his conviction to point out that the cartridge affair was only a Boston Tea party while the whole war was one for independence—a pioneer idea which is universally accepted in India to-day. With that discovery and propaganda, his name is indissolubly associated. Savarkar brought the Indian National idea from out of its artificiality into the light of organic historicism, which gives strength to the idea. That is no mean service to India's liberation movement.

Gems From Savarkar's Pen

"Shivaji is great, because his nation proved worthy of his greatness, could grasp and press on his mission to ultimate success, could realise what he could merely hope, could accomplish what he merely aspired to."

"The strongest caste that a nation determined to win its independence can have is the caste of its heart, its ideal is its dog and wherever it flows there lies its capital."

"The most treasurable eloquence in this world is the eloquence of a warrior."

"Although fetters of political slavery can at times be shaken off and smashed, yet the fetters of cultural superstition are often found far more difficult to knock-off."

"Sambhaji by his great martyrdom, not only preserved but added impetus to the valiance and strength of Shivaji's moral and spiritual gains."

sounding catchwords hold the field, Savarkar invites the country to face the facts and work for Swaraj—the 'Raj' in which our 'Swatwa' has the most unfettered chance of development.



Mr. MANDLIK and SAVARKAR at Pen (Kolaba District)

SAVARKAR photographed just at the time of his release from Ratnagiri.



SAVARKAR honoured by Bombay students