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 Edited by Anthony J. Parel
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CHAPTER I

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The Congress¹⁰ and its officials

READER: Just at present there is a Home Rule wave¹¹ passing over India. All our countrymen appear to be pining for National Independence. A similar spirit pervades them even in South Africa. Indians seem to be eager after acquiring rights. Will you explain your views in this matter?

EDITOR: You have well put the question, but the answer is not easy. One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and to give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects. The exercise of all these three functions is involved in answering your question.¹² To a certain extent, the people's will has to be expressed; certain sentiments will need to be fostered, and defects will have to be brought to light. But, as you have asked the question, it is my duty to answer it.

READER: Do you then consider that a desire for Home Rule has been created among us?

EDITOR: That desire gave rise to the National Congress. The choice of the word 'National' implies it.

¹⁰ The Indian National Congress, a political 'party' founded in 1885, is referred to as 'the Congress' throughout *HS*.

¹¹ 'Home Rule wave': in the first decade of the twentieth century, home rule or swaraj had become the focus of Congress nationalism. *Indian Opinion* in 1906 had reported on the Home Rule Movement in India (CW 5: 314).

¹² The three functions mentioned here are also the functions that he had proposed for his newspaper, *Indian Opinion* (CW 4: 320 and CW 5: 289–90).

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READER: That, surely, is not the case. Young India¹³ seems to ignore the Congress. It is considered to be an instrument for perpetuating British Rule.

EDITOR: That opinion is not justified. Had not the Grand Old Man of India¹⁴ prepared the soil, our young men could not have even spoken about Home Rule. How can we forget what Mr Hume has written, how he has lashed us into action, and with what effort he has awakened us, in order to achieve the objects of the Congress? Sir William Wedderburn has given his body, mind and money to the same cause. His writings are worthy of perusal to this day. Professor Gokhale, in order to prepare the Nation, embraced poverty and gave twenty years of his life. Even now, he is living in poverty. The late Justice Buddrudin Tyebji was also one of those who, through the Congress, sowed the seed of Home Rule. Similarly, in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and other places, there have been lovers of India and members of the Congress, both Indian and English.

READER: Stay, stay, you are going too far, you are straying away from my question. I have asked you about Home- or Self-Rule; you are discussing foreign rule. I do not desire to hear English names, and you are giving me such names. In these circumstances, I do not think we can ever meet. I shall be pleased if you will confine yourself to Home Rule. All other wise talk will not satisfy me.

EDITOR: You are impatient. I cannot afford to be likewise. If you will bear with me for a while, I think you will find that you will obtain what you want. Remember the old proverb that the tree does not grow in one day.¹⁵ The fact that you have checked me, and that you do not want to hear about the well-wishers of India, shows that, for you at any rate, Home Rule is yet far away. If we had many like you, we would never make any advance. This thought is worthy of your attention.

13 'Young India': the Indian revolutionaries associated with India House (1905–9), London, referred to themselves as the 'Young India Party'. The name had its origin in Mazzini's concept of Young Italy. *Young India* was also the name of the weekly newspaper Gandhi edited in India from 1919 to 1931.

14 An honorific title given to Dadabhai Naoroji.

15 A Gujarati proverb: 'mangoes do not ripen in a hurry'.

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READER: It seems to me that you simply want to put me off by talking round and round. Those whom you consider to be well-wishers of India are not such in my estimation. Why, then, should I listen to your discourse on such people? What has he whom you consider to be the father of the nation done for it? He says that the English Governors will do justice, and that we should co-operate with them.

EDITOR: I must tell you, with all gentleness, that it must be a matter of shame for us that you should speak about that great man in terms of disrespect. Just look at his work. He has dedicated his life to the service of India. We have learned what we know from him. It was the respected Dadabhai who taught us that the English had sucked our life-blood.¹⁶ What does it matter that, today, his trust is still in the English nation? Is Dadabhai less to be honoured because, in the exuberance of youth, we are prepared to go a step further? Are we, on that account, wiser than he? It is a mark of wisdom not to kick against the very step from which we have risen higher. The removal of a step from a staircase brings down the whole of it. When, out of infancy, we grow into youth, we do not despise infancy, but, on the contrary, we recall with affection the days of our childhood. If, after many years of study, a teacher were to teach me something, and if I were to build a little more on the foundation laid by that teacher, I would not, on that account, be considered wiser than the teacher. He would always command my respect. Such is the case with the Grand Old Man of India. We must admit that he is the author of Nationalism.¹⁷

READER: You have spoken well. I can now understand that we must look upon Mr Dadabhai with respect. Without him and men like him, we would probably not have the spirit that fires us. How can the same be said of Professor Gokhale? He has constituted himself a great friend of the English; he says that we have to learn a great deal from them, that we

16 A reference to the 'drain theory' made popular by Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.

17 'the author of Nationalism': the Gujarati text reads, 'We must say that the Indian nation (*praja*) is behind him.'

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have to learn their political wisdom, before we can talk of Home Rule. I am tired of reading his speeches.¹⁸

EDITOR: If you are tired, it only betrays your impatience. We believe that those who are discontented with the slowness of their parents, and are angry because the parents would not run with their children, are considered disrespectful to their parents. Professor Gokhale occupies the place of a parent. What does it matter if he cannot run with us? A nation that is desirous of securing Home Rule cannot afford to despise its ancestors. We shall become useless, if we lack respect for our elders. Only men with mature thoughts are capable of ruling themselves, and not the hasty-tempered. Moreover, how many Indians were there like Professor Gokhale, when he gave himself to Indian education? I verily believe that whatever Professor Gokhale does he does with pure motives and with a view to serving India. His devotion to the Motherland is so great, that he would give his life for it, if necessary. Whatever he says is said not to flatter anyone but because he believes it to be true. We are bound, therefore, to entertain the highest regard for him.

READER: Are we, then, to follow him in every respect?

EDITOR: I never said any such thing. If we conscientiously differed from him,¹⁹ the learned Professor himself would advise us to follow the dictates of our conscience rather than him. Our chief purpose is not to cry down his work, but to believe that he is infinitely greater than we, and to feel assured that compared with his work for India, ours is infinitesimal. Several newspapers²⁰ write disrespectfully of him. It is our duty to protest against such writings. We should consider men like Professor Gokhale to

18 See Gokhale 1908, *passim*.

19 Despite Gandhi's deep respect for Gokhale, the two differed on the questions relating to modern technology, Western education, and industrialisation. Although Gokhale allowed for 'certain scope' for village industries, he maintained that 'our main reliance now – exposed as we are to the competition of the whole world – must be on production with the aid of steam and machinery' (Gokhale 1908, 816).

20 *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*, both owned and edited by Tilak, were hostile to Gokhale; *The Indian Sociologist*, edited by Shyamji Krishnavarma (London and Paris), considered Gokhale and the Moderates as 'lackeys' of British imperialism.

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be the pillars of Home Rule. It is a bad habit to say that another man's thoughts are bad and ours only are good, and that those holding different views from ours are the enemies of the country.

READER: I now begin to understand somewhat your meaning. I shall have to think the matter over, but what you say about Mr Hume and Sir William Wedderburn is beyond comprehension.

EDITOR: The same rule holds good for the English as for the Indians. I can never subscribe to the statement that all Englishmen are bad. Many Englishmen desire Home Rule for India. That the English people are somewhat more selfish than others is true, but that does not prove that every Englishman is bad. We who seek justice will have to do justice to others. Sir William does not wish ill to India – that should be enough for us. As we proceed, you will see that, if we act justly, India will be sooner free. You will see, too, that, if we shun every Englishman as an enemy, Home Rule will be delayed. But if we are just to them, we shall receive their support in our progress towards the goal.

READER: All this seems to me at present to be simply nonsensical. English support and the obtaining of Home Rule are two contradictory things. How can the English people tolerate Home Rule for us? But I do not want you to decide this question for me just yet. To pass time over it is useless. When you have shown how we can have Home Rule, perhaps I shall understand your views. You have prejudiced me against you by discoursing on English help. I would, therefore, beseech you not to continue this subject.

EDITOR: I have no desire to do so. That you are prejudiced against me is not a matter for much anxiety. It is well that I should say unpleasant things at the commencement, it is my duty patiently to try to remove your prejudice.

READER: I like that last statement. It emboldens me to say what I like. One thing still puzzles me. I do not understand how the Congress laid the foundation of Home Rule.

EDITOR: Let us see. The Congress brought together Indians from different parts of India, and enthused us with the idea of Nationality. The Government used to look upon it with disfavour. The Congress has always

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insisted that the Nation should control revenue and expenditure. It has always desired self-government after the Canadian model.²¹ Whether we can get it or not, whether we desire it or not, and whether there is not something more desirable, are different questions. All I have to show is that the Congress gave us a foretaste of Home Rule. To deprive it of the honour is not proper,²² and for us to do so would not only be ungrateful, but retard the fulfilment of our object. To treat the Congress as an institution inimical to our growth as a Nation would disable us from using that body.

²¹ The position originally suggested by A. O. Hume and adopted by the Moderates.

²² The Gujarati text reads: 'It would be improper for others [the Indian revolutionaries] to claim that honour.'

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CHAPTER II

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The Partition of Bengal²³

READER: Considering the matter as you put it, it seems proper to say that the foundation of Home Rule was laid by the Congress. But you will admit that it cannot be considered a real awakening. When and how did the real awakening take place?

EDITOR: The seed is never seen. It works underneath the ground, is itself destroyed, and the tree which rises above the ground is alone seen. Such is the case with the Congress. Yet, what you call the real awakening took place after the Partition of Bengal. For this we have to be thankful to Lord Curzon. At the time of the Partition, the people of Bengal reasoned with Lord Curzon, but, in the pride of power, he disregarded all their prayers – he took it for granted that Indians could only prattle, that they could never take any effective steps. He used insulting language, and, in the teeth of all opposition, partitioned Bengal. That day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire. The shock that the British power received through the Partition has never been equalled by any other act. This does not mean that the other injustices done to India are less glaring than that done by the Partition. The

²³ The Partition of Bengal (1905–11) was a political step taken by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, by means of which the Province of Bengal was divided into two provinces: (1) West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa with a Hindu majority, and (2) East Bengal and Assam with a Muslim majority. Gandhi was well informed of developments in Bengal; see CW 5: 44, 'Will India Wake Up?'; CW 5: 114, 'Brave Bengal'; CW 5: 121–2, 'Divide and Rule'.

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salt-tax²⁴ is not a small injustice. We shall see many such things later on. But the people were ready to resist the Partition. At that time, the feeling ran high. Many leading Bengalis were ready to lose their all. They knew their power; hence the conflagration. It is now well nigh unquenchable; it is not necessary to quench it either. Partition will go, Bengal will be re-united, but the rift in the English barque will remain; it must daily widen. India awakened is not likely to fall asleep. Demand for abrogation of Partition is tantamount to demand for Home Rule. Leaders in Bengal know this, British officials realise it. That is why Partition still remains. As time passes, the Nation is being forged. Nations are not formed in a day; the formation requires years.

READER: What, in your opinion, are the results of Partition?

EDITOR: Hitherto we have considered that, for redress of grievances,

- 24 Salt is mentioned again in ch. xx. In view of the famous salt march of 1930, the reference to a salt tax here is quite significant. As far back as 1905, the salt question had entered Gandhi's political consciousness (CW 5: 9). The duty on salt dated back to Moghul times. Clive in Bengal set up a monopoly of salt for his senior colleagues and himself. In 1780 Warren Hastings put the manufacture of salt in the hands of the government, the price being fixed by the Governor-General in Council. In 1878, a uniform tax policy was adopted throughout India, both British India and Princely India. The private manufacture of salt and the possession of salt not derived from government sources both became illegal. Bengal and Assam got its salt from England; Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces and the Southern Princely states from the sea; and North India from rock-salt mines. Before 1878 duty on salt per maund (82 lb) was Rs. 1-13 in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces and the Southern Princely states; Rs. 3-4 in Bengal and Assam, and Rs. 3-0 in the North. After 1878, it was respectively, Rs. 2-8, 2-14, and 2-8. Net revenue from salt in 1880 was £7 million from a population of 200 million. (See Moon 1989, 857-8, 1039-41; Balfour 1899, 463-75.)

On 6 April 1946, at Gandhi's personal request, Sir Archibald Rowlands, the Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, on his own initiative ordered the abolition of the salt tax. But the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, vetoed the initiative on the grounds that premature abolition of the tax would create a salt famine. He thought that 'vanity' was prompting Gandhi (Moon 1973, 236). Gandhi was greatly upset by this. The salt tax was finally abolished by Nehru's Interim Government in October 1946. For a lively account of the last days of the salt tax, see Ghosh 1967, 122-32.

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we must approach the Throne, and, if we get no redress, we must sit still, except that we may still petition. After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of Partition. That spirit was seen in the outspoken writings in the press.²⁵ That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and to be written publicly. The Swadeshi movement²⁶ was inaugurated. People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face;

25 Among the prominent extremist papers of the day in Bengal were *The Bande Mataram* and *The Karmayogin* (both edited by Aurobindo Ghose), *The Jugantar*, edited by Barindra Kumar Ghose and Bhupendra Nath Dutta (the brother of Swami Vivekananda), and *The Sandhya*, edited by Brahm Bandhup Upadhyaya; in Bombay, the extremist papers included *The Kesari* and *The Mahratta* both edited by B. G. Tilak, and *The Kal*, edited by S. M. Paranjpe.

26 *Swadeshi*: things pertaining to one's own country. A many-faceted national movement which arose in reaction to the Partition of Bengal. At the *economic* level it involved the boycott of British imports. At the *educational* level, it introduced national educational institutions in Calcutta. In 1906 Aurobindo Ghose resigned his post at Baroda College to take up the post as professor of history and political science and principal of Bengal National College in Calcutta. At the *political* level, it led to resignations from legislative councils. (See Majumdar 1975, 33–64.) As early as 1905, Gandhi saw the revolutionary potential of the Swadeshi movement: 'The movement in Bengal for the use of *swadeshi* goods is much like the Russian movement' (CW 5: 132). In 1907 he compared the Swadeshi movement to *Sinn Fein*, which 'literally translated into Gujarati, means exactly our *Swadeshi* movement' (CW 7: 213).

No cause for unhappiness would remain if *swadeshi* were to replace everything foreign. We can easily attain happiness if we exert ourselves to that end during the year that has just commenced. *Swadeshi* carries a great and profound meaning. It does not mean merely the use of what is produced in one's own country. That meaning is certainly there in *swadeshi*. But there is another meaning implied in it which is far greater and much more important. *Swadeshi* means reliance on our own strength. We should also know what we mean by 'reliance on our own strength'. 'Our strength' means the strength of our body, our mind and our soul. From among these, on which should we depend? The answer is brief. The soul is supreme, and therefore soul-force is the foundation on which man must build. Passive resistance or satyagraha is a mode of fighting which depends on such force. That, then, is the only real key (to success) for the Indians. (CW 9: 118)

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it now no longer awed them. They did not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the best sons of India are at present in banishment.²⁷ This is something different from mere petitioning. Thus are the people moved. The spirit generated in Bengal has spread in the North to the Punjab, and, in the South, to Cape Comorin.

READER: Do you suggest any other striking result?

EDITOR: The Partition has not only made a rift in the English ship, but has made it in ours also. Great events always produce great results. Our leaders are divided into two parties: the moderates²⁸ and the extremists.²⁹ These may be considered as the slow party and the impatient party. Some call the moderates the timid party, and the extremists the bold party. All interpret the two words according to their preconceptions. This much is certain – that there has arisen an enmity between the two. The one distrusts the other, and imputes motives. At the time of the Surat Congress,³⁰ there was almost a fight. I think that this division

For Gandhi 'swadeshi' also meant love of one's own language. The love of the Boers for Dutch, and of the Jews for Yiddish, reflect their versions of swadeshi. 'We do not believe that those who are not proud of their own language, who are not proficient in it, can have the true spirit of *swadeshi*' (ibid., 177–8).

27 The most prominent of those banished at this time was B. G. Tilak, imprisoned in Mandalay from 1908 to 1914.

28 The Moderates: a faction of the Congress which stood for the constitutional method of attaining self-government similar to that enjoyed by Canada. Prominent among them were Dadabhai Naoroji, Dinshaw Wacha, Pherozeshah Mehta, G. K. Gokhale, Surendranath Bannerji and Madan Mohan Malaviya.

29 The Extremists: a faction of the Congress which believed that both constitutional and extra-constitutional methods were necessary for attaining swaraj. Prominent among them were B. G. Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chandra Pal.

30 The formal split between the Moderates and the Extremists occurred in December 1907 at the Surat session of the Congress which ended in pandemonium. The transition from words to blows did not take long: 'a flying missile, a shoe, hit Pherozesha Mehta and Surendranath Bannerjee, the Moderate leaders seated on the dais. This was followed by the brandishing of sticks and the unrolling of turbans, the breaking of chairs and bruising of heads; the crowning humiliation occurred when the police came and cleared the hall' (Nanda 1977, 287).