

THE INDIAN PRESS

(A Collection of Papers Presented at the Fourth Annual Conference
of the Institute, Mysore—1966).

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DR. S. P. SEN

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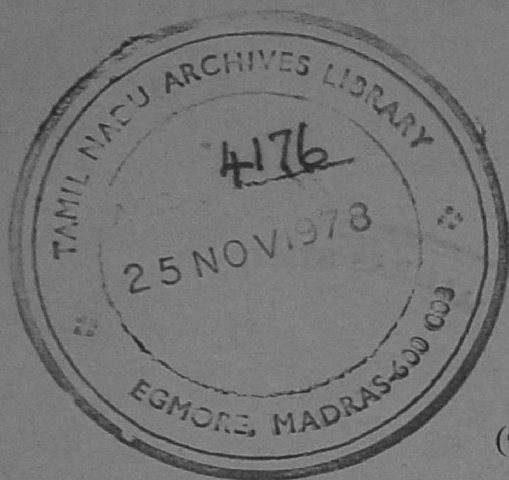
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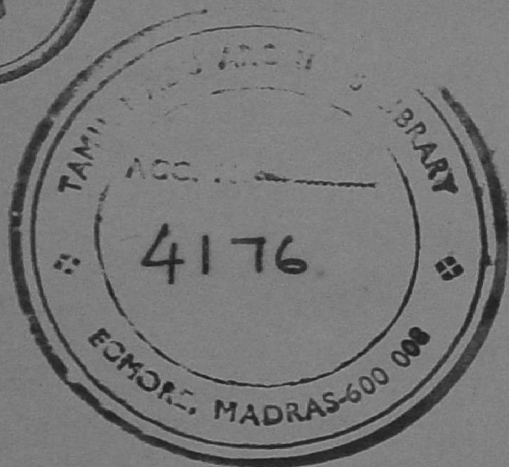


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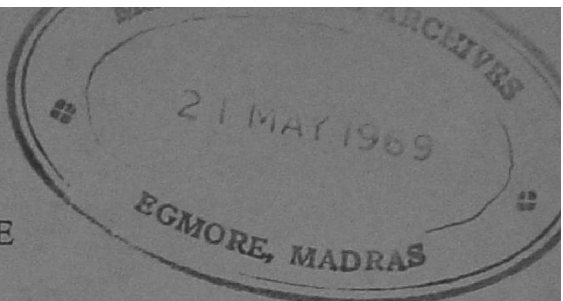
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PREFACE

The present volume on the Indian Press is a collection of eleven papers, read at the Fourth Annual Conference (1966) of the Institute of Historical Studies, held at the University of Mysore. It is not a connected history of the Indian Press, and readers would be disappointed if they take up the volume with any such expectation. The volume merely seeks to bring together a assorted collection of papers, each dealing with a particular or narrow aspect of investigation. The principal focus of interest is the Indian language press and hence the English language papers have been excluded from the purview of the present study. There are two papers on the Bengali Press, two papers on the Kannada Press, and one paper each on the Marathi, Urdu, Tamil and Telugu Press. The volume also contains a detailed bibliography on the history of the Indian Press.

It is necessary to forewarn our readers about wide disparities in length of contents among the papers. Some papers are as short as five or six pages only, while some cover more than thirty pages. Again, some papers give a general survey of the history and development of the press in any particular Indian language, while some papers are intended as serious re-studies dealing with limited periods or particular aspects. We crave the indulgence of our readers for this obvious weakness of the volume, but we hope they would appreciate that it was not possible to eliminate such disparities in the Proceedings Volume of a Conference.

As the main interest of the volume is the modern Indian Press, two papers have been included on news-writing in Medieval India. Medieval news-writing, in general, cannot be placed in the same category as modern journalism; but, as the two papers will bring out, medieval news-writers, in a sense, be considered as forerunners of modern journalists, as purveyors of news. Hence we did not think it out of place to include these two papers in the volume on the Indian Press.

After the explanations given above, our readers will possibly accept the volume in its proper light and not with any mistaken expectations about its contents. We can only hope that they will find the papers both informative and interesting. We shall feel gratified if the volume as a whole is considered even a small and humble contribution to the study of the subject.

S. P. SEN

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THE VERNACULAR NEWSPAPER PRESS OF BENGAL OF THE POST-MUTINY PERIOD WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PERIOD 1880-1892.

MRS. KALPANA BISHUI

(Victoria Institution (College), Calcutta)

Bengal was the pioneer in the field of Indian journalism. *Hicky's Gazette* was the first of its kind to be started by an Anglo-Indian* on 29th January, 1780 at Calcutta¹. It was in Bengal again that the first newspaper, written in an Indian language (in Bengali), was started. It may be the *Samachar Darpan* of the Serampore missionaries or the *Bengal Gejeti* of Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya or of Harachandra Roy².

As soon as the native newspapers began to appear in the field, they became a matter of deep concern with the authorities. Sir Thomas Munro's minute³ reflects the general attitude of the ruling authorities towards the native press. When freedom was granted to the press in India (1835), the fear that the native press might undermine British authority was not absent from the minds of some of the councillors of Sir Charles Metcalfe's Govern-

¹ *The Indian Press*—Margarita Barns, London, 1940, Page 46.

* The term Anglo-Indian here means the English residing in India. The first Indian newspaper was the *Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser*, better known as *Hicky's Gazette*, started by James Augustus Hicky on 20th January, 1780 at Calcutta.

² The early history of Bengali journalism begins with a controversy. Some give the credit to the *Bengali Gazette* (1816) of Gangadhar (not Gangakishore) Bhattacharyya of being the first paper to be published in Bengali language while others take the *Samachar Darpan* of the Baptist Missionaries (Published from Serampore on 23rd May, 1818) as the first one. Some recent publications on press (*A History of the Press in India*, S. Natarajan, 1962, issued under the auspices of the Audit Bureau of Circulations Ltd., Page 26, and *History of Indian Journalism*, J. Natarajan, 1955, Part II of the Report of the Press Commission, the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, page-17) accept the former view. Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his chapter on Press in *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, Part II, page 224, 1965, also seems inclined to accept the *Bengal Gejeti* as the first vernacular newspaper in Bengali which was perhaps first issued on 15th May, 1818. But Brajendra Nath Bandopadhyay in the latest edition of his *Bangla Samayik Patra*, published in Magh 1354 (B.E.) Part I, pages 11-16, has confirmed the view that the publication of the *Samachar Darpan* commenced two weeks earlier than that of the *Bengali Gazette*. He brings to light some other facts connected with the latter one. The name of the publisher, editor and manager of the paper appears to be Gangakishore (not Gangadhar) and one Harachandra Roy was connected with him in some capacity in the matter of the publication of that paper. The chronology may be a matter of controversy, but it is established beyond doubt that the *Bengali Gazette* was the first paper to be published exclusively under Bengali control and management. Not a single issue of this paper is available and the period of its duration is also a matter of controversy.

³ Minute of the 12th of April, 1822. (Vide G.R. Gleig, *Sir Thomas Munro*, 107, Vol-II). In this famous Minute Sir Thomas Munro wrote, "A free Press and the dominion of strangers, are things which are quite incompatible and which cannot long exist together; for what is the first duty of a free press? It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke and to sacrifice to this one great object every measure and consideration". What he most apprehended was the effect which would probably be gradually produced on the minds of the native army.

ment⁴. But the report⁵ given by John Clark Marshman on the vernacular press in Bengal only a year after (1836) to the Governor-General of India-in-Council, Lord Auckland, was not very encouraging. He reported that the apathy of the natives had gradually contracted the number of native papers from almost ten to five and that their whole number circulated by *dawk* throughout the country did not exceed three hundred among seventy millions of people. He further added that whatever might be the political influence of the native press, it was confined almost exclusively to Calcutta. The freedom, enjoyed by law for the last twelve months, he asserted, had produced no change whatever even in the tone of the native journals.

By the fifties of the 19th century the vernacular press of Bengal seemed to have made considerable progress with regard to both its circulation and influence. Rev. J. Long's article in the *Calcutta Review* of 1850 and his two reports on the Vernacular Press of Bengal of 1855 and 1857 throw interesting light on its growing importance. The editorials (of Bengali newspapers), he writes, "though very feeble, yet by the process of perpetual reiteration, are producing a strong and deep impression on the native mind, and are moulding the opinions of thousands of intelligent and influential Hindus"⁶. Again he says in his *Report on the National Press in Bengal* of 1857, "the native newspapers are humble in appearance, yet like the ballads of a nation they often act where laws fail, and as straws on a current they show its direction"⁷. The influence of newspapers was great, in Rev. Long's opinion, though their number in circulation was small compared with that of other publications. Their influence, he estimated, extended at an average of 10 readers for each paper to 30,000 persons, their views being conveyed to numbers in the mofussil relating to Government measures. Some of the Bengali newspapers (such as the *Bhaskar*), he reported, circulated as far as the Punjab and had subscribers in England among Europeans who wished to keep up their acquaintance with the native press⁸.

The outbreak of the Mutiny (1857) directed the serious attention of the Governor-General-in-Council to the writings of the native press. To their evil influences was attributed a large portion of the discontent, instilled into the troops and the ordinary people⁹. As such, the liberty of the untrained writings was thought incompatible with the state of insurrection and an urgent necessity was felt by the Government for a more absolute and summary control over the press. The result was the Act No. XV of 1857, applicable to all newspapers in India, European and native, which

⁴ Minute by H. T. Prinsep, dated 17th April, 1835
And

Minute by W. Morison, dated April 25, 1835.

Quoted in *Indian Press* by Margarita Barns, Pages 212-217.

⁵ The Report quoted in the *Calcutta Review* 1911—*History of the Press in India*, S. C. Sanial.

⁶ *Early Bengali Literature and Newspapers*—Rev. J. Long—*Calcutta Review*, 1850.

⁷ Report on the National Press of Bengal; Selections from the Records of Bengal Government—No. 32, 1859.

⁸ Ibid. Rev. Long's reports show that the number of Bengali books increased from 300,000 copies in 1853 to double that number in 1857.

⁹ Lord Canning's speech, 13th June, 1857 before the Legislative Council. Quoted in "History of Indian Journalism," S. C. Sanial, *Calcutta Review*, 1908.

remained operative for one year only. Instantaneous action was taken against some vernacular newspapers of Bengal (the *Sooltan-Ul-Akhbar*, the *Doorbeen* and the *Samachar Sudhabarshan*, the first two being written in Persian and the last one in Hindi and Bengali) as also against some Anglo-Indian newspapers (the *Friend of India* and the *Bengal Hurkaru*)¹⁰.

It was the Mutiny again which suggested to the Bengal Government the preparation of an elaborate report on the native press of that province. Even before the outbreak of the Mutiny the ruling authorities did not deem the statistics of the vernacular press beneath their notice¹¹. To probe into the native press as "the exponent of the Native Mind" became a matter of greater importance after the outbreak of the Mutiny. As Rev. Long writes, "...surely the mental food of the Indian people ought also to be examined, as also its purveyor, the Native Press". He further writes, "The opinions of the Native Press may often be regarded as the safety valve which gives warning of danger; thus had the Delhi Native Newspapers of January 1857 been consulted by European functionaries, they would have seen in them how the Natives were rife for revolt, and expecting aid from Persia and Russia"¹².

Reporting on the native papers became a regular affair with the Bengal Government since 1862-63 when reporters were first established in lower Bengal with the sanction of the Government of India for bringing their tone and spirit under the cognizance of the Government¹³. In 1864 the matter having been mentioned in Parliament, the Secretary of State addressed the Government of India on the importance of getting an insight into the feelings of the natives as represented in the press¹⁴. This resulted in the appointment of a Government reporter for the papers of Northern India in 1864 and for those of Bombay and Madras a few years later (1866).

It was then expressly stipulated that nothing like a censorship of the native press was in contemplation and of this stipulation the Secretary of State formally approved. These reports, which formerly had been freely distributed to Government offices and to the public, came to be regarded as confidential by the Home Department's Resolution of 24th July, 1874. The Government deemed it inexpedient to give wide and artificial circulation to them as these contained many extracts and summaries remarkable only for their "seditious and mischievous tendency"¹⁵.

¹⁰ *Indian Press*—Margarita Barns—Page 256.

¹¹ *Report on the National Press in Bengal*—Selections from the Records of Bengal Government—No. 32, 1859. Rev. J. Long writes in the report, "That the statistics of the Native Press in India have been regarded with attention by Government we have evidence in the facts—that the Court of Directors sent out many years ago a standing order to the Secretaries of Government in India to transmit to them regularly copies of new vernacular works. In 1856 they directed to have the India-House Library supplied with one copy of each work of every description in original Bengali published by the Native Presses of Calcutta."

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Extract of Letter No. 234-T, dated the 2nd August, 1862—Home (Public)-A-Sept., 1897—No. 145-146.

¹⁴ Note on the Vernacular Press, 1876—Home (Judicial) Dept., 1878, April—Nos. 211-235.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The post-Mutiny period, specially the sixties and seventies of the last century, saw the rise and growth of a large number of newspapers, owned and edited by Indians, some written in English and the majority in vernaculars of different provinces. Though it was written in English, mention should be made of the *Hindoo Patriot* (started in 1853), which had already established its reputation as the first Indian newspaper of Bengal, and perhaps in India, exercising great influence over the people and the Government. Besides the *Hindoo Patriot*, the other papers which should find honourable mention among those written in English were the *Bengalee*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *National Paper* etc. It was during this period that a galaxy of illustrious publicmen became associated with journalism in Bengal and some others came to the forefront of public life through their journals and newspapers.

The feebleness of vernacular journals of Bengal was manifested during the Mutiny and impressed upon the educated people the necessity of having in vernacular a true organ of native opinion. The *Someprakash* had its birth just after the Mutiny, in the year 1858, due to the joint efforts of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan. It had for its primary object the discussion of politics and its tone was far superior to that of its contemporaries. Its editor, Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan, "taught his native brethren of the journalism craft a new style of journalism"¹⁶ and did not a little to rouse the social and political consciousness of the Bengali people by making the vernacular newspaper an ideal medium of propaganda and diffusion of knowledge. The part, played by the *Hindoo Patriot* and the *Someprakash*, in upholding the cause of the poor ryots against the terrible oppression of the mighty English planters, during the indigo disturbances of 1860, is too well known to be repeated here. Another powerful vernacular paper, the *Gramvarta Prakashika*, edited by Harinath Majumdar (better known as Kangal Harinath) came out in April 1863 to ventilate the grievances of the rural people and to make their life better.¹⁷

The well-known *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the joint venture of Hemanta Kumar, Sisir Kumar and Motilal Ghosh, made its first appearance as a Bengali weekly from a village (originally called Polomagura but later renamed Amrita-Bazar) in Jessore on February 20, 1868¹⁸. From the beginning it was strongly nationalistic in attitude and taught the people to imbibe a spirit of fearlessness and independence.

This period also saw the first venture at cheap journalism. The *Sulav Samachar* of Keshab Chandra Sen came out as a weekly pice paper in 1870.

¹⁶ *Hindoo Patriot*, 9th January, 1865—quoted in *Bangla Samayik Patra* Vol. I. (New edition, 1354 B.S.), Brajendra Nath Bandopadhyaya, Page 158.

¹⁷ For the history of the Bengali newspapers—Ibid-Vols. I & II and *History of the Press in India—Printed Newspapers*, S. C. Sanial, Calcutta Review, 1911.

¹⁸ It became for sometime a bilingual paper, some portions of it being published in English from 25th February, 1869 and was later on converted into a purely English paper on 21st March, 1878 to elude the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton. It became a daily paper on 29th February, 1891, at the time when the Bengal public opinion was greatly agitated by the Age of Consent Bill. From 1871 December it came to be published from Calcutta. Its first two editors were Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh.

It met with an unexpected success, its sale having reached 3000 to 4000 copies weekly, an unprecedented newspaper sale at that time.

Another note-worthy publication, the *Halishahar Patrika*, edited by Babu Kishori Mohan Ganguli (who later on became famous as the English translator of the *Mahabharata*), also came out in the same year.

The *Samajdarpan*, a vernacular fortnightly, edited by Jasoda Nandan Sarkar, was started in 1871 at Khulna in the district of Jessore.

The *Sadharani*, edited by Akshoy Chandra Sarkar, came out from Chinsura in the year 1873. It was one of the best papers of that period. Many famous litterateurs, such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, were its regular contributors. According to Bipin Chandra Pal, it "was at that time the most powerful organ of educated opinion in Bengal"¹⁹.

The Education Gazette, which was started on 4th July, 1856 through the official influence of Mr. Hodgson Pratt under the editorial management of Rev. Mr. O'Brien Smith, was still holding the field^{19a}. At first it was understood to be a Government paper and its object was stated (in the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for the year 1856-57)^{19b} as "to supply the people in the interior of the country with a newspaper cheap in price and healthy in tone". Babu Bhudev Mukherjee (then Inspector of Schools) accepted the editorial charge of the paper in December 1868 after the resignation of Babu Peari Charan Sarkar from the post of editor and manager. Afterwards the Government ceded their interest in the paper to Bhudev Mukherjee, under whose management the paper attained considerable distinction. Babu Rangalal Banerjee, the well-known Bengali poet, was associated with the paper for some time and some of his famous poems such as *Bharat Sangeet* adorned its pages. It continued to exist for a long time.

The *Sahachar*, another well-written paper, had its beginning in the year 1873 (1280 B.S.) It was edited by Babu Bipradas Chatterjee, formerly sub-editor on the staff of the *Someprakash*, and Babu Shashibhusan Chatterjee of Konnagar. Both were men of education^{19c}.

Besides newspapers, some periodicals of great repute were started during this period, such as the *Bangadarshan* of Bankim Chandra, *Aryyadarshan* of Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan, and *Bandhav* of Kaliprasanna Ghosh.

Of the papers published from mofussil towns, special mention should be made of the *Hindu-Hitoishini* of Dacca and *Bharat-Mihir* of Mymensingh.

Besides those mentioned above, there were many other vernacular journals and newspapers in Bengal in the sixties and seventies of the last century, some of which proved to be ephemeral while others continued to exist for a considerable period of time.

The Indian-owned press, during this period, became more and more

¹⁹ Memoirs of my life and times, Vol. I. B. C. Pal, Page-275.

^{19a} *Bangla Samayik Patra*, Brajendra Nath Bandopadhyaya, Vol. I, pp. 142-146, new edition. S. C. Sanial in his article 'History of the Press in India', *Calcutta Review*, January 1911, gives the date as 6th July, 1856.

^{19b} Quoted in *Bangla Samayik Patra*, Vol. I.

^{19c} Memorandum on Bengali periodicals—Enclosure in a letter from Sir Richard Temple to Lord Northbrook, dated 29th August, 1875. (Native Press, 1875).

nationalistic in attitude and critical in tone and posed a serious problem for the authorities to deal with. A new section (Section 124A) was added to the Indian Penal Code in 1870, making penal all seditious writings and speeches (i.e. those which were calculated to excite feelings of disaffection to the Government). The Wahabi conspiracy of 1869-70 had been the immediate occasion for such addition.

The alleged inadequacy of the law (Section 124A) was brought to the notice of Lord Northbrook's Government, in connection with the writings of the *Halishahar Patrika* in 1873, for the first time by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell, to whom the writings of the native press had been a source of constant irritation and anxiety. He himself had often been the target of virulent attack of the native press²⁰. He was decidedly of opinion that a much stronger law on the subject (i.e. a law which should punish seditious writing "summarily and severely without the eclat of a long prosecution") was required. A prosecution, he opined, would involve an amount of scandal and litigation that would make "the cure worse than the disease"²¹. The incompatibility of a free Press with a despotic form of Government seemed to be at the root of the problem which the British rulers had created and could not now solve.

The only result of this representation of the Bengal Government was that the question of prosecuting any newspaper under the provision of section 124A of the Indian Penal Code came to be dealt with as a matter of Imperial policy²².

In 1873, Sir George Campbell also instituted an enquiry into the state of the vernacular press of Bengal, the result of which showed that there were altogether 38 papers in existence, half of which were being published from mofussil towns and villages²³.

The writings of the native press of Bengal, this time two articles in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 23rd January 1875, on Baroda affair (quoted in the *Pall-Mall Gazette*), again drew the attention of the ruling authorities, both of the Secretary of State and of the Government of India, to the expediency of bringing the law (Section 124A) to bear on such writings; the latter of these two articles ending with the following peroration: "To emasculate a nation that the Government may rule without trouble. Surely to poison an obscure Colonel is by far a lighter crime than these". The language of these articles, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury, seemed

²⁰ In criticising his educational policy the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* described Sir George as the great Destroyer, the Mahesvara of the Hindu triad. Mr. Woodrow, who was the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal at the time, was described as the old Bull—the "Booda Brisha" on which Siva rides and with the help of this old bull, Siva was destroying the education world of Bengal. Such "trenchant criticism" and "vitriolic satire", as B. C. Pal writes in his *Memoirs*, fascinated the people very much". B. C. Pal, *Memoirs of my life and times*—Vol. I, Page 157.

²¹ Letter from Secy. to Govt. of Bengal, No. 2808, dated the 7th August, 1873—(Enclosure to the Despatch No. 22 of 1878 (Judicial) to the Secy. of State for India—Home (Judicial Progs. 1878, April—Nos. 211-235).

²² Confidential circular letter No. 108, dated 8th January, 1874 from the Govt. of India to Local Govts. Appendix 5—Home (Public) Progs—January, 1890, No. 318-323(A).

²³ *Indian Press*, Margarita Barns,

"to palliate", if they did not absolutely justify as a duty, the "assassination, under certain circumstances of British officers....."²⁴.

What deterred Lord Northbrook's Government from instituting legal proceedings in regard to such writings was not only the vagueness of the law, and the composition of juries, but the fear of excitement and scandal, occasioned by such prosecution²⁵. The section 124A of the Indian Penal Code did not seem to have helped the Government in solving the problem presented by the native press.

Lord Northbrook promised to take up at some future date the question of the condition of the press, the state of law and the propriety of altering it,²⁶ but before he could do that, he resigned.

The problem, left unsolved by Lord Northbrook's Government, was taken up by that of Lord Lytton in right earnest. It was again the writings of the Bengali press that furnished the immediate occasion, and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden, took the initiative in moving the matter. He, in his speech made at a durbar held in Calcutta on 12th August 1877, commented severely on the "disloyal" tone of the Bengali newspapers and urged, in a demi-official to the Government of India, on the Viceroy the expediency of taking the matter up. In support of his assertions, he sent up a series of extracts from Bengali papers of the years 1876-77, mostly from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Bharat-Mihir*, the *Sadharani*, the *Samajdarpan*, the *Someprakash* etc.²⁷

The remedy, agreed upon by the Government of India and most of the Provincial Governments, the only exception being that of Madras, was a special legislation for restraining the "licence" of the native vernacular press and not an amendment of section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. The recommendation of Sir George Campbell in 1873 for a summary procedure in dealing with the seditious writings of the native press evidently had influence on Lord Lytton's Government in taking the course of action²⁸. That procedure seemed to be most suitable as it would preclude the publicity and eclat which would attach to a trial in a court of justice²⁹. The Vernacular Press Act, passed on 14th March 1878, at a single sitting, provided the executive authorities with supreme power of punishing and repressing seditious writings, without having recourse to judicial procedure.

An analysis of Government's policy and attitude towards the press shows that the vernacular press, especially that of Bengal, was gaining more

²⁴ Despatch to the Government of India—No. 53 (Political), dated India office, London, the 6th May, 1875—Home (Judicial) Progs. 1878, April Nos. 203-206.

²⁵ Despatch No. 52 dated Simla, the 6th September 1875 from the Government of India to Her Majesty's Secy. of State.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The speech and the demi-official of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal—quoted in Lord Lytton's minute, dated 22nd October, 1877. Appendix to Home (Public) Progs. Jany. 1890 318-323A.

²⁸ Despatch from the Govt. of India, to the Secy. of State for India. No. 23, dated Simla, the 18th April 1878. Progs—Home (Judicial) Dept. 1878, April—Nos. 211-235.

²⁹ Telegram from the Viceroy to Secy. of State, dated Calcutta, 13th March, 1878.

³⁰ Letter from Secy. to Govt. of Bengal, No. 2808, dated the 7th August 1873. Enclosure to the Despatch No. 23 of 1878 (Judicial) to the Secy. of State for India. Home (Judicial) Progs. 1878, April Nos. 211-235.

and more importance in the eyes of the Government, not as an exponent of native public opinion, but as an agent for creating an opinion detrimental to the interests of the British Government. It was feared that it would subvert British authority in India by spreading its mischievous influence on the masses. What Sir George Campbell apprehended was not so much its influence on the people of Bengal itself as on those in other parts of India, "in whose hands and before whose eyes such matters would really be highly inflammatory and dangerous"³⁰. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury, quoting the articles of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, reminded the Government of India in 1875 that "the unchecked dissemination amongst the Natives of articles of the character cited above cannot be allowed without danger to individuals and to the interests of Government itself"³¹. Lord Lytton's Government laid great stress on the increasing seditious violence of the native press, directly provocative to rebellion. In the statement of objects and reasons of the Vernacular Press Act it was openly stated that a section of the Vernacular Press "attacks the very existence of British rule in India"³². The reason why the vernacular newspapers were accorded discriminatory treatment was that they were addressed to a more ignorant and more easily excited class and in their case, therefore, seditious writings were more politically mischievous than the same writings would be if they were written in the English language³³.

Sir Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, had been one of the chief supporters of the bill for restraining the "licentiousness" of the native vernacular press. His speech and representation to the Government of India in 1877 had furnished the immediate pretext for taking the matter up. Though the Act applied to all India (except Madras), the real cause of offence came mostly from the Bengali press. The extracts which were sent along with Lord Lytton's Minute for the consideration of the Provincial Governments were taken all from the Bengali newspapers. Thirtysix extracts as examples of seditious writings were made from 15 journals of Bengal, the total number of vernacular journals of that province being 35 at that time.³⁴ It is to be marked that out of thirtysix, four extracts were made from the *Samajdarpan*, a journal which had ceased to exist a few months earlier.

Sir Ashley Eden was over-enthusiastic to enforce the application of the Act to some Bengali newspapers even on retrospective grounds. Bonds were demanded from the *Bharat-Mihir* of Mymensingh, the *Dacca Prakash*, the *Dacca Hitoisini*, the *Sulav Samachar* and the *Sahachar* of Calcutta, but he had to cancel his orders under the directives of the Central Government.³⁵

³¹ Despatch No. 53, dated 6th May, 1875 from the Secy. of State for India, to the Government of India. Home (Judicial) Progs. 1878, April—Nos. 203-206.

³² Appendix VVV—Statement of object and reasons—Legislative Department—Progs., 1878, March—Nos. 143-147.

³³ Despatch No. 23, dated Simla, the 18th April, 1878.

From—The Government of India,

To —The Secretary of State for India.

Home (Judicial) Progs., 1878, April Nos. 211-235.

³⁴ Bengal Administration Report for 1876-77, Page 370.

³⁵ Letter No. 30, dated Simla, the 25th April 1878.

From the Govt. of India, to Her Majesty's Secy. of State for India. Home (Judicial)

Bond was also demanded from the printer of the *Someprakash* under instruction of the Government of India but it stopped publication.³⁶ It was believed by Motilal Ghosh, the second editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, that the suppression of their paper was one of the main objects of the new legislative measure. To escape the operation of the Act, it was turned overnight into an English paper. The writings of the Bengali press had always figured prominently in the deliberations of the Government in formulating their press policy.

Public reaction was sharp against Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act. Protest meetings were held not only at Calcutta and in Bengal but in many other parts of India. Almost all the prominent public associations of India sent their petitions, requesting the Government for its repeal or amendment. The press question became an all-India question and the Vernacular Press Act acted as a stimulant to the growing national consciousness of the people.

The change of ministry in England and coming of Lord Ripon as the Viceroy of India led to the repeal of the Act on 10th January 1882. A special law, which had remained almost a dead-letter, for regulating the vernacular press was deemed to be no longer required.

Sir Ashley Eden, who had been one of the chief sponsors of the Act, naturally felt dissatisfied with the repeal on which no expression of opinion of the Local Governments was sought. He was sure that no alteration of the Indian Penal Code would produce the desired result and that the amendment of the Code proposed would absolutely remain a dead-letter, as the Vernacular Press Act had been³⁷.

The writings of the Bengali press again caused provocation to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Rivers Thompson, and led to the review of the press policy by the Supreme Council in 1884. Attention being drawn by the Lieutenant Governor to the disturbing effect upon the native mind by the writings of that press³⁸, the Home Member, J. Gibbs, and Home Secretary, A. Mackenzi, urged upon Lord Ripon for the issue of a Resolution³⁹, giving warning to the vernacular press on the eve of his departure. Lord

Progs. 1878, April Nos. 236-240.

³⁶ No. 545, dated Fort William, the 10th March, 1879.

From C. Bernard, Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India

To the Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal—Home (Public) Progs. 1879, March Nos. 221-222.

In the place of the *Someprakash*, the *Nababibhakar* was started. Permission to revive the *Someprakash* was sought and granted in 1879 and the editor gave an undertaking for its future good conduct.

³⁷ No. 3590 J, dated 3rd Sept., 1881.

From Horace A. Cockerell, Esq., Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, Judicial, Political and Appointment Depts.

To the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Dept., Legislative Dept., Progs., 1882. A. Feby., Nos. 149-194.

³⁸ No. 2061-JD-dated Darjeeling, the 18th August, 1884.

From F. B. Peacock, Esq., Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

To the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Dept. Home (Public) A. Jany., 1890, Nos. 318-323.

³⁹ Home (Public) Progs. January 1890, No. 318-323(A).

A. Mackenzie's note, dated 20.9.84 and J. Gibbs' note, dated 24.9.84. The tone of the Vernacular Press in Madras, Bombay, and the Northwestern Provinces seemed far less objectionable to them. The collection of passages was made almost exclusively from Bengal Native Press for the consideration of the Government of India.

Ripon, however, was not prepared to consider it, as it would imply "monstrous" injustice to the Native Press who had not committed greater offence than the Anglo-Indian press did a year before (i.e. in connection with the Ilbert Bill). "To deal upon one principle with the Vernacular Press and upon another with the Anglo-Indian Press", he summed up, "would be grossly unjust and in the highest degree impolitic". Any attempt to resuscitate the Vernacular Press Act in any shape seemed to be highly repugnant to him, as it would violate the established policy of the British Government and the fundamental principle of British rule in India.⁴⁰

In the eighties, the vernacular press of Bengal maintained a steady advance with regard to both its number and circulation. The most influential newspapers, including those written in English, of the period under review were weeklies. The reason for their popularity, perhaps, lay in the fact, as it was explained by S. N. Banerjee, that the craving for fresh news was then not general, and that the Indian readers for the most part were content to have a weekly supply of news and comments thereon⁴¹. The daily papers showed some improvement. By 1890 there were at least five dailies and the *Dainik* may be considered as the leading journal of this class. The movement for cheap journalism, which was started by Keshab Chandra Sen by the publication of the *Sulav Samachar* as a pice paper, got a fresh impetus, according to S. N. Banerjee, from his imprisonment in connection with the contempt case⁴². There was a stir all over the country and the people's passionate desire for news increased the circulation of the *Bangabasi* and the *Sanjibani*, both of which were cheap weeklies and both of which continued to hold an important place in the journalistic world of Bengal.

One of the leading journals of this period, the *Nababibhakar*, had its birth in the year 1879, edited by Gangadhar Banerjee, a professor, and Girija Bhusan Mukherjee, a pleader. After some years it was joined with the *Sadharani* of Akshay Chandra Sarkar and came to be known as the *Nababibhakar Sadharani*. It ceased to exist from 1890.

The *Bangabasi* was started by Jogendra Nath Bose as a pice paper in 1881. At first it came out as an organ of liberal thought in Bengal but later on its open breach with the Brahmo Samaj drove it to an extreme position on the side of Hindu orthodoxy⁴³. It possessed the largest circulation and was the first paper, not only in Bengal but in India, to be prosecuted for the charge of sedition.

The success of the *Bangabasi* brought into the field its competitor, the *Sanjibani*, edited by Krishna Kumar Mitra in 1883. It was started, as Bipin Chandra Pal writes, to counteract the influence of the *Bangabasi* which was preaching hide-bound conservatism, both theological and social. It was an organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

Of the new journals at least two other names should be mentioned,

⁴⁰ Ripon's note dated 6.11.84. Ibid.

⁴¹ *A Nation in Making*, S. N. Banerjee, P. 50.

⁴² Ibid., P. 78.

⁴³ *Memoirs of my life and times*, Vol.-I, B. C. Pal, Page 431-432.

those of the *Surabhi* and the *Samaya*. The *Surabhi*, edited by Jogendra Nath Bose, came out in the year 1880 under the fostering care of Rajnarayan Bose. After some time it was joined with the *Pataka* and came to be published as *Surabhi-O-Pataka*.

The *Samaya*, another cheap weekly like the *Bangabasi* and the *Sanjibani*, was edited by Jnanendra Nath Das and was started in the year 1883.

Besides those mentioned above, there were many other journals which were started during the eighties and were conducted with ability for a considerable period of time.

A special mention should be made of the *Hitavadi* which came out on the 30th May, 1891 as a weekly newspaper. Krishna Kamal Bhattacharyya was its chief editor and Rabindra Nath Tagore was connected with the paper as the editor of the Magazine section.

In 1894 Kali Prasanna Kavyavisharad took charge of the paper and turned it into the best vernacular journal of that period. After the death of Kavyavisharad (1907) the management fell into the hands of Sakham Ganesh Deuskar, Jaladhar Sen and others.

Among the old papers some were still in full glory such as the *Sadharani*, *Bharat-Mihir* etc.

Muslim journalism also made some progress in Bengal during this period. By 1890 there were at least four newspapers, owned and edited by Mohammedans, in existence. These were the *Ahmadi*, the *Gauhar*, the *Sudhakar*, the *Urdu Guide* and the *Dar-us-saltanat*.⁴⁴

The foremost position was taken by the *Sudhakar* whose circulation exceeded 3,000 weekly in 1890. Edited by Munshi Reazuddin Ahmed, "it was devoted to the Mohammedan revival, and as bigoted on the Mohammedan as the *Bangabasi* was on the Hindu side"⁴⁵. It very often betrayed anti-Hindu feelings in its writings.

The *Ahmadi*, a Mohammedan fortnightly, edited by Moulvi Abdul Hamed Khan Eusofzat, came out from Tangail, Mymensingh, in the year 1886. It was a well-written paper and displayed no religious bigotry. The professed object of the conductors was to promote social union between Hindus and Mussalmans⁴⁶.

An estimate could be made of the steady increase maintained by the vernacular journals of Bengal in their number and circulation during the period under review on the basis of the data given in the Government's reports on the native press.

Bengal: Number of papers (Vernacular) in circulation during the period (1880-1892).

YEAR

	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892
No. of papers (vernacular) in circulation.	37	38	56	63	64	63	62	63	67	71	62	71	74

⁴⁴ Report of Native Press for 1890-Home (Public) Progs. 1891, October. Nos. 260-286. (A)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

An approximate idea about the increase in their circulation could be formed from the fact that, whereas in 1880 it was estimated to be about 65,179⁴⁷ for the whole of British India, in 1890 (i.e. after a decade) in Bengal alone the number had exceeded 66,000.^{47a}

But statistics apart, there was more or less consensus of opinion among the Government and non-Government observers that the number of people influenced by the vernacular newspapers was in no way confined to the subscribers only. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot very emphatically stated before the Legislative Council, in the course of the amendment of the Vernacular Press Act in October 1878, that the circulation of vernacular newspapers was in no way limited by the number of copies actually struck off. "The great majority of those who become acquainted with the vernacular papers do so", he said, "not by reading them, but by hearing them read"⁴⁸. A similar opinion had been expressed by many other high-ranking Government officers, including the Lieutenant Governor⁴⁹ of Bengal and the members of the Supreme Council⁵⁰. Mr. Digby quotes an instance, as a sample of many, where a single newspaper served a whole village⁵¹. A vernacular journal, it may be safely presumed, thus had a much wider reading constituency than its circulation list alone would seem to indicate.

As regards the influence, which the vernacular press really exerted on the people, there is a great inconsistency in the statements of its critics even amongst the highest ruling authorities. Sometimes it had been assumed that they in no way represented the feelings of the people⁵² and that they helped to form the opinion of a very limited circle of readers⁵³. At other times it had been feared that they were about to produce a rebellion in a couple of months⁵⁴. Again, on some other occasions, though rare, its "value to the administration both as a means for educating the people and as a guide to native opinion"⁵⁵ had been recognised. This inconsistency may

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ C.B.'s note—6-5-80—Legislative Dept. Progs. 1882-A-Feby., Nos. 149-194. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, in his speech of the 16th October 1878, speaks of the total circulation of vernacular papers being, "not more than 100,000 or 150,000". The figure (given above) for the whole of British India, namely 65,179, is the total of the reported circulation of all vernacular journals according to the several 'Reports on Native Newspapers' for April 1880.

^{47a} It is to be noted here that it is difficult to get an exactly accurate idea of the increase in their circulation, as the number had not been stated against all the papers in circulation in the Government reports.

⁴⁸ Abstract of the proceedings of the Council. Speech by Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, the 16th October, 1878. Legislative Dept. Progs. 1878, October Nos. 57-73.

⁴⁹ Bengal, Government's letter No. 17265, dated 20th April 1891. Home (Public) Progs., 1891, October Nos. 260-286. (A)

⁵⁰ J. Gibb's (Home Member) note, dated 24-9-84. Home (Public) Progs., January 1890, No. 318-323A.

⁵¹ *The Native Newspapers of India and Ceylon*, Calcutta Review, 1877—W. Digby.

⁵² Sir Ashley Eden's Durbar speech and demi-official to the Govt. of India—Extracts given in Lord Lytton's Minute, 22nd October, 1877—Appendix to Home (Public) Progs. Jany. 318-323A. Letter from the Bengal Government No. 3185 J. dated Calcutta, the 12th November, 1886—Home (Public) 1886 (B). Decr. 17-18.

⁵³ Letter from the Bengal Govt.—No. 184T-J dated the 26th April, 1881—Home (Public) 1881 B. May, 38-39.

⁵⁴ Vide the speeches of the different Government members including that of Lord Lytton at the time of the passing of the Vernacular Press Act.

⁵⁵ Bengal letter No. 920 JT, dated 2nd June, 1882. (Note—Sir Rivers Thompson's opinion

perhaps be accounted for to some extent by the difference in personal temperaments and by political bias, colouring the opinions of the critics. But a general tendency among the ruling authorities to disparage the vernacular press and to draw a line of demarcation between the public and the press is to be noticed.

In spite of the hostile criticism of the vernacular press at Government level, there is a tardy recognition of the fact in the annual reports on the native press that the vernacular newspapers were gradually increasing their influence and were being read by communities in the interior of the country where no English paper would be read.⁵⁶ The large number of papers which were being published from the mofussil towns and villages perhaps testify to the accuracy of the fact⁵⁷. A more or less impartial estimate could be formed of the increasing influence of the native press from the observation of Sir George Birdwood, made in 1877.⁵⁸ He said, "..... considering the rapidity with which it has grown, and the distinction and influence which leading native newspapers have gained, it is evident that the Native Press in India supplies a real want in native society and the fact of the transparent honesty, with which it deals with felt local grievances, makes it an admirable handmaid to the Government in the administration of the country". It may be safely presumed that the vernacular journals were exerting increasing influence on certain sections of the people, especially on the rising generation of educated men. The native papers, written in English, were no doubt on a higher educational level than the former but both sections were inspired by the same traditions, pursued the same aims by essentially similar methods and as such ideas and opinions, preached in the native English papers infiltrated into the vernacular section. It is the educated class, the leaders of the people, who would be most strongly influenced by these papers as they were their regular readers and contributors. But they it was who would give the motive force by which the masses would be moved. Looked at in this light, the vernacular press was of considerable power. Indirectly its effects were mighty.

Besides the spread of education and improvement of mechanical devices, some internal events during this period accelerated the growth of public opinion and gave further impetus to Indian journalism, both English and vernacular.

The repeal of the Vernacular Press Act (1882), hailed with joy and acclamation by the Indian educated public and press, was thought to be due to their sustained agitation and combination⁵⁹ and it added to the strength and confidence of the Indian press.

on the Native Press underwent a radical change within three years). Home (Public) 1882-B-June 159.

⁵⁶ Reports on the Native Press for 1884 and 1885. Home (Public) 1885-B-Sept., 142-143. Home (Public) 1886-B-Dec., 17-18.

⁵⁷ From a comparative study of the Government reports it appears that in 1885 the total number of papers published from Calcutta were 23, the rest, 40 in number, were coming out from the mofussil. In 1890 the ratio was 20:42.

⁵⁸ "The Native Press of India"—Dr. George Birdwood—Journal of the Society of Arts March, 1877.

⁵⁹ Home (Public) 1881 B—May, 38-39.

The great Ilbert Bill controversy, as it aroused a bitter spirit of racial animosity and party feelings, left its traces on the writings of both the sections of the press, Anglo-Indian and Indian, and widened the chasm between them. It taught the people the value of unity and organisation and further stimulated their political consciousness. The tone and attitude of the native press, as was remarked by the Government reporter, became entirely political in their character⁶⁰, this characteristic, of course, not being exclusively due to that event.

The Contempt case of Surendra Nath Banerjee (1883) had an important bearing on the state of public feeling at the time, and added further stimulus, as it has been noted above, to the development of vernacular journalism in Bengal.

The foundation of the Indian National Congress was another epochal event which added to the importance of the Indian press, both vernacular and English. The editors and founders of some of the leading newspapers were present at the first session of the Congress⁶¹ and some of them took prominent part in its deliberations⁶². Among the Bengali journalists were present the editor of the *Indian Mirror*, Narendra Nath Sen, and the editor of the *Nababibhakar*. The Congress, its proceedings, its aims and objects, its merits and defects figured prominently in the journalistic discussion. It brought politics to the forefront and the Indian-owned press, with ever increasing force, served as a medium for the diffusion of political knowledge among the people. As the Indian-owned press became more and more nationalistic in attitude and political in tone, the Anglo-Indian press, with a few honourable exceptions, became more and more hostile to Indian aspirations and began to serve as a mouthpiece of the British Raj.

The agitation over the Age of Consent Bill (1891) had its effects on the journalistic world of Bengal. Among the leading papers of the province, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Bangabasi* ranged themselves prominently in the opposition to the Bill, while the *Indian Mirror*, the *Sanjibani* and some others supported it. On February 19, 1891, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* became a daily to serve the orthodox cause. The movement against the Bill was really an attempt to harness religious sentiment to political discontent. The sequel to the agitation was the *Bangabasi* prosecution case, the first case to be launched by the British Government against any Indian newspaper for the charge of sedition.

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 added another step to the progress of Indian journalism. The debates in the Legislative Councils, interpellations by the members, and discussion of the budget furnished the journalists with

⁶⁰ Reports on Native Press for 1883. Home (Public) 1885B—June—Nos. 269-272.

⁶¹ The representatives of the following papers attended the first session of the Congress: The *Nassim* of Agra, *Tribune* of Lahore, *Indian Spectator*, *Indu Prakash* of Bombay, the *Indian Mirror* and *Nababibhakar* of Calcutta, *Crescent* of Coimbatore, *Hindustani* of Lucknow, *Hindu* of Madras, *Gyan Prakash* of Poona, *Quarterly Journal* of Sarvajanic Sabha, *Kesari* and *Maratha* of Poona. c.f. *History of Indian Journalism*—J. Natarajan, Page 98-99.

⁶² C. Subramaniam Iyer, the editor of the *Hindu* of Madras, moved the first resolution, approving the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the working of the Indian Administration. *Ibid*.

news and also a weapon in the hands of the Indian editors to attack a Government whose policy was denounced as unsympathetic and coercive.

The writings of the press of Bengal came under the prominent notice of the Government several times during the course of the decade under review. The problem faced by Lord Dufferin (1884-1888) was the perennial one, how far an absolutely free and uncontrolled press was compatible with the autocratic system of government in India. The agitation in the press and the organisation of mass-meetings in the various districts of Bengal, rather a novel development, was in his opinion due to the "imitation and importation of Irish example", by the more extreme party in Bengal⁶³. He further added: "Day after day, hundreds of sharp-witted Babus pour forth their indignation against their English oppressors in very pungent and effective diatribes. Facts are either invented or misrepresented to suit the purpose of these ingenious gentlemen, and I must say the way in which they serve them is by no means discreditable to their literary power". The Bombay papers seemed to him to be far more moderate, sensible and statesmanlike⁶⁴. The influence of the extremist section of the press, it was apprehended, would not fail to engender a wide-spread feeling of hostility to the British rule⁶⁵ and that the effects would be all the more deplorable if soldiers would become newspaper readers⁶⁶.

It appears from his private correspondence⁶⁷ and despatches to the Secretary of State that the reconstitution of the Provincial Councils was a part of his programme of controlling the native Press. In two continuous despatches (No. 67, 68), bearing the same date, the 6th November, 1888, the suggestions were put forward for reconstituting the Provincial Councils (Despatch No. 67) and for a more effective criminal law against libel and seditious propagandism (Despatch No. 68⁶⁸). The novel device was hit upon, it seems, to overcome the difficulty attending any repressive legislation regarding press and public speaking, if unconnected with a measure of liberalising character. The Secretary of State, Lord Cross, seemed willing to take decision on the one, while reserving that on the other. It was his definite opinion that unless and until the existing law could be shown with specific instances to be insufficient and inadequate, no amendements, proposed by the Government of India, for checking seditious propagandism could be entertained.⁶⁹ His disinclination was not so much for his

⁶³ *Private Correspondence of Lord Dufferin*. From Dufferin to Kimberley, dated March 21, 1886.

⁶⁴ From Dufferin to Cross, dated 23rd November, 1886.

⁶⁵ From Dufferin to Kimberley, dated March 21, 1886.

⁶⁶ From Dufferin to Cross, dated May 20, 1887.

⁶⁷ From Dufferin to Cross, dated August 17, 1888.

⁶⁸ Home (Public) Progs. January 1890, Nos. 318-323 (A). The two proposals formed part of one whole. On discussing the draft of the sub-committee's Report the Council considered it was better to separate the proposals, to restrict one Report to the Legislative Council question only; and to deal with the question of seditious propagandism in a separate Report. So the questions were done separately and reported in separate though continuous Despatches to the Secretary of State—A. P. M.'s note dated 29-4-1889—Home (Public) Progs. Jany. 1890., 318-323.

⁶⁹ Despatch No. 26. From the Secy. of State to the Governor-General in-Council, dated the 28th March, 1889—Home (Public) Progs., January 1890, Nos. 318-323 (A).

liberal instinct as for the fear of the democratic House of Commons⁷⁰.

Towards the close of his viceroyalty, the writings of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, one of the leading papers of Bengal, on the action of the Government in respect of Bhopal State, caused provocation to Sir Lepel Griffin, the Agent to the Governor-General. On the representation being made by Sir Lepel, requesting the Government to institute criminal prosecution against that paper for libel⁷¹, Lord Dufferin's Government refused to take any legal action for fear of greater publicity⁷². The same reason actuated his policy with regard to press-prosecutions, proposed by other Provincial Governments.⁷³

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Bengal again contributed to press history during the viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne by publishing in 1889 a secret foreign office document, the minute of H. M. Durand, the foreign Secretary, and by making the comment that the real reason of the deposition of the Maharaja of Kashmir was not his resignation or the oppression committed by him on his people, but the fact that Gilgit was wanted for strategical purposes by the British Government.

The Government of India had already under its consideration a bill to make penal the publication of official secrets. In his speech in the Legislative Council, Lord Lansdowne passed strong strictures on the conduct of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, in publishing a secret document, some portion of which he characterised as "a sheer and impudent fabrication"⁷⁴.

No action was taken against the paper, but an Official Secrets Act, somewhat similar to the Act passed by the British Parliament, was adopted on October 17, 1889.

The Official Secrets Act was needed more for the Anglo-Indian press than for the Indian press. The publication of official documents of a confidential nature by the native press was few and far between. Two very important official documents, of course, got their publication in an unauthorised way in the native papers in the year 1889—Lord Dufferin's minute on the re-constitution of the Legislative Council by the *Bengalee* and the aforementioned foreign office document by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and on both the occasions the Government was put in a very awkward position⁷⁵. Both of these unauthorised publications reminded the Government of the necessity of an Official Secrets Act⁷⁶.

It should be remembered, however, that one of the most important Anglo-Indian papers, the *Pioneer of Allahabad*, was in the regular habit of publishing official secrets which it used to get hold of by establishing

⁷⁰ *Private Correspondence of Lord Dufferin*—From Cross to Dufferin, dated Feby., 25, 1887.

⁷¹ Foreign Secret I Progs., 1888, January, 19-20.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Appendix to Home (Public) Progs.-A., January, 1890, Nos. 318-323.

⁷⁴ Lord Lansdowne's Speech before the Council, 17th Oct. 1889.

⁷⁵ *Lord Lansdowne's private correspondence*—From Cross to Lansdowne, April 12 1889. From Lansdowne to Cross, May 6, 1889. From Lansdowne to Cross, October 14, 1889.

⁷⁶ Ibid. From Cross to Lansdowne, March 22, 1889. Lord Lansdowne's speech before the Council. 17 Oct. 1889.

entente cordiale with the secretaries and members of the Council. It was not unoften that such publications used to make the Government uneasy⁷⁷, but no disciplinary measure was ever known to have been taken against it. The native press did not fail to remind the Government of this fact⁷⁸ when the Official Secrets Act was passed. This discriminatory attitude i.e. the obtaining of official information by the *Pioneer* only was a constant source of misunderstanding between the Government and the native press.

Sir Charles Elliott, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal (1890-1895), seemed to be overzealous about the application of the Act. He gave warning twice to the editor of the *Reis and Rayyet* and once to that of the *Indian Mirror* for so-called infringement of the Act. It appears from the nature of information published by the two papers for which they were rebuked that Sir Charles Elliott regarded everything done in the Bengal Secretariat or Belvedere as official secret⁷⁹.

Penal action was taken against the *Praja Bandhu*, a vernacular newspaper of Chandernagore (Bengal) in 1889 for publishing "scurrilous and seditious articles". This paper was prohibited from circulation in British India under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act of 1878 and section 60-A of the Indian Post Office Act of 1866⁸⁰, and its managing proprietor, Babu Tinkauri Banerjee, a clerk in the office of the Director of Public Instruction, was dismissed from the Government service for contravening the standing orders of^{80a} the Government of India as contained in the Home Department Resolution No. 19-1134, dated 8th July 1875⁸¹.

It was again the writings of a Bengali newspaper, the *Bangabasi*, that furnished the immediate occasion during the viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne for instituting the first press-prosecution on a charge of sedition. Lord Lansdowne and his councillors were equally alive, like Lord Dufferin, to the dangers inherent in the writings of the native press⁸². On the representation made by Sir Charles Elliott for strengthening those sections of the Penal Code, dealing with incitement to disaffection and with defamation, in view of the increasing virulence of the writings of the native press, both English and vernacular, and their wide-spread influence⁸³, the Government

⁷⁷ Lord Lansdowne's private correspondence—From H. E. The Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay to The Marquess of Lansdowne, August 14 1889.

⁷⁸ *Nababibhakar Sadharani*, 21st Oct. 1889; *Sahachar*, Oct. 23, 1889; *Samaya*, Oct. 25, 1889; *Sanjibani*, Nov. 16, 1889. Reports on Native Press for 1889.

⁷⁹ The correspondence passed between Sir Charles Elliott and Sambhu Chandra Mukherjee, the editor of the *Reis and Rayyet* and Narendra Nath Sen, the editor of the *Indian Mirror*—quoted in "History of Journalism in India", S. C. Sanial, *Calcutta Review*, Oct. 1908.

⁸⁰ No. 5429, dated 21st Oct. 1889. Notification by the Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce. Home (Public) A, Oct. 1889, Nos. 292-309.

^{80a} These orders prohibit any Government servant from becoming the proprietor of a newspaper without the previous sanction in writing of the Government he is serving and direct that such sanction should only be given in the case of newspapers mainly devoted to topics not of a political character.

⁸¹ No. 1959, dated Simla the 21st Oct., 1889. From C. J. Lyall, Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Department, to—the Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

⁸² Lansdowne's note—31.5.91—Home (Public) Progs. 1891, Oct. No. 260-286(A). *Private papers of Lord Lansdowne*. From Lansdowne—to Cross, June 23, 1891.

⁸³ From the Govt. of Bengal, No. 1726J, dated 20th April, 1891—Home (Public) Progs., Oct., 1891, 260-286. (A)

of India instructed the Bengal Government to bring some well-selected case before the courts against a conspicuous and influential paper for testing the efficiency of the existing law (Section 124-A)⁸⁴. The result was that the first test case was instituted against a native paper of Bengal, the *Bangabasi*, for its writings in connection with the "Age of Consent Bill" under section 124-A of Indian Penal Code on 6th August, 1891.

The prosecution case ended in a compromise. The Chief Justice, Sir Comer Pethram, having refused to give any final verdict in the absence of the unanimity of the jury, the case was postponed for the next session and the proprietor, editor, manager and printer of the *Bangabasi* made submission to the Lieutenant Governor, by promising never to repeat the offence and thenceforth "to conduct the paper in a spirit of loyalty"⁸⁵. The Native Press Association, recently formed, and the British Indian Association interceded on behalf of the *Bangabasi* and entreated the Lieutenant Governor to stay further proceedings⁸⁶.

The case was accordingly withdrawn and the Government of India and Government of Bengal claimed to have attained the desired object in instituting the prosecution⁸⁷ i.e. the efficacy of the law (Section 124A) had been tested.

One direct result of the *Bangabasi* prosecution case was the formation of the Native Press Association with Babu Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, Secretary to the British Indian Association and editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, as its President. The object of the Association, to quote the words of the Resolution under which it was formed, was "to protect, maintain and further by all legitimate means the lawful interests of the Native Press and to improve its tone and status and to preserve moderation in the discussion of all public questions, and to take all such measures as might be necessary to enable the Native Press to fulfil the important functions which belong to it, as the educator of the people, exponent of the public opinion and faithful interpreter between the rulers and the ruled"⁸⁸. Except the *Indian Mirror*, the *Indian Nation* and the *Reis and Rayyet*, the editors and proprietors of all important native papers of Bengal, written both in English and in Bengali, joined it.

⁸⁴ From C. J. Lyall, Secretary to the Govt. of India, No. 1082, dated 18th June, 1891. To the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal. Ibid.

⁸⁵ The humble petition of Jogendra Chandra Bose, Krishna Chandra Banerjee, Brajraj Banerjee and Arunoday Ray. To the Honourable Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Appendix to the letter No. 148-J, dated Darjeeling, the 9th Sept. 1891. From Sir John Edgar, Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Department. Ibid.

⁸⁶ (i) From—Babu Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, President of the Native Press Association. To—The Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal. dated Calcutta, the 7th Sept. 1891. Appendix to the above letter. Ibid.

(ii) From Babu Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, Secy. to the British Indian Association. To—The Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, dated Calcutta, the 4th Sept. 1891. Ibid.

⁸⁷ From the Govt. of Bengal No. 148 J. D. Dated 9th Sept. 1891. To—The Govt. of Bengal No. 1465, dated 17th Sept. 1891. Ibid.

⁸⁸ From—Babu Rajkumar Sarvadhikari, President of the Native Press Association. To—The Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal dated Calcutta, the 7th Sept. 1891.—Home (Public) Progs. (A) Oct. 1891 No. 260-286. The Native Press Association was first formed at Delhi in 1876 at the time of the Imperial assemblage there. It died a natural death.

A Press Bureau was sought to be set up at the same time by Mr. Risley, the Municipal Secretary to the Bengal Government, with the approval of Sir Charles Elliott for furnishing the native press with correct information and thereby to improve relations with them. The scheme fell to the ground as the Government of India refused to give concurrence to it and as there arose mutual jealousy and recriminations among the different native papers due to the belief that Mr. Risley was showing undue preference in distributing news to the *Hindoo Patriot*, the editor of which happened to be the President of the Press Association⁸⁹.

A study of the native press of Bengal during the period under review would be perhaps incomplete without getting a glimpse into the spirit of their writing, their attitude towards some of the major problems of those days and their conception about their own rights and duties.

Since the beginning of the vernacular press in Bengal a high ideal of editorial duty and responsibility had been preached through their pages though it cannot be said that it was realised by everyone. The position assumed by Raja Rammohan Roy as the editor of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (a Persian paper) as far back as 1822 was that of an educator of the people and of an interpreter and mediator between the ruler and the ruled⁹⁰. That high ideal the respectable class of vernacular journals always set before them, but along with that a spirit of fearless and independent criticism was coming into their tone with the growth of the political consciousness of the people during the post-Mutiny period.

The position which they conceived to be theirs may be termed as one of loyal opposition whose duty it was to point out the faults and shortcomings of their rulers, as well as to lay before the authorities the grievances of the people. So far as the British Government and the enlightened principles of justice and toleration on which it was supposed to be based were concerned, they described themselves as inspired by feelings of unmixed gratitude and loyalty. What they complained of was that their criticisms were regarded as proceeding from a spirit of disaffection towards the British rule. The exposure of the wrong doings of the officials or the criticism of a particular line of policy, pursued by the Government, it was reminded now and then, was not a disloyal act⁹¹. A wholesome fear of newspaper criticism would be conducive to the interests of good government and would ensure the stability of British rule in India⁹². They, according to their own belief, were acting as friends and counsellors to the Government⁹³ and as honorary ministers to the state⁹⁴. They were the best spies⁹⁵ through whom the Govern-

⁸⁹ Home Public Deposit file No. 106, 1892.

⁹⁰ Prospectus of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* quoted in *The British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, Part II, Page 226. R. C. Majumdar.

⁹¹ *Bangabasi*, Oct. 8, 1887; *Sahachar*, 12th Oct. 1887, (Reports on Native Press for 1887). *Sanjibani*, Oct. 16, 1888 (Report on Native Press for 1888) etc.

⁹² *Bangabasi*, February 21, 1885 (R. N. P. 1885); July 30, 1887 (R. N. P. 1887); *Sanjibani*, July 3, 1886 (R. N. P. 1886); *Bharatbasi*, 27th March 1886 (R. N. P. 1886); *Dainik and Samachar Chandrika*, 30th Oct. 1887 (R. N. P. 1887) etc.

⁹³ *Dainik*, 7th Feby. 1886 (R. N. P. 1886); *Nababibhakar*, April 19, 1886 (R. N. P. 1886).

⁹⁴ *Samachar Chandrika*, 30th April, 1885 (R. N. P. 1885).

⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

ment could know of the real state of the people. The *Dacca Prakash* of April 3, 1887 wrote that the political influence of loyal newspapers would consist in enlightening and advising the people and the Government on the questions of the day but if it would mean combination to oppose the Government, they would have nothing to do with it⁹⁶. They claimed to be the educator of the people and the barometer of their feelings⁹⁷. To infuse them with a spirit of loyalty was taken by some as a part of their duty⁹⁸.

The rights, very often claimed by the editors of the Indian-owned press of Bengal, were on a par with those of the opposition party in England⁹⁹. If the opposition party in England could criticise Her Majesty's Government, its policy and measures and the conduct of the Government officials fearlessly and were not charged with sedition, why should the same charge be levelled against them while they were doing the same duty?

Whatever might be their professed rights and duties, the outspokenness of the vernacular journals of Bengal, as we have noticed above, produced a great reaction in the minds of the foreign rulers. They were charged with perversion of truth and wilful misrepresentation of the acts and policies of the Government with a view to exciting feelings of disaffection against it. As regards the inaccuracy of facts, the native newspapers charged the Government with the failure of their duty of supplying the native press with useful information and the charge was to a great extent true. But the fundamental factor, lying at the root of this seeming hostility, was that the standpoint of the people was very different from that of the Government and that things could not be expected to be seen in the same light from opposite directions. What seemed misrepresentation to the Government was very often real presentation of facts from the standpoint of the subject people. A very few English statesmen had the insight to see that "the position of the Native Press must, from the nature of things, be always in opposition"¹⁰⁰.

Loyalty, professed by the native editors, was quite in consonance with the political thinking of the educated Indians of that period. The co-existence of loyalty to a foreign Government with the expression of political and economic discontent, sometimes in a very acrid and bitter tone, may seem unnatural and paradoxical but there is nothing to wonder at in view of the then political condition of India and the state of the political consciousness of the educated people. As it had supplied many a theme for editorials and contributions in the native press, it requires some analysis which may help us to understand its nature as also the factors promoting it.

Loyalty, expressed by the native editors, nay by the whole educated class, was genuine in the sense that they did not desire at all the subversion of British rule¹⁰¹. Some of them did not hesitate to declare the British Govern-

⁹⁶ *Dacca Prakash*, April 3, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

⁹⁷ *Bangabasi*, Feby. 21, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885); *Bharatbasi*, 27th March 1886 (R. N. P. for 1886); *Nababibhakar*, May 17, 1886 (R. N. P. for 1886).

⁹⁸ *Bangabasi*, July 30, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

⁹⁹ *Sahachar*, December 31, 1884 (R. N. P. for 1885).

¹⁰⁰ C. C. Stevens' note on the Native Press—quoted in "Newspaper in India"—H. P. Ghosh.

¹⁰¹ *Sanjibani*, April 11, 1885; *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 20th April 1885; *Sulav Samachar*, 4th April, 1885; *Someprakash*, April 20, 1885. (R. N. P. for 1885).

ment as their own Government¹⁰² and emphasised the fact that the interests of the educated Indians were closely bound up with those of the Government¹⁰³. They did not fail to remind at the same time that the strongest defence of the British Empire or its stability rested on the loyalty of the Indians¹⁰⁴. It was on that ground that they desired their enrolment as volunteers¹⁰⁵, the repeal of the Arms Act, the utilisation of the army of the Native Princes in the war against foreign foes¹⁰⁶, and better facilities for the promotion of the natives in the army¹⁰⁷. That the British rule was a providential blessing was the sturdy faith not only of the native editors¹⁰⁸ but also of many of the leaders. The Indians were loyal for the many benefits which the British Government had conferred upon them¹⁰⁹.

Loyalty was manifested by the educated Indians not only as a matter of faith but also as one of political necessity. It was not only their sense of gratitude but their self-interest that would impel them to be loyal. The *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of May 4, 1885 says, "If India had been governed on the system on which England is governed, natives of India would have entertained a feeling of spontaneous and pure loyalty to the British Government. But the system of administration which obtains in this country is almost at every step characterised by selfishness on the part of the rulers; consequently it is impossible for the people of India to entertain a feeling of pure loyalty to the British Government". It further adds, "Nor is it likely that they will, if they find a suitable opportunity, be deterred by their loyalty to British rule from making an attempt to achieve their freedom"¹¹⁰. But as in the prevailing condition of India they had no chance of regaining their independence, they would feel no inducement for the subversion of British rule which was sure to be followed by another foreign rule, most probably by Russian rule¹¹¹. So their self-interest made them loyal to the British throne. The *Surabhi* of June 2, 1885 reminds that "loyalty does not mean the appreciation of British rule by absolute standard, but only in comparison with Russian rule" and that loyalty again was conditional in the sense that if the British Government would continue to be guilty of oppression and injustice, it would not in future find such loyalty in Indians¹¹².

Expectation for reward in return for that loyalty was very often expressed by native editors. Obtaining of privileges which the British Government had promised to confer upon them was the reward expected. By loyalty they would be able to draw the sympathy of the British people in whose

¹⁰² *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 30th March 1885; April 6, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885).

¹⁰³ *Someprakash*, April 6, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885).

¹⁰⁴ *Gramvarta Prakashika*, April 4, 1885 (Ibid.).

¹⁰⁵ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, April 6, 1885 (Ibid.); *Someprakash*, April 20, 1885; *Sanjibani*, April 11, 1885; *The Mussalman Bandhu* 17th April, 1885 (Ibid).

¹⁰⁶ *Gramvarta Prakashika*, April 4, 1885 (Ibid).

¹⁰⁷ *Surabhi* April 14, 1885. (Ibid).

¹⁰⁸ *Someprakash*, Decr. 28, 1884 (Ibid).

¹⁰⁹ *Sulav Samachar*, 4th April 1885 (Ibid).

¹¹⁰ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, May 4, 1885 (Ibid).

¹¹¹ Ibid, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, June 1, 1885 (Ibid.),

Sahachar, July 4, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

¹¹² *Surabhi*, June 2, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885).

sense of justice they had immense faith and who were believed to come forward to redress their grievances¹¹³.

Loyalty would be the foundation upon which the political agitation of the natives would be based. They were not in favour of rebellions and revolutions like the Irish. They would defeat the officials in the political warfare with the weapon of loyalty¹¹⁴. With the expression of loyalty, it was reminded now and then that the non-fulfilment of the Queen's Proclamation, granting equal rights, was causing disillusionment and discontentment among the people. "A history of the non-fulfilment of promises by the British Government would be the whole history of the last hundred and fifty years" was the sarcastic remark of the *Sadharani* (February 4, 1877) which provoked the rulers to anger¹¹⁵.

Some of the conservative papers like the *Bangabasi* on the other hand laid stress on loyalty as an instinctive and hereditary virtue of the Hindus¹¹⁶. Their religion and literature had taught them loyalty—it was professed¹¹⁷.

From the standpoint of the native press it appears that little dissatisfaction was felt with the British Government on the ground of its being a foreign Government, if all its acts and measures were guided principally by a desire to promote native or Indian interests, and if the officers of the Government and Anglo-Indians in general behaved justly and generously towards the people.

Profession of loyalty to the person of the Queen was abundant and unflinching. She was regarded with feelings of love and veneration, for which it would be hard to find a parallel. Native newspapers were often found to make appeals to the Queen in person for the redress of their grievances, though they knew that the Queen had not, under the British constitution, the power to receive such appeals or to grant such redress. This sort of writing indicates that they were impelled more easily and naturally towards loyalty as a feeling of affection and respect for the person of the sovereign than towards loyalty as a similar feeling for the principle of sovereignty and this perhaps means that the old Hindu idea of loyalty had not yet been dislodged from their minds.

Loyalty they would accord to the people of England also whose virtues in their own country were steadily applauded. Their hostility was directed, not in any extreme degree, against the form of government in India, which would satisfy all the aspirations of the people if it would acquire a representative character; but only against Englishmen in India, officials and non-officials alike, the arrogance and injustice of the former and the rapacity and brutality of the latter being the theme of frequent declamation.

Along with the profession of loyalty, there are sufficient indications in

¹¹³*Ananda Bazar Patrika*, May 25, 1885 (Ibid).

¹¹⁴*Sahachar*, April 15, 1885 (ibid)

¹¹⁵This extract from the *Sadharani* (February 4, 1877) along with others was taken into serious consideration by the Government while passing the Vernacular Press Act. Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, Vol. 57, 1878, paper No. 274.

¹¹⁶*Bangabasi*, May 13 1891 (R. N. P. 1891).

¹¹⁷*Bangabasi*, March 14, 1885 (R. N. P. 1885).

the writings of the native press of that period that the educated natives considered a state of political dependence to be inconsistent with national or individual self-respect. The *Paridarshak* of May 3, 1885, for example, writes in an article headed "Foreign Rule" that the administration of a country "however defective it may be, should remain in the hands of the natives of that country if its national and political independence which is a sacred fact were to be preserved intact. Now as regards India, British rule had begun to crush her national and political independence".¹¹⁸ The *Surabhi-O-Pataka* of January 14, 1886 writes that the favour of the Government would simply confirm the people in their slavery and that a spirit of national self-help was to be cultivated¹¹⁹. The *Sadharani* lamented for the fall of Plevna during the Russo-Turkish War. It said it had been deeply moved by the fall of Plevna because—"We Hindus have borne and still bear the hardships and misery which follow the downfall of the prestige of a nation. In every bone, vein and pore of our bodies this sense of national degradation works as a slow consuming fire. God forbid that even our deadliest enemies should suffer as we do"¹²⁰. The native newspapers of Bengal sympathised with the Afghan people in their fight for preserving their independence¹²¹ and expressed bitter resentment against the annexation of Burma (1885). Many articles came out grieving over the loss of independence by the Burmese people.¹²²

The value of independence or the feeling of national degradation in being subjected to a state of slavery was realised by the native editors and by the educated class, but it seems that this sort of thinking was more of the nature of an intellectual belief than that of a political idea, and that it was unconnected with feelings of disaffection towards the constituted government of the country.

To the British Government, which was regarded almost as a permanent entity, the native press was more or less loyal. What they wanted was not the subversion of the British rule but a greater share for the natives in the administration of the country, and in this they voiced the aspirations of the educated class.

Since the seventies they were gradually becoming conscious about the

¹¹⁸R.N.P. (1885).

¹¹⁹R.N.P. (1886).

¹²⁰Extract from the *Sadharani* of 23rd Dec. 1887. This was one of the many extracts from the native papers of Bengal taken into consideration at the time of the passing of the Vernacular Press Act (1878). Parliamentary papers, House of Commons, Vol. 57, 1878, paper No. 274.

¹²¹The *Burdwan Sanjibani* exclaimed, ".....The spectacle of a people without a leader to guide them, and ready to defend their dearly-prized boon of liberty at the sword's point, greets the eye. They know they have no chance of success in an open battle against the trained soldiers of the British Government, but yield they will not, for they are not made of such stuff as will accept this lot. Hence it follows that either they must be exterminated or the British Government must leave Afghanistan. The extermination of an innocent and free people on the strength of a mere suspicion is such an immoral proceeding that the civilized world will never approve of it"—Report on the Vernacular Press for Bengal for the year 1880.

Home (Public) 1881 B-May, 38-39. Such writing was the typical example of many that came out on the Afghan War in the Native Papers of Bengal.

¹²²Vide the different extracts and summaries of the editorials and articles published in the Native newspapers given in Reports on Native Press of Bengal for 1885 and 1886,

necessity for the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils, both supreme and local, and during the eighties they became more and more insistent and vocal in their demands. How the liberal section of the native press had been agitating for some changes in the constitution of the Legislative Councils could be guessed from the writings of the *Sanjibani*, one of the leading papers of Bengal during the eighties. It wrote on December 27, 1884, in an article headed "Political Existence", ".....Keeping pace with the changes of times and the general advancement and following the law of nature, the human mind is now being gradually drawn towards a system of representative government. It has now become the paramount duty of the rulers to bend themselves before this fact, and frame laws accordingly. Otherwise a revolution will one day certainly occur—a revolution which will be led by the people, and the complete responsibility of which will fall on the shoulders of the official classes.....It may not be avowed through fear, but the result will not be otherwise."¹²³

By representative government they did not, of course, then mean a full-fledged parliamentary government like that in England or the self-government or autonomy prevailing in the colonies. Their appraisal of contemporary political condition of India made them cautious in their demand. What they meant was the re-organisation of the Legislative Councils on a partially elective basis and in this demand they forestalled the Congress¹²⁴. The stand taken by the Congress that at least half of the members should be elected was more or less endorsed by the liberal section of the native press¹²⁵.

The iniquitous character of the composition of the unreformed Councils and its adverse effects on the political and financial administration of the country was pointed out by them again and again. Whereas the number of Indians was 250 millions, and that of Englishmen in India not much above 1,00,000, it was reminded, 15 out of 18 members of the Viceregal Council were Englishmen¹²⁶. It was a matter of great regret that the people had had no hand in the framing of laws which they would have to obey and no control over the expenditure of their own money¹²⁷. They had no influence over the rulers of their country. Had they been the master of their own destinies like the colonies in financial matters, the iniquitous import duties would not have been imposed¹²⁸. The reluctance of the rulers to grant elective franchise in Lord Cross's Bill was explained by some by the fact

¹²³R. N. P. (1885).

¹²⁴The *Hindoo Patriot* in a leading article in 1874 observed, ".....Home Rule for India ought to be our cry, and it ought to be based upon the same constitutional basis that is recognised in the colonies"—Quoted in *The British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance* Vol. X, part II, pp. 500-R. C. Majumdar.

Among the native papers of Bengal the *Someprakash* (14th Paush, 1270 B.S.) was the first to demand a full-fledged representative legislature. cf. *History of Political Thought*—B. B. Majumdar, Page 330. The agitation carried on by the Indian Association for representative Government was fully supported by many of the native newspapers of Bengal—cf. *Bharat-Mihir*, Feby. 24, 1880; *Burdwan Sanjibani*, Jan. 6, 1880.

¹²⁵*Sahachar*, Decr. 29, 1886 (R. N. P. for 1887); November 16, 1887 (Ibid).

¹²⁶*Sahachar*, March 31, 1886 (R. N. P. for 1886).

¹²⁷*Sahachar*, April 17, 1886 (Ibid); *Bharat-Mihir*, April 22, 1886 (Ibid).

¹²⁸*Sahachar*, Jany. 18, 1886 (Ibid).

that such concession would injure British trade interests, as the financial autonomy enjoyed by the colonies had been doing¹²⁹. To one section of the press, the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils was the panacea for all evils. It was a necessity for bringing public opinion to bear upon the acts of the Government¹³⁰ and an elective franchise would be extremely helpful to the training up of the people in the work of self-government^{130 a}. It would prevent famine¹³¹ and bring about the material welfare of the people by giving them a voice in the imposition of new taxes and control over expenditure¹³². To others it remained a puzzle how the introduction of a few elected members in the Legislative Councils would change the whole situation so long as the British were in charge of the supreme power¹³³. How it would improve the material condition of the people was also a question to them.¹³⁴ To the ultra-conservative papers like the *Bangabasi* the introduction of the elective system would have had very adverse effect on the social organisation of the Hindus and this apprehension made it a great opponent of the representative system of government throughout the period¹³⁵. The unsuitability of the elective system for India was reiterated again and again by the same paper on the ground of diversity of races and creeds.¹³⁶ The Congress scheme for the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils, according to it, would lead to the despotism of the majority¹³⁷.

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 seemed to be disappointing to the more advanced section of the liberal press as it made no provision for election to the Legislative Councils¹³⁸, while the moderate section was ready to give it a trial. They seemed to be satisfied with the fact for the present that the new Act proposed to give a special power to the Government which, if willing, might ask the public bodies, the chambers of commerce, the municipalities, the large towns etc. to return members to the Legislative Councils¹³⁹ and both the sections looked upon the Act as an outcome of the Congress's agitation¹⁴⁰. But the conservative section remained unconvinced that the passing of the Act would alter India's destiny in any way¹⁴¹.

In their fight for representative government the liberal section of the native press drew their inspiration from the historical and constitutional precedents of England and from those of the colonies. The Indians were dissatisfied with British rule, the *Nababibhakar-Sadharani* wrote on April 14, 1890, because it lacked the most important and essential features of that rule prevailing in England and that the "cardinal principle is that the

¹²⁹ *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, Decr. 31, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890)

¹³⁰ *Sajibani*, January 23, 1886 (R.N.P. for 1886).

^{130 a} *Ibid*, Novr. 23, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

¹³¹ *Sadharani*, July 27, 1884 (R. N. P. for 1884)

¹³² *Someprakash*, Jany 24, 1887 (R.N.P. for 1887).

¹³³ *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, March 3, 1892 (R. N. P. for 1892).

¹³⁴ *Dainik*, Jany. 9, 1887; (R. N. P. for 1887); *Bharatbasi*, Jany. 8, 1887 (*Ibid*).

¹³⁵ *Bangabasi*, Dec. 17, 1887; Dec. 31, 1887. (*Ibid*).

¹³⁶ *Ibid*. March 8, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, Jany. 4, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

¹³⁸ *Sajibani*, Feby. 27, 1892. (R. N. P. for 1892).

¹³⁹ *Sahachar*, March 9, 1892; April 27, 1892 (R. N. P. for 1892).

¹⁴⁰ *Sanjibani*, April 30, 1892 (*Ibid*); *Sahachar*, April 27, 1892 (*Ibid*).

¹⁴¹ *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, March 3, 1892 (*Ibid*).

people are their own rulers, and that the administration should be carried on according to their wishes."¹⁴² Such utterances are to be found now and then in analysing the writings of the native press during the post-Mutiny period.

That the colonial type of government was the ultimate goal which the Indians should strive for was frankly admitted by them, though the contemporary political condition would counsel them caution in limiting their demands¹⁴³.

The fight of the Irish people for Home Rule or Self-Government was the most inspiring theme with them during the eighties and nineties of the last century, though the methods adopted by the former did not meet with their approval. The *Sahachar* wrote on April 21, 1886, "Ireland will obtain a Parliament of her own. Let the whole of India combine to agitate for obtaining such a Parliament. Indians should govern themselves"¹⁴⁴. A similar sentiment we come across in many other papers.

Though the violent methods adopted by the Irish was not to their liking, they did not fail to understand that such methods were carrying greater weight with the British rulers. The *Samaya* of 29th March 1886 wrote, ".....the Irish dynamitards harass the people of England and they get their rights; the people of India are submissive, therefore, they do not get their just dues"¹⁴⁵.

The freedom of the press was regarded by the Indian-owned papers, both English and vernacular, as an article of faith as well as a practical necessity but in the advocacy for that freedom they could not, of course, improve upon the arguments, put forward by Raja Rammohan Roy long before¹⁴⁶. Whenever there was any attempt on the part of the Government at restraining its liberty, they raised a loud outcry against the retrograde measure. The passing of the Vernacular Press Act during Lord Lytton's viceroyalty seriously offended public opinion and gave rise to discontentment and despair among the native newspapers. All the prominent daily and weekly papers of Bengal viz., the *Samachar Chandrika*, the *Bharat Mihir*, the *Someprakash*, the *Moorshidabad Patrika*, the *Pratikar*, the *Howrah Hitakari*, the *Gramvarta Prakashika*, the *Hindi Lalana* etc. launched a campaign of self-defence against the said Act. They dwelt upon their innocence^{146(a)} and sufficiency of the existing laws such as the Penal Codes.¹⁴⁷ The implicit faith, which they entertained in the liberal policy of the British Government and in the liberalism of the English people was given a rude shock. The *Sadharani*, the leading paper of Bengal of

¹⁴²R. N. P. for 1890.

¹⁴³Such ideas had been propagated by the *Someprakash* since the seventies, Cf. History of Political Thought—B. B. Majumdar, Page 251.

¹⁴⁴R. N. P. for 1886. *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, April 5, 1886. (R. N. P. for 1886); *Bharatbasi*, Decr. 26, 1886 (Ibid); *Sadharani*, May 9, 1886 (Ibid).

¹⁴⁵R. N. P. for 1886.

¹⁴⁶vide the memorial submitted to the Supreme Court and the Appeal to the King-in-Council. *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy*, Collet. (Edited by Dilip Kumar Biswas and Prabhat Kumar Ganguli).

^{146a}*Bharat-Mihir*, April 4, 1878 (R. N. P. for 1878)

¹⁴⁷*Sadharani*, March 31, 1878 (Ibid).

that period, writes, "It is not merely for their learning and intelligence or the excellence of their literature and philosophy that Englishmen are regarded by us in the light of God. It is their Wilberforces, Hampdens, Mills, Brights, Metcalefs, Macaulays and hundreds of other great men, whose liberal principles have quite captivated us, and we have regarded them as the very model of morality, and hold them in veneration.....It is because we had reposed our confidence in the liberal policy of the rulers that this imminent thunderbolt has disappointed and surprised and silenced and pained us ; and we hope this rigorous measure will be replaced." ¹⁴⁸

Many of the journals dwelt upon the evil consequences that would ensue as a result of the Act. The *Biswa Dut* of April 3, 1878, for example writes, "It will retard the progress of vernacular languages and repress all freedom of speech" ¹⁴⁹.

Characterising the Vernacular Press Act as a monument of Lord Lytton's disgrace, the *Someprakash* of March 25, 1878 bitterly comments, "The scandal, in the first place, lies in the fact that His Excellency has struck at the liberty of the Press, a fundamental principle of the British constitution by virtue of which the British nation has become so great and achieved its superiority over all other nations. By showing disrespect towards this constitution he has insulted the British nation. Secondly, by enacting this law he has allowed both himself and the Government of India to be stained with partiality and has brought disgrace upon them. In the third place, he has punished one for the fault of another. Fourthly, by enacting a law for the suppression of the scurrilous writings of the native press Government has shown that as in the case of snake-bites, cholera, and malarious fever, it has not yet been able to discover the true remedy" ¹⁵⁰.

The freedom of the press, it was reminded by many journals on many occasions, was a greater necessity in a dependent country like India where there was no representative institutions than in a country ruled by its own people ¹⁵¹. It would, to say the truth, act as a safety valve ¹⁵².

The Official Secrets Act (1889) was likewise criticised as being one of a dreadful nature, passed with the view of putting down the native press ¹⁵³, and it was reminded that it would serve the purpose of a despotic Government like that of Russia or Turkey. It would injure the cause of good government by hiding the misdeeds of the officials and keeping the people in complete ignorance about the intention of the Government ¹⁵⁴. The general trend of their criticism was that it would stifle public opinion and curb their freedom.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, March 24, 1878.

¹⁴⁹ R. N. P. for 1878.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, July 8, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885); *Sahachar*, Octr. 16, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

¹⁵² *Sahachar*, October 12, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

¹⁵³ *Nababibhakar Sadharani*, Octr. 21, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

¹⁵⁴ *Sanjibani*, Octr. 26, 1889; Novr. 16, 1889; *The Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, Octr. 21, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

Very staunch was their advocacy for the liberty of the press and very vehement was their criticism of the Government's attempt at curtailing that freedom, but when the native press of Bengal was put to a practical test in connection with the *Bangabasi* prosecution in 1891, the stand taken by them did not seem to be a heroic one. Though the prosecution was considered as an act of doubtful wisdom¹⁵⁵ and a menace to the liberty of the newspaper press in India¹⁵⁶, it became the occasion for a sudden effusion of loyalty in the vernacular press of Bengal¹⁵⁷. The majority of them felt satisfied with the compromise made and expressed gratitude to the Government for the magnanimity it had shown. Only a few of the Indian-owned papers of Bengal such as the *Indian Mirror* (written in English) and the *Navayuga* rebuked the *Bangabasi* for the cowardice it had shown and the humiliation to which all of them had been subjected by asking the favour of the Government¹⁵⁸. The days when the Indian journalist would solemnly declare that he was in no way accountable to the alien people in carrying out his humble share of the God-appointed mission of Swaraj¹⁵⁹, and that living in Maharastra was as good as living in the Andamans, if cowed down by persecution, were still ahead.¹⁶⁰

Ever since the beginning of the native press, they had been singing the praise of a free press¹⁶¹, and long before the foundation of the Congress they were harping on the tune of nationalism and unity. In the seventies the necessity of having a separate national existence was realised by many¹⁶² though some of them took a realistic view of the situation and dilated upon the fact that some elements were still lacking in the national unity of India¹⁶³, while others preached the idealistic view that the inhabitants of India had come to understand that they were one nation¹⁶⁴. In any case, both the schools were preaching the lesson of nationalism and emphasised the necessity of having unity among the different Indian races. They lamented the national degeneration that had set in as a result of the loss of liberty and exhorted the people to attend to the improvement of their minds and bodies as well

¹⁵⁵ *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, Aug. 10, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891); *Sakti*, Aug. 11, 1891; *Sahachar*, Aug. 12, 1891; *Samaya*, Aug. 14, 1891.

¹⁵⁶ Annual report for the Native Press of Bengal, 1891. Home (Public) 1892 A-May, 8-12.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Referred to in the *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*. Sept. 28, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891).

¹⁵⁹ Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab's (editor of the *Sandhya*) written statement before the Court (23rd Sept., 1907). cf. *Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab-O-Bharatiya Jatiyatabad*—Haridas and Uma Mukhopadhyaya.

¹⁶⁰ Tilak's reply to Motilal Ghosh during the pendency of the first sedition case against the former (1897), when asked to consider if he should escape punishment by expressing regret for what had appeared in his paper—Quoted in *Newspaper in India*, H. P. Ghosh.

¹⁶¹ In protest against Adam's Regulations (1823) Raja Rammohun Roy stopped the publication of his paper *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (written in Persian), writing a memorable editorial in its last number in which he quoted a couplet full of vigour and courage. It says: The honour that has been purchased at the cost of a hundred drops of blood of the heart, Oh Sire, do not sell that honour to the door keeper for hoping to get honour. (Quoted in *Studies in Bengal Renaissance*, edited by Atul Chandra Gupta, Page 428.)

¹⁶² *Sadharani*, Feby. 1876 (R. N. P. for 1876).

¹⁶³ *Sadharani*, May 31, 1874 (Quoted in *History of Political Thought*, B. B. Majumdar, Page 305-306).

¹⁶⁴ *Sahachar*, October 16, 1876 (R. N. P. for 1876).

as the wealth of the country¹⁶⁵. The *Hindu Ranjika* of September 13, 1876 remarked, "..... that those who believe that real improvement has been effected in this country by our British rulers, would do well to consider whether our only improvement has not been that we have fitted ourselves to become slaves"¹⁶⁶.

In the eighties, the expression of national feelings in the native press of Bengal had become more vociferous and insistent. While recognising the value of western education in promoting unity and nationalism among the Indian people,¹⁶⁷ they could not forget that it was the subjection to a common rule, sufferings from common hardships, common grievances that had mostly produced that sense of unity among them.¹⁶⁸

The Anglo-Indian agitation against the Ilbert Bill, as it is well-known, created a violent stir in the politically-conscious Indian mind and the native press of Bengal faithfully reflected the feelings of bitterness and despair, generated by it. They launched a campaign to make it a popular issue and gave vent to the people's wounded feelings and defended national honour and dignity. The *Dainik Varta* of December 24, 1883 asked the 250 millions of natives "to raise a cry because experience teaches them that victory is to be gained by outcry, by bluster, by threats and by showing a rebellious spirit"¹⁶⁹. The plea of the rulers that they had abolished race-distinction was a myth. The *Sanjibani* of December 29, 1883 commented that the hypocrisy of the English was disgraceful¹⁷⁰.

The *Bharat-Mihir* of January 17, 1884 pointed out the lessons which they had drawn from the agitation. It wrote, "It is useless for the conquered people to expect justice and righteousness from the conquerors. Unless the former are strong and can return blow for blow, all their speeches and agitations are like crying in the wilderness". It further added, "Union is strength. The Anglo-Indians, owing to their unity, have gained a victory over the Government. Unless the people understand unity, they have no chance of success"¹⁷¹.

So the value of unity and combination, of agitation and retaliation had been realised by them and the lesson had been taken to heart that these were to be used in future agitations. A wider gulf had been created between the rulers and the ruled and a rude shock had been given to the faith of the people in the sense of justice of the British rulers and the British people. They could understand and made others understand that the national life of the Indians had received a great stimulus from the recent agitation.

¹⁶⁵ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Aug 26, 1875 (R. N. P. for 1875); *Hindu Ranjika*, Sept. 13, 1876 (R. N. P. for 1876).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Someprakash*, Jany. 3, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887); *Nababibhakar Sadharani*, Jany. 28, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

¹⁶⁸ *Dacca-Gazette*, Decr. 24, 1886 (R. N. P. for 1887); *Someprakash*, Decr. 20, 1886 (R. N. P. for 1886).

¹⁶⁹ R. N. P. for 1884.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Many such expressions are to be found in the native newspapers of Bengal during the years 1883, 1884.

The holding of the sessions of the National Conference at Calcutta (1883, 1885) and the foundation of the Indian National Congress were hailed by them as the sign of a vigorous national life¹⁷².

The Congress attracted a great deal of attention of the native press of Bengal. It had its supporters as well as detractors. The proceedings of the Congress received publicity through their pages and many of them served as the most useful agent for the propagation of its ideals. There were trenchant criticisms as well as friendly advice.

The *Sanjibani*, one of its ardent supporters, welcomed the Congress session almost in an ecstatic tone. It was "the ceremony of the great Puja of the Mother"—the day on which the slumbering children of the Mother would awake from their sleep of many hundred centuries¹⁷³. It gave a clarion call to the worthy sons of the Mother to sacrifice their body, life and soul, their wealth and everything for the deliverance of their country and to emulate the examples of Mazzini, Garibaldi and heroes like Washington¹⁷⁴. It took immense delight at the sight of a fallen nation striving once more to regenerate themselves¹⁷⁵. The Congress was the assemblage, it asserted, of Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Parsees, Sikhs for worshipping Mother India. If the Congress had done nothing besides producing the brotherly feeling among the different races of India, the annual expenditure of more than a lakh of rupees for its sake, it acclaimed, had not been in vain¹⁷⁶. So the main justification of the holding of the Congress-session, in the eyes of its supporters, lay in the fact that it had brought about the political union—the union which was the culmination of "cultured freedom and patriotism" which England had communicated to India¹⁷⁷ and they were grateful for that. The Congress was a loyal body¹⁷⁸, they asserted, and its object was not a political revolution but administrative reforms¹⁷⁹. They took objection to the Congress being called a seditious movement¹⁸⁰. An influential section of the native press of Bengal, it is clear, was performing the noble task of inspiring the people with national feelings, with patriotism; they were popularising the Congress ideals and helping the cause of the much sought for political union of the diverse races inhabiting India.

There were not only adulation and admiration but constructive suggestions for making the Congress an effective political body¹⁸¹ and there were even bitter criticisms of the organisation, of its procedure, and of the shortcomings of its leaders.¹⁸²

¹⁷² *Sahachar*, Decr. 16, 1885 (R. N. P. for 1885).

¹⁷³ *Sanjibani*, Decr. 20, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

¹⁷⁴ *Sanjibani* Decr. 27, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1891).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, Decr. 20 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, Jany. 4 1890 (*Ibid*).

¹⁷⁷ *Samaya*, Jany. 6, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

¹⁷⁸ *Someprakash*, Octr. 1, 1888 (*Ibid*); *Arya Darpan*, Jany. 4, 1889 (R.N.P. for 1889); *Grambasi*, Jany. 11, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890); *Banganivasi*, Jany 2, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891).

¹⁷⁹ *Sahachar*, Novr. 21, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

¹⁸⁰ *Burdwan Sanjibani*, Novr. 13, 1888.

¹⁸¹ *Someprakash*, Novr. 14, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

¹⁸² *Nababibhakar-Sadharani*, Jan. 17, 1887 (*Ibid*); *ibid*, Oct. 29, 1888 (R.N.P. for 1888); *Bangabasi*, Jany. 1, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887); *Ibid*, Jany. 3, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891); *Ibid*, Aug. 2, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890); *Dacca-Prakash*, Novr. 25, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888);

The Congress was criticised right from the beginning by a section of the native press of Bengal for overlooking the interests of the masses. The *Bharatbasi* wrote on December 11, 1886 that if the interests of the masses were not considered by the Congress, then it was "not a National Congress but a Congress of higher and middle classes"¹⁸³. A similar sentiment was expressed by the *Garib* of December 29, 1886¹⁸⁴. The *Dainik* of January 9, 1887 bitterly criticised the "impractical and speech-making baboos" for not touching the fringe of Indian national problem which was poverty¹⁸⁵. The *Dacca Gazette* (July 23, 1888) indignantly asked, "What will people who have no food to eat and no cloth to wear gain by obtaining political rights?" It further advised the agitators, if they really wished the welfare of their country, to try their best to keep the wealth of their country within itself by developing arts and manufactures¹⁸⁶. The Congress was criticised also for not having any contact with the masses, with the people of the mofussil,¹⁸⁷ and was advised by its supporters to take steps for attracting popular sympathy¹⁸⁸.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh raised his voice of protest against the Congress organisation, its composition, character, methods, aims and also against its leaders in the year 1893 in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay¹⁸⁹. But one could hear mutterings of discontent against the unfruitful activities of the premier organisation in the native press of Bengal even in the eighties.

The major question on which the native newspapers of Bengal were divided in opinion was the representative character of the Congress. The charge levelled against it that it was not a representative body, being composed of only educated class, or that it was only a Hindu organisation, was answered by its supporters with great consistency and logic. Lord Dufferin's famous speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, casting slur upon the educated class and the Congress was not taken lying down¹⁹⁰. They pointed out that "in all times and countries the educated lead and have led the uneducated and there is no reason why the rule should not hold good in India"¹⁹¹. They also asked in what sense the English Parliament, or the French Chamber of Deputies, or the American Congress was a representative assembly¹⁹². To be the representative of a class, it was enough that the man who would represent them would be acquainted with all their wants and be sympathetic towards them. "Wilberforce was not a slave," it was

Ibid, Jany. 12, 1888 (Ibid); *Nabayuga*, Decr. 25, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890); Ibid. Jany. 8, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891); *Samaj-O-Sahitya*, Jany. 18, 1891 (Ibid).

¹⁸³R. N. P. for 1886.

¹⁸⁴R. N. P. for 1887.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶R. N. P. for 1888.

¹⁸⁷*Hitakari*: 29th Decr. 1890 (R. N. P. for 1891); *Kasipur-Nivasi*, 14th Decr. 1890. (R.N.P. for 1891).

¹⁸⁸*Banganivasi*, Jany. 9, 1892 (R. N. P. for 1892).

¹⁸⁹*Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, pp. 75-6, Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee.

¹⁹⁰*Sanjibani*, Decr. 8, 1888 and many other papers refuted the charges. The only exception was the *Bangabasi* (Decr. 8th, 1888) which wrote, "The writer agrees with his Lordship in thinking that a handful of men aspiring to represent 250 millions of the people of India should not be trusted with that duty", (R. N. P. for 1888).

¹⁹¹*Surabhi-O-Pataka*, Novr. 15 1888 (Ibid).

¹⁹²*Sahachar*, Novr. 14, 1888 (Ibid).

reminded, "and yet he fought for the slaves, Mr. Gladstone is not an Irishman, and yet he is fighting for the Irish ryot"¹⁹³. They based their arguments not only on the precedents prevailing in the western democratic countries, but on the fact that it was no novelty with the Indian people to accept the man of learning among them as their leader. The *Sanjibani* wrote, ".....But learning or intellectual superiority has lost nothing of its historic prestige, and it is in the very nature of the Indian people to accept the man of learning among them as leader or representative. The Congress, which consists of educated Indians is, therefore, a representative movement"¹⁹⁴. A still more cogent argument was put forward by the *Sanskarak*. It said, ".....Nor can it be strongly affirmed that the National Congress represents the Indian nation, as it professes to do, for the mass of the people are as ignorant of Congress as they are of any other western innovation. Still no one can doubt that the National Congress represents educated India, and like the intelligent soul that guides the motions of the material body, the educated natives are destined to rule over the masses, guide their conduct, and protect and consolidate their rights and interests. In short, they are the national leaders of the Society in which they are born"¹⁹⁵.

The representative character of the Congress was challenged by some ultra-conservative papers like the *Bangabasi* on the ground that the Hindus who attended the Congress were "Anglicised Baboos" who were non-Hindu in conduct and principle.¹⁹⁶ The Congress as then constituted, it opined, was a Congress not of the nation but of the Babus alone¹⁹⁷. The opposition of the *Bangabasi* is to be explained mainly by the principles which it upheld. Being a champion of Hindu orthodoxy and revivalism, it could not but be opposed to the movement which represented foreign influences.

Hostility to the Congress was shown also by an influential section of the Muslim press of Bengal. Of the four Muslim papers most influential at that time, the *Ahmadi* was the only one to give it support while the three others were its vehement critics and bitter opponents¹⁹⁸. Their opposition to the demand of the Congress for the introduction of elective franchise was based on very well-known grounds that the Mussalmans would be swamped by Hindu majority and the latter would be hostile towards their interests. The *Urdu-Guide* noted that the country was not yet fit for representative government as there was no proper national feeling in the country and as the different races inhabiting it were not on the same moral and intellectual level¹⁹⁹. According to the *Sudhakar*, the National Congress was a misnomer as neither the Hindus nor the Mussalmans had any sympathy with it. The Congress only caused the fire of jealousy between the Hindus and the

¹⁹³Ibid., Novr. 16, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

¹⁹⁴*Sanjibani*, Decr. 8, 1888 (Ibid).

¹⁹⁵*Sanskarak*, Decr., 1887.

¹⁹⁶*Bangabasi*, Decr. 8, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888). Ibid, Jany. 5, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Annual Report on Native Press of Bengal for 1890—Classification of vernacular newspapers in Bengal—Home (Public) Progs., 1891, Oct., 260-286. (A)

¹⁹⁹*Urdu-Guide*, Octr. 12, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

Mussalmans to burn with increasing fury²⁰⁰.

It is refreshing to note a different tone in the *Ahmadi*. It deprecated the attempt of the Englishmen to create disunion between Hindus and Muslims and exhorted its countrymen not to widen the path of India's decline by creating disunion amongst themselves at the deceitful instigation of the foreigners²⁰¹. Some of the Hindu papers saw in the aloofness of the Mohammedans from the Congress an imperialist attempt at paralysing the activities of the Congress by engendering ill-feeling between the two communities²⁰². But a few Hindu papers like the *Burdwan Sanjibani* held the Hindus partially responsible for the growing ill-feeling between the two and for the lack of faith of the Mohammedans in the Congress²⁰³.

There was more or less unanimity among the liberal and conservative sections of the native newspapers of Bengal that the Congress should not deal with social-reform question. They saw in the advice, given by Lord Dufferin²⁰⁴ and many others, to the Congressists for taking up the question of social reform, an attempt at frustrating the movement²⁰⁵ and injuring the feeling of social solidarity which was gradually growing up among different Indian communities²⁰⁶. The social reformation, they reminded, was not an indispensable condition of national unity²⁰⁷. Moreover, the different races inhabiting India with different customs, usages and religions would not allow questions relating to their own society to be discussed by others in the Congress.²⁰⁸ The conservative papers like the *Dainik-O-Samachar-Chandrika* were alarmed at the idea of the fusion of the social and political sections of the Congress²⁰⁹. The *Burdwan Sanjibani* warned the Congress not to meddle in the social affairs of the Hindus. If it did so, it affirmed, it would make the Hindu society its enemy²¹⁰. The idea of placing the work of social reform in the hands of the 'Anglicised Baboos' was repugnant to the ultra-conservative paper *Bangabasi*²¹¹.

The attitude of the native press of Bengal towards the problem of social reform during the eighties and nineties of the last century was fully revealed in their writings in connection with the Age of Consent Bill (1891). Though a beneficent measure, it gave rise to a loud outcry and the contemporary native papers of Bengal faithfully reflected the state of public opinion of that time.

The majority of the vernacular papers, Hindu and Muslim, opposed the Bill as a most unwise, uncalled for and unwarrantable interference with

²⁰⁰ *Sudhakar*, June 20, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

²⁰¹ *Ahmadi*, Kartic 1293 B.S. (R. N. P. for 1887).

²⁰² *Someprakash*, Oct. 1, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888); *Nababibhakar Sadharani*, July 4, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

²⁰³ *Burdwan Sanjibani*, Novr. 20, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

²⁰⁴ Lord Dufferin's Speech at St. Andrew's Dinner (1888).

²⁰⁵ *Surbhi-O-Pataka*, Decr. 20, 1888.

²⁰⁶ *Nababibhakar Sadharani*, Jany. 28, 1889 (R. N. P. for 1889).

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Hindu Ranjika*, Novr. 16, 1887 (R. N. P. for 1887).

²⁰⁹ *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, Novr. 26, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

²¹⁰ *Burdwan Sanjibani*, Jany. 14, 1890 (R. N. P. for 1890).

²¹¹ *Bangabasi*, Dec. 8, 1888 (R. N. P. for 1888).

the social and religious institutions of the people, and both the sections denounced the measure as one involving a violation of the promise of religious neutrality contained in the Queen's Proclamation²¹². Among its opponents were the ultra-conservative papers like the *Bangabasi*, the *Dainik-O-Samachar-Chandrika* as well as liberal papers like the *Sulav-Samachar*, while the *Sanjibani*, the *Dacca-Gazette*, the *Grambasi*, the *Samaya* and a few others gave support to the Bill.

The *Bangabasi's* writings in this connection deserve a careful perusal as B. C. Pal writes that "it exerted a very considerable influence over current life and thought in our province for nearly quarter of a century"²¹³ and as Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramoni, one of the greatest protagonists of the movement of Hindu religious revival, and Hindu social apologetics found in it a ready-made organ²¹⁴. It raised the cry of Hindu religion in danger and exhorted the Hindus to wake up from their sleep and shake off their lethargy. It writes almost in a hysteric tone, "Unfortunate Hindu, pitiable Hindu! the dearest treasure of your life, your religion, which was your only solace in this mortal life of care and anxiety, is at last about to disappear. The British Lion is about to destroy it without coming to know what a treasure it is to you, that it is a treasure to gain which the ancient Hindu sages sacrificed every earthly enjoyment, and to make which richer they sacrificed their lives....."²¹⁵.

It asserted in unmistakable terms the superiority of Hindu religion, culture, ethics and morals to those of the Europeans and saw in the passing of the Age of Consent Bill a sinister desire of the Government to reduce the Hindu society to the low moral level of the European society.²¹⁶ Pride in *Sanatana* religion, faith in the immortality of that religion found expression in its writings in glowing terms²¹⁷. It wrote, "The *Sanatana* religion is pure gold; be it Aurangzeb or Kala Pahar, Lansdowne or Scoble, whoever may burn it, only the dross will be burnt, the gold will come out all the brighter".²¹⁸ The presumption of the English in playing the role of social reformers in India was vehemently condemned not only by the *Bangabasi* but by many other vernacular papers. It wrote, ".....That you should step forward to reform our moral is your great mistake and dangerous presumption. Would you compose poetry because you are a great wrestler? Shall you introduce widow marriage (or) suppress girl marriage because you won Plassey and Assaye?..."²¹⁹

The line of arguments taken by the *Bangabasi* was more or less followed by the other conservative papers. The *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika* warned the Government that "any increase of the Age of Consent will

²¹²Annual Report on Native Press of Bengal for 1891—Home (Public) 1892-A, May 8-12.

²¹³*Memoirs of my life and times*, B. C. Pal, page 431.

²¹⁴*Ibid*, page 425.

²¹⁵*Bangabasi*, Jany. 17, 1891 (R. N. P. for 1891).

²¹⁶"Our Condition", *Ibid*, 28th March, 1891. It was one of the articles for which the *Bangabasi* was prosecuted. Home (Public) Progs., 1891, Octr. 260-280. (A)

²¹⁷"The Revealed form of the English Rulers", *Bangabasi*, 28th March, 1891. *Ibid*.

²¹⁸"The most important and the first idea of the uncivilised Hindu", *Ibid*, 16th May. 1891. *Ibid*.

produce a revolution in Hindu Society".²²⁰ The *Nabayuga* shouted, "If this Bill be passed into law, the Hinduism of Hindus will be gone"²²¹. The *Bengal Exchange Gazette* wrote, "The Viceroy should know, once for all, that the Hindus are best, as they are, and that they want no innovations in their society"²²².

The opponents of the Bill attached the greatest importance to the many protest meetings held in different parts of the country, and particularly to the mass meeting on the Calcutta maidan, and to the Mahapuja, attended by thousands of Hindus at Kalighat, as furnishing the clearest and strongest evidence of the fear and dislike with which the Bill was regarded by the people of this province. They used threats and entreaties and gave warning to the Government against the recurrence of a similar disaster as the great Sepoy Mutiny²²³.

Many of the vernacular papers which were not conservative in religious views or were rather indifferent in religion were also opposed to the Bill and their ground of contention was that the alien Government should not interfere in the social customs of its subjects. Even a moderate paper like the *Sahachar* could not give it whole-hearted support on the ground that the Legislative Council which had no representative of the people among its members was not competent to deal with a question like the one which was then before the Viceregal Council²²⁴. Even that most earnest supporter of the Bill, the *Sanjibani*, counselled its withdrawal in view of the grave dissatisfaction which it had caused.²²⁵

The supporters of the Bill took the measure to be a just and judicious one and did not see in it any interference with the religious practices of the Hindus²²⁶. The *Sanjibani* argued that a measure so clearly and urgently demanded in the interest of morality and humanity could not possibly constitute a violation of the Queen's Proclamation. It further warned the oppositionists that the people in England would form a very low opinion of the culture of the people of India and would therefore consider them unworthy of political rights.²²⁷

The Bill was opposed by most of the Muslim papers including the *Sudhakar*²²⁸ and they also expressed the fear that it would interfere with their religion. But the *Urdu-Guide* and *Dar-us-saltanat* saw nothing to object in this Bill and gave it whole-hearted support²²⁹.

The last phase of the agitation against the Consent Bill found expression in a large amount of writing in which the British rule was assailed on its

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *Dainik-O-Samachar-Chandrika*, Jany. 12, 1891. (R. N. P. for 1891).

²²¹ *Nabayuga*, Jany. 15, 1891, Ibid.

²²² *Bengal Exchange Gazette*, Jany. 18, 1891. Ibid.

²²³ *Bangabasi*, Jany. 31, 1891. Ibid.

²²⁴ *Sahachar*, Jany. 14, 1891. Ibid.

²²⁵ *Sanjibani*, Jany. 17, 1891. Ibid.

²²⁶ *Grambasi*, Jany. 19, 1891; *Dacca-Gazette*, Jany. 20, 1891; *Samaya*, Jany. 30, 1891. *Sanjibani*, Jany. 17, 1891. (R.N.P. for 1891)

²²⁷ *Sanjibani*, Jany. 24, 1891.

²²⁸ Annual Report on Native Press of Bengal for 1891—Home (Public) 1892-A, May 8-12,

²²⁹ *Urdu-Guide and Dar-us-saltanat*, Feby. 20, 1891. (R.N.P. for 1891)

commercial side, and fervent appeals were made to their countrymen to forswear the use of English goods and revive the arts and industry of the country²³⁰. The idea of "boycotting" English goods and thereby to compel the British Government to grant political rights or to redress political and economic grievances was not a new one with the native press of Bengal in 1905. It got currency in the native newspapers during the seventies of the last century when they raised their voice of protest against the abolition of cotton duty²³¹.

The controversy over the Age of Consent Bill presents a real picture of contemporary Bengali thought and life which was practically divided into two camps, one marked by extreme orthodoxy and another by liberalism resulting from rationalism and individualism of European culture and it appears that the former one was getting stronger hold on the people of Bengal during the last quarter of the 19th century.

The *Bangabasi* school of writing gave vent to the new sense of national self-consciousness, termed neo-Hinduism or revivalism, which expressed itself in the "glorification of Hindu religion and society in their current forms²³²". An extreme point of view is represented by that school led by Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramoni which took up an attitude of uncompromising opposition to everything that was not Hindu. Its violent agitation against the Age of Consent Bill is to be explained by its consistent opposition to heterodox influence from whatever quarter arising, to all attempts at the social reformation of the Hindus by the Government or any other external agency. The agitation in a sense was a revolt against the cultural domination by the European civilisation which brought in its wake a new revolt against the foreign domination. In full accordance with the principle of Hindu orthodoxy this school steadily opposed and denounced the system of public education in force in India as undermining Hindu belief and therefore as disintegrating Hindu society and lowering the standard of Hindu morals. The *Bangabasi* lamented over the fact that contact and struggle with English ideas had at least the effect of contracting and dwarfing the Hindu's religious instinct. It was a matter of regret with it that the Hindu, in his eagerness to achieve worldly prosperity by acquiring English education, allowed himself to be dominated by Englishism, and thus lost all respect for his own religion²³³. In a still mores weeping statement it added, "Social opinion is a powerful regulator of character, but English education has spoiled Indian society itself."²³⁴ The agitation of the *Bangabasi* school against the Age of Consent Bill was therefore the outcome of principles and of a policy originally respectable but now characterised by extravagance and fanaticism.

Besides those problems touched upon, the vernacular papers of Bengal wrote consistently and vigorously on various other national problems,

²³⁰Home (Public) Progs. 1892, A-May, 8-12.

²³¹*Grambarta Prakashika*, March 10, 1875 (R. N. P. for 1875).

²³²*British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, Part II, Page 115, R. C. Majumdar,

²³³*Bangabasi*, Feby. 6, 1892 (R. N. P. for 1892).

²³⁴Home (Public) Progs. A 1891, Octr. 260-286.

political and economic, social and religious, such as the Indianisation of the civil-service, racial discrimination, economic exploitation of India by British rulers, poverty of the masses, suitability or otherwise of the free trade in India, necessity for industrialisation, problems connected with education, condition of the labourers, removal of various social evils etc. during the last quarter of the 19th century. It is to be regretted that proper justice could not be done in the treatment of all these problems within the scope of this paper.

We may conclude now with a note on the services rendered by the native press of Bengal to the cause of the country and of the nation. They acted as the best recorder as well as the best educator of the people. They reflected as well as helped in the formulation of public opinion with regard to the vital issues before the country. They harped on the tune of nationalism and unity, infused patriotic feelings in the minds of the people and awakened the political consciousness of a larger number of educated Indians. They acted as the best agency for the propagation of the ideals and thoughts of the national leaders and of national organisations and thereby prepared the field for a greater struggle for freedom to be taken up against the foreign rulers in the next century.

They focussed the attention of the people as well as of the Government on the various social evils and on the defects of the administration, suggested remedies and thereby played an important part in the reconstruction of the country. With regard to social problems their attitude, it is to be noted, was not always consistent and enlightened but some of them helped the cause of social reform throughout the 19th century.

Before the formation of a regularly constituted Opposition Party in this country, they played that part admirably well. By their scathing criticism they tended to curb to some extent the autocratic tendencies of the then ruling power. By the exposure of the wrong-doings of the officials they helped the cause of good administration in the country. The Press also protested vigorously against the discrimination in justice, against the haughty arrogance of the ruling community and by widely disseminating these ideas through their pages intensified the feeling of estrangement between the Indians and Englishmen.

They raised their voice of protest against the restriction of their own liberty and thereby served the cause of freedom. There is no exaggeration in saying that the Press was one of the most powerful factors in the building up of the Indian nation in the 19th century.

THE GROWTH OF THE PRESS IN BENGAL VIS-A-VIS THE RISE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM (1858—1905)

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The period between 1858 and 1905 witnessed the gradual consolidation of the forces of nationalism in India. If the first half of the 19th century was the childhood of Indian nationalism, the period under review marked the stage of its vigorous adolescence. The year 1858 not only saw the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown, it visualised the beginning of the transformation of British connexion with India. Marx had, however, a different explanation of this change-over. In his opinion, the British rule had "a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia."¹ According to Marx, therefore, in 1858 the "destructive" role of the British rule in India ended and its "regenerating" role began. One of the indications, he saw, of such regeneration was "the free press, introduced for the first time into Asiatic society".² The growth of the press in India may, thus, be viewed in the context of the changing character of British connexion with India.

An outcome of India's contact with the West, especially with Great Britain, was the awakening of the Indian mind. This was facilitated in a great degree when the British began to look at India from a new angle since 1858. When it was stated in the Queen's Proclamation, "we desire no extension of our present territorial possessions; and while we will permit no aggression upon our Dominions or Our Rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others", a new hope was aroused. Indians were definitely happy when they heard Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State, talking of the conciliation of "the minds of Natives of high rank". Educated middle-class men began to pin their hopes on the liberation and sense of justice of the Englishmen. The atmosphere was congenial, and nationalism as a practical concept began to crystallise rapidly. The rise of nationalism is not an exclusive phenomenon. It brings with it germs of new development in every sphere of life. This is quite evident when we study the growth of the press in India in general and Bengal in particular. Nationalism and growth of the press in Bengal were two mutually supporting concepts—each influencing the other in its path of progress. In other words, it may be said that the growth of the press was directly proportional to the consolidation of the forces of nationalism. To put it in a different way, nationalism was the 'monotonic function' of the growth of the press in Bengal. An introspective study of the growth of the press

will reveal that a restricting press act or the birth of a newspaper or a contempt case is not an isolated incident. All of them are but links in the chain. It would not be preposterous to say that they are interwoven by an unperceived thread of nationalism. The press had become the carrier of the seeds of nationalism and in this process it enriched itself. Moreover, when the nationalist leaders propagated their political philosophy through their organs, they indeed furthered the cause of the press in general. Tilak's *Kesari*, Surendra Nath Banerjee's *Bengalee*, Motilal Ghosh's *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, to mention only a few, were all mighty crucibles of nationalistic ideas in the country. In our study, however, we must make a distinction between the Indian-owned press and the English-owned press. Though we are more concerned with the former, the latter, by their pro-British attitude, indirectly contributed to the development of the former by supplying food for controversy and contest.

When the administration of India was assumed by the Crown, there was some confusion as well as tension in the sphere of the press. Though the Press Act of Lord Canning was valid only till June, 1858, it did not bring about any improvement in the situation. The European-owned press cried for vengeance and inflamed the feelings of the Europeans. Even many prominent Englishmen could not approve of the tone of the Anglo-Indian newspapers. Writing in 1864, Sir George Trevelyan observed, "The tone of the press (Anglo-Indian) was horrible. Never did the cry for blood swell so loud as among these Christians and Englishmen in the middle of the nineteenth century. The pages of those brutal and grotesque journals published by Hebert and Marat during the agony of the French revolution, contained nothing that was not matched and surpassed in the files of some Calcutta papers".³ Mr. E. A. Samuells, Commissioner of Revenue for the Division of Patna, gave a warning: "I confess it appears to me that articles of this description are much more likely to endanger the stability of the Government than any amount of abuse, whether of the measures or of the members of Government."⁴ In spite of these reactions, the official attitude was not much helpful. "The Indian Press far from being regarded by the authorities as an instrument of communicating ideas of progress to the people came to be regarded with suspicion".⁵ Sir George Campbell, the Lt. Governor of Bengal, emphatically said in the early seventies of the last century, "My own opinion has always been that an entirely free press is inconsistent with a despotic form of Government even if it be a paternal despotism."⁶ Side by side with this, there was a growing awareness of the utility of the Indian language press. In his report of 1859, Rev. J. Long wrote, "The opinions of the Native Press may often be regarded as the safety valve which gives warning of danger; thus had the Delhi Native Newspapers of January 1857 been consulted by European functionaries, they would have seen in them how the natives were rife for revolt and were expecting aid from Persia and Russia."⁷ Long also remarked: "Much at that period was written and spoken on the subject of the Native Press, and many hasty remarks were made respecting it, while some said it was so

radically corrupt that it ought to be abolished. . . . of late some officials have proposed cutting the knot, and either suppressing the Native Press or establishing rigorous censorship. We trust that the perusal of this report will show how suicidal a measure of this kind would be to the interests of good Government and sound education."⁸ The utility of the Indian press was indirectly admitted when Lord Canning tried to rehabilitate the confidence of the Indian people. A chance to review the situation came in 1860 when the Indian Penal Code came up for final adoption. Responsive to the changed circumstances Lord Canning suggested the dropping of the Sedition Clause (Section 113) on the ground that it would be an attack on the liberty of the press. His suggestion was accepted and the press which had suffered a setback came to life with renewed vigour. The Government was, however, unwilling to allow its servants to take advantage of the freedom of the press to propagate their own views on different problems in the country which might be contrary to those of the Government itself. Thus we find the following Home Department Notification in July, 1875⁹:

- "1. No officer in the service of Government is permitted without the previous sanction, in writing, of the Government under which he immediately serves to become proprietor, either in whole or in part, of any newspaper or periodical publication, or to edit or manage any such newspaper or publication. Such sanctions will only be given in the case of newspapers or publications mainly devoted to the discussion of topics not of a political character, such for instance as art, science or literature. The sanction will be withdrawn at the discretion of the Government.
- "2. Officers in the service of Government are not prohibited from contributing to the public press; but their position makes it incumbent upon them to confine themselves within the limits of temperate and reasonable discussion, and they are prohibited from making public, without the previous sanction of Government, any documents, papers, or information of which they may become possessed in their official capacity."

While all these developments were taking place on the Governmental level, the press in Bengal was making rapid strides. It is true that some of the papers in Bengal—the *Bengal Harkaru*, the *Samachar Sudhabarshan*, the *Durbin*—had to suffer under the Press Act of 1857. But nothing could dampen the spirit of the Bengal press. There was no looking back, and there was a vigorous growth of the press in the province of Bengal in the decades following the transfer of power. Bengalee middle class leaders came forward with new papers to add to the strength of the press. The *Shome Prakash* came out in November, 1858, followed by the *Indian Mirror* (August, 1861), and the *Grambarta Prakashika* (April, 1863). It is really heartening to observe that the *Shome Prakash*, the *Hindoo Patriot* and the *Grambarta Prakashika* were devoted to rural matters and championed the cause of the poor ryots. In 1868 were founded two weeklies—one the *Bengalee* (Eng-

lish), other the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Bengali)—which played a very important role in the future. Keshab Chandra Sen started the *Sulav Samachar* in 1870, followed by the *Halishahar Patrika* conducted by young students. The rate of growth of the press in Bengal may be understood by the fact that there were thirty-eight papers in the province in 1873. More and more papers were coming out, a detailed list of which is likely to interest the statistician.

Side by side with the physical growth, the Indian-owned press in Bengal contributed to the formulation of public opinion in the province. In spite of the hostile attitude of the British-owned press and the suspecting policy of the Government, the press went on doing its sacred duty undaunted. A new expectation was in the air and the nationalist leaders profitably utilised the press as a weapon to rectify the grievances of the people. Grievances and aspirations of the middle class men further cemented the forces of nationalism which in their turn were reflected in the newspapers and periodicals of the time. As years rolled on, the Bengal press began to exert a significant influence on the policies of the Government. A great sensation was created in the Bengal press in 1861, by what is known as the *Nil Darpan* case. A protracted controversy went on in the columns of the newspapers of the province with regard to the nature of indigo cultivation. When, on the strength of the Indigo Commission's report, action was taken in certain cases, the educated middle class championed the cause of the ryots and the press went into attack against foreign oppression and domination. "The criticism was that the cultivation of indigo was not voluntary on the part of the raiyat, that the best land was forcibly ploughed up and resown with indigo when it had already been sown with other crops, that the raiyat became indebted to the factory, lost his personal freedom and was oppressed, kidnapped, imprisoned and outraged by servants of the factory."¹⁰ So great was the impact of the attack by the Bengal press that Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, had to address a long explanation to the *Statesman* in order to "clear up charges of unfair dealing and of personal hostility to the planters and to make such explanation as was due to persons who felt themselves aggrieved by the publication." Though the Government had to retreat in the face of the powerful attack of the Bengal press, it derived a lesson from the events of 1861. It is evident that the British rulers were becoming increasingly uneasy about the attitude of the Indian language press. Thereafter, "it was repeatedly impressed on the local officials that a more careful watch should be kept on the Indian language press and the complaint was frequently recorded that the annual reports submitted were inadequate and left much to be desired."¹¹

It is interesting to observe that as Indian discontent was intensifying and as the nationalistic sentiment of the people was being aroused, the divergence between the views of the Bengal press and those of the Government increased. Robert Knight observed with great dissatisfaction that the Government was not at all sympathetic to the press and was not willing to consult it. "It withheld all information on subjects of current interest,

showed no deference to public opinion and looked on the press as factions and incapable of promoting the public good."¹² The Bengal press, on the other hand, wanted to assert itself and to make its voice heard by the authorities. In this they were gradually becoming sharply critical of the Government. Though the press had not yet become the Fourth Estate in the effective sense of the term, it had become a powerful factor in the formation of public opinion in the country. Speaking in February, 1878, Mr. Kristodas Pal observed: "The Indian Press, both European and Native, is a living reality. There may be those, as my friend Mr. Knight said, who may choose to argue that there is no such thing as public opinion in India, and who are perhaps not slow to repress it if they can, but the public in India do think, do feel, and do speak as the public in other civilised countries, and if the Press is not strong, it is not because the cause it advocates is weak, the principles it enunciates are weak, but because the sympathy it receives from the powers that be is neither sufficient nor strong."¹³

When the press in Bengal was trying to find its rightful place, it reeled under the blow of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. This Act was passed at one and the same sitting of the Imperial Legislative Council. The undue haste of the Government betrayed their nervousness. The reactionary regime of Lord Lytton had perhaps thought that the blistering criticism of the press, especially the vernacular press, would not serve the best interests of British imperialism. As President of the Legislative Council, Lytton summed up the debate on the Vernacular Press Bill in the following words: "I should have rejoiced had it fallen to my lot to enlarge, rather than restrict, the liberty of the press in India; for neither the existence nor the freedom of the press in this country is of native origin or growth. It is an exotic which especially claims and needs, from the hands that planted it in a foreign soil and clime, protecting shelter and fostering care. It is one of the many peculiarly British institutions which British rule has bestowed upon a population to whom it was previously unknown, in the belief that it will eventually prove beneficial to the people of India, by gradually developing in their character those qualities which have rendered it beneficial to our own countrymen.... But all the more is it incumbent on the Government of India to take due care that the gift for which it is responsible shall not become a curse, a stone instead of bread, to its recipients"¹⁴. Lord Lytton's observation was, no doubt, a nice piece of lecturing; but it was a monument of gross distortion of facts. How could he come to the conclusion that a free press had become "a stone instead of bread, to its recipients"? It was, perhaps, just the otherwise. The patent fact is that the Government was alarmed at the tone of the vernacular newspapers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. This has been made clear by Motilal Ghosh who asserted that "the blow was aimed mainly at the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which was then an Anglo-vernacular paper...." Analysing the origin of the Act, Motilal wrote: "Babu Shishir Kumar was at the time a poor man. His position in Calcutta society was not high. The tempting offer came from the ruler of the province. Many another man in his circumstances would have succumbed

to his temptation. But he was made of a different stuff. He resisted and did something more. He thanked His Honour for his generous offer, but also quietly remarked, 'Your Honour, there ought to be at least one honest journalist in the land'. The expected result followed. Sir Ashley flew into an unconquerable rage. With scathing sarcasm he told Babu Shishir Kumar that he had forgotten to whom he was speaking, that as supreme authority in the province he could put him in jail any day he liked for seditious writings in his paper, and that he would drive him back to Jessore bag and baggage from where he came in six months. It was not a vain threat. The Vernacular Press Act owed its origin to this incident. It was to take revenge on Babu Shishir Kumar that Ashley Eden persuaded Lord Lytton to pass this monstrous measure at one sitting."¹⁵ It is true that Motilal overrated the importance of the episode; but the perusal of the columns of the Bengali press at that time will show that they were teeming with what appeared to the Government seditious writings, and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was perhaps the arch-offender in this respect. This is clearly borne out by the fact that the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* changed overnight into a full-fledged English paper. In the *Patrika* of 21st March, 1878, it was written: "It is with deep regret that we part with our vernacular columns. The step has been forced upon us by our friends and patrons upon whose judgment and patriotism we have confidence.... Whether this change will benefit our country or not, Heaven alone knows, but we think an absolutely independent paper, conducted in the English language, is just now a great necessity."

Whatever may be the origin of this Act, a desperate attempt was made to gag the Indian press in general and the Bengal press in particular. In the name of giving "protecting shelter and fostering care", the Act sought "to furnish the Government with more effective means than the existing law for the purpose of punishing and repressing seditious writings which were calculated to produce disaffection towards the Government in the minds of the ignorant population." Though the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* could escape from the clutches of the Act, proceedings were started against several Bengali papers for their past writings. The *Shome Prakash* was the worst sufferer when it was served with a notice and it had to close down for the time being. The editors of the *Bharat Mihir* of Mymensingh, the *Dacca Prakash*, the *Hindoo Hitoyisini* of Dacca, the *Sulav Samachar* and the *Samachar* of Calcutta were called upon to furnish security. It is rather peculiar that this repressive Act could not fully gag the press in Bengal. C. E. Buckland, the temporary Press Commissioner, estimated the press in the following words: "...it was noticed that, although some improvement had taken place in the style and language of the Vernacular newspapers since the introduction of the Vernacular Press Act, their general tone was one of opposition to Government and Government measures. They never hesitated to impute unworthy motives to Government and were full of personalities regarding Government servants. They, however, generally preluded their remarks by expatiating on their individual loyalty, and of complaining of the passing of the Act. The leading organs of the press were naturally found in Calcutta."¹⁶

In the columns of the *Statesman* was published a letter ascribed to "one of the ablest civilians in India" which shows that the impact was not much. "Perhaps it would be unfair to name newspapers", the letter ran, "but the fact is that inspite of the Press Act the disloyal papers remain as disloyal as they were. They are less outspoken; but the spirit is just the same as before. It may be an advantage to have repressed their outspokenness; but it is misleading and foolish to assume that the Act has changed disloyalty into loyalty".¹⁷

Notwithstanding the Vernacular Press Act, the Bengal press obtained a new lease of life, when nationalist sentiment was whipped up as a result of this reactionary measure. It is, however, true that there were a few among the Bengalees who welcomed the Act perhaps in the hope of getting more favours from the British masters. Hence we find Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore speaking in support of the measure: "I must take this opportunity most emphatically to repudiate, on the part of the educated Natives of India, all sympathy with such writers, who, from whatever motive, attempt to excite something like a feeling of disaffection against British rule. The educated Natives do not even know of the existence of most of these newspapers. It is, however, I believe, a known fact that much of this class of writing proceeds from folly and a spirit of braggadocio rather than anything else, yet that some sort of check should be put upon this abuse of the liberty of the Press, I cannot deny"¹⁸. It is no wonder that there would be a few like Jotindra Mohan but these men certainly did not voice the feeling of the Bengalees in general. The Act actually came upon the educated community as "a bolt from the blue", though Surendra Nath Banerjee anticipated that "something of the kind was coming".¹⁹ Surendra Nath Banerjee found the educated community in Bengal greatly agitated. It was no longer a question of merely achieving the freedom of the press; it was slowly merging into a national agitation. The educated middle class had been disillusioned. They found that the "August Mother of Free Nations" was unwilling to treat Indians in a just manner. It was now a question of securing the rights of the Indian people. Very naturally, the cloud of violent agitation was gathering in the horizon. Bengal soon plunged headlong into an intense agitation against the Vernacular Press Act. Surendra Nath lamented over the inert attitude of the British Indian Association; but "it was fortunate that the Indian Association had been formed five years before, and that there was this organization to voice the sentiments of the middle class"²⁰. Surendra Nath, aided by Rev. Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Rev. K.S. Macdonald, threw himself heart and soul into the movement. "The cry of political movements being seditious had not been raised; but it was a distinct source of strength and inspiration to us that we had with us", he wrote, "these two highly-honoured representatives of the Christian community of Calcutta in what was the first great political demonstration of the middle-class community in Bengal."²¹ A meeting was held in the Calcutta Town Hall, where Surendra Nath "delivered one of his most brilliant speeches at a public meeting" and put up a spirited defence of the Indian

language press. He asked how it was that the press which was found by Sir Richard Temple and Sir George Campbell to be loyal between the years 1872 and 1875, turned hostile and seditious in the next three years. The meeting was an unqualified success and its impact was tremendous. About the meeting, S.N. Banerjee wrote: "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 who could act with effect for the protection of their interests, even though the wealthier classes were lukewarm, and official influence was openly arrayed against them. It was a lesson that the middle-class of Bengal never forgot..."²² While Surendra Nath was organising public opinion in Calcutta, Motilal Ghosh went to Dacca, where a big public protest meeting was held at his instance. Babu Kali Prasanna Ghose, Babu Ananda Chandra Roy and many other leading personalities of Dacca attended the meeting.²³ The agitation against the Act thus reached a dizzy height. Meanwhile, there was a change in Government in England. Disraeli was replaced and Gladstone formed the new cabinet. Even before he came to power, Gladstone was impressed by the agitation in India and opposed the Act in the British Parliament. He also introduced a measure in the House of Commons proposing that all actions taken under the Act must be communicated to the Secretary of State and laid before Parliament. Indians were jubilant when he formed the new Government. The Indian Association then addressed a letter, drafted by Surendra Nath, to Gladstone expressing gratitude to him for his support to the liberty of the press in India. Thus, when Gladstone became the Prime Minister and Lord Ripon the Viceroy, the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act became a foregone conclusion. On December 7, 1881, the Repealing Bill was passed without discussion and Lord Ripon remarked, "All I desire to say is that it will always be a great satisfaction to me that it should have been during the time that I held the office of Viceroy that the Act had been removed from the Indian Statute Book."²⁴ This was a great hour of triumph of the press in Bengal. The Vernacular Press Act was not only a great event in the history of the press, but it constituted a landmark in the national movement in India. Surendra Nath Banerjee certainly did not exaggerate the importance of the agitation against it when he wrote, "it indeed marked a definite and progressive stage in national evolution..."²⁵ What began as a fight for the rights of the Indian press was slowly transformed into a national agitation. From now on the growth of the press and the rise of nationalism in the country went hand in hand.

The repeal of the Vernacular Press Act gave a new lease of life to the Bengal Press. As a mouthpiece of the conservative sections, the *Bangabasi*, a Bengali weekly, was started by Jogendra Chandra Basu in 1881. Next year, Krishna Kumar Mitra brought out the *Sanjibani*, another Bengali weekly. This was an organ of the progressive sections and Bipin Chandra Pal described it as a "powerful organ of liberal thought". Though Surendra Nath Banerjee admitted that the press at that time was not 'as vocal and as powerful as it became in the 20th century, it had become "a great instru-

ment of propagandism". The Contempt Case against Surendra Nath in 1883 gave another impetus to the already growing Bengal press. Surendra Nath was charged with contempt of court when he strongly criticised Justice Norris who forced a *Saligram* to be brought to the court for identification. In the columns of the *Bengalee* on April 2, 1883, he wrote: "What are we to think of a judge who is so ignorant of the feelings of the people and so disrespectful of their most cherished convictions, as to drag into Court, and then to inspect, an object of worship which only Brahmins are allowed to approach, after purifying themselves according to the forms of their religion? Will the Government of India take no notice of such a proceeding? The religious feelings of the people have always been an object of tender care with the Supreme Government.

"Here, however, we have a judge who, in the name of justice, sets these feelings at defiance and commits what amounts to sacrilege in the estimation of the pious Hindus. We venture to call the attention of the Government to the facts here stated, and we have no doubt due notice will be taken of the conduct of the judge."

On May 2, 1883, Surendra Nath was served with a writ from the High Court to show cause why he should not be committed for contempt of court. He was then sentenced to two months' imprisonment on May 5, 1883 for the paragraph he wrote in the *Bengalee*. His imprisonment created a great resentment in the country. In Calcutta, Indian shops were closed, business came to a standstill spontaneously, students went into mourning, and a large number of demonstrations were held. About the reaction to the sentence passed on him, Surendra Nath wrote: "In the whole course of my public life, I have never witnessed, except in connexion with the agitation for the modification of the Partition of Bengal, an upheaval of feeling so genuine and so widespread as that which swept through Bengal in 1883."²⁶ He was not exaggerating when he remarked that the incident "operated as a unifying influence". Ananda Mohan Bose also observed in the Report of the Indian Association for 1883, "It has now been demonstrated by the 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. . .". Meetings of sympathy were held in many great towns like Lahore, Amritsar, Agra, Fyzabad, Poona, etc. What surer test can one expect than this to prove that the growth of the press was no longer an isolated phenomenon but it was conditioned by the rising nationalistic sentiment? Deriving the life-force from the spirit of nationalism, the press gradually became the powerful medium to diffuse that spirit to the masses. This was a wonderful game of give and take in the process of which the national movement made giant's advance and the press asserted itself in the political life of the country.

Before the echo of the contempt case died down, the controversy over the Ilbert Bill opened a new chapter in the growth of the press in Bengal. Though the British-owned press in Bengal had grown very powerful, their pro-imperialistic attitude could be well matched by the inspired Indian-owned press. The contempt case had already given a great impetus to jour-

nalism, and there was a passionate desire for news. "The Ilbert Bill and the subsequent developments were commented upon in a series of articles in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*."²⁷ Motilal never missed to point to this agitation, whenever the question of disloyalty of the Indians was raised. Though the Indian-owned press in Bengal was not directly concerned with the agitation, the editors closely observed the technique of the Anglo-Indian press. Excepting perhaps the *Statesman* under the editor of Robert Knight who was one of the few European champions of the Indian cause, the Anglo-Indian press grew very restive. They could put a tremendous pressure on the Supreme Government to undo the proposed measure. It is true that "the controversy ended with the virtual though not avowed abandonment of the measure proposed by the Government Act III of 1884 extended rather than diminished the privileges of European British subjects charged with offences, and left their position as exceptional as before."²⁸ This had a tremendous impact not only on the press but also on the minds of the nationalist Indians. They obtained a great lesson from the methods of the Anglo-Indians. The organised agitation against the Ilbert Bill served the purpose of providing a practical demonstration of how agitations over grievances should be organised. It may be said that the incident was a blessing in disguise to the national movement in the country which was in the offing. Being convinced of the value of organisation, Surendra Nath Banerjee took the lead to convene the first Indian National Conference in Calcutta on July 17, 1883. Simultaneously, Allan Octavian Hume was working on the idea of establishing a national organization in the country. His attempts bore fruit and the first Indian National Congress session was held in Bombay in 1885. According to Dufferin, the idea of the Congress was to be welcomed for the proper formation of public opinion in the country. It is true that the Indian press, and specially the Bengal press, was surcharged with emotion and restlessness. The Lt. Governor found the absence of moderation and calmness in the press as a whole. He added: "Many utterances of the Native Press and of the Anglo-Indian Press from which the vernacular papers take their tone, were during the year (1883) such as to bring the papers containing them within the scope of the criminal law. In 3 instances applications were made to the Government by native officers to sanction the prosecution of calumnious articles in vernacular papers; but the Lt. Governor has been personally opposed to any action which would put that law in motion, hoping for the time when prejudice and passion would give way to better feelings."²⁹ But, as Surendra Nath Banerjee pointed out the British rulers conveniently forgot the provocation they gave to the Indian press for strong writings. Hume wanted the Congress as "a safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our action." Hence W.C. Bonnerjee wrote in his *Introduction to Indian Politics* (1898) "The newspapers (according to Lord Dufferin), even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in Native circles, it would be desirable in their interests as well as the interests of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and

point out to the Government in what respect the administration was defective and how it could be improved." What Lord Dufferin and his associates could not foresee is that there would be a close cooperation between the leaders of the press and the leaders of the Congress. The establishment of the Congress was thus closely related with the growth of the press as some of the founders and editors of the leading newspapers were prominent among the founders of the National Congress. Hence we find among others, Narendranath Sen, editor of the *Indian Mirror*, and Girija Bhusan Mukherjee, editor of the *Naba Bibhakar*, joining the first session of the Congress. Later, when Surendra Nath Banerjee entered the Congress, the Bengal press became a mouthpiece of nationalist ideas. Simultaneously, more and more newspapers and journals were coming out, the prominent among which between 1883 and 1905 were the *Indian Nation*, the *Hope*, the *Nabyabharat*, the *Nabajiban*, the *Hitabadi*, the *Sadhana*, the *Basumati*, the *New India*, and the *Sandhya*. Meanwhile the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was converted into a daily in February, 1891, and the *Bengalee* also became a daily in February, 1900.

Side by side with the physical growth, the press in Bengal was becoming more and more absorbed in the politico-social problems of the time. Under the tide of nationalism people, especially the educated middle-class, became news-hungry and the press had to cater to their needs. In doing so, the press was becoming sharply critical of the policies of the British rulers. In 1884, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published certain information criticising the conduct of Sir Lepel Griffin, the Agent to the Governor-General for Central India and his administration of Bhopal. In spite of the appeal of Sir Griffin, no action was taken against the *Patrika* by Lord Dufferin. The Viceroy did not take any action because he thought that it would draw greater publicity to the matter under dispute. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* made history in Bengal when it published a confidential Foreign Office document in 1889, showing the real reason why the Maharaja of Kashmir had been deposed. Though no action was taken against the *Patrika*, there was a commotion in the country. Even some of the Members of the English Parliament came to be more interested about the Indian press and its activities. Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., who had come to India to preach against intoxicants, became the London correspondent of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* at the request of Motilal Ghosh. It was a great credit for the *Patrika* that an English Parliamentarian like Charles Bradlaugh took much interest in the columns of the paper. Bradlaugh had a meeting with Motilal Ghose and collected relevant information about Kashmir from the columns of the *Patrika*. It was this Charles Bradlaugh who raised the Kashmir question in Parliament. Thanks to the Bengal newspapers, several Indian questions were raised in the British Parliament in the eighties and nineties of the last century. To check such disclosures an Act was passed in October, 1889. It provided a penalty of imprisonment for a year to two years and/or a fine according to the nature of the offence.

When the press in Bengal was gradually developing into maturity,

there appeared signs of difference of opinion with regard to political, social and religious questions. A perusal of the different newspapers and journals in the nineties would show that they were influenced by two trends of thinking—moderate and extremist. The age of emotional journalism was perhaps drawing to a close and the Bengal press, quite in tune with the political atmosphere, tried to form public opinion either in a conservative or in a progressive mould. In this connexion, one must bear in mind that in doing so, the press only reflected the trend of the national movement. It is a well known fact that at the end of the last century extremist political thought was slowly gaining ground. In the Congress itself an extremist wing had come up slowly and unperceived. This state of things was reflected in the Bengal press when it was involved in the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill of 1891. Motilal Ghose writes that the country had gone mad over the Bill. Opposition to the Bill was organised on the pattern of the Ilbert Bill agitation. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* played a leading part in the agitation against the measure. The other daily, the *Indian Mirror*, supported the Bill. Unfortunately, it was at this time that the element of religion was injected in the Bengal press when the *Hindoo Patriot* regretted the want of a Hindu daily paper to safeguard the religion of the Hindus.³⁰ The *Indian Mirror*, which supported the measure, was vehemently criticised as being a Brahmo paper. Taking the cue from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Bangabasi* violently attacked the Age of Consent Bill. The following was written in one of the columns of the *Bangabasi*: "If in doing this your religion is destroyed, let it be. If you are obstructed in observances which have descended to you from time immemorial, let it be. If you have to give up a handful of water to your belief in the shastras, you must give it—still the mighty ruler, the Englishmen, will never let you do that which may not appear to the English to be in conformity with good education, good morals and civilization. If it is so, Oh Probhu! then declare it openly and then destroy us all; destroy our caste, religion and society; then we shall understand from what motives, for the accomplishment of what object, you are carrying out these measures."³¹ A case was instituted against the *Bangabasi* under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, but it was withdrawn after apologies had been tendered. There is no denying the fact that "the conflict between the conservatives and progressives became sharp and Bepin Chandra Pal, who had entered public life by that time and supported the Bill, was shot at. Fortunately, the bullet did not hit him."³²

The attention of the Bengal press was turned from the social problems when the Indian Councils Act was passed in 1892. This Act fell far short of the nationalist expectations and the newspapers expressed disappointment with the inadequacy of the measure. In the columns of the *Bengalee*, Surendra Nath Banerjee expressed his strong feelings with regard to this Act. Before long, however, the press in this province was once again involved in a series of unhealthy rivalry. As Motilal has rightly observed, "the year 1896-97 was a year of strifes". A nasty rivalry started between Motilal and Surendra Nath centering round the famous *Hitabadi* defamation case. For months

together the Bengal papers went on abusing each other. However, the differences between Motilal and Surendra Nath were patched up for the success of the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1896. In spite of this, the air of jealousy and discord did not clear up. The press in Bengal had to divert their attention to the sufferings of the people due to the great plague in 1896 and the famine in 1897. The Bengal newspapers, specially the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, published gruesome descriptions of the sufferings of the famine-stricken people and urged the Government to provide adequate famine relief. It was again in 1897 that the Indian Penal Code was revised to punish what the Government thought seditious writings. Tilak was prosecuted and imprisoned for his so-called seditious writings in the *Kesari*. There was an upsurge of sentiment and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 25 September 1897, appeared in black lines as a matter of protest against Tilak's imprisonment. At the end of that year, the Bengal press grew more restive. Unfortunately, the fight between journalists was revived in 1899. Motilal writes: "The disfranchisement of Dacca was hotly discussed in the Calcutta press towards the middle of 1899 and there was a regular quarrel over this matter among the press magnates, which degenerated into personal recriminations and mutual fault findings, and the old differences between Motilal and Surendra Nath were revived."³³ The journalists did not take lesson from this and more quarrels appeared in 1900. The Bengal Provincial Conference, which was held at Bhagalpur at the beginning of the year 1900, was severely criticised by Motilal for not being democratic and for being confined to orators and editors. He was bitterly attacked in the columns of the *Bengalee* and the *Basumati*. For a long time Surendra Nath and Motilal exchanged shots at each other. Writing on this episode the *Indian Nation* commented, "There is a regular tug-of-war, for, there is no doubt that Greek has met Greek. Two mighty patriots, veterans both in the art of agitation, have been flying at each other's throat and there is no doubt that they are terribly in earnest."³⁴ They were about to go to the court, but good sense ultimately prevailed and the differences were made up. But it is well known that the truce was a temporary one.

To my mind the press in Bengal would have gone into pieces if Lord Curzon had not come to India. To the strife-torn press, the new Viceroy offered some common problems to fight against. It may sound paradoxical but it is true that in his attempt to stamp out liberalism in this country, Curzon rescued the Indian national movement and the Bengal press. With his high concept of the imperial responsibilities of the Englishmen in India, Curzon ran into trouble with the Bengal press in particular and the Indian press in general. Valentine Chirol, in his book *Indian Unrest*, named some 20 journals and newspapers which stepped up a virulent campaign against the Viceroy. In fact, the press had become the instrument of politics. Several factors combined to widen the gap between the ruler and the ruled. Waves of repression swept the country and the press was slashed by sedition trials. The situation was made worse by the attitude of the Anglo-Indian press which ridiculed all Indian politicians and seized every opportunity

to increase the bitterness. In his Convocation Address to the young graduates of the Calcutta University in February, 1902, Curzon characterised the "Native Press" as "something which cannot be depended upon and which made foolish exaggerations". The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* at once took up the gauntlet and wrote: "Lord Curzon began by stating that he wanted to teach; and he based his claims as a teacher not upon the fact of his being the Chancellor but that he is past forty and therefore competent to teach. In India fifty-five, however, is the age which entitles a man to pose as a sage."³⁵ The consummation of Lord Curzon's imperialism could be found in the Partition of Bengal. To destroy the Bengali nationalism, he conceived of the plan in 1903 and executed it in 1905. The Partition of Bengal is a great landmark in the history of the national movement in India and thereby in the history of the press. The people of Bengal, nay the people of India, were fired with nationalist sentiment ever since the partition plan was officially announced in 1903. The country was flooded with enthusiasm and there was a tremendous growth in the Bengal press. In spite of the heavy hand of Government repression new radical papers began to come out. Many papers had been suppressed and many papers were defunct, but the Bengal press could not be crushed. There was no looking back. Mutual jealousies and rivalries were forgotten and the ranks of the Bengali Hindu journalists were closed to put up a tough fight with the Government. Then began what may be called the era of the revolt of the Bengal press. At that hour of grave national crisis, the press in Bengal was somewhat weakened by the dissensions among the Hindu and the Muslim journalists. The educated Hindu middle class vehemently attacked the partition; while the Muslim middle class in Bengal was divided. One group led by Syed Abdur Rasul, Sir Abdul Halim and others opposed the partition, but another group under the leadership of Nawab Khwaja Salimullah, Nawab Nawab Ali Chaudhury and others wholeheartedly wanted it. This was reflected in the Muslim newspapers of the province. The difference between Hindu and Muslim journalists was already there since the nineties of the last century. The Muslim journalists did not like the approach of the Hindu nationalist leaders who appealed to religion to arouse the people. Thus, when Tilak revived the Shivaji festival, the *Soltan* (a Calcutta paper) "suggested to the Hindus that if they must celebrate such festivals, why not find some hero who would not be obnoxious and unpalatable to the Muslims as Shivaji was,"³⁶ There was, however, a silver lining. In the 19th century, Muslim journalism was in an infant stage, but the partition of Bengal gave an impetus to its growth since 1905. Despite these dark patches, it may be said that the limping press of Bengal of the mid-nineteenth century had been slowly transformed into a powerful force in Indian life by 1905. In the calamitous crucible of 1905 the press of Bengal had its rebirth.

From what has been written it appears that the growth of the press in Bengal does not reflect the regenerating role of the British rule, as supposed by Marx. Mere existence of the idea of the freedom of press does not prove anything. The idea of the free press along with many other promises was

not a reality. In this one must not emphasise too much the character of the regime of Lord Ripon or the activities of some noble Englishmen. Freedom of the press was to be tolerated only so far as it was consistent with the interests of British imperialism. The concessions given by the British rulers were not due to any genuine feeling for the Indian people but because they were considered to be profitable from the point of view of the empire. It is true that "the second half of the nineteenth century in India was . . . a period very different from Clive's eighteenth-century 'Augean stables' of plunder."³⁷ But the hard fact is that British imperialism simply changed its facade since 1858. British connexion with India changed only superficially and theoretically. It was like pouring old wine into a new bottle. Thus, we agree with John Strachey that Marx exaggerated, at least in the case of the growth of the press in India, the regenerating side of the British rule in this country. Signs of regeneration had appeared, no doubt; but the shadow of the destructive aspect lengthened to blur the new expectations.

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THE BEGINNING AND GROWTH OF THE MARATHI PRESS

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The practice of writing news-letters was very much in vogue in medieval India. The Court *Akhbarat* of those days could very well be taken as fine specimens of literary style. The Maratha news-writers were not slow to emulate. The rhetorical description of the Maratha debacle of Panipat (1761) given in a *Bakhar* is well known.¹ After the murder of Narayanrao (1773), the Poona representative of the Patwardhans of Miraj wrote two letters immediately after the incident.² These letters compare very well with the account given by the British writers. Mahadaji Sindhia brought the rober of honour from the Emperor of Delhi for Sawai Madhavrao. A *Darbar* was held at Poona for presentation of the robes to the Peshwa. The Patwardhan's representative informed the proceedings to his master, in a letter,³ the style of which could be well compared with any news item from "Our own Correspondent" in any of the modern Marathi newspapers.

It will thus be seen that the system of writing news-letters was not uncommon in Maharashtra. With the advent of the British, the printing press came to India. The first newspaper *Hicky's Bengal Gazette* appeared in Calcutta in 1780. The *Bombay Herald* which was started in 1789 was the first newspaper in Bombay. Bombay, being under the British much before Poona came under their rule, got the advantage of western institutions. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the first newspaper in Western India should have been published in Bombay. The *Bombay Gazette* (1790) and the *Bombay Courier* (1792) appeared in quick succession.

Half a century elapsed before the Indian language newspapers could be published. The *Mumbai Samachar* was the first Gujarati paper founded and edited by Ferdunjee Marzban. The first issue of the paper came out on July 1, 1822. The paper is yet in existence. The *Samachar* was a weekly to begin with. In 1832 it became a daily, but within a year it again became a weekly. It finally became a daily in 1855. Strange as it may seem, Janardan Vasudevji (1804-1894), the first Indian acting judge of the Bombay High Court, and Vinayak Vasudevji, brother of Janardan Vasudevji (he was Oriental Translator, but because of the power he wielded in Bombay he was known as the *Kala Governor*), two Maharashtrians were editors of the *Samachar*. Two more Gujarati papers, the *Mumbai Vartaman* (September 1, 1830) and the *Jame Jamshed* (1832) appeared soon after.

The English newspapers generally used to give information about the activities of Government officers, society events and political news. The Gujarati papers followed suit.

Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar (1812-1846), the first Indian to be a

professor at the Elphinstone Institution had the honour of being the pioneer in Marathi journalism. He belonged to the batch of early scholars and thinkers who used the western knowledge for the advancement of their people. Though Bombay was under the British for a long time, the British victory over the Peshwa in 1818 enhanced Bombay's place in the British domain. Bombay, then, became the capital of the newly constituted Bombay Presidency. This change had a great effect. The life in Bombay, now, became more organised and the leaders of the people began to think in terms of country and did not restrict their activities to the Bombay Island only.

With Elphinstone as the first Governor of Bombay, education began to develop rapidly. Balshastri was one of the foremost of those who got education under the new regime. He had studied a number of sciences, like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Geology. He had read well in History and Psychology. He knew a number of Indian and foreign languages. Unfortunately, he died at the age of thirtyfour, but within such a short time he left an indelible mark on the first half of the nineteenth century. On January 6, 1832, Balshastri published the first number of his paper, the *Durpun* (Mirror). The paper was a fortnightly to begin with, but became a weekly on May 4, 1832. Its size was $19" \times 11\frac{1}{2}"$ and had eight pages of two columns each. It was a bilingual one, the same matter being given in English and Marathi. The first issue was published by Cawasjee Cursetjee for Raghunath Harishchandraji at the Messenger Press, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay. Some time later it was published by Shreekrishna Jagannathji at the Courier Press, No. 7, Bell Lane, Bombay. Balshastri, Janardan Vasudevjee and Raghunath Harishchandraji requested the Government to buy a few copies. Though the Government did not buy many copies, it was buying at least one copy⁴.

As Balshastri was highly esteemed, both by the Government and by the public, the paper attained dignity and respectability right from the beginning. In the first issue, Balshastri declared that the aim of the paper was to stimulate amongst the natives the desire to study western learning. The *Durpun* was also meant to be an open forum for discussion about the well-being of the people and the prosperity of the nation. A variety of subjects were discussed through the columns of this paper. There were articles asking the people to enter Government service as also articles on religious controversies. Balshastri discussed in details the Hindu caste system. He also wrote on many occasions about the activities and achievements of Raja Rammohan Roy. A keen social reformer, as Balshastri was, he wrote on female education, widow remarriage etc., fully giving his support. The paper also gave information about the appointments and transfers of the Government officers and activities of the social elite. Important judgements of the Supreme Courts of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, also found place in the columns of the *Durpun*. Balshastri was ably assisted by Janardan Vasudevji⁵ and Raghunath Harishchandraji⁶.

The *Durpun* seems to have stopped publication some time in 1840. During the short period of its existence Balshastri maintained a very high

standard. In the very first year there was a fierce controversy about the caste system. The editor, while maintaining strict impartiality, gave full scope to both the sides. If, however, an article was couched in a language that was not proper, he mercilessly used the blue pencil. Certain articles he refused to print, at the same time he gave reasons in the paper for not printing the same.

It may thus be seen that the first Marathi newspaper was conducted on strictly idealistic lines. It laid down the tradition of popular education through the columns of newspapers. The promoters never desired to make any profits but spent out of their pockets for their objective of spread of learning amongst the people.

In 1835, one Anandrao Vithoba applied for permission to the Board of Directors of the East India Company for permission to start a paper to be called the *Poona Vartik*. In his application he stated, "It will contain articles of the utmost variety, intelligence and novelty of every description from all quarters of the World and likewise furnish the public in general that information highly interesting on the former and present state of powers in India."⁷ It is, however, not known what happened further to his application. It seems that the proposed paper did not see the light of the day.

Within a short time after the *Durpun* ceased to exist, a new Marathi paper started publication. This was the *Mumbai Akhbar* published by Suryaji Krishnaji at the United Service Gazette Press at No. 1, Nesbit Lane, Bombay. In the first issue of the paper, published on July 3, 1840, the publishers stated that as the *Durpun* ceased to exist it was necessary to publish a new paper for the information of the people. The topics which should be brought to the notice of the Englishmen in general, and the British Government in particular, would be dealt with in an English language newspaper, to be called the *United Service Gazette*, to be published shortly thereafter. The publisher further mentioned that since the publication of the *Durpun*, a taste for general knowledge was evident amongst the people of India. It was necessary, therefore, to publish a Marathi paper which would satisfy the thirst of the local people. The *Mumbai Akhbar* was to be only in Marathi. The promoters promised to include many more topics than had appeared in the *Durpun*. The topics would include foreign news and news items about the social and economic developments in the world. Though the paper was to be only in Marathi, the editor promised to publish in English an article which meant to draw the attention of the Government to a subject of vital importance to the people.

It may be seen from the above that the promoters of the newspapers had a two-fold object in view. They wished to acquaint their Indian readers with the happenings in the world. In this respect, their bias was certainly educative. As the editor of the *Durpun* observed, he wanted to bring the western knowledge to the doors of the Indians. Another object was to let the Government officers know about the woes and worries of the people. As the ruling class was exclusively English, it was necessary to publish in English the matter which required their attention. For a long time this dual objective guided

the policy of the Marathi newspaper editors. The *Akhbar* was followed by the *Prabhakar*. This was edited by Govind Vithal Kunte *alias* Bhau Mahajan (1815-1890). The size of the paper was 11" + 9" and its first issue was published in Ganpat Krishnaji's Press on October 24, 1841. But from July 17, 1842, it was published in its own press. The paper gave news for which it generally relied upon English and Gujarati papers. Bhau Mahajan, the editor of the paper, being a learned man was particular about giving informative and thought-provoking articles to his readers. He was the first Marathi professional journalist. Balshastri edited the *Durpun* while he was in the Government service. Bhau Mahajan spent twentyfive years in journalism at a time when the Indian political situation was in a crucible. By 1840, the state of Satara was taken over. Sind and Punjab disappeared as independent states during the life time of the *Prabhakar* which lasted for about twentyone years. Bhau Mahajan was also known for his fearless writing. This period in our history was the one in which an average educated Indian looked to the West for inspiration. He was suffering from a complex because of which he looked down upon everything that was Indian. Bhau Mahajan, while accepting the usefulness of the modern western civilisation, showed a great respect for Indian traditions, languages and social institutions. When Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale *alias* Vishnubuva Brahmachari (1825-1871) had his famous wordy duel with the missionaries, while resisting the attempts made by the missionaries to convert others, Bhau Mahajan was not slow to criticise the mannerisms of Vishnubuva. The famous *Shatapatre* of Sardar Gopal Hari Deshmukh *alias* Lokhitwadi (1823-1892) appeared in the columns of the *Prabhakar* between 1848 and 1850.

The *Jnyan-sindhu* and the *Chandrodaya* were contemporaries of the *Prabhakar*. There seems to have been a rivalry between the *Jnyan-sindhu* and the *Prabhakar*. The *Jnyan-sindhu* was edited by Vireshwar Sadashiv, the son of Sadashiv Kashinath Chhatre.

About the same time the missionaries from Western India thought it necessary to have an Indian language newspaper to propagate their views. For this purpose, they started the *Jnyanodaya* from June 1842. It was at first a monthly and then became a fortnightly. The first six issues were only in Marathi. Later on it became an Anglo-Marathi journal. This paper is celebrating the 125th year of its existence this year. In the beginning the tone of the paper was to ridicule the superstitious beliefs of the Hindus. Later on it showed a more sober attitude. As it was a missionary paper, it naturally gave prominence to the preachings of Jesus Christ. In addition, it gave information about the Christian missions and their work in India.

In order to promote their cause, the paper pointed out the harmful beliefs of the Hindus. To an extent it added to the tendency of the early educated class to decry the Hindu social institutions. From this point of view its activities could be called anti-Hindu. But there was another aspect of the story. Its criticism did make a few Hindus introspective. Some of them pondered over the Hindu social institutions and eschewed the evil practices. Thus indirectly it did help the cause of social reform in India. Besides this,

the missionary paper was very informative and educative. The back files of the paper are very useful as a source of social history in Maharashtra. During the last hundred and twentyfive years, it had a number of eminent editors, perhaps the most prominent being the famous Marathi poet, Reverend Narayan Waman Tilak.

Being the capital of the Peshwas, Poona was the centre of all activities in Maharashtra. With the fall of the Peshwas, its importance was lessened to some extent. As the British made Bombay the capital of the new province, the cultural activities of the newly educated class were seen first in Bombay. It was therefore proper that Marathi journalism should have had Bombay as its birth place. But Poona would not lag far behind. The *Mitrodaya*, the first Marathi paper from Poona, appeared in 1844. It, however, proved to be a short-lived one. The *Jnyan-prakash*, the well-known Marathi paper of Poona, saw the light of the day on February 12, 1849. Till 1862, it was lithographed. Afterwards it was printed. It was a weekly for about half a century. From August 15, 1904 it became a daily. After more than a hundred years of useful existence, it ceased publication in 1951. Its first editor was Krishnaji Trimbak Ranade. Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, Vishnu Moreshwar Bhide and Lokhitwadi were amongst its early contributors. Towards the end of the nineteenth century we find articles by Madhav Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. With the *Jnyan-prakash* becoming a daily, Hari Narayan Apte, the famous Marathi fiction writer, was appointed as its editor.

During the hundred years of its existence, the *Jnyan-prakash* contributed to a great extent to the educational and social movements in Maharashtra. No subject was taboo to its editors. Local, national and international news, information about Government appointments, Lawyer's notices and matters of a similar type appeared regularly. The paper, however, was known for its forceful propaganda of various public causes. In the very first issue the promoters declared that their object was to dispel the ignorance of the people. They wanted their paper to be useful both to the people and to the Government. The Sarvajanic Sabha was established in Poona in 1870. The Sabha soon became a *forum* for the discussion of the social and political problems. Its deliberations found an echo in the columns of the *Jnyan-prakash*.

After the rise of extremism in the political firmament of Poona, the *Jnyan-prakash* lent its support to the moderates. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Gokhale started the Servants of India Society, in Poona. In 1909 the Society purchased the proprietary rights of the *Jnyan-prakash*. Naturally the paper became the chief mouthpiece of the moderate school of thought. About this time it had become a paper devoted to serious social and political problems. K. G. Limaye, who took over the reins of editorship in 1926, brought about a great change. Though he continued the policy of the paper in matters social and political, he at the same time started publishing articles on drama, cinema, music, light literature etc. The columns of the paper were opened for literary discussions and knotty problems of historical research.

It is quite significant that journalism in Poona started with a Marathi newspaper. The first English paper in Poona, called the *Poona Observer* was published on May 15, 1852.

While the Marathi press was carrying out its work of spreading enlightenment, the Christians missionaries were becoming more and more aggressive in their propaganda. The *Jnyanodaya* was mercilessly attacking the Hindu institutions. It was, therefore, felt necessary to have Marathi papers to counteract the missionary activities. Foremost in the field was Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale *alias* Vishnubuva Brahmachari. In 1852, he started the *Vartaman Dipika* to reply to the articles appearing in the *Jnyanodaya*. He was followed by Krishnashastri Chiplunkar who published the *Vichar Lahari* in the same year. This paper was published on alternate Thursdays and was giving the date according to the Hindu calendar. It claimed to be a protagonist of true religion and antagonist of pseudo-religions. As its motto it had *Satya* (truth) and *Shanti* (peace). Through the columns of the *Vartaman Dipika* and the *Vichar Lahari*, quite a tough fight was given to the missionaries.

While attacking the missionaries, Vishnubuva ridiculed the social reformers who were candid enough to accept the weak points of the Hindu system. He also ran down those who preached the study of western knowledge. This attitude brought him in conflict with Bhau Mahajan of the *Prabhakar*. The *Prabhakar* effectively stood against the vituperation poured on the reformers by the *Vartaman Dipika*. The monthly subscription of the *Prabhakar* was twelve rupees as against five rupees of the *Vartaman Dipika*. Naturally the latter had a greater sale. To counteract this Bhau Mahajan started another paper called the *Dhoomketu*, whose subscription was four rupees only. Through the columns of the *Dhoomketu*, Vishnubuva was criticised for his reactionary views. Bhau Mahajan, however, was fair enough to allow Vishnubuva to publish his replies in the *Dhoomketu* itself.

In the infancy of Marathi journalism, it was but natural that papers should be published in Bombay and Poona. But the mofussil areas were not very far behind. Nana Moroji Trilokekar (1822-1895) from Bombay who was a chief clerk in the office of the Political Agent at Kolhapur started the *Vartaman Sangrah* in 1853. Within a short time the *Jaganmitra* (1859) from Ratnagiri and the *Shubh Suchak* (1858) from Satara made their appearance. The district papers were comparatively small in size and had a limited circulation. Yet, the very fact that within twenty years of the publication of the first Marathi newspaper in Bombay, papers should have been started in the districts speaks about the deep roots taken by Marathi journalism in a short time.

That the aim of the early Marathi newspapers was the spread of knowledge is implicit in their very titles. Titles like *Jnyanodaya*, *Jnyan-prakash*, *Prabhakar*, *Mitrodaya*, *Arunodaya*, *Suryodaya*, *Dhoomketu*, *Kiran* etc. denote the rise and spread of light. The papers kept themselves true to the names. In the early days of the contact with the west the Marathi newspapers rendered great service to the people by carrying the western knowledge to the people.

While the *Jnyan-prakash* was spreading its light in Poona, the *Prabhakar* in Bombay slowly died out. This was a period of the beginning of political awakening in Maharashtra. In the social field also the reformers were trying to advance their views. At such a time the need of a well balanced newspaper was very keenly felt. Lokhitwadi, who had played a prominent part in bringing out the *Jnyan-prakash* in Poona, was now in Bombay. He always looked upon newspapers as a powerful weapon to advance the cause of social reforms in which he evinced keen interest. Especially because of his efforts the *Induprakash* appeared in Bombay in 1862. With the *Induprakash*, begins the second stage of Marathi journalism.

The *Induprakash* was a bilingual paper. Its Marathi side was looked after by Vishnu Parsharam Pandit, commonly known as Vishnushastri Pandit (1827-1876). Actually Vishnushastri was in Poona when the paper was started, but in 1864 he retired from the Government service and accepted assistant editorship of the paper in Bombay. He was born in a Shastri family, yet had an open mind on matters social. He detested the tradition-loving orthodoxy and wished to alter the unhealthy traditions. He was one of those who had correctly understood the changing times. Because of his writing, the *Induprakash* soon became a leading paper in Maharashtra. The paper was fortunate enough to get the services of a person like M. G. Ranade⁸ (1842-1901) to edit its English section. Through the columns of this paper Ranade wrote a number of thought provoking articles on social and political subjects. He contributed an article on the battle of Panipat, the language of which was too sharp for the authorities to appreciate. The paper came into lime-light during the controversy about widow remarriage in which Vishnushastri Pandit forcefully put forward the plea of the protagonist before His Holiness the Shankaracharya. Though the verdict of Shankaracharya went against him, his advocacy earned for him and for the *Induprakash* a great name.

After a while Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar⁹ (1855-1923) worked as an editor of the paper for six years. Because of his political activities he had to give up editorship, yet he continued to write under the pen-name 'A Political Rishi.' His writing earned for the paper a distinct place in the sophisticated society. Chandavarkar's editing had acquired for the paper reputation of a first class journal. He was a man of deep erudition and used his pen on diverse subjects.

Within a short time the *Induprakash* became a mouthpiece of the social reformers. A large number of the educated Indians flocked under its banner. For years together the paper made a forceful advocacy for female education, widow-remarriage and such other problems concerning the emancipation of women. In politics the paper, however, followed the moderate line.

When the promoters of the paper found it difficult to continue, at the suggestion of Ranade, Damodar Savalaram Yande¹⁰ organised a limited company and took over the management of the paper. This is perhaps the first instance of a limited company being formed to conduct a newspaper in India. The company started an English paper called the *Indu of Bombay*, in

addition to the Marathi paper. But the English paper could not be continued for long. In 1902 the *Induprakash* became a daily. It ceased publication in 1924.

As he was not in full agreement with the reformist school of thought, Vishwanath Narayan Mandalik¹¹ (1833-1889) started the *Native Opinion*, in 1864. It was first issued only in English, but as a number of people expressed a desire to read Mandalik's viewpoint, matter in Marathi was also added. The first bilingual issue appeared on July 1, 1866. In the very first issue Mandalik declared that he would publish the opinions of 'Natives' without caring for favours or frowns of any one. Because of the erudite articles of Mandalik, the paper soon attained respectability in Indian journalism.

Though Mandalik was the founder and chief contributor of the *Native Opinion*, its editorial responsibility was shouldered by Narayan Mahadeo alias Mama Parmanand (1838-1881). He was for sometime editing the English section of the *Induprakash*. He had good experience of journalism and was known for his English composition. Within a short time he made the *Native Opinion* well known all over. He was studious by temperament, hence his articles were weighty and full of information. He never took extreme sides and maintained a dignified attitude. Mainly because of his writings, Sir Bartle Frere, the then Governor of Bombay, enrolled himself as a subscriber of the paper¹². In 1871, Mandalik had to sever his connection with the paper. Mama Parmanand also took service outside Bombay. Narayan Mahadeo Paranjape and his brother Haribhau managed the paper till 1906 when it closed down.

During its life of about 40 years, the *Native Opinion* expressed fearless views on a number of topics. It wrote very little about social reforms but kept its forum open for discussion of a large number of subjects. Both the *Induprakash* and the *Native Opinion* got the support of the educated class in Bombay. Both of them, therefore, could publish erudite articles and educate the reading public. Because of this both the papers earned for themselves a proud place in Indian journalism.

After the establishment of the Prarthana Samaj, the promoters felt the need of a paper to propagate their views. For this purpose they started the *Subodh Patrika*, in Marathi and Gujarati. Its first issue was published on May 1, 1874. In 1897 Dwarkanath Govind Vaidya became the editor of the *Subodh Patrika*. For about half a century he carried on the paper with a missionary zeal. He wrote mainly about religious matters. There were articles about female education; and other aspects of social reforms, such as the eradication of the caste system and non-worship of idols, also appeared regularly in the *Subodh Patrika*. Persons of the eminence of M. G. Ranade, R. G. Bhandarkar¹³, N. G. Chandavarkar being Prarthana Samajists wrote regularly in the columns of the *Subodh Patrika*. This brought weight to the paper in a short time.

A paper which lived for a very short time, yet which deserves mention was the *Kiran* edited by Mahadeo Ballal Namjoshi. The paper was started in 1877 and lasted only for a couple of years. During this period it wrote

fearlessly about the happenings in the country. After the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, the Indian language newspapers were gagged to a great extent. At this time the *Kiran* wrote an open letter to its correspondents asking them not to be afraid of the Act and go on writing fearlessly. Of course the paper wanted the correspondents to make sure about the truth of the contents of their reports.¹⁴ It promised the correspondents that the editor would bear the entire legal responsibility.

The use of humour mixed with deep satire was the hall-mark of the *Lokakalyanechhu* (1871). An anonymous writer writing under the pen-name *Golya Ghubad* created quite a sensation for a time by his allegorical articles. To an extent this can be looked upon as the beginning of yellow journalism in Marathi.

During this period a few more district papers appeared on the scene. The *Arunodaya* was started at Thana by Kashinath Dhondo Phadke in 1866. Right from the beginning the paper took a strong nationalist attitude. A couple of decades before the establishment of the Indian National Congress, the *Arunodaya* published a series of articles, preaching the formation of political organisations to throw out the foreign rulers. With the rise of Tilak the paper followed him. After 45 years of dynamic existence it was closed by the British Government in 1911.

The *Arunodaya* was followed by the *Suryodaya* at Thana (1867), the *Khandesh Vaibhava* at Dhulia (1867), the *Jnyan Sagar* at Kolhapur (1869) and a host of other papers in a number of districts. Even in Portuguese Goa, the *Deshsudharnechhu* was published in 1877. The *Belgaon Samachar* (1864) at Belgaon, the *Nasik Vritta* (1863) at Nasik and the *Satyashodhak* (1871) at Ratnagiri may be cited as typical instances of district papers. Of these the *Belgaon Samachar* (Belgaon), the *Shubha-Suchak* (Satara), the *Jnyan Sagar* (Kolhapur), the *Kalpataru-Anand-Vritta* (Sholapur), the *Khandesh Vaibhav* (Dhulia) and the *Satyashodhak* (Ratnagiri) enjoyed a very long life.

In the middle of the 19th century Jotirao Phule (1827-1890) began to thunder against the exploitation of the so-called lower castes by the Brahmins. His heart was moved at the miserable condition of the sons of the soil. To ventilate the grievances of the down-trodden, his friend Krishnarao Bhaskar started the *Deenabandhu* in 1877. The paper soon became a powerful organ to carry on propaganda for ameliorating the condition of the toiling millions. The paper made a forceful plea for the eradication of the caste system. For a long time the social reform movement was led by the higher caste Hindus. Their views found a place in papers like the *Induprakash* and the *Subodh Patrika*. With Jotiba the movement became militant in which a number of non-Brahmins took part. Their voice was echoed in the *Deenabandhu*. The paper soon became almost the official organ of the Satyashodhak Samaj founded by Jotiba on September 24, 1873.¹⁵

So far we have referred to papers in general. On September 8, 1877 a new paper called the *Satyaprakash* was started by Uben Abraham Karlekar. This paper was meant for the Marathi-speaking Jewish community. A large

number of these people live in Bombay city and Kolaba district. They are known there as Bene Israel. The *Satyaprakash* was the first communal paper in India.

Generally the newspapers of this period followed a pro-Government policy. Quite a few of them were edited by the newly educated class, some of whose members had their eyes dazzled by the western civilization. Very naturally they wrote preaching the cause of social reforms. Some of the social reformers like Lokhitwadi were persons who had pondered deeply over the Hindu social institutions. They used the Marathi press as a medium for educating their brethren. The work of the *Durpun*, the *Prabhakar*, the *Jnyan-prakash*, the *Induprakash* and the *Native Opinion* is worth mentioning in the history of social reform movement in India.

On rare occasions some of the papers did criticise the Government actions. Mention must be made in this respect about the Deccan Riots of 1875-1876, the dethronement of Malharrao Maharaj Gaikwad, the enlargement of the powers of the Secretary of State for India, the repeal of import duty on cotton and rumoured restrictions on the liberty of the press and such other events which were hotly discussed through the columns of the press.

Slowly the Marathi press had also started taking interest in international affairs. Quite a few articles were written about the Afghan War. The news about European events were also given but not so prominently.

A new age in Marathi journalism began on January 4, 1881 with the publication of the *Kesari* (Lion). The *Kesari* was a paper belonging to the young batch who had started the Deccan Education Society in 1880. Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar,¹⁶ Bal Gangadhar Tilak¹⁷, Vaman Shivram Apte, Ganesh Krishna Garde, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar¹⁸, and Mahadeo Ballal Namjoshi were the signatories to the advertisement which appeared in the June 1880 issue of the *Nibandhamala* (edited by Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar). The paper was to be in Marathi. Instead of adding an English section to the paper the promoters decided to issue an English paper called the *Mahrata*. In having an English and a Marathi paper, Chiplunkar and his colleagues followed the old practice of writing in Marathi the matter meant for the consumption of the local people, and publishing in English the matter which required the attention of the ruling class.

In the advertisement, the promoters declared that in addition to social and political news there would be special articles on social and political institutions and full information about the discussion in the British Parliament about Indian affairs. They also promised to give book reviews. In the first year Chiplunkar, Agarkar and Tilak wrote a number of articles. By the end of 1881 the *Kesari* severely criticised the Diwan of Kolhapur for ill-treating the Chhatrapati.¹⁹ The Diwan sued for defamation. As the correspondent could not give sufficient evidence, Tilak and Agarkar were sentenced to imprisonment for hundred and one days.²⁰ This was the first prosecution of editors in the field of Marathi journalism. It created a halo round the heads of Tilak and Agarkar. The direct result of this was that the sale of the *Kesari* went up by leaps and bounds. The age of appeals and en-

treaties was fading out and a new age of demand for rights was dawning on the horizon.

Chiplunkar died in 1882. The *Kesari* was then managed by Agarkar and Tilak. Both were working as professors at the Fergusson College, Poona, which the Deccan Education Society had founded in 1885.

Within a short time a dispute arose between them about the priority to be given to social or political reforms. Agarkar held very strong views about social reforms. He was for all round change for the better in the Hindu institutions. His articles were severely critical of the orthodoxy. Tilak on the other hand believed in organising the people to fight the foreign rulers. Though he was personally in favour of social reforms, he believed that a merciless attack on age-old traditions might bring a split in the nationalist ranks. He, therefore, did not agree with Agarkar's policy. The rift became acute and in 1887 Agarkar severed his connections with the *Kesari*.

Agarkar by nature was absolutely outspoken. He could not stand injustice in any field. The religious tyranny of the orthodox incensed him. He struck hard against the evil practices of the Hindus, such as tonsuring of the widows, child marriage, social ban on widow re-marriage etc. After leaving the *Kesari*, he started the *Sudharak* in co-operation with Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The first issue of the *Sudharak* appeared on October 15, 1888. The paper like many others was a bilingual one. Agarkar wrote in Marathi while Gokhale's articles were in English. Gokhale was of a studious temperament. His well studied articles coupled with Agarkar's thought-provoking matter earned for the *Sudharak* a high place in Marathi journalism within a very short time. Unfortunately Agarkar died in 1895 at the age of 39. After his death Vasudeo Balwant Patwardhan, Sitarampant Deodhar and Vinayak Ramchandra Joshi tried to continue the *Sudharak*, but they failed and the *Sudharak* ceased publication within a short time.

After Agarkar left the *Kesari*, Tilak became the sole editor of the paper. The roars of the lion in political matters were heard in the hills and dales of Maharashtra. In 1896-97 he celebrated the Shivaji festival at Raigad, the capital of Shivaji. Because of the articles he wrote in connection with this festival in the *Kesari* he was prosecuted for sedition under section 124-A of the I.P.C. He was sentenced to a year and a half's rigorous imprisonment. The martyrdom of Tilak made the *Kesari* very popular among the rank and file of Maharashtra. During the agitation against the partition of Bengal, because of Tilak's whole-hearted support to the movement, the *Kesari* earned an all-India reputation. In 1908 Tilak was again prosecuted on the same charge and was sentenced to six years' transportation. During his incarceration, Kelkar²¹ managed somehow to carry on the paper. This was a period of Government oppression. The Press Act of 1910 took a great toll of Marathi newspapers. To run a paper at this time was almost like tight-rope-walking. At a time when a large number of papers succumbed to the wrath of the rulers, the skill of Kelkar enabled the *Kesari* to survive. After his return from Mandalay in 1914, Tilak started the Home Rule Movement. The propaganda he made for this cause and for Indian independence in general made the

Kesari the most popular paper in Maharashtra. During this period the sale of the *Kesari* exceeded the circulation of any other paper in Maharashtra.

A number of newspapers started publication after the *Kesari*. A few may be mentioned here. The *Vartahar* (1889) edited by Balaji K. Raghunathji (Navalkar) was published every Sunday. It gave selected news, including stories of oppression by the white man, and sometimes short readable essays. For a time the *Vartahar* was very popular in Bombay.

In October 1890 Haribhau Apte started the publication of his famous paper the *Karmanuk*. As the meaning of the word is, the paper was meant for entertainment. He already had a name as a novelist through the columns of the *Poone Vaibhav*. In the first issue of the paper Haribhau declared that his aim was to entertain the people, at the same time giving information about scientific and such other subjects. He stated that his paper would try to achieve the same objective as that of the *Kesari* through the medium of amusement. He was very particular that there should be nothing in the paper which would not be in consonance with good taste. He insisted that his paper should be read by all the members of the family and by persons in every strata of society. A number of his novels were serialised in the columns of the *Karmanuk*. The *Karmanuk* was in circulation till 1917.

About 1890 Anandrao Ramchandra Dharadhar started a paper called the *Bhoot*. The paper was published on every *Poornima* (Full Moon day) and every *Amavasya* (New Moon day), hence he called it the *Bhoot* i.e. the *Ghost*. This paper also was mainly devoted to entertainment. The paper started giving cartoons about political and social matters. Perhaps, the *Bhoot* was the first Marathi paper to publish cartoons. Dharadhar was ably assisted by his nephew Sundarrao Ganapatrao Vijayakar. For a time this paper caught the imagination of the people and became very popular. It ceased publication in 1904.

The most important paper in the next decade was the *Kal*. Shivram Mahadeo Paranjape,²² a staunch nationalist, started the paper in March 1898 in Poona, at a time when the political fever was very high. The plague of 1897 followed by the murder of Rand had created a turmoil in Poona. The Government had become very touchy and found sedition in what otherwise would have been looked upon as absolutely harmless. Tilak had already fallen a prey to the executive wrath. Paranjape dared to publish a nationalist paper in such troubled times. He was known for a very satirical pen. He was very well adept in using a style in which words often carried a double meaning. This is evident from the very title of his paper *Kal*. It means time, it also means the God of death. His articles in the *Kal* are now published in ten volumes and are accepted as fine specimens of stylish Marathi. To Paranjape goes the credit of introducing beautiful literary style for journalistic articles. His ardent nationalism and hatred for the British rule brought him into conflict with the authorities. During the last two years of the first decade of the twentieth century the Government brought a heavy hand upon the nationalist press. In 1908 the *Kal* became a casualty of the Government's

hostility. Paranjape was prosecuted and sentenced for sedition. After he went to jail, his paper soon stopped publication.

In 1893 Keshav Purushottam Mehendale started perhaps the first daily in Bombay called the *Mumbai Vaibhav*. In order that the paper should be within the purchasing power of the common man, he priced the paper at only the quarter of an anna. About the same time L.N. Joshi published another daily called the *Gurakhi*. Both the papers got good circulation because of the rise of the nationalist movement in Maharashtra.

Another landmark in the history of Marathi journalism was the *Bhala* (The Spear) published in 1905, by the Bhopatkar brothers, Bhaskar Balwant, Dinkar Balwant and Laxman Balwant. The *Bhala* was more a 'views' paper than a 'news' paper. The Bhopatkars were known for their forthrightness. They wrote pointed articles in support of the nationalist movement. This was a time when the entire country was rocked by the partition of Bengal. On this background the vigorous articles of the editors became very popular with the masses. The Bhopatkars also had a fine literary style. Even now their articles are read by students of Marathi literature.

Within the next five years a number of Marathi newspapers made their appearance. Of these the *Hindu Punch* (Thana, 1909) may be specially mentioned. It was a paper in the style of the *Punch*, which published humorous cartoons. It thus continued the work of the *Bhoot* which had stopped four years earlier. Because of the satirical cartoons the paper became very popular within a short time. Unfortunately, the promoters could not envisage the very thin line between humour and ridicule. The paper strongly supported the Tilak school of extremists. It was therefore very common for it to criticise Gokhale and the moderates. When it went to the length of publishing indecent cartoons about Gokhale, it lost its popularity. Its editor Vaman Balkrishna Ranade was prosecuted for defamation by Gokhale and the paper soon came to an end.

Since the establishment of the Satya Shodhak Samaj by Jotiba Phule, the *Deenabandhu* was published as an organ of the movement for the welfare of the masses. In the beginning of the twentieth century, because of the patronage of Shahu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur, the non-Brahmin movement assumed a militant attitude. To ventilate their views the leaders of the movement started the *Vijayi Maratha* in 1907 at Kolhapur. The paper carried on vigorous attacks on the Brahmin predominance. It made an appeal for the education of the masses and tried to get for the Marathas a high place in the public service as also in society.

As there was no daily to carry on propaganda on behalf of the extremist school, Tilak and his followers organised a limited company to start a daily. This company was called the Rashtramat Publishing Company which started a daily called the *Rashtramat* in 1908. The paper was both a newspaper and a 'views' paper. It published detailed reports about the tours and speeches of the nationalist leaders. The paper soon had to be closed down because of the repressive policy of the Government.

While Western Maharashtra was having a number of newspapers, Berar

and Nagpur did not lag behind. The *Desh Sevak* (1907) from Nagpur followed in the foot-steps of the *Kesari* and the *Kal*. It was conducted by Haripant Pandit, Gopalrao Ogale and Achyutrao Kolhatkar. It was also one of the victims of the Government policy in 1910.

Since the agitation of the partition of Bengal, the Government of India followed a ruthless policy with regard to the nationalist leaders and the nationalist press. In addition to the papers closed down during 1908-10 mentioned above, the Government forced the closure of the *Arunodaya*, the *Vihari* (Thana), the *Swarajya* (Sholapur), the *Pratod* (Islampur), the *Samarth* (Kolhapur) and a host of other papers.

In 1914 Tilak came back from the six years' transportation at Mandalay. His return was a signal for the rejuvenation of the nationalist cause. Within a short time after his release the First World War broke out in Europe. Naturally the reading public was anxious to get the day to day news, both of Tilak's Home Rule Movement and of the War. This demand was fully met by the *Sandesh* started by Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar in 1914. From this date till the death of Tilak in 1920, the period can be called the *Sandesh* Age of Marathi journalism. So great was the work of the *Sandesh*. Kolhatkar was a born journalist. He could correctly put his fingers on the pulse of the public. Under strange captions like *Vatsala Vahininchi Patre* (letters from sister-in-law, Vatsala), *Beta Gulabchya Kan Goshti* (whispering in the ear by daughter Gulab), Kolhatkar discussed serious social and political problems. His style was very interesting. He managed his paper all alone. The obituary of Tilak that he wrote at one stretch covered forty six columns of his newspaper. This may perhaps be an all-time record of an obituary article. He was also very keen on giving news as early as possible to his readers. Even his news reporting was couched in such a fine language that people preferred to read the news from the *Sandesh* rather than from any other newspaper. His articles which are fine illustrations of highflown Marathi are published in a book form in three volumes by Anant Hari Garde.

The Non-Co-operation Movement in the post-war period brought a spate of Marathi journals. To commemorate the services of Tilak a paper called the *Lokamanya*²³ was started with Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, an erstwhile colleague of Tilak and a former editor of the *Kesari*, as the editor. Because of Khadilkar's experienced editing, the paper prospered in a very short time. But within hardly three years Khadilkar left the *Lokamanya* on account of disagreement with the promoters.

On leaving the *Lokamanya*, Khadilkar started his own paper, the *Navakal*, in 1924. This paper is yet in existence. Khadilkar took the side of the No-changers against the Swarajists. Hence his paper soon became the mouth-piece of the Gandhian School as against the *Kesari* which was a staunch supporter of the Swarajists. The political controversy during the twenties was centered round these two papers. For a time Khadilkar made the *Navakal* almost as popular as the *Kesari* which was now edited by Narsimha Chintaman Kelkar.

Though Khadilkar left the *Lokamanya*, it was continued by Bal Ganga-

dhar Kher²⁴ and Dattopant Sawarkar. The *Induprakash* was incorporated with the *Lokamanya*. When Sawarkar became the editor of the *Lokamanya* he formed a limited company to conduct the paper. Yet in spite of his great efforts the paper could not last for long.

In the early twenties two weeklies made a prominent mark. The *Mouj* edited by Anant Hari Gadre was started in 1922 and within a short time became very popular because of the easy popular style of the editor. The *Mouj* catered to the tastes of all types of people. Gadre looked upon Kolhatkar as his *Guru* (Teacher). Following in the foot-steps of his *Guru* who was the first in Marathi journalism to give news and express views about drama and cinema, Gadre devoted quite a good space for these topics. Ramchandra Kashinath Tatnis issued his weekly, the *Vividh Vritta*, in 1923. This was a liberal organ which hit hard against the Gandhian School. Chandrakant Vishnu Bavadekar who wrote under the pen-name *Alamgir* soon popularised his column wherein he used carping criticism about men and matters. The *Vividh Vritta* soon became a representative paper of the anti-Congress group.

In the thirties a paper called the *Lokshakti* was started in Poona specially to carry on propaganda work on behalf of the Congress. Despite the support of the Congress Government the paper could not last long. The Non-Brahmin movement found expression through a few more papers in this period. Mention must be made of the *Garibancha Kaiwari* (Kolhapur), the *Tarun Maratha* (Kolhapur), the *Kaiwari* (Bombay), and the *Majur* (Poona). During this period Bhimrao Ramaji Ambedkar²⁵ formed a granite organisation of the so called untouchables. To give vent to his views he published two weeklies, the *Janata* and the *Samata*. Through these papers he made a powerful plea for the uplift of the untouchables by the untouchables themselves. His vituperation against the caste Hindus could be easily condoned when we take into consideration the inhuman treatment given to the untouchables by the caste Hindus for centuries together.

Similar work in this direction was done by Vinayak Ramchandra Joshi, who revived the *Sudharak* of Agarkar. Following in the foot-steps of the great reformer he made a fervent appeal for radical change in the Hindu customs. While Joshi was trying for a change of heart, Keshav Sitaram Thakare attacked in a vituperative language the orthodoxy through the columns of his paper, the *Prabodhan*. Because of the cutting language used by Thakare, the paper soon became very popular with the reformers in general, and the non-Brahmins in particular. Thakare's main target was the hierarchical caste system. He lent his pen to Ambedkar and others who were trying their best to remove the blot of untouchability from the fold of Hinduism. Unfortunately, both these papers died soon.

Their place was taken by the *Jagaruk* edited by Walchand Kothari and the *Jagruti* of B.B. Palekar. They were soon joined by the *Rastraveer*, published and edited by Desai. All these papers championed the cause of the non-Brahmins and mercilessly exposed the tradition loving orthodoxy.

The other side of the picture was presented by the *Mumukshu* (1907)

edited and published by Laxman Ramchandra Pangarkar, first from Dhulia, then from Nasik. Pangarkar was a great student of the literature of the Marathi saints. He generally defended the orthodox school of thought. He wrote mainly about the *Warkari* section which was comprised of the devotees of Vithoba of Pandharpur. As the paper was published in a time of turmoil, even the *Mumukshu* could not help publishing articles on political matters.

Gajananrao Bhaskar Vaidya believed in welcoming to the Hindu fold, persons who were born in any other religion. For converting such people, who were willing to enter Hinduism, he had established the Hindu Missionary Society. To popularise his views, he started in 1920 the *Hindu Missionary*. Because of his premature death in 1922, the paper proved to be a short-lived one, though his brother Sunderrao continued it for a few years after his death.

During this period a large number of newspapers were being published in various districts in Maharashtra. The *Shubhasuchaka* of Satara, which was started much earlier, completed eighty years of its existence. The *Satyashodak* of Ratnagiri was also continuing its publication. In addition to old papers, the *Aikya* of Satara, the *Balvant* of Ratnagiri, the *Vainateya* of Sawantwadi, the *Kolaba Samachar* of Kolaba, the *Sholapur Vritta* of Sholapur, the *Nagar Samachar* of Ahmadnagar are worth noting. Special mention must be made of the *Karmayogi* of Sholapur. Its editor, Rambhau Rajwade, was sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment by the martial law court of Sholapur for writing about a firing at Sholapur during the martial law regime. Narayanrao Bamangavakar of the *Uday*, a weekly published at Amravati in Berar, made a profound impression during the Non-Co-operation Movement. The *Uday* was perhaps the most widely read paper in Berar. The same distinction was held by the *Maharashtra* in Nagpur. This paper was edited by Gopalrao Ogale. Under his stewardship the paper soon gained such a place, that it was called the *Kesari* of Nagpur, the *Kesari* of Tilak being the most respected paper in Maharashtra.

There were Marathi newspapers outside Maharashtra in the princely states ruled over by Maharashtrian rulers. Of these the *Baroda Vatsal* (1884) of Baroda was perhaps the oldest. It was followed by the *Sayaji Vijaya* in 1893-1894. The *Jayaji Pratap* of Gwalior (1909) was published both in Hindi and in Marathi. The *Shri Shivaji* of Dewas (Sr.) and the *Martand* of Dewas (Jr.) were two other Marathi papers in this area. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, the *Jagruti* and the *Kaptan* of Baroda became quite popular.

In 1923 Avantikabai Gokhale started the *Hind Mahila*, a weekly specially devoted to feminine problems. Unfortunately, it lived only for about three years.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 gave rise to a number of newspapers. During the early thirties, politics was the predominant topic in every paper. Quit India and the Muslim League demand for Pakistan gave fine topics to the newspapers, with

the result that the demand for Marathi newspapers increased to a tremendous extent. There once was a time when a Marathi newspaper was a one-man affair. This was literally true in the case of Kolhatkar of the *Sandesh*, who, sometimes, wrote, composed and printed the paper himself. With a very high increase in the newspaper reading Marathi public, large scale production of newspapers become the norm of the day.

The changing times brought in the Capitalist in the field of Marathi journalism. The Goenkas started publishing the *Lokasatta* (editor, H. R. Mahajani), the *Free Press* group of papers produced the *Navashakti* (editor, P. V. Gadgil), and the Benet Coleman Company very recently added their Marathi paper, the *Maharashtra Times* (editor, D. B. Karnik). All these are in Bombay. The *Navakal* (editor, P. K. Khadilkar) and the *Maratha* (editor, Acharya Atre) are the only two dailies which are owned by private trusts. In Poona, Tilak's *Kesari* has now become a daily and is being edited by his grandson J. S. Tilak. The *Kesari* and the *Sakal* are two Poona dailies which belong to private institutions. In a number of districts quite a few dailies are being published.

National and international political news and comments thereon constitute the chief matter for almost all the newspapers. There is practically nothing to be achieved in social reforms, all that the social reformers wanted to get having been already a reality. The Marathi newspapers give sufficient room for literary topics and news about the literary conferences and the literateurs. Sports, mainly cricket, have also a place of honour in the press.

Quite a few papers, both dailies and weeklies, indulge in foretelling according to the signs of the Zodiac. At one time cross-word puzzles were also a common feature of the press. On the whole, like the press in India in general, the Marathi press is in a prosperous condition.

MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

Balshastri Jambhekar, the pioneer in Marathi journalism, was also the first in the field of magazines and journals. On May 1, 1840 he brought out the *Digdarshan*, the first Marathi journal. This was not only the first in Marathi but the first in any Indian language in Western India. He had given an advertisement in the *Bombay Times* of January 10, 1839. In the advertisement he stated that the *Digdarshan* would be published once a month and that its subscription would be rupees five per year. It was declared that it would contain important news and articles on history, geography, physics, chemistry and general knowledge. It is difficult to state the period during which the journal existed but it must have been in circulation for at least four years. During this period, the *Digdarshan* earned reputation as a scholarly journal.

The Marathi *Jnyanprasarak* appeared in 1850. It was a quarterly journal, which lasted for about fifteen years. Bhau Mahajan, who was editing the *Prabhakar*, started a quarterly called the *Jnyandarshan* in 1854. Even

this journal had to close down within about four years. The *Shalapatrak*, which is yet in existence, started its career in 1861 with the title, the *Poone Pathashala Patrak*. This is the first magazine in Marathi which was meant specially for the school going children.

The *Vividhajnyanvistar*, perhaps the most respected of the Marathi journals, had its first issue published in July, 1867. This journal had a useful existence for over seventy years. As the promoters stated in the first issue, the journal was published for men and women to spend their time in a good manner. The first editor of the journal was Ramachandra Bhikaji Gunjekar (1844-1901), one of the early fiction writers. He was succeeded as editor by Janardanpant Modak (1845-1890). A number of eminent editors added to the reputation of the journal. A number of Marathi *Bakhars* and other valuable historical source material saw the light of the day through the pages of this journal. Students of Maratha history will ever remain indebted to the *Vividhajnyanvistar* for this great service. The paper also has a place of honour in the history of Marathi literature. There were about thirty magazines in circulation when this journal was started. A few of them are mentioned here. The *Nyayashraya* (1866) and the *Vakilancha Sathi* (1867) dealt with law points. The *Jnyanodaya* (1842), the *Taraprasarak* (1850), the *Prabhodaya* (1856), and the *Sayandeepika* (1861) were magazines conducted by the missionaries for spreading Christianity. To counteract their propaganda, the *Vichar Lahari* (1852), the *Chandrika* (1854) and the *Saddharma Deepika* (1866) were published by devout Hindus.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century a spectacular awakening in social and political spheres was clearly visible. In the journalistic world the change was heralded by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar who published the *Nibandhamala*. The pages of the *Nibandhamala* have given a vigorous type of Marathi literature, the like of which is rarely seen. Vishnushastri, known as the Shivaji of the Marathi language, wielded a merciless pen against the admirers of western institutions. He poured venom on Lokhitwadi and Jotiba Phule. By deriding the social reformers, Vishnushastri did retard the social progress to some extent. In the field of politics, however, he inspired the people to organise themselves for regaining the lost freedom. A person endowed with rare intellect, he used all weapons to strike at his opponents. His writing has been called as a reaction to the anti-Hindu propaganda of the missionaries. So far as he confined his pen to controvert the anti-Hindu and pro-Christianity writings, his vituperation is certainly understandable, but when he doubted the integrity of men like Ranade and Bhandarkar who were doing a great service through the Prarthana Samaj, his action cannot be justified. The first issue of the *Nibandhamala* was published in January 1894. The journal lasted exactly for seven years. Vishnushastri's important articles have been published in a book form.

The Sanskrit works and the poetry of the mediaeval saint-poets were published by Ganpat Krishnaji in his magazine, the *Jnyanachandrodaya* (1840) and by Madhavchandroba Dukale through the *Sarva Sangraha* (1866). Certain magazines were issued for special purposes, for instance the *Valmiki-*

Ramayan Katha Mahodaya (1874), the *Kavyartha Deepika* (1874), the *Manusmriti* (1876), and the *Yajnyavalkya Smriti* (1876).

The *Vividhajnyanvistar* started the work of publishing original sources of Maratha history. After a few years Balkrishna Atmaram Gupte issued a magazine entitled the *Kayastha Prabhunchya Itihasachi Sadhane* (1881). Within five years Gupte brought out a large number of original documents recording the services of Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhus to the Maratha State. This was the first journal devoted exclusively to the publication of historical documents. This journal was followed by the *Kavyetihas-Sangrah* (1890), edited by Kashinath Narayan Sane. For nineteen years a number of *Bakhars* and other original documents were published by this journal. In 1897 Dattatraya Balwant Parasnis and Vasudev Vamanshastri Khare edited the *Bharatvarsha* and the *Aitihasik-Lekh-Sangrah*, respectively. Both these journals were meant only for the publication of original documents of Maratha History. This work was carried further by the *Ramdas Va Ramdasi* (edited by Shankarrao Deo) and *Itihas Ani Aitihasik* (1915, edited by Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade). The same work was carried further by the *Itihas Sangrah* and the *Maharashtra Itihas*. In 1910 after the establishment of the *Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal*, the Mandal started its quarterly which has produced a heap of documents in print during the last half a century and more. During the last two years the *Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal* of the *Mumbai Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya* is publishing a journal called the *Itihas Ani Sanskriti* (editor, V. S. Bendre). It may thus be noted that quite a few journals in Marathi undertook the task of giving original documents. Because of this work, it has been now possible to write a cogent history of the Marathas.

Similar work was done by the *Maharashtra Kavi* published by Vinayak Laxman Bhawe. Through this journal the poetry of the saint-poets of Maharashtra was given to the public. They also brought out a lot of historical material. Rajwade translated a number of works and published the same through the journal called the *Bhashantar* (1894). During the life of three years of the journal, historical material in other languages was made available to the Marathi-reading public. Rajwade published a number of books through another journal called the *Grantha Ratnakar* (1898). This type of work was also carried on by V. G. Vijapurkar through his journal, the *Granthamala*. During the twelve years of its existence the *Granthamala* brought out learned essays on religious, social, political and scientific subjects. The journal also published original research documents. Volumes V, VI and VII of Rajwade's *Marathyancha Itihasachi Sadhane* were serialised in this journal.

There were a large number of magazines publishing literature and useful information. Of these the *Manoranjan* was perhaps the most important. Kashinath Raghunath Mitra worked hard to make his magazine very popular. There was a time when almost every Marathi family belonging to the white-collared class was subscribing to the *Manoranjan*. It was seen on the table of every educated person. Modern short story and modern

poetry were popularised by the *Manoranjan*. True to its name, the paper entertained the Marathi public for over twentyfive years. The magazine also started the practice of giving to its subscribers one Marathi novel every year. Another magazine which deserves special mention is the *Chitramaya Jagat* (1910). For the last fiftyseven years this magazine has maintained a place of honour amongst Marathi magazines. It was known for its informative aspect. During the First World War it was publishing a monthly review of the War throughout its duration. This attracted a large number of subscribers. As its name denotes, the magazine is highly illustrated. It is also known for its political criticism.

The *Anand*, the *Balodyan*, the *Khelgadi* and the *Balbodha* were magazines issued for little children. Vasudeorao Apte made the *Anand* very popular within a short time.

There were a few magazines like the *Acharya*, the *Dharma Jagriti*, the *Dharma*, the *Tatvajnyan Mandir*, and the *Purushartha*, which were devoted only to religious and philosophical discussions. The *Vyayam* published matter concerning physical exercise.

In the twentieth century a number of middle class castes in Bombay started magazines giving information about the achievements of their members and events like births, deaths, etc. The circulation of these magazines was restricted only to members of the castes. Perhaps, the first amongst them was the *Prabhu Masik*, belonging to the Pathare Prabhus of Bombay. The magazine continued from 1908 to 1921. After a brief gap, the *Prabhu Sevak* appeared in 1922, but this magazine could not continue for more than a year. In 1923 Ramrao Ganpatrao Vijayakar and Sakharan Vithal Rao started the *Prabhu Prabhat* which is still running (edited by P. S. Navalkar). The Pathare Prabhus, being the original inhabitants of Bombay, have played a leading role in the development of Bombay. The magazine has been an ideal of what a caste magazine should be. Though the Pathare Prabhu caste is only of six thousand souls, it has one more magazine called the *Prabhu Tarun* (editor, V. K. Kothare). The unique feature of this paper is that it is being continuously edited by Vishnu Krishnarao Kothare for the last fortyfour years since its inception in 1923. This may be an all time record in Marathi journalism. The *Daivajnya Prabodhini* of the goldsmith caste, the *Maharashtra Saraswat* of the Saraswats, the *Kshatriya Sanjivani* of the Pathare Kshatriyas, the *Bhandari Vijay* of the Bhandaris, the *Maratha Mitra* of the Marathas are some of the well known caste magazines.

At present there are a large number of Marathi magazines, the leading being the *Kirloskar* and the *Sahyadri*. The latest trend in the Marathi magazines is towards publishing detective and horror stories. Quite a few of them are also tending towards publishing obscene matter. Despite this tendency, on the whole the Marathi magazines are doing a great service to the enrichment of Marathi literature.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE HINDI PRESS

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In December 1819, there appeared *The Gospel Magazine*, a bilingual (Bengali and English) monthly journal containing 16 pages, published by the Bengal Auxiliary Missionary Society. The contents of the first issue (Dec. 1819) are as follows:

The Origin of the Week	...	...	Page	1
Jesus, a Saviour	...	...	„	3
Purification of the Heart	...	...	„	5
Advantage of Early Education	...	...	„	7
History of Christ	...	...	„	11
Mirzapore Chapel	...	...	„	13
Intelligence	...	...	„	16

Like the body of the text, the contents table occupies two columns, English and Bengali.

From the point of view of our inquiry, the importance of this missionary magazine lies in the fact that extracts from it were published in Nagari. A notice to this effect first appears on the back cover of the August 1820 issue. The notice continued in three subsequent issues. In the last announcement, the term “Hinduwee” replaced Nagari. The only copy of the booklet printed on the somewhat rough paper of the period and entitled “Extracts from the Gospel Magazine”, is available in the British Museum Oriental Section, written in Khari Boli. Neither the editor’s name nor that of any contributor is given.

There is no real evidence to show whether the “Extracts from the Gospel Magazine” appeared once or repeatedly, although the several announcements on the back of the parent magazine do suggest that it was a regular feature. Nevertheless, we are not justified, however much we may be tempted to do so, in calling it the first Hindi magazine.

As far as can be ascertained, no mention of either the Bengali ‘Gospel Magazine’ or its ‘Nagari Extracts’ has been made in any history of Hindi journalism.

It was not until May, 1826 that the first Hindi newspaper the *Oodunt Mārtand* in Nagari character appeared in Calcutta. Pandit Jugal Kishore Śhukla, a native of Kanpur and a ‘Proceeding Reader to the Sadar Diwani Adalat’, was its proprietor and Munoo Thakur of Banstalla Gali was its printer.

The following application (Feb. 9, 1826) was made to the Chief Secretary to Government, C. Lushington:

Sir,

Being desirous of publishing a weekly newspaper in the Hindee Language and Deo Nagree character to be entitled 'Oodunt Martand', I beg leave to forward herewith the requisite affidavit verified by myself and Munoo Thakaur before a Magistrate, and to submit the sanction and authority of Government for the same.

(signed by Jugal Kishore)

Thus, according to the Press Ordinance of 1823, a license was issued on Feb. 16, 1826, authorizing Jugal Kishore and Munoo Thakur to publish the paper.

A statement entitled 'Native Publications' was incorporated in the Parliamentary Papers (1831) showing the number of periodical publications and printing presses, under the license of the British Government in the Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay for the years 1814, 1820 and 1830 respectively. In the year 1830, we notice for the first time the record of two Hindi newspapers, the *Oodunt Martand* and the *Bongodooth* (Bangadut).

This confirms the statement that the *Oodunt Martand* was undoubtedly the first Hindi journal.

A contemporary journal, the *Samachar Durpan*, also published a notice to this effect on June 17, 1826 (in Bengali).

नागरी का समाचारपत्र । हाल में इस कलकत्ता नगर से 'उदन्त मार्तण्ड' नामक एक नागरी का नूतन समाचार पत्र प्रकाशित हुआ है, इससे हमारे आह्वाद की सीमा नहीं है । क्योंकि समाचार पत्र दूसरा सम्पत्ति संबंधीय और नाना दिशों के देशों के राजसम्पर्कीय वृत्तान्त प्रकाशित हुआ करते हैं, जिनके जानने से अवश्य ही उपकार होता है ।

The editor reminds his readers that vernacular newspapers were first printed in Bengali, followed by Persian and Urdu. However, he adds,

'There is only one newspaper in Nagri by which the people living as far as Banaras can be benefited.'

Jugal Kishore's own statement which follows is borne out by Marshman's remarks given above.

“यह उदन्त मार्तण्ड जब पहिले पहल हिन्दुस्थानियों के हित के हेतु जो आज तक किसी ने नहीं चलाया पर अंगरेजी ओ पारसी ओ बंगले में जो समाचार का कागज कृपता है उसका सुख बोलियों के जानने ओ पढ़नेवालों को ही हीता है । इससे सत्य समाचार हिन्दुस्थानी लोग देख कर आप पढ़ ओ समझ लें ओ पराई उपेक्षा न करें ओ अपने भाषे की उपज न छोड़ें, इसलिये बड़े दयावान करुणा और गुणानि के निधान सब के कल्याण के बिषय गवरनर जेनेरल बहादुर की आयस से जैसे साहस में चित्त लगाय के एक प्रकार से यह नया ठाट ठाटा ।

The above lines prove that the *Oodunt Martand* was the first newspaper to appear in Hindi and also make clear the ideals cherished by the editor in establishing it.

Unfortunately, the paper was discontinued after December 1827, because its circulation was not sufficient to meet the cost of publication nor did it receive any financial support from the Government. Thus the paper was published for a year and a half (i.e. 23rd May 1826 to 4th December 1827). There were 79 issues of the newspaper.

After two years the *Bangadoot*, a Hindi weekly edition of *The Bengal Herald*, was published (1829) every Saturday. Its proprietors were R. M. Martin, Raja Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Prosonno Coomar Tagore, Nil Ratan Halder and Rajjisen Singh. Through the columns of this paper, Rammohan Roy propagated his religious beliefs.

The early history of newspapers in North Western Provinces is a placid one. There were no significant causes or controversies over closely contested issues to stimulate the press. Government found it necessary to encourage the publication of books and newspapers by various devices.

One of the first newspapers, the *Soobdut-ool-Ukhbar*, was started in 1833 by Munshi Wajid Ali Khan, in Persian. He was the editor and proprietor and commanded respect both for his tact and ability. His paper was subsidised monthly by five rulers and a rich merchant.

The first Hindi newspaper to appear in the North Western Provinces was the *Banaras Akhbar*. It was published in Banaras in 1845 under the guidance of Raja Shiv Prasad, and its editor was Raghunath Thatte, a Maratha. The journal seems to have contained only local news and a piece of translation from Sanskrit books on Law was given in every issue. There were only 44 subscribers.

As regards language, the editor was guided by the ideals of Raja Shiv Prasad who was in the Education Department. He directed his efforts towards evolving a common language for Hindus and Muslims which could be written in either script, Persian and Nagari. He always believed in the employment of such words which are 'Amfaham and Khaspasand', common and popular.

Later this aim was restated by Raja Shiv Prasad in the preface to his book *Itihastimirnasak* (Vol. 2) in the following words:

"I may be pardoned for saying a few words here to those who always urge the exclusion of Persian words, even those which have become our household words from our Hindi books, and use in their stead Sanskrit words, quite out of place and fashion or those coarse expressions which can be tolerated only among a rustic population... I have adopted, to a certain extent, the language of the Baital Pachisi."

The *Banaras Akhbar* which was published under the patronage of Raja Shiv Prasad was lithographed in the Nagari script. The language of the *Banaras Akhbar* is Hindusthani, but in certain places the introduction of a considerable number of Perso-Arabic words compels us to recognise it as Urdu.

According to Garcin de Tassy, the circulation of this newspaper was limited to cultured Hindus, as it was written in 'hindi recherche', mixed

with Sanskrit words, and was, as regards style and production, superior to the other 'hindoustani' journal of the same name.

This suggests that the *Banaras Akhbar* was in fact bilingual, written in Hindi and Urdu (Tassy's 'hindoustani'). Tassy has also drawn attention to the number of Sanskrit words in the Hindi issue of the *Banaras Akhbar*.

R. K. Das tells us that the *Banaras Akhbar* was the first newspaper in Hindi, but from the evidence noted earlier it is clear that the *Oodunt Martand*, which appeared in 1826, can claim this distinction.

Another paper, the *Martand*, was published from Calcutta in 1846, under the editorship of Maulvi Nasiruddin. The paper was pentaglot. It was published in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Persian and English, providing five columns for the respective languages. Tassy says that the effort was not a success and compares the attempt made in Europe for the production of multi-lingual newspapers.

R. K. Das further states that a journal entitled the *Sudhakar* was published in 1850 under the editorship of Tara Mohan Mitra. He describes this publication as the first Hindi journal and contrasts its language with that of the *Simla Akhbar* and the *Malwa Akhbar*. He thinks that the latter two were probably written in Urdu, whether printed in Nagari or in Persian character. As we have already seen, he had at another place called the *Banaras Akhbar* the first Hindi journal.

The *Banaras Akhbar*, we know, was mainly an Urdu production, but the *Sudhakar*, according to Marshman later referred to, was in a pure Hindi style. We can only suppose that R. K. Das changed his mind about what constituted 'Hindi' between viewing the two publications.

Marshman in his article 'The Native Press in the North Provinces' wrote:

"There are to present seventeen lithographic presses established in those Provinces, from which newspapers and periodicals in the native languages are issued, independent of such as are conducted by Christian Missionaries at Mirzapore and elsewhere."

The editor listed seventeen newspapers, the last three (Nos. 15-17) being in the Nagari character. These were: the *Banaras Akhbar* (Govind Rugonath Thutteh), the *Soodhakar* (Pundit Ratneshur Tewaree) and the *Simla Ukhbar* (Seikh Ubdoolah).

Elsewhere in the same article, Marshman pointed out that the language of the *Banaras Akhbar* and the *Simla Akhbar* was Urdu but the character was Nagari.

From the statement quoted above two facts emerge. In the *Simla Akhbar*, Nagari character was employed; and the *Sudhakar* which has, so far, been regarded as published in 1850, proves to be an earlier publication, and must have been produced prior to 1848, the date of Marshman's article. As *The Friend of India* was a contemporary journal, the information given in the article referred to cannot be ignored.

The *Sudhakar* was a bilingual paper, but later (1853) it became unilingual. The editor of the Hindi issue was Pt. Ratneshwar Tiwari. The language

was Khari Boli and as such was opposed to the language policy of Raja Shiv Prasad. However it shared the Raja's social and political views.

The *Malwa Akhbar* published at Indore, under the editorship of Dharam Narayan, was a bilingual paper with two columns, Hindi and Urdu.

A children's paper entitled the *Balkō ke liye Phulō kā hār* was printed in 1850 at the Orphan Press, Mirzapore. The name of the Press and the contents suggest that it was a missionary enterprise although the editor's name is not given.

In 1850, Jugal Kishore, publisher of the *Oodunt Martand*, brought out another newspaper, the *Samyabad Martand*, which continued upto April 1852. Jugal Kishore seems to have shown considerable interest in encouraging Hindi journalism and can be considered as one of the pioneers in this field.

A certain Munshi Sadasukhlal, who was well-versed in Urdu, Hindi and English, commenced editing a paper, the *Budhi Prakash*, in Agra in 1852. Sadasukhlal owned a press. Besides the Hindi paper, he published another one, the *Nur-ul-absar*, in Urdu.

In 1854 the *Samachar Sudha Varshan* (daily) appeared as a bilingual paper, Hindi and Bengali, in Calcutta. It was edited by Shyam Sundar Sen and it contained one page Bengali and one Hindi.

"The news items and editorials were written in Bengali but news relating to merchandise, ships, market reports and other items connected with business were written in Hindi as well."

Thus we see that from 1845 onwards, Hindi newspapers appeared in the three main towns, Calcutta, Banaras and Agra. The language of the majority of the newspapers cited above is Khari Boli with its dialectical and regional flavour. The chief editors were Jugal Kishore, Raja Shiv Prasad, Munshi Sadasukhlal and Raja Rammohan Roy. The last, a Bengali, ventured to produce a standard literary Khari Boli style, probably assisted by his knowledge of Sanskrit. He could not entirely avoid, however, the influence of his native tongue in his writing.

Of all the editors, Munshi Sadasukhlal was the most outstanding both for his language and for his choice of subject matter. This may be due to his close association with education. His concern for female education marks him as well in advance of the thought of his day. In fact, in many ways he was modern and his style came very close to that of the later nineteenth century.

THE URDU PRESS AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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There were a large number of Urdu newspapers in India. Among them I have picked a few—the *Hindustan*, the *Akhbar-i-Am*, the *Sahifa-i-Qudsi*, the *Rafiq-i-Hind*, the *Nur-i-Afshan* and the *Pisa Akhbar*. These belong to Northern India.

This paper is a study of the attitude of the Urdu Press to the Indian National Congress in the first two decades of its life. The Urdu newspapers gave full publicity to the Indian National Congress. Even those which opposed the Congress gave all the details pertaining to it. One feels that the tone of some of the pro-Congress papers was of a higher standard than that of the papers of the opposite camp.

Mohammad Ali Bheemji, a patriot and a noble Congress worker of Bombay, had toured all over Northern India. He visited Delhi, Lahore, Peshawar, Gujrat (Punjab) and other places where he tried to spread the gospel of the Indian National Congress.

When he arrived in Delhi, the nationalist party had distributed handbills for his meeting. The anti-nationalist party prepared to counteract its effects. In Delhi it was more of a demonstration against Md. Ali Bheemji. Dr. Nazir Ahmad was asked to speak on the mission of Md. Ali Bheemji.¹

“On the insistence of some of my friends I broke my silence, as my friends said my talk would give the Muslims a correct appraisal of the aims and ideals of the Congress. One of my friends brought me a handbill of Bheemji. Pointing his finger to the word *National Congress*, he asked me to explain what it meant.” Dr. Nazir Ahmad talked in this strain and said even educated persons did not know what the term ‘national’ meant. He dealt at length why the Congress was formed and gave reasons. He said that many Indians had passed examinations and sought jobs. These disgruntled jobless persons, who failed to get employment, had started the agitation. He paid high tribute to the British Government. He said Indians should be thankful to the British Government for what it had done for them. Indians should fear the Russians more than any other. After all, he said, a known enemy was better than an unknown one. Then he sampled out instances to show how the Indian National Congress failed to reduce the Salt-tax and remove the Arms Act. He made a capital out of it. Who was Bheemji? It was even difficult to pronounce his name. What were his credentials? Perhaps, he was one of the disgruntled job seekers. The *Sahifa-i-Qudsi*, commenting on the speech of Dr. Nazir Ahmad, said the audience understood the meaning of the word national and the Congress had no right to call itself national.

In Pesahwar when Md. Ali Bheemji delivered a series of lectures for the propagation of the aims and ideals of the National Congress, he was heckled and pestered. Some members even shouted him down to resume his seat. Mr. Ajodhi Pershad read extracts from the English text and gave its gist in Urdu.

In support of his thesis, Bheemji read extracts from the speeches of John Bright and Richard Temple to show how the British Government had failed to keep up to the promises of the Queen, for equal opportunities in services, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. He brought to the notice of the audience how much the economic drain had turned India into a poor country and how the educated Indians found the doors of services closed. Were not these evidences sufficient to prove the high-handed policy of the British Government? he asked. These facts fell flat on the ears of the Pathans who were given better amenities of life by the British Government. Why should they care for a few jobless B. As! says the paper.

Bheemji addressed the people in Guzrat (Punjab).

The *Rafiq-i-Hind*, the *Noor-i-Afshan* and the *Civil and Military Gazette* wrote editorials and reported his speech with pungent remarks.²

The feeling of antagonism against the Congress could be gauged when we find that the Anjuman-i-Islami, Lahore, took its members to task for treating Bheemji as its guest.³

One member had reminded the Association of the resolution which said that no member should attend any meetings addressed by Bheemji. The members who supported the Congress were to be expelled from the membership of the Association.

Another resolution read, "Should not Shaik Omar Baksh, who took the Chair when Bheemji delivered his speech be removed from the membership of the Association? Should not Shaik Omar Baksh be punished because Bheemji remained his guest? An inquiry committee was to be appointed to take necessary action."

Thus we find Shaik Omar Baksh, who supported the Congress point of view and helped the Congress, was punished by the Anjuman.⁴

Bheemji arrived at Lahore. To counteract the effect of the Congress, the Central National Muhammadan Association held its meeting on 7th November 1888 under the chairmanship of Babu Miran Baksh. It passed a number of resolutions:

1. That the Association looks on to the work of the Congress with suspicion, as it was creating ill feelings between the British Government and the people. It endangers peace.
2. The Association had no sympathy with the mission of Bheemji.
3. The Association had decided to boycott the meetings wherever Bheemji speaks for the Congress.
4. But the Association would like Bheemji to address the public when the Lahore Muslims hold their meeting."

One of the members passed disparaging remarks against Bheemji and said that as he could not make a living in any other way, he had taken up this work as a paid agent of the Congress. This was the most unkind cut.

Another member exhorted the Muslims to avoid any contact with Bheemji because he was creating ill feelings among the Muslims and also against the Government. He said that the British Government had been just and kind to Indians. It was disgraceful for the educated persons to be ungrateful to the Government.

Thus generated suspicion and distrust. Any move by the Congress was looked upon with suspicion and at times was thought seditious.

In spite of all these troubles and worries Bheemji stuck to his work. He moved to Multan. Here he found that the people boycotted him. He could not get a house on rent. Thanks to the efforts of Lala Harishchander and Babu Mohendernath, at last he got a house. He printed a number of hand bills and posters and got them widely distributed. Under the chairmanship of Hakim Shah Baksh, he addressed the people, but a large number of Muslims boycotted him.⁵

The Muslims generally stood aloof under the guidance of Sir Sayyid. Sir Auckland Colvin, the Lt. Governor of the N. W. Provinces at that time, made no secret of his hatred for the Congress. Raja Shiv Prashad and others too joined Sir Sayyid against the Congress. The hostile atmosphere was so much worked up that it was even thought that the Allahabad Session would prove the grave of the Nationalist Movement. Thanks to the bold spirit of Ajodhya Nath, everything went on smoothly. Sir Sayyid established the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886. Two years later i.e., 1888, the United Indian Patriotic Association was formed in Aligarh, which was distinctly hostile to the Congress. Then came into existence the Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India, which distinctly showed the separatist tendencies, and it was patted by the Government.

In the first Session of the Association Mr. T. Beck delivered a speech of which an extract is sufficient to show how the separatist tendencies were allowed to sprout.

"For the last few years there are two kinds of agitation which have been gaining strength in the country—the one is the National Congress and the other is a movement against cow slaughter. Of these the first is entirely opposed to the Englishmen and the second movement is against the Mussulmans. The object of the National Congress is that the political power of the English Government should be transferred to some groups among the Hindus We must therefore carry on the propaganda in favour of true loyalty and unity of action."⁶

The Aligarh school of thought opposed the representative principle and said that the Congress had no right to call itself a national association. But Badruddin Tyabjee in his Presidential address denied their charge, when he said:

"Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community, the Mussulman community, has kept aloof from the proceedings of the two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true and applies to one particular part of India,

and is moreover due to certain special local and temporary cause (Hear, Hear and Applause), and in the second place, no such reproach can, I think, with any show of justice be urged against the present Congress.”

In the Calcutta Session of 1896, under the Presidentship of Sayani, the Congress congratulated Gladstone on his birthday. Mr. Ismail of the Aligarh party protested against it, saying that Gladstone had injured the feeling of the Muslims by his deprecatory remarks against the Sultan of Turkey. His objection was over-ruled by the President. Therefore, the *Pioneer* made a capital out of it.⁷

The *Akhbar-i-Am* said that the Aligarh party was enraged because of Gladstone's deprecatory remarks on the Sultan, but why should it remain silent when Lord Salisbury passed worse remarks than Gladstone. Was the Aligarh party very sincere in its respect and faith towards the Sultan? It claimed that it represented all the Muslims; if so, who had denounced Sir Sayyid as infidel? Certainty it was not the nationalist Muslims of the Congress.⁸

The Muhammadan Education Conference had its session in Meerut. The *Akhbar-i-Am* said that the Aligarh party passed a number of resolutions against the Municipal elections. It upheld the Government expenditure on the military establishment saying that it was better qualified than anybody else on defence affairs etc.

Further, the *Akhbar-i-Am* opined that those resolutions were passed rather to stress the show of loyalty of the Muslims in opposition to the National Congress. That was all. No constructive resolutions for the people were moved.⁹

The Urdu Defence Association, which espoused the cause of Urdu, in a short time found its house divided. Nawab Lutf Ali Khan, the President-elect, fearing the displeasure of the Lt. Governor, resigned. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk passed scathing remarks against Khan Bahadur Lutf Ali Khan.¹⁰ Thus Hindi-Urdu controversy added more fuel to the fire.

The *Hindustani* analysed the causes as to why the Aligarh school of thought had adopted such an attitude. It opined that it was a defeatist attitude which in the long run would do no good to them.

The *Pisa Akhbar* defending the Aligarh school of thought gave the reasons. The Muslims should not take hasty actions to displease the Government which had been good to them.¹¹

It was a leap in the unknown. What chances were there for the Congress to succeed?

The Muslims being backward in education would not be able to assert themselves in the Congress.

The *Akhbar-i-Am* said that it would not comment on the first argument. To say that the Muslims should not leap in the unknown was pessimistic and futile. They should be bold and brave, with faith in the Congress. Without agitation, nothing could be achieved.

As for the last argument, it said that the Muslims should see that as

far as possible a large number be educated. But the lack of education argument should not be stressed too far. In other words it meant inferiority complex. Get over it the sooner the better. The Muslims would then certainly assert their rights. Therefore the *Akhbar-i-Am* appealed to the Muslims to join the Congress *en-masse* and from within assert their rights.¹²

The Government's policy of patting the Muslims against the Congress and then turning its back on them in the Hindi-Urdu controversy gave the Aligarh party a severe shock. It mellowed down their stiff stand. Hazrat Mohani and Abdul Qayum Baqi were able to win a great number of members of the Aligarh party to their side.

The work of Hazrat Mohani and his great sacrifices in the national struggle fall out of the scope of the present study. Maulana Abdul Qayum Khan Baqi's lengthy but convincing articles, interspersed with quotations from the Holy Koran, on the Muslims and the Congress even now deserve careful study.

REFERENCES

1. *Akhbar-i-Sahifa-i-Qudsi*, dated 18th October, 1888.
2. *Rafiq-i-Hind*, dated 27th October, 1888.
3. Ibid. Note that Shaik Omar Baksh later on became the President of the Standing Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress. Vide, *Akhbar-i-Am*, dated 19th December, 1895.
4. Mohammad Ali Bheemji, was a Khoja businessman of Bombay, widely travelled, and a social worker. Annie Besant speaks very highly of his work. He toured Europe and United Kingdom at his own expense in 1901 to explain the point of view of the Indian National Congress. Vide, Annie Besant, *India A Nation*, P. 70, *Akhbar-i-Am*, dated 23rd July, 1901.
5. *Sahifa-i-Qudsi*, dated 6th September, 1888.
Note: Read the speeches of the Maharaja Eshwari Pershad Narayan of Benares, 20th July 1880, Benares Institute, and also of Raja Beenga. These two were the followers of Raja Shiv Pershad. Vide *Akhbar-i-Am*, dated 21st May, 1894.
6. A series of letters were addressed to the Editor of *Akhbar-i-Am* pleading for Hindu-Muslim unity and stating that they should not waste energy in petty quarrels. They also discussed the pros and cons of the question of cow slaughter. The writer pleads that the policy of give and take is the best, and it would cement unity.
7. *Akhbar-i-Am*, dated 10th January, 1897.
Note: The *Sirmour Gazette*, and the *Akhbar-Punjab* gave full publicity to the work of Sir Sayyid Ahmad.
8. *Akhbar-i-Am*, dated 10th January, 1897.
9. Ibid. dated 18th January, 1897.
10. Ibid. dated 19th September, 1900.
11. *Pisa Akbhar*, dated 2nd February, 1901.
12. Ibid.

Note: The *Kasim-ul-Akhbar* and *Manshur-i-Muhammadi* of Bangalore wrote much against Sir Sayyid Ahmad and also criticised the Christian Missionaries' work.

Mr. Aziz, a correspondent of the *Akhbar-i-Am*, had sent a letter from London to Dadabhai recommending that the Indian National Congress should hold its session in London. Dadabhai's reply appears in the issue of the *Akhbar-i-Am* dated 11th November, 1898.

Note: Correspondence between Sir Sayyid Ahmad and Surendranath Banerji and the meeting between Sir Sayyid and Mr. A. O. Hume show clearly that Sir Sayyid Ahmad opposed the Congress for its ideology of democratic institutions. Perhaps a detailed study of these correspondence which are preserved in the Archives of Aligarh University might throw some more light on this subject.

THE HISTORY OF THE TAMIL PRESS

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The Tamil press is typical of the rest of the Indian press in that it is a plant of recent growth. While the first newspaper was published in England in 1622, the earliest Tamil periodical appeared only in 1831. One reason for the late origin is the late introduction of the printing press in India. A second reason is that Tamil prose itself is comparatively of recent origin.¹ Early Tamil literature was principally in the form of poetry, and even when prose appeared, it was of an ornate variety. It is but recently that the Tamil prose has made an attempt to appeal to the masses. The slow development of primary education was another factor responsible for the tardy growth of the press. Moreover, the rule of foreigners in the country through the medium of the English language, the repressive press legislation and the imposition of heavy taxes on the press were other factors which retarded the development of the press. Finally, the outlook of the average citizen, including that of the educated classes, continued to be of the old traditional pattern until recently. There was hardly any craving for news about other people or other countries.

The earliest attempts at establishing contact with the masses through the press were made by the Christian missionaries. The first Tamil periodical known as the *Tamil Magazine* was produced by the Christian Religious Tract Society in 1831. This was followed by the earliest Tamil weekly called the *Dina Vartamāni*, which was published in Madras about the year 1856. This may be considered as the earliest newspaper of importance. Though both of them were largely devoted to religion, the *Dina Vartamāni* provided also the outstanding items of news.

The first Tamil newspaper as such was the *Swadēśamitran*, started by G. Subrahmania Aiyar in 1882; but for some years, it was not regular. It appeared as a weekly for a time and then as a tri-weekly. The *Hindu* and the *Swadēśamitran* were being conducted by the same person till about 1898, when G. Subrahmania Aiyar left the *Hindu* and concentrated on the *Swadēśamitran*, which he converted into a daily in 1899.

Till 1917, the *Swadēśamitran* was the only Tamil daily. Towards the end of 1917, a new daily by name *Dēśabhaktan* appeared with the illustrious Tamil scholar, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar as editor. He was succeeded by V. V. S. Aiyar, who, too, was an eminent scholar and a political rebel. Both these writers were able to introduce a remarkable style of Tamil writing, which was at once natural and elegant. Though this paper ceased

(1) The credit of introducing the printing press and developing the Tamil prose goes to the early Christian missionaries.

publication towards the end of 1920, it must be acknowledged that made a great contribution to the development of Tamil style.

Meanwhile, in 1904, G. Subrahmanya Aiyar had employed young Subrahmanya Bharathi as sub-editor. This formed a landmark in the history of the *Swadēśamitran*, no less than in that of Tamil journalism, because Bharathi proved himself in due course to be the greatest poet of nationalism in the Tamil country. Besides, he was a gifted writer in Tamil prose as well. It is said that "he wrote with effortless simplicity and unfailingly reached the understanding of ordinary people. At the same time he wrote elegantly and incisively."

His feelings were deeply stirred by the Partition of Bengal, and he started, in co-operation with a few followers of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, two weeklies, *India* in Tamil, and *Bāla Bhārathi* in English. Very soon, on account of the Government's persecution, he had to exile himself to Pondicherry. But the Government banned the entry of his papers into India. Deprived of sustenance from the major part of the Tamil country, the papers died in 1910. Subrahmanya Bharathi then turned to his poetic activities and wrote numerous stirring national songs. Later, when he returned to Madras, he rejoined the *Swadēśamitran*, but he died soon after, in his 39th year.

A. Rangaswami Aiyangar became the editor of the *Swadēśamitran* in 1918 and improved the tone of the paper. When, ten years later, he became the editor of the *Hindu*, C. R. Srinivasan succeeded Rangaswami Aiyangar as the editor of the *Swadēśamitran*. In due course, C. R. Srinivasan became a great force in the world of Tamil journalism. For over fifty years he distinguished himself as a front rank journalist. Though forceful and effective, his style was remarkably sober. In 1917, there appeared the *Drāvidan*. At the outset it professed to work for the uplift of the Ādi-Drāvidas. But in course of time it became a champion of the cause of non-Brahmins as a whole. With the introduction of Dyarchy in the Province, it became the organ of the Justice Party, which co-operated with the Government in running the administration.

After the *Dēśabhaktan* ceased publication in 1920, for a time, the only daily with a wide circulation was the *Swadēśamitran*. The second quarter of the present century was conspicuous for the rise in the tempo of the national agitation. Naturally the world of Tamil journalism also felt the impact of this fervour. In 1926, Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu started the daily called the *Tamil Nāḍu*. By virtue of its popular and effective style, it soon became prominent. It proved to be a vigorous champion of Indian freedom. But in 1930, the *Tamil Nāḍu* did not support the Civil Disobedience movement begun by Gandhiji, and therefore, some Congressmen started a new paper, entitled *India*. But, though it had a certain measure of popularity at the outset, in a short time it was unable to support itself financially.

In 1933, there appeared in Chettinad a daily known as the *Sudarmam*. It devoted itself to the cause of faith in religion, and to the condemnation of atheism. But it was a short-lived paper. Similarly, the *Jayabhārathi*, a daily which appeared about this time, served the cause of the national move-

But, on account of its weak financial position, it had to cease publication. In 1934, there arose the *Dinamani* with T. S. Chockalingam as the editor. Soon it shot up to great popularity, and it acquired a higher circulation than all the other Tamil dailies put together. The *Dinamani* made a deliberate attempt at making the contents of the paper intelligible to the new readers. Within a short time after the appearance of the *Dinamani*, the *Tamil Nāḍu* and *India* had to cease publication. In 1939, the *Dinamani* and the *Swadēśamitran* were the only two Tamil dailies in Tamil Nad, barring *Viḍuthalai*, which had entered the field in 1935. But the *Viḍuthalai* was not so much a newspaper as a 'views' paper, because it stood for the removal of social supremacy of the Brahmins and of the caste system in general. Naturally it wrote with great vehemence and roused much bitterness among a certain class of people.

In 1943, T. S. Chokalingam broke with the *Dinamani* and started his own daily called the *Dinaśari*; but it lasted only till 1952. Meanwhile, popular dailies called the *Dinathanthi* and the *Mālai Muraśu* were started in 1942 by S. B. Adityan. The *Nava*, the *Nam Nāḍu*, the *Tamil Nāḍu* and the *Dinamalar* are some of the dailies which have sprung up after 1947.

Prior to our securing independence, the focus of attention on the part of the newspapers was largely on the national struggle. The press in India had contributed its share to the national awakening of the masses and the shaping of public opinion. After independence and the functioning of various regional units, the floodlight was turned away from national to local problems. But care must be taken to see that parochial tendencies are not unduly encouraged, which may prove detrimental to the interests of national integration.

Reviewing the history of the Tamil dailies it is found that before World War I the circulation of the daily newspapers was very limited. The Boer War of 1897 had given some fillip to the curiosity of the educated public. The Russo-Japanese War also helped news-mindedness in a section of the population, and the Swadeshi movement which began in 1906 created an emotional relationship between the reader and his newspaper. But it was unquestionably the First World War that created a thirst for news. Added to that, the national struggle for liberation was steadily gathering momentum.

But in spite of the steady increase in the number of readers in Tamil Nad, as in the rest of India, the position is by no means satisfactory, in comparison with that of other advanced countries. India is not anywhere near the progressive countries, like the U.S.A. There, according to a report prepared by the U.S.I.S. in 1959, as many as 1,855 papers sold over 57 million copies every day to a population of 180 million. On the other hand, in India, with her 430 million people, 318 newspapers sold in that year a meagre 4.2 million copies. Though accurate figures regarding the number of readers of the Tamil newspapers are not available, broadly speaking, the position is similar to that in the rest of India. It has been reckoned that the circulation of Tamil daily newspapers up to 1928 was never more than 12,000.

Among the causes for the comparatively poor demand for newspapers, mention may be made of the concentration of papers in towns and cities, the inadequate facilities of communication to the villages, and the insufficient arrangements and consequent failure to penetrate into rural areas, where the bulk of the population live. But the principal cause is the low average income of the people. The National Sample Survey revealed that the house-hold in urban areas spent a little over 30 Paise a month on newspapers, while for those in the rural areas the figure was less than 3 Paise. The per capita income at the time of the Survey was Rs. 280/-. Naturally in a poor country the price factor is important in determining the circulation of newspapers. One of the causes of the success of the *Dinamani* at the beginning was its attractively low price. When it raised its price later, the circulation fell. During January-February 1951, the price of the paper was increased from 1 anna to 1½ annas, and the average circulation fell from about 67,000 in December 1950 to about 55,000 in these two months. This fall is not surprising, when we remember that in a rural family budget the newspaper comes only at the end of the list, if at all. The Tamils, like the rest of the Indians, are poor. It would, therefore, seem that social ends are better served by keeping the prices of newspapers as low as possible.

Perhaps another factor responsible for the comparatively small range of Tamil newspaper circulation is that full and the latest news regarding sports and games do not find an adequate place in them. Interest in sports is spreading widely, not only among the English educated people, but among others as well. Exhaustive coverage of sports like cricket and tennis, which occupy about 10% of the space of an English newspaper, is not a common feature of Indian language papers. A greater prominence may be given to sports and games not only in order to attract a larger clientele but also to promote further interest in the sports and games themselves.

On the positive side, the history of Tamil journalism shows that certain unfortunate tendencies have crept in, which are likely to endanger the level of journalism. The accepted standards of journalism are often ignored. This temptation is particularly noticeable in the case of new entrants into the field of journalism, who, eager to increase the circulation of their papers by attracting a wider circle of readers, tend to lower the journalistic standards. Sensationalism, rather than veracity, seems to be the governing factor with some raw journalists. Frequently, there occurs a distortion of truth in the presentation of news. Perhaps, a certain measure of 'slanting' is inevitable; but it is absolutely necessary to draw a line between angling and deliberate perversion of truth. Accuracy should be really the primary aim of journalistic ethics.

Still worse, in certain cases, there is a tendency towards vulgarity. A craze for providing news of obscene occurrences is noticeable in the case of certain Tamil newspapers. Scandal-mongering is an allied defect. All these are deeply regrettable.

Another danger arises from newspaper concerns becoming the monopoly of certain capitalists. Journalism should not descend to the level of

an industry, though care should certainly be taken to maintain the financial soundness of every concern. The evil of 'chain newspapers' has appeared in many advanced countries; it has entered the field of Indian journalism, too. This constitutes a menace to the maintenance of the ideals of journalism; moreover, it tends to become undemocratic.

The status of editors has suffered in consequence of the proprietor's domination. It is hardly necessary to emphasise that the future of journalism depends on the independence of the editor. "It is only a valiant crusader who can fight the ever-growing battle against pressures, internal and external, on the newspaper and maintain its integrity."

When the important role that the language press has to play is remembered, no care will be too much to ensure the proper ideals of journalism. The newspaper is at once the educator and interpreter, the real link between the Government and the people, particularly those living in rural areas.

Society has a far greater stake in sound journalism than it realizes. The people must be fully and accurately informed and given all the data necessary for the continuing development of man's personality in a welfare state. The responsibility of the press becomes great particularly in a society such as ours where there is not sufficient volume of public opinion to assert itself or to react to the performance of the press. Though one-sided, the following observation of Thomas Jefferson emphasises the important role of the press. He said: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I would not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter".

Monthlies, Weeklies, Bi-weeklies and Tri-weeklies:

There arose a considerable number of periodicals in the present century. The most prominent among them are the *Ānanda Vikāṭan*, devoted to short stories and humorous skits, the *Kumudam* and the *Kalki*, both of which are literary weeklies, providing topical news as well as short stories. In these weeklies, novels appear in the form of consecutive serials.

From the latter part of the 19th century several periodicals devoted to the propagation of religious doctrines appeared. In respect of Christianity there arose *Snēha Bōdhan* (1875), *Vēda Viḷakkan* (1890), *Vēda Bōda Mata Mōli* (1929) and *Puttuyir* (1950). Journals devoted to Hinduism were numerous. The important ones among them are *Śaiva Udaya Bodhini* (1882), *Indu mata Chirtirutti* (1883), *Śittāndam* (1912), *Drāviḍa Bhāgavadan* (1914), *Irāmānujan* (1918), *Samarasamārgam* (1927), *Śivanēśan* (1927), *Mādava mitran* (1929), *Dhārmika Hindu* (1946) and *Arappōr* (1950).

In respect of Islam there appeared the *Islam Nēśan* (1909) *Tattuva Islam* (1921), and *Dārul Islam* (1922). It is noteworthy that these periodicals devoted to religion were concerned with the exposition of their respective doctrines. They did not directly embark on controversies or condemnation of other religions.

From the last quarter of the 19th century, and more particularly from the second decade of the present century, the struggle for political freedom

influenced journalism in Tamilnad as in the rest of India. Though the agitation for national independence dominated many of the daily newspapers, certain weeklies and monthlies were primarily devoted to it. Among them *Navaśakti* (1920), *Kuḍiaraśu* (1925), *Dēśabandhu* (1926), *Gāndhi* (1930), *Sudandirachaṅgu* (1930), *Congress Pērikai* (1938) and *Aśoka* (1947) were the leading ones. They luridly painted the atrocities and misdeeds of the British Government, particularly their policy of repression in connection with the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements. The later developments associated with the Cripps Mission, the Cabinet Mission and the ultimate grant of independence as well as the creation of Pakistan figured prominently in these journals. But, on the whole, one has to admit that the number of periodicals devoted to the national movement is not as considerable as one has reason to expect. One important reason for this was that there appeared other forces which tried to focus the popular attention on social problems. The less educationally advanced sections were prompted to take a lukewarm, if not a hostile, attitude towards the Congress and the Indian nationalist movement. The rise of the Justice Party championing the cause of the non-Brahmins, and later of the Drāviḍa Kaḷagam which was opposed to the traditional conception of Hinduism and of the caste system were not enthusiastic supporters of the Congress policy.

After independence, several periodicals advocating the views of the Drāviḍa Kaḷagam, and of the later dissident group entitled Drāviḍa Munnērrakkaḷagam have appeared. The *Pūnthōṭṭam* (1947), the *Tōzhan* (1947) and the *Drāviḍa Yēḍu* (1957) were Drāviḍakkaḷagam periodicals which popularised the views of their accredited leader, E. V. Ramaswami Naickar. The *Tamiḷar Nādu* (1948) and the *Pakuttarivu* were some of the Drāviḍa Munnērrakkaḷagam journals. They urged the proper development of Tamil and the maintenance of the individuality of Tamil Nad. The *Drāviḍak-kūṭṭaraśu* (1952) urged the union of the Drāviḍakkaḷagam and Drāviḍamunnērrakkaḷagam and the uplift of the Tamils.

The various other political parties of Tamil Nad have had their own periodicals. The Tamil Araśukkatchi, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Muslim League and the Swatantra Party have their own periodicals. Though they also contain short stories and other articles of general interest, primarily they concentrate on the propagation of their party views. On the whole, it cannot be claimed that they maintain a high standard. Mutual recriminations, personal attacks and vindictive malignments frequently dominate them.

Periodicals aiming at social uplift are larger in number. But in the initial stages they pertained to particular sections and castes of the Hindu fold. They aimed at the improvement of the educational and other facilities of certain communities and at securing adequate recognition at the hands of the Government in respect of official preferments and employment. Partly this was a consequence of the policy of divide and rule adopted by the British Government. Among such journals which laid stress on the importance of their castes, the prominent ones were the *Sāndōr Kula Vivēka*

Bōdhini (1909), the *Vanniyakula Kshatriya Deepam* (1912), the *Viśwakarma* (1913), the *Nāṭṭukkōṭṭai Vaiśiyam* (1914), the *Arya Vaiśiyābhimāni* (1914), the *Śeṅgunta Mitran* (1922), the *Brāhmanan* (1925), and so on. Some of the later ones in this series were the *Yādava Mitran* (1929), the *Kulāla Mitran* (1931), the *Ādi Drāviḍa Mitran* (1934), the *Valluvar* (1950), and the *Nurul Haq* (1948).

But generally this craze for promoting the cause of particular castes and pressing their claims for preferences in Government service lasted only for a short while, though some of them have survived down to this day. Several periodicals were started with a view to raising the status of women and improving their education in particular. Among these, the *Mahārāni* (1887) seems to have been the earliest. It was followed by the *Mādar Mitri* (1889), the *Sakkara Vartini* (1905), the *Mādar Bōdhini* (1911), the *Mādar Marumaṇam* (1936), the *Grihalakshmi* (1937) and the *Pudumaippen* (1947) are among the recent ones. They have served the cause of women admirably; most of them have drawn particular attention to certain age-old customs and superstitions which have to be removed.

Equally remarkable were those journals which appeared for the sake of developing the literature, arts and culture in general. The *Vivēka Chintāmaṇi* (1892), the *Gnāna Bōdhini* (1897), the *Gnāna Sāgaram* (1902), the *Vidyā Vihariṇi* (1908), the *Amrita Vachani* (1911), the *Śentamiḷ Chelvan* (1911), the *Dakṣiṇa Deepam* (1911), the *Kadāmanjari* (1912), the *Kamalāsani* (1913), the *Drāviḍa Bhāgavatan* (1914), the *Vidyabhānu* (1914), the *Kalvi* (1917), the *Sakalakalāvalli* (1920), the *Manōranjini* (1920), the *Anandāsāgaram* (1921), the *Tamiḷabhimāni* (1921), the *Kalaimagaḷ* (1923), the *Panchāmṛitam* (1924), the *Saraswathy* (1927), the *Tamiḷānanda Bōdhini* (1928), the *Chentamiḷ Bhānu* (1929), the *Abhinava Patrikai* (1930), the *Chandrikai* (1932), the *Chentamiḷ Malar* (1933), the *Ponmalar* (1933), the *Tamiḷaṇaṅgu* (1939), the *Śakti* (1939), the *Kuyil* (1940), the *Pulavar Ulagam* (1941), the *Vasantam* (1942), the *Veṇṇilā* (1945), the *Ponni* (1947), the *Deśattoṇḍan* (1952), are some of the journals of this category. Many of them have ceased publication. The *Ānanda Bōdhini* (1929) was one of the most prominent periodicals of this series, and it has survived down to this day, though it has been overshadowed by several new entrants in the field.

Specially devoted to the cause of education were journals like the *Nallāśiriyān* (1906), the *Kalvi* (1917), the *Pērāśiriyān* (1917). Bearing on the primary education of the young, there were the *Ārambakkalvi* (1933), the *Kalvikkaḍal* (1924) and the *Bōdhanāvishayap Pūṅgottu* (1941).

On the fine arts of Tamil Nad the number of periodicals was comparatively small; moreover they are of recent growth. They include the *Chirpakkalai* (1947), the *Nāṭṭiyam* (1949), the *Kalaikkadir* (1948) and the *Vijnāni* (1953). Exclusively devoted to Music was the *Sangita abhimāni* (1934), while themes of Archaeology were treated in the *Silpaśrī* (1938). It is obvious that there is scope for a much larger number of journals bearing on the fine arts. Recently several journals have arisen which concentrate on the film world. Their appeal is to a restricted class. The standard main-

tained by them is by no means high; often they degenerate into vulgarity. Among the periodicals devoted to the Cinema, the following may be mentioned: the *Cinemā Ulaham* (1935), the *Āḍal Pāḍal* (1935), the *Oli Ulagam* (1938), the *Minnoli* (1939), the *Jyōti* (1939), the *Pēsum Paḍam* (1944), the *Kalai* (1947), the *Thirai Ulagam* (1947), the *Kuṇḍūsi* (1947), the *Kalai Maṇi* (1949) and the *Pārvathi* (1950).

Several periodicals have arisen from time to time with the primary object of amusing and entertaining the readers. They have presented humorous stories and witty jokes. The *Ananda Vikaṭan* (1928) has been the most outstanding success in this field. It has all along maintained a standard of elegance worthy of imitation by journals of this kind. Others devoted to wit and humour were the *Ānanda Vijaya Vikaṭan* (1928), the *Prachanḍa Mahāvikaṭan* (1928), the *Prachanḍa Vikaṭan* (1933), the *Vasanta Vikaṭan* (1933), the *Kumāra Vikaṭan* (1933), the *Kurumban* (1933) and the *Ānanda Kūṭṭan* (1935).

Intended primarily for youngsters were the *Bāliyar Mitran* (1911), the *Bāla Vinōdini* (1918), the *Bāla Chintāmaṇi* (1935), the *Chiruvar Arivukkadir* (1935), the *Ambuli Māmā* (1947), the *Vāna Vil* (1948), the *Māṇavar Virundu* (1949), the *Ambi Thambi* (1949), the *Kannan* (1950), the *Kalkaṇḍu* (1951) and the *Pūnjōlai* (1951).

There have appeared from time to time a large number of periodicals pertaining to medicine, particularly to Āyurvēda. These include the *Ārōgya Bōdhini* (1908), the *Sukādhāra Bōdhini* (1923), the *Āyul Vēdam* (1923), the *Ārōgya Dīpikai* (1924), the *Iyarkāi* (1926), the *Maruttuvan* (1928), the *Vaittiyak Kalanjiyam* (1929), the *Ayurveda Jiyarakshagam* (1932), the *Siddhar Kalanjiyam* (1934), the *Siddhan* (1935), the *Vaidya Chandrika* (1938), the *Tamiḷ Maruttuvaṇ Poḷil* (1941), and the *Agastiyar* (1944). However, it cannot be claimed that they were all scientific; some of them were ostensibly interested in popularising their own specific medicines.

Dealing with the Yōga systems and their effect on the physical well-being, a few journals appeared. These included the *Yōgāsana Ālaya Vijayam* (1949) and the *Nal Vālvu* (1956). This is a branch in which a much larger number of journals could have appeared with advantage.

Those devoted to arts and industries were the *Acchuttoḷil* (1926), the *Chirpakkalai* (1947), the *Kalaikkadir* (1948) and the *Vijnāni* (1955). Journals on science in Tamil are but few. In this scientific age, it is necessary to pay greater attention than is being done to the dissemination of scientific knowledge among the common people. Some of the early journals like the *Vivēkachintāmaṇi* (1892) and more recent ones, the *Rāshṭravāṇi Śakti*, the *Kalaimagal* and the *Śakti* devoted some attention to scientific subjects, but only casually. Really learned contributions were few and far between.

The first scientific journal was the *Tamiḷ Nēśan* which appeared in 1917. However, it failed to secure adequate circulation, and hence it stopped publication after a time. The next journal, devoted primarily to scientific subjects, was the *Vijnāni* which appeared in 1953. But it lasted barely for a year. At present, the only periodical which pays prominent attention

science is the *Kalaikkadir*, which has been doing a great service to the dissemination of scientific knowledge during the last twenty years. The *Anuk-kadir* is a scientific journal recently started in Madras. But many more have to appear; and the reading public have also got to develop an increasing interest in this important sphere.

In respect of the periodicals as a whole it must be acknowledged that their history reveals the supreme need of certain improvements. For one thing, many of these periodicals were short-lived. The first flush of enthusiasm which led to the starting of the journals very often vanished, and it was not found possible to maintain the financial stability. Past experience suggests that few journals which concentrated on a single theme survived, unless they were adequately supported by public concerns. It would seem necessary, therefore, to spread the net a little wider, catering at once to some arts, science and literary subjects. There is nothing sacrilegious if popular magazines also carry easily intelligible accounts of the latest scientific developments or international relations. This does not mean that there is no place for pure art or science journals. They can flourish provided their financial position is made secure and circulation is guaranteed at least among public institutions. There is at once the need for specialised accounts of abstruse subjects and popular versions of the same. Competent writers who can contribute articles attuned to the different requirements must be selected for the purpose. Skilful handling of themes can really create a thirst for more knowledge.

THE GROWTH OF THE TELUGU PRESS

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Andhra Pradesh has a population of over three crores, ninety one lakhs, and its literacy is 21%. At the end of 1965, the number of newspapers and periodicals in Andhra Pradesh was 413, of which 232 were in Telugu. The State has a total circulation of 2,33,000 daily newspapers, of which Telugu newspapers account for 1,37,000 or 62.6% of the total circulation¹.

The renaissance movement in Andhra during the later half of the 19th century and in the early twenties of this century, was greatly influenced by the literature, social reformers and the political leaders of Bengal. To a large extent the origin of Telugu journalism bears a close resemblance to the beginnings of journalism in Bengal.

The first Telugu journal to be published is believed to be the monthly *Satyadoota*, a missionary journal started around the year 1836 for the propagation of Christianity by the Christian Association of Bellary. It was printed in Madras. In its wake followed the *Vrittantini* (1840), the *Sujana Ranjini* (1845) of Chinnaya Suri, the *Dina Vartamani* (1860), the *Hitavadi* and the *Ravi*. All these journals were published in a high-flown Sanskritised literary language.

Thus the Christian missionaries were the pioneers in early Telugu journalism. The Telugu script is a complex script and there was no suitable type for it in the beginning. These early publishers of Telugu journals used to caligraph the matter and get a page size block made. A laborious process indeed!²

To counteract the missionary propaganda, a few newspapers were started, the most notable among them being the *Tattvabodhini* in 1864, by the Ved Samaj, from Madras.

Madras being the capital of the composite Madras Province consisting of parts of Andhra, Karnataka, Tamilnad and Kerala, it was but natural that Telugu journals and newspapers were first published from Madras.

The *Tattvabodhini* serialised the Rigveda by appropriate Telugu meanings, correct pronunciations and commentaries. It also came out with lively discussions on religion, ethics and other social problems.

It was with the coming of Rao Bahadur Kandukuri Veereslingam Pantulu (1840-1919), the father of the renaissance movement in Andhra, and the founder of modern Telugu, that the Andhra journalism and the social reform movement in Andhra gained new dimensions³.

Veereslingam Pantulu started in 1874,^{3a} in Rajahmundry, a weekly

called the *Vivekavardhini* intended for introducing reforms in the social and literary fields in Andhra. About the same time he started a separate journal for women called the *Satihitabodhini*, then the *Hasyavardhini* and the *Satyavadini*, wherein he advocated the removal of social evils like child-marriage, caste system, and prostitution as a regular social order, and the introduction of widow remarriage, re-habilitation of women who were the victims of some evil forces, the popularisation of simple Telugu and above all the worship of one God (Ekopasana).

The teachings of Veereslingam had widespread repercussions in Andhra and it led to the spread of Brahmo Samaj Movement in the Andhra country. In order to counteract his teachings in both literary and social fields, journals like the *Andhra Bhasha Sanjivini* of Mahamahopadhyaya Kokkonda Venkataratnam Pantulu, and the *Purushartha Pradayini* (1874) from Masulipatam were started.

The first political news weekly in the Telugu language was started in the year 1885, the year which saw the birth of the Indian National Congress. This was the *Andhra Prakasika*, edited by A. P. Parthasarathi Naidu from Madras. Naidu was an ardent nationalist who carried on the publication of this weekly with vigour for more than 25 years.

The *Purushartha Pradayini* in 1874, wrote criticising the attempts of the Bishops of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, to convert the people to Christianity.⁴ The *Lokaranjini* in 1875, disapproving the remarks made by the *Broad Arrow* that the Hindus should not be made eligible for higher appointments in the Civil Service in India unless they sat for competitive examinations in England, wrote an editorial bemoaning the lack of educational facilities in India. It said: "In every town and in every village there are to be seen numbers of poor lads wandering about in the streets apparently without any employment, provision should be made for the education of these helpless boys. It is quite certain that their parents are not able to afford the means for their education and in such cases it is one of the duties of the Government to look after them".⁵

The *Andhra Prakasika* wrote an editorial in 1887, "Inquiry into the Poverty of India", when Lord Dufferin was about to appoint a Commission to enquire into the tenancy systems prevailing in India. It wrote: "Though thankful to Lord Dufferin for instituting this inquiry, it ought to be held publicly and not privately....The English Government have neither constructed irrigation works, nor have they properly repaired those constructed during the Muhammedan and Hindu administration, so that these are falling into decay. Moreover, Government officials visit annually every village on the pretext of Jamabandi, but in reality live on the supplies provided by the ryots and if the Commission would hold an enquiry, the truth about this matter will come out."⁶

While these earlier newspapers confined themselves mostly to social, economic or educational matters, the tone of the newspapers changed considerably from the beginning of the 20th century, when they started showing a keen and critical spirit on political issues. The *Gautami*, while quoting

an advertisement which said: "Wanted a Mussalman Clerk for an acting post in the Chief Office of the Inspector-General of Police, Madras" says in its editorial of the 27th August 1901, "when such an advertisement proceeds from such a high official of the Government.....whose duty it was to suppress all racial differences, such things not only prejudice between one race and another but also induce people to entertain doubts regarding the just administration of the country".

Another journal, the *Sasilekha*, originally started as a weekly in 1894 by G. Seshacharyulu and later converted into a daily, which played a notable part in the early Andhra Movement, commenting on the Coronation Ceremony of 1902, wrote on the 18th July: "It has been wired that the expenses incurred by the Secretary of State for the reception given to the Indian Princes would be debited to India. It has been resolved to spend 50 lakhs of the revenue collected from the poor people of India for sending the army to England and receiving the Indian Noblemen there for the Grand Coronation Ceremony as well as the forthcoming Delhi Darbar. Poor India does not regret spending such a large amount on such an occasion. But it feels very much for being slighted while the Colonies were greatly honoured by the Government, for the representatives of the Colonies were entertained at the expense of the State while the reception charges of the Indian Princes were debited to India."⁷

The *Krishna Patrika* commenting on the plight of Indians in South Africa wrote in 1902: "Are not all subjects under their rule equal?—Now that the British Government is supreme in South Africa, the whole Indian population look to it for the removal of the disabilities of the Indians there."⁸

The close of the 19th century saw a spurt of Telugu newspapers from the various districts, some advocating social reforms, while others vehemently pleading for popularising simple Telugu as a vehicle for conveying the new ideas and thoughts surging in the minds of men. Two of the journals published during this period, the *Godavari* and the *Andhra Kesari* served the cause of the Andhra Movement creditably.

The *Desabhimani*, the first Telugu daily, was published from Guntur in 1886, while another noteworthy monthly was also published in 1885, the *Amudritha Grandha Chintamani*, by Sri P. Ramakrishnayya from Nellore. This journal reproduced in print the contents of a number of old palm leaf manuscripts like Kumara Sambhava, Kaumudi Mahotsava, Krida-bhiraman etc.

With the beginning of the 20th century, Telugu journalism made strident progress. While the lively issue of Telugu style to be adopted for conveying popular thoughts was still being carried on by journals like the *Vajrayudham* of Sripada Krishnamoorti, the *Telugu* of Gidugu Ramamoorti, the *Andhra Sahitya Parishat Patrika* and the *Sarada* of Sri Rama Sastri, this century also saw the birth of leading Telugu national newspapers like the *Krishna Patrika* (1902), the *Andhra Patrika* (1914), the *Congress* and the *Andhra Prabha* (1938). These papers identified themselves with the national movement in the Andhra countryside.

The *Krishna Patrika*, a weekly, was founded originally in 1902 by Konda Venkatappaiah and edited by Mutnuri Krishna Rao. His writings were poignant and inspired the Andhra public a great deal. During the heyday of the Swadeshi Movement the *Krishna Patrika* criticised the actions of the British India Government in appointing teachers as provisional constables, saying "It is making strenuous efforts to ruin our trades and industries and convert us into useless dolls."⁹ During the Non-Co-operation Movement it appealed to the students to go to the villages and work, saying "unless popular force unfolds itself, arbitrariness will not vanish. This force has to be awakened in the villages which form its foundations.... The Andhra students should follow the footsteps of their Bengalee brethren who go from village to village to re-vivify and develop village life."¹⁰

The *Andhra Patrika* was originally started from Bombay as a weekly in 1908, by the great patriot Desoddharaka Nageswara Rao Pantulu (1867-1938). Later, it was transferred to Madras in 1914, and published as a daily. This paper always stood for robust nationalism, and played a leading part not only in the struggle for independence but also in the struggle for the creation of a separate Andhra Province. After the formation of Andhra Pradesh this paper is being published from Vijayawada. During the days of the Non-Co-operation Movement it wrote stirring articles appealing to the people to join the struggle, saying that "it is a fight for Dharma and as such it could never be defeated."¹¹ Besides running this daily the *Andhra Patrika* managers, under the able editorship of Shivalenka Shambhu Prasad, also run a monthly, the *Bharati*, that caters to the needs of Telugu scholars in the various fields, and a popular weekly, the *Andhra Sachitravara Patrika*, that is avidly read by one and all in Andhra Desa.

Besides the *Andhra Patrika*, other newspapers like the *Congress* of Madduri Annapoorniah, under the auspices of the Sitanagaram Ashram, and the *Janmabhoomi* inspired the people by their writings. Madduri Annapoorniah, a veteran Congress leader, who later joined the Forward Bloc of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, placed the ideal of Alluri Sitarama Raju, the hero of the Rampa Rebellion (1921-24) before the people for emulation. His writings ran as follows: "Sri Rama Raju! It is said that angels admired you in the name of Andhra manliness singing and dancing from heaven, showering flowers upon you—Alluri Sri Rama Raju! we depend upon you, brother, for the redemption of our slavery."¹²

The *Andhra Prabha*, founded in Madras in 1938 by the Express Group of papers, also served the nation under the able guidance of Khasa Subba Rao and the virile Andhra journalist Narla Venkateshwar Rao, who is now the editor of the *Andhra Jyoti*. The *Andhra Prabha* also runs a popular weekly of the same name. After the formation of the Andhra Pradesh, the *Andhra Prabha* is being published from Vijayawada.

This period also saw the growth of many "Paise" newspapers, like the *Gandivamu*, the *Devadattamu*, the *Janmabhoomi* etc., which also played a prominent part in the national struggle. In this period newspapers catering to the needs of particular castes and communities, like the *Reddi Prabha*,

the *Reddi Rani*, the *Setty Baliya*, the *Adi Velama*, the *Deccan Vysya*, also came into existence. The *Samadarsini* edited by Pinjal Subramanya Setty, which identified itself with the non-Brahmin cause, was also published during this period.¹³

The papers mentioned so far devoted their energies mainly to the promotion of the national struggle in Andhra against the British. Realising the necessity of focussing the attention of the general public on economic and labour problems, persons with a socialistic bent of mind started journals like the *Navasakti* in 1936 (by Madduri Annapoorniah) but it was proscribed by the Government in 1939. Then a Communist weekly, the *Prajasakti*, was started in 1941 which was converted into a daily in 1945, by Madduri Chandrasekhar Rao, but it was also proscribed in 1948. The same paper once again was started in 1951 as a bi-weekly and now since 1952 under the title of *Visalandhra* is being published from Vijayawada. Its editor is K. Rajagopala Rao. The starting of the *Prajasakti* could be treated as the beginning of a new era in Telugu newspaper history.

While Telugu newspapers developed on the above lines in the Andhra region of the old Madras Presidency, in the Telangana region of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, Telugu journalism could start only as late as the year 1920.

The first people to bring the Telugu printing press to the Hyderabad State during the latter half of the 19th century were the Samsthanams of Gadwal and Wanaparti, who got some literary works printed, like the *Vismruta Raja Kavulu*. The first Telugu monthly to be published from Hyderabad was the *Hitabodhini* in 1913,¹⁴ but this ceased publication within a few months.

Then in 1920 two weeklies, one from Ingurti in the Warangal District, called the *Tenugu Patrika*, edited by the enterprising Oddi Raju brothers, Sita Ramachandra Rao and Raghava Rao, and another the *Nilagiri Patrika* from Nalgonda, edited by Narsimha Rao, were started. These papers ceased publication when the bi-weekly *Golconda Patrika* was started by Suravarapu Pratapa Reddi in 1925, from Hyderabad. This paper, which later on was converted into a daily, in close association with the Andhra Jana Sangha formed by Madapati Hanumantha Rao, brought about a great awakening among the Telangana masses. It played a notable part during the days of the Razakars in keeping up the morale of the people in the State. Since August 1966 this paper has ceased publication.

About the time of the first non-co-operation movement in 1938 in the Hyderabad State, several journals were started in Hyderabad, notable among them being the *Telugu Talli* by Rachamalla Satyavati Devi, and the *Shoba* from Warangal by Devulapalli Ramanuja Rao. The *Shoba*, a monthly, was started by Ramanuja Rao in 1937, but it had to cease publication during the Razakar regime. Though it was revived in 1950, it could not continue for long. However, Ramanuja Rao continues to serve the country through his writings as one of the editors of the *Golconda Patrika*, the only Telugu daily in the State before the formation of Andhra Pradesh, and as the Secretary of the Sahitya Akademy, Andhra Pradesh.

Another paper, the *Andhra Vani*, was run from Vijayawada by B. N. Sarma for some time for the people of Hyderabad, only to strengthen the State Congress movement, but it had to stop publication soon. An interesting feature of the times was that many of the people in Telangana, being well-versed in Urdu, started running Urdu newspapers, the most distinguished among them being the *Musheer-e-Deccan*, edited by Vasudeva Rao, and the *Rayyat*, edited by M. Narsinga Rao.

The press in the Hyderabad State was directly under the control of the Home Department and if the Department took any action against them, the press could not appeal.

Every editor and publisher before starting a newspaper or journal was expected to give an undertaking to the State Government that they would neither discuss any political or religious issues in their columns nor would they write anything seditious against the State or the British Governments. The State Government gave permission to start the paper only after closely scrutinising the person's activities and family background.

As public opinion began to get restless, the Hyderabad Government encouraged the publishing of a Telugu daily under the Arabic title *Meezan* by one Calcutta-wala, in 1945. But it had to curtail its circulation due to lack of subscribers.¹⁵ During the Razakar regime the Hyderabad Government liberally patronised the paper and ran it on a limited scale, till the 'Police Action', when the publication of the paper naturally came to an end.

However, with the formation of the Andhra Pradesh, two Telugu dailies are now being published from the capital. The *Andhra Janata*, under the editorship of Panditaradhyula Nageshwar Rao, functions as the official mouth-piece of the Andhra Pradesh State Congress. The *Andhra Bhoomi* is another Telugu daily published from the capital. Its editor is Gora Sastri. The *Andhra Jyoti*, with Narla Venkateshwar Rao as editor, is another prominent Telugu daily. It is published from Vijayawada.

There are also two bi-weeklies in Telugu, the *Nellore News*, edited by M. Ismail from Nellore, and the *Sudarshanam*, edited and published from Gudivada by N. Gopalakrishnamacharyulu.

The *Prajamata*, published from Bangalore, is a popular weekly. The *Swatantra* of Khasa Subba Rao, during its life-time, was another popular weekly.

The monthly magazines in Telugu are also of a high standard. The *Chandamama*, and the *Bala*, cater to the needs of children, while the *Grihalakshmi* and the *Jyoti* cater to the needs of various householders, where they are read with avidity along with the *Andhra Patrika* and the *Andhra Prabha* weeklies. The *Pustaka Prapancham* is a book-lovers' delight. There are separate journals covering the cinema field also. Pressure of space and time perforce made me mention only a few leading journals and dailies which I felt would cover the scope of the article. With the formation of Andhra Pradesh, Telugu journalism is making tremendous progress in every field. An Andhra Journalists' Association is in existence since 1932. Andhra Pradesh, besides producing journalists of high calibre in Telugu,

has also produced eminent journalists at the all-India level, like C. Y. Chin-tamani, Khasa Subba Rao, C. H. V. Rao, G. V. Krupanidhi, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, K. Iswar Dutt, Chalapati Rao and others.

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VENKATAKRISHNIAH AND THE GROWTH OF THE PRESS IN MYSORE

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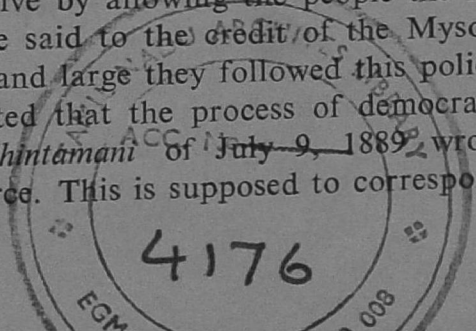
The aim of this paper is to point out the contribution of M. Venkatakrishniah, known as the father of Kannada journalism, to the growth of the press in modern Mysore. Along with him, two other persons were indirectly responsible for the same growth. They were the two Dewans of old Mysore viz., C. V. Rangacharlu and Sir. M. Visvesvariah. A brief outline of the recent history of the native state of Mysore is necessary to understand their contributions. In 1881 the state which had been under British administration for 50 years was given back to its former rulers. The first Dewan after rendition was C. V. Rangacharlu. He came to Mysore after a distinguished career as administrator in the Madras Presidency. His administration as Dewan for only 22 months was a land-mark in the history of the Mysore state, when foundations were laid for the birth of a progressive state. He was succeeded by one of the officers trained by him viz., Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer, who generally continued the policies of his predecessor, but could not win the affection of the people to the same extent as his predecessor had done. Passing over the inconsequential Sir P. N. Krishnamurthy, we come to V. P. Madhava Rao whose regime did not prove beneficial to the growth of the press. He was succeeded by the common place Ananda Rao, who was followed by Sir M. Visvesvariah, whose administration as is well-known established the reputation of Mysore as the leading Indian state in political and economic development. The successors of Sir M. Visvesvariah till we come to Sir Mirza Ismail were undistinguished. This in brief is the outline of Mysore history relevant for our purpose. We may now turn to the growth of the press during the same period, 1881-1936.

Dewan Rangacharlu is rightly looked upon as the founder of modern Mysore. He introduced popular assemblies in the state before Ripon introduced them in local government in British India. His name should go down in the history of India as one of the pioneers in introducing popular legislative institutions in India. His ideal was that, in Mysore, there should be the same type of democracy as was obtaining in England. He realised that for the successful working of such institutions there should be popular leaders. He considered M. Venkatakrishniah as one such person. At that time, education of the western type was in the hands of Christian missionaries. Rangacharlu encouraged the establishment of a private High School known as Marimallappa High School and made Venkatakrishniah its head master. He could easily have given him a much bigger post in the Government. But that would not have given him opportunities for public

service. Venkatakrishniah did not belie the hopes of Rangacharlu. He started a Kannada weekly called the *Vrittanta Chintamani*. The policy of this paper was to express people's feelings and opinion without fear or favour.¹ It was started in 1885. The year is significant, as it was the year of the birth of the Indian National Congress. The starting of such a paper was possible because the Maharaja, his Dewan and public men like Venkatakrishniah were equally determined to make Mysore a model for the other states. The Dewan was the soul of this movement. Ambil Narasimha Iyengar, who knew Dewan Rangacharlu well, wrote about him thus: "The late Mr. Rangacharlu was an eminent son of India; a saint and a genius were combined in him. I was pretty well acquainted with the late Mr. Ranade and I compare Rangacharlu to him. Both were people's men and laboured lovingly for the country. It is difficult even to think of such selfless men as these two. They forgot even their appetite and sleep when they were absorbed in subjects affecting the well-being of the people."²

Rangacharlu's successor, Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer, had a longer lease as Dewan i.e., for 18 years. Though both were from Madras, Rangacharlu had identified himself so well with the interests of Mysore that he became one with them. Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer was different. Venkatakrishniah became the leader of the Mysore group and the policy of his paper was Mysore for Mysoreans.³ The other papers of the time also followed the same policy. Here is what the *Karnataka Prakasika* of 9th August 1886 wrote, "In the Mysore state all power and authority have been delegated to the Dewan who is all powerful. The leading characteristic of his administration is favouritism... It is a well-known fact that in the past six months half a dozen Madrasis who have not the smallest claim have been appointed to subordinate places in the state service." Venkatakrishniah's *Vrittanta Chintamani* on the 12th June 1888 echoed the same or similar sentiments. "A change followed in the rulers on the rendition of the state to our Maharaja, but the quality of the administration remained unchanged, for from the hands of the Europeans to the hands of the Madrasis it continued to be foreign. Yet the people hoped for something better from Dewan Rangacharlu, but they were disappointed when he met his untimely death. The miseries of the people were many; but they feared to raise their voice lest they should be summarily expelled from the state." Thus from the point of view of the newspapers Seshadri Iyer's policies were favouritism and repression of public opinion.

In 1889 the same paper in its issue of April 16 pointed out what should be the correct policy for Native States. "It is the duty of all princes to wish the good-will of their subjects and to make their Representative Assemblies really representative by allowing the people the right of electing the members." It must be said to the credit of the Mysore rulers as well as their Dewans that by and large they followed this policy. But the press was impatient and wanted that the process of democratisation should be faster. The *Vrittanta Chintamani* of July 9, 1889 wrote, "The Representative Assembly is a farce. This is supposed to correspond to the Imperial Parlia-



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ment, with this difference that the member of Mysore Parliament is wanting in education and independence....Thus constituted, they have no voice in the administration of the state." The same paper wrote on May 22, 1901: "Mysore is regarded abroad as a model state on account of its two institutions viz., the Representative Assembly and the Competitive Examination for the civil servants. Yet when looked at closely both these institutions do not serve the purpose for which they were originally intended. The Representative Assembly has been nothing more than a petitioning body. Even the privilege of petitioning, it is not allowed to exercise, for if the members petition in a body, they are told to approach individually, and when they send up individual petitions, their petitions are rejected on the ground that as individuals they have no right to petition on matters concerning the whole province."

Under the next Dewan, V. P. Madhava Rao, the press law was tightened. The result was that Venkatakrishtiah's paper had to close down. This was announced in the *Vrittanta Chintamani* of 26th August 1908 in a leading article under the heading "Honest Journalism made impossible in Mysore." Announcing to the public that the paper had to be discontinued owing to the new press law in Mysore, the editorial observed: "Hitherto it was enough to have paid homage to His Highness and the British Government. But now it is evident that all government officials expect the same implicit obedience that is due to His Highness. But when they prove to be self-seeking and altogether regardless of the interests of the public we cannot show them any civility and it is not possible under the new law to maintain this principle; we have to discontinue the paper."

When Sir M. Visvesvariah became the Dewan in 1912 there was a new spirit in every aspect of the public life of the state. Venkatakrishtiah had now started new papers. One of them, the *Sadhvi*, a weekly, which even now exists, in its issue of 24th December 1912, contained the following item from a correspondent.

"The recent public utterance of the Dewan is quite characteristic of him. It is thorough, plain and unvarnished. It breathes a spirit of intense patriotism and zeal.... His contention that the government cannot be much in advance of the subjects is no doubt a sound proposition." The *Dhanurdhari* of 30th October 1913 also speaks of the liberal nature of Sir M. Visvesvariah's regime. "Although the repeated protests against the Mysore Press Regulation of 1908 which did away with the liberty of the Press have until now been of no avail....we are glad to find the present Dewan is disposed to handle the subject in a liberal spirit." Sir M. Visvesvariah was a Mysorean to the core. He was intensely devoted to the cause of the people. The goal for which the press had been clamouring, viz., Mysore for Mysoreans, had now been reached. Venkatakrishtiah was delighted beyond measure. Sir M. Visvesvariah looked upon this leader with great reverence. Still Venkatakrishtiah in his papers, the *Sadhvi* and the *Sampadabhudaya*, used to criticise the lapses of the Government, and Sir M. Visvesvariah used to welcome such criticism. He was unmoved

when the British Resident suggested suppression. He knew the rights and privileges of the press in a democratic country. So he did not interfere with the liberty enjoyed by the press.⁴

The next Dewan was Sir Kantaraj Urs, whose regime was autocratic. Naturally Venkatakrishniah did not spare it. Sir A. Banerji who succeeded Sir Kantaraja Urs was more constitutional in his methods, but it was only when Sir Mirza Ismail became the Dewan that Venkatakrishniah became satisfied. Very good relations prevailed between these two leaders, who were equally devoted to the progress of the state⁵.

Venkatakrishniah believed in the need for training in journalism at the University level. Though the University of Mysore had not yet started a course in journalism, he donated a good sum of money to be awarded to the best student of journalism, as and when the Mysore University should start a course in journalism. His dream was realised when the Mysore University started the teaching of journalism in 1951, 30 years after he had donated the sum. The prize is appropriately called after him.⁶

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THE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN MYSORE

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The press appeared in Mysore in the 19th century and developed in the Kannada-speaking areas of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg which were all merged with the old Mysore State on 1st November 1956 forming the new State of Mysore, also called Karnataka. Articles on the press in Kannada and English published in various reports and journals and the works of D. V. Gundappa, R. R. Diwakar, M. V. Krishna Rao and others are the main sources for the study of the role of the press in Mysore.

It was in the early 19th century that the work of Kannada printing started in Mysore. The Kannada newspaper, *Kannada Samachar*, was issued by the German missionaries in 1812 from Bellary and then its office was shifted to Mangalore. The credit of establishing the printing and publishing concerns in Mysore should go to the German missionaries. They invented Kannada types, trained the Kannadigas in the art of printing by sending them to Germany and issued Kannada newspapers with the sole object of propagating their religion.

Books for both scholars and ordinary readers were printed in Kannada about the middle of the 19th century. The *Jaimini Bharata* (1848), the *Basavapurana* (1850), the *Dasaparava Bharata* and the *Channabasava Purana* (1851) were printed for the benefit of scholars. Popular literature, namely, the *Kannada Gadegalu* containing 3500 proverbs, the *Dasarapada* having 174 verses and the *Haribhaktasara* of Kanakadasa containing devotional songs were also published for the use of ordinary men. By making use of the Kannada types of the German missionaries, Rev. Reeve printed an English-Kannada Dictionary and Karnataka-English Dictionary at Madras in 1824 and 1832 respectively. Panduranga Setty and Ananthachari were the first Kannadigas to chisel Kannada types. The love for the art of printing of Ananthachari was such that he went to Bombay and assisted the Gujarat Type Foundry to achieve perfection in the Devanagari script types, for which the Devanagari type range was named the 'Anantha Shade' after him. Later he came to Dharwar and rendered yeoman service by supplying Kannada types to several presses in and outside the town.

Printing press was established at Mysore in 1840 by J. Garrett of the Wesleyan Mission. The sole object of the press was to print literature concerning religion. Bangalore became the centre for publishing a Hindustani newspaper, the *Khasim-ul-Akbar*, the first issue of which appeared in 1863. The *Karnataka Prakasika*, the first Kannada weekly newspaper, appeared in 1865. Scholars, well-versed in writing 'Champu' prose style, contributed

articles to it. But its publication was stopped due to several difficulties, chief among them being finance. In 1874 a Sanskrit scholar by name T. C. Srinivasachar revived the paper as a Kannada-English weekly. By adopting a good literary style, the paper supported the policy of the Mysore Political Party. In 1898 it was stopped again because of financial difficulties.

In the meanwhile the Mysore Government started an Anglo-Kannada weekly in 1866 under the title, the *Mysore Gazette*, which is being published even today. It is an official journal containing Government notifications in both Kannada and English languages. Since it is in the hands of the Government, it has no financial difficulties.

Since 1895 a number of newspapers appeared in Mysore. The *Mail* (1908), the *Hero* (1910) and the *Mysore Times* (1910) were in English. Kannada journals such as the *Karnataka Kesari* (1888), the *Savinudi* (1900), the *Vokkaligara Patrika* (1907) and the *Arthasadhaka Patrika* (1914) also appeared. The Kannada daily, the *Suryodaya Prakasika* (1888), Kannada weekly, the *Vrithantha Patrike* (1887) and the English weekly, the *Mysore Star* (1900), appeared one after another. There were two reasons for the appearance of so many newspapers. One was the retransfer of the Mysore administration into the hands of the Wodeyar dynasty by the British in 1881, and the other was the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

M. Venkatakrishniah, familiarly known in Mysore as 'Tataiah' or 'Vridha Pitamaha'—the Grand Old Man—is regarded as the 'Father of Kannada Journalism'. He considered journalistic profession as an honest profession and believed that the press had to play a vital role in awakening the people from their deep slumber by spreading democratic ideals. With that end in view, he started a Kannada weekly entitled the *Vruttantha Chintamani* in 1885. Important articles concerning the attitude of the British Government towards the Native States and the duty of every Mysorean to achieve peace and prosperity in plenty in the Mysore State were published. In view of the growing importance of this paper, Venkatakrishniah started a few more newspapers both in Kannada and in English. They were, the *Hitabodhini*, the *Vedantha Chinthamani*, the *Sampadabhyudaya*, the *Sadhvi*, the *Powra Samajika Patrike*, the *Mysore Patriot*, the *Wealth of Mysore*, the *Nature Cure* and the *Mysore Herald*. All of them had a wide circulation.

Being trained well in the journalistic profession under the guidance of Venkatakrishniah, the two brothers, M. Gopala Iyengar and M. Srinivasa Iyengar started the *Kannada Nadegannadi* in 1895 at Bangalore. Besides this Kannada weekly, they also published an English bi-weekly, the *Mysore Standard*.

The editors of the newspapers began to attack the policies of the Government, with the result that the question of restricting the freedom of the press cropped up. The Mysore Legislative Council passed the Newspaper Regulation Act in 1908. Under the weight of this Act, the *Nadegannadi* was crushed and the editor was deported from the State. Venkatakrishniah championed the cause of the editors and protested against the action of

the Government. He called upon his colleagues to close down all the Kannada newspapers in Mysore which they promptly obeyed. As a result of his protest, the Press Act was relaxed. He published a weekly paper, the *Sadhvi*, which is now a daily in Mysore city. The prize, 'Vridha Pitamaha Venkatakrishniah Journalism Prize,' which the Mysore University awards to the best student in Journalism at the time of the Convocation every year speaks of Venkatakrishniah's ambition that the Mysore University should start a course in Journalism which the University started actually in 1951. On the whole, Venkatakrishniah laid the firm foundation for the growth of Kannada journalism in Mysore.

Like Venkatakrishniah, D. V. Gundappa has contributed a lot to the growth of journalism. He has a very good command over both English and Kannada, although he did not have the privilege of receiving College education. The knowledge of several languages, like Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English, has enabled him to know much about the politics, literature and art of Karnataka. In 1907 he started a Kannada daily entitled the *Samachar Sangraha*. Two years later he brought out a Kannada weekly under the title, the *Sumati*. In 1913 appeared the *Karnataka*, a Kannada weekly. Gundappa was not afraid to attack the Government if it did not function properly for the benefit of the people. Some of the policies of Sir M. Visvesvariah, the Dewan and the great engineer-statesman of Mysore, were subjected to criticism by Gundappa. He gave constructive suggestions to the Government and enlightened the people about the glory of Karnataka. Observing the growing needs of the people for administrative training, he started the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs and to give expression to its ideals he started a monthly bi-lingual, the *Public Affairs*, the articles of which on national and international problems captured the imagination of many in and outside Karnataka. He served the country as a member of the Mysore Legislative Council, the Mysore Constituent Assembly, the Mysore University Council and the Mysore University Senate. He wrote several books in Kannada, *Sahitya Vignas Mathu Jeevana Soundarya*, *Mankuthimmana Kagga*, *Omar Khayyam*, *Rajyashastra*, *Anthapura Geethegalu*, *Gopala Krishna Gokhale*, *Dewan Ranga-charlu* and *Swami Ramasastri*. The Mysore University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Literature in 1961 for his services to different branches of knowledge, namely Journalism, Politics, Literature, Public Affairs and Art. Thus Gundappa laboured hard for the growth of Kannada press in Mysore.

The Dewans of Mysore, such as M. Visvesvariah and Mirza Ismail, encouraged journalism. They knew the value of a free press in educating the masses. The British Residents directed them to put an end to the freedom of the press but the Dewans under various pretexts pacified them. After World War I several newspapers appeared in Mysore, but mention may be made of a few of the important ones. The *Vishwakarnataka* appeared in 1921 both as a daily and a weekly under the guidance of T. T. Sharma. Both continued till 1956, when they closed down due to several reasons,

chief among them being finance. The newspapers passed through the hands of several editors such as T. T. Sharma, S. K. Sharma, Shama Iyengar and N. S. Venkobarao. During the period of the national movement, the paper was the guiding star. Besides this paper, another newspaper called the *Tainadu* appeared in 1926. It is in circulation even today. It is very popular throughout Mysore because its press is equipped with modern printing facilities and some of its editors had travelled widely in European countries and enriched the paper with their experiences. The *Janavani* is another paper which spread the ideals of nationalism in Mysore. The *Prajamatha* is another weekly paper which is even today enjoying its reputation as a good journal. It came into existence in 1931, and during the struggle for freedom it played a vital role in awakening the people. The Government banned it. The press was shifted to Hubli and copies were being sent to the old Mysore State. The Government interfered, with the result that its name was changed into the *Prajamitra* and copies were sent to the cities of Mysore and Bangalore. Later the *Prajamitra* became the *Prajamatha*. M. S. Gurupadaswami, now a member of Parliament, is associated with it. It is enjoying a wide circulation throughout Mysore. There were also other newspapers like the *Chitragupta*, the *Democrat*, the *Veerakesari* and the *Navajeevana* which circulated along with the *Prajamatha*.

Several newspapers were started in regions like Bombay Karnatak, Madras Karnatak, Hyderabad Karnatak and Coorg. The Bombay Karnatak which comprised the districts of Dharwar, Belgaum, Karwar and Bijapur was the home of many Kannada newspapers such as the *Subuddhi Prakash* (1849), the *Hitechhu* (1870), the *Vijaya*, the *Rajahamsa* and the *Karnataka* (1880). Besides these dailies, there were weeklies such as the *Karnataka Patra*, the *Lokashikshaka*, the *Karnatakavritta*, the *Lokabandhu*, the *Rajahamsa*, the *Dhananjaya*, the *Kannada Kesari*, the *Sachitra Bharata* and the *Subhodaya*. These papers were started with three definite objectives. First, it was to check the influence of the Marathi language; second, it was to create national consciousness among the people; and third, it was to express the views of the people against the Government. To speak anything against the Government during those days of British Raj amounted almost to the purchasing of trouble. Mudaveedu Krishna Rao, the founder of the *Karnataka Vritta*, by his persuasive tongue and patriotic writings, criticised the anti-national acts of the Government, and suffered the consequences.

The *Karmaveera*, a weekly newspaper, which is now in wide circulation throughout Karnataka had its birth in 1921 at Dharwar. Kabbur Madhav Rao, Rama Rao, Hukkerikar and Ranganatha Ramachandra Diwakar distributed among themselves the work of editing, composing, printing and despatching the paper and worked hard day in and day out to make the paper very popular. In spite of paucity of funds, severe competition with other newspapers, and rigorous measures of the Government, the paper continued to enjoy wide circulation. Alur Venkata Rao and D. R. Bendre helped the journalists by their valuable contributions. The weekly is published

from Hubli. H. R. Purohit worked for 30 years, till 1964, as its editor and increased the fame of the journal by writing scholarly comments on current issues.

The *Samyukta Karnataka*, a daily newspaper, was started by R. R. Diwakar in 1934 at Hubli. It was to educate the masses and to publish the national literature that the paper was started. H. R. Moharay was its editor for a quarter of a century. The paper has rendered yeoman service in the struggle for India's freedom. It is in circulation even today. The *Kasthuri*, a Kannada monthly digest, is devoted to the spreading of scientific knowledge, historical information and high-brow entertainments, of special delight to the intellectuals. R. R. Diwakar is mainly responsible for the wide circulation of the *Karmaveera*, the *Samyuktha Karnataka* and the *Kasthuri*.

As regards Madras Karnatak, Mangalore which is now the headquarters of the South Canara district was the birth place of many Kannada newspapers, some of them like the *Mangalore Samachar*, the *Kannada Samachar*, the *Krista Saddharma Deepika Kanteerava*, the *Navayuga*, the *Swatantra Bharata*, the *Prabhat*, the *Rashtra Bandhu*, the *Swadeshabhimani*, the *Swarajya*, the *Deshabhakta Antharanga* and the *Rashtramatha* as weeklies; and others like the *Kraistha Sabha Patra*, the *Sathya Dipike*, the *Suvasini*, the *Krishnasukti* and the *Vasantha* as monthlies. Kadangodhu Shankar Bhat, Panje Mangesh Rao, Bengal Rama Rao, Govinda Pai and others enriched their papers by their scholarly articles. The *Navabharata* which had its birth in 1941 at Mangalore as the first daily newspaper is catering to the needs of the people of Coorg, Hassan, Mysore and Shimoga.

Hyderabad Karnatak comprised of Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar. The Government of Hyderabad published the *Hyderabad Samachar* in Kannada. G. K. Praneshacharya started a weekly, the *Sadhana*. These were to help the Kannadigas. But after integration in 1956, these newspapers were stopped. Coorg published two newspapers, the *Kodagu* and the *Kodagu Vruthantha*, which were purely local in character. To-day there are two magazines published from Mercara, one is the *Shakti*, a daily, and the other is the *Janmabhoomi*, a weekly.

After the attainment of freedom, several newspapers came into existence, chief among them being the *Prajavani*, a leading Kannada daily. It had its birth in 1948 as a sister publication of the *Deccan Herald* which was started a few weeks earlier. T. S. Ramachandra Rao is its editor. It discusses all problems of the world. It presents current news, national and international. A separate page for sports, the *Choobana*, and scholarly editorials are the special features of this paper. It has won State Awards for excellence in printing and designing continuously for five years. Owned by the Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd., Bangalore, it has got all the modern facilities. There are a number of news agencies and correspondents. They cater to the needs of all the people of rural and urban areas in the State.

Patil Puttappa who secured a Master's degree in Journalism in the University of South California started the *Prapancha*, a weekly, and the

Vishwavani, a daily newspaper from Hubli. He also started the *Manorama*, a fortnightly, devoted to movies and entertainment. These papers help very much the North Karnataka reading public.

During the post-independence period newspapers like the *Satya*, the *Chitragupta*, the *Mahakarnataka* etc. were published from different parts of Mysore but they disappeared as quickly as they came due to several difficulties, chief among them being finance. At present the *Prajavani*, the *Samyukta Karnataka*, and the *Tayinadu* are the leading newspapers. The *Sudha*, a weekly magazine, issued from the office of the *Prajavani* is a very popular one. It deals with varieties of topics, namely, Arts, Science, Culture, Education, Sports, Religion and Movies. Newspapers have been playing an important role in the development of Kannada literature in modern Mysore. Kannada periodicals are also many in number, the more well-known being the *Kathavali*, the *Kathakunja*, the *Kathegara*, the *Kalpana*, the *Naguvananda*, the *Jayakarnataka*, the *Jayanthi*, the *Koravanji*, the *Kannadanudi*, the *Kamadhenu*, the *Subodha*, the *Yugapurusha*, the *Saraswathi*, the *Sodari*, the *Shakti*, the *Chandamama*, the *Kanda*, and the *Balaprapancha*.

Several departments of the Mysore University publish journals. The *Prabuddha Karnataka*, the *Journal of Historical Studies*, the *Patrikodyami*, the *Journal of Psychology* and the *Literary Criticism* are small town newspapers issued from the district headquarters in the Mysore State. At present there are 36 dailies, 98 weeklies, 92 monthlies and 35 other periodicals in Kannada bringing the total to 261. The advent of Kannada typewriter promises a new era in the field of Kannada journalism.

NEWS-WRITERS OF MUGHAL INDIA

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Need of News-writing and Background

The craze for news is an old and natural passion of mankind. Applied to personal and social levels it amounts to curiosity, idle or useful. Applied to the arts of government, it becomes espionage, civil or military. It is true that during Mughal rule in India the full-fledged news-papers as we know today catering to millions of readers and containing news, national and international, were lacking. But it would be a mistake to think that there was no craze for news, no arrangement for its satisfaction and no movement of news at least for a limited purpose. In fact there were many news-writers, official and private, spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. By the beginning of the eighteenth century we have even a reference in English records to public newspapers (*akhbars*) in a very limited field and in an inchoate form. Espionage is an indispensable corollary of every government in every age and in every country, though its methods and working might vary. News-writing as it existed in Mughal India was closely connected with espionage, while transmission of news naturally presupposed a postal department. Thus news-writing, espionage and postal system were inextricably connected. Here we are concerned only with news-writers as a part of the Intelligence and Espionage system of Mughal Empire.

In ancient India theorists and law-givers prescribed an elaborate system of espionage, involving collection and transmission of news for state purposes, while emperors, kings and rulers maintained a vast body of intelligencers and secret service men. But historically the news-writers of Mughal India have to be connected not with ancient India, but with the Abbasid State Post Organization, itself a compound of old Roman and Persian institutions, and brought to India by the Ghaznavids and continued by the Delhi Sultans. Sir T. W. Arnold writes:

"One of the most important departments was that of the State Post (Diwan al Barid), an institution that the Arabs took over from the Romans, as the very designation indicates, *barid* being a loan-word from the Latin *Veredus*; but the story that Harun's great Persian minister, the Barmecide Yahya, reorganised the postal system on a new basis, probably indicates that the Arabs incorporated also into their system the old organisation of the Persian Empire. Like the Roman *cursus publicus*, this department was designated only to serve the interests of the state, by keeping the central government in touch with the outlying provinces and providing secret information of the doings

of the various governors. In every large province the postmaster had to keep the Caliph informed of every event of importance, to report on the state of the finances and the administration of the crown lands, the behaviour of the officers of the state, and the condition of agriculture and the peasantry...and the Chief Postmaster at the capital had to communicate despatches to the Caliph immediately on their arrival."¹

The efficient espionage organisation of Mahmud of Ghazni exemplified in the *Diwan-i-Shughl-i-Ishrafi-i-Mamlukat*, in which persons of both sexes served as spies, was derived, through the Samanids, from the Abbassides.²

The Delhi Sultans also had their intelligencers or news-writers at the centre and in the provinces. The *Barid-i-mamalik*, the Commissioner of Intelligence, assisted by his *naib*, collected information on the events of the empire. For controlling the activities and movements of the governors the Sultans appointed secret service officials (*Barids*) or official reporters (*Akhbar navis*) in the markets and towns of the provinces who reported every occurrence there to the Sultan. Speaking of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, Ziauddin Barani says "In his efforts to secure justice he appointed confidential spies (*barids*) in all the fiefs, and throughout his territories, he also appointed them for great cities, and for important and distant towns. And that they might discharge their duties with efficiency and honesty he did not give them too large a field of observation. He never failed to attend to what came to his knowledge through these spies, and had no respect for persons in administering justice. These spies were greatly feared by the nobles and officials, and neither they nor their sons or dependents dared to distress any innocent person." Balban used to know the movements of his son, Bughra Khan, in Samana province through his *Barids* (intelligence men), deputed there for the purpose. We are told that Balban had the *Barids* of Badaun hanged for failure to inform him of the murder of an attendant by the governor.³

During the Sultanate period it was Alauddin Khalji who organised the system almost to perfection so as to embrace the whole gamut of his political and economic system. His *munhis* (spies) communicated to the Sultan even the most trivial things about persons, high and low, entered their houses and troubled them for slight offences. In the words of Barani, Alauddin "provided so carefully for the acquisition of intelligence that no action of good or bad men was concealed from him. No one could stir without his knowledge, and whatever happened in the houses of nobles, great men and officials, was communicated to the Sultan by his reporters. Nor were the reports neglected, for explanations of them were demanded. The system of reporting went to such a length, that nobles dared not speak aloud even in the largest palaces (*hazar-sutun*), and if they had anything to say they communicated by signs. In their own houses, night and day, dread of the reports of the spies made them tremble. No word or action which could provoke censure or punishment was allowed to transpire. The transactions in the bazars, the buying and selling, and the bargains

made, were all reported to the Sultan by his spies, and were kept under control." There were informers to enforce the Sultan's wine-drinking ban, who "searched diligently, and the city gate-keepers and spies exerted themselves to seize the wine, and apprehend the contrabandists." There were informers to enforce the Sultan's ban on social union of the nobles. "Through fear of the spies, the nobles kept themselves quiet; they gave no parties and had little communication with each other. No man of a seditious, rebellious, or evil reputation was allowed to come near them. If they went to the *Sarais*, they could not lay their heads together, or sit down closely and tell their troubles. Their communications were brought down to a mere exchange of signs." Regarding market control also, "Reports used to be made daily to the Sultan of the market rate and of the market transactions from three distinct sources. 1st. The superintendent made a report of the market rate and of the market transactions. 2nd. The *barids* or reporters made a statement. 3rd. The *munhis* or spies made a report. If there was any variance in these reports, the superintendent received punishment. The various officials of the market were well aware that all the inns and outs of the market were reported to the Sultan through three different channels, and so there was no opportunity of their deviating from the market rules in the smallest particular." Thus news-reporters and spies, mutually checking, became an inexorable engine of the terror organisation of Alaud-din.⁴

Muhammad Tughluq also had his own system of getting reports about his dominions, which have been described by Ibn Battutah and Shahabuddin Abul Abbas Ahmad (in his *Masalikul Absar Fi Mamalik ul Amsar*). "The Rehla of Ibn Battutah bears testimony to the efficiency of the secret intelligence service that functioned well throughout the country. As a result all the occurrences whatever their nature and description as well as the actions and affairs of the inhabitants were regularly communicated and reported from all parts of the empire to the central government of Delhi and to the emperor personally wherever he might be. Even the private conversations held between friends in the houses or in the streets were reported and recorded." Further Ahmad says: "The Sultan is very anxious to know all that passes in his territories, and to understand the position of all those who surround him, whether civilians or soldiers. He has emissaries, called intelligencers, who are divided into a great number of classes. One goes among the soldiers and people. When any fact comes under his notice what ought to be communicated to the Sultan, he reports it to the officer above him; this one, in like manner, communicates it to his superior; and so on in due course the fact comes to the knowledge of the Sultan."⁵

Even making due allowance for any hyperbole or exaggeration in the above assessments of contemporary writers, it is clear that the Sultans were intensely sincere in learning news as it stood between themselves on the one hand and sedition, rebellion and disobedience on the other. It is also apparent that strong Sultans were able to command sincerity and integrity from the general body of news-reporters. When the Sultans were

earnest, the news-writers generally did not play them false. Thus they played an important part in maintaining the authority of the Sultan and social and administrative stability in the Sultanate.

In fact the medieval news-writer helped the successful running of a centralised government which presupposed the maintenance of close contact with different parts and provinces of the empire. Unless the ruler kept himself informed of news or events throughout the empire he would never feel safe in the capital.

The necessity of getting news of the kingdom is thus forcibly pointed out by Abul Fazl: "Keeping records is an excellent thing for a government; it is even necessary for every rank of society."⁶ The importance of maintaining news is even more forcefully emphasized by Aurangzeb. In his last will he writes: "The main pillar of government is to be well-informed in the news of the kingdom. Negligence for a single moment becomes the cause of disgrace for long years. The escape of the wretch Shiva took place through (my) carelessness, and I have to labour hard (against the Marathas) to the end of my life (as the result of it)."⁷

Organisation of News-writers in Mughal India

I. Gradual growth of the organisation

The Mughals seemed to have overhauled the pre-existing system of secret service men or secret informers of the Sultans by adding an open wing of official recorders. This involved a change in news-writing and news collection. They organised an elaborate system, which has been well described by Sir Jadunath Sarkar. According to him there was a four-fold organisation, the agency consisting of four categories of men, who sent reports of two kinds, written and oral. There were three categories of written reporters and one category of oral reporters. But this distinction was not always maintained. Among the written reporters were:

- (i) the *Waqai'navis* or *Waqai'nigar*, a writer or surveyor of events.
- (ii) the *Sawanih navis* or *Sawanih nigar*, also a recorder of events.
- (iii) the *Khufia navis* or secret writer.

But while the *Waqai'navis* or *Waqai' nigar* was a public news-writer, transmitting all kinds of sundry information, the *Sawanih navis* or *Sawanih nigar* and the *Khufia navis* were both secret news-writers or reporters, who also dealt with government officers. The oral reporter was called the *harkārah*. Literally he was a courier of news but really speaking he was a spy who carried oral news and also sent secret news-letters.⁸

It is not, however, clear when this classification was actually introduced and whether this was the general pattern throughout the Mughal period. A careful perusal of contemporary sources would indicate that this was the fully developed form. It grew up as a result of a slow, evolutionary

process. As a matter of fact the classification given by Sir Jadunath tallies exactly with what Ghulam Hussain, the author of the *Siyar ul Mutakherin*, describes as the form under Aurangzeb and his successor: "No less than four persons have been appointed to discharge the duties of this one office of intelligence, to wit, the *Vacaay-nugar* or Remembrancer, the *Sevanah-nugar* or Gazetteer, the *Qhofiah-neviss* or Secret-writer and the *Harcara* or spy."⁹

The gradual growth and organisation of the system becomes clear only when we scan the sources of different reigns. It was Akbar who introduced this open wing consisting of the *Waqai'navises*, perhaps to lighten the burden on the secret news-writers. The Emperors were news-hungry. They wanted to get as much information as possible of every nook and corner of the land. They also wanted to be on guard against all possible sources of mischief in a growing empire. A combination of both these tasks in the same hands would tend to make the system unworkable. A distinction was thus made between the public news-writers for giving all kinds of sundry news and the secret news-writers in important and special cases and localities. From the manner in which Abul Fazl describes the position and duties of the *Waqai'navis* in the *Ain-i-Akbari* it is clear that at first the *Waqai'navises* were appointed for the capital to give reports to the Emperor.¹⁰

That Akbar next elaborated the system of getting news from the provinces and deputed specially appointed news-writers to various provinces and that the practice was continued by Jahangir is clear from the latter's *Memoirs*. He writes therein: "It had been made a rule that the events of subahs should be reported according to the boundaries of each and news-writers from the court had been appointed for this duty. This being the rule that my revered father had laid down, I also observe it and much gain and great advantage are to be brought about by it."¹¹ This practice of appointing news-writers in provinces was in continuation of that of the Sultans of Delhi, itself borrowed from that of the Abbasids, as already described earlier. Mirza Nathan, the author of a contemporary history, *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, very significantly writes: "It was the custom to appoint in every Subah a news-writer with instructions to send to the imperial court reports of events and doings of the provincial governors in the form of a connected narrative and they had instructions not to show them to the Subahdars." Thus Jahangir appointed Yagma Isfahani *Waqai'navis* (news-writer) in Bengal then governed by Islam Khan (1608-13) and he hurriedly started to take up his post.¹²

Jahangir introduced a further change viz., the practice of reading the reports of public news-writers of each province openly in the imperial court. According to Mirza Nathan, author of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, a contemporary history, Jahangir did so in order to make a parade of his greatness before the expected Persian ambassador.¹³

The gradual development of the organisation also becomes clear when we examine the relation between the *Waqai'navis* and the *Sawanih-nigar*,

whose functions were overlapping. Sir Jadunath Sarkar pointed out long ago that the two terms mean the same thing, a writer or surveyor of occurrences; thus both were news-writers, but the former was "the more regular and public reporter of the two, while the *Sawanih-nigar* was of the nature of a secret-reporter on important cases only." The former was "attached to every field army, province and large town, and a *Sawanih-nigar* at special places and times only." In other words, the *Sawanih-nigar* was a special commissioner. Quoting *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Sarkar says that the *Sawanih-nigar* was "intended to be a spy and a check on the former", because the *Waqai'navis* was suspected to be in collusion with local officers to the detriment of the entire system. This double system ensured the correction of news. But the *Mirat* does not mention when the change took place. From the *Alamgirnamah* it may be inferred that it was Aurangzeb who appointed the *Sawanih-nigar*. "Besides these officials he has appointed the *Sawanih-nigars* whose duty it is to send to the Emperor secret reports without informing the *Waqai'navis* about them. If the *Waqai'navis*, being interested in any party, fails to give a truthful account of any occurrence or event, or suppresses news which might be prejudicial to the party in which he is interested, the *Sawanih-nigar* would not fail in his duty and would inform the Emperor about it without concealing anything."^{13a} Subsequently the *Sawanih-nigar* also became public, being entrusted with the duty of provincial postal supervisors, and then, according to Sarkar, the *harkarahs* were appointed.¹⁴

II. Different classes of news-reporters and informers in Mughal India

(a) *Waqai'navis*

According to Abul Fazl Akbar appointed fourteen *Waqai'navises*, who were "zealous, experienced and impartial clerks, two of whom do daily duty in rotation so that the turn of each comes after a fortnight." This presupposed an arrangement like this: 1st day—first and second writers; 2nd day—2nd and 3rd writers; 3rd day—third and fourth writers etc. These were assisted by 'some other suitable men' or super-numeraries or *Kotal*, each being appointed for a day and acted for a *Waqai'navis* (when detailed on any important work).

About the duties of the *Waqai'navises* Abul Fazl writes: "Their duty is to write down the orders and the doings of His Majesty and whatever the heads of the departments report..." The diary, corrected by an imperial officer (the Mir Bakshi), was placed before the Emperor for approval. Thereafter each report was copied and signed by the clerk concerned, and handed over "to those who require it as a voucher, when it is also signed by the Parwanchi, by the Mir 'Arz and by that imperial officer who had secured the Emperor's approval. In this form the report was called *Yad-*

dasht or memorandum. The completed *Yad-dasht* was then passed to "several copyists who write a good hand and a lucid style", for making "proper abridgment" thereof. "After signing it, they return this instead of the *Yad-dasht*, when the abridgment is signed and sealed by the *Waqai'-navis*, and the *Risala* (i.e. *Risala-dar*), the *Mir 'Arz*, and the *Darogha*. The abridgment, thus completed, is called *Ta'liqa* and the writer is called *Ta'liqa navis*. The *Ta'liqa* is then signed, as stated above, and sealed by the ministers of State."

From this it is clear that there were four stages in the reporting of imperial news in the time of Akbar.

- (i) the diary
- (ii) imperial approval
- (iii) certified memorandum, and
- (iv) abridgment.

What were Akbar's objectives in issuing these regulations about the *Waqai'-navis*? Abul Fazl says: "His Majesty's object is, that every duty be properly performed; that there be no undue increase, or decrease in any department; that dishonest people be removed, and trustworthy people be held in esteem; and that active servants may work without fear, and negligent and forgetful men be held in check."¹⁵ It may be presumed from this that news-reporting was not properly performed, distribution of work between different departments was not adequate, the news-reporters had become dishonest or negligent, and honest reporters were open to risks. Thus Akbar endeavoured to reform and reorganise the system and infuse new enthusiasm and vigour.

The *Waqai'-navis* or public recorder of events was, indeed, a very important officer of the Mughal government. Foreign travellers of this period have left interesting (but sometimes vague) accounts of this officer—perhaps because they could not understand the difference between the *Waqai'-navis* and the *Sawanih-navis*. Bernier tells us that the business of the *Waqai'-navis* was "to communicate every event that takes place".¹⁶ Dr. Fryer calls the *Vocanoveces* 'Public Notaries' who were "placed immediately by the Mogul to give notice of all transactions."¹⁷ There not compares him with the Secretary of State of the Franks and the Intendant of a province in France and says: "He is called *Vaca Nevis* that is who writes and keeps a Register of all that happens within the extent of the country where he is placed. The King keeps one in every government to give him notice of all that occurs..."¹⁸ Manucci says: "It is also a fixed rule of the Moguls that the *Vaquianavis* (*Waqiah'-navis*) and the *Cofia navis* (*Khufiyah navis*) or the public and secret news-writers of the empire, must once a week enter what is passing in a *vaquia* (*waqiah*)—that is to say, a sort of gazette or Mercury, containing the events of most importance. These news-letters are commonly read in the King's presence by women of the *mahal* at about nine O'clock in the evening, so that by this means he knows what is going on in his kingdom." "In all the mansions of the nobles, and of those holding important offices, there are *waqiah-navis* and *khufiyanavis*, who are under obligation to send word to the court of all that happens."¹⁹

According to the *Siyar ul Mutakherin*: "Their duty was to inhabit such cities and towns as were the seats of command and government, to the end that they might have it in their power to write down at day-break such events as should have happened the whole day and night before, and to send the paper to the Emperor."²⁰

There were *Waqai'navises* both for the centre and the provinces. Their duty was respectively to report occurrences in the centre and the provinces as minutely as possible.

In order to enable the *Waqai'navis* to discharge his duties properly he enjoyed considerable freedom of authority. He was placed directly under the Emperor and was coordinate with, if not independent of the provincial governor. Mirza Nathan tells us that the *Waqai'-navises* "had instructions not to show their reports to the Subahdars."²¹ Thevenot significantly notes that the *Waqainavis* depends on no Minister of State but only on his Majesty.²² Both the *Waqai'-navis* and the *Sawañih-ñigar* were expected to develop complete detachment in conduct. The *Siyar* notes: "if at any time it came to appear, that the secret Gazetteer, or the Remembrancer, or any other public officer, had himself found means to acquire the least interest with the Imperial Princes, or with the Grandees of the Court, or with the men in eminent station, or was in any connections with them; such a man was forthwith dismissed, and another appointed in his stead:" Aurangzeb reprimanded Prince Muizuddin (future Jahandar Shah), son of Prince Muazzam, for recommending a higher mansab for the *Waqai'navis* in his army, and considered it desirable to transfer the *Waqai'navis* as his integrity would be jeopardised.^{22a}

The post of news-writer entailed great responsibility. His task was extremely delicate and hence difficult. In an 18th century manual (*Hedayet ul Qawaid*, 1715), Hedayetullah Bihari has thus advised a newly-appointed *waqai'navis*:²³ "Your work is delicate, both sides have to be served... In every matter write the truth but avoid offending the nobles..." How to reconcile the apparent contradiction in this very shrewd advice? The author advises as follows: "In the wards of most of the high officers, forbidden things are done. If you report them truly, the officers will be disgraced. If you do not, you yourself will be undone. Therefore, you should tell the lord of the ward—"In your ward forbidden things are taking place. Stop them." If he gives a rude reply, you should threaten the kotwal of the ward by pointing out the misdeed. The lord of the ward will then know of it. Although the evil has not yet been removed from the ward, yet, if any one reports the matter to the Emperor, you can easily defend yourself by saying that you have informed the matter of the ward and instructed the kotwal". Thus the post of news-writer demanded from its incumbent certain qualities of character, shrewdness, 'deep sagacity and consideration', circumspection—besides honesty and loyalty to the Emperor. He must learn to keep "both the Shaikh and the Book...in their proper places." He must cultivate truthfulness: "Report the truth, lest the Emperor should learn the facts from another source, and punish you." He must "write after care-

fully verifying" his statements. It may also be safely presumed that omission to communicate any important provincial news to the Emperor who might come to know of it from a different source would make him open to the charge of neglecting his duty and hence liable to punishment.

The *Waqai'navis* (public intelligencer in a province) collected reports of local occurrences through his own agents in most small parganas. He made selections out of these for the Emperor's ears and incorporated them in the provincial news-letter. Further his clerks, deputed to the offices of the nazim or governor, diwan, faujdar in areas round the capital of the province, the qazi's court and the kotwal's *chabutra*, placed the record of daily occurrences every evening before him. While attending the public court of the governor, the *Waqai'navis* recorded the events on the spot. He communicated the contents of this news-letter to the governor (as also the news-letter of the field army to the commanding general) before sending these to the Emperor.²⁴ He was required to send his report or gazette of events of a particular area once every week to the Emperor. The news-letters of provincial *Waqai'navis* and *Sawanih-nigars* were placed before the Emperor by Mir Bakhshi. Sometimes the *Waqai'navis* reported to a third party settled before.²⁵ Sometimes,—in many provinces and all minor armies,—one officer used to hold the two posts of the *Waqai'navis* and the *bakhshi*. Thus Muhammad Husain Jahiri was appointed both at the same time by Jahangir in Orissa.²⁶ Mir 'Abdul Jaleel (Wasiti) Bilgrami held both these posts in Gujarat and Sind.^{26a}

(b) *Sawanih-nigar or Sawanih-navis or Khufianavis*

Owing to occasional cases of collusion between the *Waqai'navises* and the local officers, it became necessary to appoint another reporting agency, called the *Sawanih-nigar* or *Sawanih-navis*. The *Waqai'navis* was a public reporter, but the *Sawanih-nigar* was a secret reporter, living *incognito* (unknown) in the Subah, and authorised to send reports about the provincial officers and events direct to the Emperor. The *Sawanih-nigar* was appointed at some places and for limited periods only.²⁷ The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* says: "In former reigns *Waqai'navises* were employed (to report provincial occurrences); but owing to the suspicion of their entering into collusion (with the local officers) and making false reports, *Sawanih-nigars*, who were also called *Khufianavises*, were appointed to reside secretly in the Subahs and report news." From this it is evident that the *Sawanih-nigar* was intended to be a secret agent and check on the *Waqai'navis*.²⁸ It was on the basis of the *Sawanih* that provincial officers were rewarded or punished.²⁹

The *Sawanih-nigar* was required to send his report about the whole province twice a week or 8 times in a month (i.e. double frequency of the *Waqai'navis*). Unlike the *Waqai'navis* he did not communicate the news-letter of the Subahdar's Court or of the field army to the Subahdar and the general respectively before sending them to the Emperor.³⁰

(c) *Khufianavis*

Subsequently, however, even the *Sawanih-nigar* became public as postal supervisor in the province. As such he had to send to the centre the weekly news-letters of *Waqai'nigar* and *harkārah* and the applications of the governor and the diwan with the cash balances. According to the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* "At last when the latter (i.e. *Sawanih-nigars*) were entrusted with the duty of supervising the postal arrangements within the province, the matter became public." According to Sarkar, it was then that the third or most secret class of reporters or *harkārahs* or true *Khufianavis*es were posted to the provinces.³¹ If this was so, these must have been members of Central Intelligence and not of the provincial staff. "The *Khufianavis* or secret writer was a most confidential agent", unknown to local officials. He collected information through his own agents deputed to parganas and the courts of various officials like the governor, diwan etc. and sent his reports directly and secretly without at all informing the local authorities. As Sarkar writes, "All people were in mortal dread of these secret intelligencers."³²

(d) *Harkārah*

The change in the character of the *Sawanih-nigar* from a secret to public service necessitated the establishment of another secret agency.

According to the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, "the *harkārahs* posted in the province have to report the news of all sides and occurrences" to the *Subahdar* and to send letters closed in envelopes for being despatched direct to the imperial court with the provincial post.³³

(e) *Akhbar-navis*

Like the *Waqai'navis* and the *Sawanih-nigar* or *Khufianavis*, the *harkārah* also had his agents in the offices of the governor and other places. These subordinates of all these classes of informers were known as *akhbār-navis*.³⁴

(f) *Frequency of sending Reports*

According to the *Hedayet ul Qawaid*, "Waqai should be sent once a week, *Sawanih* twice, and the *akhbār* of *harkārahs* once (? a month) and the despatches in cylinder (*nalo*) from the *nazim* and the *diwan* twice every month, in addition to urgent matters (which were to be reported immediately)."³⁵

But from the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* it appears that early in the 18th century the practice in Gujarat was to send all such reports once a week to the Emperor along with the despatches of the *subahdar* and *diwan* and a statement of the treasury cash balance.³⁶

(g) *News-writers in army and missions*

News-writers and spies were maintained not only for purposes of the civil government but also for military purposes. The *Waqai'navis* used to accompany all expeditionary forces and embassies sent to foreign countries. He sent the news-letter of the field army to the commanding general before sending it to the Emperor.³⁷

(h) *Darogha of Dakchauki, head of the Post and Intelligence Department*

The official head or superior of the four classes of news-writers, public and secret, was the *Darogha-i-dakchauki*, Superintendent of Posts and Intelligence. He was also their protector, who sometimes had to take up the cause of a dutiful reporter as against a wrathful and vindictive governor reported against. He had his counterparts in the provinces. These daroghas enjoyed 'great influence and trust'.

As chief of the postal department he was responsible for the carrying of *dak* or mail from the Centre to the provinces (e.g., *farmans*, *shuqqa*, *nishan*, *hasb ul hukm*, *sanad*, *parwanah* and *dastak*) and provincial reports and news-letters. The news-letters (and the oral communications of the *harkārahs*) were sent to the *Darogha-i-Dakchauki*. According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, it was the darogha who handed them unopened to the wazir for submission to the Emperor. The *Siyar ul Mutakherin*, however, states: "There were posts established, that carried the dispatches, with all speed, and in all weathers, to Court, where a Daroga or Inspector examined the same; after which he reduced to a concise exposition the substance of such as deserved the Imperial notice, presenting at the same time, the whole detail as forwarded by the provincial intelligencers. Nevertheless whatever amongst those papers was addressed personally to the Emperor, was sacred, and could not be set open by any other hand than his own. It was perused by the Monarch himself, who alone could break the seal, and he alone ordered what he thought proper about the contents."³⁸

The proper transmission of news necessitated the maintenance of the postal department (*Dakchauki*) with a vast body of trained couriers and runners and relays of horses on the highways³⁹, which have not been analysed here.

III. *Other classes of informers*(i) *Spies*

The Mughals, like the Abbasids, had an elaborate espionage system. About the Abbasids, Sir T. W. Arnold writes: "In addition to this department there was a large force of detective police, and an elaborate system of espionage became a characteristic feature of the administration, whereby a Caliph set spies to watch his officials, and even the members of his own

family, while they in return employed their own spies to report upon his movements and utterances. For this purpose, in addition to regular members of the postal service, persons of every social grade, merchants, pedlars, physicians and slave girls, were employed."⁴⁰

Besides the news-writers, public and secret (the *Waqainavis* and *Khufi-anavis*) there was another class of men called spies. Their duties were the same in practice. But there was a difference in their status. While the news-writers were departmental officials and belonged to a regular and open service, the spies were not, being his secret agents, appointed by the Emperor secretly, working and writing reports in secret. The spies employed by Aurangzeb were more numerous than under his predecessors. He feared that his father's fate might overtake him. Through these spies he kept contact with different parts of the empire. Thus Manucci says: "There are in addition (to *Waqia'navis*) spies, who are also obliged to send in reports weekly about other important business, chiefly what the princes are doing and this duty they perform through written statements."⁴¹

(ii) *Halal khors*

Besides the news-writers of the Intelligence department, the *Kotwal* or head of the city police also had his own staff of news-collectors, called *halal-khors* or house-scamengers. Their working has thus been described by Manucci. The *Kotwal* "obtains information about all that goes on, so as to be able to send in his report. For this purpose there are throughout the Mughal Empire certain persons known as 'alarcor' (*halal-khor*), a word which means 'men who live on what is well earned'. These men are under obligation to go twice a day to clean out every house and they tell the *Kotwal* all that goes on. On his part, the *Kotwal* must render an account to the King of what he has heard has happened, whether it be by night or by day..."⁴²

(iii) *Female Spies*

Female spies were also maintained by the Emperors. In the time of Aurangzeb, Hamida Banu, Superintendent of the harem of Prince Muazzam (*mahaldar*), "the highest female servant, was a sort of female *major domo*," and acted as a spy. When after eight years of confinement (1687-95), Muazzam was appointed governor of Multan (1696-98), he was watched by his suspicious father's spies. Hamida Banu reported that the Prince used to take his pen-case and memorandum book at night in his private chamber.⁴³

The news-recorders and secret spies served as the 'eyes and ears' of the Emperor Aurangzeb to see and hear about the events of the Empire and thereby to exercise watch over the vast official hierarchy.⁴⁴

(iv) *Merchants in foreign lands*

It was not possible to send regular news-writers to foreign countries like Persia, Turkey or Arabia. Here merchants served as news-reporters. Aurangzeb maintained contact with them through Surat.^{44a}

(v) *Spies and reporters of private parties*

If the Emperor had his hierarchy of news-writers and reporters, public and secret, the Princes, nobles, ministers and rich merchants also had their own respective agents and spies,—private persons—who had to stay at different towns and other places, collect news and send their reports or letters (*akhbārs*) to their employers or correspondents. Such men were called *akhbār-navis* (news-writers) according to *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* and Hedges. The local rulers and native princes also had a regular corps of news-writers in their states for collecting and reporting news. Big merchants and influential citizens also employed news-writers in chief cities.⁴⁵

News-writers in Action

I. *News-writing as a means of imperial control*

The problem of exercising proper vigilance and effective imperial control over different parts of the vast empire was difficult indeed in those days. The Mughal Emperors' devised certain institutional checks like administrative dyarchy, the rivalry between the *subahdar* and the *diwan*, the *subahdar* and the *bakhshi* but this depended on personal equation. They also improvised certain practical checks like imperial tours (but these, so far as a particular province was concerned, were few and far between), transfers of officers and provincial inspection by high officers. The Emperors, therefore, tried to retain their grip over the empire, both in peace and war, control the conduct and activities of its officers and watch movements of sedition, rebellion etc. and suppress adverse combination of enemies with the help of the perennial flow of news, sent by his news-writers, which endeavoured to make amends for the lack of quick means of communication. The extensive net-work of news-writers, spies, detectives and informers, maintained by the government, both at the centre and in the provinces, districts, towns and parganas thereof and who were expected to let nothing of importance to escape their notice, helped the energetic Emperors to retain their fingers on the pulse of the country.^{45a}

The working of the system, however, varied from time to time in actual practice, depending on various factors like geographical factors, the degree and extent of central vigilance, the personal vigour and alertness of the Emperor, and of the controlling Intelligence staff, and the sense of duty,

honesty and loyalty of the news-writers themselves, the adequacy or otherwise of the staff and other circumstances. We do not have materials to correctly assess the numerical strength of the intelligence staff and spies in the Mughal empire. According to the Danishmand Khan there were about 4000 spies in imperial service in 1120 A.H. (1708-9 A.D). But this seemed to be an under-estimate.^{45b} Father Francois Catrou writes that the Emperor's spies were to be found all over the country and they sent their reports which he carefully read. Holding that the Mughal spy system was better organised than in any other country, Manucci observed: "Aurangzeb had such good spies that they knew (if it may be said) even men's very thoughts."⁴⁶ If the reports of the empire had survived, these would have constituted a most copious source of history of the period. But we can only have a most fragmentary account of the working of the system from contemporary Persian chronicles, memoirs, foreign travellers' accounts and European factory records.

II. Nature of Reports

The reports of the news-writers were not necessarily confined only to political matters and provincial news, but dwelt on everything of interest to the Emperor. Reports of all kinds, even idle gossip or scandal, were welcome at the centre. As Dr. Beni Prasad notes, it was the duty of the reporters to send regular reports to the headquarters of all activities of the provincial authorities, of all sensational, interesting and curious events of different categories,—“whether military, social, economic or biological, chemical or physiological.” From Jahangir's memoirs and the accounts of Motamad Khan and others it appears that the reporters used to send periodically reports of what they heard or saw. Thus to Jahangir they reported the sweetness and flavour of the mulberry fruit of Lahore as well as the manner of the death of Mulla Gadai darwesh while kneeling with his face turned towards the *Qibla* in a monastery in Kashmir city.⁴⁷

Once Aurangzeb, as Viceroy of the Deccan, informed Shah Jahan of the non-availability of *Shahpasand* mangoes (of Burhanpur) of which the Emperor was very fond, and added that this must have been reported by the local *Waqai'navis*.⁴⁸

The following news-reports in Aurangzeb's time throw light on the miscellaneous nature of subjects dealt with by the reporters.

(a) Civil

(1) News-letter of the office (*Kachari*) of the High Diwan: Sayyid Mir Habibullah of Jaunpur, the *amin* of *jaziya* misappropriated Rs. 40,000 from the imperial treasury. So Inayet ullah Khan detained him and appointed *sazawals* (Collectors) to realise the sum from him. Aurangzeb, however, considered realisation unnecessary as he had already learnt from the reports of Burhanpur that the Sayyid spent all his earnings on charity.⁴⁹

(2) Speaking of the oppressors of the cultivators, Sarkar writes: Even the royal messengers (called *mewrahs* in Gujarat) who carried Government letters, reports of spies, baskets of fruits for presentation to the Emperor, used to rob the people of the villages they passed by sometimes under the pretext of making good the losses in the fruits they carried.⁵⁰

(3) The news-letters of Aurangzeb's court contain many examples of Matabar's vigilant care for his charge, his strict maintenance of efficiency by removing negligent or drunken officers and recommending the promotion of his abler subordinates and his efforts to induce the Emperor to post the most useful men under him.⁵¹

(4) "spies report that the Berads, having issued from the fort, had occupied different points of the (now deserted) outposts of Sultan Husain (Kam Bakhsh's lieutenant), Md. Baqar and others....The Marathas fled. The Mughals too lost heavily...."⁵²

(b) Military

(i) News-letter of the army of Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat Jang: Jang-ju Khan Deccani, a commander of 5000, mischievously ordered his kettledrums (placed on buffaloes) to be carried abreast with the kettledrums of Nusrat Jang's band, i.e. on an equal footing.⁵³

(ii) Report of the province of Nander: Sayyid Hasan Ali Khan Barha (later Abdullah Khan, wazir of Farrukhsiyar) actively fought with the Maratha general, Hanumant, and converted him to Islam. Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat Jang recommended promotion for both the Sayyid brothers and sent his recommendation by *dak* (relays of couriers).

The Emperor offered some presents but refused to promote them, for 'to relax the reins to the Sayyids of Barha is to bring on final ruin i.e. a bad end.'⁵⁴

(iii) "Spies report that Parashuram, the head assistant (*pesh-dast*) of Ramchandra, is in Khelna, and wished to cede the fort to the Emperor. Hearing of it, Trimbak Ingle and other officers of the enemy have arrested and imprisoned him."⁵⁵

Dr. Yusuf Husain Khan referred to a large collection of *Waqai* in the form of *Roznamchas* (daily news) in the Hyderabad Central Records office, covering the year 1660-71 and relating to 14 places in the Deccan (Hyderabad, Aurangabad, Daulatabad, Ramgir, Berar, Parenda, Ahmednagar, Kalyan, Fatehabad (Dharur), Supa, Baglana, Udgir, Junnar and Jalna). They throw ample light on political, economic, and administrative conditions of the Deccan in the 17th century. The subjects covered are: "the visits of Vakils, envoys, and traders from different countries and the arrangements about their Dastak (safe-conduct) made by the authorities concerned. They also deal with the movements of troops in the Deccan, and the despatching of auxiliary forces to disturbed areas with supplies of sacks of gunpowder, rockets and cannon-balls.

Other important matters mentioned in the *Waqai* are: accounts of

the daily collection of amounts at the cashier's office; remittances of money to the Imperial Treasury and its transfer from one place to another under an escort of troops; judicial proceedings in the courts of justice; assignments of Jagirs to the Mansabdars, their promotions, demotions, and transfers; dismissals and reinstatements of officials; despatch of confidential letters, bags, baskets of mangoes and other fruits; conferment of robes of honour; presentation of gifts and peshkash; verification of troops, their transfers and postings; branding of horses; purchase of elephants; farming of diamond mines; archery and shooting tests; escheat of the properties of deceased Mansabdars." Among matters of political interest are prohibition of *rahdari* in Baglana (28-5-61) while there are references to the ship of Mir Jumla, piracy, end of Shuja, and news of Bijapur, Golkonda and Shivaji.

These *Waqais* also contain many matters of economic importance. We get "much information about the buying and selling rates of gold and silver, the rate of exchange of different coins current in the market and the prices of various commodities." The *Waqai* also refers to various coins in circulation in the Deccan.

- (a) *huns* or pagodas (gold—either named after the Rajas of Vijaynagar (e.g. Bukka, Devarai, Sivrai, Achyutrai, Kishnarai, etc.) or places of issue (e.g., Mylapuri, Nellore and Dharuri, etc.).
- (b) Golkonda-coined pagodas.
- (c) Mughal *ashrafis*
- (d) Rupees (Shahjahani, Alamgiri, Mahmudi, Changhizkhani, Muzaffari, Miranshahi, Chalni, Aurangshahi, Khazana, Berari, Golcondi Alai).^{55a}

III. Efficiency of the System

There are some examples of the efficient and prompt working of the system. Sometimes we get such news as death of some travellers on road near Lahore due to sudden storm.^{55b}

The successful working of the system presupposed the independence and integrity of the news-reporter, who could write without fear or favour. So he did not minimise or conceal the faults of the governors, princes or nobles.

Akbar punished many governors and high officers for oppression and mis-government: (i) Husain Quli Khan Mahram, governor of the Punjab, removed from office, (ii) the case of an *amalguzar* (collector) of Delhi against whom the public had petitioned was investigated by high revenue officials, (iii) Sheikh Sultan (a learned man, appointed *Karori*) was hanged for oppressing the people of Thanesar, the ryots having petitioned against him, (iv) the grandson of Bairam Khan and son of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan was imprisoned for murderous assault on a Qazi, (v) Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi, Sadr of Gujrat, was imprisoned on a representation, (vi) Shiqdar Allah Bardi, agent of Sadiq Khan, near Sialkot was found guilty of charges of op-

pression by Amir Fathullah Shirazi (during Emperor's tour in Kashmir) and executed.^{55c}

Hawkins was ill-treated by Mukarrab Khan at Surat. On reaching Agra he complained to Emperor Jahangir. But he was surprised to find that the Emperor had already received a detailed report from the *Waqianavis*.⁵⁶

The publication of the ordinances of Jahangir regarding royal prerogatives (1612), prohibiting their usurpation by distant princes, officers and nobles,⁵⁷ showed that such encroachments were regularly reported by the reporters.

Tyrannical governors reported against by either *Waqia'navises* or *Sawani-nigars*, i.e. public and secret reporters for abusing their power and position of trust, were promptly asked to submit explanations, or were sternly punished,—by recall, censure, or disgrace, though it must be admitted that many cases of oppression remained unknown to the Emperor. Thus Jahangir (a) warned Said Khan, governor of the Punjab, of the operation of "My justice" in case of the tyranny of his eunuchs over the people, (b) reduced his favourite Mukarrab Khan's *mansab* for a cruel act, (c) recalled and disgraced Mirza Rustam, governor of Tattah, for his tyranny over the people and handed him over to the jailor of State prisoners (Ani Rai Singh Dalan) after investigation, (d) recalled Chin Qilich Khan, the 'tyrant of Jaunpur', (e) instituted an enquiry into the case of Raja Kalyan, Governor of Orissa (acquitted later), (f) recalled and humiliated Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang, governor of Gujarat, on the report of Bakhshi and after investigation by Dayanat Khan, (g) reprimanded Shahjahan severely for the oppression of the English traders by his subordinates.⁵⁸ Thus Hawkins remarked: "If complaints of injustice which they (local governors) do, be made to the King, it is well if they escape with the loss of their lands."

Mir Nasir, the *Waqai'navis* of Burhanpur, appointed by Shahjahan Superintendent of the local imperial *karkhana*, reported that Aurangzeb, as Viceroy of the Deccan, had engaged all expert weavers in his own *karkhana* which had harmed the imperial *karkhana* as also of Princess Jahanara's *karkhana*. Shahjahan became angry. Aurangzeb complained (to Jahanara) that the report was malicious but had subsequently to clarify the matter to the Imperial Diwan (Allami Sadullah Khan).^{58a}

We have some very interesting examples of punishment of high officers for social offences and moral lapses. Akbar had Hafiz Qasim castrated for having outraged a Kashmiri woman. In the time of Jahangir the *mansab* of Mukarrab Khan, governor of Cambay, was reduced, and his servant, actually responsible for the offence, executed, on the complaint of forcible abduction and subsequent death of the daughter of a widow, who was given an allowance. Izzat Khan, governor of Sind, infatuated with a daughter of a rich merchant, was induced by the girl to come to her room in a woman's dress and subsequently locked up. At his mysterious disappearance, the *Waqai'navis* reported the matter to the Emperor. The Emperor dismissed him and deprived him of his rank.

An analysis of the Anecdotes of Aurangzeb would show that thirtytwo

reports of news-writers and spies belonged to the following categories:

- (a) Provincial news-letters: Afghanistan (Kabul, Ghazni)—5; Gujarat (Ahmadabad)—3; Bengal—1; Nander—1; Masulipatam—2. Total—12.
- (b) Letters of Spies (Sawanih and oral): Afghanistan, Multan, Lahore, Oral, Persia, Supdt. of Sawanih. Total—6.
- (c) News-letters of Army:
Md. Azam (2); Zulfiqar Nasrat Jang (2); Firuz Jang (2); Hamid Khan (1). Total—7.
- (d) Letters of *Nazirs*:
Bahadur Sh. (1); deorhi of Azam (1); Kam Bakhsh (1); Bidar Bakht (2). Total—5.
- (e) News-letters: High Diwan (1); Reports (1). Total—2.

The *Ahkam i Alamgiri* records many instances of the bold and independent attitude of the reporters and spies. Thus we get reports—

- (a) of infringement of royal prerogatives by princes and nobles,
- (b) of reckless audacity, irresponsibility and neglect of duty of princes,
- (c) of domestic quarrels of princes,
- (d) of illegal, audacious and profligate actions of nobles,
- (e) of lack of alertness of frontier governors, and
- (f) of impending foreign invasion.

(a) *Cases of infringement of royal prerogatives*

(i) Kabul News-letter:

Prince Muhammad Muazzam, appointed Governor of Afghanistan (May 1698), ordered the beating of four drums while holding court. Aurangzeb sarcastically asked the Prince (through the Prime Minister) to shun impatience and to beat four tabors, as beating of kettledrums while holding court was a royal prerogative.⁵⁹

(ii) News-letter of Kabul Province:

Md. Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) used to sit on a platform constructed one yard above the ground. The Emperor warned him of his rashness and foolishness and ordered that two mace-bearers should unseat him in open court and dismantle the platform.⁶⁰

(iii) Report of the province of Bengal:

Ibrahim Khan, Governor of Bengal (1689-98) was reported to hold court sitting on a charpai (*couch*) while the qazi and other canon law officers sat on the floor.

The Emperor wrote that "if he is unable to sit on the ground by reason of any disease, he is excused till his restoration to health, and he should urge his doctors to cure him soon." The newswriter was promoted in rank (by 100 troopers) and appointed a faujdar ["so that he too may know the taste of report-writing against himself by (other) writers".]⁶¹

(b) *Cases of reckless audacity and irresponsibility of princes*

(i) News-letter of the army of Prince Muhammad Azam Shah:

Prince Md. Azam Shah, unmindful of the prohibition of the *nazir* and the *mahaldar* (who also reported to the Emperor), used to come too near the entrenchments of Panhala fort for a view of it. The Emperor deprecated this boldness and urged his son to have caution and foresightedness as 'manliness does not consist in audacity and recklessness' but in humility.⁶²

(ii) Report of Bihroz Khan, the *nazir* of the deorhi of Prince Md. Azam Shah.

Prince Azam (governor of Gujarat, 1701-5), quarrelled with Nur-un-nisa, the *mahaldar* or superintendent of the harem, by not taking her to the imperial garden at Ahmadabad. At her request the *nazir* stopped the Prince from riding out. The Emperor ordered that the provincial 'mansabdars and Khwajah Quli Khan (with his own troops) and the Rajah of Narwar should cooperate and prevent the prince from riding out or giving audience....' Though the Prince begged pardon, the Emperor ordered a deduction of Rs. 50,000 from his salary, to prevent recurrence of such an audacious and foolish act, though his mahals (jagir) were not escheated.⁶³

(iii) Report of Gujarat Province

A Maratha commander, Janāji Dalve, plundered some merchants 80 miles from Ahmadabad on the highway to Surat. 'Azam knew it from a news-letter but remained unconcerned as the place was situated within the *faujdari* of Amanat Khan.

The Emperor ordered reduction of 5000 from the substantive rank of the Prince and realisation of a sum equivalent to the merchants' loss from his agents. He sarcastically commented on the lack of sense of responsibility and wisdom of the governor in not taking action against the culprits and considering himself "lower than Amanat Khan".⁶⁴

(iv) Letters of the *nazir* and news-writer with Prince Kam Bakhsh.

The latter had joined the siege of Jinji (December 1691) though Asad Khan and his son Nasrat Jang were the real commanders. Nasrat Jang requested the Prince to move cautiously as 5000 Maratha cavalry were hovering round the Mughal army. The Prince (who was secretly negotiating with the Marathas) behaved rudely and even conspired to imprison the Khan (as known from the letter of the *nazir*). Learning of this, the Khan summoned the news-writers (as witnesses) and rode on elephants to the Prince's quarters with Rao Dalpat Bundela and pulled down the Prince's tents. The Prince was virtually in the custody of Rao Dalpat. Aurangzeb approved of the Khan's action. This shows that the position of a news-writer was very important. The Emperor despaired of the reform of his son and wanted him to be sent to him under escort.⁶⁵

(v) Letter of *Nazir* of Bidar Bakht:

At first the Prince exerted much to capture the Sinsani fort of the rebel Rajaram Jat (expedition under Khan-i-Jahan, 1688-90). But it was known later on that he had orally requested the Jat to relinquish the fort after giving

his niece (brother's daughter) to him. The Emperor punished the prince for this neglect of duty by reducing his *jagir* by half.⁶⁶

(vi) Report of the army of Prince Md. 'Azam Shah (at Ahmadabad)

Md. Beg, an *ahadi*, ingratiated himself into the Prince's favour by backbiting. The Emperor punished the backbiter, as the company of such a man was the most harmful of all bad things for kings and rich men.⁶⁷

(c) *Domestic quarrels of a Prince*

Letter of Nazir of Prince Bidar Bakht

The Prince was generally very affectionate to his wife (Shams-un-nisa or Puti Begam), daughter of (Sayyid) Mukhtar Khan. But there was a quarrel among them, the prince calling her the daughter of a rascal (*paji*). The Emperor advised patience (by referring to his own relation with Dilras) and threatened rebuke and punishment if the matter was not reported by the *mahaldar* and the *nazir* to have been amicably settled.⁶⁸

(d) *Illegal, audacious and profligate actions of nobles:*

(i) News-letter of the army of Firuz Jang Khan.

Ghaziuddin Khan had, while holding audience, executed one Muhammad Aqil for highway robbery. The Emperor described him as 'foolish' and ordered that trials must be held according to Quranic law, i.e., execution must not be without proof.⁶⁹

(ii) News-reports (*Sawanih*) of Lahore

Mir Malik Husain Bahadur Khan entitled Khan i Jahan Bahadur Kokaltash (1673) and Zafar Jang (1675) was governor of the Punjab (1691-97). He oppressed the people of Lahore at the time of his return. The Emperor rebuked the oppressive governor for his innovations (*bidat*, illegal practices) in the jagirs appertaining to Lahore.⁷⁰

(iii) News-letter of Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang.

The Khan wanted his orders should contain the phrase 'By the *Karamat-buniad* command (of the Khan)'. The Emperor ironically remarked that a commander of 7000 did not possess *Karamat* (miraculous power) and that he himself was a slave of the angel Firuz.⁷¹

(iv) On the basis of a spy's oral report Yar Ali Beg told the Emperor that Hamid ud din Khan Bahadur resigned when Muhammad Murad had called him a *mardak* (a little man) and a *chela* (slave) of the Emperor.⁷²

(v) News-letters and Reports:

Mirza Tafakhur, son of the daughter (Qamar-un-nisa) of Wazir Asad Khan, marrying a sister of Mumtaz Mahal and hence maternal uncle of Aurangzeb, was a profligate noble who kidnapped the wife of a Baksaria, Ghanashyam by name. The Emperor ordered his confinement in Delhi.⁷³

(vi) News-letter of Machhli-bandar (Masulipatam)

Siddi Yaqut Khan, *thanahdar* of Danda Rajpuri, was ambitious enough to become the collector of the place, for which he sent a petition. Aurangzeb

commented on the "aggressive and self willed spirit" of the Khan, saying that he wrote the petition in a state of intoxication⁷⁴.

(e) *Lack of alertness of frontier governors*

(i) News-letter of the province of Afghanistan.

11,000 horses entered Kabul with one groom for every two horses, for cavalry purposes. The Emperor regarded it as "a very strange act of negligence" of the governor, Amir Khan (1677-98), as 5500 brave foreign Turanis entered the Mughal territory. The Emperor cautioned vigilance against foreign invaders' stratagem and ordered only one groom (useless, old and helpless) to 20 horses in future.⁷⁵

(ii) Despatch of Amir Khan, governor of Kabul.

The Mughal thanahdar of Ghazni (36 miles away) wrote that Persian thanahdar of Qandahar would offer 100 Persian horses to the Emperor if he was permitted to shift the thanah 4 miles within Mughal territory on account of desiccation on the former site. The Emperor expressed surprise at the attitude of Amir Khan trained in Mughal court from the age of seven and urged on him vigilance against the devices of the Persians.⁷⁶

(f) *Impending foreign invasion*

(i) News-letter of Persia sent by Muhammad Sadiq, the leader of the merchants.

Shah Abbas II left Isfahan to advance towards India. The Emperor promptly marched himself to repel the invasion. September 1666—Aurangzeb learnt from reports of spies that Persia wanted to invade India. Sent Muazzam and Jaswant towards the Punjab (4th September). Himself left Agra on 9-10-66.⁷⁷

(ii) News-letter of Ghazni

Subhan Quli, Persian *thanahdar*, sought permission from Amir Khan, governor of Kabul, for mutual inter-frontier trade (as the distance was only 8 leagues). Amir Khan referred it to the Emperor. The Emperor expressed wonder at the attitude of Amir Khan and contrasted the Persians and Indians.⁷⁸

IV. *Corrupt and inefficient reporters*

As against the honest and efficient news-writers and spies who disclosed cases of misgovernment, ambition or abuse of authority by governors and officers and helped the Emperor to check them, there were also many who tried to abuse their trust and turned their office into a field of private gain or who were negligent or inefficient. True, there was a theoretical code of conduct, laying down precautions and restrictions regarding the behaviour of the reporters and severe punishments were inflicted on slack and collusive news-writers. But all this did not deter many from being

dishonest and sending false, wrong or undependable reports. Thus lure of gold or prospects of personal gain led many to put a premium on the friendship of the nearby governor, the man on the spot, while Delhi was far-off. From this point of view, what Lord Bryce once said that it is a much harder task to raise the civic character of a people than to alter political institutions may be equally applicable to the news-writers of this period.

First, a case of giving incorrect reports was seen in the Orissa campaign of Raja Man Singh. He sent his eldest son Jagat Singh against the Afghans under Bahadur Kurah. The local landholder, Hammir, forewarned Kuar Jagat Singh that reinforcements were coming to Bahadur Kurah. Jagat Singh sent some spies to watch the movements of the Afghans. But the spies gave a wrong report about the encampment of the Afghans in a neighbouring jungle. So Jagat Singh did not expect any immediate attack and became careless. As a matter of fact the Afghans leaving their tents in the forest had silently advanced towards the Mughal camp by secret ways and defeated the Mughals badly.⁷⁹ Instances can be multiplied.

Secondly, there was shameful collusion or secret understanding between the official reporters and the governors. The classic complaint in this regard was that by Bernier: "It is true that the Great Moghul sends a *Vakia Navis* to the various provinces; that is a person whose business it is to communicate every event that takes place; but there is generally a disgraceful collusion between these officers and the governor, so that their presence seldom restrains the tyranny exercised over the unhappy people."⁸⁰ That matters did not improve even after the appointment of the *Sawanih-nigars* or *Khufianavises* as a check on the *Waqai'navis* is borne out by the corroboration of the French physician's complaints and by the observations of the Venetian physician and gunner who followed him. Manucci writes: "Officials in their eagerness to become rich, plunder or act wrongfully. They bribe the *Vakianavis* (official reporter), so that the king may never hear."⁸¹ This would tend to suggest that mere institutional reform unbacked by the personal vigilance of the Emperor, then preoccupied in the Deccan wars, proved to be inadequate to arrest the corrosive influence of corruption.

Thirdly, corruption spread its tentacles not only over reporters working among civilian officers but also among the military officers. The English physician Dr. Fryer had a very poor opinion of the efficiency and work of the *Waqai'navises* (called by him 'Public Notaries or Public Intelligencers') and condemned them for not reporting false musters which were the order of the day. They were won over by the governors. Thus they received money from both sides,—from the Emperor their salary and from the officers their bribes. He says: "This cheat (i.e. practice of false musters) is practised all over the realm, notwithstanding here are public Notaries placed immediately by the Moghal, to give notice of all Transactions; which they are sure to represent in favour of the governors when they reside, being fee'd by them, as well as paid by the Emperor; so that if a defeat happen, it is extenuated: if a victory, it is magnified to the height. Those in this office are called *Voçanoveces*,"⁸² Fryer's comments on the honesty of news-

writers are equally unfavourable. He held that one of the main causes of Aurangzeb's failure in the Deccan wars, in spite of his vast army, was the dishonesty of his news-writers in frequently sending false reports. "Notwithstanding all these formidable numbers (large armies), while the generals and vakia navises consult to deceive the Emperor, on whom he depends for a true state of things, it can never be otherwise but that they must be misrepresented when the judgment he makes must be by a false perspective."⁸³

Even assuming that these scathing comments of the three foreign observers were overdrawn and that there were, perhaps, some shining lights who stood above the average run of corrupt news-writers, it may generally be said that the system proved faulty in several instances. Evading the restrictions imposed by the espionage system, some governors acted in a virtually independent and arbitrary manner, while military officers neglected even a vital matter like the armed strength of the empire, knowing fully well that their misconduct would not be duly reported.

In fact the corruption of the news-writers, emphasized by the foreign travellers, is high-lighted by the views held by the Empire's two outstanding generals, Mir Jumla and Mirza Rajah Jai Singh and even by Emperor Aurangzeb. In the opinion of Mir Jumla, the reports which the imperial *Waqai'navises* used to send to the Emperor were often "defective and incorrect". Hence his *Waqai'navis*, Shihabuddin Talish, intended, as he writes in his preface, "to give a detailed and faithful account" of the Assam campaign. What is more striking in Jai Singh's despatches in the Bijapur campaign is that they show that Aurangzeb himself was fully cognisant of the shortcomings in the accuracy of the news transmitted. It is clear that the effectiveness of the Mughal army as a fighting machine was undermined by what in modern terminology would be called 'Fifth Columnists'. The gravity of the danger was heightened by the fact that the Mughal secret service itself, the agency to checkmate and nip such activities in the bud, was the hot-bed of corruption and hence utterly inefficient. In his despatch to the Emperor Jai Singh expressed his sense of despair as follows: "The fact about the couriers (harkaras) is, as remarked by the Emperor, that even the tenth part of their news is not in consonance with facts: and this is quite evident to the Emperor. Although there is none at Bijapur who can detect the falsehood in their statements yet the nature of their news and other signs of these ignoble and worthless people give clear proof that they are liars, selfish, greedy of gain and pro-Deccanis. For some time when the enemy forces were at a distance of ten or twelve kos from the imperial army it was repeatedly ascertained that the Bijapuris bribed them into betraying to them all information about the imperial army, big or small. Whatever they say is against the truth. The presence of these people in the victorious camp is tantamount to giving the spies of the enemy access to us."⁸⁴

V. Risks of honest performance of duty

The honest performance of duty by some news-writers was at times

attended with risks of public humiliation at the hands of an irate governor. The latter would publicly insult or beat a news-writer for sending an adverse report against himself. In such a case the *Daroga-i-Dakchauki*, the Superintendent of Posts and Intelligence, the official superior or protector of the news-writers, would take up the matter with the Emperor for punishing the governor.

The report of Yar Ali Beg, Superintendent of news (*Sawanih*) is an instance in point. Buzurg Umed Khan (then governor of Bihar) insulted Abdur Rahim the newswriter of the province in open darbar and turned him out. The Superintendent took up his cause before the Emperor and wrote: "If no punishment is inflicted (for this), other writers will abstain from writing the truth about occurrences, and become (mere) servants of the provincial governors. The Emperor punished the news-writer by dismissing him and reduced the rank of the governor (by 500) and his jagir. It is, however, not clear what fault the news-writer had committed.⁸⁵

VI. Disclosure by spies and punishment of negligent officers

When the public reporters failed to send a report of an event of which the Emperor got information from spies, the news-writer was punished.

The letter of a spy of Afghanistan disclosed that Prince Md. Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) set up canvas screens (*qanat*) in the Jama Mosque to offer prayers. Aurangzeb connected this with his son's 'fear and cowardice'. He dismissed the negligent and slack *nazir* of Kabul and reduced his rank by 100 *suwar* for not reporting the matter. He also ordered resumption of the jagirs of the news-writer and reporter of Kabul, though he did not degrade them in rank as they might be of service in future. The spy was ordered to send a further report after a second enquiry. The prince was to be removed if the fact was true.

The *Sawanih-navis* of Azam (in the Deccan) reported to the Emperor about the improper behaviour of a drunk Punjabi horseman at the tomb of Saint Gisu Daraz. It was not reported by the *Waqai'navis*. Aurangzeb therefore brought it to his son's notice.⁸⁶

VII. The delicate task of news-writing

News-writing was a very delicate and onerous task. News-writers had to be very circumspect and cautious in what they wrote if they had to avoid unpleasant consequences of an indiscreet report.

Letter of the *nazir* of Md. Muazzam Bahadur Shah.

On the whispered suggestion of the Prince (coming from Sarhind chakla) the Superintendent of the elephants arranged an elephant fight but none, animals or men, were hurt. But Aurangzeb was not satisfied. Considering that the *nazir* could not (for fear of his own life) conceal, and that he was actuated by 'shame of avarice' in reporting non-injury, the Emperor ordered reduction of the *nazir's* rank (by 200) and proportionate change in *jagir*,

To the 'foolish Prince' the Prime Minister should write a *hasbul hukm* for violating the royal prerogative and indulging in 'useless and unprofitable longings'.

News-letter of Ahmadabad:

Ibrahim Khan, appointed governor of Gujarat (1705), used to go to the Jama mosque on a palki (palanquin), thereby violating royal prerogative. Even princes could not go to the mosque in a *nalki* or open litter. To the enquiry of the news-writers, the Khan replied that they might write what they wanted. The Emperor asked the Prime Minister to caution him not to do anything which gave a handle to the news-writers to complain. He also punished the news-writer for his 'wrong conception' (in wrongly equating *jhampons* or boat shaped chair with *palkis*), i.e., for wrong information by reducing his rank (by 50) and *jagir* in the same proportion though he did not dismiss him from his post.

News-reporter of Nasrat Jang:

Zindan Khan Deccani, a commander of 4000, was reported as being 'used to sacrifice his life in the service of the emperor' and deserving a higher rank.

The Emperor sarcastically commented on the rhetorical writing, for how could the mansabdar be still alive if he repeatedly sacrificed his life? He condemned the Deccani officers as faithless (rather unjustly).

News-letter of the army of Hamid Khan Bahadur (brother of Ghaziuddin Firuz Jang).

He carried kettledrums and bandsmen and played the naubat every day as at festivities though the distinction had not been granted. The Emperor snubbed him and sarcastically remarked "the news-writer must not spitefully bring such charges", against a person enjoying the rank of 4000 and title of Bahadur as "even low persons do not require permission to play *naubat* on festive occasions."

Letter of Md. Azam, news-writer of Gujarat province, a *walashahi* (retainer) of the Emperor.

Md. Amin Khan, the governor of Gujarat (1672-82), held court in a state of intoxication. The Emperor regarded this as a slander. On this being reported to the governor by his court agent the governor punished his slanderer by having his moustaches and beard pulled out and flung into the air in open darbar. This too was reported to the Emperor who dismissed the lying news-writer.⁸⁷

VIII. News-writing as a literary art

So far we have treated news-writers as a mere spoke in the administrative wheel of the Mughals whose reports were of value in running the machine of administration. But there is another aspect of the news-writers which, though not possessing any value to the practical administrator, possessed a value of a different kind,—a literary and artistic value. I am referring particularly to the long and masterly diary of the conquest of

Kuch Bihar and Assam and its continuation, written by Mir Jumla's *Waqai' navis* Ibn Muhammad Wali Ahmad entitled *Shihabuddin Talish*, the author of *Fathiyya-i-ibriyya* (completed May, 1663). In his elaborate portrayal of the campaign, as an eye-witness, marked by great literary skill, the *Waqai' navis* rose to the level of a historian. His diary with a stern warning has become an invaluable source to the future historian.⁸⁸ Similarly Abdul Jaleel, the *Waqai'navis* (& *Bakhshi*) in Gujarat was a Sayyid of Bilgram reputed for his literary style.^{88a}

Mughal News-writers as fore-runners of Newspapers

I. Fore-runners of newspapers outside India:

Nowhere in the world newspapers as public vehicles of news were born in a day. These were preceded almost every where by centuries of effort. The first newspaper in China, claimed to be the first in the world also, was a Court Gazette (*Ti-pao* or Palace Report, also called *Ti-chan* or Court Reading matter), published by the Tang rulers (618-906 A.D.) as a means of communication between government officials. The first western printing was done in Germany from movable types. The first newspapers were published in Belgium in 1605 (Antwerp), in Germany in 1609 (Augsburg), in France in 1631 (The *Gazette*, patronised by Richelieu), in England in 1622 (*Weekly Notes*), in Sweden (1645) and in Italy in 1645 (Genoa). But printed newspapers had their fore-runners of varying kinds. Writers of news-letters in Rome used to supply news to businessmen and political leaders and other persons living away from the capital as early as 5th century B.C. Julius Caesar as Roman Consul (60 B.C.) used to have a daily bulletin posted at the Forum for government notifications. Many of the other precursors of printed newspapers like 'the town criers' (or bellmen), posted proclamations, controversial pamphlets, ballads, broadsides, news-sheets, news pamphlets and news-books, dealing with battles, defeats, marvels and coronation, appeared in Germany and some other European countries, Holland, Belgium and England (London, 1549) in the 16th century and some were available for sale in shops and fairs. These were followed by circulation of newsheets in Switzerland (1610), Austria (before 1620), Italy (1636, in Florence), and Japan (late 17th century) and certain other countries.⁸⁹

II. Fore-runners of Newspapers in India:

In our own country the first printing press was established by the Portuguese at Goa in 1556,⁹⁰ the year of the accession of Emperor Akbar. But curiously enough, Akbar did not encourage printing presses in his own dominions and the first newspaper published in India was the Bengal Gazette

or Calcutta General Advertiser, or Hickey's Gazette (January 29, 1780). Medieval India had some fore-runners of modern newspapers comparable to those in Europe. Comparable to the town criers or bellmen in Europe there were the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer, the Imam reading the *Khutbah*, and the drummer making announcements to the villagers and townspeople. As in Europe we also had our ballads dealing with stories of heroism and valour, battles and disasters etc, while the *Charans* or wandering minstrels may be compared to the troubadours of Europe. Above all, the news-letters and reports of the news-writers, official and private, may be compared to the government notifications and news-letters in Europe.

III. The official and secret News-letters in Mughal India:

As described earlier, Mughal India had the following classes of government news-letters and reports sent by the Intelligence Staff of the Mughals:

- (i) *Waqai's* or news-letters
- (ii) *Sawanih* or *Khufia* or secret news-letters
- (iii) *Akhbars* or news reports
- (iv) *Roznamchas* or daily reports.

The first two may be described as the official documents, i.e., news-letters of the *Waqai'navis*, *Sawanih-navis*, or *Khufia navis*, which again were largely based on the *akhbars* (or news-reports) or *roznamchas* or daily reports of their subordinate agents (*akhbarnavis*).

In some contemporary European records of the seventeenth century we usually get references to the Persian *Waqai'* or *Wacka* (*Waka'a*) and *Waacka* (or Gazette) in the sense of news-letter or gazette.⁹¹

IV. The Court Bulletins:

Then there was the series of official records known as the *Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-Mu'ala*, news of imperial court or court bulletins or court news-letters of the reigns of Aurangzeb and his successor. These were minutes of the proceedings of the Mughal Emperor in *darbar*—"the movements and doings of the Emperor, the time of holding Court, the appointments made, the persons presented or given *congée*, the presents offered to the Emperor and the gifts bestowed by him, summaries of the despatches received and the orders passed on them, etc." These were noted down daily by clerks (like clerks of Tudor Privy Council) in *Shikastah* handwriting on a particular sheet of brown paper. Each sheet for a single day contains a heading (at the top,—*Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-mu'ala*) followed by the day, week, date, month, regnal year). It has been well said that here we find "the Mughal officialdom both at work as well as at play."⁹²

V. News-reporting in the eighteenth century:

The system of official news-writing and reporting continued to function

in the first half of the 18th century. But its efficiency must have suffered with the decline in monarchy and consequent administrative decline. Early in the reign of Farrukhsiyar (1713-19), Chhabela Ram, governor of Agra, complained that the deputies of the *Waqai'nigar* wrote whatever they liked (i.e. making allegations against him) as he had stopped their private profits. He asserted that the country was more peaceful than before and travellers moved in complete security. The Emperor ignored the complaint, saying that the office of news-reporters was worthy of trust and it could not be supposed they wrote without finding out facts.⁹³

Ghulam Husain, the author of the *Siyar ul Mutakherin*, has referred to the graphic report of a terrible flood in the Carnatic in 1720, the second year of the reign of Muhammad Shah, in the "Imperial Gazette of Hyderabad". We are told that owing to untimely heavy rains there was a calamitous and unprecedented flood in the Carnatic, washing away villages, men, houses and cattle. Similarly we also get references to the "Gazette of Cabul and Peshawar", describing troubles in Kabul and Kashmir and the like.⁹⁴

Bengal continued to have its own staff of reporters and spies under the Nawabs. There was no love lost between Prince Azim ud din (Azim us Shan), subahdar, and Murshid Quli (Kartalab Khan), diwan of Bengal, for the latter's economic measures were galling to the former. The governor tried to win over the reporters to his side by offering bribes and recommending before the Emperor the increase of mansab of *Waqai'nigar* Abdul Rahman Khan. But Aurangzeb turned it down, as being inconsistent with the fixed principle laid down, that princes (governors) were not to recommend higher rank for news-reporters. The Emperor also reprimanded his grandson for his pro-Hindu proclivities, reported to him by news-writers. Murshid Quli had also to counter the adverse reports against him through his own agents. The Emperor also realised the possibilities of inaccuracy and falsehood in reports from distant provinces like Bengal. Reports of the oppression of 'Azim us Shan on the cultivators and of his *saudi i khas* and recklessness in provincial revenues reached Aurangzeb, then far away in the Deccan, through news-writers' reports. Through the reports of *Waqai'navis* and *Sawanih-nigar* came the news of Azim us Shan's futile effort to have Murshid Quli killed. The diwan had a detailed report of this included in the *Waqai* (official newsletter) for being sent to the Emperor.⁹⁵

The correspondence between the English in Calcutta and the country powers in 1756-65 makes frequent allusions to *hirkaras* and *akhbars*. Under Siraj ud daula the *darogha* of *harkara* in charge of his Intelligence Department was Raja Ram Narain Singh of Midnapur (brother of Raja Raj Narain Singh, a powerful zaminder with great political influence), whose emoluments and status were those of a minister. His brother Narayan Das (Singh) *harkara* was sent by Siraj to Calcutta (1756). Before the Diwani grant of 1765, the '*waqayanigari*' still flourished in Bengal. The *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* shows that in 1763 Shakir ud daulah was "granted the *Bakshinigari* and *waqaya'nigari* of Bengal and Bihar" drawing an allowance of Rs. 2000 a month and a *jagir* of 80 lakhs of dams. He had two agents

Muhammad Waris Khan and Ray Sida Mal for managing his affairs.⁹⁶ All this would tend to show that the Reporters and Intelligencers were still occupying a very important position at least in Bengal.

During the first quarter of the 18th century the services of the official reporting agency were evidently utilised by the English Company's servants in Bengal. C. R. Wilson has given extracts from the Bengal Public Consultations (1704-1717) which refer to the terms *Bakhshi*, *Waqai'navis*, *Waqai-nigar*, *Waqai's*, *Sawanih-nigar*, *Akhbarnavis*, *Harkara*, *Darogha Harkara*,—all of course written in curious spellings. The Company's servants used the services of the news-agents of Hugli to ventilate their grievances before the Court.

27.3.1704 : Ram Chandra, Company's *vakil* at Hughli, was instructed to present himself to the Governor, *Bakhshi* and *Waqai'navis*.

1.6.1714 : Presents to be given to certain royal messengers including the *Sawanih nigar*, coming from Hughli to witness the 'public show and rejoicing' made by the English for honouring the 'King's seerpaw' so that they might 'notifye in their *Vaccaes* (waqas) to Court.'

10.6.1717 : Together with the attested copies of "three royal rescripts" (Farman of 1717—for Madras, Surat and Bengal), received from Khwaja Sarhad, Mr. Feake "delivered an Attestation under the Seals of the *Swannagur Wackernagur*, and the *Herr coradroga*" regarding an article stolen from "Contoo the Cossimbazar Broker."

25.11.1717: Presents for the Imperial officers were "Registered by the *Vaccangur* and News writers who were present at the delivery." Again, "the *Vaccanagur Swannanagur Horrcora*" and a few other officers came from Hughli to take notice of the ceremony of making some presents to the *Gurzbardar* and the *Chilla* and so presents were also given to them.

It is interesting to note that these Consultation Books also use the terms *waqai'navis* and public newspapers together.

28.4.1715 : The English tried to have their complaints of extortion at Cassimbazar (on account of the connivance of the Diwan with the Customs House officers there) noted in the *Vacca's* (Waqas) and public newspapers by requesting the *vaccanagur* (waqa negaur) and newswriters through Messrs. Browne and Spencer.

5.5.1715 : The protest of the English was "recorded in the newsbook"—not only by the *Wackanagur* but also by the '*Sanwannagr* (Sawan neh negaur) and *Eckbarnavis* (*Akhbarnavis*) in their news books'.

13.5.1717 : The public rejoicings to be made by the English at the grant of the farman of 1717 to Surman (public dinner, cannonade, bonfires etc.) would be 'taken notice of in the *Wacka* and other publick News Papers'⁹⁷.

It is, however, difficult to determine exactly when the system of news-writing and Intelligence department of the Mughals died out. It seems to have been a case of gradual atrophy as well as of silent disuse. Perhaps a clue may be found in the laments of Ghulam Husain (C. 1783): "Now all those offices being suppressed it comes to pass that, not only in villages, but in towns and in renowned cities, the servants, the favourites, the dependents, nay very often, the very spies and emissaries of a Zemindar, having wriggled themselves into the service of Government, commit upon the inhabitants a variety of oppressions and exactions, and always with the utmost safety; nor is there found a single man to ask them what they are doing; so far from there being any one to inflict a condign chastisement upon them. It is then worth any observer's while to examine what kind of Government existed then, and how matters stand now; and what were the circumstances of the subject then, and what they are to-day."^{97a}

VI. *Private akhbars*

Apart from the official *waqai's* and *akhbars*, meant for the Emperor and his ministers, there was a class of private *akhbars* or semi-public newsletters which used to circulate among large sections of the people. In Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, we have, besides the *Akhbarat*, a very valuable collection of private letter-books called Vakil Reports, Waqaya papers, and Khatoot Maharajgan and Ahalkaran. "The utility of the *Akhbarat* and Vakil Reports as sources of information for historical research has been highly spoken of by prominent scholars because they record the daily happenings, news and proceedings of the Mughal Court. The personal and official activities of the Jaipur rulers along with an up-to-date account of the social customs, manners, ceremonies, etc. of the royal household have been narrated in the Waqaya papers; while the Khatoot Maharajgan Ahalkaran along with the Kharitas throw a conspicuous light over the relations of the state with the Mughals, Marathas, Pindaris and other neighbouring rulers."^{97b} The Rajasthan records are important not only for the news contained therein but also because they are 'genuine specimens' of mid-seventeenth century Rajasthani prose. Hence the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar considered them to be "of unsurpassed value to students of Indian Philology and of the actual growth of the North Indian vernaculars."^{97c} During the period under review the value of such *akhbars*, vakil reports and letters etc. as an important agency for supplying news was fully realised. Princes, ministers, merchants and all others who could afford it, had their news-writers, who compiled *akhbars*, containing whatever news they could collect,—political, military, commercial, religious,—trivial details, idle gossips or reports, lies, scandals of the court and the city, slanders, sarcasms, abuse of government etc. These private manuscript *akhbars* or news-papers, written and copied in multiple copies by hand or lithographed, continued in circulation and were liberally patronised by local governments and chiefs, and were avidly read by the news-hungry people. Their influence on the

people was considered by no less a personage than Macaulay (1836) to have been greater than that of printed papers.

The influence of private *akhbars* (newspapers) in Maharashtra on the minds of the people in the court of the Peshwa is clearly illustrated by the well known Poona anecdote (1773-4) recorded by Grant Duff. When an enraged elephant rushed towards Peshwa Madhava Rao, his brother, Narayan Rao, tried to jump off with others. Madhava Rao caught his arm and remarked, "Brother, what will the *Ukhbars* say of you?"⁹⁸

In 1792 the public newspapers of Delhi wrote that the Emperor expressed the hope to Mahadji Sindhia and the Peshwa that they would enable him to recover the imperial tribute from the Bengal Province. In 1813 the Lahore *Ukhbars* and 'Hindusthan Newspapers' gave details of the advance of the united army of Ranjit Singh and Futeh Khan (wazir of Kabul) in conquering Kashmir and occupying Attock by the army of Ranjit.⁹⁹

The manuscript newspapers were vigorous in circulation in 1830's when liberty was granted to the Indian Press by Macaulay and Metcalfe. These are referred to by Lord Auckland, then Governor-General of India, as well as by Macaulay, Legislative Member of the Council, in 1836. Lt. Col. Sir William Sleeman left a vivid description of the manuscript newspapers of Oudh in 1849-50. Their existence 'at the courts of the Native Princes' was also testified to by Sir C. E. Trevelyan, during the Parliamentary Enquiry Committee, 1852-3. During the movement of 1857 the manuscript news-letters and *akhbars* constituted the inflammable but mysterious *chitti chapatees* which were distributed by the village watchmen among the sepoys in Northern India. Even after the manuscript newspapers came to be superseded by the growing use of cheap printed newspapers, these letters sometimes lingered on among firms of merchants and bankers.¹⁰⁰

REFERENCES

¹Cambridge Med. Hist. IV, Ch. 10 by Sir T. W. Arnold, p. 283. The word *Barid* may also have been derived from Greek *beredros*. The State Post, known to Byzantine and Sassanid empires, operated from the Umayyad Age but became very important under the Abbasids, and covered the whole empire by middle of the 9th Century. The postal service being official it only carried private letters as an exception. Article *Barid* in Ency. Islam [New ed. 1960, 1045-47 (D. Sourdell).] For Timur's regulations, Davy and White, *Institutes of Timur*, 347-55.

²The Department of Secret Intelligence had agents (*mushrifis*) throughout the country. The head could engage the services of the trusted slaves and servants of princes, ministers, courtiers, important officers and foreign princes to spy on their own lords ("counting the very breaths of the Khans of Turkistan" (Baihaqi); Nazim, *Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (1931), 144-6.

³Barani, in Elliot & Dowson, III, 101, 112; M. Aziz Ahmad, *Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, 362-3.

⁴Elliot & Dowson, III, 179-80, 181, 195; K. S. Lal, *Hist. of the Khaljis*, 236-40.

⁵M. Husain, *The Rehla of Ibn Battutah* xxix; *Masalik ul Absar*, in Elliot & Dowson III, 581.

⁶Ain (Phillot) I. 268-70.

⁷Sarkar, Aurangzib V, 216. "In short, as amongst the arts of government, information and knowledge of the state of the land and of its inhabitants, hold a principal rank; and the interest of the Legislators in gathering knowledge, is always to tranquillise and quiet the people of God, by whose providence the Princes and Rulers have come

to have the command and power over them; and as the happiness and ease of the subject is their main concern." *Siyar* (Cambray ed.) III. 174-5.

⁸Sarkar, *Mughal Administration* (1963 ed.), 61-64.

⁹"...to the end, that should any one or any two of them attempt to send in writing an unfaithful account, still the truth and real state of things might soon be investigated, by comparing their information with the accounts written by the two or three others; a discovery always followed by the disgrace of the faithless or uninformed writer, who never failed to be dismissed from a post of honour and affluence, and to be consigned to shame and distress." *Siyar* (Cambray ed.) III. 173-5.

¹⁰Ain I. op. cit.

¹¹Rogers & Beveridge I. 247. Perhaps the appointment of the waqainavis may be dated about the reorganization of the provincial governments by Akbar.

¹²*Baharistan i Ghaibi* 225; *Borah* (Eng. Tr.) I. 209.

¹³Sir Jadunath has quoted Mirza Nathan to show that it was Jahangir who introduced the practice of appointing news-writers in provinces but this goes against the evidence of the Emperor's *memoirs* where the credit has been given to Akbar.

"When the letter of Mukarram Khan and Shaykh Kamal containing the news of the handing over of the war-elephants by Raja Parikshit and of his surrender reached Islam Khan, he summoned Khwaja Yaghma, the news-reporter, and said to him thus: "Write in your chronicle how the Raja of Kuch who claims independent sovereignty (for his dynasty) for a century has been humbled in a moment, and how I am turning him into a vassal of the Emperor." *Baharistan* 285; *Borah* I. 254-5.

^{13a}*Alamgirnamah*. 1081

¹⁴Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, 61. The *Sawanih navis*, secret before, now became a parallel organisation of the waqianavis (Saran, 199).

¹⁵Akbar was not ignorant of the Persian system of report. Nature of subjects recorded: "what His Majesty eats and drinks; when he sleeps, and when he rises; the etiquette in the State hall; the time His Majesty spends in the Harem; when he goes to general and private assemblies; the nature of hunting-parties; the slaying of animals; when he marches, and when he halts; the acts of His Majesty as the spiritual guide of the nation; vows made to him; his remarks (vide Fifth Book); what books he has read out to him; what alms he bestows; what presents he makes; the daily and monthly exercises which he imposes on himself; appointments to mansabs; contingents of troops; salaries; jagirs; *Irmas* money (vide above, p. 260, note 2); *sayurghals* (rent-free land); the increase or decrease of taxes; contracts; sales, money transfers; *peshkash* (tribute receipts); dispatch; the issue or orders; the papers which are signed by His Majesty; the arrival of reports; the minutes thereon; the arrivals of courtiers; their departures; the fixing of periods; the inspection of the guards; battles, victories, and peace; obituaries of well-known persons; animal fights and the bettings on them; the dying of horses; capital punishments; pardons granted by His Majesty; the proceedings of the general assemblies; marriages, births; *chawgan* games (vide Ain 29); *chaupar*, *nard*, chess, card games, etc. extraordinary phenomena; the harvests of the year; the reports on events". Ain I. op. cit.

¹⁶Bernier (Constable), 231.

¹⁷Fryer, *New Account of East India & Persia* (Crooke's ed.) I. 344.

¹⁸S. N. Sen, *Indian Travels of Thevenot & Gemelli-Careri*. 26

¹⁹*Storia do Mogor* (New ed.) II. 309, 395-6.

²⁰*Siyar*, op. cit. III. 173.

²¹*Borah* I. 209

²²Sen, op. cit.

^{22a}"My grandson, Mahmed-muez-eddin. has been writing to me to recommend M. N. Remembrancer of such a province. Of course something must be done for him; but yet, the man is to be dismissed from that office directly, that the Gazetteer may remember to write Gazettes no more.

"As interest has taken place, abilities have been obscured;

"And a hundred sorts of films have covered his eye-balls (128)."

But the answer he sent to that grandson himself, is still more curious. Here it is:

"Dutiful sons, that are acquainted with their father's temper, do not write recommendations in behalf of Gazetteers, and such sort of people. Your request is granted, and the man has been promoted accordingly; but yet, he has been dismissed from that office. Do not commit the like offence again." *Siyar* III. 174 (Cambray ed.).

²³*Hedayet ul Qawaid*. in Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, 64.

²⁴*Mirat* sup. 174-5, in Sarkar, op. cit. 62. *Islamic Culture* (July, 1954), p. 462.

²⁵Based on *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* in Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, op. cit.

"Most noble son! The *Waqai'nigar* of the Pargana of Loni has written to his brother that the *Amin* and the *Faujdar* of that place receive fifteen to sixteen thousand rupees annually by way of road-toll out of which only a thousand or two are remitted to the public treasury. This is not a levy but highway robbery. To divert public money fraudulently to one's own use is unlawful. Had it been a matter of a small amount being

involved, it would not have been so grave. But it is otherwise. The fraud and perfidy of the *Amin* should be thoroughly investigated. In this respect a Farman is being issued to the Subadar and the Diwan concerned to take necessary action in the matter." (Aurangzeb to Prince Azam). *Islamic Culture* (July 1954), 462-3; P. Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, 198.

"In many of the important parganahs, separate reporters were posted directly from the imperial court, to send to the provincial diwan *siaha* (ledgers of receipts) of the escheated jagirs of mansabdars who were dead, absconding or absent." (Mirat Supplement 174-5, Eng. Tr.), (Sarkar, 62).

²⁶Sarkar, *op. cit.* 62-3; Rogers and Beveridge I. 203. According to *Mirat* the Mir Bakhshi used to appoint four bakhshis in the province. P. Saran, *Provincial Govt. of the Mughals*, 197.

^{26a}*Mir Abdul Jaleel (Wasiti) Bilgrami*—a Sayyid of Bilgram, was the official intelligencer as also the *Bakhshi* in Gujarat, *mansabdar* and granted a jagir in the time of Aurangzeb. His dignity and elevation made others jealous of him and angry against his patron, Yar Ali Beg. Complaints against Abdul Jaleel could not be proved, as he was a very dutiful officer. But it was considered advisable to transfer him, without any degradation, to Bakhar in Sind as *Bakhshi & Sawanih-nigar*. Here also he became the victim of malice. He was recalled during the reign of Farrukhsiyar. But his explanation was considered satisfactory to Ratan Chand (and therefore to Abdulla Sayyid and the Emperor) and so he was fully restored to his posts. But, at his own request, dictated by consideration of his old age and the political situation in the court, he was permitted to send his own proxy and to stay at Delhi. In 1133 A.H. he resigned in favour of his son but died five years later and was interred in his home town of Bilgram. He was reputed in literary circles as an author and poet and well known for his epistolary style. MU. (Tr.) I. 637; II, 410, 935, 1062; *Isl. Culture*, Jan. 1928, 133.

²⁷Sarkar, *op. cit.* 61; Siyar, *op. cit.* 175.

²⁸*Mirat i Ahmadi*.

Sarkar, *op. cit.* Saran (*op. cit.* 198-9) says that the *Sawanih-nigar* had to report not only about government officers but all other events and were appointed throughout the empire by the Postmaster General of the province to whose suite were attached 20 horsemen for carrying out his duties.

In the memorial to the Privy Council in 1824 of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other Indians against the Press Regulations of 1823, reference was made to the advantage of having two sets of intelligencers,—the *akhbar-navis* or news-writer who published an account of whatever happened and a *khoofe-navees* or confidential correspondent who sent a private and particular account of every occurrence worthy of notice (para 50),—showing that some restraint was absolutely necessary to prevent abuse of power.

²⁹Sarkar.

³⁰Sarkar, *op. cit.* 62, 64.

³¹*Mirat i Ahmadi*, Sarkar, 61-64. also Manucci (olded) II. 309; Saran, 199.

³²Sarkar, *op. cit.* The duties of the *subordinate agents* of the *Khufianavis* or Secret Service reporters were various:

(i) to deliver to the Nazims and Revenue Officers the *farmans* and orders issued from the Khalsa office for confiscation of the jagirs of the dead or dismissed or run-away jagirdars.

(ii) the Postmaster issued passports under his seal to the macebearer or Ahadi, carrying royal mandates or gifts, and also passports for the return journey.

(iii) the *postmen* had to conduct these macebearers safely (either way, going and returning), arrange their provisions from the faujdars or zamindars or thanahdars of their respective stations. Thus the secret service and the postal work came to be performed by the same body of men. (Suppl.) *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Tr. by Nawab Ali and Seddon (1928), p. 150.

³³*Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, in Sarkar, *op. cit.* 63. He was appointed by the darogha of the harkara. Saran, 199.

³⁴*Ibid.* Saran, 199.

³⁵Sarkar, *op. cit.*; Manucci II. 309 (new edn.)

³⁶*Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, in Sarkar, 64.

³⁷Babur wrote in his memoirs: "Two spies returned from the Bengal army, said that Bengalees under Makhdum-i-Alam were posted in 24 places on the Gandak and there raising defences."—Mrs. A. Beveridge, III. 663. A Waqainavis and Khufianavis accompanied Aurangzeb's embassy to Persia, Manucci (old) II. 128. According to Saran there was a parallel organisation of Waqai'navis for the army, and the office was combined with that of the Bakhshi (p. 201).

³⁸Manucci (new) II. 309; Sarkar, *op. cit.* 63, 223-4 (classes of letters): *Siyar* (Cambray ed.) III. 173; Usha Agarwal states (*Bengal, Past & Present*, Jan-June, 1966. vol. LXXXV. Pt. I. Serial No. 159) that the *Darogha-i-Dakchauki* gave the letters to *Mir Bakhshi* who opened all letters except the personal letters of the Emperor.

To help despatch of news and reports of spies, regular postal service existed through-

out the Ghaznavid empire. The *Sahib Barid* (Master of Post) at the headquarters of every province was the official news writer and he had to keep the Sultan in touch with everything of importance in province, particularly doings of local officers and commanders (according to Baihaqi and Siyasat namah). The Sahib-Barid submitted his reports in a cipher. Nazim, op. cit.

The Postmasters (*ashab al barid*), placed under the director of the department of the Post (*Sahib diwan al barid*) were not merely to send official correspondence between local officials and central services. "They had to provide the central government with all necessary information on the state of their province and agents' activities, on the attitude of the commissioners for land taxation and crown lands and that of the Kadis and on the monetary and economic situation." They supervised the governor of the district and sometimes they had also to redress grievances. In Baghdad the reports collected by the director of the *diwan* were sent directly to the Caliph (at least in the early period). Independent of postal service, there was also a director of intelligence (*khavar*), to supervise all officers of the capital, including the wazir himself when necessary (Miskawayh); Encyc. Islam (1960 ed.) 1045-1047.

³⁹ Beni Prasad, Jahangir; Hawkins, Voyage, 400-1.

⁴⁰ Camb. Med. Hist. IV. 283.

⁴¹ Storia (new ed.) II. 309; The head spy was called *Darogha-i-harkarah*. He was much feared and had great influence.

⁴² Storia (new ed.) II. 395

⁴³ Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*.

⁴⁴ Sarkar, *Mug. Adm.* 63; *Siyar* (Cambray ed.) III. 173.

^{44a} Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, Islamic Culture (July, 1928), p. 163. Timur's Institutes also envisaged the use of merchants for intelligence of other countries. Davy & White, pp. 216-7.

⁴⁵ Hedges III. 22. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Sarkar, op. cit; S. C. Sanial, Newspapers of the Later Moghul Period. *Islamic Culture* (Jan. 1928), 312. Sarkar thinks that the office of Harkarah was maintained in some of our feudatory states. The secret intelligencer is now called *parchawala*, which title must not be compounded with the *parcha-navis* described in Manual, p. 56.

^{45a} The importance of getting news for the head of the state may easily be realised from the fact that the Buwayhids "cut off" the *Barid* so as to deprive the Caliph of the source of information and thereby to reduce him completely under their tutelage. Ency. Islam (1960 ed.) op. cit.

^{45b} Shuja ud daulah, Nawab Wazir of Oudh (1753-75) is said to have had 22000 harkarahs (messengers) and spies, who brought news from Poona every 7th day and from Kabul every 15th day. Faiz Bakhsh Munshi, *Tarikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*.

⁴⁶ Catrou, *History of the Moghal Dynasty*; *Storia* (old ed.) II. 18;

⁴⁷ B. Prasad, *Jahangir*. Mulla Gadai was a dervish spending 40 years in a monastery of Kashmir city. Two years before his death he had asked the inheritors of that monastery to allow him to select a corner in that monastery as his future burial place. The news-writers described how he died and how the door of the monastery opened of itself. People found the mulla in the monastery after his death, on his knees with his face turned towards the Qibla. Rogers I. 291.

⁴⁸ *Muqaddamai Ruqaat i Alamgiri*, 223, in Yusuf Husain Khan, *Seventeenth Century Waqai*, Islamic Culture (July 1954), 463.

⁴⁹ Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, No. 44.

⁵⁰ Sarkar, *Aurangzib* V. 366; *Mughal Administration*, Ch. 5.

⁵¹ Sarkar, *Aurangzib*. V. 127-8.

⁵² Ibid. V. 186

⁵³ Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, No. 30

⁵⁴ Ibid, No. 32

⁵⁵ Sarkar, *Aurangzib* V. 150n, based on Akhbarat 9.3.1702.

^{55a} Yusuf Husain Khan, 'Seventeenth century Waqai', Islamic Culture, July, 1954.

^{55b} Rogers & Beveridge I. 330-1.

⁵⁶ Hawkins, *Voyages*, 400-1.

⁵⁷ Rogers I. 205; Elliot & Dowson, VI. 325.

⁵⁸ Rogers I. 13, 172, 262, 263, 265, 301-2, 389-90. 421; Roe, 116-7; Hawkins (*Purchas* III. 43); B. Prasad, *Jahangir*.

^{58a} *Muqaddama-i-Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri* 228-9. in Islamic Culture, July, 1954, 463.

⁵⁹ Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, No. 12.

⁶⁰ Ibid No.

⁶¹ Ibid No. 64

⁶² Ibid No. 19

⁶³ Ibid No. 20

⁶⁴ Ibid No. 21

⁶⁵ Ibid No. 25

⁶⁶ Ibid No. 26

- ⁶⁷Ibid No. 60
⁶⁸Ibid No. 27
⁶⁹Ibid No. 34
⁷⁰Ibid No. 37
⁷¹Ibid No. 35
⁷²Ibid No. 40
⁷³Ibid No. 48
⁷⁴Ibid No. 66, 67
⁷⁵Ibid No. 49
⁷⁶Ibid No. 50
⁷⁷Ibid No. 51
⁷⁸Ibid No. 52
⁷⁹*Akbarnamah* (Beveridge) III. 879; R. N. Prasad, *Man Singh*, 82-3.
⁸⁰Bernier (Constable), 231.
⁸¹Storia (old) II. 450-1.
⁸²Fryer (Crooke). Hakluyt Soc. II. Blochmann, JASB (1872), 51.
⁸³Fryer, *op. cit.* 52
⁸⁴*Haft Anjuman*. my translation, *Bengal, Past & Present*; my article on Mirza Rajah Jai Singh's policy in Bijapur, JIH. December, 1965, p. 760.
⁸⁵Sarkar, *Mughal Administration; Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, No. 62. Yar Ali Beg accompanied Aurangzeb in all his Deccan campaigns.
⁸⁶Sarkar, *Anecdotes*, No. 13; Ruqaat 27, cited in *Seventeenth Century Waqai* by Yusuf Hussain Khan, *Islamic Culture* (July 54), 464.
⁸⁷Sarkar, *Anecdotes*, Nos. 14, 65, 31, 36, 61.
⁸⁸Value discussed by Sarkar, JBORS I. 179-81; *Life of Mir Jumla* by the present writer; abstract translation by H. Blochmann, JASB 1872, 63-96. A comparison of Talish's work with the official history, the '*Alamgirnamah*', reveals a striking verbal similarity: 'Whole sentences, in fact, occur word for word in both books'. Blochmann, therefore, concludes rightly that either the *Alamgirnamah* borrowed from Talish's work or both depended on the official reports sent to the Emperor. Blochmann in JASB, 1872, p. 51.
^{89a}S. C. Sanial, *Newspapers of the Later Mughal Period*, *Islamic Culture*, Jan. 1928, p. 133.
⁹⁰*Ency. Britannica* (1962), Vol. 16 S.V. Newspaper.
^{90a}J. B. Primrose, *The First Press in India and its printers*.
⁹¹*Diaries of Streynsham Master; Hedges' Diary*.
Yusuf H. Khan, 'Seventeenth Century Waqai', *Islamic Culture*, July 1954.
⁹²H. Beveridge, JRAS. Oct., 1908; Morley, *Cat. of Pers. Mss.* in RAS Library. No. C. xxxiii
Sarkar, *Aurangzib II; Mughal Admn.* 253; S. R. Sharma, *Bibliography of Mughal India*.
There are two important series of this: (i) Royal Asiatic Society, London, collection, transcripts were taken by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, (ii) Jaipur State Archives series, now stored in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. Copies of both these series exist in the library of Maharajkumar, Dr. Raghubir Singh, Sitamau (Malwa).
⁹³Letters of Chhabela Ram Nagar, quoted by S. C. Sanial, *The Newspapers of the Later Moghul Period in Islamic Culture* (Jan. 1928), 137-8.
⁹⁴*Siyar* I. 226, 234. Sanial holds that the Imperial Gazette was both for the government and the people. *Islamic Culture*. *op. cit.* Kaem Khan, son of Jaffer Khan, was head of Post & Gazette office under Muhammad Shah. It has been suggested by S. C. Sanial (*Islamic Culture*, Jan. 1928) and Usha Agarwal (*Bengal: Past & Present*, 1966) that the first reference to ante-typographic newspaper in medieval India is to be found in the *Muntakhabul Lubab* of Khafi Khan, who, according to them, writes that Aurangzeb got the news of the death of Raja Ram (March, 1700) for the first time from newspapers and the Emperor believed in their accuracy. But Khafi Khan refers to the "news brought by *Munhis*" only and not newspapers (B.I. *Muntakhab ul Lubab*, p. 469).
⁹⁵Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, II. 402, 404: "though the medium of newsletter and court records", according to Riyaz Tr. 251.2.
The father of historian Karam Ali was appointed news-writer of Burdwan Chakla under Shuja Khan (1726-39) on Rs. 200/- a month in 1734-5. Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs*, 10.
⁹⁶Shakir ud daulah was oppressed and injured by Mir Qasim who acted against the wazir's desires because the wazir, the English and Nawab Mir Jafar had a friendship for him. So he wrote to Major Adams (December 1763) about his appointment and hoped that the major would help him in settling his business. He also assured that he would 'serve the English and the Nawab as best as he can. He further stated that his uncle, Muhammad Mir Khan and his cousin 'Izzat Khan imprisoned him for several months and seized his post of *Waqai'nigari*, allowances and jagirs. He informed Mr. Batson (Jan. 14, 1764) that he sent Muhammad Waris Khan and Ray Sidā Mal to manage his affairs. Letters of Shakir ud daulah to Major Adams, December 7, 1763 and to Mr. Batson, Jan. 14, 1764. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* I. 258-9, 175.
The head waqainigar resided at Patna with his deputies posted in each district. Dic-

tionary of Mohammedan Law, and of Bengal Revenue Terms, with a vocabulary, Persian and English, Cal. 1797, referred to by Sanial, *Islamic Culture* (Jan. 1928), 138n.

⁹⁷The following words are spelt as follows:

(a) *Waqai'navis*—as *Wacca Nevis* (*Waqayanavis*), *Wackanagar*, *Wackanagur*, *Vaccangur*, *Vacca nagur* (*Waqanegaur*), *Wacker nagur*, *Waqainigar*, *Waqianigar*.

(b) *Waqai*—as *Wacka*, *Vaccaes* (*Waqas*), *Vacca's* (*Waqas*).

(c) *Sawanihnigar*—as *Swannagur*, *Sanwanagr* (*Sawannehnegaur*), *Swannanagur*, *Sawanagur*.

(d) *Akhbarnavis*—as *Eckbarnavis* (*Akhbarnavis*)

(e) *Harkarah*—as *Horrcora*, *Horcorra*

(f) *Herrcoradroga* i.e. *darogha i harkarah*

C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal* I.

^{97a} *Siyar* III. 175 (Cambray ed.)

^{97b} Annual Adm. Report of Rajasthan State Archives for the years 1958-59 and 1959-60. p. 17.

^{97c} Rajasthani Records, by Sir Jadunath Sarkar and Dr. Raghubir Sinh, Preface, p. 7.

⁹⁸ Duff, *History of the Marathas*, II. 250-1 (Cambray ed.)

⁹⁹ Supplement to Calcutta Gazette April 15, 1813; April 22, 1813.

¹⁰⁰ Minute of Lord Auckland, 8 Aug. 1836; Minute of Macaulay, 2 Sept., 1836; Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh* in 1849-50 I. 67-70; *Rambles and Recollections*, I. 301 (Constable); J. B. Norton, *Topics for Indian Statesmen* (1858 ed. p. 328); R. P. Karkaria, *East & West* (1902): *Islamic Culture* (July 1928) 453-9.

NEWS-LETTERS OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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In old times as in modern times, every head of government had to rely on the information received by him through his subordinate officers and spies. The Sanskrit proverbial saying that kings perceive through their spies is at least a half truth if not the whole. For just as the head of any government receives information from his officers in the routine course through correspondence, reports etc., he receives very valuable news from his spies orally or in writing. The head of every government had, therefore, generally both these agencies. I wish to speak here a few words about these agencies of the medieval times and their records.

This short paper of mine is based on: published works such as the *Akhabār-i-Darbar-i-Muallā* by Dr. B. D. Verma; Persian Sources of Indian History, Vols 2 and 5, Part 1, by myself; Persian Records of Maratha History, Vol. 1, Delhi Affairs, by the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar; Selected Waqāyā of the Deccan by Dr. Yusuf Husain; News-letters by the same author; Miscellaneous papers from the series 'Selections from the Peshwa Daftar' no. 46, by Dr. Nazim; and about six thousand unpublished news-letters deposited in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner, in my Maṇḍala and in the Alienation Office, Poona. Out of the news-letters of Rajasthan State Archives, I had examined only those of Aurangzeb's court, while in my Maṇḍala there are news-letters sent by Khemkaran wald Manasārām firm, those issued from the Offices of Mahādaji Shinde and his generals, news-letters of the Lakhnau court etc. News-letters of officers followed generally the pattern of the Mughal court with variations suiting the officer's religion, social or political status, etc. But I have excluded these lastly mentioned ones from my treatment of the subject here as they belong to the modern period. For Marathi news-letters I have used a number of books mentioned in paragraphs no. 9 ff.

Every Mughal *subah* had one (chief) Wāqā'nawīs or news-writer and he had his agents all over the *subah*, whose duty was to send the news of happenings in their respective jurisdictions to the (chief) Wāqā'nawīs. He on his part used to select and consolidate the news thus received by him and hand it over to the *subahdar* for transmitting it to the court through the Dāroghā of Dakchaukī. In this process the *subahdar* sometimes colluded with the Wāqā'nawīs and at other times there were clashes between them. These reports were sent to the Mīr Bakhshī who used to submit them to the emperor for orders on them.

The other category of news-writers was of Sawānahniḡārs or Khufiyā-nawīsas. These were not connected with the Wāqā'nawīs or the *subahdar*

in any way. They sent their news-reports directly to the Mir Bakhshī for submitting them to the emperor. Sometimes these reports differed from those of the Wāqa'nawīsas and the emperor thus used to get the real picture of the happenings in his realm. The *subahdars* and Wāqa'nawīsas were much afraid of these Sawānahnigārs. These two types of news-reporters, however, served as checks on each other.*

In later Mughal times there was a third category of news-writers, it seems, who were called Pādshāhī Harkārahs. I have not seen as yet whether this category has been dealt with in detail in Persian sources. But among the Marathī sources of the early 18th century, we come across several references to this category. Rājā Keshavarāo, Rāo Mukundarāo, Rāo Badrīnathrāo belonged to a family of such Pādshāhī Harkārahs who maintained themselves on the *in'āms* and cash allowances given to them by both the later Mughal Emperors and the Peshwas. I know the descendants of these Pādshāhī Harkārahs. I once conceived that their family records might contain the remnants of the news-letters drafted and despatched by them. With this view in mind I examined their old records. They had indeed some very old Persian, Perso-Marathī and Marathī documents beginning from the early 17th century, two of which I had already published long ago in the first volume of the *Persian Sources of Indian History* published by the B.I.S. Mandala. Some of their Marathī news-letters have been published in the Peshwa Daftar Series, vols. 2, 21 and 27. But so far as I remember, I did not get anything of this category in their unpublished records.

There is still one more category of news-writers of the eighteenth century. I have published some of their news-letters in two instalments in volumes no. 2 and 5, part 1, of the series *Persian Sources of Indian History*, which is being published by my Mandala. Some are in the Alienation Office, Poona, and some are among the papers of the Poona Parasnis family that were purchased by the Bombay Government in 1949. They seem to come from a proprietary concern of one Khemkaraṇ wald Manasārām, and not simply Manasārām as noted by the late Sir J. N. Sarkar in *Persian Records of Maratha History* volume 1,—Delhi Affairs, p. 1. He probably hailed from the Panjab and had established his firm in Delhi. He had posted his agents at every important place in North India and in places as far as Kabul, Bukhara, Balkh, Qandahar etc. The firm collected information coming from all these places from time to time, edited it and despatched the selected news to various courts according to their needs, one of which courts was the Peshwa's one. These news-letters are generally long ones, sometimes extending over 225 lines or more and are written in very small *Shikasta* hand and it becomes a difficult job to decipher them accurately. I have collected this information from the news-letters themselves and the seal of Khemkaraṇ wald Manasārām impressed on some of the envelopes or wrappers of the news-letters.

*As *Ain-i-Akbari*, *Mirāt-i-Ahmadi* and other sources and the late J. N. Sarkar's 'Mughal Administration', work no. 5 supra deal with this subject at some length, I have desisted from repeating or paraphrasing it here. I have passed on with some passing remarks.

The Persian news-letters of the Mughal regime bore different, single or joint names in singular or plural, such as *Waqāya*’, *Sawānah*, *Siyāh*, *Roznāmchah*, *Akhbar* etc., and when the same were of the Mughal court itself words such as *Huzūr*, *Darbār*, *Darbār-i-Muallā* were added after the first word. Then comes the mention of the month, the *Julūs* or regnal year generally, and *Hijra* year rarely, and the week-day to which the news-letter belonged. The date of the month comes last, followed by the word *minhu*. The week-days are noted as first day (*Yaum* or *Shanbah*), second day, third day, fourth day, fifth day, the day of *Juma* and the day of *Sabt* or *Shanbah*. This is the mode of noting the details of the date of the news-letter in general; but variations are found here and there.

The details of the date are followed by the every day routine of the emperor such as his getting up in the morning, attending the prayers, the ‘*ām*, the *khās*, the *ghusalkhāna*, *adālat*, going out for a hunt etc. Then we get the entries of *nazar*, *peshkash*, rewards, dresses of honour etc. presented to and by the emperor. Then there would be appointments, removals, transfers etc. of officers, commanders and others. After this come the most important items of news. The gists of letters addressed to the emperor by his generals and sub-ordinate officers were read to him one by one and his orders were sought by uttering the words ‘*dar-in-bāb har chah hukm shawad*’. In reply to these requests, the emperor sometimes passed orders in brief; but at other times he either remained silent or passed some remarks not of the nature of an order. Generally the news-letter noted the orders on a number of matters, while rarely it was closed by remarking that owing to indisposition or some other cause no ‘*ām*, *khās*, *ghusalkhānah* ‘*adālat* etc. were held.

We do not know what the exact position was regarding the two agencies of acquiring information about the subjects, friends and foes, in the Deccan in the medieval period. That there must have been these two agencies goes without saying. But no satisfactory information can be had about them. We know nothing about the *Bahmanī* and the five *Sultanats* periods, except that spies and news received through them have been several times referred to in the compilations of the period. *Shivājī the Great*’s espionage system must have been very efficient; for without that efficiency, he could not have over-taken his enemies unawares a number of times and succeeded in his undertakings so easily. *Ājñāpatra* supposed to have been written by *Rāmachandrapanta Amātya*, the finance minister of that great man in his last days, gives instructions about collecting news through spies and officers spread all over the country. But no news-letters sent by these spies have as yet come to light.

During the *Peshwa* period spies of every power were very active. But there is so much first-hand published material in the form of diplomatic correspondence, envoys’ reports and news-letters that it is impossible to distinguish easily between them. There are indeed some despatches which begin with the word such as *Akhbār*, *Waqāya* etc. and which specify the name of the writer as well as the period of which they supply information,

But there are many others which have nothing similar to the above type, but which have been despatched by the same writer and which supply similar types of information. It is only from a minute scrutiny of a record especially after knowing if any advice, instructions, etc. are sought from the addressees that we can ascertain if that particular document can be either a news-letter or a diplomatic record or a report. This subject, therefore, requires a separate treatment. But here I shall refer to some important published sources where we can get news-writers and their news-letters. The largest collection is in the 15 volumes by the late V. V. Khare and his son the late Y. V. Khare. Then come the papers published in the *Itihāsa-Saṅgraha* by the late D. B. Parasnis under various titles, the first in two volumes with a supplement, the second in one volume with a supplement, the third in one volume, and the fourth in two volumes. Then come the *Nagpur Affairs* in two volumes by the late T. S. Shejwalkar, 3 volumes of Paṇeṁ Akhbār, 6 volumes of Vaidya Daftar by the late S. L. Vaidya. Rajwade volumes 1, 3, 5 to 8 10 to 21 also contain hundreds of news-letters. Then come Chandrachūd Daftar in two volumes, Hīṅgaṇe Daftar in two volumes by myself, Peṭhe Daftar in two volumes by the late V. S. Chitale. Letters included in these volumes may come to about 20,000 in number, and a majority of them are news-letters, while a minority consist of diplomatic correspondence, reports etc. Still it may come to about eight thousand. Then the Chandrachūd, Hīṅgaṇe, Dābhāde, Purandare and other *Daftars* deposited in my Mañḍala, Nānā Phaḍnis *Daftar* from the Deccan College and the Peshwa, Parasnis and other *Daftars* in the Alienation Office, Poona, contain hundreds of news-letters either in Persian or in Marathi awaiting classification and closer study.

The number of news-writers and reporters mentioned in these records will easily come to about one hundred. But here I shall mention only a few: Śaṅkarājī Malhār, Amṛitarāo Śaṅkar, Dhoṇḍo Dattātraya, Bāburāo Malhāra, Mahādevabhaṭa Hīṅgaṇe, his four sons Bāpū, Dāmodara, Purushottama, Devarāo, his grandsons Govinda Purushottama and Devarāo Dāmodara, his assistants Govinda Tamājī and his brother Dharmarāo Tamājī Śaṅkarājī, Sakhadēva, etc. Viṭṭhale Śāmarāja, Keso Bhikājī, Kacho Janārdana Kṛishṇājī Jagannātha, Janārdana, Śivarāma, Raṇasoḍa Kṛishṇa, Sañjhagiri, his son Raghunātha, their assistants Gaṇeśa Kṛishṇa and Bala-kṛishṇa Sadāśiva Kher and Rāmachandra Kṛishṇa, Hari Sadāśiva etc. and members of Vaidya, Guṇe and other families.

Marathi news-letters and reports and Persian news-letters of Khemkaraṇ Manasāram are most factual ones, depicting quite faithfully circumstances referred to in their letters. They would neither exaggerate, nor under-estimate any events. Their writers appear to have executed their task honestly. But that is not the case with the news-letters of the Mughal court. Information from the letters received by Aurangzeb from his officers, captains etc. and noted in them is often exaggerated so much that it borders on falsehood. For instance in almost all the reports of skirmishes, actions and battles fought between the Marathas and the Mughals from 1681 to

1707, it is stated that the Mughals were few in number while the Marathas were great in number; still by the good luck of His Majesty, the Mughals were victorious and the Maratha losses were heavy. Had it been a fact, Aurangzeb would have smashed out the Marathas and their kingdom from the Deccan just as he had done in the case of Bijapur and Golconda kingdoms. But history tells us that exactly the contrary had happened. Aurangzeb himself in certain cases had expressed doubts about the truthfulness of the accounts narrated to him and had waited for more information from other sources. Then in Rajasthan State Archives I remember to have come across a reference that a *Khufiyānavīs* was prevailed upon not to send his secret report to the emperor.

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