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Two centuries of struggle (Press wins freedom in India)

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

School of Public Relations and Communications

THESIS

TWO CENTURIES OF STRUGGLE

(Press Wins Freedom in India)

by

H. S. DILGIR

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Approved by

First Reader.....*Frederic Sheer*.....

Professor of.....*journalism*.....

Second Reader.....*David M. White*.....

Professor of.....*journalism*.....

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I dedicate this humble work to the

MEMORY OF

those valiant fighters, who laid
down their lives for the freedom
of the press all over the world.

"When I regard their firm,
fearless assertion of the rights
of free discussion, of speech,
and of press, I look on them
with unmixed respect. The first
systematic effort to strip the
citizen of freedom of speech,
they have met with invincible
resolution. They are sufferers
for the liberty of thought,
speech and the Press, and in
maintaining this liberty amidst
insult and violence, they deserve
a place among its most honored
defenders".

(William E. Channing).

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

I owe a debt of gratitude to my teachers, Dr. Joseph A. DelPorto, Chairman, Division of Journalism; Dr. David Manning White, and Dr. James C.Y. Shen who always guided me, made helpful suggestions and provided me with valuable literature from their personal libraries, for the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER I

"Throughout the world where free men try to govern themselves and live at peace with their fellows, journalists are seeking to play their part in the struggle against fear and against ignorance which breeds fear". 1.
(Rohan Rivett)

Freedom of the press in any country is in a real sense the mirror of liberty enjoyed by the citizens of that country. Earnest Hocking says, "Freedom of speech and press is close to the central meaning of all liberty. Where men cannot freely convey their thoughts to one another, no other liberty is secure. Where freedom of expression exists the germ of a free society is already present and a means is at hand for every extension of liberty. Free expression is therefore unique among liberties as protectors of the others; in evidence of this when a regime moves toward autocracy, speech and press

are among the first objects of restraints or control".².

The study of the history of the struggle for freedom of the press in India is as interesting as the study of the conflict and fight of the Indian nation for her freedom and liberty. The words of the Commission on Freedom of the Press in America, that, "Freedom of the Press is essential to political liberty",³ are equally true in the case of India's freedom movement. The press in India, like most of the other countries was born under authority. It had to fight at every step to reach a stage when in the year 1949 with a great pride the nation could say that:

"WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY, of Status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY THIS twenty sixth day of November, 1949, DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles,

Act.19. (1)

All citizens shall have the right:

(a) to freedom of speech and expression"⁴.

From its inception, the press in India was governed under an authoritarian policy. Each moment it had not only to fight for its freedom, but very often it had to fight even for its existence. It was not because of any moral, social or legal reasons that from time to time restrictions were imposed on the Indian press, but there was a clear case of discrimination between the English press and the native press. Such discrimination and arousal of hatred in the minds of native people led to a mutiny in 1857. The British could crush the mutiny by killing people physically but they could not kill the feelings within the hearts of people.

The press which at every step faced authority was already chafing at the Acts and Regulations being passed from time to time to restrain or crush it. During the political struggle it sided with the national leaders. It not only spoke for the press freedom but it spoke for 400 million people of India to liberate them from colonial domination. It served as a "transmission belt carrying ideas and information essential in a democracy from sources to the people."⁵ A.D. Mani of the Hitavada is of the opinion that the Indian press deserves a great recognition for its valuable services rendered during the freedom movement. He says:

Before India became independent the press of India functioned as a crusading agent for the freedom of the country and its contributions in assisting the nationalist movement to fruition have not received in a proper and adequate measure the recognition they deserve. It is no

exaggeration to say that the freedom movement launched by the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, received considerable fillip from the press of India. It is difficult to say how quickly the movement for freedom would have progressed without the understanding, friendly and encouraging support which it received from the press in India.⁶

In this light, this study is not only a study of a few newspapers. It is a study of the four hundred million lives of a country whose voice was suppressed for many decades. The British Government was making every possible attempt to gag the press. As the press was the most powerful weapon of propagating the ideas and ideology of the national leaders, the Government always tried to create a wide gulf between the leaders and the people by curbing the press. J.N. Sahni, while talking of the hardships and ordeals the press had to undergo fighting for the freedom, says:

The Indian Press has passed through some very dark days of persecution and coercion and has reached its present maturity through a baptism of fire. The struggle for Indian freedom was almost a parallel movement to the struggle of the Indian Press to function with dignity, integrity and with honor.⁷

This project is aimed at finding facts about the struggle which the press in India carried through a period of about two centuries to get itself free from foreign domination. At the same time it gives an insight into the political atmosphere of the country before the year 1947, right from the days East India Company came into being in India.

1. Rivett, Rohan. The Asian Student, (September 29, 1962), 6.
2. Hocking, William Earnest. "A Framework of Principle", Freedom of the Press, University of Chicago Press. pp. 53 - 54.
3. Commission on Freedom of the Press, "A Free and Responsible Press". Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947, p. 107.
4. "The Preamble of the Constitution of India," About India. (Information Service of India, Washington, January 1959), p. 9.
5. Emery, E. and Smith. The Press and America (Prentice Hall Inc.), p. viii.
6. Mani, A.D. Journalism in Modern India (Edited by Roland E. Wolseley, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, p. XIV.
7. Sahni, J.N. "Freedom of the Press (Information Service of India, New York), p. 2.

POST-INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENTS.

The study of the post-independence period of the press in India enables us to understand better the extent to which the Britons tried to keep the press and people of India under their control and at their mercy. So much so that the Indians were not provided adequate means of education. It is shocking to note that when Britishers left India, the rate of literacy was only 8%. Within a period of sixteen years after independence, by the end of 1963, it is reported that the rate of literacy will go as high as 63%.

The study of Table I on page 9 shows that whenever restrictions were fewer or there were no restrictions at all, the newspapers grew rapidly in the country. After independence, in a study of the recent four years we find that the number of newspapers is going up every year. In 1958 there were 6918 newspapers in the country. The Press Registrar's report for 1961 shows that by the end of that year there were 8305 newspapers in India, which means an increase of about 40%.

In Table II on page 10 we can clearly see the growth of newspapers in 14 major languages of India, within the first five years after independence. The newspapers not only increased in number but there was a marked improvement in the circulation also. Some of the newspapers which had a circulation of about 60,000 in the year 1948, now have a circulation of more than 100,000. Table III on page 11 shows how the circulation went up within six years only after independence.^{1.}

T A B L E I

Number of Indian Newspapers and Periodicals from 1889 to 1937

YEAR	NUMBER of PAPERS PUBLISHED	NUMBER of PERIODICALS PUBLISHED
1889 - 90	562	302
1895 - 96	613	463
1901 - 02	655	491
1906 - 07	744	973
1911 - 12	656	2596
1916 - 17	805	1900
1921 - 22	1094	2255
1926 - 27	1485	3627
1931 - 32	1743	2893
1936 - 37	2164	3193

T A B L E II

No.	Languages	1947	1952
1.	ASSAMESE	1	1
2.	BENGALI	15	24
3.	GUJERATI	25	42
4.	HINDI	53	125
5.	KANNADA	18	30
6.	MALAYALAM	9	11
7.	MARATHI	27	41
8.	ORIIYA	2	4
9.	TAMIL	7	15
10.	TELEGU	6	7
11.	URDU	75	163
12.	BI-LINGUAL or MULTILINGUAL	Not Available	33
13.	OTHERS	"	12
14.	ENGLISH	51	90

T A B L E III

NAME of the PAPER	LANGUAGE	CIRCULATION	
		1948	1954
The Times of India, Bombay	ENGLISH	60,000	97,398
The Statesman, Calcutta New Delhi	"	60,000	65,000
The Hindustan Times, Delhi	"	35,000	49,000
The Amrit Bazar Patrika, Calcutta	"	55,000	69,000
The Free Press Journal, Bombay	"	12,000	68,000
The Milap	URDU	20,000	21,858
The Partap	"	20,000	21,209
The Bombay Samachar	GUJERATI	40,000	30,000
The Janans	"	25,000	13,367
The Prabhat Bombay	MARATHI	30,000	36,500
The Basumati	BENGALI	20,000	20,492

The figures given in the tables show a marked difference between the pre-independence period and post-independence period. The journalists had to fight till all the restrictions were removed from the press. Today the concept of freedom has gone a step further, the journalist has not only a right to get information and publish freely. He has a right to protect his source of information. The I.P.I. Report on press secrecy says that, "The freedom of the press will remain incomplete as long as journalists are subject to laws denying them even a limited right to protect their sources of information."²

The progress the Indian press has made after 1947 assures us of a very bright future. It can be said with confidence that the press that fought for its freedom shall make all endeavors to maintain the dignity of freedom. This freedom shall not remain to be just a theory but will serve as a protector of all liberties in the country. Mani has this to say about the future of free press in India:

I have no doubt in my mind that the future of democracy in India lies in the hands of the free press of the country. In an increasingly dictatorial world our country is a bastion of democracy in the East.³

Till 1947, the government and the press in India lived like two rival groups but now the government is not only giving fullest possible co-operation to the press, but is trying to help also and solve its problems in whatever way it can. The Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri,

while inaugurating the annual session of the Delhi Union of Journalists on April 29, 1962, said that the press had an important role in a democratic set-up. He called for closer relationship between the press and the government, and advised officers to be less secretive in matters concerning the publicity of government policies and programs.

At a discussion arranged in May 1962 in Paris by the International Press Institute and the Federation of Newspaper publishers on press freedom, A.K. Sarkar, Managing director of the Amrit Bazar Patrika said:

The freedom the Indian press now enjoys in relation to the Government is one of the significant gains arising from the part our newspapers played in our national struggle for independence.

Now in the last 10 years all those drastic press laws and emergency provisions have been removed from our statute book. Our press has no longer any outside authority breathing down its neck: the only laws we have to reckon with are the usual ones of defamation, contempt of court and copyright, etc.

In a word, the press in independent India, broadly speaking, enjoys the status and privilege of a free press as in other democratic countries.⁴

After 1947 also, the government introduced Acts, but the nature of these Acts was absolutely different from those passed by the British Government before 1947. These Acts are now meant to promote the cause of the press and the people connected with the press; such as the Act 45 of 1955 known as "The Working Journalists (Conditions of Service) and

Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955." This Act is meant to regulate certain conditions of service of working journalists and other persons employed in newspaper establishments.

If ever any act was introduced or suggested by the Government which in any way directly or indirectly was found detrimental to the interests of the press or was felt to be an encroachment on the rights of the press, that was immediately resented and opposed by the press. In 1951 Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, in a speech to Parliament accused a certain section of the press of indulging, day after day, in "vulgarity, indecency, and falsehood." He said, "It had become impossible to distinguish what is true and what is false." He pressed for a constitutional amendment which would give the Government powers to impose restrictions on the press "in the interest of the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign countries, public order, decency and morality." But an immediate opposition forced the Prime Minister to agree to refer the matter to a special Committee of Parliament.⁵

Another attempt was made by the Government in 1956 to keep a check on the press by passing the Newspaper (Price and Page) Act (No. 45 of 1956) which received the assent of the President of India on September 7, 1956. The object of the Act was made clear in the "Statement of Objects and Reasons" of the Bill as published in the Gazette of India July 31, 1956.

The statement said:

The regulation of the prices of newspapers in relation to their sizes appeared to be a necessity to the Press Commission mainly in order to provide the circumstances in which freedom of opinion could be very much more real than is today by eliminating unfair competition and equalizing opportunities for newspapers specially with smaller resources. Accordingly, one of the major recommendations of the Press Commission was that legislation be enacted empowering Government to issue from time to time a price page schedule fixing a minimum price at which papers of a particular size can be sold. The Commission also recommended that in order to ensure that the reader gets an adequate proportion of news and views and that the advertisements are not reduced in effectiveness because these are too many of them, the total space allotted to advertisements in newspapers should be restricted to a specified proportion.⁶

This Act also could not come into force because of a test case brought to the court by a Marathi language newspaper, the Sakal of Poona. The Supreme Court of India ruled that the Act empowering the Government to fix the price and number of pages of newspapers was unconstitutional. The Court said:

The citizen is entitled to propagate his views and reach any class and number of readers as he chooses.

Freedom of expression was violated by the portion of the Act which sought to regulate the amount of space newspapers devoted to news, to opinion and advertisements. Such provisions would create a vicious circle which would ultimately end in closure of the newspaper.⁷

Ashoke Sen, Union Law Minister, while talking to the inaugural meeting of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists at Calcutta, described the free press as one of the pillars of democracy. He referred to the decision of the Supreme Court of India as "A glorious chapter in the Constitutional history of free India."

Press monopoly is another menace to the freedom of the press which has become a focus of attention these days. Government is thinking of the measures to be taken in this direction because the monopoly causes many shortcomings. Gopala Reddy, Minister for Information and Broadcasting assured the people that the Government will not let press barons control all or most of the newspapers. He said in the Parliament on August 24, 1962 that, "The Government would set up a Press Council in four or five months. Legislation would be introduced for this purpose. When such a council came into existence it could deal with the question of monopoly if the situation warranted."⁸

Every effort is being made by the journalists to maintain and retain the freedom of the press won after about two centuries of struggle. The press is today feeling free not only to express its views but to criticise the Government also. P.P. Singh, Head of the Department of Journalism, Punjab University, strongly supported the right of the press "not only to report parliamentary proceedings on a selective basis but also to criticise erring legislatures or members."⁹

Another boon of the freedom was the growing education in journalism in the country. Raymond Nixon, in reviewing progress of the Indian Press, says:

India in ten years of independence has developed post graduate programs in journalism at five institutions: The University of Calcutta and Madras, Punjab University in Delhi, Hislop College in Nagpur and Osmania University in Hyderabad. A sixth institution, Mysore University offers some courses in journalism as undergraduate electives.¹⁰

Recently Bombay University has also started offering courses in journalism.

Immediately after achieving freedom the press started to think of all the factors which would in any way hamper its progress. The shortage of newsprint was and still is a great problem. The distribution of newsprint by the Government under quota system could any time affect the free expression of the press. Immediate attention was paid to this problem and a paper mill was started in the year 1948. The Government is also trying to meet the increasing demand of the newsprint. Due place is given to the fulfillment of this need in Five-Year plans.

Press has done its duty in winning the freedom for itself and for the country. It is now trying to protect the freedom won through strife, struggle and sacrifices. It is now the duty of the audience of the press to apprise it from time to time of irregularities, if any, on the part of the press or the Government. As V.K. Narasimhan puts it, "It is the public who will have the final say as to whether the press should be free or not."¹¹.

The following pages will give a historical account of the fight the press carried on for many decades against foreign domination to reach a stage where it could thrive and flourish freely as described in this chapter.

1. Sources: Punjabi Rattan Weekly, (September 1960), 7.; The Editor, (January 1961), 5.; I.P.I. Report, Vol. 9, No. 7 (1960), 13.; India News Weekley, Washington, (October 1, 1962), 2.; India 1959, India 1961, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.; "Mass Media in the Developing Countries, "UNESCO Report 33, (1961), 18; Journalism Quarterly, (Spring 1956), 215.
2. ———. "Press Secrecy", The Asian Student, (May 19, 1962), 6.
3. Mani. op. cit., p. XIV.
4. ———. "Press in Burma, Japan and India Described," The Asian Student, (May 26, 1962), 4.
5. ———. "Law to Crush India's Press Asked by Nehru," Editor and Publisher, (May 19, 1951), 59.
6. ———. "India's Press Control Law Ruled Invalid," Editor and Publisher, (October 14, 1961), 85.
7. Sen, P.K. The Press Publications and Copyright Laws of India. Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar and Sons, 1958, 42.
8. ———. "Talk of Press Monopoly," The Statesman, Overseas Edition, (September 1, 1962), 10.
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10. Nixon, Raymond B. "Journalism Research Around the World," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 35, No. 1. (1958), 8.
11. Narasimhan, V.K. "The Press, The Public and the Administration," I.P.I. Report, Vol. 10, No. 9, (January, 1962), 7.

CHAPTER II

The way to get at the nature of an institution is to see how it has grown.

A.G. Keller

BIRTH OF THE PRESS

If at all any real greatness could be attached to the work of Christian missionaries in India, that should be for the installation of printing press and thereby enabling the modern Indian languages to develop. Jawahar Lal Nehru, in his The Discovery of India says:

The advent and use of the printing press gave a great stimulus to the development of the popular Indian languages.

The early Christian missionaries, especially of the Baptist Mission at Serampur, helped in this process greatly. The first private printing presses were set up by them and their efforts to translate the

Bible into prose version of the Indian language met with considerable success.

There was no difficulty in dealing with the well-known and established languages but the missionaries went further and tackled some of the minor and undeveloped languages and gave them form and shape, compiling grammars and dictionaries for them. They even labored at the dialects of the primitive hill and forest tribes and reduced them to writing. The desire of the Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into every possible language, this resulted in the development of many Indian languages. Christian missionary work in India has not always been admirable or praiseworthy, but in this respect, as well as in the collection of the folklore, it has undoubtedly been of great service to India.¹

The installation of the printing presses by the Christian missionaries for their propaganda work, formed the foundation of Indian press on which were based the future developments. Today in India we have got 8305 newspapers and magazines published in about 13 regional languages of the country consuming more than 70,000 tons of newsprint every year.

Before going into the birth and growth of the press in modern India, it would be worth while saying a few words as to what lead to the establishment of this institution known as PRESS.

R.R. McCormick defines press: "The press is an institution developed by modern civilization to present the news of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and lead public opinion and to furnish that check upon Government which no constitution has ever been able to provide."²

Even the primitive men felt the communication problem. There were different methods of communication among the primitive people such as drums

and smoke signals. During the stone age man started to communicate through pictures. This Pictograph Stage began to develop into Ideographs. Next stage came when human sound could be represented by phonograms. Large number of symbols were reduced to a few which came to be used as the alphabet of a language. Sidney Kobre in his Foundations of American Journalism says:

Man has felt the need to communicate to others since his early appearance about 1,000,000 B.C. The history of communication is the history of civilisation, for only by being able to communicate with others has man been able to progress.³

For a long period word of mouth was the only source of communication. In India communication became more organized and came into a regular form of newsgathering under mighty king Ashoka, grandson of Chandragupta Maurya who succeeded to the empire about 273 B.C. The dream of uniting the whole of India under one government led Ashoka to attack the East Coast. There was a great human slaughter in this war. The news of the slaughter hurt Ashoka badly and he decided to abandon warfare. Under the influence of Budha's preaching he devoted himself to public works for the good of the people. The effect of Kalinga War on his mind can well be noted in the edicts he issued. One of them read:

Kalinga was conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty when he had been consecrated eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away as captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number died.

Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Piety, his love of Law, and his inculcation of that Law dharma. Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the

Kalingas because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death and carrying away captive of the people.

Moreover, should anyone do him wrong, that too must be borne with His Sacred Majesty, so far as it can possibly be borne with. For His Sacred Majesty desired that all animate beings should have security, self control, peace of mind and joyousness.⁴

This sudden change in the mind of Ashoka and his desire to serve his subjects gave birth to the system of news gathering in India. He sent official reporters all over the country with explicit instructions:

At all times and at all places, whether I am dining or in the ladies apartments, in my bedroom, or in my closet, in my carriage or in my palace gardens, the official reporters should keep me informed of the people's business. At any hour and at any place, work I must for the commonweal.⁵

Writ writers were kept in the court who used to put to writing the king's orders and send to the persons concerned. These orders used to be issued in response to reports received from the king's men. About the system of news gathering during Ashoka's regime, J. Natarajan said:

Some of these writs were accompanied by oral messages conveyed by the messenger who was himself an important official entitled to a grant of land. Ministers too were expected to keep themselves well informed by correspondence and a minister was expected successfully to undertake works for the people, ensure security of person and property and propose remedial measures against calamities and in the promotion of colonization and the improvement of wild tracts of land.⁶

There was no significant change or progress in circulation of news letters till the Moghul emperors came to India. In the 16th century the Moghul emperors appointed news writers at various places, whose duty

was to send reports to the administrative headquarters. These reports were copied and circulated to important officials. This circulation of hand written reports could be said to be a manuscript newspaper.

Margarita Barnes says:

The earliest distinct mention of ante-typographic newspaper is to be found in the Muntakhabat-al-Lubab of Khafi Khan where we find the death news of Raja Ram of House of Siva Ji brought to the Imperial Camp by the newspapers. The great historian (Khafi Khan) also gives us clearly to understand that the common soldiers in Aurangzeb's time were supplied with their newspapers.⁷

With the advent of the East India Company in India, news reporting became more organized, scientific and regular. The East India Company came to India in 1600 A.D. as traders but later on with diplomacy and power succeeded in establishing British rule all over the country. The Company, primarily was an association of businessmen known as The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies.

In the seventeenth century the East India Company received permission from the Moghul ruler of India to start a factory at Surat. Soon after they purchased a piece of land in the South and founded the port of Madras. In 1662, Charles II of England received by way of dowry the island of Bombay from Portugal, which he transferred to the Company. In 1690 the Company founded the city of Calcutta. By the end of the seventeenth century the British had established their strongholds at various important centers of the country.

The East India Company had its headquarters at Calcutta. To get reports from all their establishments they engaged news writers and

reporters. In the seventeenth century they had a network of reporters who received regular salary for the job. Though their salaries were not high but they were the privileged group of people as they enjoyed certain facilities for being in the service of the Company. They were allowed to carry on private business. They could adopt any other means of getting more money through some trade which could supplement their income. So all the news writers and reporters, besides their salary, were carrying on private business also, because the Company paid them low salaries. This "private business" was a privilege granted to them but they took it as a golden opportunity of being in official position of the Company and started making hay while the sun shone. Soon the Company had to withdraw that privilege. The Court of Directors in London had to set a definite policy and scale of pay. They laid down the terms of appointment thus:

For the advancement of our apprentices we direct that after they have served the first five years, they shall have 10 per annum for the last two years; and having served these two years to be entertained one year longer as writers and have a writers salary; and having served that year to enter into the degree of factors which otherwise would have been 10 years. And knowing that a distinction of titles is in many respects necessary, we do order that when the apprentices have served their times they be styled as writers; and when the writers have served their times they be called factors; and factors having served their times be styled merchants; and merchants having served their times be styled senior merchants.⁸

About the abuse of privileges by the Company's employees Lord Clive once wrote to the Court of Directors in 1765, "In a country where money is plenty, where fear is the principle of Government, and your arms

are ever victorious, in such a country, I say, it is no wonder that corruption should find its way to a sport so well prepared to receive it."

But Edward Thompson and G.T. Garrett, the English historians, hold Lord Clive to be responsible for all such corruption when they say that:

A gold-lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until she had been bled white..... For the monstrous financial immorality of the English Conduct in India for many a year after this, Clive was largely responsible.⁹

All this corruption led to a strict control over the employees of the Company and this control resulted in a systematic news system also. The next step was to establish printing presses, as the work of the Government could not be carried out without them. The Christian Missionaries that went to India from England carried with them the knowledge of printing during the fifteenth century. The introduction of a small printing press by them for the printing of the Missionary Tracts and religious propaganda literature in Malayalam and Tamil could not be said to be the introduction of a printing press for the public. Private printing presses were not encouraged, they were considered "dangerous and explosive for the Indian mind." Nehru gives an interesting account of that:

There is a story that the Nizam of Hyderabad once expressed a desire to see European Machinery, and thereupon the British resident procured for him an air pump and a printing press. The Nizam's momentary curiosity having been satisfied, these were stored away with other gifts and curiosities. But when the Government, in Calcutta heard of this, they expressed their displeasure to their resident and rebuked him especially for introducing printing press in an Indian state. The resident offered

to get it broken up secretly, if the government so desired.^{10.}

The East India Company had installed printing presses in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in the years 1674, 1772 and 1779 respectively, but no attempts were made to bring out a newspaper. It was in the year 1776 when an ex-employee of the Company William Bolts tried to start a newspaper. But the Secret Committee of the Company had information about him that he had some material against the Company and he was passing on some confidential information to Nawab Shujah-ul-Dowlah. Before he could print a copy of his newspaper he was ordered to leave India and go back to Europe.

In January 1780, James Augustin Hickey, who once used to be the printer of the Company, started a newspaper called the Bengal Gazette or Hickey's Gazette. This was the first newspaper in India.

Hickey's Gazette was only a two sheet newspaper. He was under nobody's influence and he freely made attacks on the employees of the Company. He did not restrict his attacks to the employees of the Company only. He also made severe attacks on the personal life of the then Governor-General, Warren Hastings. He accused a missionary John Zachariah Kiernander of trying to sell out the Main Church, who sued him for libel. Hickey was sentenced to four months of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500. Hickey continued attacks on government officials and once again was arrested and sentenced to one year imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200. Continuous harrassment by the government did not change his determination but financial

difficulties broke him and he was reduced to poverty.

Hickey's conflicts with the government served as a warning note to the publishers that followed him. Instead of entangling themselves in any trouble with the government they published the newspapers after getting prior permission from the Governor-General and printed on their newspapers PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY. Within six years after 1780, there appeared four weekly newspapers and one monthly magazine published from Calcutta. M/S B. Messink and Peter Reed started the India Gazette in 1780. In 1784 appeared the Calcutta Gazette which was published under the direct patronage of the government. The Bengal Journal appeared in 1785 and the same year one monthly magazine, the Oriental Magazine of Calcutta Amusement, appeared. The year 1786 saw the printing of another weekly, the Calcutta Chronicle.

In Madras also, a few newspapers were born during the same period. The Madras Courier appeared in 1785, which was recognized by the government and was brought out by one Richard Johnson, the government printer. R. William started the Madras Gazette in 1795. The same year once again was born a newspaper which was published WITHOUT AUTHORITY, it was the India Herald, started by Humphreys who was soon arrested and deported to England.

The year 1795 is important for another reason. Newspapers in India saw for the first time a censorship imposed on them when the Madras Gazette, though published by authority, was asked to "submit all general orders of the government for scrutiny by the Military Secretary before publication." Free postage facilities were also withdrawn.

Bombay's first newspaper, the Bombay Herald, was started in 1789.

The Bombay Gazette came into existence in 1791 into which was merged the Bombay Herald in 1792.

1. Nehru, Jawahar Lal. The Discovery of India. New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1955, p. 229.
2. Minattur, Joseph. Freedom of the Press in India, The Hague, 1961;
R.R. McCormick quoted from Newsroom Problems and Policies; p. 117.
3. Kobre, Sidney. Foundations of American Journalism (Florida State University, 1958) p. 2.
4. Nehru. The Discovery of India, p. 86.
5. Nehru. The Discovery of India. p. 86.
6. Natrajan, J. History of Indian Journalism (Government of India Publication, 1955) p. 2.
7. Barnes, Margarita. The Indian Press. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1940, pp. 32 - 33.
8. Natrajan. op. cit., p. 3.
9. Thompson, Edward & Garrett, G.T. Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, London, (1935).
10. Nehru. The Discovery of India, p. 223.

PRE-MUTINY ERA.

The year 1791 can be said to be an important year in the history of the struggle for maintaining freedom of speech and expression. William Duane, who became the editor of the Bengal Journal could not continue for a long time to be its editor as he had published the rumored death of Lord Cornwallis. He started another paper the Indian World which was making a steady progress but he was regularly being harassed by the government. His house was twice broken into and searched. In 1794 he was arrested and deported to England without giving any specific reasons. The only reason we find is from a letter of the then Governor-General Sir John Shore in which he wrote that the "newspapers in Calcutta had assumed a licentiousness too dangerous to be permitted in this country, and that he had ordered one of the editors, William Duane, to be sent to Europe."

There were no specific laws in the country to govern the press. What ever action the Governor-General thought to be fit, was taken by the Government. Natrajan has described the state of affairs thus:

During this period there were no press laws as such. If the person intending to start a paper was already persona non grata with the Government or with influential officials he was deported forthwith. If a newspaper offended and was unrepentant, it was first denied postal privileges; if it persisted in causing displeasure to the Government, it was required to submit part of or the entire newspaper to censorship, if the editor was 'incorrigible' he was deported.¹

The newspapers started during this period dealt mostly with the British population in India and published material relating to the activities of the European population in India. This trend of English-owned newspapers

lasted for a long time. Nehru writes:

I remember when I was a boy the British-owned newspapers in India were full of official news and utterances; of service news and promotions; of the doings of English society, of polo, races, dances and amateur theatricals. There was hardly a word about the people of India.²

Margarita Barnes gives a better and more clear picture of the nature of newspapers of the eighteenth century.

Apart from parliamentary reports, there were editorials on subjects of interest to the resident Britons on events in England, on the army, on the reported plans of Indian rulers. In addition to this type of information we find newsletters and reports from Paris, Stockholm, Vienna, Madrid, China, Rio de Janeiro and other centres of Interest. There are letters to the editor, government notices, social news, "poets corners", advertisement and even fashion notes.³

With the end of the eighteenth century the press saw a rigid control and faced restrictions in the form of the Press Regulations which were a strict form of censorship. In the year 1799, when the Britons were engaged in a fight with Tipu Sultan, an Indian ruler in the South, Charles K. Bruce, the editor of the Asiatic Mirror published some articles which were not agreeable to the mind of the Governor General Marquess of Wellesley, who considered himself to be a mighty ruler of India. He introduced the Press Regulations. According to these Regulations every newspaper was required to:

1. Give the name of the printer,
2. Print the name of the editor,
3. Print the name of the Proprietor,
4. Submit all material for scrutiny before publication,
5. Not to publish any paper on Sunday.

Also, the press was not allowed to print any news about government and Military affairs. The punishment for violation of these Regulations was deportation to Europe. Wellesley was trying to suppress the press entirely, so much so that he did not allow even the Serampore Missionaries to establish a press of their own.

Soon it was found that the newspapers were not complying with these regulations. Besides the restrictions on the press an axe fell on the freedom of speech as well when in 1807, under orders of the Governor General all public meetings were banned. The editors found another way of giving vent to their feelings through pamphlets which did not bear any name of printer or publisher. Immediately another order was issued that the manuscript of pamphlets should also be submitted for approval before it is published. When in 1813, Lord Hastings took over as Governor General, he relaxed the earlier restrictions. He wanted to abolish pre-censorship, expecting cooperation from the editors to exclude voluntarily matter detrimental to the interest of the Government and the public in general. So he issued another Regulation in 1818 which read as follows:

Relying on the prudence and discretion of the editors for their careful observance of these rules the Governor General in Council is pleased to dispense with their submitting their papers to an officer of the government previous to publication. The editors however will be held accountable for whatever they may publish in contravention of the rules now committed, or which may be otherwise at variance with the general principles of British law as established in this country, and will be proceeded against in such manner as the Governor-General-in-Council may deem applicable to the nature of the offence, for any deviation from them.

The editors are further required to lodge in the Chief Secretary's Office one copy of every newspaper, periodical, or extra, published by them respectively.

19th August 1818

J. Adam
Chief Secretary to the Govt.

The rules were as under:

The editors of newspapers are prohibited from publishing any matter coming under the following heads, Viz. First: Animadversions on the measures and proceedings of the Honourable Court of Directors, or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India: or disquisitions on political transactions of the local administration: or offensive remarks levelled at the public conduct of the Members of Council, of the judges of the Supreme Court, or of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta.

Second: Discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population, or any intended interference with their religious opinions or observations.

Third: The re-publication from English or other newspapers of passages coming under any of the above heads, or otherwise calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India.

Fourth: Private scandal and personal remarks on individuals, tending to excite dissention in Society.

It was during this year that the first Indian newspaper, the Bengal Gazette, was published by one Gangadhar Bhattacharjee. The Serampore Missionaries had started three newspapers, the Dig Durshan in Bengali, the Samachar Durpan a bi-weekly in Bengali and the Friend of India.

The Christian Missionaries through the columns of their journals made serious attacks on the religious beliefs of the native people and it led to the birth of a parallel press to answer their religious allegations.

Nirmal Kumar writes:

It required the challenge of Christian Missionary activity to rouse Bengal from her slumber and this is how it happened. The Baptist Mission of Serampore was established in 1800 A.D. and a weekly

newspaper Smaachar Darpan (Mirror of news) was started by it in May 1818 and in 1821 there appeared in it a bitter attack against Hindu society and religion. Raja Ram Mohan Roy sent a suitable reply but as it could not be printed, he founded a bi-lingual magazine of his own, entitled Brahmnical Magazine. This did not however run beyond three issues.

In the meantime another Brahmin named Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya had already printed in Bengali weekly magazine named Bengal Gazette (June 1818).⁴

It is interesting to note here that although the Bengali type had been cast much earlier in 1778 by Charles Wilkins and Panchanan Karmakar, no newspaper came out before 1818 in Bengali language.

It was probably the effect of British oppressive rule that Bengal was almost going to forget her culture and in the words of Nirmal Kumar it was in the state of deep "slumber" and it required some strong stimulus. Christian Missionaries' attacks shook the Bengalis, and they responded to the challenge in a befitting manner. Sir Percival Griffiths writes:

The violent and unrestrained attacks of the Serampore Missionaries on the beliefs of the Hindus created great resentment and led to a temporary ban on missionary propoganda in Calcutta, but the missionary publications, nevertheless did a great deal to stimulate thought and contributed to the renaissance which was at hand.⁵

Even Lord Minto, once the Governor-General of India, while talking of the activities of the Serampore Missionaries said, "They filled pages with hell fire and still hotter fire, denounced against a whole race of men for believing in the religion which they were taught by their fathers and mothers."⁶

During this very period one James Silk Buckingham started the Calcutta Journal, a bi-weekly paper. While talking of his editorial duties he said

it was "to admonish Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults and to tell disagreeable truths." He was a fearless fighter for freedom of speech and expression. In spite of the warnings issued to him by the Government he continued editing his paper in keeping with his policy till 1823. The Calcutta Journal, started as a bi-weekly, grew so popular that within a period of three years it became a daily newspaper. It was the first daily of India. The Government could no longer stand its popularity and criticism of administration in India and Buckingham was deported to England in 1823. He continued his fight in England also against the East India Company and exposed them through his Oriental Herald which he started immediately after his arrival in England.

During this very period appeared on the scene a great reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy who started a newspaper to defend Hinduism against the relentless attacks of the Christian Missionaries. Later on he developed a strong press for social reforms which made him known as one of the founders of the Indian Press. He was a great scholar and thinker. Monier Williams, the Orientalist says that he was "perhaps the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of Comparative Religion, that the world has produced." Sir Percival Griffiths also describes him as "a man of versatile ability, profoundly learned in both Indian and European languages." He was an ardent lover of truth and freedom. When he read the articles written by the Christian Missionaries attacking Hindu religion, he defended it with all zeal and enthusiasm. J.N. Natrajan says, "It was Ram Mohan Roy who successfully defended Hinduism against the onslaughts of the Christian Missionaries of

Serampore." He started publishing SAMBAD KUMUDI in Bengali and MIRAT-UL-AKHBAR in Persian in 1922.

There is a controversy over the date of origin and publisher of the SAMBAD KUMUDI. Margarita Barnes writes in her book, The Indian Press, that the paper was founded in December 1920 by Bhabani Charan Bannerji and taken over later by Ram Mohan Roy. The Rev. J. Long in a note sent to the Government in 1859 on "The past condition and future prospects of the vernacular press of Bengal," says, that Ram Mohan Roy started the paper in 1819. Nirmal Kumar Bose in his Modern Bengal gives the date of its origin as 1821 and associates with it the name of Bhabani Charan some time at a later date. From an article written by Buckingham in his Calcutta Journal when Sambad Kumudi ceased publication, it seems that Bhabani Charan was the founder of this paper. He writes: "The innocent Semgbad Cowmuddy, the object of so much unnecessary alarms, was originally established in the month of December, 1821, and relinquished by the original proprietor (Bhabani Charan) for want of encouragement in May 1822, after which it was kept alive by another native till the September following, when about the Commencement of the Doorga Pooja Holiday, it first was suspended and then fell to rise no more."

To Raja Ram Mohan Roy freedom of the press meant, "freedom to pursue the truth and to involve a way of life proved by the test of reason."

It has already been said that Lord Hastings was a firm believer in the freedom of the press. He expressed his views on the subject openly

while replying to an address presented to him by the leading citizens of Hyderabad, Nagpur and Madras and the Company's high officials. He said, "from my habit of regarding the freedom of publication as a natural right to my fellow subjects, to be narrowed only by special and urgent cause assigned. The Government which has nothing to disguise wields the most powerful instrument that can appertain to sovereign rule."

Lord Hastings had always to face opposition from John Adam, a member of the Council, who was strictly against granting any freedom to the press. It was to the ill luck of the Indian press that John Adam succeeded Lord Hastings as the Governor General of India in 1823. The first thing he did was to issue an ordinance requiring that a Licence be obtained from the Governor-General-in-Council to print or publish any matter. The penalty for publishing anything without a licence was Rs. 400 for each such publication and in default imprisonment not exceeding 4 months.

A regulation issued under this ordinance absolutely prohibited the printing of books and papers and the use of a printing press without procuring a licence. The first victim of this ordinance was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Mirat-ul-Akhbar. Representations were made by the then leading journalists of the country. Appeals were made to the King-in-Council but all were turned down and the press in India was fettered by John Adam. These regulations were mainly aimed at the native editors because they could not be deported and he wanted to control them somehow or other. The proof of this is found in the fact that the Samachar Darpan, the Indian language

newspaper edited by a non-Indian and run by the Christian Missionaries, was receiving all types of encouragement, patronage, privileges and even financial aid from the Government. It paid only one-fourth of the normal charge for postage, but when Joogal Kishore Sookal of Hindi Oodunt Martund applied for postal concession, his application was turned down. The Regulations are said to be a "forerunner of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878." The Indian-owned Indian-language newspapers were greatly affected during Adam's administrations

By the end of the year 1828 the Adam regime also came to an end and Lord William Cavendish Bentinck took over as the Governor-General of India. He was much interested in social reforms in India and he found that the press in Indian languages was a great asset for the purpose. There was already a free controversy going on between the progressive press of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the orthodox Hindu press over issues such as the abolition of Sati, widow-remarriage and education of women, etc. Lord Bentinck started taking interest in the press. He relaxed restrictions and instituted inquiries into the circulation and influence of newspapers. The inquiries revealed that between 1824 and 1826 there were only six Indian language newspapers published in Calcutta. Bentinck's liberal attitude encouraged the Indian press and by 1830 sixteen papers came into being. During 1831 - 1832, 19 more newspapers were started. Lord Bentinck provided all sorts of possible facilities to the press and it was through his patronage that the press was able to survive through the economic crisis of 1830. Sir Charles Metcalfe,

Senior member of the Council, played a great role in advocating the cause of freedom of the press. Once he expressed his views in a note on the subject as follows:

I take it as universally granted that the press ought to be free, subject of course, to the laws, provided it be not dangerous to the stability of our Indian Empire.

Should it ever threaten to become so, the local Government ought undoubtedly to possess the power of protecting the safety of the State against this or any danger, from whatever quarter it may come, because it is impossible in this distant region, that we can be protected on emergency by any enactments of the legislature of the other country.

But at present there is no symptom of danger from the freedom of the Press, in the hands of either Europeans or Natives, and the power being reserved to provide for the public safety against any danger by which it may at any time be menaced, to crush what is itself capable of great good from an apprehension that it may possibly, under circumstances, as yet unconceived, be converted into an evil, would be a forecast more honoured in the breach than the observance.⁷

This liberal attitude of Lord Bentinck and Sir Metcalfe encouraged the Indian press and during this period papers originated in some other regional languages of the country, such as Malyalam, Telegu, and Marathi.

The only restriction to be imposed on the press during the Bentinck regime was in 1830 when a mild ban preventing the papers from discussing the Army Officers-allowances Order was imposed. Lord Bentinck opposed to the last imposition of any law but William Butterworth Bayley, a member of the Council, who used to be a great supporter of John Adam, got it decided by a majority from the Governor General's Council that the restriction be imposed on the press. When in 1835 the Indian and European journalists submitted a joint petition the main issue of which were the Adam Regulations

of 1823, Sir Charles Metcalfe again strongly pleaded for the freedom of the press. His note is worth reproducing here. He said:

I have for my own part always advocated the liberty of the Press, believing its benefits to outweigh its mischiefs; and I continue of the same opinion.

Admitting that the liberty of the Press, like other liberties of the subject, may be suspended when the safety of the State requires such a sacrifice, I can not, as a consequence, acknowledge that the present instance ought to be made an exception to the usual practice of the Government; for if there were danger to the State, either way there should be more, I should think, in suppressing the publication of opinions, than in keeping the valve open by which bad humours might evaporate. To prevent men from thinking and feeling is impossible.

The Government which interferes at its pleasure with the press becomes responsible for all that it permits to be published.

If I could think it sound policy to shackle the press I should prefer the steady operation of the censorship, or any fixed rule, to the occasional interference of the Government by its arbitrary will. Every letter addressed by the Government to the editor of a newspaper had always appeared to me to be derogatory to the Government, and the Bengal Government has been exposed to more ridicule from this sort of correspondence than from any other cause. It is true that the power now exists of converting ridicule into terror by the destruction of property, who can see a newspaper impertinence brought to such an end?

In reply to the petition submitted by the journalists, an assurance was given to them that soon an action would be taken in this respect. On February 6, 1835 Lord Bentinck resigned and Sir Charles Metcalfe became the Governor-General of India. We have already known the views of Sir Metcalfe about the freedom of the press, the restrictions imposed upon the press were an eye-sore to him. After assuming the Governor Generalship, the first thing he did was that he requested William Macaulay, the Legislative Member of the Supreme Council, to recommend an Act for the press. Macaulay

himself was a lover of freedom. He said that, "in reality liberty is and ought to be the general rule and restraint the rare and temporary exception". While recommending the Act he prepared, he said, "Should it be adopted, every person who chooses will be at liberty to set up a newspaper without applying for a previous permission. But no person will be able to print or publish sedition or calumny without imminent risk of punishment."

Sir Charles Metcalfe knew it very well that any action taken in this direction will not be liked by the Court of Directors, but still he strongly recommended the Act drafted by Macaulay to the Council and said, "no law, in my opinion could be devised with any good effect except a law making the Press free." The Act was opposed by H.T. Princep and Lt. Col. Morison, the members of the Council. They proposed that a distinction be made between the European press and the native press and an officer be appointed to watch the native press. Lord Metcalfe turned down the proposal saying that, "I am, therefore, of opinion that any restraint on the native press beyond what is imposed on the European would be injudicious."

After some discussion, the new Act, known as the Act No. XI, 1835, was unanimously passed by the Council and the Bengal Press Regulations of 1823 were repealed. This Act extended to the whole territory under the control of East India Company. Under this Act the printer or the publisher was required to file a declaration only giving the name of the place of publication and that every paper was required to bear the following details:

1. Name of the printer,
2. Name of the publisher,

3. Place of publication.

Sir Charles Metcalfe did court the displeasure of the Court of Directors but he indeed did the greatest service to the press in India. It was because of his liberal attitude that during the years between 1836 and 1856 the press thrived and flourished. The Governor-Generals that followed him, did not reverse his policy. Lord Auckland started the practice of supplying Government news to the press. In North Western Provinces, the Indian language newspapers grew up like mushrooms during 1836 - 1856, though very few of them survived. Newspapers were started at Dehli, Lahore, Agra, Benares, Simla and many more towns. Except for Punjabi, Oriya and Assamese, newspapers were started in all the regional languages of the country and some of them had a big audience. The Rast Guftar of Dadabhai Nowroji was started during this very period which later on played a great role in the fight for freedom. It ceased publication in 1921.

The press enjoyed freedom until the year 1857 when the Mutiny broke out. Whether or not the native press incited people against the British rule, but Lord Canning, the then Governor General succeeded in imposing restrictions on the press under the plea that the native press had played a great part in bringing about the rebellion. He said:

I doubt whether it is fully understood or known to what an audacious extent sedition has been poured into the hearts of the native population of India within the last few weeks under the guise of intelligence supplied to them by the native newspapers. It has been done sedulously, cleverly, artfully.

Thus in June 1857 Act No. XV was passed which implied almost all the

clauses of Adam Licensing Regulation of 1823, that nobody could keep or use a printing press without a licence and that the government had full powers to grant or revoke a licence.

Although this Act was introduced for one year only, many newspapers and editors suffered because of it. The English press during the rebellion was a privileged press. Their writings caused bitterness in the minds of Indian language news-paper editors.

In 1858 the administration of India was directly taken over by the Crown from the East India Company and Lord Canning became the first Viceroy of India. To win the Confidence of the Indians after rebellion, the press was granted freedom. Lord Canning established an "Editors' Room" wherefrom journalists could get all information regarding government affairs. During the year 1860 when the Indian Penal Code was drawn Lord Canning opposed the introduction of Sedition clause. He said that it would abridge the freedom of the press. It was after ten years in 1870 when the code was amended, introducing Act XXVII, that section 124 A relating to sedition was incorporated.

After 1860, within a period of ten years some important newspapers appeared which are wielding influence and circulation till date. In 1861, the Bombay Times, the Courier, the Standard, and the Telegraph were amalgamated and assumed a new name, the Times of India; the Statesman started in 1862. In 1868 the Amrit Bazar Patrika was started by Sisir Kumar Ghosh in a small village in Bengal. In 1872 he moved to Calcutta and started

publishing the Patrika as a bi-lingual weekly. About the policy of his newspaper, Sisir Kumar said that the Patrika had been started to awaken the people "they are now more dead than alive, and need to be roused from their slumber."

Printing presses were also growing all over the country. A need was felt by the government to regulate the printing presses and publishing of books and newspapers, so Act XXV of 1867 was passed which later on came to be known as the "Press and Registration of Books Act" after being amended by Act X of 1890 and by Act III and Act X of 1914. This Act again was modified in the years 1952, 1953 and 1956. It contained in it all the clauses of the Metcalfe Act No. XI of 1835.

Again in the year 1876 the press had to face restrictions, this time more strict and stringent. It was not that the press instigated the government to take any action or the government was not satisfied with the behavior of the press, but it was the result of the poisoned mind of Sir Ashley Eden the Lieut. Governor of Bengal whose predecessor Sir George Campbell had left an opinion for him that the native press needed a strong control. Lord Canning was accused of weak administration as he did not discriminate between the native and the English press. When in 1876 Lord Lytton became the Viceroy he started probing into the working of the native press. Sir George Campbell's reports and Sir Ashley Eden's pressure made him pass the Vernacular Press Bill known as Act IX of 1878. The responsibility of this Act is solely thrown on Sir Ashley. The Statesman of May 1881 wrote:

In the height of his career it will be remembered that he heroically gagged the Vernacular Press of India.

The basis of all this was Sir Campbell's report and Sir Ashley's dispute with Sisir Kumar of the Amrit Bazar Patrika. Sir Ashley was successful in winning to his side Babu Kristo Das Pal, the editor of Hindu Patriot; he called Sisir Kumar and said, "Let us three, I, you and Kristo Das govern the province." But Sisir Kumar replied, "Your honour there ought to be at least one honest journalist in the land."

Sir Ashley Eden felt greatly insulted and humiliated. He threatened Sisir Kumar of grave consequences. To bring the Patrika under control, he got the Vernacular Press Bill passed. Before the Bill was passed Sisir Kumar brought out his paper only in English, thus evading the attack of Sir Ashley Eden. This Act authorized any Magistrate of a District or a Commissioner of Police to call upon the printer and publisher of any Vernacular newspaper to sign a bond not to print certain kind of material. He could demand security and could forfeit it if thought fit and the printer or publisher had no right to appeal.

in 1880, when Mr. Gladstone came into power in England, he issued instructions to the Marquis of Ripon, the new Viceroy of India, to repeal the Act, which was done on December 7, 1881. Surrindra Nath Bannerji of the Bengalee was the main figure to gather public opinion against the Vernacular Press Act. He arranged public meetings, addressed gatherings and sent representations to the Government in London. His efforts resulted

in the repeal of the Act. But in 1883 he was sentenced to twomonths' imprisonment for a libelous publication. His imprisonment shook the public and there was great resentment all over the country.

During the Lord Ripon regime, the second phase of journalism started. The press, which was born in the country to be used as a weapon of social reforms, started merging into a strong political force to raise the voice of the four hundred million people against the foreign domination.

1. Natrajan. op. cit., p. 8.
2. Nehru. Discovery of India, pp. 204 - 205.
3. Barnes. op. cit.
4. Bose, Nirmal Kumar. Modern Bengal, University of California, (Reprint No. 7, 1959), pp. 10 - 11.
5. Griffiths. op. cit., p. 53.
6. Griffiths. op. cit. Lord Minto quoted, p. 58.
7. Natrajan. op. cit., p. 32.

CHAPTER III

"The cost of freedom is
always high."
John F. Kennedy.

POST MUTINY PERIOD

It has been mentioned in the previous pages that the British population in India was getting a preferential treatment which by and by was widening the gulf between Indians and the Britons. Adam Regulations of 1823 and Vernacular Press Act were the seeds of contempt sown by men like John Adam and Sir Ashley Eden which grew into a poisonous plant. A mention has also been made of Surrindra Nath Bannerji of the Bengali, for having been sentenced to two months' imprisonment for libel.

Modification of Ilbert Bill of 1884 was another eye opener for the

Indians. They saw how the British population of Calcutta insulted the Viceroy because he did not grant them privileges which they were seeking, and he did not give them any preference over the native population. The agitation carried out by the British population compelled the Legislative Council to modify the Ilbert Bill in the interest of the British population of India. Under the amended bill an Indian district magistrate could try an European by jury but at least half of the jury were to be European.

Such kind of privileges and protection convinced the Indians that the Europeans wanted to enjoy privileges at their cost and they thought themselves to be superior to the native people. Surrindra Nath Bannerji had openly devoted himself and his paper the Bengali to the cause of the Indian people. The developments after 1857 changed the tone of the whole of the Indian press. The press which was born as a weapon for social reforms, soon became a political force. Sivaraman in Journalism in Modern India writes, "Immediately after the mutiny, the Anglo-Indian press quite often indulged in attacks on the integrity of character of the Indian population. Patriotic sentiment in this country was roused into opposition. This sentiment was the real motive force in the development of the Indian owned press and the object was to reach the ears of the rulers, the bulk of this new effort was turned in the direction of English language journalism."¹

The post-mutiny era of Indian journalism was an era of great upheaval. Surrindra Nath Bannerji toured all over the country and prepared ground for

the national awakening. His imprisonment caused a great resentment in the hearts of the people against the British rule and people were shaken from deep slumber. The Statesman wrote articles defending the cause of Bannerji and condemning the action taken against him. The object of the press during this period was to kindle a fire of nationalism and desire for freedom. Gandhi defined this object of the press in his autobiography thus: "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects." After the mutiny, the Indian press had all the three objects stated by Gandhi before it. Bannerji availed of the opportunity and established Indian National Conference in Calcutta in 1883, which could be said to be the foundation of the Indian National Congress. Surrindra Nath Bannerji was not alone in condemning the privileges enjoyed by the British Community, which were denied to the Indians, there were Englishmen also who sided with him. One Robert Knight openly criticized the privileges granted to Europeans and step-motherly treatment accorded to the natives. Another European, a retired civilian, Allen Octavian Hume, worked for the freedom of Indians and called on the educated men of the country to organize and fight for their rights. It was he whose open address to the educated men of India gave birth to an organized group known as the Indian National Congress, which did a great deal in awakening the masses of the country. Hume wrote in his address:

Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress

must spring from within and it is to you, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative. In vain may aliens, like myself, love India and her children, as well as the most loving of these; in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought, in vain may they struggle and sacrifice, they may assist with advice and suggestions; they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers but they lack the essential of nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves.——As I said before you are the salt of the land. And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men can not be found with sufficient power of sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be devote the rest of their life to the cause - then there is no hope for India. Her sons must remain and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for 'they would be free themselves must strike the blow.' And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns, that they dare not or will not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on, for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, can not, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong, and our adversaries right. Then are Lord Rippon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary, then at present at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she enjoys. Only if this be so, let us hear no more factious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings and treated like children, for you will have proved yourself such. Men know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of English being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are - then rightly are these preferred to you, rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task-masters, they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realize and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."2.

Hume's call to the educated Indians to "Organize and fight for rights" resulted in the founding of the Indian National Congress. In 1885 Lord Dufferin also encouraged the idea of forming a body of Indian national leaders who could meet yearly to discuss the problems of the people and convey their feelings and suggestions to the Government. The first session of the Congress was attended by the prominent editors and publishers of some of the leading newspapers of the country such as the Rast-Guftar, the Indu Prakash, the Indian Mirror, the Hindu, the Mahratta, the Kesari, the Spectator, the Navabibhakar, the Tribune, the Hindustan, the Indian Union and the Crescent.

Some of the editors who played a great part and were already prominent among those fighting for freedom were Dadabhai Nowroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Narendra Nath Sen and G. Subramania Iyer. Most of these papers were the outcome of political consciousness among the educated Indians. The Indian Mirror was started by Man Mohan Ghosh in 1861, who was a fearless writer and who had once started "Indigo Agitation" through the columns of the Hindu Patriot and had made the Government appoint the Indigo Commission.

The Rast-Guftar, a Gujerati paper was started in 1846 by Dadabhai Nowroji to protect the cause of Parsi Community only, but soon it was thrown open to all the Indians without any distinction of caste and creed. It was used to put up a strong defense of Indians against the attacks made on them in the English Press.

The Hindu of Madras which was started in 1878 was a center of political activities. It had developed deep relations with Allan Octavian Hume.

The Maharatta and the Kesari were controlled by the great political leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak, about whom Aurobindo Ghosh writes, "The only preparation for liberty, is progress in the awakening of the national spirit and in the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty. It is these clear perceptions that have regulated his (Tilak's) political career."

The Tribune was established in 1881 because of the efforts of Surrindra Nath Bannerji, who had fought tooth and nail against the Vernacular Language Press Act and was later on elected President of the Indian National Congress. He toured Northern and Western India to organize support for the cause of freedom. It was due to his efforts that Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia founded the Tribune at Lahore. Bannerji has written about it in his A Nation in the Making and about Sardar Majithia. He said, "He (Majithia) was one of the truest and noblest men whom I have ever come across. It was perhaps difficult to know him and to get to the bottom of his heart, for there was a certain air of aristocratic reserve about him, which hid from public view the pure gold that formed the stuff of his nature. He threw himself actively into the work for which I had been deputed. I persuaded him to start a newspaper at Lahore."³

Another important newspaper of this period, which was highly critical

of the British rule in India, was the Madras Standard. It was started in 1877 as an Anglo-Indian newspaper. In 1892 it was taken over by G. Paramesvaran Pillay who was a fiery writer and whose pen soon won popularity for his paper. It was Pillay who in 1896 offered all possible co-operation to Gandhi when he toured India to explain the cause of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi wrote in his autobiography:

The greatest help here came to me from the late Sjt. Paramesvaran Pillay, the editor of the Madras Standard. He had made a careful study of the question and he often invited me to his office and gave me guidance. Sjt. G. Subrahmaniam of the Hindu and Dr. Subrahmaniam also were very sympathetic. But Sjt. G. Paramesvaran Pillay placed the columns of the Madras Standard entirely at my disposal, and I freely availed myself of the offer.⁴

In the year 1889 the Amrit Bazar Patrika published certain articles relating to the Government administration. No strict action was taken against it but for future safeguard An Official Secrets Act was passed, which was later amended by Act V of 1904.

The prominent persons of this period who carried the burden of the Indian National Congress were Surrindra Nath Bannerji, Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak and Mahadev Govind Ranande. There was a difference of opinion between Tilak and Gokhale over the working of the Indian National Congress but whenever the freedom or integrity of Indian press was challenged, Gokhale always sided with Tilak. In 1903 when the Official Secrets Act of 1889 was going to be amended, he too bitterly opposed it along with Tilak.

In spite of the certain differences between these leaders, who were held in great esteem by one and all for their selfless work, they carried the banner of freedom heroically. Tilak was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for certain articles written in the Kesari but was later on released as a result of petition made by Professor Max Muller and Sir William Hunter. There were no regular laws to govern the press, but the editors were harrassed and prosecuted under the plea that their writings incited the people to violence. To suppress such writings the Government issued an order on June 25, 1891, saying that:

1. No newspaper or other printed work, whether periodical or other, containing public news or comments on public news shall, without the written permission for the time being in force of the Political Agent, be edited, printed or published after 1st August 1891, in any local area administered by Governor General in Council, but not forming part of British India.
2. If this is contravened, the Political Agent may by order in writing,
 - a) Require him to leave such local area within seven days from the date of such orders,
 - b) and prohibit him from re-entering such local area without the written permission of the Political Agent.
3. Disobedience of orders mentioned in the last foregoing paragraph shall make one liable to forcible expulsion.

The stage was set by leaders like Tilak, Gokhale, Bannerji and Ranade for public demonstrations and disapproval of such Acts passed by the Government. So now, instead of suppressing the voice of people Acts and Regulations aroused their national sentiment and prepared them for struggle. On the other hand Government was equipping herself to crush any movement and gag every voice raised against it. Patriots like Lala Lajpat Rai and S. Ajit Singh were deported for raising their voice against the

British rule.

By the year 1907, demonstrations became increasingly violent. Some prominent British officials were killed at various places in the country. The passage of Acts like the Public Meeting Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Press Act and the Sedition Law provoked the people to fight against this suppression. Riots broke out in various parts of the country, and as usual the press was held responsible for crying loudly for freedom and for advocating the cause of people who took part in anti-British demonstrations. So in 1908 the Government passed the Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act VII. This enabled the local authorities to take action against any editor or publisher who raised a voice against the "high-headedness" and high-handedness of the Government. As a result of this Act, seven presses were confiscated in Bengal, Punjab and Bombay.

Other noteworthy revolutionaries of the period were two editors of high calibre, Aurobindo Ghose of the Bande Matram, a paper started in 1906 and Bipin Chander Paul, one of the founders of the paper. Aurobindo Ghose defined his theory of resistance against foreign rule thus: "In a peaceful way we act against the law or the executive, but we passively accept the legal consequences." He had a great influence over the developing political movement of the country. When he was arrested in the Alipore Bomb Case of 1908 for sedition, the Mahratta wrote about him, "Who knows but what is sedition today may be divine truth tomorrow? Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is a sweet soul."

When Ghose was under trial, Tilak was sentenced to six years transportation. The papers which somehow or other were connected with Tilak had to undergo heavy losses. The Kesari had to furnish a security of Rs 5,000. During his confinement Aurobindo Ghose spent most of his time in religious meditation. When he came out after his release, he could not bring together his religious meditations and politics, so he gave up politics and went to Pondicherry in 1910.

In 1910, to check the growing agitation in the country and to keep the spokesmen of the people under control, the Government passed the Press Act I of 1910. The Anglo-Indian press mostly favored the Government. The outbreak of riots and shooting of Britishers at Calcutta, Midnapur and Muzaffarpur widened the gulf between the natives and the aliens. It was said that, "Every Anglo-Indian pen that writes in the Press is dipped in Government ink."

This Act was another blow to the Indian Press, a severe blow. From 1910 to 1914 nineteen newspapers were prosecuted under the Press Act I of 1910. Heavy securities were demanded and the editors were convicted for violation. Of the nineteen papers fourteen ceased publication.

In 1914, Tilak was released. He again started his agitation for Home Rule. It has been mentioned that there was a difference of opinion and method of approach between Tilak and Gokhale. An attempt was made to bring closer to each other these two groups of Nationalists (Tilak group) and Moderates (Gokhale group) but there was no reconciliation. When Gokhale

died in 1915, the gulf between the rival groups remained as wide as ever. The Nationalist Group was predominant in the Congress. In 1916 Tilak was elected to the Congress with a majority of Nationalists as delegates from Bombay. M.K. Gandhi, after his return from Africa, under the guidance and influence of great leaders like Aurobindo Ghose, Gokhale and Tilak started taking active part in India's fight for freedom. In the Subjects Committee he was proposed by Moderates but was defeated as Nationalists were in great majority. Tilak's health was deteriorating, he felt that Gandhi was the proper person to share his burden, so he declared him elected.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the political scene took a serious turn in the country. Papers were printing accounts of all political events fearlessly and new papers were born to cope with the demand of the people for more news on current political topics. There were three important Anglo-Indian newspapers in Bombay: the Times of India, the Bombay Gazette and the Advocate of India. Also there were two weeklies, the Kaiser-I-Hind and the Oriental Review. One Anglo-Marathi paper, the Indu Prakash, was also completely devoted to the national cause.

Abul Kalam Azad, a great scholar of Arabic, who received his early education at the Al Azhar University of Cairo, had been much impressed with the growing nationalism in Turkey. He applied the knowledge of that nationalism to India and to propagate his views, he started an Urdu paper Al-Hilal in 1912 when he was twenty-four. The Government did not approve

of what he wrote. It was afraid of new ideas propounded by the political leaders of that period. Jawahar Lal Nehru writes:

A mild criticism by me of official incompetence soon after the Behar earthquake was deeply resented, probably because the truth of it was realized. Newspapers that criticised the official arrangements at a subsequent earthquake were heavily penalized or suppressed. All criticism hurts the sensitive skin of the Government.⁵

Afraid of criticism and national awakening, the Government disabled the Al-Hilal by demanding heavy securities but when the paper seemed to sustain all injuries inflicted on it, its press was confiscated in 1914 and Azad was interned in 1916.

In 1913 appeared the first issue of the Bombay Chronicle which was sold as a one-anna paper (like the penny-papers of America) when all the other newspapers were selling at four annas a copy. It was edited by B.G. Horniman who once worked on the Manchester Guardian. He was a great supporter of the Indian cause for freedom. He fearlessly attacked the Government for its suppression of the voice of the people and for injustice and atrocities. He was the first to bring to public light, through the columns of his Bombay Chronicle, the Martial Law atrocities in the Punjab in 1919. Again he wrote fearlessly about the Amritsar massacre of 1919. The Government could no longer bear him. He was dragged from his sick bed and deported to England. About Mr. Horniman and the paper Gandhi writes:

Just then Mr. Horniman in whose hands the Bombay Chronicle had become a formidable force, was suddenly spirited away by the authorities. This act of the Government seemed to me to be

surrounded by a foulness which still stinks in my nostrils. I know that Mr. Horniman never desired lawlessness. His sudden deportation therefore caused me as much pain as surprise. As a result of these developments I was asked by the directors of the Bombay Chronicle to take up the responsibility of conducting the paper.

But the Government came as it were to my rescue, for by its order the publication of the Chronicle had to be suspended.⁶

Pandit Mandan Mohan Maliviya had started from Allahabad a newspaper the Leader in 1909. It was a moderate paper. By the year 1919 the shape of the freedom movement had entirely changed. Gandhi had started making the movement a people's movement, as he saw that unless and until the message of movement echoed from every nook and corner of the country, it was difficult to overthrow the strong British rulers. The happenings in Punjab also changed numerous staunch moderates. On April 4, 1919 General Dyer fired on non-violent mobs assembled in Jallian Wala Bagh at Amritsar in Punjab and killed hundreds of people. Martial law was declared in Punjab. No Congress leader was allowed to enter Punjab. The publication of news was banned. Nehru gives an account of Punjab of that time thus:

The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from outside eyes. There was hardly any news, and people could not go there or come out from there.⁷

The Punjab happenings changed the mind of a Moderate like Moti Lal Nehru, the father of Jawahar Lal Nehru, who till then believed in legal and constitutional fight only. He dissociated himself with the Leader and in 1919 started another paper from Allahabad, the Independent. As both father and son had to concentrate their activities in Punjab, there was

nobody else to take due care of the newspaper. Still through thick and thin it carried the message of the leaders to the people.

Two great movements were in full swing in the country, the non-cooperation and the Kisan (peasantry) movement. It has been mentioned that Gandhi made villages his center of activity. More than 82 per cent of the Indians live in villages. Gandhi went to the villages to apprise people of what independence meant. Because of the increasing momentum of these movements the British started seeing danger everywhere. In 1921 they arrested the leading Congressmen along with other workers. All over the country more than 30 thousand people were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the non-cooperation movement. Moti Lal Nehru and Jawahar Lal Nehru were among the arrested. The Independent started dwindling in their absence. In 1923, it ceased publication. Editors were now fearlessly writing and advocating for freedom. In 1920 C.F. Andrews wrote a pamphlet, the Independence - the immediate need. Though an Englishman, he helped to awaken the nationalism of Indians. He wrote:

The only way of self-recovery was through some vital upheaval from within. The explosive force needed for such an upheaval must be generated within the soul of India herself.----- therefore, it was with the intense joy of mental and spiritual deliverance from an intolerable burden that I watched the actual outbreak of such an inner explosive force, as that which actually occurred when Mahatma Gandhi spoke to the heart of India the mantram "Be free. Be slaves no more." - and the heart of India responded. In a sudden movement her fetters began to be loosened, and the pathway of freedom was opened.

1. Wolsely. op. cit., p. 23.
2. Griffiths. op. cit., pp. 63 - 64.
3. Natrajan. op. cit., p. 99.
4. Gandhi, M.K. An Autobiography. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, p. 180.
5. Nehru. Toward Freedom, p. 395.
6. Gandhi, op. cit. pp. 472 - 473.
7. Nehru. Toward Freedom, p. 49.

THE GANDHIAN ERA

In 1920 when Lokmanya Tilak died Gandhi took over the leadership of Congress. About Gandhi's taking over of Congress leadership, Jawahar Lal Nehru said in his 1936 Presidential Address to the 49th session of the Indian National Congress:

Sixteen years ago under the inspiration of our leader (M.K. Gandhi) we took a new and long step converting this Congress from an ineffective body, feebly functioning among the upper classes, into a powerful democratic organization with its roots in the Indian soil and the vast masses who live on it.¹

What Aurobindo Ghose once originated that, "we should win freedom through passive resistance and peaceful methods", Gandhi put that doctrine to practice. Press was the biggest and strongest weapon to propagate the doctrine. In 1920 he published a strongly worded article, 'The Doctrine of the Sword', defining his philosophy of non-violence thus:

I do believe that when there is a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless victim to her own dishonor. But I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.

Nonviolence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant I want India to recognize that she has a soul that can not perish and that can rise triumphant above physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world.

Thus each word of the leaders, carried to the masses through press, kindled a fire in the hearts of the freedom-loving Indians. The events started changing quickly. The machinery of the British Government became busy trying to intercept the voice of the Indian leaders. People were put

behind the bars without due process of law, and literature advocating freedom was being proscribed. After 1920, it seemed as if there was no law in the country to protect the countrymen. Every letter written by the British pen and every word spoken by the British rulers was to crush the voice of the people.

Two booklets, Hind Swaraj and Sarvodaya, were proscribed by the Government. Gandhi suggested that the proscribed literature be printed and sold out to the people. These two booklets were printed in thousands and sold at Bombay. People not only paid the actual price of the books, but they donated, along with the price of the books, large sums of money. The proceeds went to the Congress funds. Jawahar Lal Nehru condemned the attempts of the Government to crush their voice by suppressing the press. He said:

A Government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act and similar laws that suppress the press and literature, that ban hundreds of organizations, that keep people in prison without trial and that do so many other things that are happening in India today, is a government that has ceased to have been a shadow of a justification for its existence.²

Mention has been made how the Chronicle of Bombay ceased publication under orders of the Government. The management of the Chronicle was controlling another English paper, the Young India. They requested Gandhi to take over the editorship of the Young India. Another Gujarati monthly which was later on converted into a weekly, the Navajivan of Ahmedabad, had already been handed over to Gandhi by its former editor Indu Lal Yajnik.

The Young India was also moved from Bombay to Ahmedabad. Gandhi gave the message of his Satyagraha (Peaceful agitation) through these papers.

About these papers and the suppression of press he writes:

The press laws in force in India at that time were such that, if I wanted to express my views untrammelled, the existing printing presses, which were naturally run for business, would have hesitated to publish them. The need for setting up a press of our own, therefore became all the more imperative.

Through these journals I now commenced to the best of my ability the work of educating the reading public in Satyagraha. Both of them had reached a wide circulation. They enabled me freely to ventilate my views and put heart into the people. Thus I feel both the journals rendered good service to the people in this hour of trial.³

From 1922 to 1924 when Gandhi was in jail, C. Rajagopalachari edited the papers. The Young India ceased publication in 1931. In 1933 Gandhi started the Harijan.

Although the Press Act of 1910, Section 124 A and 153 A of the Penal Code introduced in 1898 and the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act of 1908 had taken a heavy toll and had used all possible means to crush Indian press, the stricter their application, the stronger was the retaliation. By 1919 the Government had taken action of one kind or another against 991 printing presses and newspapers. More than 173 new presses and 129 new newspapers were nipped in the bud because they could not pay heavy securities. Out of 88 old printing presses, 40 had to suspend working as they could not arrange to pay heavy penalties imposed on them. Government received about 500,000 Rupees by way of securities and forfeitures within the first five years of the Act. More than 500 publications had been proscribed under the Act.

The press was not born merely with an idea of running business but it was born out of necessity. There was a mission behind its working. The growing unrest among the masses to win freedom was being controlled and conducted by the leaders through the press. The native press all over India was serving as a mouthpiece of the national leaders, as Gandhi himself said of his journalism, "I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission."

In Sindh the New Times edited by Sadhu T.L. Vaswani was serving the national cause. Another paper, the Hindu, that had been started in 1912, was a fearless supporter and advocate of the national movement. In 1930 three of its editors were arrested and imprisoned in succession. The authorities closed down the press and confiscated the machinery but it continued to appear from different places under different names. In 1932 the entire editorial staff and management were arrested. In 1920 another paper, the Sind Observer, was started. It became a leading nationalist paper of the province.

In Bihar, the first nationalist paper was started by Sachinda Nand Sinha in 1918 under the name of the Searchlight.

In Bengal, the Amrit Bazar Patrika and the Bengali were already doing a great service to the nation by raising a voice against the tyranny of the foreign rule. In 1920, Chakravarty started another paper, the Servant, to propagate the non-cooperation movement. C.R. Dass started his Forward in 1923.

Another important nationalist newspaper of the era was the National Herald, started in 1938 with Jawahar Lal Nehru as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

The National Herald had to undergo numerous trials and tribulations. In 1940, under orders of the U.P. Government, it published war news for about six months without headlines, until the order was withdrawn.

In October 1940, The Government of India issued an Order which prohibited "the printing or publication of any such matter which may cause opposition to prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion." The National Herald had to discontinue publication of leading articles because they used to have direct bearing on war and the people of India. Only a month later the U.P. Government demanded a security of Rs. 6,000 which was forfeited in 1942 for some 40 objectionable articles. Soon after, a fresh security of Rs. 12,000 was demanded.

During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1941, the editor of the National Herald was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for writing an "objectionable" article. In August 1942, when all the Congress leaders were arrested, fresh restrictions were imposed on the Herald and the press in general in India. The Indian Express and the Dinamani suspended publication as they preferred not to bring out a newspaper at all than to bring one under government restrictions.

A reference has already been made to the Punjab happenings of the year 1919 when the Government introduced Martial Law in the State. The Government

demanded a security of Rs. 2,000 in 1919 from the Punjabi. The paper had to cease publication due to non payment of security. The same year Kali Nath Ray, editor of the Tribune, was arrested and the offices of the paper were sealed prior to police search.

The paper ceased publication for three days. Ray was tried and sentenced to two years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000; but on appeal, the sentence was reduced to three months.

It is worth mentioning here that Kali Nath Ray was one of the few editors who change the destinies of people. His editorials were often quoted in Parliament by the Government of India and the British Government. He served the nation through the columns of the Tribune till 1945, when he had to leave Punjab on grounds of his failing health.

Mrs. Anne Besant had purchased the Madras Standard in 1914 and had started publishing it under a new name the New India. She was editing another weekly paper the Commonweal. The New India was a great champion of Home Rule for India. Anne Besant's open and severe criticism of the Government soon popularized the paper. The paper was held for "objectionable" writings and was asked to furnish a security of Rs. 2,000 which was forfeited and again fresh security of Rs. 10,000 was demanded.

Mrs. Besant was interned but the paper kept gaining popularity under the editorship of P.K. Telang. Mrs. Besant was a strong critic of Gandhi's direct action also. She vigorously criticised his non-cooperation policies so much so that when in 1930, Gandhi began his salt-movement she described

this clash with the authorities as a mockfight.

In Madras, the Swarajya, a spokesman of the Congress, was an extremely popular paper. Similarly in other provinces the newspapers were playing a great part in carrying the voice of the leaders to the masses, and further the reaction of the people to the Government. The end of the second decade merged into an era which saw the whole of India standing as one huge mountain against the rising tyranny of the British Government.

The third decade of the 20th century saw a new sun rising in India. Along with the non-violent movement of the Congress, terrorists under the leadership of Sardar Bhgat Singh, a youth of Punjab, caused a great stir and awakening by throwing a bomb in the Punjab Assembly from the visitors gallery.in 1929. Pamphlets which carried a message for the youngmen of India to rise and revolt against the foreign rule were also distributed. Bhagat Singh became a symbol of heroism, even school children had songs on their lips about him. Had not the Gandhi-Irwin Pact been signed, the terrorists would have overshadowed the non-violent movement. The Government was surprised at this sudden popularity of a terrorist leader. Now India looked like a formidable force which could overthrow the Government any moment.

Another important event of the era was the Lahore Session of the Congress 1929, when the important decision of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) was taken. On the basis of this decision, January 26, 1930 was earmarked as Independence Day. A pledge was taken on this day by the

Indian National Congress:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We feel also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India had not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe therefore that India must sever the British Connection and attain Purna Swaraj, or complete independence....

We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country..... We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj.

Under this resolution the Congress launched countrywide peaceful civil disobedience. Already there was a great commotion all over and this movement fanned the fire. The Government passed a Press Emergency Powers Act which was confined to incitement to violence.

This Act gave the authorities more powers to crush the press and gag the voice of freedom seekers.

Indiscriminate arrests were being made. The Viceroy of India Lord Irwin signed a pact with Gandhi in 1931 and the Government promised to release all political prisoners and withdraw restrictions if civil disobedience movement was withdrawn. Gandhi went to London to participate in the Round Table Conference and when he returned to India by the end of 1931 he found that the Government had arrested numerous leaders and workers in North

Western Frontier Provinces and United Provinces. New ordinances had been issued. The Working Committee of the Congress asked the Nationalist Press all over the country to refuse to give any security and stop publication instead.

Gandhi called the action taken by the Government as "Legalised Government terrorism," and he told the Government that civil disobedience will continue but in a strictly non-violent manner. He was immediately arrested on January 4, 1932. Within four months after his arrest 80,000 persons were arrested. Jawahar Lal Nehru was tried and sentenced to two years of rigorous imprisonment. Four new ordinances were issued. All public gatherings and processions were banned. Newspapers and printing presses were absolutely controlled.

Jawahar Lal Nehru gives an account of that period in his autobiography. In part he says, "Civil liberty ceased to exist, and both persons and property could be seized by the authorities. It was a declaration of a kind of state of siege for the whole of India."

Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, stated in the House of Commons on March 24, 1932, "I admit that the ordinances that we have approved are very drastic and severe. They cover almost every activity of Indian life."

The Press Act of 1930 was enlarged in the form of the Criminal Law Amendment of 1932, which empowered the provincial governments to demand or forfeit security from newspapers, to confiscate printing presses if they

found them in any way inciting people to act against His Majesty's Government.

The period between 1932 and 1946 brought the struggle for freedom to a decisive point. There was hardly a day when the government did not devise new methods to gag the voice of the people. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact bore no fruits. Gandhi was arrested but a year later when he declared a 21-day fast he was released on May 8, 1933. The same year the British Government presented the White Paper to India, which was nothing but the jugglery of words. The Governors of the provinces had full powers to interfere with the administration and the Viceroy of India was the supreme monarch over them all. Congress refused its acceptance and all the Congress members of Legislatures remained out of them.

The Press Emergency Act of 1931 was still in force. Congress had been declared unlawful. Whatever means tyranny can adopt to suppress its subjects, the British Government adopted. Till 1937, there was no change from either side. Neither the Government was prepared to yield to the demands of the Indians, nor the Indian leaders were prepared to withdraw agitation. In 1937 when certain restrictions were removed and an assurance was given that the Governor would not interfere with the administration of the provinces, Congressmen returned to the Legislatures. But the outbreak of World War II in 1939 again turned the tables. Two years of peace with Congress proved as a lull before storm. The country was thrown into war without the consent of the people. The Congress Party refused to cooperate

with the Government. Their contention was that Britain had no reason to use Indians to retain their freedom in Europe, when they denied freedom to Indians. The Government equipped itself well with weapons of Ordinances and Acts to meet any emergency in the country. The Defense of India Act was passed. This Act provided for precensorship of war news. The penalty for violation was up to five years' imprisonment. The Official Secrets Act was amended. The amendment provided penalty of death or transportation for publication of any information likely to be of use to enemy. Similarly the Press Emergency Powers Act was amended imposing more restrictions on the publication of certain news.

Soon after the declaration of war, Gandhi started the movement of individual Satyagraha in 1940 and he himself took the lead. The Government immediately issued a notification to suppress all possible publicity of the movement, saying:

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (b) of sub-rule (1) of rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, the Central Government is pleased to prohibit the printing or publishing by any printer, publisher or editor in British India of any matter calculated directly or indirectly, to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion or of any matter relating to the holding of meetings or the making of speeches for the purpose, directly or indirectly, of fomenting such opposition as aforesaid.

Immediately a conference of editors was called and the Government was approached to withdraw the notification. The Government did withdraw the said notification with an understanding between the editors and the Government that the editors will work under a press adviser of their respective Province. A Press Officer was appointed at the Center to control the Press

Advisers.

The Press Officer exceeded all limits and kept a strict control over the Press. Often all-India-news, published in one province, was censored in another. The Officer censored headlines even, and issued instructions for display and the type design to be used for news items. The proceedings of civil disobedience cases could not be published. Even the genuine criticism of Government officials was not allowed. We can say that the Press Officer exercised all possible powers he could to gag the press and thus demoralize the people fighting for freedom.

But this suppression only served to arouse greater resentment and resistance. In 1942 the Congress passed the "Quit India" resolution, calling on the British to quit India immediately. It was a strong movement. In spite of all types of suppression it spread across the country like a wild fire. Unauthorized leaflets were printed and distributed to carry out the propaganda of the Congress. To check this surging wave of revolution the Government once again issued a notification directly aimed at the Congress activities. It said:

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (b) of sub-rule (1) of rule 41 of the Defence of India rules, the Central Government is pleased to prohibit the printing or publishing by any printer, publisher or editor of any factual news (which expression shall be deemed to include reports of speeches or statements made by members of the public) relating to the mass movement sanctioned by the All India Congress Committee or to the measures taken by Government against that movement.

Again the editors, who in 1940 had formed themselves into the All-India

Newspaper Editors' Conference approached the Government and assured it of voluntary restraint in connection with the publication of "Quit India" movement news. The notification was withdrawn, but the Government interfered every now and then in the press affairs. Finally it came in conflict with the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference when at the end of 1942 it issued a prohibitory order on all the newspapers to refrain from printing certain news. As a protest against this order the AINEC issued instructions to all newspapers to go on strike for one day as a mark of protest. Also it was decided not to publish any Government House Circulars or news from Government offices. On January 1943 the Government withdrew its order. The Congress leaders were arrested. The press could not publish any news about political happenings. The country was undergoing a state of almost lawlessness. Subhash Chandra Bose had escaped from imprisonment and had managed to go out of India. He formed a parallel Indian Government in Singapore and an Indian National Army to liberate India. Within India also, in certain provinces masses were taking law into their own hands. Along with the non-violent movement of Gandhi, the "Quit India" movement instigated Indians to disrupt Government order and harass the Government.

The British Empire was involved in World War II; there was regular goading from the United States of America to accord some hope of freedom to the Indians. Sir Winston Churchill, who had said that he had not become "The King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire", in 1942 sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India to negotiate with the Indian leaders. Muslim League, which by then had become equally as strong as the

Congress, wanted a separate State for 90 million Muslims. They also wanted freedom from the foreign domination but their slogan was "Divide and Quit India." Cripps could not bring about any satisfactory results as he had come practically with no definite offer. He just wanted to pacify the rage and fury of the Indians. He returned to England without any accomplishment.

The War came to an end but the British Government was now convinced that they could no longer keep India under their control. Also the Churchill era ended and Labor Government came into power. Clement Attlee declared in the House of Commons on March 15, 1946 that he was sending a Cabinet Mission to India with the intention of making a final effort to break the deadlock between Britain and the Indians, and the Congress and Muslim League. The Congress wanted freedom for unitary India and Muslim League wanted division of India into two. Muslim League leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah always suspected the intentions of the Hindu leaders of the Congress, therefore he did not want the 90 million Muslims to stay under Hindu domination.

The Cabinet Mission consisted of Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, and Mr. A.V. Alexander. The Mission offered a scheme to the leaders of Congress and Muslim League:

A unitary India would be formed but the Central Government would be responsible for only three subjects - Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. For the rest the country would be divided into three main administrative groups. Group A would comprise the area where Hindus are in majority. Group B would be composed of Punjab, Sind, N.W.F. Provinces and British Baluchistan where Muslims are in majority. Group C would consist of Bengal and Assam where the Muslims would have a *small* majority.⁴

Both parties accepted the plan offered by the Cabinet Mission and the Mission returned to England triumphantly but the Press Conference of Jawahar Lal Nehru after his election as President of the Congress on July 10, 1946 made Jinnah suspicious of the intentions of Hindu majority. Nehru said that he intended to modify the plan. He said, "The big probability is, from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, section A (the Hindus) will decide against grouping. Speaking in better language, there is a four to one chance of the N.W. Frontier Province deciding against grouping. That means Group B collapses. It is highly likely that Bengal and Assam will decide against grouping."⁵

This statement of Nehru was considered to be an act of sabotage as he had already accepted the plan and Muslim League had also accepted it. But now Jinnah had every right to suspect the intentions of Hindu leaders so he once again pressed for Pakistan, a separate State for Muslims. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the former President of the Congress, wrote about Nehru's statement that "The mistake of 1946 proved costly." There was once again a great rift between Congress and League. Jinnah declared August 16, 1946 as "Direct Action Day" and said:

What we have done today, is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods and by Constitutionalism. But now we are obliged and forced into this position. This day we bid good-bye to constitutional methods———today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it.⁶

There could never again be a compromise between the two groups. On August 16, 1946 riots broke out in Calcutta. Within forty eight hours more

than 4,000 people were killed and numerous injured. The military brought lawlessness under control and once again peace was restored in the country. Attlee was in a great hurry to decide things as he was afraid that the civil disobedience movement may not spring up again, if the British failed to establish soon an Indian Government at the Center. He ordered the Viceroy to form an Interim Government, which was sworn in on September 2, 1946.

With the swearing in of the Interim Government the axe of Defence of India Rules hanging over the Press since 1942 was removed. But as the gulf between Muslim League and Congress widened, the country was soon to be divided into two as India and Pakistan. Communal riots broke out almost in all parts of the country. To meet the situation the Provincial Governments had to enact certain Legislatures and issued ordinances. The following were some of the Laws enacted during 1947:

- (I) The Central Press (Special Powers) Act 1947
- (II) The Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act 1947
- (III) The Bihar Maintenance of Public Order 1947
- (IV) The Bengal Special Powers Act 1947
- (V) The Bombay Public Security Measures Act 1947
- (VI) The C.P. & Berar Public Safety Act 1947
- (VII) The Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act 1947
- (VIII) The Punjab Public Safety Act 1947
- (IX) The U.P. Maintenance of Public Order (Temporary) Act 1947

No doubt the circumstances prevalent in the country forced the Government to pass such stringent Acts which imposed restrictions on the press, but the Government was conscious of the fact that in a free country the press should enjoy full freedom. In March 1947, the Government appointed an Enquiry Committee to look into the Press Laws in force in the country.

The same year on August 15, the country was declared a Free Democratic Republic, though it had to be divided into India and Pakistan. The Congress which had hitherto been fighting for a free and unitary India also accepted the partition of the country. The "Union Jack" which had been flying over the Government buildings for more than two centuries was replaced by the Tri-color. A heavy price had to be paid to win freedom. About 600,000 persons died in the communal riots of 1947; 14,000,000 were driven from their homes and 100,000 Young girls were kidnapped on both sides of India and Pakistan.

The freedom, the charter of which was first written by the editors of the country, was no doubt won but the press was still fettered. The Enquiry Committee of 1947 was working to find out the Acts and Rules which were meant to suppress the voice of the editors.

The new Constitution of Free India came into force on January 26, 1950. On the recommendations of the Enquiry Committee and under Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression, the following Central and State Acts were repealed:

CENTRAL ACTS:

1. The Indian States (Protection against disaffection) Act 1922.

2. The Press (Emergency Powers) Act 1931, XXXIII of 1931.
3. The Foreign Relations Act 1932 (XII of 1932).
4. The Indian States (Protection) Act 1934 (XV of 1935).

STATE ACTS:

1. The Hyderabad Press and Printing Establishment Act.
2. The Madhya Bharat Press (Emergency Powers) Act 1950.
3. The Mysore Press and Newspapers Act 1940.
4. The Patiala and East Punjab States Union Press (Emergency Powers) Ordinance.
5. The Rajasthan Press Control Ordinance 1949.

Provisions in the following Acts regarding printing, publication or distribution of any newspapers, news sheets or book whether by providing for the pre-censorship or for the demand of security from the printer or publisher, were declared void:

1. The Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1947 (V of 1947).
2. The Bihar Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1949 (III of 1950).
3. The Bombay Public Security Measures Act 1947 (VI of 1947).
4. The Madhya Pradesh Security Measures Act, 1950 (XXIII of 1950).
5. The Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1949 (XXIII of 1949).
6. The Orissa Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1950 (X of 1950).
7. The West Bengal Security Act, 1950 (XIX of 1950).
8. The United States of Gwalior, Indore and Malwa (Madhya Bharat) Maintenance of Public Order Act (VII of 1949).
9. The Patiala and East Punjab States Union Public Safety Ordinances.

10. The Rajasthan Public Security Ordinance, 1949 (XXVI of 1949).
11. The Saurashtra Public Safety Measures Ordinances (IX of 1948).
12. The Travancore-Cochin Safety Measures Act, 1950 (V of 1950).
13. The Bhopal State Public Safety Act, 1947 (V of 1947).

The repeal and amendment of the above mentioned Acts shows that in all the provinces the restrictions were removed and the press felt free all over the country. After a continuous struggle of about two centuries and after undergoing numerous trials and tribulations the press got a clear victory over the Government. In a free India, Dr. B.V. Keskar, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting declared in a Parliamentary debate,

"The Government should think ten times before it did anything which would impinge on the freedom of the press."⁷

Justice Bhagwati of Indian Supreme Court while giving judgement in the case, Express Newspapers vs. Union of India, gave a verdict which says in part:

It would certainly not be legitimate to subject the press to laws which take away or abridge the freedom of speech and expression or which would curtail circulation and thereby narrow the scope of dissemination of information or fetter its freedom to choose its means of exercising the right or would undermine its independence by driving it to seek government aid. Laws which single out the press for laying upon it excessive and prohibitive burdens which would restrict the circulation, impose a penalty on its rights to choose the instruments for its exercise or to seek an alternative media, prevent newspapers from being started and ultimately drive the press to seek government aid in order to survive, would therefore be struck down as unconstitutional.⁸

1. Nehru. Toward Freedom, B, p. 388.
2. Nehru. Toward Freedom, p. 395.
3. Gandhi. op. cit. p. 474.
4. Mosley, Leonard. The Last Days of the British Raj. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, p. 24.
5. Ibid. pp. 27 - 28.
6. Mosley. op. cit., p. 29.
7. ———. "Freedom Defended", I.P.I. Report, Vol. 9, No. 7, (November 1960), 13.
8. Express Newspapers vs. Union of India. (1958), S.C.J., 1113 at 1116.

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