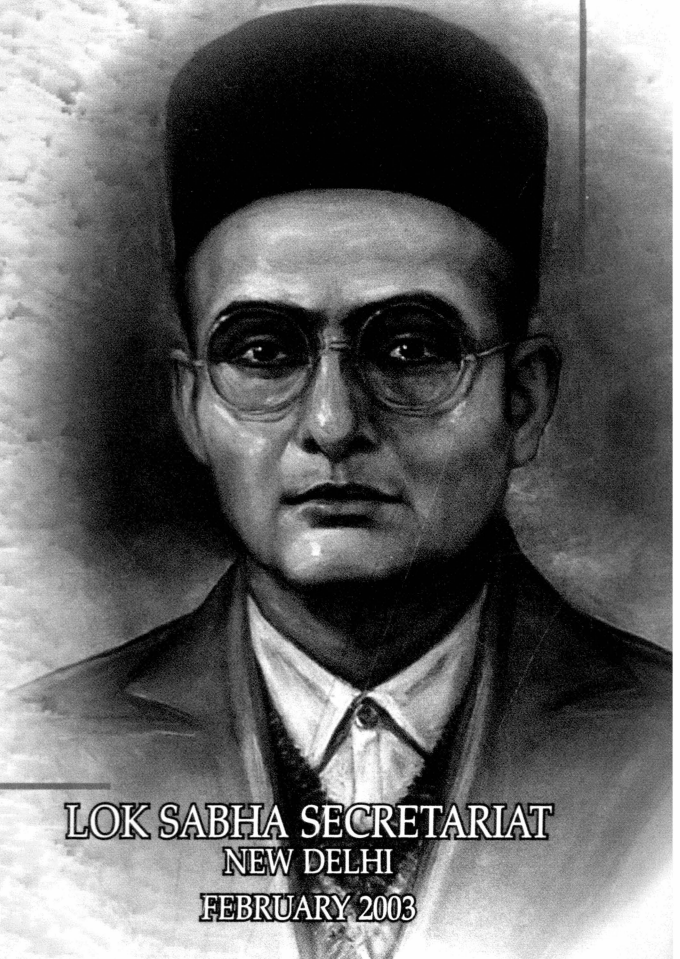


Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
FEBRUARY 2003

SWATANTRYAVEER
VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

FEBRUARY 2003

© 2003 LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

Published under Rule 382 of the *Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha* (Tenth Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A., Saraswati Marg, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110 005.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	(i)
<i>SWATANTRYAVEER</i> VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR — A PROFILE	(v)
Early days	1
Strategy for national liberation	2
Mustering international support	3
His arrest and extradition	3
Savarkar's dream state	4
A committed social reformer	6
His economic thinking	6
Savarkar, the rationalist	7
His literary achievements	8
An inspiring revolutionary	9
<i>SWATANTRYAVEER</i> VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR —A PICTORIAL PROFILE	11

PREFACE

Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a versatile personality who has been a source of inspiration for generations of Indians. He was a committed revolutionary, renowned freedom fighter, eminent political thinker, devoted social and religious reformer, prolific writer and poet, and a rationalist philosopher. A grateful nation honours the memory of *Veer* Savarkar on 26 February 2003 when the Hon'ble President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam will unveil his portrait in Parliament House. To mark the occasion, the Lok Sabha Secretariat is bringing out this booklet containing the profile of *Veer* Savarkar and some select photographs. The profile is based on published sources relating to the life and times of Shri Savarkar.

We are deeply beholden to the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri Manohar Joshi for his benign guidance in organizing this function. We are thankful to Capt. Anand J. Bodas, Executive President, *Swatantryaveer Savarkar Rashtriya Smarak*, Mumbai for donating the portrait of Shri Savarkar, which has been painted by Smt. Chandrakala K. Kadam.

This publication is a humble tribute to the indomitable leader that *Veer* Savarkar was. We hope it will be found useful and informative by all.

New Delhi,
19 February, 2003

G.C. MALHOTRA,
Secretary-General,
Lok Sabha

SWATANTRYAVEER
VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

- A Profile -

Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was, as the epithet aptly describes, a brave and die-hard patriot. His love for the Motherland runs through all facets of his personality — from a valiant freedom fighter, to enthusiastic social reformer, to prolific writer, to fiery orator. A devout nationalist, he devoted his entire life to the service of Mother India.

Early days

Shri Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was born on 28 May 1883 at Bhagur, a village near Nasik. His parents, Shri Damodarpant and Smt. Radhabai belonged to a middle class family. He joined the village school at the age of six. Vinayak grew up listening to passages read out by his father from the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and Ballads and *Bakhars* on Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji and the Peshwas. He was a voracious reader and read any book or newspaper from cover to cover, page to page. An inborn genius that he was, Savarkar had a rare talent in poetry and his poems were published by well-known newspapers when he was hardly ten.

Even as a young boy, Vinayak was very conscious of the sufferings of people. Thus, he was emotionally stirred by the miseries caused by famine and plague. To add to this was the harsh treatment and excesses committed by the British Raj. In such an atmosphere, the assassination of two British Plague Commissioners by the Chapekar brothers in Poona on 22 June 1897 and the subsequent execution of Damodarpant Chapekar disturbed the young Savarkar. He took a vow in front of Goddess Durga, of sacrificing his nearest and dearest, to fulfil the incomplete mission of the martyred Chapekar. He vowed to drive out the British from his Motherland and to make her free and great once again. Ever since, Savarkar earnestly strove to spread this mission of his life.

In 1901, Savarkar married Yamunabai. They had three children—two daughters and one son. One of the daughters died in her infancy.

Earlier in 1899, when he was just 16 years old, Savarkar formed *Mitra Mela*, a group whose principal aim was to attain the

complete political independence of India. The name of the group was later changed to *Abhinava Bharat*. It had a close resemblance to the 'Young Italy' movement of Guiseppe Mazzini and that of the revolutionary societies in Russia. Hundreds of young men joined the organisation. *Vihari*, a Marathi weekly, became its mouth-piece with major contributions from Savarkar. Savarkar urged his countrymen to despise everything that was English and to abstain from purchasing foreign goods. On his inspiration, many students daringly performed bonfire of foreign clothes. Followers of the *Abhinava Bharat* were determined to achieve Independence and were not averse to the idea of armed revolution, if required. Savarkar justified this course of action thus: "Whenever the natural process of national and political evolution is violently suppressed by the forces of wrong, then revolution must step in as a natural reaction and therefore ought to be welcomed as the only effective instrument to re-enthroned Truth and Right." He further said: "You rule by bayonets and under these circumstances it is a mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when no constitution exists at all...Only because you deny us a gun, we pick up a pistol."

Alongside his political work, Savarkar pursued his academic career as well. With recommendations of Lokmanya Tilak and Shivram Pant Paranjpe, Savarkar applied for scholarship for higher studies in London. He left for London in 1906 and continued his mission there also. The same year, he started the *Free India Society*. The India House in London witnessed overflowing Lecture Halls on weekly Sunday meetings. In these meetings, Savarkar delivered speeches on the history of Italy, France and America and the revolutionary struggle they had to undergo. A host of young people came under Savarkar's influence during this period; prominent among them were Bhai Parmanand, Lala Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, V.V.S. Aiyar, Revabhai Rana, Gyanchand Varma, Madame Cama, P.M. Bapat, M.P.T. Acharya, W.V. Phadke and Madanlal Dhingra.

Strategy for national liberation

According to Savarkar, the liberation of the Motherland was to be achieved by a preparation for war which included the teaching of *Swadeshi* and boycott of foreign goods; imparting national

education and creating a revolutionary spirit; and carrying patriotism into the rank of the military forces.

With clear indications of an imminent war in Europe, Savarkar wanted to utilize the opportunity. Savarkar and his *Abhinava Bharat* started writing, printing, packing and posting revolutionary literature. He wanted to impart military training to his comrades. A resolution demanding *Swaraj* was unanimously passed at a Conference held in December 1908. Conscious of the hardships that could follow, Savarkar warned his audience: "Before passing this resolution, just bring before your mind's eye the dreadful prison walls, and the dreary dingy cells". The resolution was passed unanimously.

Mustering international support

Savarkar was among the first Indian leaders who realised the importance of international support for India's freedom struggle. The Indian revolutionaries of *Abhinava Bharat* were in constant touch with the revolutionary forces of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China. Savarkar's aim was to organize a united anti-British front with a view to rising in revolt simultaneously against the British Empire. Savarkar wrote articles on Indian affairs in the *Gaelic America* of New York, got them translated into German, French, Italian, Russian and Portuguese languages and had them published. Savarkar deputed Madame Cama and Sardar Singh Rana to represent India at the International Socialist Congress which was held on 22 August 1907 at Stuttgart in Germany. He had also been a staunch supporter of the idea of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. He won the sympathies of the Irishmen serving in Scotland Yard, who actually helped the Indian revolutionaries in smuggling political literature.

His arrest and extradition

Though Savarkar passed the final examination at the Gray's Inn, the Benches of his Inn refused to call Savarkar to the Bar. They wanted him to give a written undertaking that he would never participate in politics. Savarkar rejected their offer.

Savarkar's activities finally led to his arrest in March 1910. While being extradited to India, he made the famous escape through the port-holes of the steamer into the sea and reached the shore off Marseilles in France. However, he was recaptured. Influenced by world-wide public opinion in favour of him, the French Government demanded that Savarkar be returned to France. However, the Hague International Tribunal passed a judgment in favour of the British Government. At the young age of 27, he was sentenced to two transportations for life and imprisoned in Andamans. The life in prison (1911-1924) was one of untold hardships.

Due to the restrictions imposed on him after release from jail, Savarkar became less active. Savarkar was elected President of the Hindu Mahasabha Session at Ahmedabad in 1937. For five successive years thereafter, he presided over the Mahasabha Sessions. With independence round the corner, he vehemently spoke against partition. Just two days prior to 26 January 1950, when India was to become a Republic, Savarkar issued a statement saying: "Let us sink our petty squabbles over provincialities, personalities and party platforms on that day and proclaim our national victory to the world. Let us first consolidate what we have already got and follow courageously the policy of tit for tat to all outsiders concerned and all will go well with us".

Savarkar's dream state

Savarkar was of the view that a nation is a group of mankind which is bound together by some or all of the common ties such as common religion and culture, common history and traditions, common literature and consciousness of common rights and wrongs, occupying a territory of geographical unity, and aspiring to form a political unit. Savarkar was for Hindu-Muslim unity and visualized a non-sectarian State.

In his Presidential Address at the Hindu Mahasabha Session in 1937 at Ahmedabad, Savarkar declared:

Let the Indian state be purely Indian. Let it not recognise any invidious distinctions whatsoever as regards the franchise, public

services, offices, taxation on the grounds of religion and race. Let no cognizance be taken whatsoever, of man's being Hindu or Mohammedan, Christian or Jew. Let all citizens of that Indian State be treated according to their individual worth irrespective of their religious or racial percentage in the general population. Let that language and script be the national language and script of that Indian state which are understood by the overwhelming majority of the people as happens in every other state in the world, that is, in England or the United States of America and let no religious bias be allowed to tamper with that language and script with an enforced and perverse hybridism whatsoever. Let 'one man one vote' be the general rule irrespective of caste or creed, race or religion.

Savarkar's India would have unbounded faith in a World Commonwealth as his political philosophy conceived that the Earth is the Common Motherland and humanism 'the patriotism of man, but his India would not go under during the process which leads to the welding of humanity into a World Commonwealth. In international politics, Savarkar's India would help to build world peace and prosperity. Nationalism, according to him, was but an inevitable step towards the goal of humanity and Pan-Human State.

Savarkar's vision of India was one in which all citizens would have equal rights and obligations irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion, provided they avow and owe an exclusive and devoted allegiance to the State. All minorities were to be given effective safeguards to protect their language, religion, culture, etc. but none of them would be allowed to create a State within a State or to encroach upon the legitimate rights of the majority. Further, the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, of worship, of association, etc. were to be enjoyed by all citizens alike. In the event of any restriction imposed, the interest of public peace and order or national emergency would be the guiding principle. There would be joint electorates and 'one man one vote' would be the general rule. Services would go by merit alone. Primary education would be free and compulsory. *Nagari* would be the national script, Hindi, the lingua franca and Sanskrit, the *Devabhasha* of India.

A committed social reformer

After his release from jail in 1924, Savarkar took up the task of social reform with full earnestness. He waged a war against casteism and untouchability and fervently wrote against the taboos regarding inter-caste marriages, sea-crossing and re-conversion. He carried on an intense propaganda in favour of mixed-caste schools through the Press and appealed to the authorities to set up such mixed-caste schools. In the event, he was able to ensure just, civic, humane and legitimate rights for 'untouchable' children and made them sit along with upper caste Hindu children in public schools.

Then came the question of temple entry for the 'untouchables'. The stand of the orthodox Hindus collapsed in the face of Savarkar's arguments. "He is not God who can be desecrated", he remarked. He transformed the Ganesh festival started by Tilak into a Pan-Hindu festival where the issue was discussed threadbare. Thanks to Savarkar's efforts, the Vithoba temple of Ratnagiri at last witnessed the historic entry of 'untouchables'. Later, the *Patit Pavan* temple was constructed which became the centre of Pan-Hindu activities.

Savarkar fearlessly and whole-heartedly supported Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle for liberation of the 'untouchables'. Removal of untouchability, he maintained, implied purification and salvation of misguided orthodox 'touchables' also. Savarkar distributed sacred threads among the so-called 'untouchable' Hindus and declared: "The people who regard untouchability which has been a disgrace to humanity as a part of their religion are really the fallen people". As part of his efforts, he successfully organised *Sahabhojan*, the first Pan-Hindu dinner. At the same time, Savarkar urged the 'untouchables' not to abandon their occupations as every occupation had its value. Along with his supporters, he visited the slums and towns where the 'untouchables' lived, guided them, and worshipped with them.

His economic thinking

Even though Savarkar realized the importance of the economy, he maintained that "the attempt to interpret all human history and human activities in economical terms alone is altogether one-sided and amounts to maintaining that man has no other urge in

him to live but hunger." Savarkar suggested a few broad principles of economic policy which included: every effort will be made to reinvigorate the peasantry and the working class and the villages which are their cradle; national capital is under the present circumstances mainly individual and indispensable for the development of national industry and manufacture, it also will receive due encouragement and recompense but the interests of both the capital and labour will be subordinated to the requirement of the nation as a whole; some of the key industries or manufactures and such other items may be altogether nationalized, if the Government can afford to do so and conduct them more efficiently than private enterprise can do; in some cases, the Government may take over the land and introduce State cultivation if it can serve to train up the peasant class as a whole with the use of big machines and agriculture on a large and scientific scale; all strikes or lockouts which are obviously meant or inevitably tend to undermine and cripple national industry or production in general or are calculated to weaken the economic strength of the nation as a whole must be referred to State arbitration and get settled or in serious cases quelled; private property must in general be held inviolate and in no case there should be on the part of the State any expropriation of such property without reasonable recompense; and every step must be taken by the State to protect national industries against foreign competition.

Savarkar, the rationalist

Savarkar's outlook was absolutely modern, scientific and secular. He wrote: "Let an earthquake occur, public prayer is our remedy. Let a patriot fall ill, we go to attend a crowded prayer-meeting. Let a pestilence ravage our land, and we kill goats in sacrifice to ward off the calamity. It was quite all right when we did not know the causes of such things, but to stick to these superstitions even when science has revealed the cause of such calamities is simply absurd." He wanted to promote the principles of science in every activity of human life. He observed:—

Machine has made it possible for man stay beneath water, rise high up in the sky. Machine has made man far-reaching, far-seeing, far-speaking and far-hearing. Machine has conferred upon man blessings

which no prophets could give or no penance could secure. Mankind owes its present civilization entirely to the use of machine, and thus machine, far from being a curse, is a wonderful boon which has bestowed supernatural powers upon this human race!

His literary achievements

Savarkar's literary works were marked with vigour, sublimity and idealism. His poetic qualities were evident in the following verse which he recited in one of his melancholy moments in London: "Take me O Ocean! Take me to my native shores. Thou promised me to take me home. But thee coward, afraid of thy mighty master, Britain, thou has betrayed me. But mind, my mother is not altogether helpless. She will complain to sage Agasti and in a draught he will swallow thee as he did in the past". Being deeply influenced by the philosophy of Guissepe Mazzini, Savarkar translated his autobiography into Marathi. The impact of the book was such that the book suffered proscription for forty years.

While in the Cellular Jail in Andamans, in the absence of any writing material, he etched his poems on the walls of his cell. The collection of his poems are aptly named as *Wild Flowers*. Though complete in themselves, *Kamala*, *Gomantak*, *Saptarshi*, *Virahochhvas* and *Mahasagara* are parts of the incomplete epic. His other poems, *Chain*, *Cell*, *Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath*, *Oh Sleep*, and *On Death Bed* have a philosophical basis.

Savarkar's renowned work *Hindutva* was written in Ratnagiri jail under his pen-name *Mahratta*. The book defines the principles of Hindu nationalism at length. During his internment at Ratnagiri, he wrote another of his famous books, *Hindu Pad-Padshahi*. Savarkar's book *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* became the source of inspiration for many revolutionaries. The book was proscribed even before it was published. Savarkar managed to get the book printed in Holland. It later reached India, America, Japan and China wrapped in covers with fictitious names. Leaders of the Ghadar Party, drawing inspiration from the book, raised the Komagatamaru Rebellion. Bhagat Singh and his colleagues brought out an underground edition in 1928. According to N.C. Kelkar, "All the writings of Savarkar are like

leaps through arches fixed with knives and blazing torches turned inside." The book Savarkar worked the longest on was *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* which has nearly a thousand references. He also wrote *My Transportation for Life*, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan* and *An Echo from Andamans*.

One of Savarkar's notable contributions was that he introduced blank verse metre *Vainayak* into Marathi poetry. He also launched the movement for the purification of the Marathi language. His first play, *Usshap*, paved the way for struggle for the well-being and welfare of the depressed classes and strived to bury untouchability. His second play, *Sanyasta Khadga*, the "Foresaken Sword" was a devastating commentary on the doctrine of absolute non-violence, and preached that relative non-violence was a virtue. Another play of his was *Uttarakriya*. He also wrote the novels *Moplah Rebellion* and *Transportation*.

The history of the Sikhs fascinated Savarkar. He learnt *Gurmukhi* script, read *Adi Granth*, the *Panth Prakash*, the *Surya Prakash*, *Vichitra Natak* and other works on Sikhism. His pamphlet named *Khalsa* and many others issued in *Gurmukhi* educated the Sikh soldiers about the cause of freedom. He also composed a poem on Guru Gobind Singh. Savarkar held in high reverence the glorious martyrdom of Jesus Christ and also composed a poem on the crucified Christ.

An inspiring revolutionary

Towards the later years of his life, Savarkar's health deteriorated fast and he was almost confined to bed. He repeatedly requested doctors not to prolong his life. From 3 February 1966, he began his fast unto death. To the surprise of doctors, he survived for twenty-two days with little or no medicine, taking only five or six tea-spoonfuls of water every day. Ultimately, on 26 February 1966, at the age of 83, he breathed his last.

Shri C. Rajagopalachari once described Savarkar as a national hero, a symbol of courage, bravery and patriotism, an *abhitirth* in the long battle for freedom. In his tributes on the passing away

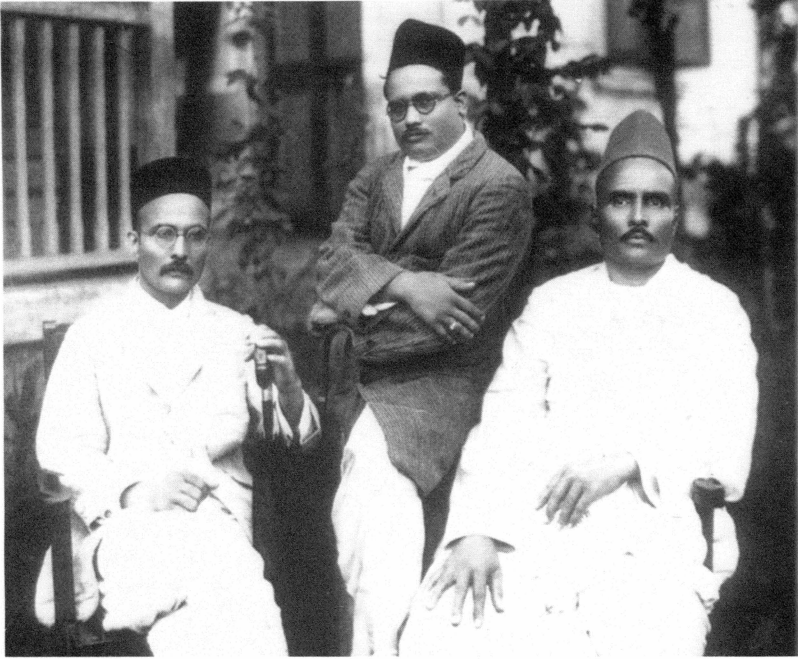
of *Veer Savarkar*, the then President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said that Savarkar was “a steady and sturdy worker for the Independence of our country... his career was for many a youngster a legendary one.” The then Vice-President Dr. Zakir Husain paid tributes to *Veer Savarkar* and said: “A great revolutionary as he was, he inspired many young men to work for the liberation of our Motherland”. Paying rich tributes to Savarkar, the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi said: “Savarkar was a great figure of contemporary India and his name is by-word for daring and patriotism. He was cast in a mould of a classic revolutionary and countless people drew inspiration from him”.

Veer Savarkar's life has always been and will ever remain an inspiration to generations of Indians.

SWATANTRYAVEER
VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR
- A Pictorial Profile -



Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar
A painting by Shrimati Chandrakala K. Kadam, Mumbai



Swatantryaveer Savarkar with his brothers Babarao Damodar Savarkar and Narayan Damodar Savarkar



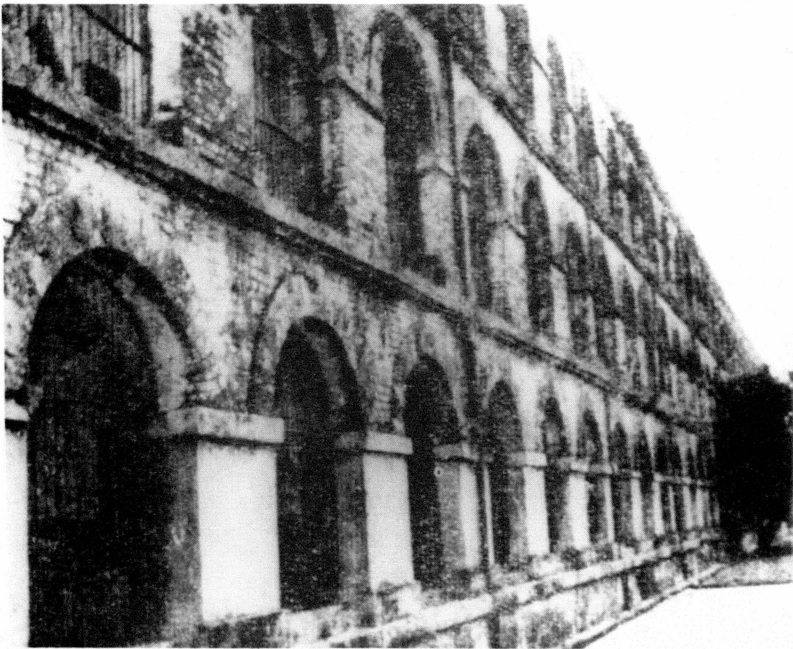
Family members of Savarkar



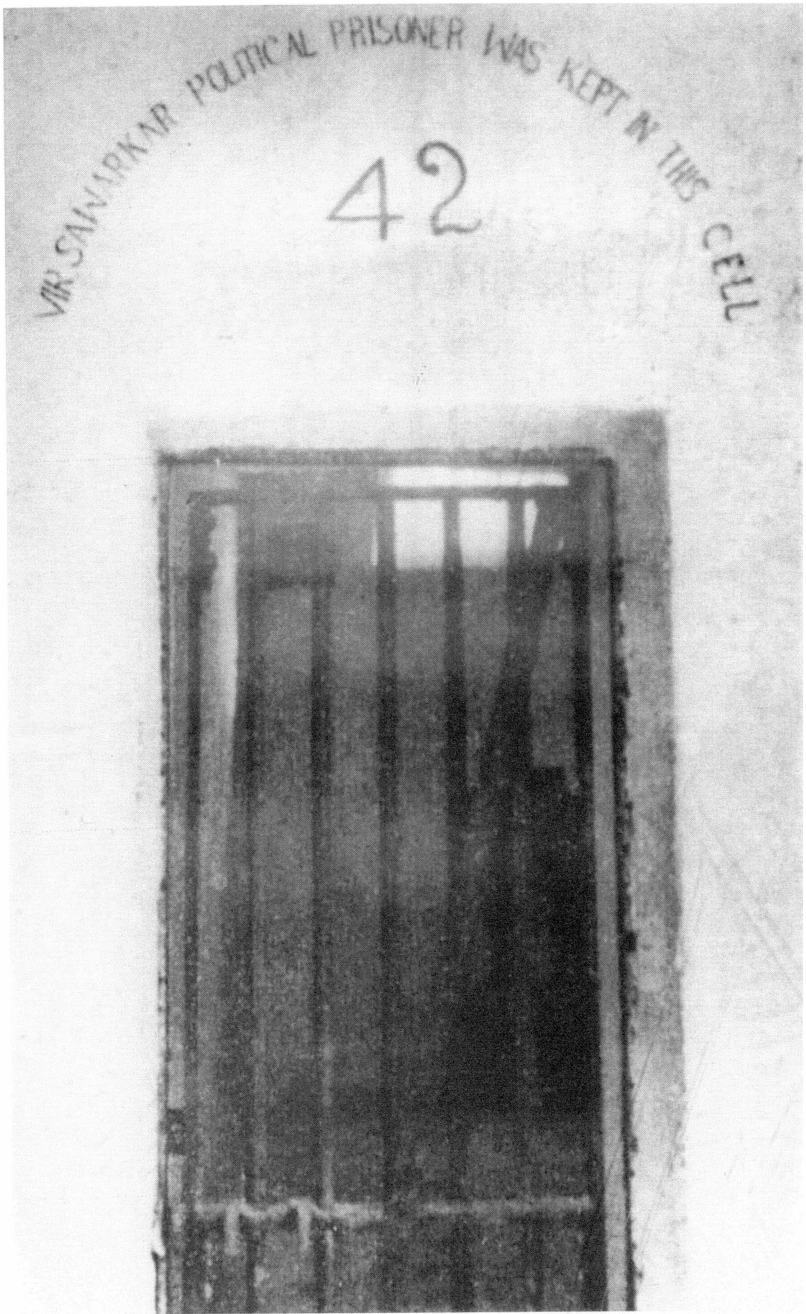
Veer Savarkar—The Fiery Orator



Savarkar at a Hindu Mahasabha Session



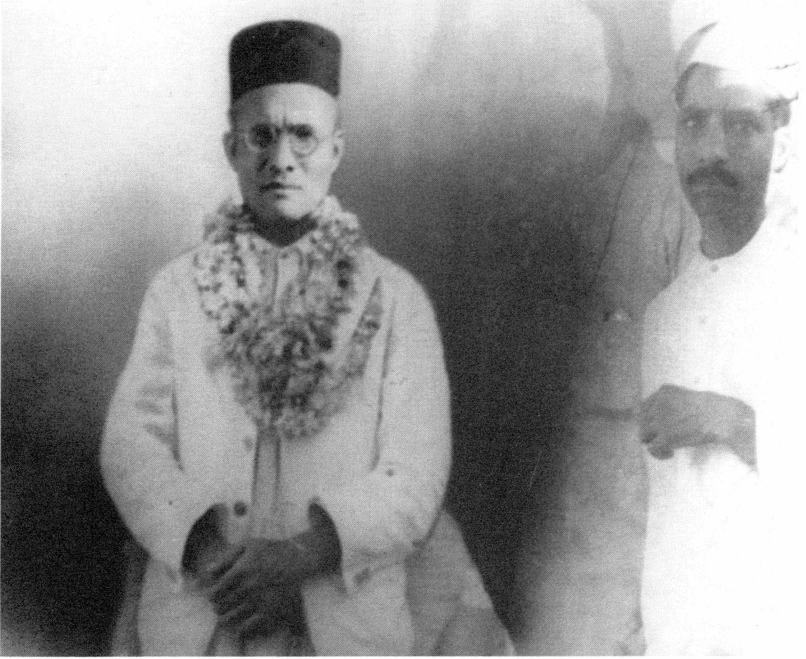
The Cellular Jail in Andamans where Savarkar was incarcerated



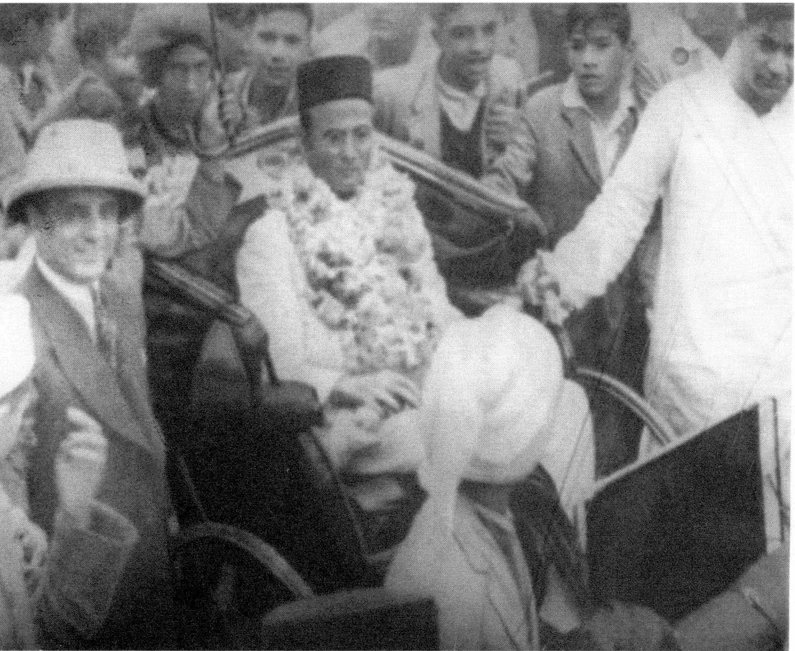
The Cell where Savarkar was incarcerated



*Veer Savarkar hoisting the flag at the Hindu Mahasabha
Session in Ahmedabad*



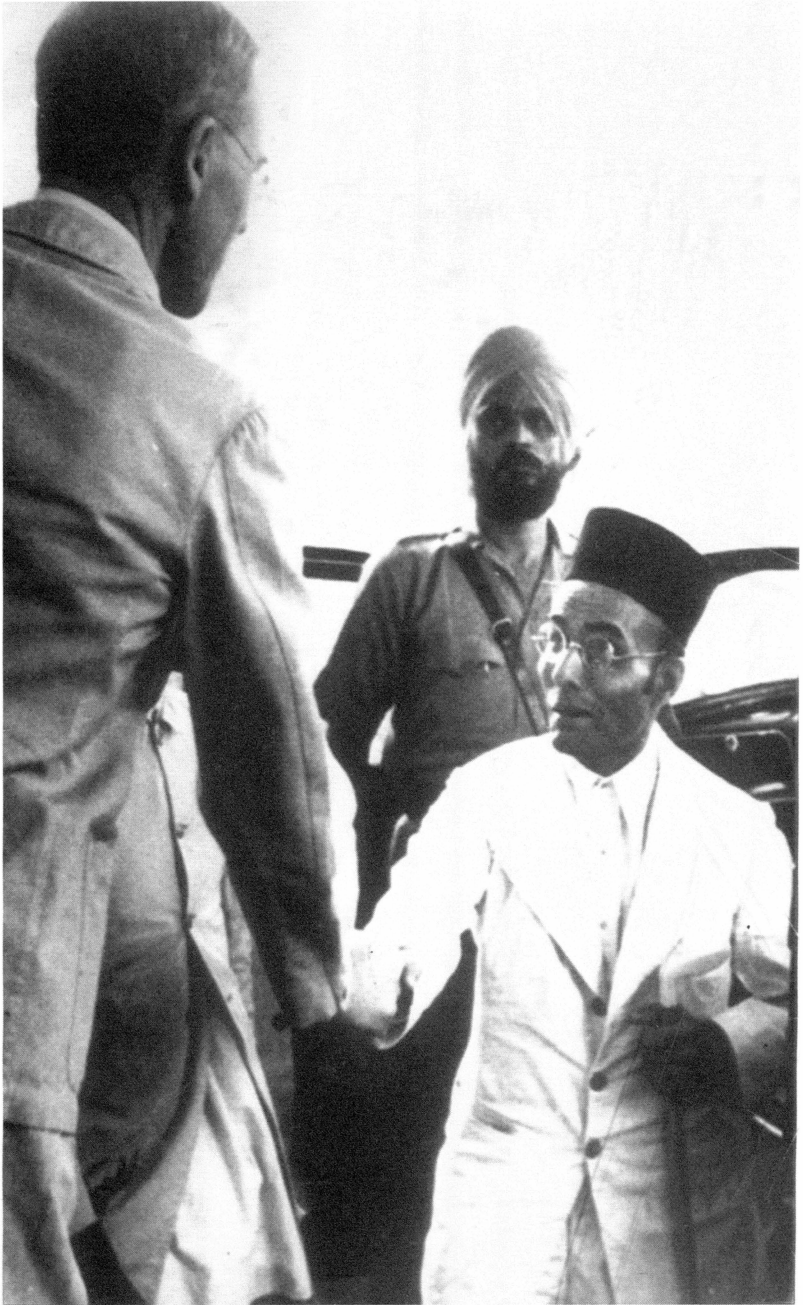
Savarkar on his arrival in Delhi on 3 October 1938



Savarkar proceeding to meet the Viceroy at Shimla on 10 July 1940



Savarkar with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose



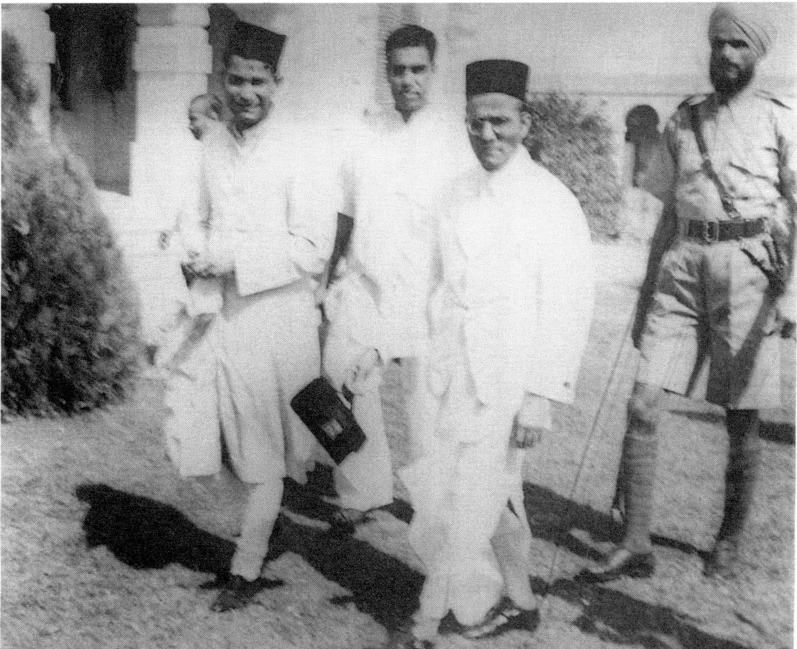
Savarkar with Sir Stafford Cripps



Savarkar with Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee



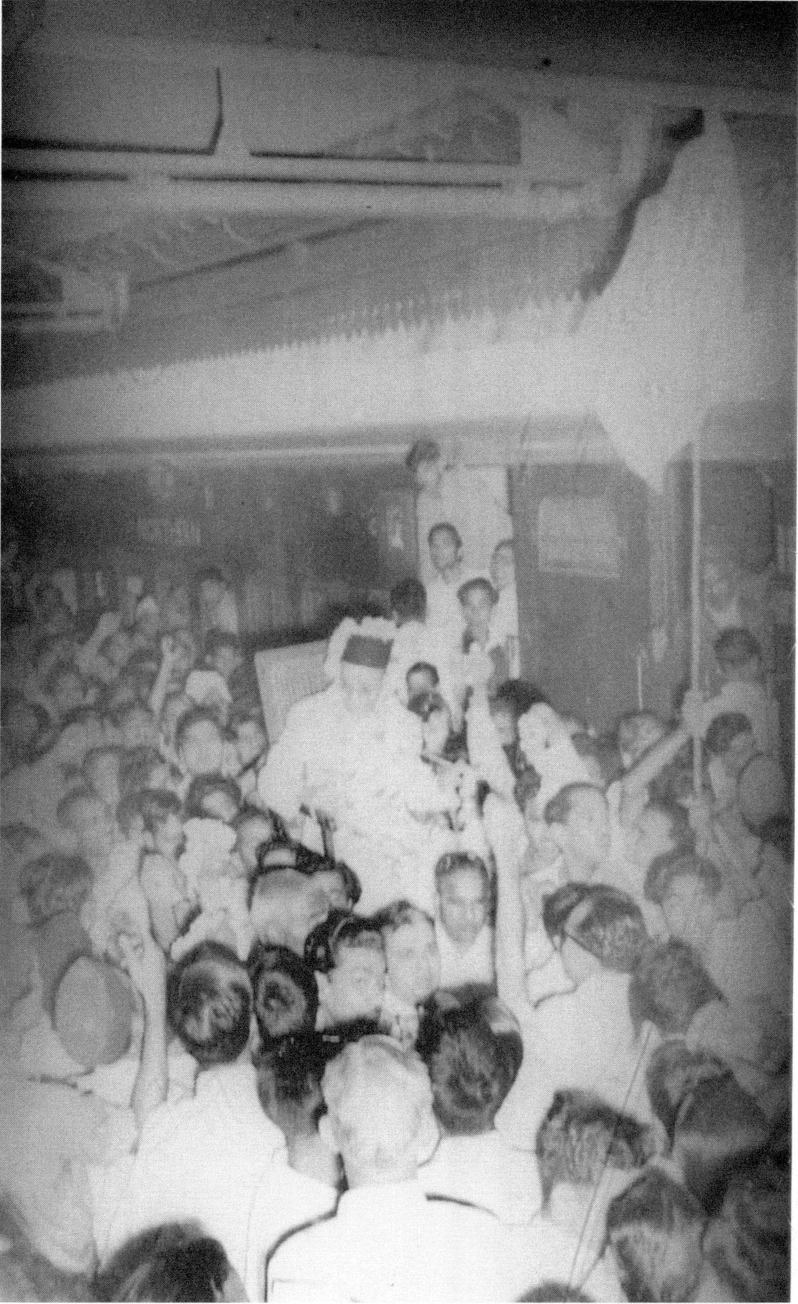
Savarkar with Maulana Azad



Savarkar with some of his supporters



Veer Savarkar addressing a function



Savarkar addressing a function in New Delhi on 11 May 1957
marking the Centenary of the 1857 War of Independence



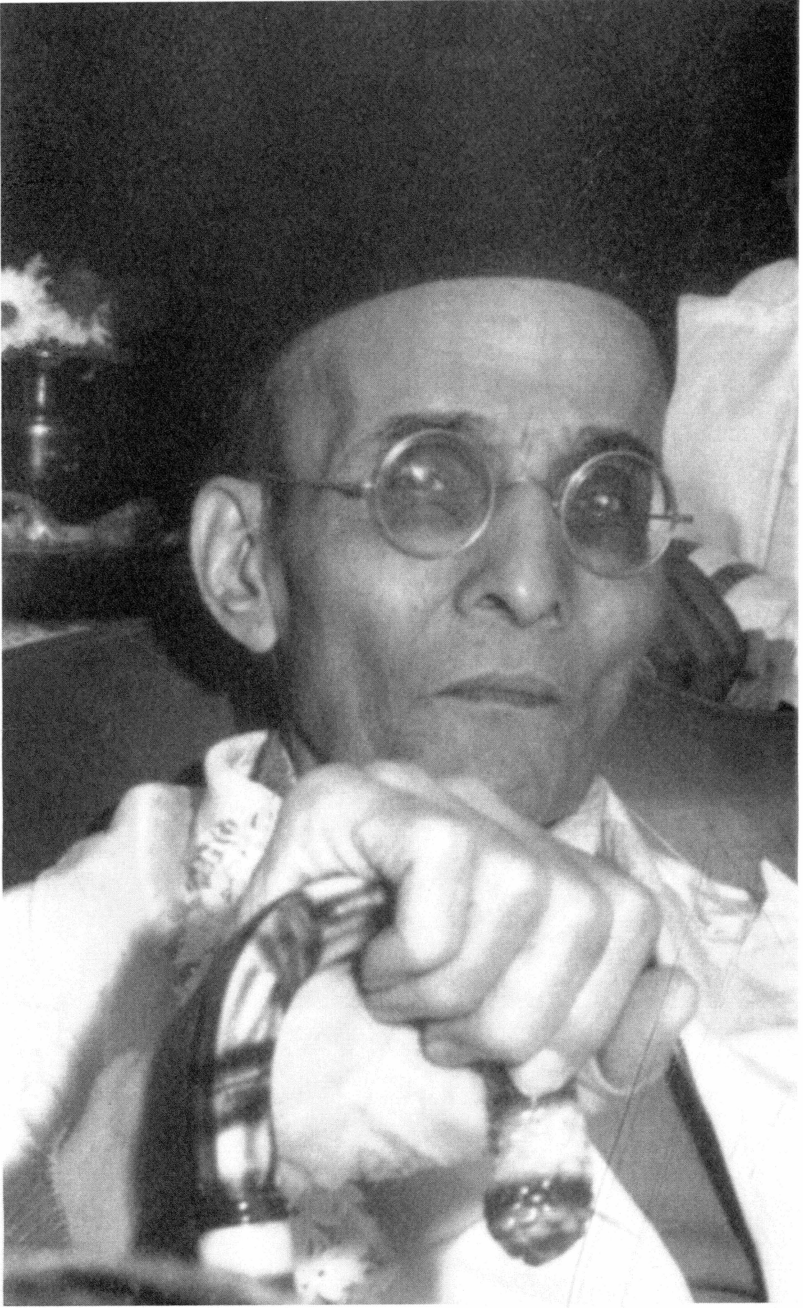
Veer Savarkar



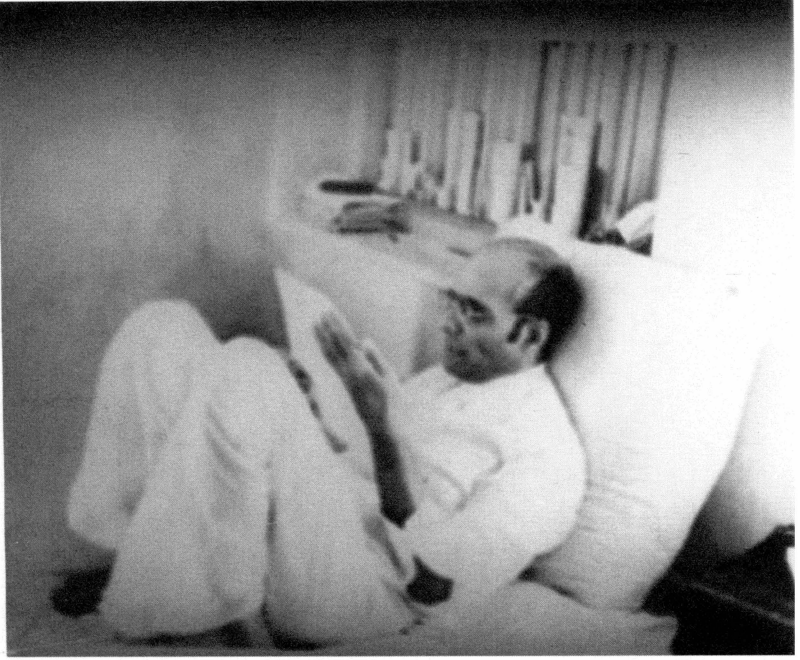
Veer Savarkar



Veer Savarkar



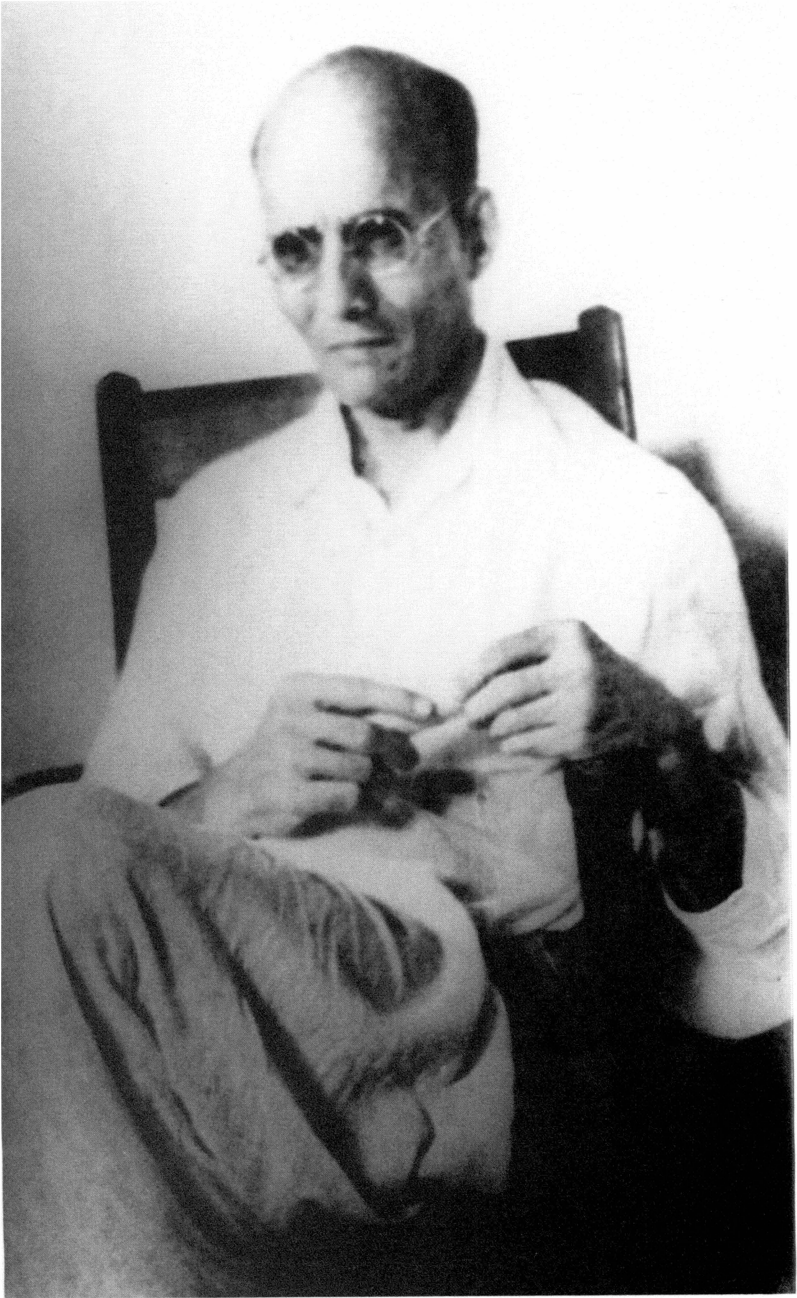
Veer Savarkar



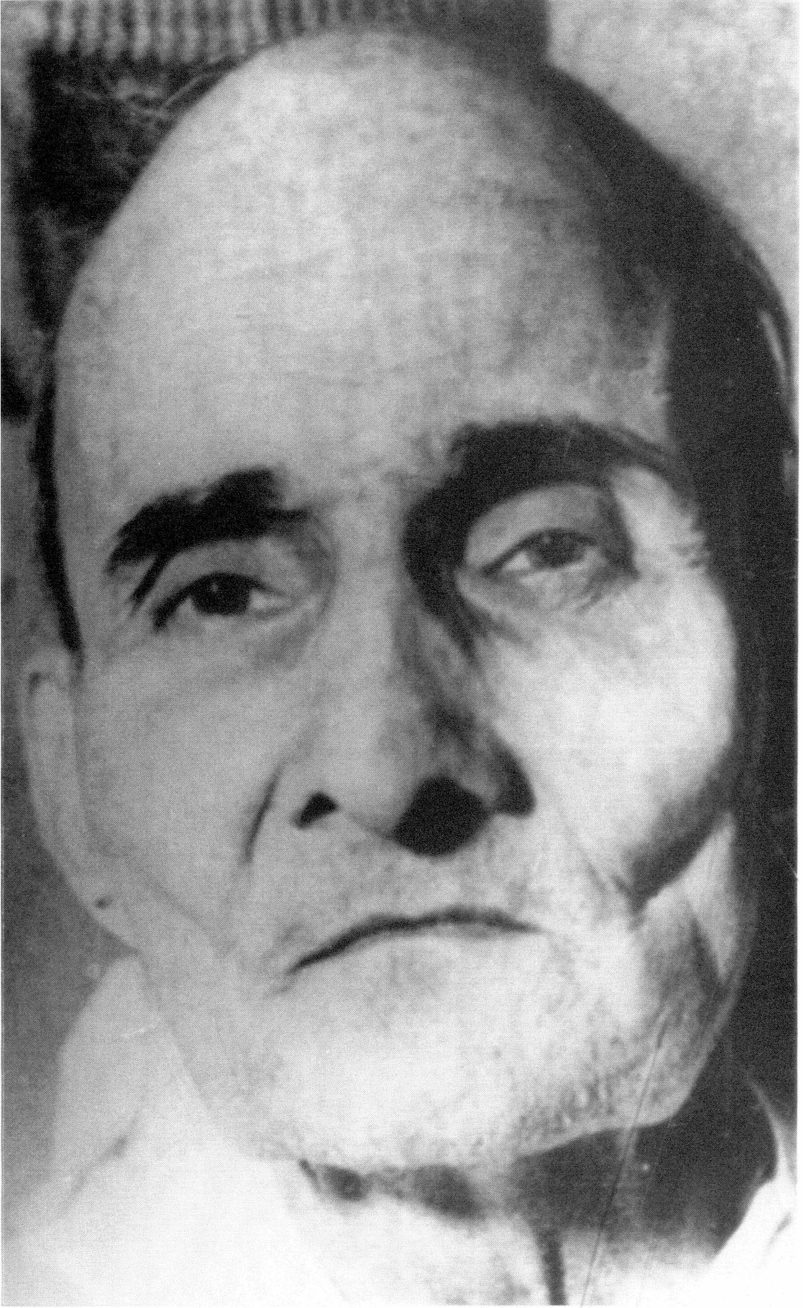
Veer Savarkar



Veer Savarkar



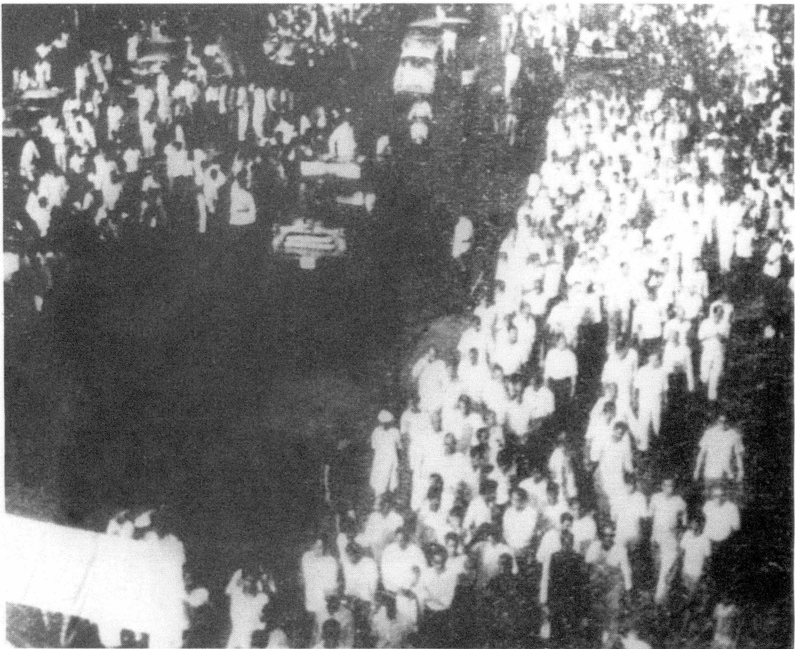
Handwritten signature
Veer Savarkar



Savarkar at age 80



Savarkar's funeral procession in Mumbai



Another photograph of Savarkar's funeral procession