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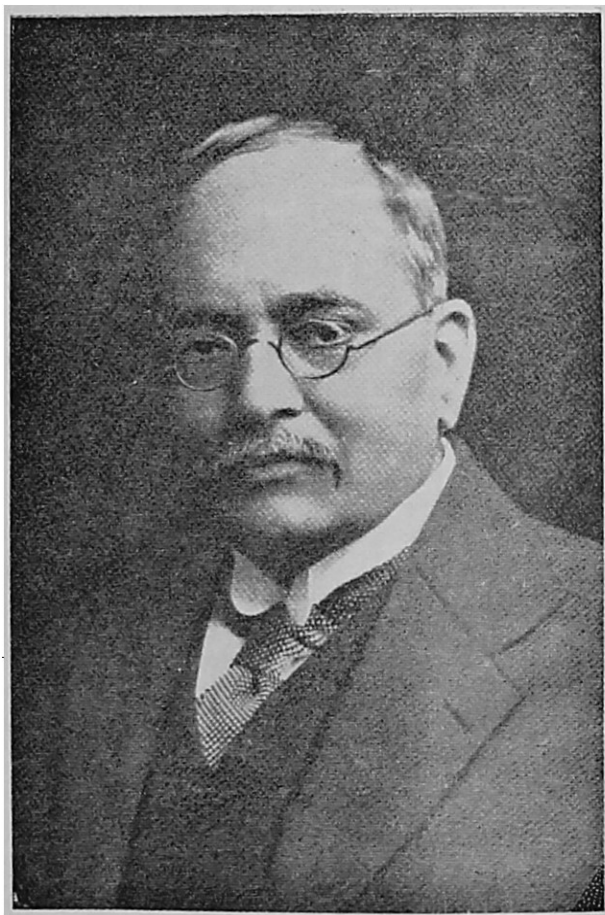
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GOKHALE
AND
MODERN INDIA



GOPAL KRISHNA GORHALE

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AND
MODERN INDIA

CENTENARY LECTURES

Edited by

A. B. Shah & S. P. Aiyar



MANAKTALAS; BOMBAY

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Foreword

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world 'This was a man'

—SHAKESPEARE

MOST LEADERS of thought and action who laid the foundations of contemporary India were born in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was therefore inevitable that the second half of the present century should be an age of centenaries of pioneers in different fields — social, political, economic, religious, literary and cultural. However, of all those whose centenaries the nation has celebrated since Independence or is planning to celebrate in the coming years, none perhaps is more worthy of grateful remembrance and emulation today than Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Teacher and educationist, statesman and economist, social reformer and a true Servant of India in the best sense of the word; without vanity of any kind and yet completely free from a pathological obsession with simplicity; modern but not estranged from his people; atheistic — at least, agnostic — and yet (or, therefore?) committed to truth without any subterfuge; devoted to his country's interests but neither a chauvinist nor lacking in moral courage when the occasion demanded frankness or, even, a public confession of error — Gokhale stands out in the fog of Indian politics as the most important exponent of reason in public life and liberalism as the basis of a modern, democratic welfare state. Perhaps

that is why his centenary did not receive the notice it deserved. He was too good, too rational and too democratic a leader to inspire men of a different faith, based on hero-worship, religious sentiment and naked pursuit of power in the name of high-sounding ideals.

But precisely this situation makes Gokhale all the more relevant today. The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom was therefore keen on having a fresh appraisal of his thought made by men who shared his values and were, by training and profession, competent to undertake it. I am grateful to three scholars, Dr S. K. Muranjan, Dr S. P. Aiyar and Dr T. M. Joshi for their willing acceptance of our invitation to deliver the three Centenary Lectures printed in this book. They are now being made available to the larger reading public, especially of the younger generation in politics, administration, voluntary organizations and the universities.

Bombay
October 2, 1966

A. B. SHAH
Executive Secretary
Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

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Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Frontispiece</i> | |
| <i>Foreword – A. B. Shah</i> | v |
| <i>Contributors</i> | vii |
| 1. INTRODUCTION – S. P. Aiyar | 1 |
| 2. SOCIAL IDEALS OF GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE – S. K. Muranjan | 15 |
| 3. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE – S. P. Aiyar | 27 |
| 4. ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE – T. M. Joshi | 69 |

GOD, GIVE US MEN!

• • • •

God, give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and
ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honour; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without
winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice sleeps.

Josiah Gilbert Holland

July 24, 1819 — October 12, 1881

ABOUT THE BOOK

Of all those whose centenaries the nation has celebrated since Independence or is planning to celebrate in the coming years, none perhaps is more worthy of grateful remembrance and emulation today than Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Teacher and educationist, statesman and economist, social reformer and a true Servant of India in the best sense of the word; without vanity of any kind and yet completely free from a pathological obsession with simplicity; modern but not estranged from his people; atheistic — at least, agnostic — and (or therefore?) committed to truth without any subterfuge; devoted to his country's interests but neither a chauvinist nor lacking moral courage when the occasion demanded frankness or, even, public confession of error — Gokhale stands out in the fog of Indian politics as the most important exponent of reason in public life; liberalism as the basis of a modern, democratic welfare state. These centenary lectures delivered under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, are examined in depth the outstanding features of Gokhale's thought and its relevance to our times.

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