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Voices of Indian Freedom Movement



J. C. JOHARI

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PREFACE

The Lahore Congress of 1929 set the trend of India's struggle for nothing short of complete independence. The pace of movement became quicker. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 made it very clear that Gandhiji had become the undisputed leader of the national organisation. The British rulers dishonoured the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact by arresting Gandhiji soon after his return from England at the Bombay port on 28 December, 1931 and placing a ban on the Indian National Congress in the following year that came to an end two years after. But it all failed to numb the zeal of the freedom fighters. The Congress found fault with many provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935 and yet it took part in the elections to the provincial legislative bodies with a view to demonstrate its popularity in the country as well as to prosecute the freedom struggle in the form of a fight to the finish by smashing the last colonial constitution dispensation. The Congress ministries could make remarkable achievements in the midst of several constraints imposed by the British rulers and all kinds of false and concocted allegations levelled by the Muslim League—the pampered child of British imperial genius.

The Second World War broke out in September, 1939. It brought about a fundamental change in the obtaining situation when the Muslim League in March, 1940 came forward with a demand for the creation of a separate and sovereign homeland of the Muslims. Taking stock of the worsening international situation, the Congress resolved to launch the Quit India Movement in 1942 that shook the foundations of the imperial rule. The war came to an end in 1945, but Britain as a shattered power thought it expedient to convert its policy of 'divide and rule' into the strategy of 'divide and quit'. The colonial powers played a very nefarious game as a result of which the country fell into the abyss of communal violence. In such a helpless situation the realistic leaders of the Indian National Congress thought it expedient to swallow the bitter pill of partition as that was the only practicable course left for them to save the body after amputating its diseased limbs.

Thus ends the story of our freedom struggle after leaving this strong impression that the character of the Indian National Congress changed in response to the obtaining situations from the partition of Bengal in 1905 to the partition of the country in 1947. Lord Curzon ignited the fire that provoked the zealous nationalists to take to the path of agitation by militant means. It is true that the line of the 'extremists' failed to make an immediate mark of its own on the pace of freedom struggle, it is equally true that in course of time it gathered more and more weight that could be tamed by Gandhiji who diverted it in the right direction. The non-cooperation movement of 1921-22 and the civil disobedience movement of 1930-31 marked the failure of the fight, but they definitely hinted at the success of the use of peculiar techniques of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* as evolved by the 'wisest physician of the country'. The tide of violence could not be stemmed in the Quit India Movement for which all blame should be laid on the British rulers who made the zealous nationalists leaderless by putting all great leaders behind the bars in a fit of unfounded apprehensions.

The matter relating to the story of India's freedom movement covers the role of the Indian National Congress ; it also covers important pronouncements and interpretations of the British statesmen, leaders and publicists. As such, I have put it in two parts. Part I has all necessary information relating to the role of the Indian National Congress, Part II has important readings representing the British point of view. I hope that my scheme would receive the appreciation of my readers who would find here much for the purpose of their advanced study or research in this important field of modern Indian history and politics. I have drawn material from numerous sources, Indian and foreign, according to my scheme and I offer my sincere gratitude to all of them. I am thankful to a large number of my friends for the help they extended to me in the completion of this project. In particular, I am thankful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out the volumes in a record time.

—J.C. Johari

INTRODUCTION

A brief survey of the rise and development of Indian nationalism shows that our anti-colonial struggle passed through different stages, each stage being higher than the previous one, until we achieved independence in 1947. However, the history of our anti-colonial struggle forms an integral part of the role of the Indian National Congress so much so that the two become the same in view of the patent fact that a movement for gradual constitutional reforms in the forms of self-rule within the Empire as initiated by the Founding Fathers of the national organisation saw its culmination in the final struggle for nothing short of full freedom. The call of Tilak for Swaraj as 'our birth-right' became for Gandhiji 'self-rule within the Empire if possible and without it if necessary', and ultimately became *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence) for Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash C. Bose. The Congress which was founded with a resolve to 'save the British Empire' ultimately resolved to save the Indian nation from the hold of British Empire.¹

1. Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya makes a fine observation: "The soil that was prepared by Macaulay in the thirties of the nineteenth century on the proud day in the annals of the British Empire when India would have self-government, the seed that was sown by W.C. Bonnerjee in 1885 to gather under one banner for different sub-nationalities of India, the plant that was nursed by the waters of 'Love and Service' poured out by Anand Mohan Bose in Madras in 1898, the tree that was christened 'Swaraj' by the Grand Old Man of India in 1906 in Calcutta, the flower that blossomed as Home Rule in 1917 at the hands of Mrs. Besant, the fruit that made its appearance as complete independence or *Purna Swaraj* with Jawaharlal Nehru the *Baghban*...all these marked the stages of fulfilment of the hope and the promise of sixty years in the formation of the Provisional National Government (the interim government) in 1946," *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 808-09.

The wave of extremism overtook in the wake of the present century when the new generation of the nationalist leaders came forward with a new resolve of *swaraj* (self-rule) having social, political, economic and spiritual ramifications.² Swaraj was no more a call for self-rule within the Empire as conceived by Hume and the Indian leaders like P.M. Mehta, W.C. Bonnerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji and Badruddin Tyabji. It involved something more. By taking inspiration from the great and glorious past of India, the leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab and B.C. Pal and Sri Aurobindo of Bengal widened the scope of the movement by laying stress on using *swadeshi* (indigenous) goods, acquiring Indian education, admiring Indian civilisation and culture, and, above all, by adopting agitational techniques for the fulfilment of their aims. The boycott of foreign goods meant the boycott of everything foreign including goods of consumption, system of administration, education and culture. This movement brought about a change in the course of our nationalist struggle, since it "could rouse among the people a militant determination to win swaraj."³ The nation learnt that the only effective guarantee against misrule was the vigorous assertion of its will and thereby this movement became the fore-runner of Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement. A foreign commentator thus rightly says that Tilak "left for Gandhi a philosophy of struggle because long back him, he (Tilak) had set before the nation the whole programme of non-cooperation."⁴

2. It is quite evident from these words of B.C. Pal : "It is not merely an economic movement, though it openly strives for the economic reconstruction of the country. It is not a mere political movement, though it has boldly declared itself for absolute political independence. It is an immensely spiritual movement having as an object not simply the development of economic life or the attainment of political freedom, but really the emancipation in every sense of the term, of the Indian manhood and womanhood." Cited in Haridas and Uma Mukherji : *India's Fight for Freedom*, pp 198-99.

3. A.R. Desai : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 331.

4 T.L Shay : *The Legacy of Lokmanya*, p. xx.

The course of our nationalist struggle underwent a fundamental change when Gandhiji denounced the British rule as 'Satanic' in 1919 and gave the call for complete non-cooperation to the foreign rulers. It boldly demonstrated that our anti-colonial struggle had taken the form of a secular struggle in which the Hindus and the Muslims had a common stake. It became clear that by all means the national movement had become a mass movement. It revealed that the political consciousness, that was once confined to the westernised educated class hailing from the upper section of the Indian society and then percolated to the middle class intelligentsia, had now covered the masses under the unique leadership of a person whom people reverentially called 'Mahatma'. Gandhiji's call for complete non-cooperation to the British rulers for winning Swaraj 'within a year' had an electrical effect on the people who took it as a matter of faith. Soon it appeared that the Mahatma was riding on the crest of a wave and had no obstacles to encounter as "his asceticism, his simple life, his vegetarian diet, his adherence to truth and his consequent fearlessness all combined to give him a halo of saintliness."⁵

Not the fight, though the movement failed. Swaraj could not be gained within a year. The whole thesis of non-cooperation was criticised by those who were not prepared to digest the idea of India's complete separation from Britain, or who had certain misgivings about the efficaciousness of the technique of non-violence. As a matter of fact, the whole controversy was centred on the implications of Swaraj and the ways of achieving it.⁶ Those who differed from the

5. S.C. Bose : *Indian Struggle*, p. 162. While paying his tribute to Gandhiji, Prof. Ernest Barker says : "He will be remembered as one of the very few who have set the stamp of an idea on an epoch ; that idea is non-violence." See his paper in S. Radhakrishnan (ed) : *Mahatma Gandhi : Essays and Recollections*, p. 294

6. It is a fact that the leading Congressmen, though crying for Swaraj, were not very clear about the real meaning of this term. While supporting the resolution for the achievement of Swaraj by the people of

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way of Gandhiji came to be known as the 'pro-changers' and had their own path that appeared in the form of the Swaraj Party led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. They adopted the peculiar strategy of 'walk in and walk out' by entering the reformed Legislative Councils with a resolve to break the alien rule from within. They could make some mark in the elections of 1923, but after the death of Das in 1925 the whole machinery went out of gear. The results of the election in 1926 demonstrated that the "gilt was off the ginger bread."⁷ The whole policy as well as the tactics of the Swarajists were ridiculed by their critics in different ways despite the fact that the Secretary of State Lord Birkenhead called it as India's well-organised and disciplined political party. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru described them as 'peripetetic patriots' or 'men of patriotism in locomotion' who failed to achieve anything more than to prove that the constitutional reforms

India by all legitimate and peaceful means as conceived by Gandhiji, Lala Lajpat Rai at the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1920 came forward with an explanation that this word was deliberately chosen for its ambiguity in order to enable the Indians to remain within the projected commonwealth or to leave it according to their own preference' See Daniel Argov : *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement*. p. 168, Jawaharlal Nehru records his impression about the time of non-cooperation thus : "It was obvious that to most of our leaders Swaraj meant something much less than independence. Gandhiji was delightfully vague on the subject and that he did not encourage clear thinking about it either." *An Autobiography*, p. 76. It is discernible from the statement of Gandhiji himself when he defined 'swaraj' in these words : "It means a state such that we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be partnership at will." Thus, we may depend upon the version of the official historian of the Congress who says : "Mass civil disobedience was the thing that was luring the people. What was it, what would it be ? Gandhi himself never defined it, never elaborated it, never visualised it even to himself. It must unfold itself to a discerning vision, to a pure heart from step to step, much as the pathway in a dense forest would reveal itself to the wayfarer's feet as he wends his weary way until a ray of light brightens the hope of an all but despairing wanderer." Sitaramayya, *op. cit* , Vol. I, p. 376.

7. C Y. Chintamani : *Indian Politics since Mutiny*, p. 107.

under the Act of 1919 “were a charter of irresponsibility of the Executive heads and a denial of even the elementary principles of democracy.”⁸

The Swaraj Party operated like a pressure group inside the Indian National Congress for some time. The Swarajists remained like Congressmen and Gandhiji unhesitatingly blessed them as their real aim was to win Swaraj without adopting the way of bloodshed. He did not take exception to the orientations of the Swarajists whose mode of action was not basically different from Tilak’s idea of ‘responsive co-operation’ that, hoping against hope, harped on the case of India’s Swaraj within the Empire without endorsing the basic stand that the alien rule was ‘Satanic’ and it was not prepared to treat India on the basis of some kind of equal and honourable partnership in the projected commonwealth. In 1929 the dividing line between the ‘pro-changers’ and the ‘no-changers’ had its end when the Congress at its Lahore session endorsed the call for complete independence and thereby gave the final touch to the meaning of Swaraj. The campaign against salt tax was a part of the civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhiji in 1930 and it was certainly a symbolic resistance to stir the dominant energies of the nation based on his call for a fight to the finish. This movement came to an end with the signing of a pact with the Viceroy on 5 March, 1931. It provided another instrument to the critics of Gandhi to describe it as another failure of the experiment of non-violence in dealing with the might of British imperialism.⁹ It may be true to some extent. But this fact should not be lost sight of that the Mahatma had by now become like “a live volcano with a unique personality that played a decisive part in firing India for the struggle..

8. V P S. Raghuvanshi : *Indian Nationalist Movement and Thought*, p. 186.

9. A Marxist historian of India, R.P. Dutt, says that the stoppage of this movement after signing a truce with the Viceroy was like ‘a tame surrender of Indian nationalism to British imperialism.’ *India Today*, p. 273.

Without him, she could not have achieved this spectacular unity.”¹⁰

The second World War broke out in 1939 and it created a peculiar situation. A revolutionary section of the Congressmen led by Subhas Bose desired to bank upon the maxim that ‘England’s worry is India’s opportunity.’ But as a votary of truth Gandhiji said that his non-violence meant ‘help the enemy when in trouble.’ The British rulers failed to understand the meaning of Gandhiji’s honest commitments which led to a situation in which Gandhiji gave the call of ‘Quit India’ in 1942. This was a call for the foreign rulers to leave the country and also a warning to the countrymen that “those who undertake underground activities will come to grief.” The Quit India Movement saw violence at an unprecedented scale the cause of which should be traced in the injudicious stand and actions of the British rulers. The wholesale arrest of all great leaders of the Indian National Congress was a blunder that left the fiery nationalists without any control of their elders. Situation became more tense as a result of the treacherous role of the Muslim League that extended its cooperation to the British for strengthening the case of Pakistan. The political biographer of Jinnah testifies to this fact that as the Congress “became the most militantly anti-British on the eve of World War II, Jinnah and the Muslim League reached a working alliance with the Viceroy that would help the League to achieve Pakistan in the aftermath of Allied victory.”¹¹

The World War ended in 1945, but victorious Britain emerged as a shattered power. Like a shrewd businessman the British rulers thought it expedient to leave India gracefully than to retain a tottering enterprise. Moreover, like an astute statesman, they thought it expedient to convert their policy of ‘divide and rule’ into the strategy of ‘divide and quit’ so as to

10. H.N. Brailsford : *Rebel India*, p. 29.

11. Stanley Wolpert : “The Indian National Congress in National Perspective” in Sisson and Wolpert (ed. s) : *Congress and Indian Nationalism*, p. 37.

punish the enemy who gave the call to quit and to reward the friend who stood with them in their hour of difficulty. In stead of leaving the country immediately after the War, they waited for some time during which their pampered child (League) could be more and more assertive and violent as a result of which communal riots broke out in different parts of the country. The British rulers became deliberately ummindful of the fact that the 'first function of the state is to ensure safe and civilised life to the people'. Conditions were allowed to deteriorate more and more to an extent that the realistic leaders of the Congress had to accept the alternative of partition as a matter of Hobson's choice. Even a noted English writer has given vent to this point in these words : "Could it (partition) then, have been rightly averted ? The path to an answer runs through a jungle of ifs and buts. Perhaps the most certain proposition is that Britain's transfer of power came too late to avoid partition."¹²

Whatever may be the causes of the partition of India and the historians may debate them in their own ways, it is certain that to the people of India it occurred as the most unfortunate event of history.¹³ It may be described as the compulsion of events.¹⁴ But credit goes to the leaders of the Congress that even in that crucial moment of trial they maintained their balance of mind and the resolution passed in the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Delhi on 15 June, 1947, *inter alia*, optimistically incorporated this expression: 'The

12. H.V. Hodson : *The Great Divide*, p. 225.

13 Rammanohar Lohia goes to the extent of enumerating eight reasons for this—British chicanery, declining years of Congress leadership, objective conditions of Hindu-Muslim rioting, lack of grit and stamina among the people, Gandhi's non-violence, Muslim League's separatism, inability to seize opportunities as they came, and Hindu hauteurs. *Guilty Men of India's Partition*, p. vii.

14. In 1916 Nehru told Michael Brecher : "I suppose it was the compulsion of events and the feeling that we could not get out of the deadlock of morass by pursuing the way we had done ; it became worse and worse." Leonard Mosley : *Last Days of British Raj*, p. 248.

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Congress has consistently upheld that the unity of India must be maintained. Ever since its inception, more than 60 years ago, the National Congress has laboured for the realization of a free and united India, and millions of our people have suffered in this great cause. Not only the labours and sacrifices of the past two generations but the long course of India's history and traditions bear witness to this essential unity. Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India as she is and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. Economic circumstances and the insistent demands of international affairs make the unity of India still more necessary. The picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds and hearts. The A-ICC earnestly trusts that when present passions have subsided, India's problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all."

—J.C. Johari

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PART I

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND ITS MOVEMENTS SIGNIFYING ITS CHANGING CHARACTER

On the day on which the Interim Government—it must be more appropriately called Provisional National Government—took charge, one was naturally reminded of how it represented the fulfilment of the promise of old—the promise of India's deliverance from bondage very much like that of Israel's exodus to the land of Canaan from their bondage in Egypt. The *soil* that was prepared by Macaulay in the thirties of the nineteenth century of the proud days in the annals of British Empire when India would have self-government, the *seed* that was sown by W.C. Bonnerjee in 1885 to gather together under one banner the different sub-nationalities of India, the *plant* that was nursed by the waters of 'Love and Service' poured out by Anand Mohan Bose in Madras in 1898, the *tree* that was christened 'Swaraj' by the Grand Old Man of India in 1905 in Calcutta, the *flower* that blossomed as Home Rule in 1917 at the hands of Mrs. Besant, the *fruit* that made its appearance in 1929 as Complete Independence or Purna Swaraj with Jawaharlal as the *baghban*—all these marked the stages of the fulfilment of the hope and the promise of sixty years in the formation of the Provisional National Government (in 1946). The fulfilment was doubtless there, but the fructification was yet to take place.

—B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
The History of the Indian National Congress
Vol. II, pp. 808-09.

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CONGRESS—FINAL FIGHT FOR FULL FREEDOM

The Act of 1935 came as the last constitutional dispensation foisted by an alien power on the people of a subject nation. With this started the last phase of our freedom struggle as well. The Congress took the resolve to combat the new constitution both inside and outside the Legislatures so as to end it. The goal of *purna swaraj* was not to be reversed or diluted, come what may. The scheme of Federation, as proposed in the Act, remained like a 'lost ideal'. The system of provincial autonomy replaced the notorious system of dyarchy introduced by the Act of 1919. The way the Congress ministries functioned in the provinces during 1937-1939 demonstrated their unique capability to operate the system of self-government. It is for this reason that the Congress leaders rejected all assurances of self-rule for India within the British Empire (amounting to Dominion Status for India) and adhered to the demand for nothing short of complete independence. The obdurate stand of the Tory Prime Minister (Churchill) forced the Congress to launch the Quit India movement in 1942 and the astounding success of this agitation forced the alien rulers to convert their policy of 'divide and rule' into the policy of 'divide and quit' so as to give a parting kick to the enemy (Congress) and a reward to the friend (Muslim League) for its cooperation to the British government during the times of its great crisis. However, for all this the British rulers deserve the credit of being the founders of a modern imperial system that procreated its own enemy in the form of Indian nationalism. 'To preserve and maintain their central imperial rule, the British physically unified the country and they, thereby, laid the material base for the development of modern

Indian nationalism. And it is as a reaction against British rule that Indian nationalism grew and developed.”*

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1935)

The A-ICC had its meeting at Jubbulpur on 24 and 25 April. A resolution passed on this occasion recorded its satisfaction at the work of the Congress party in the Assembly in the face of many difficulties and congratulated the members on the excellent discipline observed by them. Its another resolution condemned the ban on Congress organisations. It said : “This Committee draws the attention of the country to the continuance of the ban on Congress organisations in the N.W.F.P. and all Congress Committees in Midnapur district in Bengal and on affiliated and allied bodies fully accepting the Congress creed and discipline like the Khudai Khidmatgars and Hindustani Seva Dal and other constitutions in Bengal, Gujarat and elsewhere and the recent suppression of Lahore and Youth League organisations in Bengal, the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, the Punjab and elsewhere on the plea of alleged tendencies without reference to any covert acts, and arrests of workers connected with such organisations. This organisation appeals to the people at large to realise that the political salvation of the country is bound up with the strengthening of the Congress organisation and calls upon all sections to do everything to increase the strength of the Congress.” Another resolution condemned the abuse of Foreigners’ Act. It said : “The Committee notes the flagrant abuse of the Foreigners’ Act, an ancient piece of legislation intended for a wholly different purpose, in pursuance of the same general policy of continued repression, whereby a large number of Congressmen who fully accept the Congress creed have been externed from British India and thus deprived them not only of the opportunity of legitimate activity but also of residing and carrying on business which in many cases they have been doing for years.”

*Sankar Chose : *Indian National Congress : Its History and Heritage*, p. 95.

In its meeting held on 17 and 18 October at Madras, the A-ICC passed an important resolution relating to the offices under the new constitution. It said : "Considering the long interval of time that is bound to elapse before the next general provincial elections under the new constitution and the uncertainty of political conditions during this long period, this Committee is of opinion that it is not only premature but also inadvisable and impolitic to come to any decision on the question of acceptance or non-acceptance of office at this stage and therefore affirms the resolution of the Working Committee passed at Wardha on the subject. At the same time, the Committee desires to make it clear that it sees no objection to the question being discussed in the country."

In its meeting held at Delhi on 16-18 January, the CWC took some important decisions. About the celebration of the Purna Swaraj Day, it passed a resolution which said :

"The public should not need the reminder that January 26 has been observed, since the Lahore Congress, as the Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) Day. As civil disobedience has been suspended by the Congress, the proceedings for the day should not be in breach of the ordinances or other laws or orders promulgated by local authority. Consistently with this precaution, silent processions should be taken to previously announced meeting places and at the meetings the under-noted resolution worded in Hindustani or the local languages should be read out by the Chairman and without any speeches passed by the audience standing. Where meetings are prohibited, every household should meet at the appointed time and pass the resolution and inform the nearest Congress Committee of having done so.

At every meeting or in every house the passing of the resolution should be preceded by the unfurling of the national

The resolution shall be as under :

'We remind ourselves on this, the solemn national day, that Complete Independence is our birthright and we shall not rest till we have achieved it.

'To that end we shall strive to the utmost of our ability to observe truth and non-violence in thought, word and deed, and shall consider no sacrifice or suffering too great to be undergone.

'As a token of the expression of the two essential qualities of truth and non-violence, we shall seek to :

- (i) adopt and promote heart unity among different communities and to establish complete equality of status among all, irrespective of caste or creed or race.
- (ii) to adopt and promote complete abstinence from intoxicating drinks or drugs.
- (iii) to promote hand-spinning and other village industries and to adopt for personal use khaddar and other products of village industries to the exclusion of other products.
- (iv) to abolish untouchability.
- (v) to serve the starving millions in every way we can.
- (vi) and to engage in all other national and constructive effort.'

It is recommended that the national day be devoted, in so far as it is possible, to some special constructive effort and a determination be made to develop greater dedication to the cause of *Poorna Swaraj*.

There should be no hartal observed."

It advised the people not to take part in the silver jubilee celebrations of His Britannic Majesty's reign. A resolution passed to this effect said :

"Official announcement has been made that the Silver Jubilee of His Britannic Majesty's reign is to be celebrated in India. It is necessary for the Working Committee to guide the public as to the attitude to be adopted on the occasion.

The Congress has and can have nothing but good wishes for the personal well-being of His Majesty, but the Congress cannot ignore the fact that the rule in India with which His Majesty is naturally identified has been a positive hindrance to the political, moral and material growth of the nation. It now threatens to culminate in a constitution which, if enforced,

promises to exploit the nation, to drain her of what she still possesses of wealth and to harden her political subjection as has perhaps never been attempted before.

It is, therefore, impossible for the Working Committee to advise any participation in the forthcoming celebration.

At the same time, the Working Committee has no desire, by hostile demonstrations, to wound the susceptibilities of Englishmen and others who will want to take part in the celebrations. The Working Committee, therefore, advises the general public, including Congressmen who may be members of elected bodies, to be satisfied with mere abstention from the events that may be arranged for celebration.

The Working Committee trusts that the authorities and responsible Englishmen will recognise and appreciate the honest and inevitable attitude of the Working Committee and refrain from unnecessarily wounding national self-respect by compelling, directly or indirectly, participation in the forthcoming celebrations.”

Under Art. XII (d) (iii) of the amended constitution of the Congress, it framed a set of following disciplinary rules :

1. The Working Committee shall have the power to take disciplinary action against :

- (i) Any Committee of the Congress which deliberately acts or carries on propaganda against the official programme and decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitration or commissioner duly appointed and which it is its particular duty to obey.
- (ii) Any member of a Congress Executive or elected Congress Committee who deliberately acts or carries on propaganda against the official programme and decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed and which it is his particular duty to obey.

- (iii) Any member of the Congress who is proved to the satisfaction of the Working Committee to have been responsible for the embezzlement of Congress funds or to have broken a pledge given to the Congress or any subordinate committee or have been guilty of any fraudulent action in connection with enrolment or election to a Congress Committee or is guilty of acts involving serious moral turpitude and such as render his continuance as member undesirable in the interests of the Congress.
2. (i) In the case of a Committee of the Congress the disciplinary action may be the supersession of such a Committee ; and such further action against offending individual members as may be necessary may also be ordered.
- (ii) In the case of member of any Congress Executive or elected Congress Committee the disciplinary action may be his dismissal, and the fixation of a period during which he cannot be validly elected to any office or membership in any Committee of Congress.
- (iii) In the case of a member of a primary Congress organisation the disciplinary action may be a disqualification for a stated period from standing for any election, including election to the legislatures or exercising any other right of a member, or expulsion from the Indian National Congress.
3. No disciplinary action shall be taken without an opportunity being given to the Committee or individual concerned to state its or his case and answer such charges as are made before the Working Committee.
4. When the Working Committee is not sitting, the President may take cognizance of all urgent cases requiring disciplinary action and shall act on behalf of the Working Com-

mittee. In all such cases the decision of the President must be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee who may confirm or revise the same.

5. The Executive Committees of the Provincial Congress Committees shall also have the power to take disciplinary action against their subordinate Committees and members of any Congress Executive Committees and members of primary Committees within their province. In all such cases the same procedure as is followed by the Working Committee shall be adhered to. It shall be open to the Committee or member against whom disciplinary action is taken to appeal against it to the Working Committee, provided pending the appeal the order appealed against is submitted to.

6. Any person against whom an expulsion order is passed may apply for revision to the AICC. Such application should be sent by registered post to the Working General Secretary's address not later than forty days after the date of the final order appealed against, provided that at any time a revision may be applied for and allowed by reason of altered circumstances.

The Forty-Ninth Session (1936)

It was held in the city of Lucknow from 12 to 14 April. The welcome address was delivered by Sri Prakash and then Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presided. The notable point is that it was the first session after the Congress constitution had in many respects been radically changed at Bombay two years back. It was the third time when the session was held in the city of Lucknow, previously in 1899 and 1916; and it was the second occasion when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presided. It was attended by about 700 delegates, though the number of visitors reached the figure of about 30,000. The national organisation had by now completed 50 years of its momentous life and on this occasion in his address Jawaharlal Nehru declared that socialism was the only way to solve social and economic problems of the country.

SWARAJ AS RECOVERY OF OUR LOST SOUL*

Friends and fellow-workers,

On behalf of the United Provinces, I offer a most hearty welcome to all who have assembled here today at this officially the 49th—but really the 51st—session of the Indian National Congress. I will not indulge in the usual language of convention, and talk of the shortcoming of our arrangements, obvious as they are; nor offer apologies, hypocritical as they must sound for any discomforts that you might have to suffer. I will also not try to enter into any self-defence on the ground of our difficulties, which are entirely of our own creation, and for which we fully deserve to be punished. One thing, however, needs must be mentioned. It has happened perhaps only once or twice before in the history of the Congress—and that too for the sake of very special personalities—that the Chairman of the Reception Committee did not himself belong to the town where the Congress was being held.

I have a shrewd suspicion that a small man like myself has been suddenly forced into this position today in order that no citizen of Lucknow itself might suffer direct criticism when it has not been possible for us to offer hospitality on that grand and lavish scale for which this town is traditionally famous. I fear the Chairman of the Reception Committee, as well as the head of the volunteer force, have been drafted from Benares—the ancient pilgrim centre of Kashi—not so much to prove the united nature of our United Provinces, as to enable us to say that though the arrangements here may not be worthy of those who are used to receive *Rajas* and *nawabs*, they are good enough if made in the name of those who have acted as hosts and chaperons to pious pilgrims. And I of Benares gladly welcome you, knowing only too well that delegates and visitors to the Congress come in the same spirit of reverent pilgrimage as do all those, rich and poor alike, who come to worship at the shrines of my city.

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Lucknow Congress held in April, 1936.

Many comrades, known and unknown, valiant fighters for the country's liberty have left us since last we met at Bombay. The Congress, in its resolutions, will doubtless give expression to the nation's sorrow at the loss we have sustained. Two of these, however, I must single out as intimately affecting my own province. In the passing away of Kamala Nehru, not only has our President lost a noble wife but we have all lost our Kamalaji, who always made her home at Allahabad, a home to the least of us, and not only extended to us unstinted hospitality, but gave us cheer and hope in the darkest days of depression.

We who have sat with her in the inmost counsels of the provincial Congress executive, will for ever miss the grace and dignity of her presence in our deliberations. Our hearts go out to Jawahar Lal in his grievous bereavement ; and we may only hope that, brave as he is, his sorrow will be assuaged by the thought that it is being shared by countless men and women in the land ; and that his nearest fellow-workers feel it as their own. In the death of Tasadduq Sherwani, we have lost a great gentleman, a stout-hearted patriot, and a true champion of nationalism overriding all petty considerations of class, creed, or community ; one who gave up all he possessed for the cause of the country's freedom which was so dear to his heart. To his brothers and other members of his family we send heartfelt condolences today.

It is no business of mine to review the present situation or to suggest any programme for the immediate future. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without putting on record the result of my little experience as a humble worker of the Congress, and referring to the chief difficulty that I find in the way of improving matters alike in the political as in other spheres of our national activity. I hope I shall not shock the susceptibilities of my friends present, when I say that great individuals as such have ceased to interest me. The only person who I think matters, is that unknown but most important person—the common man in field and factory, in the cottage and the street, on whom falls the heaviest load of life. I regard the

sole end of all effort, to be his betterment ; and to my thinking the highest achievements and the noblest endeavours are in vain if they do not result in bringing any light to him or in ameliorating his life in any way.

We have had plenty of great men in our country in the past. We can claim some of the greatest men of today also as being of our land ; but in the present as in the past, great men seem to come and go, leaving only their name and fame behind, while the mass goes on for ever in its own apathy, ignorance and destitution, moral and material. Something must be done to change this state of things. We have already innumerable gods who, I take it, were the great men and women of the past now enshrined in stone and marble, for passing generations to revere and worship. No one would object to it, no one would have any cause to complain if this mentality had not given us the notion that the duty of the mass is only to honour the great from a distance and go its own way heedless of their teaching.

We seem to think there is a separate caste of patriots away and above the ordinary run of man, whose business it is to be patriotic, to win freedom or whatever public good may be their craze, by some mysterious methods which they must devise and practise, while the sole duty of the ordinary man is to adore these good people and do nothing himself to help in the task of the nation-building. We do not seem to realise the simple truth that the activities of leaders are futile unless we ourselves respond to their call in our own lives.

As a corrective to this mentality, I think the time has now come to put a complete stop to ovations, processions, addresses, and the like for those who are great and at the same time we must also draw up a simple code of disciplined life, commensurate with the limitations of ordinary human nature, and insist on all to follow it enforcing it with a sanction. We must say that anyone who lives according to that code, however humble his sphere may be, is as great a patriot as the greatest so recognised in the land, for true greatness resides in fulfilling

the tasks one undertakes in a spirit of duty and responsibility. What we need are injunctions to tell us how a person worthy of Swaraj behaves, how he is considerate and accommodating to his fellowmen, even in the smallest things of life.

There is much misunderstanding on the subject ; and though it may appear a matter of small consequence, I personally regard it as of the greatest moment viewing the conditions of our life as they are. Thus alone, to my mind, can we infuse the spirit of hope in the hearts of our countless men and women and spur them to action on right lines ; and thus alone can we harness to the country's service, the latent energies and the great possibilities of our human material, now remaining unutilised. Thus also I feel we can eliminate the unnecessary personal jealousies and bitternesses and communal and political bickerings that are ruining public life in our land today.

I regard the so called problems of council-entry and office-acceptance—so intensely exercising the mind of many as of no importance whatsoever. These can be safely left to take care of themselves. So far as I can see, I have no doubt that we of the Congress today stand for a reconstruction of society. We are impatient of things as they are. It is no more possible to tolerate excessive wealth in the hands of a few on the one hand, and crushing poverty of the vast masses on the other ; unlimited power for a handful and the condition of slaves for the rest. We definitely stand for an equitable distribution of work wages and comforts for a society of freedom and of love. The thousands of poor men and women who today are sacrificing their all for the cause that the Congress represents, are not doing so in order to continue the cruel and irresponsible oligarchy that is crushing us all.

Let those who are better off than the rest of their brethren or who today enjoy the monopoly of all position and power, wealth and leisure, not forget that the very things that they prize, are endangered when the many are wallowing in dirt and in poverty, deprived of all the light that proper knowledge and

adequate comfort can give them. Widespread poverty inevitably reacts on the well to-do and disease and death creep within their sheltered walls because the neighbourhood is unhappy and unclean.

Viewed from the purely selfish standpoint even, enhancement of life in all its aspects really depends upon a proper setting; and it is up to those who feel unnecessarily disturbed today by our ideals, to help actively instead, in bringing about a state of thing where, there will be, as a matter of fact, more real gain for themselves. It is time that we placed before the country our exact ideas about the society we are seeking to build. That will help all to know what we want and will eliminate all doubts and suspicions and may be false hopes and ambitions as well—that so unnecessarily clog us at every step. We must now frame our own future constitution, not so much of the Government which is after all not very important, but the constitution of society itself for the well-being of which alone any Government can be allowed to exist.

Logical preciseness and intellectually correct programmes, however, can be of little value unless we have people to appreciate and follow them. What India needs are real men and women, sturdy and efficient citizens, who can be depended upon to perform their tasks in every sphere of activity with which they may be connected, humble or high; and so long as these are not forthcoming, we can achieve nothing, however perfect our resolutions on paper, however brave our voice on the platform. Let the story of the last 15 years of our earnest labour teach us a lesson. If we are really determined to be free we cannot afford to be oblivious of the underlying nature of the forces that are arrayed against us. The government as it is, is a compact and efficient organisation, each part of which knows exactly its duty even in the most distant and isolated places, and fulfils its task properly and punctually for the strength and stability of the whole and in a spirit of mutual loyalty hard to equal.

In order to meet this we have also to be organised in a similar manner, and our units have also to be of a character simi-

lar to the units of the opponents we are facing and fighting. Unless we are able to do that, our greatest efforts are bound to go in vain ; and we shall always find ourselves at the end of every great movement, just where we started. The history of India from the earliest times has this sad tale to tell. Every-time we have to begin at the beginning. Let the Congress now devise methods by which we as a nation shall not be sliding back each time we make a move forwards, just leaving a few great names behind to illumine the pages of our history and to give us some fanciful satisfaction of our past greatness, when darkness envelopes us in the present and we become a butt of ridicule for the sister nations of the world.

Let us make sure that we are really out for the true freedom and greatness of a whole people and not merely to exploit or enhance the undoubted greatness of a few. It is not enough to do our little bit when there is something going. It is necessary to be always on the alert and working. It is the day today work that tells in the long run and not the work done merely in spurts. Organisation for peace is far more necessary than organisation for war. If the former is secured, the latter will probably never be needed, or if it ever is, it will be completed at a moment's notice.

The task before us is verily a might one. We are on to win Swaraj. Swaraj for us is the recovery of our lost soul and not merely the finding of our lost wealth. We want Swaraj because we desire to fashion our lives in our own way, we want to get back our capacity to make our own contribution to world-thought and world-endeavour and to feel and realize that the words 'India' and 'Indian', unlike the case today, stand for everything that is noble and good ; and that we too can move about the world as a self-respecting people, as members of a race that is truly great and really free.

Comrades, I welcome you all once again and earnestly hope that your deliberations here may lead us nearer to our cherished goal.

Vande Mataram

In this session 15 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the deaths of prominent figures like Dinshaw E. Wacha, Sapurji Saklatwala, Mrs. Kamla Nehru etc. Resolution II extended greetings to the thousands of Indians under detention and in exile for the cause of India's freedom. Resolution III condemned the arrest of Subhas Chandra Bose. Resolution IV in very strong terms condemned the suppression of civil liberties. It said : "The Congress draws public attention again to the widespread and intensive suppression of civil and, in many instances, person liberties in India by the British Government, with the object of crushing the national and labour and peasant movements. In particular, to the banning of hundreds of Congress and other national organisations, and labour and peasant unions, and political and other groups ; seizure and continued possession by the Government of many ashrams and other educational institutions ; the continuation of the Ordinance regime by the certification and passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, even after its rejection twice by the Assembly, and the enactment of similar provincial Acts ; the proscription and banning of books and periodicals ; the numerous Press laws and censorship resulting in the suppression of 348 newspapers in recent years and the forfeiture of large sums deposited as securities ; the detention of large number of people for indefinite periods without charge or trial ; the numerous special and additional disabilities under which the people of the Frontier Province have to suffer ; the many encroachments on personal liberty in parts of Bengal ; the restriction by externment, internment and otherwise to the free movement of persons within the country, thus preventing them from carrying on their usual occupations and business, and even obstructing humanitarian and relief work ; the application of measures like the Criminal Tribes Act and the Foreigners' Act to political workers ; indiscriminate and widespread searches of houses ; the difficulties placed in the way of Indians going abroad and the barriers to the return home of many Indians in foreign countries, who have thus to live in exile far from their own people and their motherland.

The Congress notes that at no period since the great Revolt of 1857 has the suppression of civil and personal liberties and the repression of the Indian people, which is the normal feature of British administration in India today, been so great as it is now. While recognising that this extraordinary suppression and repression are measures of the strength and success of India's struggle for freedom, the Congress desires to point out that such is the background to the Constitution Act in spite of the statements made by representatives of British Government that constitutional progress is being made in India.

Further, the Congress deeply regrets that in the Indian States there is a similar suppression of civil and personal liberties, and, in many of them, conditions in this respect are even worse than in the rest of India and almost every kind of liberty is non-existent; that in some States even the Congress has been banned and normal peaceful work of organization prevented, and insult offered to the National Flag. The Congress realises that the effective power behind the states is that of the British Government and many of the states are under the direct control of British officers. Howsoever the responsibility for this deplorable state of affairs might be shared between the British Government and the rulers of the states, the Congress declares that it can recognise no differentiation in personal, civil and democratic liberties as between the states and the rest of India.

The Congress expresses the determination of the Indian people that notwithstanding this attempt to paralyse national growth and activity they will continue to face the situation with courage and fortitude and will carry on the struggle for freedom till independence is achieved."

Resolution V authorised and directed the CWC to organise a foreign department of the A-ICC office to work under the general superintendence of the Working General Secretary and with such social staff as may be necessary with a view to create and maintain contacts with Indians overseas and with inter-

national, national, labour and other organisations abroad with whom cooperation was possible and was likely to help in the cause of India's freedom. Resolution VI said that having considered the invitation of Romain Rolland, Honorary President of the World Committee of Struggle against War and Fascism, to participate in the World Congress for peace to be held in Geneva in September next, conveyed its greetings to the organisers of the Peace Congress and assurances of its full sympathy and co-operation in the great work of ensuring peace in the world based on national and social freedom. Resolution VII drew the attention of the country to the danger of imperialist war and the possibility of India being made a tool in such a conflict for imperialist purposes, and declared the right of the Indian people to refuse to participate in any such war without their express permission. Resolution VIII expressed the sympathy of the Indian nation for the Ethiopian people who are so heroically defending their country against imperialist aggression and considered Abyssinia's fight as part of the fight of all exploited nations for freedom.

Resolution IX has an importance of its own which attacked the Government of India Act, 1935. It said :

"Whereas the Government of India Act, 1935, which is based on the White Paper and Joint Parliamentary Report and which is in many respects even worse than the proposals contained in them, in no way represents the will of the nation, is designed to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the people of India and is imposed on the country to the accompaniment of widespread repression and the suppression of civil liberties, the Congress reiterates its rejection of the new constitution in its entirety.

The Congress, as representing the will of the Indian people for notional freedom and a democratic state, declares that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people of India and does not recognise their right to shape and control fully their political and economic future can be accepted. In the opinion of

the Congress such a constitution must be based on the independence of India as a nation and it can only be framed by a constituent assembly elected on adult franchise or a franchise which approximates to it as nearly as possible. The Congress, therefore, reiterates and stresses the demand for a Constituent Assembly in the name of the Indian people and calls upon its representatives and members in legislatures and outside to work for the fulfilment of this demand.

In view of the fact that elections for their Provincial legislatures under the new Act may, according to official statements, take place before the next session of the Congress, this Congress resolves that in such an event candidates should be put forward on its behalf to contest such seats in accordance with the mandate of the Congress and in pursuance of its declared policy. Such candidates must be chosen from those who fully support the Congress objective of Indian Independence and pledge themselves to carry out its policy in regard to the legislatures.

The AICC shall place before the country prior to the election, a manifesto explaining the political and economic policy and programme of the Congress in conformity with the resolutions passed by it from time to time. The Provincial Congress Committee may further supplement the manifesto by adding thereto specific items which have special application to their respective provinces. All provincial manifestos must be approved by the Working Committee of the AICC.

Resolved further that the functions of the Parliamentary Board be discharged in future by the Working Committee of the AICC. The Working Committee is authorised to appoint such Boards or Committees as may be necessary to organise elections to legislatures as well as to guide, coordinate and control the activities of Congress members in Legislatures. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Board need not be reconstituted hereafter.

The question of acceptance or non-acceptance of office by Congress members elected to the legislatures under the constitution having been agitated in the country the Congress, in view of the uncertainties of the situation as it may develop, considers it inadvisable to commit itself to any decision at this stage on the question and leaves it to be decided at the proper time by the AICC after consulting the Provincial Congress Committees."

Resolution X reiterated the stand of the Congress on the condition of the Indian people living in East Africa, South Africa, Zanzibar and Fiji islands and insisted on fair treatment to be meted out to them. Resolution XI revealed the stand of the Congress on mass contacts programme. It said :

"The Congress is of opinion that it is desirable to develop closer association between the masses and the Congress organisation, so that they may take greater share in the shaping of Congress policy and in its activities, and the organisation might become even more responsive to their needs and desires. With a view to this, and further to bring about closer co operation with other organisations, of peasants, workers and others, which aim at the freedom of the Indian people and to make the Congress a joint front of all the anti-Imperialist elements in the country, this Congress appoints a committee consisting of Sriyuts Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulatram and Jayprakash Narayan to make recommendations in this behalf including proposals for such amendment of the constitution as may be considered necessary. The Committee shall report to the AICC through the Working Committee by the end of July 1935 and its report shall be then circulated to provincial and district committees for opinion. The final recommendations of the AICC on this report shall be placed before the next session of the Congress."

Likewise, Resolution XII has an importance of its own which revealed the commitment of the Congress to its agrarian programme. It said :

"This Congress is of opinion that the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce. The final solution of this problem inevitably involves the removal of British imperialistic exploitation, a thorough change of the land tenure and revenue system and a recognition by the State of its duty to provide work for the rural unemployed masses.

In view, however, of the fact that agrarian conditions and land tenure and revenue systems differ in the various Provinces, it is desirable to consult the Provincial Congress Committees and such present organizations as the Working Committee considers fit, in the drawing up of a full All-India Agrarian Programme as well as a programme for each province. This Congress, therefore, calls upon each Provincial Congress Committee to make recommendations in detail to the Working Committee by August 31, 1936, for being considered and placed before the All-India Congress Committee having particular regard to the following matters :

1. Freedom of organization of agricultural labourers and peasants.
2. Safeguarding of the interests of peasants where there are intermediaries between the State and themselves.
3. Just and fair relief of agricultural indebtedness including arrears of rent and revenue.
4. Emancipation of the peasants from feudal and semi-feudal levies.
5. Substantial reduction in respect of rent and revenue demands.
6. A just allotment of the State expenditure for the social, economic and cultural amenities of village.
7. Protection against harassing restrictions on the utilisation of local natural facilities for their domestic and agricultural needs.

8. Freedom from oppression and harassment at the hands of Government officials and landlords.
9. Fostering industries for relieving rural unemployment."

Resolution XIII repeated the view of the Congress about the Indian States. It reaffirmed that the people living there had the same right of self-determination as those of the rest of India, and that the Congress stood for the same political, civil and democratic liberties for every part of India. It, however, desired that the struggle for liberty within the states had, in the very nature of things, to be carried on by the people of the States themselves. Resolution XIV said about the adoption of a number of amendments to the constitution of the Congress. Finally, Resolution XV said about the holding of next session in Maharashtra.

The A-ICO and CWO Meetings (1936)

In its meeting held on 22 and 23 August at Bombay, the A-ICC condoled the deaths of Dr. M.A. Ansari and Abbas Tyabji. It expressed its indignation at the orders of the Government concerned prohibiting Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan from entering into or remaining in the N.W.F.P. and the Punjab and noted with regret the constitution of their policy of suppression of civil liberty of individuals engaged in national activity. It viewed with grave concern the reports of interference by officials in some provinces with the activities of the Congress in connection with the forthcoming elections. In particular it condemned the action of the N.W.F.P. Government in arresting workers of the Parliamentary Board and otherwise interfering with the meeting for election purposes. Most important of all, it adopted Election Manifesto.

Election Manifesto

For more than fifty years the Indian National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India, and ever, as its strength grew and it came to represent more and more the nationalist

urge of the Indian people and their desire to put an end to exploitation by British Imperialism, it came into conflict with the ruling power. During recent years the Congress has led great movements for national freedom and has sought to develop sanctions whereby such freedom can be achieved by peaceful mass action and the disciplined sacrifice and suffering of the Indian people. To the lead of the Congress the Indian people have responded in abundant measure and thus confirmed their inherent right to freedom. That struggle for freedom still continues and must continue till India is free and independent.

These years have seen the development of an economic crisis in India and the world which has led to a progressive deterioration in the condition of all classes of our people. The poverty-stricken masses are today in the grip of an even more abject poverty and destitution, and this growing disease urgently and insistently demands a radical remedy. Poverty and unemployment have long been the lot of our peasantry and industrial workers ; today they cover and crush other classes also—the artisan, the trader, the small merchant, the middle class intelligentsia. For the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence has become an urgent one, for only independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses.

The growth of the national movement and the economic crisis has resulted in the intense repression of the Indian people and the suppression of civil liberties, and the British Government has sought to strengthen the imperialist bonds that envelop India and to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people by enacting the Government of India Act of 1935.

In the international sphere, crisis follows crisis in an ever deepening degree and world war hangs over the horizon. The Lucknow Congress called the attention of the nation to this grave situation in India and the world, and declared its oppo-

sition to the participation of India in an imperialist war and its firm resolve to continue the struggle for the independence of India.

The Congress rejected in its entirety the constitution imposed upon India by the New Act and declared that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people of India, and does not recognise their right to shape and control fully their political and economic future, can be accepted. Such a constitution, in its opinion, must be based on the independence of India as a nation and it can only be framed by a Constituent Assembly.

The Congress has always laid stress on the development of the strength of the people and the forging of sanctions to enforce the people's will. To this end it has carried on activities outside the legislatures. The Congress holds that real strength comes from thus organising and serving the masses.

Adhering to this policy and objective, but in view of the present situation and in order to prevent the operation of forces calculated to strengthen alien domination and exploitation, the Congress decided to contest seats in the coming elections for the provincial legislatures. But the purpose of sending Congressmen to the legislatures under the new Act is not to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it and seek to end it. It is to carry out, in so far as is possible, the Congress policy of rejection of the Act, and to resist British Imperialism in its attempts to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. In the opinion of the Congress, activity in the legislatures should be such as to help in the work outside, in the strengthening of the people, and in the development of the sanctions which are essential to freedom.

The new legislatures, hedged and circumscribed by safeguards and special powers for the protection of British and other vested interest, cannot yield substantial benefits, and

they are totally incapable of solving the vital problems of poverty and unemployment. But they may well be used by British imperialism for its own purposes to the disadvantage and injury of the Indian people. The Congress representatives will seek to resist this, and to take all possible steps to end the various Regulations, Ordinances and Acts which oppress the Indian people and smother their will to freedom. They will work for the establishment of civil liberty, for the release of political prisoners and detenus, and to repair the wrongs done to the peasantry and to public institutions in the course of the national struggle.

The Congress realises that independence cannot be achieved through these legislatures, nor can the problems of poverty and unemployment be effectively tackled by them. Nevertheless the Congress places its general programme before the people of India so that they may know what it stands for and what it will try to achieve, whenever it has the power to do so.

At the Karachi session of Congress in 1931 the general Congress objective was defined in the Fundamental Rights resolution. That general definition still holds. The last five years of developing crisis have however necessitated a further consideration of the problems of poverty and unemployment and other economic problems. With a view to this the Lucknow Congress laid particular stress on the fact that "the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems, and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce," and called upon the Provincial Congress Committees to frame full agrarian programmes. The agrarian programme which will be drawn up by the AICC on the basis of these provincial programmes will be issued later.

Pending the formulation of a fuller programme the Congress reiterates its declaration made at Karachi—that it stands for a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent,

and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of rent and revenue.

The question of indebtedness requires urgent consideration and the formulation of a scheme including the declaration of a moratorium, an enquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision for cheap credit facilities by the state. This relief should extend to the agricultural tenants, peasant proprietors, small landholders, and petty traders.

In regard to industrial workers the policy of the Congress is to secure to them a decent standard of living, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as the economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right of workers to form unions and to strike for the protection of their interests.

The Congress has already declared that it stands for the removal of all sex disabilities whether legal or social or in any sphere of public activity. It has expressed itself in favour of maternity benefits and the protection of women workers. The women of India have already taken a leading part in the freedom struggle, and the Congress looks forward to their sharing, in an equal measure with the men of India, the privileges and obligations of citizens of a free India.

The stress that the Congress has laid on the removal of untouchability and for the social and economic uplift of the Harijans and the backward classes is well-known. It holds that they should be equal citizens with the others, with equal rights in all civic matters.

The encouragement of khadi and village industries has also long been a principal plank of the Congress programme. In

regard to the larger industries, protection should be given but the rights of the workers and the producers of raw materials should be safeguarded, and due regard should be paid to the interests of village industries.

The treatment of political prisoners has long been a scandal in India. Every effort should be made to improve this and make it humane. It is equally necessary to change the whole basis of the prison administration so that every prisoner might be treated in a humanitarian and rational manner.

The communal decision, which forms part of the new Act, has led to much controversy and the Congress attitude towards it has been misunderstood by some people. The rejection in its entirety of the new Act by the Congress inevitably involves the rejection of the communal decision. Even apart from the Act as a whole, the communal decision is wholly unacceptable as being inconsistent with independence and the principles of democracy; it encourages fissiparous and disruptive tendencies, hinders the normal growth and consideration of economic and social questions, is a barrier to national progress, and strikes at the root of Indian unity. No community or group in India profits by it in any real sense, for the larger injury caused by it to all outweighs the petty benefits that some have received. Ultimately it probably injures most those groups whom it is meant to favour. The only party that profits by it is the third party which rules and exploits us.

The attitude of the Congress is, therefore, not one of indifference or neutrality. It disapproves strongly of the communal decision and would like to end it. But the Congress has repeatedly laid stress on the fact that a satisfactory solution of the communal question can come only through the goodwill and cooperation of the principal communities concerned. An attempt by one group to get some communal favour from the British Government at the expense of another group results in an increase of communal tension and the exploitation of both groups by the Government. Such a policy is hardly in keeping with the dignity of Indian nationalism; it does not fit in with

the struggle for independence. It does not pay either party in the long run ; it sidetracks the main issue.

The Congress, therefore, holds that the right way to deal with the situation created by the communal decision is to intensify our struggle for independence and, at the same time, to seek a common basis for an agreed solution which helps to strengthen the unity of India. The effort of one community only to change the decision in the face of the opposition of another community might well result in confirming and consolidating that decision, for conflict between the two produces the very situation which gives Governments a chance of enforcing such a decision. The Congress thus is of opinion that such one-sided agitation can bear no useful result.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole communal problem in spite of its importance, has nothing to do with the major problems of India—poverty and wide-spread unemployment. It is not a religious problem and it affects only a handful of people at the top. The peasantry, the workers, the traders and merchants and the lower middle classes of all communities are in no way touched by it and their burdens remain.

The question of accepting ministries or not in the new legislatures was postponed for decision by the Lucknow Congress. The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it will be desirable for this decision to be taken after the elections. Whatever the decision on this question might be, it must be remembered that, in any event, the Congress stands for the rejection of the new Act, and for non-cooperation in its working. The object remains the same : the ending of the Act. With a view to this end every endeavour will be made to prevent the introduction and functioning of the federal part of the scheme, which is intended to perpetuate the domination of imperialist interests and the feudal interests of the States over the whole country and prevent all progress towards freedom. It must be borne in mind that the new provincial assemblies will form the electorate for the proposed federal central legislature and the

composition of those provincial legislatures will materially affect the fate of the federal constitution.

We appeal to the country to give every support to the Congress in the elections that are coming. National welfare demands it. The fight for independence calls for it. The effectiveness of the work that the Congress members of the legislatures will do, will depend on their numbers and their discipline and the backing and support that the country gives them. With a clear majority they will be in a position to fight the Act and to help effectively in the struggle for independence. Every party and group that stands aloof from the Congress organisation tends, knowingly or unknowingly, to become a source of weakness to the nation and a source of strength to the forces ranged against it. For the fight for independence a joint front is necessary. The Congress offers that joint national front which comprises all classes and communities, bound together by their desire to free India, end the exploitation of her people and build up a strong and prosperous and united nation, resting on the well-being of the masses.

With this great and inspiring goal before us, for which so many men and women of India have suffered and sacrificed their all under the banner of the Congress, and for which to-day thousands of our countrymen are suffering silently and with brave endurance, we call upon our people with full hope and confidence, to rally to the cause of the Congress, of India, of freedom.

In its meeting held on 9, 10 and 11 December at Bombay, the CWC reiterated its stand on the mass contacts programme. It condemned interference of the Government in elections to the Provincial Assemblies. "It passed a resolution to set up a committee for considering the frontier policy of the Government of India. It said : The Committee, after some discussion about the situation in the Frontier created by the recent raid, appoin-

ted a committee consisting of Shris Vallabhbhai Patel, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Bhulabhai Desai to consider the Frontier policy of the Government and the recent military operations there and make recommendations to the Committee and the Subjects Committee of the Faizpur Congress." In supersession of the previous resolutions, it adopted new rules in regard to disciplinary action :

Disciplinary Rules

In suppression of the previous resolutions of the Working Committee in regard to disciplinary action, the following rules were adopted by the Committee.

1. The Working Committee may take disciplinary action against :

(i) Any Committee of the Congress which deliberately acts or carries on propoganda against the programme and decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed.

(ii) Any member of a Congress Executive or elected Congress Committee who deliberately acts or carries on propoganda against the programme and decisions of Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed.

(iii) Any member of the Congress who deliberately acts contrary to the decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any authority, umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed or is guilty of embezzlement of Congress funds or other fraudulent action in connection with funds and accounts, or of having broken a pledge given to the Congress or any subordinate committee or

of any fraudulent action in connection with the enrolment of members of the Congress or election to a Congress Committee or who deliberately acts in a way which in the opinion of the Working Committee is likely to lower the power and prestige of the Congress so as to render his continuance as a member of the Congress undesirable in the interests of the Congress.

2. (i) In the case of a Committee of the Congress disciplinary action may be the supersession of such a Committee ; and such further action against offending individual members as may be necessary.

(ii) In the case of a member of any Congress Executive or elective Congress Committee, the disciplinary action may be his removal from such office or membership, and the fixation of a period during which he cannot be validly elected to any office or membership in any committee of the Congress.

(iii) In the case of a member of a primary Congress organisation disciplinary action may be a disqualification for a stated period from standing for any election including election to the legislatures and local and municipal bodies or exercising any other right as a member during the unexpired period of his membership and the fixation of a period during which he may not be admitted to the membership of the Congress.

3. No disciplinary action shall be taken without an opportunity being given to the Committee or individual concerned to state its or his case and answer such charges as are made before the Working Committee.

4. The Executive Committees of the Provincial Congress Committees shall also have the power to take disciplinary action against their subordinate committees and members of any Congress Executive Committees and members of primary committees within their province. In all such cases the rules and procedure as are laid down for taking action by the Working Committee shall be applicable. It shall be open to the Committee or member against whom such disciplinary action is taken to appeal against it to the Working Committee pro-

vided that pending the appeal he obeys the order appealed against. The Working Committee may, however, stay the operation of the order.

5. When the Working Committee is not sitting, the President may take cognisance of all urgent matters in regard to disciplinary action and shall act on behalf of the Working Committee. In all such cases the decision of the President must be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee for confirmation.”

The Fortieth Session (1936)

It was held in the village of Faizpur in Maharashtra on 27 and 28 December. The notable point is that it was the third time when Jawaharlal Nehru presided—a unique honour that was accorded to Dadabhai Naoroji. It broke a new ground in the sense that it was held in an interior part of Maharashtra as insisted by Shanker Rao Deo. It was inspired by Gandhiji’s idea of mass contact. Since the venue was away from the developed urban centres, the delegates had to undergo many inconveniences which they bore happily.

In this session 22 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the deaths of some prominent figures. Resolution II extended whole-hearted support to the objective of the Peace Congress to ensure world peace by removing the causes of war, and offered its full cooperation to it in this vital and urgent task. Resolution III said that any decision about the place of Burma in the Congress constitution be arrived at after consultation with the people of Burma. Resolution IV condemned the rise of fascism in Spain. Resolution V said that the creation of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas and Chief Commissioners’ Provinces, including British Baluchistan, from the 1st January, 1937 and covering the area of 207,900 square miles and inhabited by 13 million people, was yet another attempt to divide the people of India into different groups with unjustifiable and discriminatory treatment and to obstruct the growth of uniform democratic insti-

tutions in the country. Resolution VI said that the Congress noted with deep sorrow that an unprecedented number of natural calamities had ravaged our country during the past year and food and drought and famine and cyclone had brought intense suffering to vast number of our people, whom poverty and unemployment had already reduced to such dire straits. Resolution VII reiterated the view of the Congress about the danger of war and declared that India could be no party to it. Resolution VIII said that the policy pursued by the Government of India on the North-West Frontier had been a total failure and had caused great injury both to the interests of India and the trans-border tribes. Resolution IX recorded emphatic protest of the Congress against unjust and inhuman policy of British Government in India in keeping thousands of Indians in detention for indefinite periods without charge or trial and held that this policy had been resorted to with the object of paralysing the national movement. Resolution X extended greetings of the Congress to fellow countrymen overseas and its assurance of sympathy and help in their distressful condition and in the continuing deterioration in their status in the territories in which they had settled.

Resolution XI noted with sorrow and alarm the frequent occurrence of accidents in the collieries of Bengal and Bihar, resulting in every case in the loss of numerous human lives, widespread misery among survivors and irreparable waste of a great deal of India's mineral wealth. Resolution XII congratulated the workers of the B.N. Railway on their solidarity and the brave stand they had made against the repeated invasions on their rights. Resolution XIII reiterated the stand of the Congress for mass contacts programmes. Resolution XIV authorised the A-ICC to make changes in the Congress constitution to enable the next session of the Congress to be held in a month other than December. Resolution XV draw attention and condemned the suppression of civil liberties in India which continued intensively and perverted normal public life, interfered even with personal liberties, and crushed the present generation in India.

Resolution XVI said : "The Congress reiterates its entire rejection of the Government of India Act, 1935 and the constitution that has been imposed on India against the declared will of the people of the country. In the opinion of the Congress any cooperation with this constitution is a betrayal of India's struggle for freedom and a strengthening of the firm hold of British imperialism and a further exploitation of the Indian masses who have already been reduced to direct poverty under imperialist domination. This Congress, therefore, repeats its resolve not to submit to this constitution or to cooperate with it, but to combat it, both inside and outside the legislatures, so as to end it. The Congress does not and will not recognise the right of any external power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India, and every such attempt will be met by organised and uncompromising opposition of the Indian people. The Indian people can only recognise a constitutional structure which has been framed by them and which is based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their needs and desires."

Resolution XVII said : "This Congress resolves that after the election to the provincial legislature a convention shall be held consisting of the Congress members of the various provincial and central legislatures, the members of the All-India Congress Committee, and such other persons as the Working Committee might decide upon. This convention shall put the demand for the Constituent Assembly in the forefront, shall determine all feasible methods for ending the constitution in the provinces and for opposing the introduction of the Federal Structure of the new Act, and will consider what other steps should be taken in the legislatures to give effect to the policy laid down in the Congress Election Manifesto, Congress resolutions, and the decisions of the All-India Congress Committee." Resolution XVIII invited the attention of the nation to the general election in the provinces in which it would face the opposition of reactionary and imperialist forces and groups entrenched in places of power and possessed of vast

material resources. It thus appealed to the millions of voters to vote for the Congress candidates committed to the cause of India's independence. Resolution XIX reiterated the stand of the Congress on interests of the farmers. It reaffirmed its agrarian programme as under :

“The Congress, at its last session, being fully conscious of the fact that the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, called upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make recommendations to enable the All-India Congress Committee to draw up an All-India Agrarian Programme. Many PCCs have not yet submitted their recommendations for such a programme. The Congress regrets this delay but realises that the subject is a vast and intricate one, requiring close study and investigation. It trusts that such PCCs as have not reported so far will take early steps to send in their recommendations.

The Congress is convinced that the final solution of this problem involves the removal of British imperialistic exploitation and a radical change in the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems. It feels, however, that the deepening crisis has made the burden on the peasantry an intolerable one and immediate relief is urgently called for. Pending the framing of an All-India Agrarian Programme, therefore, the following steps are necessary :

1. Rent and revenue should be readjusted having regard to present conditions and there should be substantial reduction in both.
2. Uneconomic holdings should be exempted from rent or land tax.
3. Agricultural incomes should be assessed to income tax like all other incomes, on a progressive scale, subject to a prescribed minimum.

4. Canal and other irrigation rates should be substantially lowered.

5. All feudal dues and levies and forced labour should be abolished, and demands other than rent should be made illegal.

6. Fixity of tenure with heritable rights along with the right to build houses and plant trees should be provided for all tenants.

7. An effort should be made to introduce cooperative farming.

8. The crushing burden of rural debt should be removed. Special tribunals should be appointed to inquire into this and all debts, which are unreasonable or beyond the capacity of peasants to pay, should be liquidated. Meanwhile, a moratorium should be declared and steps should be taken to provide cheap credit facilities.

9. Arrears of rent for previous years should generally be wiped out.

10. Common pasture lands should be provided, and the rights of the people in tanks, wells, ponds, forests and the like recognised, and no encroachment on these rights should be permitted.

11. Arrears of rents should be recoverable in the same manner as civil debts and not by ejection.

12. There should be statutory provision for securing a living wage and suitable working conditions for agricultural labourers.

13. Peasant unions should be recognised."

Resolution XX made it clear that the Congress would not take part in any function related to the celebration of King's coronation as it was committed to the independence of India.

and the elimination of all imperialist control and exploitation of the Indian people. Resolution XXI gave the call of strike on 1 April, 1937—the day when the new constitution would be inaugurated in order to demonstrate effectively the will of the Indian people to resist the imposition of unwarranted constitution and as an earnest mark of their determination to launch a powerful mass movement for its destruction. Finally, Resolution XXII fixed the next session in Gujarat.

The A-ICC and CWO Meetings (1937)

In its meeting held at Calcutta from 29 to 31 December, the A-ICC took a number of important decisions. Relating to the proposed Federation for India, it said : “In view of the announcements made on behalf of the British Government that steps will be taken to inaugurate the proposed Federation, the A-ICC reiterate their emphatic condemnation of and complete opposition to the scheme and their decision to combat it in every possible way open to them. An attempt to inaugurate this scheme, despite the clearly expressed will of the nation, will be a challenge to the people of India. The Committee, therefore call upon the Provincial and Local Congress Committees and the people generally, as well as the Provincial Governments and Ministries, to prevent the imposition of this Federation, which will do grave injury to India and tighten the bonds which hold her in subjection to imperialist domination and reaction. The Committee are of opinion that Provincial Governments should also move their legislatures to give formal expression to this opposition to the proposed Federation and to intimate to the British Government not to impose it on their Provinces.”

It viewed with grave concern and horror the imperialist aggression of Japan on China attended with wanton cruelty and the bombing of the civil population. It strongly deprecated orders against large number of inhabitants of the districts of Midnapore, Chittagong and some other areas, restricting their movements and activities and constituting a humiliating interference with the personal and civil liberties of the citizens.

It called upon the Provincial governments run by the Congress to lift the ban on political books. It reaffirmed the Congress policy regarding the redistribution of Provinces on a linguistic basis and recommend to the Governments of Bombay and Madras to consider the formation of the separate provinces of Andhra and Karnataka. It also advised the Congress ministries working in the Provinces not to recommend any name to the British Government for the conferment of titles and decorations. It expressed its emphatic protest against the ruthless policy of repression as indicated by the inauguration of various restrictive and prohibitory orders and political precautions launched in the Mysore State and also against the suppression of civil rights and liberties by denying the elementary rights of speech, assemblage, and association.

In its meeting held at Wardha from 27 February to 1 March, the CWC adopted a series of resolutions. One resolution said that it "congratulates the nation on its wonderful response to the call of the Congress during the recent elections, demonstrating the adherence of the masses to Congress policy, and their firm determination to combat the new constitution and end it, and by means of a Constituent Assembly to establish an independent and democratic state and remove the many burdens which all sections of our people suffer. The Congress realises the high responsibility with which the nation has charged it, and it calls upon the Congress organisation and in particular the newly elected Congress members of the Legislatures to remember always his trust and responsibility, to uphold Congress ideals and principles, to be true to the faith of the people, and to labour unceasingly as soldiers of Swaraj for the freedom of the motherland and the emancipation of her suffering and exploited millions."

Another resolution relating to the oath of allegiance said ; "As doubts have been raised regarding the propriety of taking oath of allegiance, the Working Committee wishes to declare that the taking of that oath, in order to enable participation in the work of the Legislatures, in no way lessens or varies the

demand for independence, and every Congress member stands by that objective and has to work to the end. The primary allegiance of all Congressmen, as well as all other Indians, is to the Indian people, and the oath of allegiance does not affect in any way this primary duty and allegiance." A resolution relating to the extra-parliamentary duties of the Congress members of legislatures was also passed. It said that their sphere of activities was not confined to the legislatures but included their constituencies. All effective work in the legislatures must have the sanction of the people behind and, therefore, all work in the legislatures must be co-ordinated with Congress activity outside. In view of the great awakening of the masses during the election campaign and their interest in Congress work and desire to participate in it, a resolution sought to impress upon all Provincial and Local Committees the necessity of increasing the association of the masses with the Congress organization in accordance with the directions of the Faizpur resolutions.

But very important was the resolution relating to the policy of the Congress in the provincial legislatures. It said: "The work of the Congress members of the Provincial Legislatures shall be governed by the following policy :

(i) The Congress has entered the legislatures not to co-operate with the new Constitution or the Government but to combat the Act and the policy underlying it, as this Act and policy are intended to tighten the hold of British Imperialism on India and to continue the exploitation of the Indian people. The Congress adheres to its general and basic policy of non-co-operation with the apparatus of British Imperialism except in so far as circumstances may require a variation.

(ii) The objective of the Congress is *purna swaraj* or complete independence and to that end all its activities are directed. The Congress stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the Government is under their effective control. Such a State can only be created by the Indian people them-

selves, and the Congress has therefore insisted on a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise, to determine the Constitution of the country. The Constituent Assembly can only come into existence when the Indian people have developed sufficient power and sanctions to shape their destiny without external interference.

(iii) The immediate objective of the Congress in the legislatures is to fight the new Constitution, to resist the introduction and working of the Federal part of the Act, and to lay stress on the nation's demand for a Constituent Assembly. Congress members of the legislatures have been directed by the Faizpur Congress to take the earliest opportunity to put forward in the new Assemblies this demand for a Constituent Assembly, and to support it by mass agitation outside.

(iv) Congress members of the legislatures must remember the Congress policy of not assisting or co-operating with any function or activity, calculated to enhance the power or prestige of British Imperialism in India. Ceremonial, official, or social functions of this kind must therefore be avoided and no Congress member should take part in them. In doubtful cases individual members should not take any action themselves but should refer to the Congress party in the Assembly and should abide by its decision.

(v) No Congress member of the legislatures may accept a title given by the British Government.

(vi) The Congress Party in each provincial Assembly must act as a disciplined body ; the leaders of which will represent the Party in any conversations with the Government and other groups. Individual member shall have no official contacts with Government other than those resulting from their duties as members, and such as may be expressly authorised by the Party.

(vii) Members will be expected to be in their places in the Assemblies during the session and when the party is attending.

There should be no absence except for leave taken and cause shown.

(viii) All Congress members of the legislatures shall be dressed in Khadi.

(ix) Congress parties in the Provincial Assemblies must not enter into any alliances with other groups in the Assembly without the permission of the Working Committee.

(x) Any member of the Provincial Legislatures not elected on behalf of the Congress but willing to take the Congress pledge and abide by Congress principles and discipline may be taken into the Congress party in that legislature, if the Party consider his admission desirable. But no person against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congress may be accepted without the permission of the Working Committee.

(xi) Congress members should press for the carrying out of the Congress programme as enunciated in the Election Manifesto and the Congress agrarian resolution. In particular, they should work for :

1. A substantial reduction in rent and revenue.
2. Assessment of income-tax, on a progressive scale, on agricultural incomes, subject to a prescribed minimum.
3. Fixity of tenure.
4. Relief from the burden of rural debt and arrears of rent and revenue.
5. Repeal of all repressive laws.
6. Release of political prisoners, internees and detenus.
7. Restoration of lands and property confiscated or sold by Government during Civil Disobedience Movements.
8. Eight hours day for industrial workers, without reduction of pay, and living wage.
9. Prohibition of intoxicating liquor and drugs.
10. Unemployment relief.
11. Reduction of high salaries, allowances, and cost of administration of Government.

(xii) Under the existing Act, with all its safeguards and special powers in the hands of the Viceroy or the Governor,

and its protection of the services, deadlocks are inevitable. They should not be avoided when they occur while pursuing Congress policy.

(xiii) Congress members in the Provincial Assemblies should further give expression to certain important demands of all India application which may not be given effect to in the Provincial Assemblies, such as, substantial reduction of the military expenditure as well as of the higher civil services ; complete national control over trade and tariffs and currency ; repeal of all India repressive legislation ; freedom of speech ; press and association ; opposition to war preparations, credits and loans.

(xiv) Congress members in the Assemblies must always endeavour to mobilise public opinion in their constituencies for the particular demand they are putting forward in the legislatures. Work in the legislatures should thus be coordinated with activity outside and mass movements built up in support of those demands and of Congress policy in general.”

In regard to the acceptance or non-acceptance of the ministries, it was decided that the CWC would make its recommendations to the AICC after it had received the recommendations of the provincial and local committees. It reiterated the resolve to greet the inauguration of the Act of 1935 on 1 April, 1937 with countrywide strike.

In its meeting held at Allahabad from 26 to 29 April, the CWC adopted a number of important resolutions. Resolution I relating to the office acceptance or formation of ministries by the Congressmen in the provinces said :

“The Working Committee approves of and endorses the action that the leaders of the Congress Parliamentary Parties in the provinces took, in pursuance of the AICC dated March 18, 1937, on being invited by the Governors in their respective provinces to help them in the formation of ministries.

In the view of the fact that it is contended by British ministers that it is not competent for the Governors, without amendment of the Act, to give the assurances required by the Congress for enabling the Congress leaders to form ministries, the Committee wishes to make it clear that the resolution of the AICC did not contemplate any amendment of the Act for the purpose of the required assurances. The Working Committee, moreover, is advised by eminent jurists that such assurances can be given strictly within the constitution.

The Working Committee considers that the pronouncements of the policy of the British Government made by Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler are utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the Congress, are misleading and misinterpret the Congress attitude. Further the manner and the setting in which such pronouncements have been made are discourteous to the Congress. The past record of the British Government as well as its present attitude show that without specific assurances as required by the Congress, popular ministries will be unable to function properly and without irritating interference. The assurances do not contemplate the abrogation of the right of the Governor to dismiss a ministry or dissolve a Provincial Assembly when serious differences of opinion arise between the Governor and his ministers. But this Committee has grave objection to ministers having to submit to interference by Governors with the alternative of themselves having to resign their office instead of the Governors taking responsibility of dismissing them."

Another resolution spelt out the role of the Congress ministers outside the legislatures. It said :

"Owing to the dead-lock created by the refusal of Governors to give the assurances asked on behalf of the Congress enabling acceptance of office by Congress members of the legislatures, various questions have been addressed to the Working Committee by Congress leaders in the Provinces as to the attitude, Congressmen should adopt, towards the so-called ministries formed by the Governors in the provinces

concerned. The Working Committee is of opinion that the formation of these ministries by the Governors is unconstitutional, repugnant to the conception of autonomy and in total defiance of the overwhelming public opinion in each of those provinces. The Working Committee is further of opinion that those who have accepted ministerships in these circumstances have by their unpatriotic conduct rendered a disservice to the country. The Committee advises that public meetings be held denouncing the action of these so-called ministers and challenging them to face the legislatures and justify their conduct. But the Committee is of opinion that hostile black flag demonstrations and the like should be avoided.

Congressmen should realise that parliamentary work is but a minor part of the national programme and that the great objective of complete independence can only be secured by sustained efforts by every Congressman and Congress-woman in carrying out the programme outside the legislatures as laid down from time to time. In furtherance of this objective, members of the legislatures should establish living touch with the electors in their respective constituencies and carry the message of the Congress and commend to them the constructive programme including the use of khaddar to the exclusion of mill cloth, the local production of khaddar in villages by hand spinning and hand-weaving ; creating public opinion in favour of total prohibition ; promotion of communal unity by collective and individual effort ; and the eradication of the evil of untouchability in every form."

Resolution III prohibited the contact of the Congress ministers with non-Congress ministries. It said : "Resolved that no Congress member of the Provincial Legislatures shall have any dealings or interviews with the so-called ministers who have been unconstitutionally appointed in provinces, where Congress commands a majority and the ministers in other provinces, except with the express permission of the Leader of the Congress Party."

In its meeting held at Wardha from 14 to 17 August, it took an important decision relating to the salaries and allowances of the ministers. It said :

“The Working Committee is of opinion that, in accordance with Congress policy, salaries and allowances of ministers and others should be reduced to the lowest possible limit consistent with efficiency. The Committee realises however, that the immediate and full application of the principle is not easy, and it may not be possible to introduce the desired changes at this stage. In view of varying circumstances in the different provinces, the Committee does not wish to lay down hard and fast rules and wishes to leave a large measure of discretion in this matter to the Congress Ministries. The Committee trusts that the ministries will keep in mind the basic policy of the Congress in the matter of salaries and allowances and will always endeavour to conform to it to the greatest extent possible.

The Committee, however, lays down the following general rules for the guidance of Congress ministries :

1. Congress Ministers' salaries should in no event exceed Rs. 500 per month. House allowance Rs. 100 a month and motor car allowance Rs. 150 a month. Thus the total allowances for house and car should not exceed Rs. 250. In the event of a minister not requiring a house allowance because he has a house of his own, this allowance should not be drawn. Ministers who do not wish to draw any allowances need not do so.

The State may provide cars for ministers, but no such special provision need be made unless it is considered necessary.

2. The salaries, and allowances if necessary, of parliamentary secretaries are left to the discretion of Congress Ministries.

3. *Members* : The present scale of payment of daily allowances and travelling expenses is heavy and has to be

completely overhauled. It may be difficult to bring about this complete overhaul immediately but in any event travelling expenses should be charged at the rate of double third class fare.

If it is desired to keep the present scale of daily allowance for the days of attendance at an Assembly session, no change need be made for the present. But in no event should this exceed Rs. 10 a day, there being no additional payment by way of salary.

If, on the other hand, it is desired to introduce a system of paying salaries to members, this may be done, provided that such salary shall not exceed Rs. 75 a month. In addition to such salary an allowance not exceeding Rs. 2-8-0 a day may be given to members for the days of attendance at an Assembly session or Committee meeting.

Even if a system of paying salaries to the members is introduced, such members as do not require these salaries, should not draw them.

4. In the provinces where these standards cannot be applied as non-Congress ministers have already fixed much higher salaries and allowances, Congress members of those legislatures should only accept payment for themselves in accordance with the above direction. They may, however draw the full sums allowed by the rules and hand over the balance to the All-India Congress Committee through the Party Leader. This amount should be kept in a special fund earmarked for the province concerned."

In its meeting held at Calcutta from 26 October to 1 November, it adopted a number of resolutions. One resolution relating to the rights of the minorities said :

"The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy in regard to the rights of the minorities in India and has stated that it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the

political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and the achievement of the people of India. This objective of unity and mutual co-operation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life, which have to be preserved in order to give freedom and opportunity to the individual as well as to each group to develop unhindered according to its capacity and inclination.

In view, however, of attempts having been made to misinterpret the Congress policy in this regard, the All-India Congress Committee desire to reiterate this policy. The Congress has included in its resolution on Fundamental Rights that

- (i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or minority.
- (ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.
- (iii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.
- (iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.
- (v) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public

resort, maintained out of State, or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

- (vii) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.
- (viii) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- (ix) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

These clauses of the Fundamental Rights resolution make it clear that there should be no interference in matters of conscience, religion, or culture, and a minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.

The position of the Congress in regard to the Communal decision has been repeatedly made clear in Congress resolutions and finally in the Election Manifesto issued last year. The Congress is opposed to this decision as it is anti-national, anti-democratic and is a barrier to Indian freedom and the development of Indian unity. Nevertheless the Congress has declared that a change in or suppression of Communal Decision should only be brought about by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Congress has always welcomed and is prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to bring about such a change by mutual agreement.

In all matters affecting the minorities in India, the Congress wishes to proceed by their co-operation and through their goodwill in a common undertaking and for the realization of a common aim which is the freedom and betterment of all the people of India.”

It issued a detailed statement clarifying the sanctity of the Vande Matram as the national song that had nothing to do to injure the sentiments of people belonging to any religious community. At no time this or any other song was formally adopted by the Congress as the national anthem of India. But popular usage gave it a special and national importance. The CWC felt that the past associations, with their long record of suffering for the cause, as well as popular usage, "has made the first two stanzas of this song a living and inseparable part of our national movement and, as such, they must command our affection and respect. There is nothing in these stanzas to which anyone can take exception."

The Fifty-First Session (1938)

It was held at Haripura (a rural place in Gujarat) from 19 to 21 February. The welcome address was delivered by Darbar Gopaldas Desai and then it was presided by Subhas Chandra Bose. It shows that the advice of Mahatma Gandhi was followed again that the session of the national organisation be held in the interior and remote places of the country so as to strengthen the mass contacts programme. The delegates could not have the convenience and comfort normally available in big towns, but they bore it happily, thanks to the organising genius of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

DIVIDENDS OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME*

Friends,

I do not know why an ordinary worker like me should have been made Chairman of the Reception Committee. There is one thing certainly which is a common practice in Gujarat and it is this that we are disciplined soldiers, ready to carry out the orders of our chief. You know Sardar Vallabhbhai. His general orders are that all the speech-making is to be left to him, we have to work away silently. And yet, if I happen to be here, you must understand that it is at his behest. It is not

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Haripura Congress held in February, 1938.

for me to make a speech, political or other. The political pronouncement will be made by the Prssident. My business is to welcome you today on behalf of Gujarat.

And welcoming you as I do on behalf of business-like Gujarat, I will make only a brief business-like speech. My own faith in the old programme of 1921 is well-known, and in spite of the alteration in details that it has undergone, I think that it is that programme which is going ultimately to help us win our freedom. If the value of truth and non-violence, and of the constructive programme that they imply, was great for the initial stages of the struggle, it is greater whilst we have passed the middle stages and, God willing, are nearing the end of the journey. It is as a staunch believer in those basic principles and as an humble soldier that I have the honour to welcome you on the bank of the Tapti.

Since last year we have begun to have Congress session in villages. Faizpur had the first honour and we have had the benefit of the experience gained at Faizpur. But I do not know how far we have succeeded in making a full use of that experience. What you see here is the result of the labour of hundreds of devoted volunteer workers, two of whom have laid down their lives here. Not only Gujarat, but India mourns the loss of Pandit Khare whom all of us miss here so much. My share in the work here is negligible. It is not for me to say how far we have succeeded. It will be for you to give your verdict after the end of this Session. All I have to do today is to welcome you cordially on behalf of Gujarat, and especially on behalf of the peasants of Bardoli and Ras whose share has been not inconsiderable in making what history we have made. And in giving you the welcome I would also beg you to bear with our many shortcomings, to be content with what comforts we have been able to provide, and not to mind the discomforts we have not quite been able to avoid.

We are blessed with the presidentship of one whose life is one unbroken record of sacrifice and service and suffering. He comes from a province which has, on all the three previous

occasions, given Gujarat Presidents of the Congress, and which in suffering would easily take the first rank among the provinces of the country. I hope and pray that under the wise guidance of our President we may march further forward to our goal and add more glorious chapters to our history.

In this session 21 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoned the deaths of some prominent figures like Sir J.C. Bose, Manilal Kothari, Mrs. Swaruprani Nehru etc. Resolution II demanded immediate release of the heroic Naga woman (Guidallo) who had raised the banner of freedom in the distant forests of Assam. Resolution III sent greetings to the Indians of British Guinea on the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the first Indian settlers in South American colony. Resolution IV viewed with alarm the rapidly growing deterioration in the status, position, and rights enjoyed by the Indians in South and East Africa. Resolution V expressed appreciation of the response of the Indian people to the appeal made on behalf of the Congress to refrain from the use of cloves, and that the boycott of trade in cloves in zanzibar by the Indian merchants had been complete and satisfactory. Resolution VI showed deep concern of the Congress over the threatened estrangement of feelings between the people of Ceylon and the Indian population in the Island consequent on certain legislation in regard to local administration and apprehensions as to discriminatory measures that might be further undertaken. Resolution VII viewed with anxious concern the aggression of brutal imperialism in China and the horrors and frightfulness that had accompanied it. Resolution VIII condemned the decision of Great Britain as a Mandatory Power to bring about the partition of Palestine in the teeth of the opposition of the Arabs and the appointment of a Commission to carry out this project. It expressed full sympathy of the Congress with the Arabs in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British imperialism.

Resolution IX was related to the stand of the Congress on the issue of foreign policy and war danger. It said : "In view

of the grave danger of widespread and devastating war which overshadows the world, the Congress desires to state afresh the policy of the Indian people in regard to foreign relations and war. The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them. Striving for their own freedom and independence as a nation, they desire to respect the freedom of others, and to build up their strength on the basis of international cooperation and goodwill. Resolution X reiterated that the creation of the excluded and partially excluded areas and Chief Commissioners' Provinces, including British Baluchistan and Coorg under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935 obstructed the growth of uniform democratic institutions in integral parts of India. Resolution XI resented the separation of about 115 villages from Ajmer-Merwara province. Resolution XII rejected the new constitution and declared that a constitution of India, acceptable to the people, must be based on independence and could only be framed by the people themselves by means of a Constituent Assembly.

Resolution XIII said that the administrative practice of excluding British Indians from acquiring land in the highlands of Kenya Colony, while a European of any nationality was free to do so, constituted a humiliating disability to the Indians settled in Kenya and was a deliberate offence to the Indian people. Resolution XIV strongly deprecated the continuance of the ban on about 110 Congress organisations in the district of Midnapore imposed by the Government of Bengal. Resolution XV emphasised the importance of national education. It demanded that free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale; the medium of instructions should be the mother tongue; and throughout this period education should centre round some form of manual and productive work. Resolution XVI reiterated the stand of the Congress on rights of the minorities. It welcomed the growth of anti-imperialist feelings among the Muslims and

the growing unity of all communities in India in the struggle for independence.

Resolution XVII demanded political, social and economic freedom in all States as in other parts of India. Resolution XVIII resented the interference of the Governors in the administration of the Provinces of U.P. and Bihar. It said : "The function of the Governor is to guide and advise Ministers, and not to interfere with the free exercise of their judgment in the discharge of their day to day duty...The Congress gladly admits that a measure of cooperation was extended by the Governors to the Ministers. It has been the sincere effort on the part of the Congress to extract what is possible from the Act for the public good and to strengthen the people in the pursuit of their goal of complete independence and the ending of the imperialistic exploitation of the masses of India." Resolution XIX has its own significance which was related to the unions of the peasants or kisan sabhas. It said that the Congress had always stood for the interests of the kisans but it could not associate itself with any activities which were incompatible with the basic principles of the Congress. Resolution XX said about the making of some changes in the constitution of the Congress. Finally, Resolution XXI set up a committee under the chairmanship of the Congress President (S C. Bose) to suggest some necessary change in the constitution of the Congress.

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1938)

In its meeting held at Delhi from 24 to 26 September, the A-ICC reiterated the stand of the Congress on the rejection of the Federation and the making of a new constitution of India by means of a constituent assembly. It said : "The Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation ; but a real Federation, must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty, and representation by the democratic process of election. The Indian States participating in the Federation should approximate to the provinces in the

establishment of representative institutions and responsible Government, civil liberties and methods of election to the Federal Houses. Otherwise the Federation, as it is now contemplated, will in stead of building up Indian unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the states in internal and external conflicts.”

It also reiterated the stand of the Congress on other issues as Indian States, Palestine and war danger in the light of resolutions adopted at the Haripura session. It passed an important resolution relating to civil liberties which said : “In as much as people, including Congressmen, have been found in the name of civil liberty to advocate murder, arson, looting and class war by violent means and several newspapers are carrying on a campaign of falsehood and violence calculated to incite the readers to violence and lead to communal conflicts the Congress warns the public that civil liberty does not cover acts or incitement to violence or promulgation of palpable falsehoods. In spite, therefore, of the Congress policy on civil liberty remaining unchanged the Congress will consistently with its tradition support measures that may be undertaken by the Congress Governments for the defence of life and property.”

In its meeting held at Wardha from 11 to 16 December, the CWC decided that the next session of the Congress be held at Tripuri. It welcomed the awakening of the people of the Indian States in many parts of the country and considered this as a hopeful prelude to the larger freedom, comprising the whole of India, for which the Congress had laboured. It supported the demand for civil liberty and responsible government under the aegis of the Rulers in the States and expressed their solidarity with these movements for freedom and self-expression. It declared the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League as communal organisations and ruled that a person belonging to such communal bodies could not be a member of any elected body of the Congress. Thus, the Congress President (S C. Bose) wrote a letter to Jinnah on 16 December, 1938

regretting that the Congress could not proceed further in the direction of starting negotiations with the League with a view to arriving at a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question.

The Fifty-Second Session (1939)

It was held in the small town of Tripuri in the Mahakosal region (now Madhya Pradesh) from 10 to 12 March. Seth Govind Das delivered the welcome address. This was the first occasion when an unfortunate controversy occurred on the election of the President of the national organisation. The election of Subhas Chandra Bose for the second time was not appreciated by those who supported Pattabhi Sitaramayya and who was publicised as the candidate of Mahatma Gandhi. Though elected as the President for the session, Bose could not attend the open session owing to serious illness and his address was read out in his absence. The open session was thus presided by Maulana Azad.

**FIGHT NON-VIOLENTLY IN THE
CRITICAL HOUR OF HISTORY***

Shrijut President and Delegates,

After the splendid welcome by plentiful Gujarat, you will probably find the reception in the midst of the hills and forests of Mahakoshal rather poor. However, we are confident that you will not judge the depth and cordiality of our feelings towards you by the simplicity of our reception. Our faith in the National Institution, which you all represent, is as firm as the mountains, and our forests with their myriad tongues are shouting of liberty for achieving which we have all assembled here. Thousands of years ago when Shri Ramchandra visited our Province, a daughter of our forest tribes welcomed him by offering wild plums. And so, like Ramchandra, do accept our humble offerings as the plums of

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Tripuri Congress held in March, 1939.

Shavri and forgive us for numerous shortcomings in our arrangements that you may come across.

This town of ours made of wood and bamboo is a gift of our forests. We have named it Vishnu Dutt Nagar. The late Pandit Vishnu Dutt Shukla, was the first leader of our province Mahakoshal. The invitation of the Congress Session of 1920 was extended on behalf of the entire Central Provinces. When the question of selecting the venue arose, the late Shuklaji did his best to have the session of the Congress at Jubbulpore, but it was eventually held at Nagpur. It was at Nagpur while attending that very Congress session that Panditji breathed his last. Mahakoshal could not forget its first leader nor his long cherished ambition. It is in commemoration of his memory that we have named the town as Vishnu Dutt Nagar.

It was during the Nagpur Congress in 1920 that the Congress Province were constituted on a linguistic basis. A separate Province was formed out of the Hindustani-speaking districts and named Hindustani C.P. Its ancient name 'Mahakoshal' was revived during the Satyagraha movement of 1930, and subsequently it was approved by the Congress. In its loyalty to the Congress Mahakoshal claims a foremost place. Its political history of the last 18 years can well justify this claim. The people of this province gave a ready response to the Non-Cooperation and the Civil Disobedience movements. The flag Satyagraha which ultimately succeeded in Nagpur was started at the Jabbulpore. The Forest Satyagraha was started at the instance of our province. Even in the Parliamentary sphere it has no mean achievement to its credit. During 1923 elections the Swaraj Party secured majority only in Bengal and C.P. The Bengal majority broke down after some time, but in our province no ministry could be formed for full three years. In the elections of 1926 while the other districts of C.P. and Berar were carried away by the wave of Responsivism, Mahakoshal still kept the Congress flag flying high. The lavish praises bestowed upon Mahakoshal by the late Pandit Motilal Nehru after the elections will for ever remain

a matter of pride to us. If one analyses the election results of 1937 and takes the figures of Mahakoshal separately from those of other parts of C.P. and Berar one will find that Mahakoshal leads all other provinces. There is only one reason for our success. The people of this province have never given even a moment's thought to any organisation other than the Congress. Whenever an election fight ensued, it was always directly between the Congressmen on the one side and the apologists of the British rule on the other. The Hindu Sabha, the Responsivist Party, the Ambedkar Party, etc. never found a congenial soil in Mahakoshal. The Muslim League came in existence in our province only last year. We always rejoice to remember that on the eve of the Simon Commission's visit to India the land-holders of Mahakoshal convened a meeting and passed a unanimous resolution to boycott the unwanted Commission. All provinces of India have vied with one another in offering sacrifices for the freedom of the country. All that we claim is that whatever our shortcomings in other directions the provinces of Mahakoshal, to which you have allowed the privilege of welcoming you today, has not been found wanting in its devotion to the Congress.

After the example of the Chairman of the Haripura Congress Reception Committee, I had decided to wind up my speech here. The situation which has developed in the country during the past few weeks as also the international situation, however compel me to add a few words. The world is passing through a crisis. Small or big wars have been already going on in Europe and Asia, and any day a world war might break out. Even if India so desires, she cannot keep wholly aloof. In order to decide our attitude towards any such war, we shall have to gauge the position of England and France on one side, of Germany and Italy on the other, and of America and Japan on the third. After the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy it is only the Arabian Sea that separates us from the new Italian Empire.

Again, both Italy and Germany having obtained footholds in Spain, the Mediterranean route is no longer as open to

England as it had been in the past. Whenever a war breaks out, our armies are speedily sent out to Europe. In case of an invasion from outside, India will have no means of defence left to her. We are now threatened with foreign invasions not only from the West but also from the East. The rising power of Japan is as much a menace to us now as some Western nations had been in the past. Japan kept aloof during the last war, but this time her attitude seems to have changed. A section of the American Press has gone even to the extent of asserting that Czechoslovakia was sacrificed at Munich solely on account of the fear of Japan. It is rumoured that secret reports from British Spies stationed in the Far East stated that as soon as England would declare war against Germany over the Czechoslovakian issue, Japan would invade Australia and India, and that it was on receipt of these reports that Mr. Chamberlain hurriedly made up his mind to see Hitler and sacrifice Czechoslovakia.

The Mediterranean Sea have almost become an "Italian Lake." The only hope of protecting British possession in the Far East lies in America's siding in any future war with England. At present all the efforts of England are directed towards inducing America to join the war. England desires that America should commit herself to love's labour of protecting British Empire in the East. History records so far no such example of altruistic alliance in the world of politics. Small wonder that at the present moment public opinion in America is against any sacrifice on the part of America in men and money for the protection of British possessions in the East.

Under the circumstances, it is doubtful how far British will be able to defend India. She will have to defend herself; and she cannot do so until she has complete control over her army and her foreign policy. Thus, it is obvious that the problem of India's self-defence cannot be separated from the bigger question of her independence.

It is said that Germany, Japan and Italy are determined upon a war because they need land for their surplus population. Considering from this point of view, India's needs are even greater. Her population is growing rapidly, but the doors of other countries are being banged against her people. A large number of Indians have settled in foreign lands for about a century and with the sweat of their brow have made these countries fit for human habitation. Even in these lands our countrymen are not allowed to live in peace and on terms of equality. The question of clove trade in Zanzibar was solved only yesterday. In Kenya the highlands can be acquired by the whites of any nationality but the coloured, the fact that they may not be British subjects is immaterial.

However, our countrymen, who have lived there for many years and who are also supposed to be British subjects have no rights to purchase those lands. England can even tolerate the talk of returning Tanganayika to Germany, but declares herself powerless to protect the interests of her own subjects in South and East Africa. Only last year the British Government entered into a trade agreement of India with South Africa against the commercial interest of the country and without the consent of the Central Legislature. The Minister for Interior in the Union of South Africa only the other day hinted at legislation for segregating. Indians residing in Natal and Transval even Ceylon, Fizi and Malaya and British Guiana continuously give pinpricks to our people settled there. Last year I saw with my own eyes, the pitiable condition of our people in Africa. It is there that we fully realise the fact of our political bondage. Had we been independent, we would not have tolerated this condition even for a single day. I could understand only after visiting Africa why after fighting for the rights of Indians overseas for so many years Mahatma Gandhi arrived at the conclusion that the question of Indian settlers is dependent for its solution upon the question of Indian independence.

Thus, turn wherever we may, we find ourselves faced with difficulties. At this juncture what we need most is solid patrio-

tism, political sagacity and sound leadership. What a pity that at this very critical hour in our history, signs of internal strife should manifest themselves. We have begun to think of changing horses in the mid-stream.

The Indian National Congress was founded for carrying on the struggle for freedom, and from time to time we have not hesitated to be guided by dictators. Even during the periods intervening between various movements we could not fully follow democratic principles. Even England, known as the birth-place of democracy, substitutes a coalition ministry on the basis of dictatorship in times of war. Our Congress Organisation can be compared with the Fascist Party of Italy, the Nazi Party of Germany and the Communist Party of Russia, although they have embraced violence and we are wedded to the creed of non-violence. All the inhabitants of Italy are not Fascists, the entire German public is not Nazi, neither are all Russians Communists; yet almost all Italians, Germans and Russians have faith in their respective parties. Every Indian is not a fouranna member of the Congress, yet all Indians are with the Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi occupies the same position among Congressmen as that held by the leadership of Mussolini among Fascists, Hitler among Nazis and Stalin among Communists. The Congress, as at present constituted, is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. Its aims and objects and the means of attaining them, *i. e.* truth and non-violence have been laid down by him. The various struggles for independence initiated during the past twenty years were started, carried on and terminated in accordance with his dictates. True, the Mahatma has no specific place assigned to him in the written constitution of the Congress, but who will deny that a practice has grown up to elect as the Congress President the person upon whom Mahatma Gandhi's choice falls and for the President to nominate on his Working Committee mostly those approved by him. In brief, he has been all in all in the Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared the other day in Europe that

Gandhiji is even greater than the Congress. The President of this year was right when he said recently that it would be a tragedy if he got the confidence of others but failed to win the confidence of the greatest man of India

Today we have assembled here under peculiar circumstances. Mahatmaji has declared the election of this year's President as his own defeat. It is also stated that the new programme is to resort to direct action once again, if necessary, after giving six months' ultimatum to the British Government. I plead ignorance of secrets, but as far as I am aware Mahatma Gandhi or anyone of his colleagues has never expressed himself in favour of accepting the Federal part of the Government of India Act. If this position is conceded, and I have no reason to suspect otherwise, I make bold to say that the issue before us is quite simple. A struggle against Federation is a foregone conclusion. What remains for decision is the time and the manner of initiating the campaign.

I hope that the fight will be a non-violent one. Mahatma Gandhi is the Acharya of non-violence and knows best the technique of non-violent struggle. It is, therefore, naturally expected that it should be left to the good old teacher to decide when and how the next fight should be started. As a matter of fact, the struggle is already in progress. The Federation is designed to comprise Indian states and the British provinces. The majority of the British provinces are under the control of the Congress today. If I have correctly followed the views of the President, I think his desire is to extend the Congress regime also over the remaining provinces. Gandhiji has already started the struggle in Indian states with the result that Shrimati Kasturba Gandhi, Shrimati Maniben Patel and Deshbhakta Seth Jamnalal Bajaj have been snatched away from us.

The country will be gainer if, as I have stated above, the Congress secures control over the remaining provinces and throws its full weight in the struggle to win the fight in Indian states. I have not the least doubt that Mahatmaji will himself

give a new turn to the struggle at the opportune moment, and what the President wants today will surely happen tomorrow. I admire the enthusiasm of those who are impatient to give a fight. In politics enthusiasm alone, however, does not bring success ; confidence in the accredited leader and discipline are essential. The strength gained by the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi during the past twenty years is unprecedented in our political history. Like a tried General several times he asked us to march forward, and there is no reason why we should deviate from the path so far followed by us.

The great poet Kalidas has said : Diplomacy devoid of valour is cowardice, and valour without diplomacy is brutish. In my humble opinion Mahatmaji combines in himself the qualities of both valour and discretion. Recently while speaking on the agitation in Rajkot and Jaipur Nehruji described Gandhiji's voice as "soft but iron." It reminded me of Bhavabhuti, the great Sanskrit poet, who said in Ramchandra : 'that is harder than diamond but softer than flower.' In these words of Nehruji and Bhavabhuti we have the true picture of Mahatmaji. The enemies of our freedom recognise the iron hidden in the flower, but unfortunately sometimes we ourselves seem to mistake it for weakness.

Just at the moment both the national and international situations are critical, and I pray to the Almighty to grant every son and daughter of India present at Tripuri wisdom and strength to reach a correct decision.

Once again I extend a hearty welcome to you, brothers and sisters on behalf of the entire province of Mahakoshal, and crave your indulgence for the short comings in our arrangements and lapses in my address.

In this session 12 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the deaths of some prominent figures like Maulana Shaukat Ali, Mohammed Iqbal, G.S. Khaparde etc. Resolution

It extended cordial welcome to the fraternal delegation from the Wafd Party of Egypt that symbolised the solidarity of the movements for freedom in Egypt and India. Resolution III sent greetings of the Congress to the people of China and its deepest sympathy in the trials and privations in their struggle against a ruthless and inhuman imperialism. Resolution IV spelt out the stand of the Congress on 'National Demand'. It said :

“The Congress has for more than half a century striven for the advancement of the people of India and has represented the urge of the Indian people towards freedom and self-expression. During the past twenty years it has engaged itself on behalf of the masses of the country in struggle against British Imperialism, and through the suffering and disciplined sacrifice of the people, it has carried the nation a long way to the independence that is its objective. With the growing strength of the people, it has adapted itself to a changing and developing situation, and while pursuing various programmes, has ever worked for the independence of India and the establishment of a democratic State in the country. Rejecting the Government of India Act and with the full determination to end it, it decided to take advantage of the measure of provincial autonomy that the Act provided, restricted and circumscribed as it was, in order to strengthen the national movement and to give such relief to the masses as was possible under the circumstances. To the Federal part of the Act the Congress declared its uncompromising opposition and its determination to resist its imposition.

“The Congress declares afresh its solemn resolve to achieve independence for the nation and to have a constitution framed for a free India through a Constituent Assembly, elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise and without any interference by a foreign authority. No other constitutions or attempted solutions of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people.

“The Congress is of opinion that in view of the situation in India, the organised strength of the national movement, the remarkable growth of consciousness of the masses, the new awakening among the people of the states, as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the principle of self-determination must now be applied to the fullest extent to India so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic state by means of a Constituent Assembly. Not only the inherent right and dignity of the people demand this full freedom, but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses, cannot find solution nor can India get rid of her poverty and keep pace with modern progress, unless her people have full opportunities of self development and growth which independence alone can give. Provincial Autonomy affords no such scope for development and its capacity for good is being rapidly exhausted ; the proposed Federation strangles India still further and will not be accepted. The Congress is therefore firmly of opinion that this whole Government of India Act must give place to constitution of a free India made by the people themselves.

“An independent and democratic India will face the solution of her great problems rapidly and effectively and will line herself with the progressive peoples of the world and thus aid the cause of democracy and freedom.

“With a view to a speedy realisation of the Congress objective and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead and prepare the country for a nation-wide struggle, this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organisation, the Congress Provincial Governments and the people generally, to work to this end by promoting unity of seeking to eliminate disruptive forces and conditions which lead to communal conflicts and national disunity, by co-ordinating the activities of the Provincial Governments with the work outside the legislatures, and by strengthening the organisation so as to make it a still more effective organ of the people’s will.

Resolution V authorised the A-ICC to make some necessary changes in the constitution of the Congress to check abuses relating to the enrolment of members and elections. Resolution VI has its own importance that sought to make the policy of the Congress clear in the light of some misunderstandings that had arisen as a result of the Presidential election controversy. It said :

“In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential election and after, it is desirable that the Congress should clarify the position and declare its general policy

This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. This Congress expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members.

In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that its executive should command his implicit confidence and requests the President to appoint the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji.”

Resolution VII reiterated the stand of the Congress on the question of Palestine. Resolution VIII demanded that democratic and responsible form of Government be immediately introduced in the province of British Baluchistan. Resolution IX spelt out the foreign policy of the Congress in that critical period of history. It said :

“The Congress records its entire disapproval of British Foreign Policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the recognition of Rebel Spain. This policy has been one of deliberate betrayal of democracy, repeated breach of pledges, the ending of the system of collective security and cooperation with governments which are avowed enemies of democracy and freedom. As a result of this policy, the world is being reduced to a state of international anarchy where brutal violence triumphs and flourishes unchecked and decides the fate of nations, and in the name of peace stupendous preparations are being made for the most terrible of wars. International morality has sunk so low in Central and South-Western Europe that the world has witnessed with horror the organised terrorism of the Nazi Government against people of the Jewish race and the continuous bombing from the air by rebel forces of cities and civilian inhabitants and helpless refugees.

The Congress dissociates itself entirely from British foreign policy which has consistently aided the Fascist Powers and helped in the destruction of democratic countries. The Congress is opposed to imperialism and fascism alike and is convinced that world peace and progress required the ending of both of these. In the opinion of the Congress, it is urgently necessary for India to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from both Imperialism and fascism, and pursuing her path of peace and freedom.”

Resolution X welcomed the awakening of the people of the Indian States in many parts of the country and considered it as a hopeful prelude to the larger freedom comprising the whole of India, for which the Congress had laboured. Resolution XI noted with grave concern and anxiety the rapidly deteriorating position of the Indians overseas, particularly in the countries within the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations and extended its sympathy and support to all Indian nationals abroad in their just struggle for the assertion of their legitimate rights. Finally, Resolution XII said that the next session of the Congress be held in Bihar during the last week of December of this year.

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1939)

An important meeting was held at Wardha on 9 and 10 October under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad.* It resented that the British government had declared India a belligerent country on the side of the Allies without consulting or taking the consent of the Indian people. It objected to various far reaching measures hurried through the legislatures and promulgated in the form of ordinances vitally affecting and circumscribing the powers of the provincial governments. It demanded that the British government should immediately declare its war aims and peace aims. It condemned Fascism and Nazi aggression and reaffirmed that peace and freedom could only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. It desired to declare afresh that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress had always pledged itself. It approved the formation by the Working Committee of the War Emergency Sub-Committee and authorised the CWC to take necessary steps to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis. It was also resolved that the next session of the Congress be held in the second fortnight of March next year and not in the last week of December as decided at the Tripuri session.

In its meeting held at Allahabad from 19 to 23 November, the CWC discussed the political situation in the country created by the War and the resignation of Congress ministries. It passed a long resolution to this effect which said :

*Since Subhas Chandra Bose did not appreciate the resolution adopted by the Congress at its Tripuri session that the President should form the CWC according to the wishes of Gandhiji, he resigned in protest and then the A-ICC elected Rajendra Prasad as the interim President of the Congress.

"The Working Committee have noted with pleasure the response of the country to the policy enunciated by them in regard to the war crisis in Europe and its repercussions in India. This policy, based on numerous declarations of the Congress, was laid down in the statement issued by the Committee on September 14, 1939, and subsequent events have amply justified its wisdom and experience. The course of the war and the policy pursued by this British and French Governments, and, in particular, the declarations made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the world war of 1914-1918, is being carried on for imperialist ends, and British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end.

"The Working Committee's unequivocal demand was for a declaration of war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and in particular how these aims were going to be applied to India. These aims could only be considered worthy if they included the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as an independent nation whose policy would be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people. The answer to this demand has been made on behalf of the British Government to create misunderstandings and to befog the main and moral issue. In justification of this refusal to make a declaration in terms of the Working Committee's resolution, communal pleas have been advanced and the rights of minorities and of the Princes pleaded as a barrier to India's freedom.

"The committee wish to declare with all emphasis that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demand of the Congress, and the minorities, whatever their other differences might be, do not oppose India's right to freedom and independence. The Princes are represented by, and are the emblems of, the Paramount Power in India. In the end it will be the people of the Indian States who will determine which part they

will take in a free India, though the British Government has consistently ignored their wishes in a matter which vitally affects them. In any event the wishes of those who may oppose India's independence are, and must be, irrelevant to the declaration of the British Government's intentions. The Committee can only interpret this attempt to avoid a statement of war aims and Indian freedom, by taking shelter under irrelevant issues, as a desire to maintain imperialist domination in India in alliance with the reactionary elements in the country.

“The Congress has looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raises as essentially a moral issue, and has not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining. The moral and dominant issue of war aims and India's freedom has to be settled satisfactorily before any other subsidiary question can be considered. In no event can the Congress accept the responsibility of government, even in the transitional period, without real power being given to popular representatives. The Working Committee, therefore, approve of and endorse the reply dated November 4, 1939 sent by the Congress President to the Viceroy.

“The Committee wish to declare again that the recognition of India's independence and of the right of her people to frame their constitution through a Constituent Assembly, is essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further cooperation. They hold that a Constituent Assembly is the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country, and no one who believes in democracy and freedom can possibly take exception to it. The Working Committee believe too that the Constituent Assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving the communal and other difficulties.

“This, however, does not mean that the Working Committee will relax their efforts for arriving at a solution of the communal problem. The Assembly can frame a constitution in

which the right of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of members in the Assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

“The declarations made on behalf of the British Government being inadequate have compelled the Congress to dissociate itself from British policy and war effort, and as a first step in non-cooperation, to bring about the resignation of all Congress Governments in the Provinces. The policy of non-cooperation continues and must continue unless the British Government revises its policy and accepts the Congress contention. The Working Committee would, however, remind Congressmen that it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent. While a Satyagraha is ever ready for a non-violent fight, if it has to come, he never relaxes his effort for peace and always works for its attainment. The Working Committee will, therefore, continue to explore the means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress. The Committee must, however, resist, by the non-violent methods of the Congress, all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which are not of their choice and everything that is against the dignity and freedom of India.

“The Working Committee appreciate and express pleasure at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for the launching of Civil Disobedience, should this become necessary. But Civil Disobedience requires the same strict discipline as an army organised for armed conflict. The army is helpless unless it possesses its weapons of destruction and knows how to use them. So also an army of non-violent soldiers is ineffective unless it understands and possesses the essentials of non-vio-

lence. The Working Committee desire to make it clear that the true test of preparedness for Civil Disobedience lies in Congressmen themselves spinning and promoting the cause of khadi to the exclusion of mill-cloth, and deeming it their duty to establish harmony between communities by personal acts of service to those other than members of their own community, and individual Hindu Congressmen seeking occasion for fraternising with the Harijans as often as possible.

Congress organisations and Congressmen should, therefore prepare for future action by promoting this programme. They should explain to the people the message and policy of the Congress and the implications of the Constituent Assembly, which is the crux of the Congress programme for the future.”

In its meeting held at Wardha from 18 to 22 December, the CWC took stock of the prevailing political situation and passed a resolution which said :

“The Working Committee have studied with regret the recent pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India. His reference to the communal question merely clouds the issue and takes the public mind off the central fact that the British Government have failed to define their war aims especially with regard to India’s freedom.

“In the opinion of the Working Committee the communal question will never be satisfactorily solved so long as the different parties are to look to a third party, through whose favour they expect to gain special privileges, even though it may be at the expense of the nation. The rule of a foreign power over a people involves a division among the elements composing it. The Congress has never concealed from itself the necessity of uniting the various divisions. It is the one organisation which in order to maintain its national character has consistently tried, not always without success, to bring about unity. But the Working Committee are convinced that lasting unity will only come when foreign rule is completely withdrawn. Events that have happened since the last meeting of the Committee have

confirmed this opinion. The Working Committee are aware that the independence of India cannot be maintained, if there are warring elements within the country. The Committee are, therefore, entitled to read in the British Government's raising the communal question reluctance to part with power. The Constituent Assembly as proposed by the Congress is the only way to attain a final settlement of communal questions. The proposal contemplates fullest representation of all communities with separate electorates where necessary. It has already been made clear on behalf of the Congress that minority rights will be protected to the satisfaction of the minorities concerned, difference, if any, being referred to an impartial tribunal.

“Congressmen must have by now realised that independence is not to be won without very hard work. Since the Congress is pledged to non-violence, the final sanction behind it is Civil Resistance, which is but a part of Satyagraha. Satyagraha means good-will towards all, especially towards opponents. Therefore, it is the duty of individual Congressmen to promote and seek good-will. Success of the programme of Khaddar as an accepted symbol of non-violence, harmony and economic independence is indispensable. The Working Committee, therefore, hope that all Congress organisations will, by a vigorous prosecution of the constructive programme, themselves fit to take up the call when it comes.

Independence Day

“In view of the present political crisis and the urgent necessity of preparing the country the struggle that may be forced upon us, in the near future by the attitude of the British Government towards our demands it was felt that the Independence Pledge for this year should be so framed as to help in the preparation already on foot. The following resolution was therefore passed :

“The Working Committee draw the attention of all Congress Committees, Congressmen and the country to the necessity of observing properly and with due solemnity Indepen-

dence Day on January 26, 1940. Ever since 1930 this day has been regularly observed all over the country and it has become a landmark in our struggle for independence. Owing to the crisis through which India and the world are now passing and the possibility of our struggle for freedom being continued in an intenser form, the next celebration of this Day has a special significance attached to it. This celebration must, therefore, not only be the declaration of our national will to freedom, but a preparation for that struggle and a pledge to disciplined action.

“The Working Committee, therefore, call upon all Congress Committees and individual Congressmen to take the pledge prescribed below in public meetings called for the purpose. Where owing to illness or other physical disability, or to being in an out of way place, individual Congressmen are unable to attend a public meeting, they should take the pledge in their homes, individually or in groups. The Working Committee advise organisations and individuals to notify their Provincial Congress Committees of the meetings held as well as the individual or group pledges taken. The Committee hope that none who does not believe in the contents of the pledge will take it merely for the sake of form. Those Congressmen who do not believe in the prescribed pledge should notify their disapproval, stating reasons therefor to the Provincial Congress Committee, giving their names and addresses. This information is required not for the purpose of any disciplinary action but for the purpose of ascertaining the strength of disapproval of anything contained in the pledge. The Working Committee have no desire to impose the pledge on unwilling Congressmen. In a non violent organisation compulsion can have little place. The launching of civil disobedience requires the disciplined fulfilment of the essential conditions thereof.

Pledge

“We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they

may have full opportunities of growth. We believe 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 has 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 recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain Independence.

“We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

“We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular require successful working of the constructive programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading good-will among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interests.

“Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi, and so far as possible, products of villages handicrafts only and endeavour to make others do likewise.

“We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India.”

The Fifty-Third Session (1940)

It was held from 17 to 19 March at Bankipore in Bihar. Babu Rajendra Prasad was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and it was presided by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It met under very critical conditions created by the second World War. It adopted a resolution which said :

*India and the War-Crisis
Call to the Nation*

“This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the AICC and the Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India’s resources in this War, as an affront to them, which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncement made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under

these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress, therefore, strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen and those under the Congress influence cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

“The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and dominion or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

“The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognised minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India’s constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress renudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

“The Congress cannot admit the right of the Rulers of Indian States, or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the states or the provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the states is of British creation and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people will be protected.

“The Congress withdrew the ministries from the provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step must naturally be followed by Civil Disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention of Congressmen to Gandhiji’s declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring Civil Disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the Constructive Programme prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

“The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence, the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of Civil Disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

“The Congress hereby authorises the All-India Congress Committee and in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee, to take all steps to implement the foreign resolution, as the Committee concerned may deem necessary.”

The A-ICO and OWO Meetings (1940-1942) .

In its meeting held at Allahabad from 29 April to 2 May, 1942 the A-ICC condoled the death of Seth Jammalal Bajaj. It endorsed the decision of the CWC on the rejection of the Cripps Proposals. It passed a lengthy resolution expressing the stand of the Congress on the issue of World War and its attitude towards the British government. It said :

“In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All-India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India’s policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

“The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-cooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power.

“India’s participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to nazism and fascism as to imperialism. If India were free, she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend her-

self in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is, in fact, an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense accept it as their own.

“The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast man-power of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India’s past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interests and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India’s inexhaustible man-power should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

“The AICC is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain’s safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

“The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would,

therefore, expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting, our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves, a position which we can never accept.

The success of such a policy of non-cooperation and non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.”

It rejected the plan of C. Rajagopalachari proposing referendum in the Muslim-majority areas of the country so as to ascertain whether they would desire to live in India or not implying joining the state of Pakistan as demanded by the Muslim League. The resolution said :

“The AICC is of opinion that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal.”

The President, in view of the importance of the subject as also the number of signatories to the requisition, permitted the resolution to be moved when the non-official resolution on the same subject notified by Shri K. Santhanam came up for consi-

deration before the Committee. The President observed that the two resolutions will be voted upon separately, but the debate will be a joint one.* The non-official resolution given notice of by Shri K. Santhanam was as follows :

“The All-India Congress Committee notes with deep regret that the attempts to establish a National Government for India to enable her to face the problems arising out of the present grave situation have failed and that as a result of this Nationalist India has been placed in a dilemma. It is impossible for the people to think in terms of neutrality or passivity during an invasion by an enemy power. Neither is it practicable to organise an effective defence, independently and uncoordinated with the defence measures of the Government. It is absolutely and urgently necessary in the best interests of the country at this hour of peril to do all that Congress can possibly do to remove every obstacle in the way of establishment of a national administration to face the present situation : and, therefore, inasmuch as the Muslim League has insisted on the recognition of the right of separation of certain areas from United India upon the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of such areas, as a condition precedent for united national action at this moment of grave national danger, the AICC is of opinion that to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a National Government at this grave crisis for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil and acknowledge the Muslim League’s claim for separation, should the same be persisted on when the time

*Considering the circumstances in which the resolution came up before the AICC the President allowed Shri Rajagopalachariar to move the resolution. Shri K. Santhanam seconded it. The debate on the two resolutions lasted for three hours at the end of which they were voted upon. The resolution moved by Rajagopalachariar was defeated, 120 members voting against it and 15 members voting for it. The resolution given notice of by the 51 requisitionists and moved by Shri Jagat Narayan Lal was passed, 92 voting for and 17 voting against it.

comes for framing a constitution for India and thereby remove all doubts and fears in this regard, and to invite the Muslim League for a consultation for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of a National Government to meet the present emergency.”

But the meeting of the A-ICC held at Bombay on 7 and 8 August, 1942 became an historic event when it passed the Quit India Resolution which said :

Quit India

“The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

“The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom, and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on domination of subject and colo-

nial countries and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method.

“The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm. The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure the success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of nazism, fascism and imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subjected and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these Nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

“The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

“The AICC therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India’s independence, a Provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus

be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its allied powers, to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all powers and authority must belong.

“The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This Constitution according to the Congress view should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people’s united will and strength behind it.

“The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign dominations. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran, Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule of control of any other colonial power.

“While the AICC must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advance-

ment of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

“An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

“Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

“The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reaction of the British Government and the misguided criticism of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain

and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

"The AICC would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

"The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

“Lastly, whilst the AICC has stated its own view of the future government under free India, the AICC wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.”

In its meeting held at Wardha from 17 to 21 June, 1942, the CWC issued a statement on the ‘Political Situation’ which said :

“The Working Committee have been deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession and, in particular, by the misfortunes that have befallen the people of France. These events have already had far-reaching consequences, and they are likely to be followed by other happenings which will lead to novel situations and complex problems.

Ever since the commencement of the European war, the Congress has followed a policy which was based on its principles and on the attitude of the British Government towards the demand that India should function as a free and independent country. This policy was confirmed in the Ramgarh resolution. The manner of the application of this policy will necessarily depend on the situation which changes from day to day. Problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The problem of the achievement of national freedom has now to be considered along with the allied one of its maintenance and the defence of the country against possible external aggression and internal disorder.

“The war in Europe, resulting from a desire, for imperialist domination over other people and countries, and a suicidal race in armaments, has led to human sorrow and misery on a scale hitherto unknown. It has demonstrated the inefficacy of organised violence, on however vast a scale, for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of people. It has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom

and the choice before the world is uttermost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on a basis of freedom for all peoples. Mahatma Gandhi has presented to the peoples of the world, crying for relief from the crushing burden of war, a weapon in the shape of organised non-violence, designed to take the place of war, for the defence of a people's rights and freedom against armed aggression. He feels that at this critical phase in the history of man, the Congress should enforce this ideal by itself declaring that it does not want that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression or internal disorder.

“While the Working Committee hold that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in their struggle for independence, the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements that they have to deal with, and the possible dangers in a period of transition and dynamic change, until the Congress has acquired non-violent control over the people in adequate measure and the people have imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organised non-violence. The Committee have deliberated over the problems that has thus arisen and have come to the conclusion that they are unable to go the full length with Gandhiji. But they recognise that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder.

“Many of the problems which the Working Committee have considered in this connexion are not of the present, though they may be of the near future. The Committee wish to make it clear that the methods and basic policy of non-violence in the national struggle for freedom, continue with full force and are not affected in the least by the inability to extend it to the region of national defence.

“The War Committees that are being formed are definitely aimed at increasing the War effort. In view of the Congress policy, they cannot be supported and Congressmen cannot participate in them or contribute to war funds. Nor can Congressmen associate themselves with Government controlled civic guards.

“The Working Committee advises Congress Committees to encourage in every way the recruitment and training of peaceful volunteers for national service. Congress Committee should also organise people in villages and other areas for self-defence and in order to maintain a sense of public security in their respective areas. This should be done on a non-communal basis and in full cooperation with all other groups interested in this task.

“In view of the difficult times that loom ahead, it is essential that the Congress should function as an active and disciplined organisation. Provincial Committees are enjoined to take necessary steps for this purpose. They should realise that it is of urgent and vital importance that the Congress should function in this way in these days of crisis, and should not be merely a roll of vast numbers of inactive members. All members or executive committees, in particular, are expected to take a continuous and active part in Congress work, and those who are unwilling or unable to do so are failing in their duty to the country and are of no service to the organisation.

“The critical situation that faces the world today requires vigilant attention and action whenever needed. For this purpose, the Working Committee will meet at frequent intervals, and all members must keep in readiness to obey an urgent summons. The All-India Congress Committee should be summoned to meet in the last week of July.

In its meeting held at Delhi from 29 March to 11 April, 1942, the CWC adopted a long resolution on the draft proposals of the British Government as presented by Sir Stafford Cripps. It said :

Draft Declaration

“The Working Committee have given their full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet in regard to India and the elucidation thereof by Sir Stafford Cripps. These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India’s demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis, with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

“The Congress has repeatedly stated, ever since the commencement of the War in September 1939, that the people of India would line themselves with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked for the necessary conditions to be created to enable them to do so. An essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realisation of present freedom could light the flame which would illumine millions of hearts and move them to action. At the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, after the commencement of the War in the Pacific, it was stated that : ‘Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war.’

“The British War Cabinet’s new proposals relate principally to the future upon the cessation of hostilities. The Committee while recognising that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united nation and the establishment of a democratic State. Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people’s right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements. The people

of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence and the Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation.

“The Committee recognise that future independence may be implicit in the proposals but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion. The complete ignoring of the ninety millions of the people of the Indian States and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation of both democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian State in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the State have no voice in choosing those representative, nor are they to be consulted at any stage, while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken. Such States may in many ways become barriers to growth of Indian freedom, and enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency, and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the states as well as of the rest of India.

“The acceptance before hand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian States merging themselves in the Indian Union. The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people’s minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and extremely painful to contemplate. Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in the Indian Union against their declared and established will.

“While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would

help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national State. The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of a union and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and goodwill are most needed. This proposal has been presumably made to meet a communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among different communities to create trouble and divert public attention from the vital issues before the country.

“Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today’s grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present. The Committee have necessarily attached the greatest importance to this aspect of the question, and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance. For this the present British War Cabinet’s proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and it would appear that no vital changes in the present structure are contemplated. It has been made clear that the Defence of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defence is a vital subject ; during war time it is all important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away defence from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her Government is not going to function as a free and independent government during the pendency of the war.

“The Committee would repeat that an essential and fundamental pre-requisite for the assumption of responsibility by

the Indian people in the present, is their realisation as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. What is most wanted is the enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence. It is only thus that even in this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanise the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion. It is manifest that the present Government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence, and are incapable of shouldering burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India through their popular representatives, who may shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom, and full responsibility being cast upon them. The Committee, therefore, are unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet."

Then, in its meeting held at Wardha from 6 to 14 July, 1942 the CWC issued a long statement spelling out 'National Demand'. It said :

"Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another.

"Ever since the outbreak of the world war, the Congress has steadily pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly

appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It has also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

"These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and wide-spread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

"The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom of the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

"The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination

and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realisation will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a Provisional Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India which will later evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and of Britain will confer together for the future relationship of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

“In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other Power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied Powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

“The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would

make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable Provisional Government in India and cooperation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

“The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and, more especially at the present critical juncture in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

“While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

“Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India’s will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All-India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the AICC will meet in Bombay on August 7, 1942.”

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1945)

In 1945 the second World War ended in Europe and a relieved British government sought to resume the process of

negotiation for the settlement of India's constitutional problem. Viceroy Lord Wavell called a conference of the Indian leaders for this purpose at Simla in June. Most of the prominent Congress leaders who were under detention since 1942 had been released and so the CWC in its meeting held at Bombay on 21 and 22 June decided to take part in the Simla deliberations. It issued these 'Instructions' for the guidance of the Congressmen attending this conference.

"1. It must be clearly understood that the suggested arrangements are being considered on an interim and temporary basis only, especially in regard to communal parity. The principle of such parity is not acceptable. Also no such communal parity is applicable in the provinces and the present suggested arrangements relate to the centre only.

2. While communal parity, in the limited and temporary sense as indicated above, is being agreed to, it must be clearly understood that this does not mean that all the Muslim members of the national government will be nominated by Muslim League. The Congress cannot recognize the sole right of such nomination by a communal organization, nor can it reduce itself as a consequence to a limited communal field. The Congress, therefore, is of opinion that names may be proposed for Hindus, Muslims, Scheduled Classes, etc. by all groups in the conference and to be adopted by the conference as a whole.

3. While the Working Committee is anxious to help in finding a way out of the present deadlock which leads to Indian freedom, and will work to that end, it must be remembered that any decision taken by it has to be confirmed and ratified by the AICC. The fact that the AICC and other Congress Committees are still banned is an obstacle in our way.

4. Further the cause of large number of detenus and Congress prisoners.

5. Clarification to be sought from the Viceroy or in the Conference in regard to ;

- (i) External Affairs Department.
- (ii) Financial implications of defence.
- (iii) How far it is possible to give a nationalist character to the Indian army without at present changing its status or organisation in any way. The Indian army officers and men should have the same freedom of meeting people as the British army has in England. The present barriers isolating them to go.
- (iv) After the present war in South-East Asia is over, it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government cannot support any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries of South-East Asia, nor can it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries.
- (v) In regard to the Indian states, while recognising that, during the interim period, the powers of the Crown's representative continue, it is clear that the national government will have to deal with many matters which overlap and have concern with the States in regard to trade, industry, labour etc., etc. This government may, when it considers this necessary, make suggestions and recommendations in regard to other state matters also to the Crown's representative. Further the barriers between the states peoples, the princes, and members of the national government and their associates should be removed, so as to held in mutual discussion and consultations and the consideration of common problems, thus leading to the solution of these problems and even amalgamation with federal India.
- (vi) Provincial coalition would depend on the particular conditions of parties and groups in each particular province.
- (vii) The question of recruitment for higher services and the commitments made in regard to them must be

considered. Commitments in regard to foreign recruitments cannot be accepted, though the national Government will, whenever it considers necessary, welcome and engage foreign experts.

The President will add to these matters requiring elucidation whenever he considers this necessary and give such other directions as may be required. He may also make such alterations as he considers necessary.”

In its meeting held at Bombay from 21 to 23 September, the A-ICC passed a resolution clarifying the ‘Policy of the Congress’. It said :

“The Congress from its earliest beginning, sixty years ago, has tried to win Swaraj for all the people of India. But the content and implications of the word ‘Swaraj’ have progressively varied with the march of time as also the people towards their goal. So have the means. Thus Swaraj at one time meant self-government of the people under the tutelage and fostering care on the British Government in India. The means were strictly legal and constitutional. As efforts so circumscribed proved insufficient, violence was resorted to from time to time, but this was sporadic, unorganised and secret. At each stage, the Government of India responded reluctantly and in a niggardly manner, with some sort of reform accompanied by repression, leaving behind on every occasion a legacy of increasing discontent.

“In 1920, the Congress became a mass organization, basing its methods of action on peaceful and legitimate means, and adopted a revolutionary programme of progressive non-cooperation, including civil disobedience, which was confined in certain circumstances to individuals or groups or areas and to the redress of certain grievances. At each stage, more and more people began to join the struggle for freedom. In 1929-30, the Congress finally defined Swaraj as complete independence for India, and ever since 1930, January 26 has been observed

as Independence Day, when the pledge for independence is reaffirmed.

“In August 1942, the urgency of the situation and the perils that confronted India led to a programme of immediate severance of the British connection being conceived, and this was to be adopted if the method of negotiated settlement failed. The resolution to this effect had hardly been adopted by the AICC late at night, when in the early hours of the following morning, the members of the Working Committee, the AICC and other Congressmen and Congresswomen were arrested in Bombay and all over India and other repressive measures were adopted by the Government. The people stunned, leaderless and incensed, gave vent to their just anger in the manner they thought best, both violently and non-violently, but the governmental violence in every case put the popular acts of violence into the shade. As a result, military rule on a scale, never before known in India, became an established fact and sought to choke the voice and liberty of the people.

“In June 1945, the British Government in India released the members of the Working Committee and convened a small and, what was intended to be, a fairly representative conference for the purpose of forming an interim National Government. It was understood that any decision arrived at by the conference, would be acted upon by the Government. Suddenly, however, the chairman of the meeting, in the person of the Viceroy, brought the proceedings, to an end, not because there was no general agreement among the members but because one of the participant groups would not cooperate in the formation of an interim government. No charge, veiled or open, has been or can be brought against the Congress for the break-up.

“The noteworthy fact is that throughout all these events the yearning of the people for Swaraj has increased ; they have become more and more awakened to the need for freeing themselves from the foreign yoke and the distrust of the foreign government, in spite of its professions to the contrary,

has increased. It was hoped, as would now appear, against hope, that although the conference broke up, as it did, the Government would carry out the promise read into the Vice-regal declarations that an Indian National Government, giving effect to the voice of the people, would soon take the place of the anarchical one, nominated by the Government. If that hope had been well founded, the Government would have, without any mental or other reservations, released all political prisoners, whether detained without trial or convicted under farcical procedure. Some releases have undoubtedly taken place but not in answer to popular demand and expectation. Many still remain behind prison bars.

“Bans on some organizations and restriction and disabilities on individuals have not yet been removed and civil liberties are restricted. The continuance of section 93 rule in the provinces and the recent dissolution of the legislatures in a number of provinces are significant and outstanding instances of the policy of the Government, which is determined to hold on to its authoritarian power and to exercise it arbitrarily and autocratically. It is not possible to derive any hope for the future in the shape of frank cooperation on the part of Government with the people, in bringing them their long overdue freedom and independence.

“The method of negotiation and conciliation, which is the keynote of peaceful policy, can never be abandoned by the Congress, no matter how grave may be the provocation, any more than can that of non-cooperation, complete or modified. Hence the guiding maxim of the Congress must remain : negotiation and settlement when possible and non-cooperation and direct action when necessary.”

The CWC also made it clear that the commitments of the present British Government would not be binding. A resolution passed to this effect said : “As it appears to be the policy of the British Government to obstruct and delay the formation of a people’s National Government in India, it may take some time for such a Government to function.

During this period, the present unrepresentative and irresponsible Government may enter into various kinds of commitments on behalf of India, which may not be in the interests of the Indian people and which may create shackles preventing growth and development. The AICC, therefore, informs the United Nations and all others concerned, that the present Government of India derives no power and authority from the people of India and in no way represents them. It is imposed on the Indian people by alien power and authority and can in no way commit India to any agreement affecting the vital interests of the people. Should any such agreement be entered into, the people's representative government, on assuming power, will have the right and duty to examine it and, in the event of this being injurious to the interests of the Indian people, to refuse to be bound by it."

In its meeting held at Delhi from 27 to 30 August, the CWC passed the Election Manifesto for the forthcoming elections.

Election Manifesto

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone suffering in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice, it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, the Congress has risen stronger than ever and become more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the constitution. This constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise. The federation of India must be a willing union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.

The Constitution shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following :

1. Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association, and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.
2. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.
3. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.
4. All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.
5. No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in exercise of any trade or calling.
6. All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of state or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.
7. Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.
8. No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
9. The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.
10. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
11. The state shall provide for free and compulsory basic education.

12. Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

The state shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and the development of the backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in national life. In particular, the state will help in the development of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economic progress of the scheduled classes.

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority in utter disregard of Indian interests and views and an incompetence in administration reached a new height leading to terrible famine and widespread misery. There is no way to solving any of these urgent problems except through freedom and independence. The content of political freedom must be both economic and social.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standard of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and utilities must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth

of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and co-ordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interest inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that free India may develop into a co-operative commonwealth. The state must, therefore, own or control key and basic industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport. Currency and exchange, banking and insurance, must be regulated in the national interest.

Though poverty is widespread in India, it is essentially a rural problem, caused chiefly by over-pressure on land and lack of other wealth-producing occupations. India, under British rule, has been progressively ruralised, many of her avenues of work and employment closed, and a very vast mass of the population thrown on land, which has undergone continuous fragmentation, till a very large number of holdings have become uneconomic. It is essential, therefore, that the problem of the land should be dealt with in all its aspects. Agriculture has to be improved on scientific lines and industry has to be developed rapidly in its various forms—large scale, medium and small so as not only to produce wealth but also to absorb people from the land. In particular, cottage industries have to be encouraged, both as whole-time and part-time occupations. It is essential that in planning and the development of industry, while maximum wealth production for the community should be aimed at, it should be borne in mind that this is not done at the cost of creating fresh unemployment. Planning must lead to maximum employment, indeed to the employment of

every able-bodied person. Landless labourers should have opportunities of work offered to them and be absorbed in agriculture or industry.

The reforms of the land system, which is so urgently needed in India, involves the removal of intermediaries between the peasant and the state. The rights of such intermediaries should, therefore, be acquired on payment of equitable compensation. While individualist farming or peasant proprietorship should continue, progressive agriculture as well as the creation of new social values and incentives require some system of co-operative farming suited to Indian conditions. Any such change can, however, be made only with the goodwill and agreement of the peasantry concerned. It is desirable, therefore, that experimental co operative farms should be organised with state help in various parts of India. There should also be large state farms for demonstrative and experimental purposes.

In the development of land and industry there has to be a proper integration and balance between rural and urban economy. In the past, rural economy has suffered, and the town and city have prospered at the cost of the village. This has to be righted and an attempt made to equalize, as far as possible, the standards of life of town dwellers and villagers. Industry should not be concentrated in particular province, so as to give a balanced economy to each province, and it should be decentralised, as far as this is possible, without sacrifice of efficiency.

Both the development of land and of industry, as well as the health and well-being of the people, require the harnessing and proper utilisation of the vast energy that is represented by the great rivers of India, which is not only largely running to waste but is often the cause of great injury to the land and the people who live on it. River commissions should be constituted to undertake this task in order to promote irrigation and ensure an even and continuous supply of water, to prevent disastrous floods and soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, to

develop hydro-electric power, and in other ways to help in raising the general standard of life, especially in the rural areas. The power resources of the country have to be developed rapidly in this and other ways in order to provide the necessary foundation for the growth of industry and agriculture.

Adequate arrangements should be made for the education of the masses with a view to raising them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, and to fit them for the new forms of work and services which will open out before them. Public health services which are essential for the growth of the nation should be provided for on the widest scale and in this, as in other matters, the needs of the rural areas should receive special attention. These should include special provisions for maternity and child welfare.

Conditions should thus be created in which every individual has an equal opportunity for advance in every field of national activity and there is social security for all.

Science in its innumerable fields of activity has played an ever-increasing part in influencing and moulding human life and will do so in even greater measure in the future. Industrial, agricultural and cultural advance, as well as national defence, depend upon it. Scientific research is, therefore, a basic and essential activity of the state, and should be organised and encouraged on the widest scale.

In regard to labour, the state shall safeguard the interest of industrial workers and shall secure for them a minimum wage and a decent standard of living, proper housing, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment. Workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interests.

Rural indebtedness has in the past crushed the agricultural population, and though owing to various causes in recent years this has grown less, the burden still continues and must be removed. Cheap credit must be made available through co-operatives. Co-operatives should also be organised for other purposes both in rural and urban areas. In particular, industrial co-operatives should be encouraged as being especially suited for the development of small-scale industry on a democratic basis.

While the immediate and urgent problems of India can only be effectively tackled by a joint and planned attack on all fronts political, economic, agricultural, industrial and social, certain needs are of paramount importance today. Owing to the gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Government an incredible amount of suffering has been caused to the people of India. Millions have died of starvation, and scarcity of food and clothing is still wide-spread. Corruption in the services and in all matters pertaining to the supply and control of the vital necessities of life is rampant and has become intolerable. These urgent problems require immediate attention.

In international affairs, the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations, and particularly with her neighbours. In the Far East, in South East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years, and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and co-operation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On the 8th of August, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's history. By its demand and challenge the Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle-cry that the Congress faces the election.

The Congress, therefore, appeals to the voters all over the country to support Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. In these elections, petty issues do not count, for sectarian cries—only one thing counts : the freedom and independence of our Motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence. That pledge has to be redeemed. The cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. The time is coming when we shall redeem it in full. This election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the free India of our dreams.

The Fifty-Fourth Session (1946)

It was held in the city of Meerut from 21 to 24 November. Ragubhir Narain Singh was the chairman of the Reception Committee and Acharya J.B. Kripalani presided it. It was held after a break of six years caused by the world war, upheaval and frightfulness. It adopted a number of resolutions. Resolution I condoled the deaths of a large number of prominent figures like Rabindranath Tagore, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Bhulabhai Desai, Kasturba Gandhi etc. It appreciated the contents of the Cabinet Mission Plan (released on 16 May, 1946) recommending organisation of a constituent assembly for India and the formation of an interim government. However, it made its stand very clear by adopting a resolution which said : "On the eve of the summoning of the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for India, this Congress declares that it stands for an

independent sovereign Republic wherein all powers and authority are derived from the people, and for a constitution wherein social objectives are laid down to promote freedom, progress and equal opportunities for all the people of India so that this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full contribution to the promotion of world peace and the progress and welfare of mankind, and directs all Congressmen to work to this end.”

The Congress endorsed the resolution passed by the A-ICC on 6 July, 1946 congratulating the Indians living in South Africa on their resistance to the segregation policy of the white people of that country and recorded its satisfaction at the excellent work done by the Indian Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations exposing the narrow racialism of the South African government to the full glare of world opinion. The Congress viewed with great concern the attempts made in East Africa to make permanent the restrictions of the war time period and converting them into a permanent anti-Indian law. It sent its greetings to the Republic of Indonesia and its congratulations to the people on the success which had attended the gallant struggle for freedom. One resolution urged upon the rulers of the Indian States to streamline their administration so as to make effective popular control a reality. Endorsing the contents of the Election Manifesto and its August resolution, it reiterated : “In the opinion of this Congress Swaraj cannot be real for the masses unless it makes possible the achievement of a society in which democracy extends from the political to the social and economic spheres, and in which there would be opportunity for privileged classes to exploit the bulk of the people, nor gross inequalities such as exist at present. Such a society would ensure individual liberty, equality of opportunity and the fullest scope for every citizen for the development of his personality.”

The Congress took a very serious view of communal strife that had engulfed Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and some parts of the U.P. A resolution passed to this effect said : “The

acts of brutality committed on men, women and children fill every decent person with shame and humiliation. These new developments in communal strife are different from any previous disturbances and have involved murders on a mass scale as also mass conversions enforced at the point of dagger, abduction and violation of women and forcible marriage. The crimes apparently for political purposes, put an end to all sense of security and are ominous to the peace, tranquillity and progress of India. The responsibility for this widespread brutality must rest with the preaching of hatred and violence for political purposes and the degradation and exploitation of religion for political ends. Responsibility must also rest with those who claim to possess special responsibilities and who, in spite of warning, failed to discharge them and allowed matters to proceed to the extreme limit of endurance. The Congress would warn the country against all propaganda of violence and hate. It is not by these methods that the differences between various communities in India can be settled. They can only be settled by peaceful means.

Finally, in view of the great development of the Congress organisation and the new conditions that had arisen, it authorised the A-ICC to revise the constitution of the Congress so as to make it as widely representative of the Indian people as possible and, at the same time, a more efficient instrument for giving effect to the national will.

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1946-47)

In its meeting held at Delhi on 8 December, 1946 the CWC adopted a long resolution after taking into consideration the Statement of British Government of 5 December and its subsequent pronouncement in the British Parliament. It said :

“The Working Committee considered the British Government’s Statement of December 5 and subsequent pronouncements in the British Parliament and issued the following statement :

“The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the statement issued by the British Government on December 6, 1946, as well as other statements made recently on their behalf in Parliament. These statements, though made by way of interpretation and elucidation, are clearly additions to, and variations of, the British Cabinet Mission’s statement of May 16, 1946, on which the whole scheme of the Constituent Assembly was based.

“The Statement of May 16, 1946, laid down in paragraph 15 as basic principles of the Constitution that “there should be a Union of India embracing both British India and the states,” that “all subjects other than Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces” and that “provinces should be free to form groups.”

“The provinces were thus intended to be autonomous, subject to the Union controlling certain specified subjects, paragraph 19 laid down, inter alia, the procedure for sections to meet, for decisions to be taken as to whether groups should be formed or not and for any province to elect to come out of the group in which it might have been placed.

“In their resolution of May 24, 1946, the Working Committee pointed out what appeared to be a divergence between the basic principles and the procedure suggested, in that a measure of compulsion was introduced which infringed the basic principles of provincial autonomy. The Cabinet Mission thereupon issued a statement on May 25, 1946, in which it was stated that “the Interpretation, put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the statement, to the effect that the provinces can, in the first instance, make the choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation’s intentions. The reasons for the grouping of provinces are well-known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the two parties.” The point of issue was not merely one of procedure but the fundamental principle of provincial autonomy and whether or not a province or part should be coerced against its will.

“The Congress made it clear later that their objection was not to provinces entering sections but to compulsory grouping and the possibility of dominating province framing a Constitution for another province entirely against the wishes of the latter. This might result in the framing of rules, the regulation of franchise, electorates, constituencies for elections and the composition of the Legislature, which might seriously prejudice or even nullify the provision for a province subsequently to opt out of a group. It was pointed out that this could never be the intention of the Cabinet Mission as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the scheme they had propounded. The Congress approach to the problem of Constitution-making has all along been that coercion should not be exercised against any province or part of the country and that the Constitution of free India should be drawn up with cooperation and goodwill of all parties and provinces concerned.

“In a letter dated 15th June, 1946, from Lord Wavell to Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress, it was stated that “the delegation and I are aware of your objections to the principle of grouping. I would, however, point out that the statement of May 16 does not make grouping compulsory. It leaves the decision to the representatives of the provinces concerned, sitting together in sections. The only provision which is made is that the representatives of certain provinces should meet in sections so that they can decide whether or not they wish to form groups.” Thus the principle which was emphasised again was that grouping was not compulsory and in regard to sections a certain procedure was indicated.

“This procedure was not clear and could be interpreted in more than one way and in any event a point of procedure could not override a basic principle. We pointed out that the right interpretation should be one which did no violence to that principle. Further, in order to smooth the way to the cooperation of all concerned in the working of the proposed scheme, we not only made it clear that we were prepared to go

into the sections, but also we suggested that if our interpretation was not accepted we would be agreeable to reference on this point to the Federal Court. It is well-known that the proposal in regard to grouping affected injuriously two provinces especially, namely, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province as well as the Sikhs in the Punjab. Their representatives expressed their strong disapproval of this proposal.

“In a letter to the Secretary of the State dated 25th May, 1946, Master Tara Singh gave expression to the anxiety and apprehensions of the Sikhs and asked for clarification in regard to certain matters. The Secretary of State sent an answer to this letter on June 1, 1946, in the course of which he said : “I have considered carefully the detailed points you raise at the end of your letter. I fear the Mission cannot issue any addition to, or interpretation of the statement.”

“In spite of this explicit statement, the British Government have, on December 6, issued a statement which is both an addition to, and an interpretation of the statement of May 16, 1946. They have done this after more than six and a half months, during which many developments have taken place as a consequence of the original statement. Throughout this period the position of the Congress was made repeatedly clear to the British Government or their representatives, and it was with full knowledge of this position that the British Government took subsequent steps in furtherance of the Cabinet Mission’s proposals. That position was in conformity with the basic principles laid down in the statement of May 16, 1946, which statement of the Congress had accepted in its entirety.

“Further, the Congress had expressed willingness to refer, if necessity arose, the point of interpretation to the Federal Court, whose decision should be accepted by all the parties concerned. In the course of his letter dated June 28, 1946, addressed to Mr. Jinnah, the Viceroy stated that Congress had accepted the statement of May 16. In the course of a broadcast on August 24, 1946, the Viceroy, in appealing to the

Muslim League to cooperate, pointed out that the Congress are ready to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court.

“The Muslim League reversed its former decision and rejected the British Cabinet Mission’s scheme by a formal resolution, and even decided to resort to direct action. Their spokesmen have since repeatedly challenged the very basis of that scheme, that is, the Constitution of a Union of India, and have reverted to their demand for a partition of India. Even after the British Government’s statement of December 6, 1946, the leaders of the Muslim League have reiterated this demand for partition and the establishment of two separate independent Governments in India.

“When the invitation of the British Government was received by the Congress at the end of November last to send its representatives to London, the Congress position was clearly indicated again. It was on an assurance of the Prime Minister of Great Britain that a representative of the Congress proceeded to London.

“In spite of the assurance and of previous assurances to the effect that no additions to, or interpretations of, the statement of May 16, 1946 were going to be made, the British Government have now issued a statement which clearly, in several respects, goes beyond the original statement, on the basis of which progress has been made till now.”

In its meeting held at Delhi from 4 to 7 January, 1947 the CWC passed an important resolution which said :

“The next Independence Day is taking place at a moment critical in India’s history when the country is on the verge of the Independence we have struggled for and yet many obstructions remain and a sense of conflict and struggle pervades the country. The occasion requires a solemn re-dedication to the cause of freedom with a full realisation of the grave issues that confront the country. The Working Committee are of

opinion that on this occasion the day should be observed with all solemnity and in furtherance of national and constructive activities and the pledge taken individually or in groups, without any speeches being delivered. Processions and public meetings should not be held for this purpose. The Committee advises Congressmen and Congress Committee accordingly.”

It was also decided that the following pledge should be taken on 26 January, 1947 :

“We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe 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 has 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 recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain Independence.

“We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

“We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme kept before the country by Gandhiji and accepted by the Congress and in particular of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill in society without distinction of caste or creed. We

shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system, we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faiths may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of Mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

“Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi and so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only and endeavour to make others do likewise. We shall also try to work to the best of our ability some item or items of the constructive programme.

“We pay our grateful homage to thousands of our comrades who faced hardships, suffered humiliations and sacrificed their life and property in the struggle for freedom. Their sacrifice will always remind us of the duty never to rest until we have attained our goal.

This day we pledge ourselves again to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress to carry on, if and whenever called upon, the struggle for the Independence of India.”

Then, in its meeting held at Delhi on 6 March, 1947 the CWC passed an important resolution after taking into account

the Declaration of Prime Minister Attlee dated 20 February, 1947. It said :

“The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British Government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance.

The transfer of power, in order to be smooth, should be preceded by the recognition in practice of the Interim Government as a Dominion Government with effective control over the services and administration, and the Viceroy and Governor-General functioning as the constitutional head of the Government. The Central Government must necessarily function as a Cabinet with full authority and responsibility. Any other arrangement is incompatible with good Government and is peculiarly dangerous during a transitional period full of political and economic crises.

The Congress has already expressed its acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's scheme of May 16th, 1946, and has further accepted the interpretations put upon it by the British Cabinet on December 6, 1946. In accordance therewith, the Constituent Assembly has been functioning and has appointed various Committees to carry on its work. It has become all the more essential now to expedite this work so that the Constitution for an Indian Union and its constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power.

The Working Committee welcome the decision of a number of States to join the Constituent Assembly and trust that all the States and their peoples will be effectively represented in this task of making a Constitution for an Indian Union. The Committee invite afresh the representatives of the Muslim League, who have been elected to the Constituent Assembly, to join in this historic undertaking.

The work of the Constituent Assembly is essentially voluntary. The Working Committee have frequently stated that

there can or should be no compulsion in the making of a Constitution for India. It is the fear of compulsion or coercion that has given rise to distrust and suspicion and conflict. If this fear goes, as it must, it will be easy to determine India's future so as to safeguard the rights of all communities and given equal opportunities to all. It has been made clear that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will apply only to those areas which accept it. It must also be understood that any province or part of a province which accepts the Constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future. This peaceful and cooperative method is the only way to make democratic decisions with the maximum of consent.

In this hour when final decisions have to be taken, and the future of India has to be shaped by Indian minds and hands, the Working Committee earnestly calls upon all parties and groups, and all Indians generally, to discard violent and coercive methods, and cooperate peacefully and democratically in the making of a constitution. The time for decision has come and no one can stop it or stand by and remain unaffected. The end of an era is at hand and new age will soon begin. Let this dawn of the new age be ushered in bravely, leaving hates and discords in the dead past."

With a view to invite Muslim League leaders to meet the representatives of the Congress, it passed another resolution which said :

"In view of new developments which are leading to a swift transfer of power in India, it has become incumbent on the people of India to prepare themselves jointly and cooperatively for this change, so that this may be effected peacefully and to the advantage of all. The Working Committee, therefore, invite the All-India Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet representatives of the Congress in order to consider the situation that has arisen and to devise means to meet it.

“The Working Committee will keep in close touch with the representatives of the Sikhs and other groups concerned, with a view to cooperating with them in the steps that may have to be taken and in safeguarding their interests.”

About the situation prevailing in the Punjab, a resolution was passed which said :

“During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

“The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar and Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

“These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involved the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

“The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeals to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are

going on, and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the "causes of friction."

The A-ICC had a memorable meeting in Delhi on 14 and 15 June in which it took the unfortunate decision relating to endorsement of the Mountbatten Plan of 3 June, 1947 containing scheme of country's partition. This resolution said :

"The AICC has given careful consideration to the course of events since its last meeting in January last and, in particular, to the statements made on behalf of the British Government on February 20, 1947, and June 3, 1947. The Committee approves and endorses the resolutions passed by the Working Committee during this period.

"The Committee welcomes the decision of the British Government to transfer power completely to the Indian people by next August.

"The Congress accepted the British Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946, as well as the subsequent interpretation thereof dated December 6, 1946, and has been acting in accordance with it in the Constituent Assembly which was constituted in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Plan. That Assembly has been functioning for over six months and has not only declared its objectives to be the establishment of an Independent Sovereign Republic of India and a just social and economic order, but has also made considerable progress in framing the constitution for the free Indian union on the basis of fundamental rights guaranteeing freedom and equality of opportunity to all Indians.

"In view, however, of the refusal of the Muslim League to accept the Plan of May 16, and to participate in the Constituent Assembly, and further in view of the policy of the Congress that "It cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian union against their

declared and established will, the AICC accepts the proposals embodied in the announcement of June 3, which have laid down a procedure for ascertaining the will of the people concerned.

“The Congress has consistently upheld that the unity of India must be maintained. Ever since its inception, more than 60 years ago, the National Congress has laboured for the realisation of a free and united India, and millions of our people have suffered in this great cause. Not only the labours and sacrifices of the past two generations but the long course of India’s history and traditions bear witness to this essential unity. Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India as she is and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. Economic circumstances and the insistent demands of international affairs make the unity of India still more necessary. The picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds and hearts. The AICC earnestly trusts that when present passions have subsided, India’s problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all.

“The proposals of June 3, 1947 are likely to lead to the secession of some parts of the country from India. However, much this may be regretted, the AICC accepts this possibility, in the circumstances now prevailing.

“Though freedom is at hand, the times are difficult, and the situation in India demands vigilance and a united front of all those who care for the independence of India. At this time of crisis and changes, when unpatriotic and anti-social forces are trying to injure the cause of India and her people, the AICC appeals to and demands of every Congressman and the people generally, to forget their petty differences and disputes and to stand by vigilant, disciplined and prepared to serve the cause of India’s freedom and defend it with all their strength from all who may seek to do it injury.”

Another resolution was passed which urged upon the rulers

of the Indian States to cooperate in the building of the new constitutional structure of India. It said :

“The AICC welcomes the association of many Indian states in the work of the Constituent Assembly. The Committee hopes that the remaining states will also cooperate in this building up of the constitutional structure of free India in which the states units will be equal and autonomous sharers with the other units of the Federation.

2. The position of the states in the constitutional changes that are taking place was defined in the Memorandum presented by the Cabinet Mission on the 12th May, 1946 and the statement of the 16th May 1946. The recent statement of the 3rd June 1947 has not added these in any way. The position according to these papers was that the Indian Union would consist of the provinces and the states, that paramountcy would lapse on the transfer of power, and that in the event of any state not entering into a federal relationship with the union it will enter into other political arrangement with it. In the Memorandum it was further stated that the British Government had been informed by the Indian states that they desired in their own interests and in the interests of India as a whole both to make their contribution to the framing of the constitutional structure and to take their due place in it when it is completed. A hope was also expressed that the various state governments which had not already done so would take active steps to place themselves in close and constant touch with public opinion in their states by means of representative institutions. It was suggested that existing arrangements as between the states and the Government of India should continue in regard to matters of common concern until the new agreements were completed.

3. While recognising that some progress has been made in some states towards representative institutions, the AICC regrets that during this past critical year, since the Memorandum of the Cabinet Mission, this progress has been very limited both in its extent and quality. In view of the basic changes that

are going to take place in India within the next two months resulting from the complete transfer of power to Indian hands, it is of vital importance that progress leading to responsible Government should take place rapidly in the states. The AICC trusts that all states will initiate these changes so as to keep in line with the fast changing situation in India and at the same time produce contentment and self-reliance in their people.

4. The Committee does not agree with the theory of paramountcy as enunciated and interpreted by the British Government ; but even if that is accepted, the consequences that flow from the lapse of the paramountcy are limited in extent. The privileges and obligations as well as the subsisting rights as between the states and the Government of India cannot be adversely affected by the lapse of paramountcy. These rights and obligations have to be considered separately and renewed or changed by mutual agreement. The relationship between the Government of India and the states would not be exhausted by lapse of paramountcy. The lapse does not lead to the independence of the states.

5. Both from the point of view of the spirit underlying the Memorandum of 12th May 1946 and the statement of 16th May 1946, as well as the acknowledged rights of the people all over the world today, it is clear that the people of the states must have a dominating voice in any decision regarding them. Sovereignty, it is admitted, resides in the people, and if paramountcy lapses, resulting in the ending of the relationship of the states to the Crown, the inherent rights of the people are not affected thereby for the worse.

6. The arrangements made under paramountcy in the past dealt, inter alia, with the security of India as a whole. In the interests of that security, various arrangements were agreed to limiting the power of the state authorities and at the same time granting them protection. The question of the security of India as well as other matters are as important today as at any

time previously and cannot be ignored in deciding the future of the states.

7. The AICC cannot admit the right of any state in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India. That would be denial of the course of Indian history and of the objectives of the Indian people today.

8. The AICC trusts that the Rulers of the States will appreciate fully the situation as it exists today and will in full cooperation with their people enter as democratic units in the Indian Union thereby serving the cause of their own people as well as of India as a whole."

In its meeting held in New Delhi on 19 and 29 July, 1947 the CWC took a number of important decisions. About the termination of the foreign rule on 15 August, one resolution said :

"The Working Committee welcome the ending of foreign domination in India and the dawn of freedom for which her people have laboured and suffered for generations. That freedom has come in a manner which does not bring full joy with it for it is accompanied by the secession of some parts of the country and the breaking up of the living unity of India which nature, history and tradition had fashioned, and which was firmly tied up with the ideal of freedom. The Committee believe that the destiny of India will yet be realised and that, when passions have cooled, a new and stronger unity base on goodwill and cooperation will emerge.

"The Committee realise fully that the ending of British rule in India is an event of historic and world significance which opens the doors of freedom and opportunity to our people and which will have far-reaching consequences in national and international affairs. To India it brings substantial attainment of her objective and the freedom to advance according to the wishes of her people.

"The Committee is of opinion that this event should be fittingly and solemnly celebrated all over the country. With this

object in view the Committee advises that on the 15th August,

1. A public holiday should be proclaimed.
2. The National Flag should be hoisted on public and private buildings.
3. Meeting should be held in the afternoon explaining the significance of the occasion and reading out a statement which will be subsequently communicated.
4. The people should dedicate themselves anew to the national cause, and more particularly to the freedom and progress of the backward classes and the common man.

August 15 ends an era and begins another. The Committee calls upon the people to begin this new era in India's history with courage, discipline and confidence and with the determination to extend full freedom and opportunity to every citizen to whatever religion or class he or she may belong."

It was resolved that the National Flag as finally approved by the Constituent Assembly should be adopted by the Congress.

The British colonial rule came to an end with the advent of independence on 15 August, 1947. It also marked the end of the story of our glorious struggle prosecuted to a successful end by the unique weapons of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* provided by the Father of the Nation. Unfortunately, it also entailed the triumph of the pernicious 'two-nation theory' of the Founder of Pakistan that synchronised with the British policy of 'divide and rule' having its culmination in the policy of 'divide and quit'. The tragedy of partition was a result of an inescapable curse under the prevailing circumstances that occurred not as a logic of history but perhaps as a dictate of the destiny of the helpless people. The history of the Indian National Congress is, therefore, essentially a history of human beings having a glorious past but fighting against the inglorious present with a determination to herald a bright future.

Agreeing with the words of Gibbon, one may say that the history of our freedom movement is 'a record of crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind' ; one may also be in agreement with Lord Acton and say that the 'plot of the whole story of the struggle is the spirit of man towards the achieving of some great purpose—Freedom.' Taking it all into account, the official historian of the Congress well observes : 'Yes—freedom is the desire of the spirit, it is the cherished object of the Congress and if the Congress has imposed on its votaries a programme of service and suffering, it is to achieve this freedom in full, which it chose to achieve by inviting all the while suffering on itself, and through it by convincing the enemies of justice of its cause.'*

*B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. ix.

2

RISE AND GROWTH OF THE EXTREMIST MOVEMENT

The Indian nationalist movement underwent a fundamental change in 1905 as a result of the 'misrule' of Viceroy Lord Curzon that saw its culmination in the partition of Bengal. The official argument advanced by the British rulers that it was done for the sake of administrative efficiency could not satisfy the Indian people who could discover in it a mischievous trick to weaken the force of nationalism by separating the Muslim-majority areas of the eastern part of this province with the Hindu-majority areas of its western part. The stand taken by the Muslim League (formed in 1906) in appreciation of the partition testified to the real design of the British rulers who had now sought to reinforce their policy of 'divide and rule' with the strategy of 'conciliation and counterpoise of the natives against the natives'. The nationalist elements, therefore, had to change their line of thought and action that manifested itself in the *swadeshi* and boycott movements and open advocacy of the means of passive resistance. Naturally, it caused a wedge in the ranks of the Indian National Congress. While the senior leaders belonging to the first generation and hailing from the upper strata of the society preferred to stick to the line of, what A. O. Hume, termed 'sane and loyal nationalism', the new-comers belonging to the next generation and hailing from the middle strata of the society openly preached the line of agitation to win 'swaraj' as it was the birth-right of the Indian people. Thus, while the former came to be known as the 'Moderates', the latter were called the 'Extremists'. A duel between the two could be seen at the Calcutta Congress (1906) which signified the victory of the Extremists as the Congress adopted resolutions on Swaraj,

Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education. But the Surat session of the Congress held in 1907 witnessed the parting away of the Extremists. The notable point is that even the Moderate leaders (like Surendranath Banerjea and G.K. Gokhale) condemned the 'misrule' of the British bureaucrats in so strong terms that the distinguishing line between the two wings almost disappeared at least in verbal terms.

THE TRAGEDY OF PARTITION OF BENGAL*

Sir, I think this Congress is to be congratulated upon the singular piece of good fortune in having obtained the adhesion of that illustrious representative of a great and princely family in the capital of the new Province, of this resolution (hear, hear). Hence forth, Nawab Athikulla,—the worthy son of a worthy father, who surrendered his princely patrimony in obedience to fraternal feeling—henceforth this distinguished representative of a great and princely family will be recognised as our Captain-General in the campaign against the Partition.

Under his leadership, under his guidance, guided by his prestige and the greatness associated with his honoured name, we hope to triumph in this memorable campaign. Sir, it is our misfortune that it should be necessary for us from year to year to appeal to your indulgence to accord to this question a leading place in your deliberations. I know not how long this necessity will last. But this I do know that, so long as the Partition is not reversed or modified, the Bengali-speaking community will never be satisfied and that, no matter what concessions may be granted in other directions, they will not conciliate our people or allay their prevailing excitement.

Sir, we are told from time to time, that there is a lull in the agitation, a subsidence of the feeling which has prompted it. The other day, I was reading a letter which had appeared in the *Times* from a correspondent in India in which that correspondent observed that the agitation was on the

*Speech delivered by Surendranath Banerjea at the Calcutta Congress held in December, 1906.

wane. Sir, we are in the unfortunate position of a patient suffering from a painful disease in which there are periods of intermission but the patient knows no rest or peace so long as the root cause of the mischief lies ingrained in his constitution. Time blunts the edge of all sorrow. Time is our great healer. But time with its mollifying hands has not been able to soothe our pains. There it is festering in the depths of our hearts. There is no feeling deeper in the hearts of the Bengalee than that which is associated with home and which gathers round the domestic circle. The Bengalee, be he a Hindu or a Mahomedan, feels the strongest repugnance to the breaking up of his home, he reacts with a fanaticism which is religious in intensity. With equal pain and resentment does he view this separation from himself of his kith and kin, by the formation of a separate legislature and a separate government. The partition is in the nature of an outrage upon the deepest domestic associations. Call it a mere sentiment—an irrational sentiment, if you like; but there it is,—nobody can ignore it—moving the heart of our people with a power and intensity to which there is no parallel in the annals of our popular upheavals. That is not merely a sentimental consideration. There are deeper issues. They affect the whole of India. They concern what with us is the problem, namely, the question of self-government. If it were a question of territorial redistribution, all this excitement and irritation would be inexplicable. But the consideration is far more serious than that. The question is this :—

Brother delegates from the rest of India, I desire to draw your special attention to it. The question is this; Whether the public opinion of a great province, expressed with singular unanimity and unequalled emphasis, is to be flouted and treated with open or disguised contempt in a matter affecting the vital well-being of that Province. ('Shame'). Thus, in another form, in another garb, we have the old, old question of the assertion of popular opinion and the vindication of the principle of self-government. It is in this form and in this sense that the question appeals with convincing force to the heart and con-

science of the whole of India. Brother delegates, last year about this time, when we discussed this question, the Liberal Government had come into power, with Mr. Morley as Secretary of State for India. We had never known Mr. Morley in that capacity. We knew him more as an author than as a statesman. We knew him better—at any rate, I knew him better—as the biographer of Cobden and Burke, as the author of *Compromise*, than as a radical politician or the Chief Secretary for Ireland. Many of us had indeed sat at his feet, in the sense that we had imbibed from his writings those lessons of political wisdom dominated by the higher considerations of expediency, which have their roots in the eternal moralities of things. We, therefore, hailed our political Guru as the controller of the destinies of our motherland; we hailed him, welcomed him to the place, to the seat of the great Akbar, in the full confidence that he would fill it with more than the wisdom, with scarcely less than the beneficence, of the greatest of the Mogul Emperors. If, perhaps, our expectations were pitched too high, Mr. Morley is responsible for it. For, who can read his writings or rise from their perusal, without coming to the conclusion, that here is a master-figure in the world of thought and action, (cheers, 'hear, hear's,) and that his caution was but another name for that temper of mind which gathers in the forces of action preliminary to a determined vigorous effort. We realised the difficulties of his situation and were prepared to make large allowances for that undiluted bureaucratic atmosphere, which he breathes every moment of his life, and in which he might be said to live, move and have his being. For of all the bureaucracies, which govern or misgovern countries the stiffest, the most reactionary, the slowest to move, the one, above all others, gifted with the fatal gift of a superabundance of confidence in its own infallibility, is the bureaucracy installed at the India Office. But all the same, people expected that a man of Mr. Morley's capacity and judgment, with his great influence over the country and the House, would rise superior to his environment, assert his personality and vindicate those lofty principles of

political wisdom and justice, which are inseparably associated with his honoured name.

Sir, we have been asked to wait, and that, by no other person than Sir William Wedderburn (cheers), one of staunchest friends of the people of India and the same advice has been emphasised by another distinguished friend of India, whom I am looking out for, on the platform and whom I miss and whose sympathy for India and Indian aspirations is so well-known—I mean the Right Hon'ble Mr. Samuel Smith. We have been asked to wait. Wait we must; what else can we do? Waiting upon the will of our rulers has been our lot for the last one and half centuries. We shall certainly wait; but not in meek submission to the will of our rulers as the decree of an inexorable fate, but with the firm resolve to overcome that fate and work out our salvation (hear, hear).

Our rulers must recognise the new spirit, born it may be of the huge blunder of the Partition, vibrating through our hearts, uplifting us to a higher plane of political effort. We are, Sir, no longer Orientals of the old type content to grovel under the weight of an over-mastering fate but we are Orientals, Your Highness, of the new school, enfranchised by English culture and English influences, revived by the example of China, Japan and last but not least, of Persia, and as Orientals of the new school, we believe, that nations by themselves are made. Yes, we shall wait with patience, but it will not be the patience of inaction, but patience accompanied by vigorous, dauntless, self-sacrificing effort to undo that gigantic blunder and cruel wrong of the partition of Bengal. Mr. Morley declined to reopen the question on the ground that the partition is a settled fact. We, in our turn, decline to accept it as a settled fact; we decline to accept a wrong—admitted to be a wrong—an outrageous and deliberate insult upon the opinions of our people, as among the verities of our life and our administration. Mr. President, you have, through a long course of distinguished services of self dedication to the interests of your country, noted the triumphs of

truth and justice in this world, even in connection with the attitude and the policy of a reactionary Government.- A wrong is a lie and, as such, it is opposed to the mandate of the Omnipotent and is in conflict with the moral order of the Universe. It cannot endure in this world of eternal verities. We are bound to undo it. And if we persist, go on continuing the agitation, the Partition is doomed, foredoomed to withdrawal. Mr. Morley, let it be said to his credit, does not adduce any justification for the Partition. He makes two significant admissions—that it went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people concerned and that there were errors in the original plan. With these admissions, it is difficult to see how Mr. Morley can long stand where he is. We have only to give him a push, a persistent push, from year to year and I think we will dislodge him from that position. A statesman is not bound to be logical and that is what Mr. Morley himself has said. Read his life of Burke and you will find that it is so. He says that a statesman is not bound to be logical, but I take it that he is bound to be reasonable. If it were any other person I should have used the word rational, but I will not do so. He is bound to be reasonable, he is bound to be just, he cannot overcome the paramount claims of right doing.

Righteousness exalteth a nation ; righteousness we are told is the breath of imperial statesmen. The most reactionary of Indian Viceroys has told us that the British Government is based upon the eternal moralities of things. The most reactionary of Indian law-makers—do you know who that is—some of us have had practical experience of him, the author of the sedition clause in the Penal Code—he has said from his place in the Imperial Legislative Council that a single act of conscious injustice done in India is more disastrous to British rule than a great reverse sustained upon an Asiatic battle-field.

A wrong has been committed, and the Government itself has admitted it as such, and it is felt by the people as such

To perpetuate it and not to rectify it would be disastrous to the credit of British rule. It will do more than anything else I can think of, to shake the popular confidence, the bulwark of states and thrones in the justice and integrity of the Government. What is the Government for, if it will not rectify a wrong? That is the highest ambition, the noblest function of all Governments. It is their sacred duty to redress a wrong. Liberalism is wedded to progress. Progress involves the unsettling of the existing order of things. What has the Government been doing recently? Upsetting the educational policy of their predecessors, unsettling a settled fact. Mr. Morley admits that there are errors in the original plan. I take it, that if the Partition is to be a permanent institution and if there are errors in original plan, are they to find an abiding place in a permanent arrangement fraught with the happiness and misery of millions of people? The position is so irrational that even the *Pioneer* is constrained to say that, in the light of this admission. Mr. Morley himself has no option left to him but to reconsider the whole question. The *Pioneer* says that no question of temporary convenience can be made an excuse for perpetuating errors, and the right course would be to amend the Partition at once. But Mr. Morley's attitude is determined by the larger considerations of expediency. What those considerations are, he has not been pleased to tell us. He was challenged to state them by Mr. O'Donnell from his place in the House of Commons. But he did not accept the challenge. Are we then to be driven to the conclusion that they are not such as will bear the light of publicity and the test of scrutiny?

Brother delegates, I hold that even upon considerations of political expediency, he is bound to annul or modify the Partition. Is not the contentment of the people, an asset of some importance to the Government? Sir, in the case of a foreign Government, such as ours, it is an asset of priceless value. Her Gracious Majesty the late Queen Empress is my authority for it. For in that gracious Proclamation of the 1st November 1858, which represents the high water-mark of

British statesmanship of the last generation, she said in the concluding words of her Proclamation, that the strength of her Empire lay in the contentment of her people. The partition of Bengal strikes at the root of that contentment. It has caused wide-spread dissatisfaction ; it has alienated the people from the rulers. There could be no practical co-operation between them, when there is this yawning gulf. I will cite an illustration in point.

The other day, a high official of the Indian Government visited Rajshahi in the new province with a view to found a Co-operative Credit Society. The help of the local leaders was invoked. But they refused point-blank to co-operate with him. The local correspondent of one of the newspapers of Calcutta wrote that the people had lost all confidence in the Government. Lo and behold ; this is one of the fruits of the Partition. Mr. Morley wants new facts for him to reconsider the question. I present him with this. Here is fact No. 1. There are one or two more facts that I have to present to him.

A section of our people have lost all confidence in the utility of constitutional agitation ; they say that they decline to approach the Government with memorials and petitions. They say, what is the good of them all. Here, in the matter of Partition we have begged and prayed and protested, and entreated, the arts of sycophancy have been put into the fullest requisition. But all in vain. They say, that self-respect demands that they should have nothing whatever to do with the Government (cries of *Bande Mataram*). I may say, gentlemen, that I am not in sympathy with that view at all. I think that the political agitation must be continued and I further think that petitions should be submitted. You may say 'no' to the end of your life ; and you will not convince me that in this matter I am in the wrong. We are agreeing to differ there. Whatever that matter may be, there is the fact that a class has sprung up in our midst who do not believe in petitioning or praying to Government and who do not believe in constitutional agitation. This is fruit No. 2 of the Partition, which may

be laid before Mr. Morley. I have got another new fact to lay before Mr. Morley and that shall be the last.

In the new province, before Partition was carried out, Hindus and Mahomedans in most of the districts were living in the utmost cordiality and peace. In some districts—I am glad to be able to say not in all—the relations have somewhat changed. I do not enter into the various causes that have brought them about. There is the fact,—fruit No. 3,—the difference between Hindus and Mahomedans caused by the Partition.

Gentlemen, this brings me to the question of the attitude of the Mahomedans of India with regard to the Partition. Let me tell you that, before the Partition was carried out, with the solitary exception of Nawab Salimullah (cries of “shame”), everybody—Hindu and Mohomedan—was opposed to the Partition. That correction I accept. He was opposed, I remember now, to the smaller scheme of Partition but since the larger scheme was introduced and when he discovered he would be the premier nobleman of the new Province, then there came a sudden change in him. That I think represents the true state of facts. The Mahomedan community were opposed to the Partition and nothing has happened since then to bring about a change in the attitude of the Mahomedans in India, except that they have got a few more appointments in the ministerial subordinate police and executive services. Has the cause of Mahomedan education received an impetus? (Cries of “No”) Of course not. Is sanitation better looked after? (Cries of “No”) Mohomedans have no reason to be satisfied with the Partition, and as a matter of fact, they do not support it. I will bring forward a few facts.

There were no less than 259 anti-Partition demonstrations held in connection with the celebration of 16th October last. Out of this 259 at 135 meetings Hindus and Mahomedans joined for the purpose of protesting against the Partition. But that is not all. The foremost important anti-Partition meetings were those held in Calcutta, Dacca, Faridpur and Mymensing.

The presidents of all these meetings were Mahomedan gentlemen of light and leading, most of whom I now see on the platform. My friend, Khan Bahadur Moulavi Mahomed Yusuf presided over the Calcutta meeting. Our friend, Nawab Athikulla presided over the Dacca meeting. I know there were some pro-Partition meetings. But they were the work of one man, Nawab Salimullah, aided by his Anglo-Indian friends, official and non-official (cries of "shame"). It is a great shame. That officials should support the pro-Partition agitation is a scandal of the gravest magnitude. The official support of public movements deprives them of all their significance. This fact was brought to the notice of Mr. Morley. And I hope that the Government of the new province has taken some action in this matter. I won't be long, I will finish in ten minutes.

Gentlemen, the volume of popular opinion is rising day by day. The enthronement of popular opinion is only a question of time. 25 years ago Lord Ripon said from his place as Chancellor of the University of Calcutta that time was fast approaching, when public opinion, even in India, was becoming the irresistible master of Government. There are those who would give the world to bring about the indefinite postponement of this blessed consummation and to see that they set Hindus against Mahomedans and Mahomedans against Hindus (cries of 'shame'). We ought to be on our guard against the machinations of the intriguers who are the enemies of Hindus and Mahomedans alike. The number of Mahomedans present at this meeting is not, as you said the other day, a hundred but the number is more than two hundred. You will be pleased to hear that we have a hundred Mahomedan volunteers out of three hundreds (cries of *Bande Mataram*). Speaking for myself as a member of the Hindu community, I desire to tell my Mahomedan fellow-countrymen that we notice with satisfaction the political ferment which we witness in the great Islamic community in India. We rejoice at the growing aspiration of the Mahomedan community. From us Hindus, you will receive nothing but sympathy and co-ope-

ration, for we recognise that you ate brothers linked to us by an inseparable destiny. Hindus and Mahomedans, let us stand on a common platform—may it not be the platform of this Congress,—sanctified by public effort and devotion of our great men, may we Hindus and Mahomedans stand shoulder to shoulder on this sacred spot, this gathering of the people and nationalities of India and by mutual effort, it may be by mutual forbearance and mutual charity, work out the great destiny that the God of nations has placed before us.

Sir, I know not what the fate of this agitation will be. For the present, the signs are all against us. The future is enveloped in the deepest darkness and not the faintest streak of hope illumines the darkness of the situation. The heart of the stoutest may even quail, as he views the prospect before him. For eighteen long months have we carried on this agitation. Oh, God, for how much longer will it be our painful and laborious task to continue it. From the depths of our heart cries out a voice. "Oh, continue it, so long as the wrong is not righted. Let the banner, which has been uplifted float high in the breeze, the emblem of your hope and triumph, until success is yours; and if, per chance, the banner should drop from your shaking hands, the God of nations will raise up others in your places, who will carry it aloft, and aided by the irresistible forces of time, which make for justice and progress, they will carry it to an assured, if not, a speedy triumph. That is the voice that cries out from the innermost depths of our hearts and we bow to it.

Brother delegates, with us the Partition is what Home Rule is with the Irish. For 100 years, the Irish have fought for Home Rule; for 100 years they have met with defeat and disappointment. For 100 years, they have again and again come back to the charge. We mean to imitate the Irish along those constitutional lines, which will win for us the sympathy and support of civilised mankind, never yielding but never despairing, possessing our souls in patience, with the firm confidence that is in the physical, so in the moral world, the darkest night is often but the precursor of the brightest day and holds con-

cealed in its bosom the germs of those golden streaks which proclaim the advent of a new dawn.

Brother delegates, I have now one appeal to make to you. We want your help and your sympathy in this great struggle. Will it be extended to us? Say, yes or no. (The whole house shouted "Yes" vociferously). I thank you for this demonstration of sympathy and I beg of you, when you go back to your homes, to record in your provincial meetings and your provincial associations, resolutions of protest against the cruel wrong which has been done to the people of Bengal. Let the Government know that when one province is injured, all the other provinces share the woe and the grief. The moral significance of such a demonstration, it would be impossible to exaggerate. It will constitute a bulwark of strength in our national struggle. It will invest the public opinion of a province with the potency of the national voice of all India. It will intensify the solidarity between province and province by making them participators in their mutual sorrows and anxieties; and, therefore, Brother delegates, with all confidence do I appeal to you, to stand by us in this, the greatest struggle in which we are engaged, since we have come under British Rule; and to such an appeal made by afflicted Bengal to united India, there can be but one reply which will voice forth the predominating sentiment of this great gathering, viz., that we are all brothers moved by mutual grievances, cemented by mutual hopes, animated by mutual aspirations and linked together by a common destiny, and that, as brothers, we are resolved to fight for each other's fights and stand by one another in the hour of our darkest misfortune. *Bande Mataram*. (shouts of *Bande Mataram*)

RISE AND GROWTH OF NEW NATIONALISM*

The Partition of Bengal

The year 1905 is one of the most memorable in the history of Bengal. It would be no exaggeration to say that it was an

*From Surendranath Banerjea : *A Nation in Making*.

epoch-making year, leaving a profound and far-reaching influence on the public life of Bengal and the future of the country. It was the year of the Partition of Bengal.

There had been for some time a general feeling in official quarters that Bengal was too large a charge for a single ruler, and that the partition of the province was necessary in the interests of administrative efficiency. It was in pursuance of this idea that the province of Assam was separated from Bengal in 1874, and made a separate administrative unit under a Chief Commissioner. The separation did not, at the time, excite much criticism, although in the province thus separated from Bengal there were three Bengalee-speaking districts, namely, Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara. Public opinion was not then much of a power, and the solidarity of the Bengalee-speaking people and their growing sense of unity had not become so pronounced a factor in the public life of the province. The change was acquiesced in without demur; possibly it was welcomed by the people of Assam, who hoped that special attention would be paid to their interests.

But there is growth in all things, good or bad—nothing stationary in administration or in other human concerns. Soon the bureaucracy discovered that a further expansion of the scheme of partition was required, in the interests of efficiency as well as of the Service. Assam had no cadre of its own. The Civil Service appointments for the province were too few to justify a special cadre. Civil servants from Bengal and sometimes from the United Provinces took up appointments in Assam, but after a term reverted to their own provinces, the high appointments being few and the prospects limited. The interests of the Civil Service, with which undoubtedly the interests of the province were to some extent bound up, demanded that Assam should be a self-contained province.

The idea of a further partition for the creation of a greater Assam loomed large in the official view. The proposal was made, that the Chittagong Division, comprising the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Tippera, should be withdrawn

from Bengal and tacked on to the Province of Assam. The proposal elicited a strong protest from the people of the Chittagong Division, supported by the public opinion of Bengal. The reformed Legislative Council had come into existence. Public opinion was becoming a growing power and could no longer be altogether ignored. The proposal was dropped in view of the strong public protest ; but it was never completely shelved. It lingered in the subterranean depths of the official consciousness, to emerge into view in more propitious circumstances.

Lord Curzon was now at the head of affairs. His energy was feverish. He was upsetting and unsetting things. The question of boundaries attracted his attention. The map of India was to be recast, but by pacific methods and with the impress of his genius and superior personality stamped thereon. Here was this unsettled question. It was taken up and its scope further expanded. The proposal now assumed the form of the separation from Bengal of the whole of the Chittagong Division, to which the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh were to be added, and this area was to be incorporated into Assam.

It was in this form that the proposal came up for discussion before the public of Bengal. It roused strong opposition among all sections of the community—Hindus and Mohamedans alike. It was an opposition that the Government could not ignore. The Government sought to persuade and to conciliate by conferences with the leaders of East Bengal. These conferences were held at 'Belvedere' under the presidency of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andrew Fraser. They were organized by the newly-formed Landholders' Association, of which the life and soul at the time was Mr. (afterwards Sir A.) Chaudhuri. I was asked by Mr Chaudhuri to attend these conferences. I said it was not necessary, as the arrangements were in such excellent hands. I watched the proceedings as an interested spectator, eager to know and to help, but took no personal part or share in them.

I was under the impression, wholly unfounded, as the sequel proved, that the Government, as a result of these conferences,

would bow to public opinion and withdraw from an untenable position. But this was not to be. Lord Curzon visited East Bengal, ostensibly with the object of ascertaining public opinion, but really to overawe it. He was so hopelessly out of touch with the new spirit that his own reactionary policy had helped to foster, that he thought his presence would serve to bring the leaders of East Bengal round to his views. He was greatly mistaken. At Mymensingh he was the guest of the Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya. Among the Zamindars of Bengal there never was a finer or a stronger personality. He received Lord Curzon with all the honours of princely hospitality ; but he told him with quiet and dignified firmness that he would regard the Partition of Bengal as a grave disaster, and that he was opposed to it ; and throughout he remained a prominent leader of the anti-Partition agitation.

It was in the course of this tour that the scheme of Partition underwent a further expansion. It was now proposed, and for the first time, to include the whole of North Bengal and the districts of Faridpore and Barisal in East Bengal, in the new and expanded project.

The revised scheme was conceived in secret, discussed in secret, and settled in secret, without the slightest hint to the public. The idea of submitting it to a representative conference was no longer followed. 'The final scheme' said Lord Morley from his place in Parliament, 'was never submitted to the judgment of anybody in Bengal.' And why not ? What became of that pretended deference to public opinion, of the solicitude to consult it, so conspicuous in the early stages of the discussion, when the East Bengal leaders were invited to conferences at 'Belvedere' under the presidency of the Lieutenant-Governor ?

The truth is that there never was any real desire to defer to public opinion and abide by its decision. Lord Curzon and Sir Andrew Fraser had hoped to persuade the leaders to acquiesce in their views ; when they failed, they set public opinion at defiance, but not with the inborn courage of real statesmanship.

for the scheme, as finally settled, was embodied in a secret despatch of which the public knew nothing. Indeed, so complete was the lull after Lord Curzon's visit to East Bengal and before the storm actually burst, that the idea gained ground that the project of a partition had been abandoned. Had we the faintest idea of what had been secretly decided, a deputation would have gone to England along with the despatch, with a view to procuring the annulment of its recommendations. I would have gladly joined such a deputation.

It is abundantly clear from the despatch of the Secretary of State that he accepted the Partition of Bengal with hesitation, for he suggested an alternative scheme to afford relief to the administration by creating a province on the model of Sind in the Bombay Presidency : and when I had an interview with Mr. Brodrick in London in the summer of 1909 and we discussed the Partition of Bengal, he did not seek to justify it. It is my deliberate conviction that, but for the profound secrecy observed with regard to the final scheme, and our inaction owing to the absence of all information, the Partition of Bengal would not have been sanctioned by the Secretary of State. A timely deputation to England would have sealed its fate. But it is no use speculating as to what might have been.

On July 20, 1905, the announcement was made that Bengal was to be partitioned, and the public were informed of the details of the Partition. For the first time they learnt that North Bengal with all its historic associations was to be separated from the old province. The announcement fell like a bomb-shell upon an astonished public. But in our bewilderment we did not lose our heads. We made up our minds to do all that lay in our power, with the aid of the constitutional means at our disposal, to reverse, or at any rate to obtain a modification of, the Partition.

We felt that we had been insulted, humiliated and tricked. We felt that the whole of our future was at stake, and that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengalee-speaking population. Originally

intended to meet administrative requirements, we felt that it had drawn to itself a political flavour and complexion, and, if allowed to be passed, it would be fatal to our political progress and to that close union between Hindus and Mohamedans upon which the prospects of Indian advancement so largely depended. For it was openly and officially given out that Eastern Bengal and Assam was to be a Mohamedan province, and that credal distinctions were to be recognized as the basis of the new policy to be adopted in the new province.

We lost no time in taking action. We held a conference at Maharaja Jotindra Mohon Tagore's palace at Pathuriaghatta. The Maharaja was present and took an active part in the deliberations. Among those who attended was Mr. H.E.A. Cotton, then practising as a barrister in Calcutta, and now President of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was in the deepest sympathy with the movement for the reversal of the Partition ; so was Mr. Ratcliffe, Editor of the *Statesman*, and so was Mr. Fraser Blair, then Editor of the *Englishman*. Anglo-Indian opinion, which generally supports the official view of things, condemned the partition through its accredited organs. The attitude, however, did not long continue ; but that was the view of the Anglo-Indian Press in the early days of the anti-Partition agitation.

At the conference, it was decided that the Maharaja should send a telegram to the Viceroy praying for a reconsideration of the orders passed, and urging that, if the partition were unavoidable owing to administrative reasons, the Bengalee-speaking population should form part and parcel of the same administration. It is significant that the form of partition that was subsequently adopted by Lord Hardinge's Government was definitely foreshadowed at this conference, and was embodied in the telegram despatched to the Viceroy.

To have divided Bengal into two provinces, keeping the Bengalee-speaking population together in one province, and the rest in the other, would have removed all administrative inconveniences, whatever they were, and gratified public opinion.

But this would not suit Lord Curzon and his Government. For, as we believed, there was an underlying political motive, which would not be satisfied with such a division of the province as was suggested by the Maharaja. Lord Hardinge's Government fell in with our views, but their policy and aims were different from those of Lord Curzon.

The Conference at the Maharaja's palace was followed by almost daily conferences held in the Indian Association Rooms or at the house of Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya of Mymensingh. It was resolved to hold a public meeting at the Town Hall on August 7, a day that was destined to become famous in the history of the anti-Partition controversy. Letters were sent to the mofussil, inviting delegates to be present at the meeting. The response was unanimous and enthusiastic. My friend Babu Anath Bandhu Guha wrote to me from Mymensingh, requesting a postponement of the date of the meeting so as to give the mofussil people more time for organization; but, having regard to the strength of the feeling that had been roused, and the eagerness to fire the first shot without delay, I wrote back, after consulting friends, that time was an important element, and that the first great demonstration should be held early, so as to give the movement a lead and a direction which would co-ordinate its future development and progress throughout the province.

The resolutions to be adopted at the meeting of August 7 were the subject of anxious and prolonged discussion at the various conferences, which were attended by leading men from East and North Bengal. It was felt that mere public meetings would be of no use. Lord Curzon's Government had shown a systematic disregard of public feeling, and had treated public demonstrations with undisguised contempt. Something more was necessary—something that would be a fitting embodiment of the intense feeling that lay behind the whole movement. I remember the various suggestions made at the meetings held almost daily in the rooms of the Indian Association. One of them was that we should resign all our honorary appointments, such as those of Honorary Magistrate, and membership of

district boards and municipalities. The obvious objection to the resignation of our seats on the local bodies and the Magisterial Bench was that they afforded an opportunity of serving our countrymen, and that they were a source of local influence which would be useful in the coming struggle. Further, it was doubtful whether the whole country would be with us, in such a view. A partial failure on threshold of a great controversy would be disastrous, and the idea was therefore abandoned.

The Boycott and 'Swadeshi' Movement

While these discussions were in progress, the idea of what was afterwards called the 'Boycott Movement' was in the air, and thrust itself into prominence in our deliberations. Much has been written and said about its genesis. From whose fertile brain did it spring—when did it first see the light? Both these questions it would be difficult to answer with anything like accuracy. When the public has been roused by any stirring event, its hidden springs touched, and its slumbering forces set in motion by some great calamity or by the passionate desire to work out a cherished ideal, promising to unfold a new chapter in a nation's history, the moral atmosphere becomes fruitful under the pressure of new ideas; for the mind of the whole community is at work and marks its contribution to the sum total of national thought.

In my younger days, I had read Macaulay's graphic account of the condition of English society on the eve of the Civil War between Charles I and his Parliament—how the coming struggle overshadowed all other considerations, how it penetrated the homes of England and became the subject of conversation round every fireplace, how it leavened thought and moulded aspirations. Something of the same absorbing interest was roused by Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal. The whole community felt a concern about a matter affecting their province such as they had never experienced before. The community was writhing under a sense of surprise and indignation, accentuated by the farce of a conference at 'Bevedere', with

its seeming deference to public opinion. It was in this state of the public mind that the idea of a boycott of British goods was publicly started—by whom I cannot say—by several, I think, at one and the same time. It first found expression at a public meeting in the district of Pabna, and it was repeated at public meetings held in other mofussil towns; and the successful boycott of American goods by the Chinese was proclaimed throughout Asia and reproduced in the Indian newspapers.

The feeling was further emphasized by the stirrings of an industrial movement that was beginning to fasten its hold on the public mind. The *Swadeshi* movement had already come into existence. At any rate the *Swadeshi* spirit was abroad. It was in the air. There was a growing party among the educated community who espoused it. Our industrial helplessness was attracting attention in an increasing measure; and it was readily perceived that the boycott would be a double-edged weapon, industrial and political, in its scope and character.

The idea of a boycott was anxiously discussed for days together at our conferences. There was, as the result of these discussions, a pretty general unanimity of feeling amongst us. It was recognized that in the state of public feeling which then prevailed the movement would meet with general support; and the result fully justified this anticipation.

The only objection that was felt and seriously discussed was, how it would affect our English friends. Would they approve of it? Would they sympathize with it? Might they not regard it as an open avowal of ill will? For, as I have already observed, there were many Englishmen in Calcutta who strongly disapproved of the Partition, and of the form and the manner in which it was carried out. They were helping us with their advice and the weight of their moral support. We were anxious that we should do nothing to alienate them, and that we should continue to receive their sympathy, which proved so helpful. Further, our appeal lay to the British public against the decision of the Government of India. We knew that

Lord Curzon and the India Office would do all that lay in their power to prevent a revision of the orders passed. We felt some doubt as to how the movement would be viewed by the British public.

Thus the movement was not anti-British in its origin, nor even in its subsequent developments, though our official critics tried to make out that it was so ; and we wanted to know what the British standpoint was likely to be, from Englishmen who might be presumed to be in closer touch than we could be with the temper and opinion of their countrymen at home. How foolish it would have been to have made an appeal to the British public for the reversal of an order of the Government of India by starting an anti-British movement ! The organizers of the movement were presumably men of common sense, and they were not going to begin business by an act of folly that would make the British public turn a deaf ear to their appeals.

The terms of the resolution on the subject adopted at the Town Hall meeting demonstrated their anxiety to proceed with caution and care, and to offend no interest that might be enlisted in their favour. I was commissioned to consult some English friends as to whether they would advise such a resolution and what should be its form. As the communications were confidential, it would not be right to disclose their names even at this distance of time. But, one and all without a single exception, they advised the adoption of the course that had been suggested. A final conference was held at the house of Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya of Mymensingh, when it was definitely decided to accept the following resolution :—

'That this meeting fully sympathizes with the resolution adopted at many meetings held in the mofussil to abstain from the purchase of British manufactures so long as the Partition Resolution is not withdrawn, as a protest against the indifference of the British Public in regard to Indian affairs and the

consequent disregard of Indian public opinion by the present Government.'

It will thus be seen that the boycott was a temporary measure adopted for a particular object, and was to be given up as soon as that object was attained. Its only aim and purpose was to call the attention of the British public to Bengal's great grievance, and, when the partition was modified and the grievance was removed, the boycott was to cease. That pledge was redeemed.

That the boycott sometimes led to excesses no one will dispute ; but all constitutional movements suffer from this inherent weakness, which springs from the defects of our common human nature. All causes—the purest and the noblest—will have their moderates and their extremists. But the excesses, more or less incidental to all constitutional movements, have never been held as an argument against the adoption of constitutional methods for the redress of public grievances. If such a view were held, some of the noblest chapters of human history would have been left unwritten, and we should have been without the inspiration of self-sacrifice and patriotic devotion, which have so often been associated with the struggle for constitutional freedom. Who will say that because there is unhappily a revolutionary propaganda in Bengal, undoubtedly limited and insignificant in the circle of its influence, all constitutional efforts should be given up ? The enemies of Indian advancement would wish for nothing better. The friends of Indian progress would view it as a calamity.

The Boycott Resolution was entrusted to Babu Narendranath Sen. It would have been impossible to have found among the ranks of Bengal leaders one who by his moderation and patriotism was so well qualified for the task. Babu Narendranath Sen was then at the height of his fame and influence. He was the editor of the *Indian Mirror*, the only daily newspaper at the time in Bengal under Indian management and control. He had long fought the battles of his

country with constancy and courage; and his character for sobriety and self-restraint made him respected even by those who did not view Indian aspirations with a friendly eye. It were much to be wished that to the last he had maintained his hold over the affections of his countrymen. But, alas! the closing chapters of his life dimmed the lustre of that great popularity which at one time made him a power in the counsels of his countrymen. The unhappy anarchical developments in Bengal somewhat unhinged a temperament in which the emotions played so prominent a part. He viewed them with concern and dismay, and this champion of a free Press went so far, in his solicitude to support the authorities, as to consent to receive a subsidy from the State for the publication of a vernacular newspaper.

It was an un-English and unwise policy for the Government to pursue, for such a paper could command no influence; but it was a matter of national regret that Babu Narendranath Sen should have lent the weight of his name and influence in support of a journalistic enterprise that was so thoroughly condemned by his countrymen. This, however, was the solitary flaw in a career of exceptional brilliancy and usefulness; and the historian of our times will accord to Narendranath Sen his rightful place among contemporaries, as a fearless champion of the public interests, and a warm and devoted worker in the cause of Indian progress. If his wary footsteps gave way in a position of exceptional difficulty, who amongst us is so blameless, so far removed from human failings, that he can afford to throw the first stone at him?

I remember Narendranath Sen in the days of his sturdy manhood, when age and disappointment had not worked their havoc upon his noble temperament, when he was the terror of evil-doers, and when the enemies of his country shrank from his virile presence. I saw him the day before his death. It was a hot day in August; Narendranath Sen lay prostrate on his bed. He was weak, scarcely able to speak, but still in full possession of his faculties. Not a word passed between him

and me. We exchanged glances. He looked at me with a look on which, as it seemed to me, were imprinted the memories of the past. Tears flowed down his cheeks. I returned the sad and loving glance, my eyes dim with tears, which I tried to check as best as I could, amid the grim surroundings of that chamber of death. I came away with a heavy heart, feeling that my honoured colleagues were one by one passing away, leaving 'the world to darkness and to me.'

It is worthy of remark that the Boycott Resolution did not elicit any marked sense of disapproval from the European Press, certainly not the strong resentment that it subsequently provoked. All that the *Englishman* newspaper said about it was that 'the policy of boycott must considerably embitter the controversy if it is successful, while in the opposite event it will render the movement and its supporters absurd.' The *Statesman* was inclined to ridicule the whole movement, but there was not a trace of any resentment on the ground that an anti-British agitation had been inaugurated.

'Those who were responsible for the Boycott Resolution (said the *Statesman*) have doubtless been fired by the example of the Chinese, and they are optimistic enough to assume that a boycott of European goods could be made as effective and as damaging as the Chinese boycott of American goods has to all appearance been. The assumption will cause a smile on the European side for more reasons than one. But all the same it would be unwise for the Government to assume that the whole movement is mere forth and insincerity. On the contrary, it has been apparent for some time past that the people of the province are learning other and more powerful methods of protest. The Government will recognise the new note of practicality which the present situation brought into political agitation.'

I have dwelt at some length on the attitude of Anglo-Indian opinion with regard to the Boycott Resolution, in order to indicate that the subsequent change that took place was but

the reflex of the official bitterness which the success of the movement evoked. Bureaucracy is always unequal to a new situation or to an unexpected development. So long as things go on in the normal groove, bureaucracy, deriving its light and leading from precedent and from ancient and dust-laden files, feels happy and confident. But when the clouds appear on the horizon and when there is the ominous presage of stormy weather ahead, the bureaucratic mind feels restive; the files afford no guidance; the bureaucrat is disturbed; he loses his equanimity; his uneasiness slides into resentment; and, imagining dangers where there are none, he adopts heroic measures, which engender the very troubles that wiser and more pacific counsels would have averted.

A boycott movement in India had never before been thought of or attempted. It was a bold conception; and the first impulse of all spectators, as in the case of the *Statesman*, was to treat it with ridicule. But the success that it soon attained disclosed the volume of public sentiment that was behind it. Without a more or less universal feeling supporting it, the boycott was bound to fail. Its success was a revelation to all; it outstripped the anticipations of its inaugurators. But the bureaucracy in those days would learn nothing that was not in its files and was not consecrated by the dust of the Secretariat shelves. It was amazed at the ebullition of public feeling—it was indignant—it lost all self-control; it sought to repress where tactful handling and conciliatory measures would have been more effective, and it thus added to the intensity of the flame.

The course of events during the whole of the controversy in connection with the Partition of Bengal bears out what I have just observed. There was throughout a persistent attempt to suppress the expression of public feeling in the name of law and order; and, as always happens in such cases, the attempt at repression recoiled upon its authors. More repressive measures were requisitioned; and the more signally did they fail; and the public excitement and unrest grew apace.

Undoubtedly the student community were deeply moved, and in the exuberance of their zeal they were sometimes betrayed into excesses. When a great impulse stirs the heart of a community it is the young and impressionable who feel the full impact of the rising tide. At all times and in all ages it is to the young that the preachers of new movements have addressed themselves. 'Suffer little children to come unto me' were the words of the divinely-inspired Founder of Christianity. In Greece, in Italy, in America, in Germany, all over the world, when a new gospel was preached, charged with the message of a new hope, it was the young who enthusiastically responded to the call.

I appealed to the young to help us in the great national movement. I knew how deeply they were stirred when I was sent to prison for contempt of court, and I felt that they would help to create a body of public opinion without which we could not hope to succeed. I addressed them at numerous public meetings, and warm was the response. It had its roots in economic rather than in political causes. The Partition had indeed moved their deepest feelings, but they were more concerned with the spread of the *Swadeshi* movement than with the political propaganda that sought to reverse the Partition of Bengal.

Their enthusiasm was roused to a pitch such as I had never before witnessed. It was positively dangerous for a schoolboy or a college student to appear in a class or lecture room in clothes made of a foreign stuff. The students would not submit to exercise books being circulated for their class examinations with paper that had been manufactured abroad. I remember a schoolboy appearing in the fourth form of the Ripon Collegiate School with a shirt made of foreign cloth. As soon as the discovery was made, the shirt was torn off his back, and he narrowly escaped lynching. Let me here relate one more incident of a similar character. At an examination of the Ripon College students, the college authorities supplied foreign-manufactured paper upon which the answers were to be written. The students in a body refused to touch the blank books that

were supplied. So strong was the feeling that it was thought not safe to ignore it. Country-made paper had to be substituted, and the examination then proceeded in the usual way.

It was the fervour of the students that communicated itself to the whole community and inspired it with an impulse, the like of which had never been felt before. It was a strange upheaval of public feeling. The *Swadeshi* movement invaded our homes and captured the hearts of our women-folk, who were even more enthusiastic than the men. A grand-daughter of mine, then only five years old, returned a pair of shoes that had been sent to her by a relative, because they were of foreign make. The air was surcharged with the *Swadeshi* spirit, and it is no exaggeration to say that our young men were the creators of this stupendous moral change.

I have not witnessed a revolution in my time, nor by an effort of the imagination can I conceive what it is like. But, amid the upheaval of the *Swadeshi* movement, I could, I think, obtain some idea of the transformation of public feeling and of the wild excitement which must precede a revolutionary movement. A strange atmosphere is created. Young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, all breathe it, and all are swayed and moved and even transported by the invisible influence that is felt. Reason halts ; judgment is held in suspense ; it is one mighty impulse that moves the heart of the community and carries everything before it. An eminent doctor told me that in the height of the *Swadeshi* movement a girl-patient of his, not more than six years old, cried out in her delirium that she would not take any foreign medicine.

How was it that every one was so moved ? The visible and outward conditions do not suffice to explain it. But after all, the element of mystery, if there is any, vanishes before the gaze of the earnest student of history. The *Swadeshi* movement did not come into birth with the agitation for the reversal of the Partition of Bengal. It was synchronous with the national awakening which the political movement in Bengal had created. The human mind is not divided into watertight compartments,

but is a living organism ; and, when a new impulse is felt in one particular direction, it affects the whole organism and is manifest throughout the entire sphere of human activities. When the Congress movement was started in the early eighties of the last century it was, and is even now, a common enough remark among a certain class of writers, perhaps not friendly to Indian interests, that it would have been far better, and a more natural course, to have commenced with the vital problems of social reform than with political considerations, which might have been more usefully dealt with later on, after our social and domestic institutions had been placed on a better and more satisfactory footing. The whole course of our national evolution has belied this confident assertion. Social reform, industrial revival, moral and spiritual uplift, have all followed in the track of the great national awakening, which had its roots in the political activities of our leaders. Once again the truth was established, that all reforms are interlinked and interdependent, and that they act and react upon one another, and strengthen one another by their mutual interaction. The activities of Iswar Chunder Vidyasagar helped Keshub Chunder Sen by enabling him to appeal to instincts and tendencies broadened by the spirit of reform. His work, in its turn, helped that of Kristo Das Pal and others ; and the new school of politicians, fresh from their contact with the West, familiar with Western methods and imbued with the Western spirit, left the beaten track and extended the scope of their work by direct appeals to the educated community and even to the masses. The new ideals and the new methods moved the people, and imparted to them an impulse that bore fruit in the manifold activities of an awakened national life.

Industrial revival followed as a matter of course, and devoted men, instinct with the new spirit, applied themselves to the development of our indigenous industries. One of the earliest pioneers in this field was Jogesh Chunder Chaudhuri. He belonged to a highly capable family, one of the members of which, Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri, became a Judge of the High Court of Calcutta. Mr. Jogesh Chunder Chaudhuri is a member

of the Calcutta High Court Bar, and the founder of the *Weekly Notes*, a law journal which has a recognized and authoritative place among legal publications. But he is no mere lawyer ; and the development of the indigenous industries of his country had an irresistible fascination for him. He it was who first started an Industrial Exhibition of *Swadeshi* articles as an annexe to the Indian National Congress. That was in 1896, and a similar exhibition on a much larger scale was again held under his management in 1906, in connexion with the Calcutta Congress of that year.

Thus when the anti-Partition controversy arose, the ground for a *Swadeshi* movement had already been prepared, and the political enthusiasm of our people was linked with the fervour to uplift our industrial status. The *Swadeshi* movement was in spirit a protectionist movement. Only, as we had not the power to make laws, which was in hands other than our own, we sought to surround our domestic industries with a tariff wall not raised by the mandate of the legislature, but by the determined will of our people. Such a movement could only succeed among a highly emotional people, swayed by an impulse that was universal.

The European Press viewed the whole thing as a huge mistake, and was confident that it would soon disappear as a nine days' wonder. That it lasted much longer and was in fairly vigorous operation during the six years that the Partition was in force, was the wonder of foreign visitors, accustomed to the economic conditions prevalent in the Western world. That the people of Bengal should continue, and that for several years, to purchase home-made things at a higher price when similar or even superior articles, imported from foreign countries, could be had cheaper, was a striking testimony to the devotion and self-sacrificing spirit. In this they have never been wanting when the occasion required it, but to this quality, I fear, justice has not always been done.

A powerful, overmastering impulse soon breaks its prescribed bounds and penetrates into the many-sided relations of

life. It soon becomes a social force. Swadeshism during the days of its potency coloured the entire texture of our social and domestic life. Marriage presents that included foreign goods, the like of which could be manufactured at home, were returned. Priests would often decline to officiate at ceremonies where foreign articles were offered as oblations to the gods. Guests would refuse to participate in festivities where foreign salt or foreign sugar was used. So great was the pressure of public opinion that no Bengalee would think of purchasing a foreign-made *dhoti* or *saree*; and, if he wanted to do so for its cheapness, it had to be done during the hours of darkness, when no eyes would watch him, or, if watched, he would elude observation under the friendly covering of night.

Swadeshism and 'Bande-Mataram'

We have heard a great deal about the Non-Co-operation movement. To-day the vernacular Press is far more widespread in its influence than it was at the time of the *Swadeshi* movement; and the vernacular Press in its utterances distinctly leans towards Non-Co-operation. But the truth cannot be gainsaid that Non-Co-operation is nowhere as compared to the influence that Swadeshism exercised over our homes and our domestic life. Non-Co-operation, even in its strongest centres (and they are not many in Bengal), is not a social force, such as Swadeshism was in the days of its power and influence. There are innumerable villages in Bengal where the *charkha* and the *khaddar* are unknown. I wish it were otherwise; but the truth must be stated. An industrial movement linked with a political controversy may receive a momentary impulse which may send it far forward, but in the long run it suffers by such association. An industry must be conducted on business lines; and business considerations must, in the long run, guide and dominate its course and progress. Capital, organization and expert knowledge—these constitute the basic foundations of an industrial enterprise. A patriotic impulse will certainly help it; but only for a time, and will cease to be operative when normal conditions are restored.

It is sometimes said that our public movements are soulless, and that they are so because we do not always take the masses of our people with us. This is perhaps neither the time nor the place to discuss this question. The masses do not actively associate themselves with any public movement unless their own particular interests are vitally concerned. All great movements originate with and are guided and controlled by the intellectual leaders of the community, the masses more or less sympathizing with them and lending them the weight of their moral support. They are vocal only on great occasions, demonstrative and sometimes uncontrollable when their deeper feelings have been roused, and the memories of past wrongs, or the sense of present oppression, are kindled in their breasts. The *Swadeshi* movement appealed to their personal interests. They had sense enough to perceive that the movement, if successful, would herald the dawn of a new era of material prosperity for them.

When I entered public life nearly fifty years ago, I had three ideals, which have never failed to inspire me, and to which I always, amid the many vicissitudes of my political life, endeavoured, according to my opportunities, to give effect. They were : (1) The unification of the various Indian peoples upon a common platform for the advancement of our common political interests ; (2) the establishment of friendly and fraternal relations between Hindus and Mohamedans as the first indispensable condition of Indian progress ; and (3) the uplifting of the masses and their association with us in our public movements. It was for the realization of the first two of these ideals that I toured all over India in 1876 and 1877, spoke upon the question of Indian unity at numerous public meetings, and sought to unite all India in a common demand for the redress of a great national grievance. To me the *Swadeshi* movement opened out a splendid opportunity for the realization of one of the ideals of my life, and I embraced it with alacrity and enthusiasm.

Swadeshi meetings were held all over the country, even in places beyond our own province. I was present addressing as

many meetings (mostly in Bengalee) and in as many places as I could, and as my health and strength would permit. It was a time of unusual excitement and strenuous work. None spared himself. Every one did his best. We travelled to places strange and unknown, often difficult of access. We ate strange food. We minded nothing. We complained of nothing. We put up with the severest hardships and inconveniences in our journeys to distant places. We faced the risks of malaria and cholera. Our enthusiasm was our protection. Our faith in our immunity from danger and disease was a moral inoculation that never failed.

There was one comrade to whom I cannot help referring in this connexion, and I do so all the more readily, as he has long been lost to us. I mean Pundit Kali Prosanna Kabyavisarad, editor of the *Hitabadi* newspaper. In ill-health, suffering from a fatal ailment (Bright's disease), he was present at every *Swadeshi* meeting to which he was invited. He introduced a new element into the *Swadeshi* meetings, which is now largely employed in our public demonstrations. They usually begin with some patriotic song, appropriate to the occasion. Kabyavisarad had a fine musical talent. He himself could not sing, but he composed songs of exquisite beauty, which were sung at the *Swadeshi* meetings and never failed to produce a profound impression. He had a natural gift for musical composition, and, though he had an imperfect knowledge of Hindi, his Hindi song (*Desh ki e karyn halat*) was one of the most impressive of its kind. It was a fierce denunciation of the passion for foreign goods in preference to domestic articles, and, when it was sung at the great Congress at Calcutta in 1906, attended by thousands of our people, it threw the whole audience into a state of wild excitement.

Kabyavisarad was always attended by two musical experts, who opened and closed the proceedings of *Swadeshi* meetings with their songs. They were taught, paid and maintained by him; and, though by no means rich, he sought no extraneous assistance for their upkeep. He was not much of a

speaker, but as a writer he was the master of a vigorous and caustic style which he ruthlessly employed against the enemies of Indian advancement. A devoted patriot, he never spared himself in the service of the motherland ; and I remember his attending the Lucknow Congress of 1899, with fever on him, and a warrant in a defamation case hanging over him. He was reckless of health and life ; strong-willed, and even obstinate, above all advice and remonstrance. He was rapidly seeking into his grave. Those near and dear to him thought that the best way to improve his health and to save him from the consequences of his fanatical devotion to the *Swadeshi* cause was to send him away from the scene of his loved labours. A friend was going to Japan as a doctor on board a passenger ship ; and his relations persuaded Kabyavisarad to accompany him, believing that rest and sea-voyage would do him good. Somehow the idea never found favour with me. A presentment haunted me. Possibly public considerations were working in the inner depths of my consciousness, and coloured my judgment. However that may be, I tried to dissuade Kabyavisarad. He called me his political *guru* ; but so did many others without his fervour of devotion, and who are too ready to fling mud at their *guru*. He at one time made up his mind not to go, but at last yielded to pressure. He took leave of me in front of the Howrah railway station, as we returned from a *Swadeshi* meeting at Mugkalyan on the Bengal-Nagpur line, a few miles from Calcutta. He took the dust of my feet. I blessed him. Alas ! we were destined never to meet again, for he died at sea on the return voyage.

Thus was lost to Bengal one of the ablest and most patriotic journalists, who wielded the resources of our language with a power that made him the terror of his enemies and of the enemies of his country. He was not indeed above personalities, the bane of a species of vernacular journalism from which unhappily we have not yet emerged ; and some of his sallies into the domain of domestic sanctities we must all deplore and condemn. But his fiercest personal attacks were directed against the enemies of Indian advancement, too often masque-

reading in the guise of friends and well-wishers. The news of his death was received in Calcutta on July 7, 1907; and when, a fortnight later, the District Conference of the 24-Parganas was held at Baraset, and the proceedings were opened with his *Swadeshi* songs, there were few in that audience who could withhold the tribute of their tears to the memory of one who, despite his faults and failings—and he had many—served his country with fidelity and devotion, and with a courage that never finished.

But though a great *Swadeshi* worker had passed away, the cause did not suffer. All great movements, however much they may be indebted to personal initiative and genius, are largely independent of even commanding personalities. These sow the seeds, which fructify in the birth of men who, though not always their equals, are yet capable of bearing their burden and carrying on their work. Kabyavisarad's enthusiasm was but a reflex of the fervour that was so widely prevalent.

The Government was alarmed at the upheaval of public feeling, and it adopted the familiar methods of repression, which only served to stimulate such feeling. Agricola is reported by Tacitus to have made the shrewd observation that the government of a household is more difficult than that of an empire. When an explosion takes place in a family, the healing influences of time and good sense, aided by friendly counsels, help to bring things to their normal condition, and generally they are found to be effective. But a bureaucracy armed with omnipotent power is tempted to follow short cuts in dealing with an unforeseen situation. Repression is handy and promises to be effective. The heavy price that has to be paid, the disastrous moral result that it produces in the long run, are lost sight of in the eager desire to do the thing quickly. Temporary success is perhaps achieved, but permanent injury is done, and the seeds of future troubles are down.

The students, as I have already observed, and young men who were not students, had taken a prominent part in the

Swadeshi movement. Their zeal had fired the whole community, They had become the self-appointed missionaries of the cause. It was thought necessary to curb and control their activities. A circular was accordingly issued by District Magistrates to heads of educational institutions, in which they were told that unless the school and college authorities and teachers prevented their pupils from taking public action in connexion with boycotting, picketing and other abuses associated with the so-called *Swadeshi* movement, the schools and colleges would forfeit their grants-in-aid and the privilege of competing for scholarships, and the University would be asked to disaffiliate them. The circular was addressed to schools in the mofussil.

The circular made a distinction between students in Calcutta and those in the mofussil. but the Calcutta boys were just as enthusiastic in the *Swadeshi* cause as their mofussil brothers. Day after day, during the height of the excitement, a number of students used to stand at the corner of the Maidan, watching those who entered Whiteaway, Laidlaw's premises, begging Indians not to purchase foreign goods, or, if the purchase had been made, appealing to them not to repeat their offence. It was reported to me at the time, that some of these young men threw themselves at the feet of a fashionable Bengalee lady, as she was coming out of Whiteaway, Laidlaw's shop, and begged of her to promise not to purchase foreign goods when similar homemade articles were available.

The circular only served to add to the excitement, and it evoked universal condemnation even among organs of opinion that usually supported the police and measures of Government. The *Statesman* newspaper, commenting upon the circular used language that the *Statesman* has since banished from its columns, except when denouncing really bad measures. 'We should really like to know', exclaimed the *Statesman*, 'the name of the imbecile official at whose instance the Lieutenant-Governor sanctioned this order. The Government, there can be no doubt', added the same authority, 'has been misled by some person who is either grossly ignorant of the situation, or has allowed himself to be frightened by the fantastic scares of

the last few weeks'; and the paper concluded by observing, 'Government has blundered apparently into a childish and futile policy which can only have the effect of manufacturing an army of martyrs.' That was the language of a leading English newspaper when the first circular of a restrictive character was issued affecting students. But circular after circular followed, each one adding to the prevailing excitement, and aggravating the evil which it was intended to cure.

The *Bande-Mataram* circular was one of them. It was issued by the new Government of Eastern Bengal, and it declared the shouting of *Bande-Mataram* in the public streets to be illegal; and an authority in the person of a high European official, supposed to be versed in the ancient lore of our country, was found, who went so far as to assert that it was an invocation to the goddess Kali for vengeance. Where he got this idea from it is difficult to know. The opening lines of the *Bande-Mataram* are the words of a song, full of love for, and devotion to, the motherland, expatiating upon her beauty and her strength. 'I salute the mother, the mother of us all, namely, the motherland'—that is the plain meaning of the words. But amid the excitement which prevailed in official circles a sinister meaning was read into this very innocent formula, and a circular was issued by the Government of East Bengal suppressing the cry in the streets. We took legal opinion, and the legal opinion (that of Mr. Pugh, an eminent advocate of the Calcutta Bar) was in our favour, and against the legality of the circular.

At the Barisal Conference the cry had an almost historic bearing, to which I shall refer later on. In the meantime let me thankfully note that the official angle of vision has, in this respect, undergone a change, and the national standpoint has been accepted. At one of the recruiting meetings that I attended in North Bengal, I saw British officers standing up with the rest of the audience as the great national song was sung, and soldiers of the Bengalee regiment, wearing the King's uniform, were received by their countrymen, in the numerous towns that they visited, with shouts of *Bande-Mataram*! And

when they spoke at the recruiting meetings, some of them declared within the hearing, and with the full approval of their officers that nothing would give them greater pleasure, or fill them with more patriotic pride, than to attack the German trenches with the cry of *Bande Mataram* on their lips.

The cry, at one time banned and barred and suppressed, has become pan-Indian and national, and is on the lips of an educated Indian when on any public occasion he is moved by patriotic fervour to give expression to his feelings of joy. What is equally important to note is that it is no longer regarded by officials as the rallying cry of seditious men, intent on breaking the peace or on creating a disturbance.

The song of which '*Bande-Mataram*' are the opening words occurs in Bankim Chunder Chatterjee's well-known novel, *Anandamatha*. It is a Bengalee song, but so rich in Sanskrit vocabulary that it is understood in every part of India by educated men. Its stately diction, its fine musical rhythm, its earnest patriotism, have raised it to the status and dignity of a national song, and it forms a fitting prelude to the business of great national gatherings. Bankim Chunder Chatterjee could hardly have anticipated the part which it was destined to play in the *Swadeshi* movement, or the assured place it was to occupy in all national demonstrations. Dante, when he sang of Italian unity, had no conception of the practical use to which his song would be put by Mazzini and Garibaldi, or the part it would play in the political evolution of the Indian people. Men of genius scatter their ideals broadcast. Some of them fall on congenial soil. Time and the forces of Time nurse them. They ripen into an abundant harvest fraught with unspeakable good to future generations.

By-Issues of the 'Swadeshi' Movement

The *Swadeshi* movement gave an impetus to all our activities, literary, political and industrial. Literature felt the full impact of the rising tide of national sentiment, which

embodied itself forth in prose and verse. Journalism received a stimulus such as it had not felt for a long time. The speeches made in Bengalee at *Swadeshi* meetings, under the inspiration of the new ideas, were models of eloquence and it is a pity they have not been preserved. Where do we see the like of it in the No-Co-operation movement, at least in Bengal? Where is the universal movement of uplift throbbing in the heart of the Bengalee, raising him to a higher plane of social and moral life? Or where now do we find in literature or in journalism the inspiration of a patriotic impulse brushing aside all that is mean or contemptible or spiteful, leading national life upwards and onwards towards the fulfilment of a nobler destiny? We see none of it. It is all words from start to finish, or ill will and hatred, robed in the garb of patriotism. Or at the best, it is separation, isolation from the larger interests of humanity. As a nation we are to live, prosper and flourish, by detachment from the wider concerns of mankind. The sap that feeds humanity is to be cut off from us, and we are to flow down the stream of life, unfed, unsupported by the culture, that art and the civilization of the rest of mankind, rejoicing in our isolation, taking pride in our aloofness. To me the thought is intolerable. It must stunt our national growth, make us dwarfs where others are giants.

But let me pass on from these reflections, and dwell upon the many-sided development of the *Swadeshi* movement in the zenith of its influence. It is, however, in the industrial line that the national activities received an unprecedented stimulus. Soap and match factories and cotton mills were started one after another. The weaving industry received an impetus all its own. The weavers were a dying class; Manchester goods had killed their trade. But now there was a revival. I went to Haripal in the Hughli district to attend a *Swadeshi* meeting. The weavers who were there in large number blessed us. The neatness and tidiness of their homes, which we visited, bore evidence of their revived prosperity. So it was all over the country; and the official reports testified to the fact. But

in the wild enthusiasm of the hour and the eager desire to help forward our domestic industries, the preliminaries of organization were not always carefully thought out, and the need of expert knowledge was not sufficiently attended to. Capital flowed in, but capital was not always wisely employed. Failures followed, and they served to damp the *Swadeshi* spirit.

It must be regretfully noted that the Government did not take advantage of the opportunity to assist the movement. If it had placed itself at the head, and by wise guidance had led the movement into fruitful channels, it would have softened the acerbities of the political situation created by its own action, and would have taken a long step forward towards the solution of the industrial problem. But the political leaven of the *Swadeshi* movement probably determined the attitude of the Government, which was one of indifference and even of hostility. Boys were punished for boyish excesses, and quite a youthful army of martyrs was created. The seeds were thus sown of youthful dissatisfaction, which were destined to bear bitter fruits in the not very distant future, in the unhappy anarchical developments, of which, I am sorry to say, we have not yet seen the last.

But, despite the excesses of our boys and the repressive methods pursued, the *Swadeshi* movement made steady headway. Throughout, the dominating idea was to be independent of Manchester and of the foreign market for our ordinary wearing apparel, our *dhoties* and *sarees*. Bombay was partly supplying them; and the Bombay cotton mills had a highly prosperous time during the height of the *Swadeshi* movement. But it was felt that Bengal might, to some extent, supply her own needs. There was a cotton mill at Serampore on the Hughli, which had now been in existence for some time. It was resolved to buy up this mill and to extend its operations. A sum of eighteen lakhs of rupees was needed. An appeal was issued. I was one of the signatories. The money was easily found, being largely subscribed by our middle class people and even by our women-folk. The mill was purchased,

extended and re-named. It was called the 'Banga Luxmi Mill', as a compliment to the gentler sex, who had shown a practical interest in the concern. The mill has had a chequered history. It has had its ups and downs. We have to pay for our experience. This we have done, and we have gathered wisdom which I have no doubt will prove valuable. The mill has now entered upon a new career, and I hope it will be one of increasing prosperity.

From the very outset of the *Swadeshi* movement, it had been felt that banking facilities were indispensably necessary for the development of our industries. It was a matter of complaint that the banks under European management did not afford the requisite help to Indian concerns, and it was felt that we should have a bank of our own. Accordingly, the Bengal National Bank was started under an Indian directorate and Indian control and management. Its history shows that in Bengal Indian banking concerns may prove successful. But like the Banga Luxmi Cotton Mill, it has had its vicissitudes; it was confronted with a crisis, which happily is now over.

The *Swadeshi* movement also gave a stimulus to the inauguration of insurance companies under Indian management. I had ventured to suggest, in one of my speeches on the anniversary of what is called the Boycott Movement, that this was a direction in which we might usefully employ our energies. The suggestion was taken up, and several insurance companies were started, of which the National and the Hindustan Co-operative Insurance Companies are the best known and the most successful.

The *Swadeshi* movement was inaugurated on August 7, along with the first demonstration against the Partition of Bengal. The demonstration was an historic one. The young men of Calcutta marched in solemn procession from College Square to the Town Hall under the leadership of Mr. J. Chaudhuri. The Indian shops were all closed. The Indian part of the city had a deserted look. But all was life and animation in the vicinity of the Town Hall. A huge crowd

had gathered. They came rushing up the steps, filling the upper and the lower hall, flowing out into the portico, and the grounds beyond. We decided to have three meetings, two in the Town Hall, upper and lower floor, and the third on the Maidan near the Bentinck Statue. I made the announcement from the steps of the Town Hall. It was received with enthusiasm, and the vast crowd moved away to arrange themselves for the three meetings. There was no disorder of any kind, no unseemly rushing to and fro. The discipline of our people at public meetings has always in recent year's except with the rise of Non-Co-operation, been admirable, and foreign visitors who have witnessed our great demonstrations have been struck by their orderliness and the readiness of our people, even in moments to excitement, to obey authority. It is some evidence of their fitness to manage their own affairs.

I spoke at all the three meetings ; the enthusiasm was unbounded, and I may here mention a little incident expressive of the prevailing *Swadeshi* feeling. It had been resolved to drape the upper floor of the Town Hall in black, as emblematic of the mournful occasion which had brought us together. An order to that effect was given to Messrs. Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Co., and it was duly carried out. Mr. Halim Ghaznavi came to me on the morning of the day fixed for the meeting, saying that if the black cloth, which was a foreign stuff, were not removed, he apprehended that there would be a disturbance. A hasty consultation was held, for there was not much time to lose ; and by the hour of the meeting the whole of the drapery had been removed. Feeling was running high, and we could not ignore it. We could not afford to have a schism in our camp at the start.

The ball was now set a-rolling. The success of the first demonstration inspired public confidence and stimulated the national enthusiasm. The meeting was representative of all Bengal, more representative than any in which I have had my part and share. Never was public sentiment so outraged as by the Partition of Bengal ; and Bengal, united and indivisible,

thundered forth her protest through the mouths of her chosen representatives. The delegates who had attended the Calcutta meeting returned to their homes, fully resolved to continue the agitation against the Partition and in support of the *Swadeshi* cause. The two movements went hand in hand, and acted and reacted upon one other. The rising tide of the *Swadeshi* movement checked the import of Manchester goods, and Marwari merchants who dealt in them were alarmed. They made proposals to us with a view to facilitating the clearing off of the Manchester goods they had already in hand. We were willing to help them if they agreed not to import foreign goods beyond what they had already done. The negotiations were long and protracted, but they led to nothing.

The Settled Fact

The month of October was rapidly approaching. The 16th October was to be the day on which the Partition of Bengal was to take effect. For Bengal it was to be a day of national mourning. We were resolved to observe it as such, and the country warmly responded to our call. The programme of mourning was fixed in consultation with the mofussil leaders, and was widely circulated. There was to be : (1) The *Rakhi-Bandhan* ceremony—the red band of brotherly union was to be tied round the wrists of all whom we welcomed as brothers. It was to be the revival of an ancient Indian custom, and was to be emblematic of the new brotherly bond between sundered province and old Bengal. (2) The 16th of October was to be observed as a day of fasting. The domestic hearth was not to be lit ; food was not to be cooked except for the sick and the invalid ; the shops were to be closed, business was to be suspended ; people were to walk barefooted, and bathe in the Ganges in the early morning hours for purposes of purification. It was a self-denying ordinance, but it was cheerfully accepted, and, as the sequel showed, the heart and soul of the nation were in it.

But this was not all. The day was to be marked by the inauguration of a plan of constructive work. I proposed the

building of a Federation Hall, which, assuming that the Partition was not undone or modified, was to be the meeting-ground of the old province and its severed parts, the mark and symbol of their indivisible union. The idea suggested itself to me from what I saw at the Hotel des Invalides in Paris, where round the tomb of the great Napoleon are laurelled statues, representative of the different provinces. Those of Alsace and Lorraine were at the time veiled and shrouded. To me it seemed that we should have a memorial of that sort, statues of all the districts in Bengal, those of the sundered districts being shrouded until the day of their reunion. The Hall would serve other purposes of a public nature. It would keep alive the remembrance of our severance, and thus be an ever-living stimulus to our efforts to secure our reunion.

The proposal was carefully considered, and it was warmly supported by the late Sir Taraknath Palit and Sister Nivedita of the Ramkrishna Mission, that beneficent lady who had consecrated her life to, and died in, the service of India. Sir Taraknath Palit will go down to posterity as a princely benefactor in the cause of scientific education in Bengal ; But he was a man of many-sided sympathies. When his soul was stirred, he was quite an active figure in our politics, helping and guarding our public interests with all the clear insight of an astute lawyer, and the warmth and enthusiasm of a generous friend. He was heart and soul with us in our efforts to undo the Partition, and, though stricken down by a fatal disease, he was with us whenever he could attend, and his clear-sighted guidance was to us a valuable help.

But laying the foundation-stone of the Federation Hall was not the only function mixed for the 16th October. The anti-Partition agitation and the *Swadeshi* movement were liked together, and it was decided to hold a great demonstration in order to raise a National Fund, chiefly for the purpose of helping the weaving industry.

Such, in short, was the programme fixed for the 16th October, 1905, the day on which the Partition of Bengal was to take

place. Our workers had been out all night, looking after the arrangements for the morrow. They were tired and exhausted, but full of high spirits, cheered by the conviction that the programme would be successfully carried out. The day dawned; the streets of Calcutta re-echoed from the early hours of the morning with the cry of *Bande-Mataram*, as band after band of men, young and old, paraded the streets on their way to bathe in the river, stopping at intervals to tie the *rakhi* round the wrists of passers-by. They were often accompanied by *Sankirtan* parties singing the *Bande-Mataram* and other patriotic songs. The bathing-ghats were crammed with a surging mass of men and women, all furnished with quantities of *ralhis*, which they tied round the wrists of friends and acquaintances, and even of strangers.

I was out early in the morning visiting Beadon Square, Central College, and other places, which were thronged with people, whom I addressed. Crowds of young men took the dust of my feet and embraced me. My arms were red with the *rakhis* tied round them. It was a day worth living for—a day of inspiration that perhaps comes only once in a lifetime; but it was also a day of hard and strenuous work.

The meeting for laying the foundation-stone of the Federation Hall was fixed for 3.30 p.m. Long before the appointed hour, the grounds where the meeting was to be held were filled with a surging crowd, which flowed out into the streets, now rendered quite impassable. It was estimated that at least fifty thousand people must have been present. Yet so quiet and orderly was this vast assemblage that not a policeman was required, and no policeman was to be seen. The police had mustered strong in the different police stations, but their services were not needed either to maintain order or to regulate traffic.

The function of laying the foundation-stone was to be performed by Mr. Anand Mohan Bose. Of Mr. Anand Mohan Bose I have spoken elsewhere and in another connexion. He came from one of the districts in the Sundered province, the

district of Mymensingh, and he not only regarded the Partition of Bengal as a great national calamity, but felt it as a personal grievance. He was now an invalid, the victim of a deadly disease which carried him off in less than twelve months' time. He was confined to his bed ; but, as in the case of many other great men, the spirit rose above the ailments of the flesh ; and, despite his weakness and the deepening shadow of his approaching end, his interest in public affairs continued unabated. We approached him. We consulted his medical advisers. They thought that under proper conditions he might be permitted to perform the function. To us it was a matter of great satisfaction that the foundation-stone would be laid by one of the noblest sons of Bengal, whose patriotic enthusiasm had been stirred by the severance, by autocratic power, of old and time honoured associations.

The speech that he prepared on his sick-bed, amid the daily inroads of a mortal disease, is striking evidence of the triumph of mind and spirit over matter. I regard it as the greatest of his oratorical performances, and one of the noblest orations to which it has been one's privilege to listen. Indeed, judged by what happened within a few months, it was the song of the dying swan. The honour of reading the speech fell to me, for my friend was too weak to read it himself : he could not indeed stand on his legs. At the appointed hour, attended by his medical advisers and carried in an invalid's chair, he was brought to the meeting amid cries of *Bande-Mataram*, the whole of that vast audience rising to its feet, as if to salute one who had risen from the dead. For months the public had heard nothing of Anand Mohan Bose, except the news of his illness and of his growing infirmities, which were hurrying him on to his end.

Quiet being restored, Sir Gurudas Banarjee rose from his seat on the platform and in an impressive and eloquent speech delivered in Bengalee, in which he strongly condemned the Partition, and proposed Ananda Mohan Bose to the chair. The proposal was carried by acclamation. The appearance of Sir

Gurudas Banerjee on the platform of a political meeting and in the role of a speaker was a fact so significant that it should have opened the eyes of the authorities to the deep feeling that lay behind the anti-Partition movement. A judge has no politics. According to Sir Gurudas, an ex-judge should have none. We may or may not accept this view. Some of the most distinguished of Indian judges have been of a different opinion, and after their retirement from the Bench have not hesitated to take their share in the political movements of the day ; but that was not Sir Gurudas's opinion, and he stuck to it, with that quiet determination which so pre-eminently distinguished the man. On this occasion he was possibly overborne by the all-pervading influence of an irresistible public feeling, which penetrated our hearths and our homes, and captured the minds of young and old, rich and poor, men and women, alike. All bitterly resented the Partition. Some pretended to be neutral. Office-seekers and sycophants affected to be pleased.

The Chairman having been duly proposed, I read out the speech. I think I made myself heard by the vast audience that came to witness the proceedings, as I was told afterwards that the speech was distinctly heard from Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose's house, which was on the other side of the street. A Sikh priest of the highest social position, a descendant of Guru Nanak, Baba Kuar Singh, was among the audience, and he pronounced a benediction upon the function. Just before the foundation-stone was laid, Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri read the following Proclamation in English, and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore followed him with a translation in Bengalee :—

'Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengalee nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us.'—A.M. Bose.

The Proclamation was settled in the *Bengalee* office, from where we started for the Federation grounds, just before the

meeting was held. It was afterwards said that we had no right to issue a proclamation, that being the exclusive function of the ruling authorities. I am unable to discuss the legal aspect of the question, which certainly did not trouble us at the time. We issued the proclamation as a fitting sequel to a function that was to commemorate by a permanent memorial the indissoluble union between East and West Bengal. The Hall was to be the living symbol of our determination to counteract the evil influences of the Partition, and to maintain the integrity of our race ; and we felt that it was as well that the fact should be set forth in a clear and emphatic statement, issued on a great occasion.

We afterwards purchased the Federation grounds in order to build the Hall. But the memorial became unnecessary. The Bengalee-speaking population, with the exception of those living in what may be called an outlying area, have been reunited by the modification of the Partition. A memorial hall, which was to commemorate the dismemberment of our province and to remind us of our duty to bring about its reunion, was, therefore, not only unnecessary, but might prove hurtful by perpetuating memories of bitter controversies which should recede into the background of oblivion.

The function over, Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose was taken back under his medical escort across the road to his residence. He was none the worse for the strain and the effort. The undaunted spirit of the man and his noble fervour, which was proof against weakness and disease, bore him up. But there was something also in the moral atmosphere, in the patriotic determination and the fervid enthusiasm of that vast audience, to help and sustain him. Those near and dear to him were anxious, but they felt happy and proud that their illustrious relative had passed through an ordeal, the severest for a man in his state of health, and had performed a great function with a dignity and an eloquence worthy of the occasion.

After the ceremony, the crowd, all barefooted, wended their way to the house of Rai Pashupatinath Bose a distance of

nearly two miles. It had been decided that the collection for the National Fund, which was to help our industries, was to be made in the grounds of his palatial mansion. Due and adequate arrangements had been made for that purpose. Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri, Mr. J. Chaudhuri, Mr. Ambica Churan Majumdar and myself, along with a few other friends forming a party, walked barefooted along the flinty road. When we arrived at the house we found the grounds crammed with a vast and increasing crowd. It was impossible for me to make my way. People rushed forward to take the dust of my feet. It had better describe what happened from the column of a daily newspaper giving an account of the scene :—

‘His friends, at this juncture, gathered round him and helped him out of the crush. But the people, disappointed, said, piteously, that they had come from a long way off, without any food whatever, only to see Babu Surendranath and receive his blessings. Similarly, as he came into the street on his way back from the meeting, the crowd rushed round him, and it was Babu Debendra Chunder Ghose, the Senior Government Pleader of Alipore, who happened to be in his carriage near, who helped him out of the crush.’

A sum of Rs. 70,000 was collected on that day and in the course of a few hours. The amount was made up of small subscriptions. It was the gift of the great middle class of Bengal. Rajas and Maharajas indeed subscribed, but they paid small sums. There was no canvassing of any kind. It was a spontaneous gift prompted by the emotions of the hour. It was to be devoted to the encouragement of weaving and the promotion of the domestic industries. Some money was spent upon a weaving school, which, however, did not prosper and had to be closed. The balance of the money is now in the Imperial Bank under the control of trustees. Out of the interest a monthly grant is made to the Home Industries Association, established by Lady Carmichael, and to a school for the industrial training of Indian women.

The months that followed the 16th October, 1905, were months of great excitement and unrest. The policy of the Government, especially that of East Bengal under Sir Bampfylde Fuller, added to the tension of the situation. He declared, half in jest, half in seriousness, to the amazement of all sober-minded men, that he had two wives, Hindu and Mohamedan, but that the Mohamedan was the favourite wife. A ruler who could publicly indulge in a display of offensive humour of this kind was clearly unfit for the high office which he held. The Civil Service took their cue from him ; and his administration was conducted upon lines in the closest conformity with the policy which he had so facetiously announced. The taint spread to the judicial Bench, and in a well-known case brought down upon the erring judge the just censure of the High Court of Calcutta. In reversing the sentences passed upon the prisoners in the great Comilla Rioting Case in 1907, the High Court observed :—

‘The method of the learned Judge in dealing with the testimony of the witnesses by dividing them into two classes—Hindus and Mohamedans—and accepting the evidence of one class and rejecting that of the other, is open to severe criticism. The learned Judge ought to have directed his mind solely to the evidence which had been given before him, and to have excluded from his consideration all pre-conceived sympathies with either section of the population.’

This is very strong language, coming from the High Court with its great traditions of scrupulous fairness and judicial sobriety. But if preference or class bias had been the only fault of the new Government established in East Bengal, the position would not have been so grave as it soon became. The Partition was followed by a policy of repression, which added to the difficulties of the Government and the complexities of the situation. The cry of *Bande-Matara*, as I have already observed, was forbidden in the public streets, and public meetings in public places were prohibited. Military police were stationed in peaceful centres of population, and they committed assaults

upon honored members of the Hindu community, which excited the deepest public indignation. Respectable citizens were charged with sedition for issuing a *Swadeshi* circular, and Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, the revered leader of the people of Barisal, a man universally respected, was so charged by Mr. Jack. The accusation was baseless and Aswini Kumar Dutt obtained damages against him for libel in a Civil Court. The climax was reached when the police assaulted the delegates of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barsal in April, 1906, and forcibly dispersed the Conference.

Passive Resistance

All wings of the Nationalist party were now united ; and educated Islam joined hands with them on the Congress platform. Never did the prospects of effective and united work seem more hopeful. But the ancient divisions and methods of action which have their roots in temperament and human nature, and even in personal ambitions, were not to be effaced in a day ; and they were soon apparent in the work of the Congress. Mrs. Besant, who had hitherto identified herself with the work of the Theosophical Society and the Hindu Educational movement, joined the Congress held in Madras in 1914. Her eloquence, her forceful personality, her indefatigable industry, and her power of organization, soon made themselves felt. She had a considerable hand in bringing about the union of the different wings of the Nationalist party. She travelled from one part of India to the other, held personal interviews with the different Indian leaders and was in close correspondence with some of them.

When the Congress met in Bombay in 1915, she called a meeting to consider the question of the formation of a Home Rule League. It was to be an organization to carry on propaganda work in connexion with the question of Home Rule or Self-Government. I presided at the meetings of this conference. The general feeling at the time was that such an organization would serve to overlap and perhaps weaken the Con-

gress. The Home Rule League was not then formed. The idea, however, was not given up by Mrs. Besant, and the League was subsequently organized.

I have no desire to re-awaken the memories of events which are now well-nigh forgotten, but I must say that the League served to create the first division in the Congress camp after the reunion. I did not join it, nor did many of the ex-Presidents of the Congress. I incurred some unpopularity. But unpopularity is an inconstant factor in public life, and I was not afraid to run the risk of facing it, in comradeship with colleagues, now, alas, dead, and in what I conceived to be the best interests of the country. I had helped to build up the Congress. It was a part of my life work, my pride and my privilege, and it was not in me to do aught which, in my opinion, would weaken its influence or the great position which it occupied in the estimation of the country.

Never was the pressure brought on me to join the Home Rule League greater or more persistent than after Mrs. Besant's internment. I was then a candidate for a seat in the Imperial Legislative Council. A voter, who was a friend, wrote to me that unless I joined the Home Rule League he would not vote for me. I took no notice of the offer or the threat. The Secretary of the Home Rule League wrote to me to say that if I joined the League I should be unanimously elected President of the Calcutta Branch and my election to the Imperial Council would be unopposed. In my public life, I never allowed myself to be daunted by the frowns or seduced by the smiles of power. And even when the dispensation of favour lay in the hands of friends or colleagues I acted on the same principle, and was not to be deterred from my purpose or from fulfilling the behests of my conviction, by threats or by inducements.

Great as is my reverence for Mrs. Besant and my admiration for her public work, my objection to joining the Home Rule League was not in any way minimized by her internment. But I readily and whole-heartedly associated myself with the public protests against this unfortunate measure. I presided at two

protest meetings, one held at the Indian Association rooms and the other at the Town Hall of Calcutta, and as strongly condemned her internment at any Home Rule Leaguer. The internment of Mrs. Besant was the origin of the movement for her election as President of the Congress of 1917. The first visible sign of disunion among the members of the Nationalist party after the Lucknow Congress was, as I have observed, the formation of the Home Rule League and the second was the movement for the election of Mrs. Besant as President of the Congress. The internment of a gifted lady who was serving the motherland with unexampled devotion set the whole country ablaze with excitement. The general feeling was that by her internment the Government sought to aim a deadly blow at the agitation for self-government, which she had so vigorously championed ; and the utterances of provincial rulers, which had a wonderful family likeness in their tone of disparagement, if not of ridicule, of our aspirations for self-government, deepened the public impression and intensified the public agitation.

It is no exaggeration to say that it was the Government that set in motion the impulse that placed Mrs. Besant in the presidential chair of the Congress. That has often been the way of bureaucracies, which, living in an atmosphere of their own and out of touch with the popular forces, have failed to gauge their strength and volume and have eventually been overwhelmed by them. Could the bureaucracy have anticipated the agitation that Mrs. Besant's internment gave rise to, it would probably have left her alone. The Madras Government had indeed an Indian member on the Executive Council. But he had been through life a bureaucrat, and his appointment as a member of the Government failed to satisfy the one condition that Lord Morley had in view in his scheme of reform, namely, to place the highest Councils of the Government in touch with popular opinion. However that may be, the mistake was committed. It was indeed a blunder ; it was persisted in for a time ; but, with the appointment of Mr. Montagu as Secretary of State for India, a new atmosphere was created in the India Office, and Mrs. Besant was released, attesting once

again the growing power of public opinion in India. This was further illustrated in a curious fashion in Bengal by a side issue of some moment.

Mrs. Besant's internment brought to the forefront the question of passive resistance. With whom it originated it is difficult to say. Possibly the idea was Mr. Gandhi's ; at any rate Pundit Madan Mohan Malavya came down to Calcutta and discussed it at an informal meeting of friends. I was not present, as I was at Ranchi for a change and rest. I understood that the sense of my Bengal friends was opposed to passive resistance as a political weapon to be now employed. At a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held soon after in Bombay, the question was discussed. As senior ex-President, I presided. There was a fairly strong party in favour of passive resistance. Our Bengal friends, however—the majority of them, at any rate—were all opposed to it. It was a difficult situation to deal with and at a private meeting we arranged our plans. When confronted with a trying situation I have always found it useful to have recourse to Fabian tactics. I suggested the postponement of the question, referring the matter to the Provincial Congress Committees. Time would thus be gained ; the prevailing excitement would pass away ; and reason and common sense would assert themselves. This proved to be a wise course to have followed.

Mr. (now Sir) Provash Chunder Mitter was entrusted with the Resolution that we drafted. The feeling was high on the day when the question first came up for discussion. I allowed full scope to the debate, which had to be postponed on account of the lateness of the hour ; and, as I anticipated, the temperature was much cooler on the following morning when we met and the discussion was resumed. Speaker after speaker followed, until Mr. Tilak suggested that a committee should be appointed to consider the question. That was Sir Provash Chunder Mitter's opportunity, and he moved that the matter, in view of its importance, be referred to the Provincial Congress Committee for report. A time-limit was fixed for the report · it was to be the first week of October. The motion was

carried with practical unanimity ; and, as the event showed, a difficult situation was saved. Everything pointed to an early pronouncement by the Government on the question of self-government ; and if the pronouncement was made before the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in October, the excitement and irritation which lay at the root of the idea of passive resistance would be allayed.

We in Bengal, who had passed through the ordeal of fire in connexion with the anti-Partition and the *Swadeshi* agitation, knew the difficulties that surrounded a movement of defiance of authority culminating in the violation of official orders, legal or illegal. The incidents of the Barisal Conference (where we followed a policy of passive resistance), the nameless insults offered to respectable people at Sirajgung, Banaripara and elsewhere, the persecution of *Swadeshi* workers under the guise of the maintenance of law and order, were all still fresh in our minds ; and we felt that passive resistance could not succeed unless there was an overwhelming body of public feeling behind it and there were many who would be willing to suffer for the cause which had provoked it. We were not sure that these conditions existed in the present case ; and we were glad of a postponement, which allowed time for thought and reconsideration, and, as we hoped, for the development of a situation that would make passive resistance unnecessary and undesirable.

In the meantime in Bengal the question had assumed an acute form owing to circumstances which I shall presently relate. I have already referred to the meeting held at the Indian Association rooms to protest against Mrs. Besant's internment. It was held in a hurry and was in the nature of a preliminary conference, delegates from the mofussil not having been invited. It was therefore resolved to hold a Town Hall meeting at a subsequent date, to be convened by the Sheriff, in which representatives from the mofussil were to be asked to take part. A requisition was duly signed and presented to the Sheriff. The date of the meeting was fixed and Sir Rash Behari Ghose was to preside.

All of a sudden the public learnt that the meeting had been forbidden by the Government. The principal requisitionists were invited by the Hon. Mr. Cumming to meet him, and the orders of Government were communicated to them. One of the astonishing reasons for the prohibition of the meeting was that the orders of the Government of one province could not be allowed to be criticized by the people of another province. This new doctrine of inter-provincial amenity had never been heard of before. Everybody laughed at it ; everybody knew that that was not the real explanation, which was withheld under a plea, the hollowness of which was transparent. The explanation was the subject of ridicule in the newspapers. It certainly did not improve the position of the Government, but added to the public discontent. We were at the time in Bombay attending a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. I sent a wire urging the summoning of a conference on our return, and we hurried back as fast as we could.

The Conference was held on the day after my return to Calcutta ; and it was largely attended. There was, alas, one prominent personality who was absent and who was never again to appear in our public meetings. Two days before, Mr. Rasool had died suddenly of heart failure, while he was in the thick of the preparations for the wedding of his only daughter. Many of us were thus assembled at the Conference under the shadow of a personal bereavement. I was in the chair. The excitement was great, and it grew as the discussion proceeded. Everybody who spoke vowed that he was prepared to resist the order of Government and go to jail if necessary. Obviously, if the forbidden meeting were held, a collision between the promoters and the police would be inevitable.

At last, after a good deal of animated discussion, it was resolved that six of us should retire and formulate a method of action, which was to be accepted by the Conference without demur. The gentlemen thus honoured were the elders of the Conference. They were Sir Rash Behari Ghose, Babu Motilal Ghose, Mr. Byomekesh Chakravarti, Mr. C.R. Das, Mr. Fazlul

Huq and myself. We withdrew to an ante-room for about an hour, and unanimously agreed that we should wait in deputation upon Lord Ronaldshay at Dacca, where His Excellency the Governor then was, explain the situation to him, and appeal to him to cancel the order of prohibition. We felt that we should give the Government an opportunity of withdrawing from an untenable position, and that, if we failed, then and then only should we have recourse to passive resistance and hold the Town Hall meeting in defiance of the Government order.

We returned to the Conference Hall with this decision, and Mr. Byomekesh Chakravarti was charged to explain it. He did so with the tact and skill of an old and practised lawyer. But, as always happens when an audience is excited, counsels of moderation failed to impress them. We were subjected to a good deal of heckling. Our decision evidently did not commend itself to the majority of the Conference, who were all for holding the meeting and for the conflict with the police that must follow. How many would have stood the test, if the collision had actually taken place, is more than I can say. I have some recollection of those who, with bold language on their lips and defiance in their mien, ran away as fast as their legs could carry them when the police dispersed the procession in connexion with the Barisal Conference. The times have changed ; nevertheless the frenzy for incarceration and the mad fury for cheap notoriety is confined to a limited class.

The Conference broke up without a decision ; but it was understood that we were to go as a deputation, though without the formal authorization of the Conference. I at once placed myself in communication with Mr. Gourlay, the Governor's Private Secretary, and a day was appointed for the Deputation. We were to be received on the day immediately following a meeting of the Legislative Council to be held at Dacca. Many of the Indian members of the Legislative Council wanted to join the Deputation ; but the number was limited to six, and I think it was a wise decision, regard being had to the confidential talk that we had with the Governor,

which perhaps a large deputation would have prevented. In the meantime, the air was full of wild proposals of protests against the prohibition of the Town Hall meeting. One of them was that the Indian members should all abstain from attending the meeting of the Legislative Council. This idea was seriously discussed on board the steamer that carried most of the members to Dacca. Nothing could have been more unwise on the eve of a settlement and when a deputation was about to be received on the subject. I mention it only to show how extreme views are apt to find currency and even predominance when the public mind is thrown into a state of excitement by the unwisdom of the Government.

Our deputation was received by Lord Ronaldshay, at Government House at Dacca, with courtesy and cordiality. The deputation consisted of Mr. Byomekesh Chakravarti, Mr. C.R. Das, Mr. Fazlul Huq, Dr. Nilratan Sircar, Babu Surendranath Roy, and myself. The first question asked by Lord Ronaldshay was who was to be our spokesman. Mr. Chakravarti mentioned my name. The political atmosphere in Bengal had not yet become charged with the feelings which the subsequent controversy about Mrs. Besant's election to the presidency of the Congress evoked.

Lord Ronaldshay came fully prepared with all the official papers bearing on the matter. His Excellency opened the discussion, and it soon became apparent that all talk about inter-provincial amenities, about the undesirability of the people of one province criticizing the actions of the ruler of another, was moonshine. The real grounds for the prohibition were disclosed with perfect candour. They were not indeed convincing, but they were plausible enough. What prompted the order for prohibition was that a meeting of the Home Rule League (at which, the Governor added addressing me, 'You were not present') language was used to which the Government took strong exception; and it was apprehended that at the Town Hall meeting, the speakers being substantially the same, similar language would be employed and addressed to a much larger audience of young men; and this would do great harm.

'I have not prohibited' added Lord Ronaldshay significantly, 'the attendance of students at public meetings as has been done in other provinces.'

Lord Ronaldshay began reading out extracts from the reports of C.I.D. officers who were present at the meeting of the Home Rule League referred to above. Whether the proceedings were correctly reported or not, it is impossible to say ; but, if the notes were substantially correct, the language used was highly improper. One speaker, who was often in requisition at public meetings held by the authorities themselves, was reported to have advised the young men present to adopt the tactics of the Anusilan Samiti, which had been suppressed, advocating the employment of force. This speaker, said the report, added that the English were a handful in this country, while they, the children of the soil, could be counted by lakhs ; and yet this handful of foreigners were our masters. Another speaker addressing the Home Rule meeting said that he must speak in English, as he did not trust the translated reports of the C.I.D. officers. This observation seemed to me to be perfectly innocuous, and I said so, especially as the same speaker on a former occasion had to complain of an inaccurate report of his speech by the C.I.D. To this His Excellency said in reply that it meant a reflection upon the C.I.D., about which the Government felt a natural concern, as the officers of the C.I.D. had too often been singled out for the vengeance of the revolutionary party.

I said in the course of the conversation that the fact that Sir Rash Behari Ghose was to have presided was a guarantee that the proceedings of the meeting would be conducted upon moderate and reasonable lines. Lord Ronaldshay observed that they were not aware of this fact. I said that it could have been easily ascertained. His Excellency was throughout frank and reasonable ; and he said that, if we gave a guarantee that no inflammatory language would be used and that the meeting would be properly conducted, he would withdraw the order of prohibition. We replied that we could give no undertaking,

but that we would do our best to carry out His Excellency's wishes and we added that there was always an implied understanding on the part of the organizers of public meetings that they should be conducted upon proper and reasonable lines. The upshot of it all was that the prohibition was to be withdrawn, subject to the assurance we gave.

We returned home gratified with our success. But I, for one, was not altogether free from doubt as to the sort of welcome that would be accorded to us. In Bengal, even the most indubitable achievement is not always a passport to unqualified public approval. When the Partition of Bengal was modified, and when all thought that the voice of dissent would be drowned in a chorus of public appreciation, there were those who regretted that Behar should have been separated from Bengal, and there were many more to whom the transfer of the capital came as a shock. I was therefore, fully prepared for comment and criticism, especially in view of what had transpired at the conference, which, broke up without a decision.

Our representative character was challenged, and one of those who had taken a leading part in our deliberation and had allowed himself to be nominated as a member of the Deputation, was loud in his protestations of our want of representative authority. But in this world nothing succeeds like success. The withdrawal of the prohibition was a point gained, the value of which could not be questioned. The public are not, or are only temporarily, concerned with side issues of a personal character, which may for the time being tickle their nerves, or satisfy their innate love of scandal. But the fit soon passes away and reason and common sense assert themselves as the normal attitude of the public mind. It was suggested that we should hold another conference and tell them what had passed. I set my face against it, for I anticipated a repetition of the heckling, the quarrelling and wrangling of the last Conference. I proposed a Town Hall meeting; for I felt that such a meeting would, by its size, its publicity and its representative character, minimize the play of

personal passions and even of partisan prejudice. I was right in this view.

A public meeting at the Town Hall was held ; it was the old prohibited meeting, with the glamour of success achieved over the obstructiveness of official authority. It was a vindication of our indefensible right to hold meetings so long as there was the fair promise of the observance of a constitutional procedure. In the absence of Sir Rash Behari Ghose, I was asked to preside, and I accepted the invitation. Mine was the only speech ; none other was made. That was the universal sense of the meeting and it was cheerfully acquiesced in. I took advantage of this opportunity to explain the character of the Deputation that I had the honour to lead. I believe that what I said at the Town Hall meeting in this connexion met with general approval ; and I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it here :—

‘My friend Babu Motilal Ghose and myself were at Bombay when the news of this prohibition reached us. We hurried back to Calcutta. A conference was held and a deputation waited upon His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay at Dacca. We as a deputation did not derive our authority from any association or public body, but from our representative character as individuals who on many critical occasions have borne the heat and brunt of battle in the service of the motherland. Our charter lay in the memory of our public services, in the purity of our motives, above all in the conviction that we enjoyed the confidence of our countrymen. At the interview with His Excellency we gave no undertaking of any kind ; none was asked. We said that we should do our best to see to it that the meeting was conducted upon responsible lines. Call it an assurance if you like, but it was an assurance which is implied in all our public meetings ; it is what is required by the law. There was no equivocation of any kind on our part, no compromise of any principle, no surrender of any right. We acted according to our lights, with dignity and firmness, and with due regard to the constituted authorities

of the land. His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay reciprocated our attitude. He received us with kindness and even cordiality, and treated us in a spirit of conciliatory statesmanship. The order of prohibition was withdrawn. The principle that the people of one province were not to discuss the proceedings of the authorities of another province was abandoned. This is the sum total of our work at Dacca. We are not ashamed of it ; we stand by it.'

Thus was averted what threatened to be a crisis in the history of our public movements. Collisions with the Government I am, and have never been, afraid of, provided that the cause is just, that it has behind it a strong body of public opinion, and that it may not lead to a measure of repression beyond our strength to endure and which may retard our growing public spirit. The repressive measures following the anarchical movement in Bengal had a blighting effect upon the growth of our public life, because the hand of repression was too heavy for us to bear. The all-pervading influence of the police, to which our public men were subjected, the long terms of imprisonment inflicted on some of young men, and the suppression of the *Samitis*, all had a disastrous effect upon the growth of our nascent public life. But perhaps I have travelled a little beyond the period with which I was dealing when I was led into this somewhat lengthy digression.

The Revolutionary Movement in Bengal

In the events of the Midnapore Conference and of the Surat Congress following one another in close succession, in the adoption of lawlessness and violence, so conspicuous in the break-up of the Surat Congress, as a method of political warfare, impartial observers could read the beginnings of a new development fraught with peril to the orderly and peaceful evolution of our national life. Here was a portent, the full significance of which soon manifested itself. On the morning of April 1, 1908, all Calcutta was startled to learn that on the previous evening a bomb outrage had been committed at

Mozufferpore in Behar and that the unhappy victims of it were two European ladies, mother and daughter, the wife and sixteen-year old child, of Mr. Pringle Kennedy, a leading pleader of the Mozufferpore Bar.

By a bitter irony of fate Mr. Pringle Kennedy was one of the few Europeans who had identified themselves with the Congress movement, and had on one occasion presided over a session of the Bengal Provincial Conference. The bomb was meant for Mr. Kingsford, District Judge of Mozufferpore, who, as Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, had made himself unpopular by passing heavy sentences on young Bengalee *Swadeshi* workers. Especially odious had he become by inflicting corporal punishment upon more than one respectable young man. The sentences were believed to be unjust; and it was adding insult to injury to degrade their victims by the infliction of corporal punishment. The insult sank deep into the hearts of some of the young *Swadeshi* workers; and they vowed revenge. Two young men, Khudiram Bose and Profulla Chakie were charged with the execution of the mandate of the conspirators. Both lost their lives. One was hanged; and the other shot himself when about to be captured. It was a tragedy in the fullest sense—grim, futile and purposeless. It was immediately followed by the discovery of the Moraripuker Conspiracy, the trial of the conspirators and the heavy punishments inflicted upon the leaders.

Bureaucracy was alarmed, startled at the result of its own blunders. It sought to restore the situation and to ensure the ends of peace, and of law and order, by representative measures which followed one another in rapid succession, chilling the public life of the country, and stunting its growth and development. The liberty of the Press and of public meetings was curtailed; and an old rusty weapon which had long lain unused in the armoury of the Government was taken down to deal with public workers who had been prominently connected with Swadeshism. Regulation III of 1818 was requisitioned to deport men, some of whom were the leading spirits of the

Swadeshi movement, honoured and respected by their countrymen. One morning in December, 1908, people learnt with astonishment that Aswini Kumar Dutt, the leader of the Barisal District, the founder of the Brojomohan College, Krishna Kumar Mitra, one of the foremost members of the Brahma Samaj, a man held in universal respect by all who knew him, Satis Chunder Chatterjee, Sachindra Prosad Bose, prominent *Swadeshi* workers, and the wealthy and patriotic Subodh Mullick, had all been deported under Regulation III of 1818.

As regards myself, it was said that the order for deportation was ready, but that it was cancelled at the last moment through the intervention of Sir Edward Baker, who had now become Lieutenant-Governor and who knew me well. Whatever the truth might be, one evening in the first week of December, 1908, as I was about to sit down to dinner, my friend, Moulvi Abul Hossain, one of the most eloquent of our *Swadeshi* preachers, came rushing to my house at Barrackpore with the report that the C.I.D. officers were coming to arrest me and that I had better get ready. I said, 'All right, let me have my dinner, and too have yours.' He readily agreed. We had our dinner ; and we waited for a couple of hours for the police, but the police never came. So I went to bed, and my friend returned to Calcutta with his mind somewhat at ease.

As a matter of fact, I was not deported, while some of my most prominent friends and associates were. Was it ever in contemplation to deport me ? I know not. The archives of the Secretariat may some day yield up the secret. While I was a member of the Government, I could have perhaps obtained this information—but I refrained. However that may be, the report of my friend Abul Hossain derived some confirmation from the fact that on the day of his visit, when he said I was to be deported, a considerable body of police and European troops had come up to Barackpore, though it was explained that this was because the Viceroy, Lord Minto, had come to attend the races. But the Viceroy had often been known to

attend races at Barrackpore without such a strong muster of troops or of police.

It is very evident from Lord Morley's *Recollections* that, radical statesman that he was, his whole soul revolted against the policy of deportation without trial, and that he yielded reluctantly to the pressure of circumstances, and to the weight of superior knowledge which the men on the spot claimed and which he could not dispute. He was so much annoyed with some of the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council that he wrote to Lord Minto: 'And, by the way, now that we have got down the rusty sword of 1818, I wish you would deport—and—(two officials); what do you say? I should defend that operation with verve.' This was said half in earnest and half in jest, but it was sufficiently expressive of Lord Morley's sense of irritation and dislike at the deportations. Who these two officials were, the public will probably never know. But officials of this class will never be wanting so long as officialism is not controlled by the popular will. That, in all countries and in all ages, has been found to be the true panacea for official vagaries.

Human nature and human conditions are not materially different in India. The fur-coat argument is the weapon of the reactionary, though it was not a reactionary who coined the phrase, and it must be allowed that, subject to the strictest scrutiny and the limitations that such scrutiny must impose, Lord Morley's sense of fairness led him to suggest safeguards which, I fear, were not always acted upon. Writing to Lord Minto on December 4, 1908, he said: 'One thing I do beseech you to avoid—a single case of investigation in the absence of the accused. We may argue as much as we like about it, and there may be no substantial injustice in it, but it has an ugly, Continental, Austrian, Russian, look about it.'

Quoting this passage from Lord Morley's *Recollections* in moving my Resolution on the appointment of an Advisory Committee in the Imperial Legislative Council on March 19, 1918, I asked the hon. member-in-charge of the Home Depart-

ment of the Government of India 'if this part of the instructions of Lord Morley were being given effect to in connexion with the investigations relating to prisoners under Regulation III of 1818'. No reply was given ; the obvious inference must therefore be that this very necessary safeguard was not followed. There was another equally important limitation prescribed by Lord Morley. On August 23, 1908, he said :

'He (an Angla-Indian official) must have forgotten what I very expressly told him, that I would not sanction deportation except for a man of whom there was solid reason to believe that violent disorder was the direct and deliberately planned result of his actions.'

It obvious that here again Lord Morley's instructions were not followed by the authorities out here. Had they been obeyed in spirit and essence, men like Krishna Kumar Mitra, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Satis Chunder Chatterjee, and Sachindra Prosad Bose and some others could not have been deported ; for they were all strongly wedded to constitutional methods and never dreamt of doing anything which directly or indirectly was calculated to produce 'violent disorder'. Under the gravest provocation, when attacked by the police, they never thought of retaliation, and submitted to police violence without striking a blow. Here we have again a repetition of the old order of things so often observable in the remissness or the total disregard shown by the servants of the East India Company in carrying out the orders of the Court of Directors. Again and again they were told by the Court of Directors not to add to their ever-expanding dominions ; but as often the temptation proved too strong and they violated the express orders of their masters ; and their offences were condoned, for they helped to bring larger dividends to the shareholders and larger additions to their territories, and with them to the power and the prestige of the Company.

There are no such temptations now ; possibly there are no glaring violations of orders proceeding from the India office ; but the old spirit of officialism impatient to have its own way

is, I am afraid, still there. The control of a Secretary of State from a distance of ten thousand miles, despite the present facilities of communication, must be feeble. And the time has come or is in sight when the power and responsibility of the Secretary of State should be transferred to the Government of India, subject to popular control, with the necessary safeguards for Imperial unity.

By instinct and by conviction Lord Morley was opposed to a policy of repression, but was driven to it by the overmastering pressure of circumstances, which, as Minister responsible for the Government of India, he could not resist. But the revolutionary movement taught him its own lessons. The people are never interested in revolutions or in movements that are a menace to the public peace. Their whole soul is bound up with law and order. The conclusion was therefore forced upon him that everything was not right in India, that there was something rotten in the State of Denmark, and that there must be conditions in the constitution of the Government and in the administration of the country to account for the development of the revolutionary forces. It was, I believe, acting under this conviction, that Lord Morley set himself to the task of constitutional reforms which would make the Government more acceptable to the leaders of the Indian people.

No matter from whom the Reforms emanated, they found in him a warm champion, insistent in carrying them through, and reminding Lord Minto that they should not be delayed. The zeal of the philosopher-statesman was apparent in his letters to Lord Minto, who, let it be said to his credit, responded with readiness and alacrity to the instructions of his chief. The idea of having an Indian member for the Viceroy's Executive Council, and for the Provincial Executive Councils, and that of the appointment of Indian members to the India Council London were Lord Morley's own. Friends of India like Lord Ripon shook their heads; and even so sympathetic a sovereign as King Edward was doubtful about an experiment so novel, and so opposed to deep-rooted and traditional official

ideas. But Lord Morley was nothing if not strong in his statesmanship, if he never showed this quality of strength more strikingly than in connexion with the Reforms, and his stern attitude in opposing Lord Kitchener as Viceroy of India, a proposal which had ever the support of the King.

The reform measures, known as the Morley-Minto Scheme, were welcomed as a small advance. Nobody in India was under the delusion that they meant very much. Their most important feature was perhaps the power given to non-official members to move resolutions on public questions, thus affording them an opportunity of criticizing the measures and policy of the Government, though without exercising any real control over them. Lord Morley was careful to tell the House of Lords that he was not inaugurating parliamentary institutions in any sense, though he must have realized from what small beginnings parliamentary institutions had their genesis in that great country which was the mother of all Parliaments.

A deputation waited upon the Viceroy for the boon, such as it was; and even a Town Hall meeting in Calcutta was suggested. That such a meeting was not held was due to my intervention. I told Sir Edward Baker, who was then Lieutenant-Governor, that I could join it only on the understanding that there would be a resolution against the Partition of Bengal and praying for its modification. This the official inspirers of the meeting would not agree to, and the idea was dropped.

The new Councils came into existence in 1910, and at the very first meeting the Viceroy announced that it was no longer necessary to keep in confinement the political prisoners detained under Regulation III of 1818, that they were not associated with any revolutionary movement, and that they would all be released. The deportation of Krishna Kumar Mitra, Aswini Kumar Dutta and the others was a great political blunder. It served no useful purpose, it did harm; it frightened none; it added to the political uneasiness and excitement. Since then there have been cases of deportation, but nothing like the feel-

ing that was then evoked. When I had an interview with Lord Morley in the India Office in the summer of 1909, I made a strong representation for the release of Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra and Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt. Lord Morley listened, but said nothing. The occasion indeed was inopportune. Sir William Curzon-Wyllie had just been murdered, and a strong feeling of indignation was roused in England against all suspected of political intrigue. In quieter times I might have had some chance of success. In July, 1909, I had none. To the grim tragedy of that month I shall have to refer later ; but in the meantime, let me pass on to a personal reminiscence in connexion with the reformed Councils.

Under the Regulations framed under the Parliamentary Statute of 1909, a dismissed servant of the Government was not eligible for election to the Legislative Councils. Dismissal from Government service was thus made a disqualification. Under the former Regulations (under the Statute of 1892) there was no such disqualification, though I believe an attempt was made to introduce it. Thus under the new Regulations I was disqualified for a seat in the Legislative Councils, local and Imperial. It was, however, a disqualification that could be removed by the head of the Government. Sir Edward Baker was then Lieutenant-Governor. He knew me well. For years together we were colleagues in public work ; and we learnt to like and respect one another. Of his own motion, without any suggestion from anybody he removed my disqualification and sent me a copy of the Government notification.

I was placed in a position of some difficulty. I had repeatedly said that I would not allow myself to be elected to the Councils unless and until the Partition of Bengal was modified. So far as the reformed Councils were concerned I had often told the leaders of public opinion in Bengal : 'Hands off till the Partition is modified.' Speaking at Sir William Wedderburn's breakfast in Westminster Palace Hotel on June 24, 1909, I said in the presence of Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Hume, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and others :

'If Lord Morley were to hold out in his right hand the gift of the Reform Scheme and in his left the gift of the modification of the Partition, and were to tell the people of Bengal, "You cannot have both, make your choice", my countrymen would, with overwhelming spontaneity, declare themselves in favour of the modification of the Partition and would allow the Reforms to come in their own good time.'

It had always struck me that one of the most effective protests that we could make against the Partition of Bengal, which Lord Morley had so often declared with nauseating insistence to be a settled fact, was, for the Bengal leaders to abstain from all participation in the work of the reformed Councils. I knew that such a self-denying ordinance would not be acceptable to all. But I had made my choice and had proclaimed my faith. For me, at any rate, there was no excuse. I had resolved upon making the sacrifice, forgoing a career, in which on a former occasion, I had, in the opinion of my countrymen, done useful work. But it was a far more difficult task to refuse what indeed was an invitation made by a friend, for whom I had great personal respect, and who was moved by a friendly and generous impulse. The invitation of the Governor of a province would have made little or no impression on me. It was the act of a friend who wanted to make the new Reform Scheme a success and who desired that I should contribute to it. To me it would have been a matter of great personal satisfaction to have been a colleague of Sir Edward Baker in the enlarged Legislative Council; for I knew how high-minded he was in all his dealings, how generous to his critics, and how affectionate and kind to his friends.

I felt the difficulty of my position and at last invited some of the leading men of Bengal to a conference to advise me as to what I should do. Among them were the late Mr. A. Rasool, Babu Ananda Chunder Roy and Babu Ambika Churn Majumdar. Their unanimous opinion was that I should decline, for, if I stood for election to the Bengal Legislative Council, the people of East Bengal would lose all faith in the

leaders of West Bengal and the Partition agitation would receive an irreparable blow. The political leaders of East Bengal had abstained from standing for election to the Council of the new province and they naturally expected that we should do the same. I accepted their advice. To me the modification of the Partition of Bengal was the most pressing national concern, eclipsing all others then before the public.

There was yet another serious ground of objection. Under the Regulations as passed, several prominent leaders of the Moderate party stood disqualified. How could I enter the Council with the ban of disqualification excluding my colleagues? That was the decision of a conference of some of the leaders of the Moderate party. I accepted it and informed Sir Edward Baker that, deeply grateful as I was to him for the kindly consideration which in this as in other matters I had received at his hands. I must respectfully decline to avail myself of the Government notification removing my disqualifications and to stand as a candidate for election to the Reformed Council. I may here add that my refusal did not in the slightest degree interfere with the cordiality of my relations with Sir Edward Baker, whose early death I deplore and whose memory I revere.

The Anti-Partition Movement

In 1910, Lord Hardinge was appointed Viceroy in succession to Lord Minto. I met Lord Minto several times and had fairly long interviews with him. He was an English gentleman of a fine type. Fairly liberal in his sentiments, but I fear without any large power of initiative, his name will be remembered in Indian history as the joint author of the Morley-Minto Scheme: though Lord Morley's *Recollections* leave no doubt as to where the driving power lay. India owes to Lord Minto the system of communal representation for the Legislative Councils, from the meshes of which it will take her many long years to emerge. I had in one of my interviews a long conversation with him about the Partition of Bengal. He was frank and outspoken, but obdurate in his adherence to the 'settled fact'. He said, 'Mr.

Banerjea, if my country was divided in the way your province has been, I should feel just as you do.' He spoke his mind out, but he was powerless to help us in any way. When we formally waited upon him in deputation as members of the Indian Association with a request that the Partition should be modified, he repeated Lord Morley's formula and told us in reply that the Partition was a 'settled fact'.

Some of our friends in India thought that we should not have put forward the request for its modification, in view of the repeated pronouncements of the Secretary of State. Our friends in England, including Mr. W.C. Bonnerjea, who was then in London, were of a different opinion. Their view was that, having regard to the all-important character of the Partition question, it was our plain duty to give it a prominent place in an address to the Viceroy. To have omitted all reference to it on an occasion so important was to have relegated it to a secondary place among the public questions of the day. In any case, it was clear that Lord Minto would do nothing to modify the Partition. We thought it possible, though our experience of the past was not very encouraging, that Lord Hardinge might take a more favourable view.

Lord Hardinge came out to India as a comparative stranger. He was not in the ranks of English public life ; diplomacy was his profession. The Indian public received the announcement of his appointment with mixed feelings. But, before twelve months had elapsed, we realized that he would take his place in the front rank of Indian Viceroys, by the side of Bentinck, Canning and Ripon.

A new Viceroy having assumed the reins of Government, we resolved to place him in possession of all the facts and the attitude of the Indian public in regard to the Partition question. We accordingly announced a public meeting to be held in the Town Hall of Calcutta early in January to consider it. Within a day or two of the announcement I received an urgent letter from Government House inviting me to see His Excellency the

Viceroy the day after. I had never before been so summoned ; but I guessed the purpose of the invitation. I thought it was the proposed Town Hall meeting about which His Excellency wished to have information. I was right in my anticipation. After the usual greetings, Lord Hardinge wanted to know why we had call the meeting. I said in reply, 'In order to acquaint your Excellency with the situation in Bengal relating to the Partition.' His Excellency's answer was : 'But that can be done by a memorial without a public meeting ' I said, 'If your Excellency would look into the memorial personally and consult our leaders, the district leaders, there would be no reason for holding the public meeting.' His Excellency said he would do that and consult his officers. I said, 'My Lord, the officers of Government have again and again been consulted, and they have given their opinions. It is our leaders whose opinions should now be asked.' Lord Hardinge very kindly agreed ; and the public meeting at the Town Hall was not held.

I drew up a memorial largely assisted by my esteemed friend, Babu Ambika Churn Majumder, the Grand Old Man of Faridpore, and sent it to the district leaders for signature by influential and representative men. My request was that the memorial was to be regarded as absolutely confidential, so that the other side under official inspiration might not set up a counter-agitation. My instructions were faithfully observed. The contents of the document never leaked out. In the district of Rajshahi, however, the District Superintendent of Police came to know that there was an anti-Partition memorial, which was being signed, and he wanted to have a copy of it. My friend, Babu Kissory Mohan Chowdhury, who was entrusted with the signature of the memorial in the district, asked for my instructions. I replied telling him that the document was confidential and was not to be shown to any one except the actual signatories.

We submitted this memorial, signed by representative men in eighteen out of the twenty-five districts of Bengal, about the end of June, 1911, and the Despatch of the Government of

India recommending the modification of the Partition of Bengal was dated August 25, 1911; and some of the arguments that were urged in the memorial were accepted by the Government as valid reasons for the modification of the Partition, and were emphasized in the Despatch.

The Partition was modified on December 12, 1911, by the announcement made by His Majesty at Delhi. I had heard about it a week before; but from the general public and from the newspaper Press it was kept a secret. Indeed, the officials and others most interested knew nothing at all about it until the actual announcement was made, and some of them were staggered at the news. Among them was the late Nawab Salimulla of Dacca, who was the Government's right-hand man in supporting the Partition and securing the assent of the Mohammedan community of East Bengal. He got a G.C.I.E. as a solace, but to the last he remained unconvinced and unreconciled. As a gentleman, the Nawab was without an equal. As a politician, he was narrow, but shrewd, with a fund of common sense that made him a tower of strength to his supporters and the Government.

In the meantime expectation ran high in Calcutta. All eyes were centred on the Durbar at Delhi. Some announcement was expected. The King had come out to India; the King was expected to do something beneficent and to appease the excitement and unrest in Bengal. Nothing definite was indeed known. But hope builds a pyramid upon a point. The *Bengalee* office was crowded with expectant visitors throughout the day, anxious to know the news from Delhi. The hours rolled by. Disappointment was visible on the countenances of the assembled visitors. It was late in the afternoon; but there was no news about the Partition. Late in the day, Associated Press sent a message from Delhi, but it contained not a word about the Partition. There were friends sitting near me in my editorial room, eager and anxious, but growing despondent at the absence of all reference to the Partition in the last message from Delhi. I dictated an article, which was to appear the day

after expressing profound dissatisfaction at the Partition not being modified, at the same time urging our people not to lose heart, but to continue the agitation.

Having dictated the article and revised it, I went downstairs, preparing to leave office, when I was summoned back to the telephone and heard the news that the Partition had been modified. There was quite a crowd at the *Bengalee* office at the time. The news spread like wildfire. People came in throngs to the office. A huge gathering had assembled in College Square, and I was seized by my friends, put into a carriage, and literally carried by force to College Square. There I witnessed a wild scene of excitement. It was quite dark—there were no lights—we could not see one another, but we could hear voices shouting with joy and occasionally interjecting questions. A voice from the crowd cried out, ‘What do you think of the transfer of the capital to Delhi?’ I said at once, ‘We are not likely to lose very much by it.’ Subsequent events have demonstrated that I was substantially right in my impromptu answer.

I returned home from the meeting happy at the thought that for six long years my friends and myself had not worked in vain, and that our efforts to restore to the Bengalee-speaking population their ancient union and solidarity were crowned with success. The secret is told in less than half-a-dozen words. We were persistent, we were confident of success; we religiously avoided unconstitutional methods and the wild hysterics that breed and stimulate them. Even when attacked by the police, we did not retaliate. We shouted *Bande-Mataram* at each stroke of the police *lathi*, and then appealed to the constituted courts of law for redress. Passive resistance we practised. Soul-force we believed in; but we never were under the delusion that it could be employed to any useful or national purpose, except by men trained in the practice of self-restraint and the discipline of public life. It is the acceptance of naked principles, without reference to the circumstances of their application, which is responsible for many of the deplorable events that have darkened the pages of recent Indian history.

It is a pity that the Partition of Bengal was not modified in 1906, when Mr. John Morley denounced it from his place in the House of Commons as 'a measure which went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people concerned', at the same time declaring it to be 'a settled fact'. A pronouncement in which the conclusion was so wholly inconsistent with the premises only served to add to the irritation and intensify the agitation. The Partition and the policy that was adopted to support it were the root cause of the anarchical movement in Bengal. and I have no doubt in my mind that, if it had been modified just when the agitation was assuming a serious aspect and the whole country was seething with excitement, the history of Bengal, and possibly of India, would have been differently written, and our province would have been spared the taint of anarchism. Here again the psychological moment was allowed to pass by, and the modification came when it was overdue. The words, 'too late' were once more written on every line of British policy.

I cannot pass from the subject without referring to some of the prominent persons who took part in the anti-Partition and *Swadeshi* movement and shared its troubles and risks. Some of them are now dead. Among these may be mentioned Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya Chowdhury of Mymensingh, Babu Ambika Churn Majumder and Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu. Of Ananda Mohan Bose and Bhupendra Nath Basu I have written elsewhere and in another connexion. Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya Chowdhury, before the anti-Partition controversy, took little or no interest in politics. He was a man of wealth, and *shikar* was the pleasure, and the passion of his life. He took to it far more seriously than many people take to their business. By nature he was an enthusiast, and, when his feelings were roused, he spared neither money nor pains to attain his object. For a man in his position, in those days, to stand up against the Government, in regard to a measure upon which it had set its heart, needed no little courage and strength of purpose. It was a much more serious affair than voting against Government in the Legislative

Council. Lord Curzon undertook a tour in the eastern districts, and at Mymensingh, the Maharaja's headquarters, he became his guest. The Viceroy was treated with princely hospitality ; but the Maharaja never flinched in maintaining an attitude of unbending opposition to the Partition of Bengal and frankly expressing his opinion to the Viceroy. That attitude was maintained by him throughout the whole of the controversy, and even in the darkest days of repression, when the leaders of the anti-Partition movement were, in the eyes of the authorities, so many political suspects

I well remember his attending the first boycott meeting on August 7, 1905, dressed in the roughest *Swadeshi* garb, which alone was then available. It was in his house in Lower Circular Road that many of our meetings were held and many of the most momentous decisions taken. He died just on the eve of the deportations in Bengal, and there was some apprehension, not perhaps well-founded, that if he had lived he would have shared the fate of many of his friends and co-workers. His death has left a gap among the zemindars of East Bengal which has not been filled. For courage, virility and strength of purpose, he stood head and shoulders above the men of his class, and left behind him an enduring example for imitation and guidance.

Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt of Barisal was another leader of East Bengal who came into prominence. He was a schoolmaster and proprietor of the Brojomohan College at Barisal. It was founded in honour of his father, as a memorial of filial piety, but it was Aswini Kumar Dutt's devotion and organizing powers that made it one of the most successful educational institutions in East Bengal or in the whole of the province. Aided by Babu Satis Chunder Chatterjee, a colleague of his in the Brojomohan College, he organized the whole district for the *Swadeshi* movement. These organizations rendered splendid service ; and when famine broke out in Barisal Mr. Dutt was able to afford substantial help to the sufferers. The relief of the famine-stricken and the spread of the *Swadeshi* cause went hand in hand.

Those were days of conflict and controversy between the officials and the representatives of the people; and Aswini Kumar Dutt and his friends in Barisal felt the full weight of official displeasure and all that it implied. In 1908, Mr. Dutt and his friend and lieutenant, Mr. Satis Chunder Chatterjee, were deported without a trial. The reasons for their deportation will possibly remain a state secret for many long years. But, apart from the general reasons that make deportations without trial repugnant to the ordinary canons of law and justice, it seemed extraordinary that men like Aswini Kumar Dutt and Satis Chunder Chatterjee, who never harboured an unconstitutional idea or uttered an unconstitutional sentiment in their lives, should have been dealt with in this way under an old and forgotten regulation, intended to be employed against quasi-rebels. The general impression at the time was that the authorities wanted to put down Swadeshim, and they sought to strike terror among *Swadeshi* workers by this extraordinary procedure adopted against some of their most prominent leaders. But repression did not kill Swadeshism. Its decline was largely due to the failure of many *Swadeshi* enterprises, and the removal of the root cause by the modification of the Partition.

Babu Ananda Chunder Roy of Dacca must now claim attention as one of the outstanding figures of the anti-Partition movement. The undisputed leader of the Dacca Bar, Ananda Chunder Roy, occupied a position of unrivalled influence among the Hindu leaders of that city; and the whole of that influence he exerted, and with conspicuous success, for the promotion of the *Swadeshi* movement and the modification of the Partition. It is no mean testimony to his public spirit and that of the Hindu citizens of Dacca that, for the sake of maintaining the solidarity of the Bengalee-speaking population, they strenuously opposed a scheme that would have made their city the capital of a new province, with all its attendant advantages. Ananda Chunder Roy was one of the stalwarts of the anti-Partition movement, and never faltered in his opposition to the Partition. In the same category must be placed Anath Bandhu Guha of

Mymensingh. As head of the Mymensingh Bar, he wielded great influence. In those days to be a popular leader was to incur the displeasure of the authorities. Anath Bandhu Guha was in their bad books. He was not indeed deported. I believe he narrowly escaped it, but he was bound down to keep the peace under section 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code. It was a gross insult to a man of his position. But with him it was not merely a sentimental grievance, for he suffered from it, as under the rules then in force he was disqualified for election to the local Legislative Council. When he applied for the removal of the disqualification, the Local Government, which had the power to remove it, rejected the application. Fortunately this rule and several others of the same character have been done away with on the recommendation of the Southborough Committee, and the range of executive discretion has been curtailed.

Last but not least among the distinguished men who identified themselves with the anti-Partition and *Swadeshi* movement and supported it throughout was Ambika Churn Majumder. He was rightly called the Grand Old Man of Faridpore (his native district) and of East Bengal. In intellectual eminence, in the possession of the gift of eloquence, and in unflinching love and devotion to the motherland, he stood in the forefront among the leaders of Bengal. He began life as a schoolmaster. He was my colleague in the Metropolitan Institution of Pundit Vidyasagar, but he early took to politics, and his interest in it was never-failing. He was associated with the Congress almost from its birth and was the President of one of the most memorable Congresses ever held, that of 1916, which adopted the Lucknow Convention and sealed the union between Hindus and Mahomedans in their efforts to secure their common political advancement.

Ambika Churn Majumder felt so strongly about the Partition that he once told me that, if the Partition was not modified, he would sell off his ancestral property in the new province and settle in West Bengal, and he seriously asked me

to purchase some landed property for him in the 24-Parganas. He controlled the *Swadeshi* and anti-Partition movement in the district of Faridpore, and was always ready with his advice and active assistance whenever required. So great was his influence that on one occasion, in the height of the anti-Partition agitation, when the Lieutenant-Governor arrived at Faridpore, he found the railway station denuded of coolies, and the Subordinate police had to carry the luggage of the ruler of the province.

It has been said by a great writer that the public affections are but an expansion of the domestic feelings, and that patriotism has its roots amid the sanctities of the home and the tranquil surroundings of village life. Faridpore, his native district, will remember Ambika Churn Majumder as one of its greatest benefactors. He was for years the Chairman of the Faridpore Municipality, and the town of Faridpore owes its waterworks largely to his initiative and to his administrative vigour and efficiency. The Faridpore College, which has recently been established, is another monument of his public spirit, his capacity for solid achievement, and his unflinching love for the people among whom he was born and lived. Prostrated by disease, suffering from bereavements, which darkened his home, his interest in public work remained unabated. and from time to time, as occasion required, the Grand Old Man spoke out with the decisive emphasis of his younger days. In the schism that took place between the two wings of the Nationalist party over the Reform Scheme, Ambika Churn Majumder never hesitated, never wavered, but threw in his lot, with characteristic ardour, with his friends of the Moderate party with whom he had worked through life.

AGITATIONAL MOVEMENTS AND SURAT SPLIT

As pointed out in the previous chapter, a section of the nationalist leaders raised the banner of revolt against the old leadership that signified a duel between the 'constitutionalists' and the 'extremists'. While the former showed their adherence to follow the path of constitutional struggle for reforms, the latter condemned it as the way of 'mendicancy' and instead preferred to follow the line of agitation. It manifested itself in their call for the use of home-made goods (*Swadeshi*) implying boycott of the use of goods imported from abroad. This is known as *Swadeshi* and Boycott Movement that occurred in 1905 and continued thereafter. At the Kashi Congress (1905), the President of the Indian National Congress (Gokhale) appreciated the call for *Swadeshi*, but he did not find favour with the course of boycott. The growing weight of the extremists posed a serious challenge to the established leadership that was not prepared to yield before the line of the 'young Turks' and so occurred the division in 1907, known as the split of Surat, for which the two camps offered different versions.

EMERGENCE OF A GENUINE NATIONAL MOVEMENT*

Mr. Hume was quite sincere in his motives, but he forgot that a political organisation started at the instance or even with the approval of the rulers whose power and emoluments it proposed to curtail, whose despotism and principles it questioned, in short, whom it proposed to displace and

*From Lala Lajpat Rai : *Young India*, pp. 122 ff.

dethrone, was an anomaly ; it was unnatural. In their desire to have an easy and unopposed start, the Indian founders of the National Congress forgot their history, and consequently ignored the truth that "those who wanted to be free must themselves strike the blow," and that it was monstrous to expect those against whom the blow was aimed to bless the striker and the striking. We do not agree with Mr. Gokhale that "no Indian could have started the Indian National Congress" and that "if the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the official distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or other to suppress the movement."

First, political agitation did not start with the Congress. It had been started before and no attempt to suppress it had succeeded. Second, the distrust of political agitation in India was not greater in those days than it is now and has been during the life of the Congress. But if it be true that the movement could not have started by an Indian or by the combined efforts of many Indians, all we can say is that that itself would be proof of its having been started before time and on wrong foundations.

Had not Mr. Hume said that "whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within", and that it was "to her own sons that the country must look for the initiative?" Did not Mr. Hume say in his manifesto of 1883 that "in vain may aliens like myself love India...in vain may they struggle and sacrifice...they may assist with advice and suggestion, but they lack the *essential* of nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves?"

These may be only truisms, but they are fundamental and any political effort made in defiance of them must be futile and impotent. The Indian leaders of the Congress have never fully realised the absolute truth of these principles and the

result is the comparatively poor record of the Congress. In his original manifesto issued in 1883. Mr. Hume wanted fifty Indians "with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative and if needs be to devote the rest of their lives to the cause."

Of course there were many times fifty men of that kind in the country, even then, who were devoting their lives to the service of their country, but not in the political line. It took the Congress and the country, by working on Congress lines, more than twenty years to produce fifty, many times fifty, such men to devote their lives to the political cause. But unfortunately these are neither in the Congress, nor of the Congress, barring Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and the late Mr. Gokhale, who among the living Congress leaders can be said to have devoted their lives, in the way Mr. Hume wanted them to do, to the Congress cause? Within the last thirty years India has produced many noble sons who have given their all in the service in the Motherland. They come from all provinces, all religions, all denominations, and all castes. But very few of them have even been active in the Congress or for the Congress. Within the same period many Indians have given away many hundreds of thousands of rupees, some the whole earnings of a lifetime, in aid of education or for other public or charitable purpose; but the Congress work has always languished for want of funds. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress, located in London, have never had sufficient money to do their work decently. The expenses of the British Committee have largely fallen on Sir William Wedderburn. He and Mr. Hume between them spent quite a fortune on the movement. No single Indian is said to have spent even a fraction of that. The question naturally arises,— why has it been so? The answer is obvious. The movement did not appeal to the nation. The leaders lacked that faith which alone makes it possible to make great sacrifices for it.

In the early years of the Congress there was a great deal of enthusiasm for it among the English-educated Indians. So long

as no attempts were made to reach the masses and carry on the propaganda among the people, the officials expressed their sympathy with the movement. Lord Dufferin even invited the members as "distinguished visitors" to a garden party at Government House, Calcutta, when the Congress held its second session in that city in 1886. In 1887 the Governor of Madras paid a similar compliment to them at Madras¹ but in 1888, when Mr. Hume adopted the methods and tactics of the Corn Law Leaguers of England, down came the hand of the Government ; and then the Congress movement at once adopted an apologetic tone and abandoned the only method by which it could make itself heard with effect. Why ? Because, in the words of Mr. Hume, there were no "men who could act."

The Congress Lacked Essentials of a National Movement

Ever since then the Congress has cared more for the opinion of the Government and the officials than for truth or for the interests of the country. Again the question arises, why ? And the reply is, because the leaders had neither sufficient political consciousness nor faith. They had certain political opinions, but not beliefs for which they were willing to suffer. They were prepared to urge the desirability of certain reforms in the government of the country, even at the risk of a certain amount of official displeasure, but they were not prepared to bear persecutions, or suffer for their cause. Either they did not know they had a cause, or they were wanting in that earnestness which makes men suffer a cause. Or, to be charitable, they thought that the country was not prepared for an intense movement and considered it better to have something than nothing. They perhaps wanted to educate the country in political methods and bring about a political consolidation of all the national forces before undertaking an intensified

1. These compliments were renewed in 1914. The Congress held at Madras in that year was attended by the British Governor of the Presidency.

movement. But with the greatest possible respect for the founders of the Indian National Congress, or for those who a few years ago took up the control of the movement, we cannot help remarking that by their own conduct they showed that their movement lacked the essential of a national movement.

A movement does not become national by the mere desire of its founders to make it so. In the opinion of the writer it is a mistake to start a *national political movement* unless those who start it are prepared to make great sacrifices for it. A halting, half-hearted political movement depending on the sympathy and goodwill of the very class against whom it is directed, consulting their wishes at every step, with its founders of leaders trembling for their safety and keeping their purse-strings tight, only doing as much as the authorities would allow and as would not interfere in any way with their own personal interests and comforts and incomes, is from its very nature detrimental to real national interests. A political movement is mischievous in its effects if its leaders do not put a sufficient amount of earnestness into it to evoke great enthusiasm among their followers, such as would prepare them for great sacrifices for the cause on the one hand, and, on the other, produce a certain amount of fear of unpleasant consequences in those against whom it is directed. For this it is necessary that the leaders should be prepared to suffer for the cause. The sacrifice of money is the least proof of earnestness which a believer in any cause can give.

It is a fact that the English friends of the movement showed more earnestness than many of the Indian leaders. They spent their own money over it and they incurred the displeasure of their countrymen and the odium of being called traitors to their own country. Mr. Hume was "in deadly earnest." He started the movement with the goodwill of the authorities and waited for results for two years. When, however, he found that "the platonic expressions of sympathy by the authorities were a mockery," that nothing was done

to lessen the "misery of the masses" and to relieve their sufferings and redress their grievances, he decided to put more intensity into the movement. He undertook to instruct the Indian nation and rouse them to a sense of their right and to a sense of the wrong that was being done to them. In his opinion² the case was one of extreme urgency, for the deaths by famine and pestilence were counted not by tens of thousands or by hundreds of thousands, but by millions." He concluded that "in order to *constrain the Government to move*, the leaders of the Indian people must adopt measures of exceptional vigour, following the drastic methods pursued in England by Bright and Cobden in their great campaign on behalf of the people's food." So, like Cobden, Hume decided that since the attempt of the Congress leader to instruct the Government had failed and since the Government had refused to be instructed by them, the next step "to instruct the nations, the great English nation in its island home, *and also the far greater nation* of this vast Indian continent, so that every Indian that breathes upon the sacred soil of this our motherland, shall become our comrade and coadjutor, our supporter and if need be *our soldier in the great war that we, like Cobden and his noble band, will wage for justice, for our liberties and our rights.*"³

Hume's Political Movement

Now these were noble words, pointing out the only political weapon that ever succeeds against autocratic governments. We are told by Mr. Hume's biographer that "in pursuance of such a¹ propaganda in India Mr. Hume set to work with his wonted energy, appealing for funds to all classes of the Indian community, distributing tracts, leaflets and pamphlets, sending out lecturers and calling meetings both in large towns and in country districts. Throughout the country over one thousand meetings were held, at many of which over five thousand persons were present, and arrangements were made for the

2. Mr. Hume's biography by Sir William, Wedderburn p. 62.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

distribution of half a million pamphlets, translations into twelve Indian languages being circulated of two remarkable pamphlets, showing by a parable the necessary evils of absentee state landlordism, however benevolent the intention.”⁴

That was true political work done with a real political insight. If it had been preserved the history of the Congress would have been different, and perhaps the revolutionary party would never have been born or would have been born earlier. In either case the country would have been farther ahead in politics than it is now. What, however, actually happened was that the Government was at once moved to hostility. Lord Dufferin spoke of the Congress in terms of contempt “as the infinitesimal minority” at a Calcutta dinner. Sir Auckland Colvin stirred up the Mohammedans, organised an anti-Congress Association and denounced the Congress in no measured terms as mischievous, disloyal, and much before the time.

Congress Overawed

Mr. Hume started to explain in an apologetic tone. It was at this time that he came out with the ‘safety valve’ theory. Mass propaganda was at once abandoned, never to be resumed in the history of the movement (before 1920). The movement in England failed for want of funds. The movement in India collapsed for want of perseverance, vigour and earnestness. Here again we are disposed to think that Mr. Hume’s subsequent conduct was influenced more by the fears and half-heartedness of the Indian leaders than by his own judgment. If the Indian leaders had stuck to their guns and pushed on their propaganda, the country would have supplied funds and would have rallied round them. Perhaps there might have been a few riots and a few prosecutions. But that would have drawn the attention of the British public to Indian conditions more effectively than their twenty-eight years of half-hearted propaganda in England did. The political education of the

4. Hume’s *Biography*, p. 63.

people would have been more rapid and the movement would have gained such a strength as to make itself irresistible. It is possible, nay, probable, that the Government would have suppressed the movement. But that itself would have been a victory and a decided and effective step in the political education of the people. The revolutionary movement would have come earlier and the Government would have seen the wisdom of conciliating the moderates much earlier than 1909. What was given to us in 1909 might have been given twenty years earlier. The Mohammedans would have been happy to get in 1889 what they got in 1909. The Indian leaders, however, thought that they were not sufficiently strong and that the movement stood the chance of being suppressed. They gave in and abandoned the only effective weapon they had forged to get redress a political grievances.

No nation and no political party can ever be strong enough to make their voice effective, unless and until they put forward a sufficient amount of *earnestness* (not bluff) to convince their opponents that in case their demands are trifled with, the consequences might be serious to both parties. The history of political advance in self-governed countries like England, Germany, France, etc., amply proves this. No political agitation need be started unless those who are engaged in it are prepared to back it up by the power of the purse and the power of conviction.

Congress Agitations in England

The Congress, overawed in 1888 and 1889, failed in both respects. So far as the first is concerned, why, that has been a theme of lamentation, appeals, and wailings from year to year. Friends in England, whether in or outside the British Committee, have lamented it in pathetic terms. The Congress agitation in England has never been effective. The Congress has had precious little influence on English public opinion, and although the British Committee of the Congress have had an office and an organ in London for the last 25 years or more,

their influence in English politics has been almost nil. But for the generosity of Mr. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn, the Congress office in London might have been long ago closed. The leaders of the Congress have talked very much of their implicit faith in the English nation ; they have held out hopes of our getting a redress of our wrongs if we could only inform the British people of the condition of things prevalent in India ; yet the efforts they have put forward to achieve that end have been puerile and paltry. There is a party of Indian politicians who do not believe in agitation in England, but the leaders of the Congress and those who have controlled the organisation in the last thirty years do not profess to belong to that party. We shall now try to explain why this has been so.

Causes of Failure of the Congress

(1) The movement was neither inspired by the people nor devised or planned by them. It was a movement not *from within*. No section of the Indian people identified themselves with it so completely as to feel that their existence as honourable men depended on its successful management. The movement was started by an Englishman at the suggestion of an English pro-consul. The Indians, who professed to lead it, were either actually in government service or in professions allied to Government service and created by the Government. A good many of the latter aspired to offices under the Government or to a recognition of their merit and public spirit by the Government. They were patriotic enough to give a part of their time and energy to the movement, so long as it did not clash with their own interests, so long as they were not required to mar their careers for it, or so long as it did not demand heavy sacrifices from them. We do not question either their motives or their patriotism, but it was not sufficiently intense to induce them to stake their *all* on it.

(2) The movement lacked the essentials of a popular movement. The leaders were not in touch with the people. Perhaps they did not even want to come in touch with them. Their

propaganda was confined to a few English-educated persons, was carried on in English and was meant for the ears of the authorities rather than for the people. The leaders always felt shy of the masses, made no efforts to reach them, and systematically discouraged the younger men from doing the same. Some of them openly opposed efforts in this direction.

(3) The leaders failed to inspire enthusiasm among the people either because of their failure to make sacrifices, or on account of the triviality of their sacrifices. Their ordinary life, their income, their prosperity, and their luxuries were in no way effected by the movement. There were only two exceptions to this, *viz.*, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale. The sacrifices of Messrs Hume and Wedderburn shamed the people, but failed to appeal to their imagination. In fact, they roused the anger of the people against the leaders and created distrust. The spectacle of leaders accepting high offices there were offered under the Government added to this distrust.

(4) The movement was neither confined to a select few, nor open to all. While the people were expected to add to the spectacular side of the show by their presence in large numbers, by crowded meetings, by cheers and applause, they were never given a hand in the movement. Differences of opinion were always discouraged and free discussion was never allowed. It was neither a public forum, nor a private meeting of the select few. In the latter case it would have been less expensive and would have saved money for work in England. In the former case it would have been more effective.

(5) A national movement, demanding only a few concessions and not speaking of the liberties of the nation and of its ideals, is never an effective movement. It is at best an opportunist movement. It is mischievous in so far as it diverts attention from substantial *nation building and character making*. It brings fame without sacrifice. It opens opportunities for treacheries and hypocrisies. It enables some people to trade in the name of patriotism. No political movement can be entirely free from these disadvantages, but the greatest mischief, which a political

movement lightly handled and led does, is that it delays the development of the people on normal lines by raising hopes which are baseless and can never be realised by means recommended and methods adopted.

Birth of the New Nationalist Movement

The National Movement in India continued on its placid and humdrum course until Lord Curzon's ridicule of the movement convinced the people that the political methods of the Congress were quite powerless to bring them any relief against the despotism that trampled upon all their rights and sensibilities. This led to a deeper and a closer study of the political problem on the part of men who had convictions as distinguished from opinions, who had faith as against opportunism, who wanted a soul for their people, rather than a few more posts under the Government. They discovered that the movement had suffered not only by the adoption of wrong methods and by want of sacrifice on the part of leaders, but by their failure to grasp principles and to formulate ideals. Hence the cry of *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj*.

Swadeshi and Swaraj

No sooner was the cry raised than the country was swept by a wave of political activity which deeply and intimately influenced the proceedings of the Congress in 1905 and 1906. Calcutta might have witnessed in 1906 what Surat did in 1907, but for the sagacity and patriotism of Dadabhai, who rose equal to the occasion and blessed the cry for self-government. He declared in the words of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the British Premier, that good government could never be a substitute for self-government. So far good government had been the ideal of the Congress. At the Calcutta session of 1906 it was changed to self-government,—and that from the mouth of a man who had devoted his whole life to the political cause. That is the date of the birth of the real National Movement in India.

The Surat fiasco was, among other causes, brought about by the fear that the so-called moderate leaders wanted to go back what had been done in 1906. There is no doubt that they had gone back in spirit, though perhaps not in letter. The enthusiasm, created by popular propaganda of the Congress in 1888, was killed by the reaction that followed in subsequent years. The same thing would have happened in 1907 but for the fact that this time the movement was sufficiently intense to claim its martyrs.

The high ideals embodied in Swadeshi and Swaraj were the ideals worked out by the sons of India: the miseries of the motherland had given an impetus to the idea, but the idea itself stood on higher ground. It was not the redress of grievances that filled the mind of the people, but the desire of liberty. It was not concessions they wanted, but liberty. Liberty is not a thing of the earth, and therefore it can neither be given nor accepted as a gift. It has to be won. People felt that, and were prepared to realise that in their lives.

After more than twenty years of more or less futile agitation for concession and redress of grievances, they had received stones in place of bread. Lord Ripon was succeeded by a Curzon. People saw that a sort of mist, a deep, covering fog, had prevented them from seeing ahead. They had been wandering in pursuit of vain things. The heaven had been concealed from their vision and the result was that their tiny bark had been following a wrong course. The waters were stormy and the sea was heavy, but no ship could reach its destination unless the mariners and sailors in charge knew what their goal was, and unless they were prepared to put forth all they had in them to carry the bark through. So far, the bark had been sailing under misleading stars, without a compass to guide the captain. Now the compass was found and with the finding of the compass the aspect changed. Ideas inspire men. Ideals prepare them to face martyrdom. The ideal of Swaraj found men ready to suffer for it; to meet death like martyrs. The new movement has inspired a class of men whose life is filled with that idea

and that idea alone. They are the worshippers of Swaraj, they love their motherland above everything else. They do not want office, or incomes, or recognition or applause. What they want is liberty, not for themselves—that they might get perhaps by settling in other countries—but for their beloved country. High Court Judgeships, Civil Service Councils—these mean nothing to them.

The founders of the Indian National Congress began their movement under inspiration of the government and under the shadow of high offices they held or aspired to hold under that government, but the founders and inspirers of the National Movement started their propaganda by boycotting government and government patronage. The former wanted high offices, the latter despised those who held them. The former asked for concessions, the latter rejected them. The former wanted Councils, the latter would have nothing to do with them. The former appeared to the British Government and the British nation, the latter appealed to their own people and to their own patriotism and to their God. The former were led by the British, the latter by pure Indians. The former would not do anything which would mar their careers, the latter drew away their chances like poisoned bread. The former lived in bungalows, revelled in drawing-rooms and velvet-covered chairs, were attended by liveried servants, ate at well-furnished tables, entertained governors and magistrates ; the latter gave up even the little comforts they had, changed trousers for *dhotis*, coats for *chapkans* or *kurtas* (shirts), overcoats for blankets, and boats for ordinary Swadeshi shoes. The former owed their prosperity in life, their positions, and their comforts to the British system, and were therefore under obligation to the British ; but the latter chose the path of poverty and destitution to avoid obligations. They threw away their chances deliberately and with the conviction that that was the right thing to do. The former cared for wives, for children, and for home. The latter gave up all to devote themselves completely to the cause and to the motherland. The former had produced only two full-time workers for the cause in the course of 22 years, the latter pro-

duced virtually hundreds and thousands in less than two years. The former worked under the best auspices, the latter started their work under overhanging clouds, which soon burst and swept away many of them into prisons.

Is it any wonder that under such inspiration the movement spread like wild fire and assumed wide proportions? Life met life. Forces met forces. Conflict and class resulted in fatal accidents to either party. The casualties on the side of the Nationalists have been tremendously heavy and out of all proportion to their number, but judging the conflict by the resources, no one need hesitate in saying that the moral victory lies with the Nationalists. Within less than five years of their propaganda, they forced the hand of the Government to make concessions which could not be even thought of in 1905. The Congress leaders claim credit for themselves and so does the Government; but the verdict of impartial and unbiased historians will be otherwise.

Lord Morley would rally the moderates because there were extremists in the land. In the absence of the so-called extremists, the moderates were extremists and the Government and its agents looked down upon them. The Anglo-Indian statesman and his confidant the moderate Congress leaders, say that extremists are few, that most of them are those good-for-nothings who could do nothing at the universities, or with their lives; that they are maniacs and men who have lost all sense of right and wrong.

Men Who Have Inspired the Movement

But look at the men who have inspired the movement, some of whom are leading it even to-day. Is Aurobindo Ghosh a failure? Is Har Dayal a failure? Were the nine deportees from Bengal failures? How many high-class graduates have been hanged; how many are in jail! Look at their university records and look at their prospects, and then say if you can call them "malcotents" or men who have risen against the Government because they could not prosper under it. Their propaganda has

compelled the Government to adopt the severest repressive measures open to a foreign government. The Penal Code has been amended to make the definition of sedition more comprehensive. The Criminal Procedure Code has been amended to facilitate conviction and to accelerate trials. Provisions have been added to enable magistrates to award summary imprisonment for failure to give security for good behaviour asked for on political grounds. A Seditious Meetings Act has been enacted to make open propaganda impossible. An Explosives Act has been placed on the statute book. A Press Law has been passed to muzzle the press. Spies and detectives have been employed out of number. Teachers, professors, friends, pupils, class-fellows and parents have all been requisitioned to crush the movement. The number of publications confiscated under the Press Act, the convictions for sedition, for seditious murders, for dacoities and for keeping arms, the sentences for failure to find securities for good behaviour—all these continue to grow. The cry is, "Still they came!" In prisons the political prisoner has been subjected to horrible treatment; one committed suicide and another lost his senses in the Andamans. Many a tale of misery and wretchedness, of torture and of insults comes from the prisoners in India, but still the movement is far from being crushed.

There is evidence that new recruits join the secret propaganda every year and take the place of those hanged or imprisoned. A number have exiled themselves and are carrying on their propaganda in distant lands under very discouraging and depressing circumstances. The man who says that the movement is dead or dying must be a liar or a fool. The movement is alive and possibly as vigorous as it ever was. It has captured the imagination of the younger generation. And at least 75 per cent of the students in India and in England sympathise with this party.

The failures of the old Congress evolved the Nationalist Movement. The Congress did its work that way. It brought conviction home that no amount of prayers, resolutions, pro-

tests and memorials could move the autocratic bureaucracy in India, and no amount of petitions were likely to make any impression upon the people in England. The fact that the Congress leaders would give large amounts of money for educational puposes and other charities, forced people to think that they themselves had no faith in the Congress propaganda or in the Congress methods, though they lacked the courage to say so or to change their methods. It was perhaps unreasonable to expect that of the kind of men that led the Congress. Most of them loved their country and were public spirited ; they had given proof of it, good and sufficient, in other sides of national activity, in the cause of social reform, in the cause of public education, in industrial propaganda. Outside the Congress they had done enough to create an atmosphere which was bound to bring about the development of the political movement along the lines on which it eventually did develop in 1905.

The Nationalist child was, so to say, brought up on the lap of the old Congressman and fed on the food provided by him ; though, strange enough, this bringing up and this feeding produced results for which the Congressman was not prepared and which shocked him a bit. The first shock over, some of them were happy to have lived to see the day, and they blessed the movement. Some made up their minds to throttle it, but soon found that it was not in their power to do so. The worst they could do was to condemn it and to denounce it. All they could achieve was to cut the new movement, shake off all responsibility for it, and thus secure their own safety. We do not say that they did it to save their skins. But, fortunately for them, their convictions led them the way their safety lay. In their heart of hearts they blessed the new movement and were heartily glad that it came. It acted and reacted on their own movement. It made possible for them to put strength and force into their demands for concessions. Whenever an extremist leader recanted or used compromising language, they were sorry. They wanted the movement to continue and to live, though they would not join it and though they believed that it was harmful to the country in some respects. They deplore the

lack of enthusiasm and sacrifice in their own ranks, but they admire the selflessness of the extremists and respect their real leaders. An Aurobindo Ghosh and a Tilak simply compel admiration and respect. Whatever the shortcomings of Har Dayal may be, he is a unique personality.

We have started wherein the new movement differed from the old, and we have also stated what its dominant note is. We would now like to examine how it intended to proceed and how its hands were forced to do the things it has done since.

Lord Curzon and Indian Education

We have already hinted that Lord Curzon's policy and his utterances helped a great deal in the birth of the new movement. When Lord Curzon came to India, he formulated a rather ambitious programme of reforms to be introduced into the administration of the country. One of these reforms related to education.

Every one in the country, who had anything to do with education in India, was of opinion that the country was very backward in education and that the system of education there in vogue was defective. I laid too great stress on the literary side and did not fit people for the battle of life : it gave undue importance to the English language and Western modes of thought at the cost of the vernaculars and the indigenous civilisation of the country ; it encouraged "cram" at the cost of real merit ; it produced a class of imitators and left little scope or none for originality ; it invited third class men from England to fill the highest positions in the educational service of the country, and placed the best Indian intellect and talent under them to starve and rot for want of opportunities ; it did not recognise the duty of the Government to look after the education of the child from the beginning until he was fit to fight his own way in the world.

The educational system of the country required radical changes but what was most needed was that the Government

should be prepared to spend adequate sums of money for its spread and in order to make it efficient. Lord Curzon's pronouncements and programme therefore raised great hopes in the minds of the people. His University Commission was simply flooded with suggestions and statements from Indians and Anglo-Indians. The two classes, however, discussed the matter from entirely different standpoints. The Indians wanted greater facilities for education, more schools, more colleges, more masters, more stipends, an extension of primary school education, abler and better-paid teachers, freedom of private enterprise, ample provision for technical and industrial education ; but what they wanted most and cared for most was that education should be more nationalised and humanised. The Anglo-Indians wanted a curtailment of the educational opportunities, a greater and stricter control of private enterprise, a raising of university standards, and a system of education which would curb the rising generation and make them more easily amenable to discipline and obedience.

Lord Curzon did go into all these questions, but the decision arrived at convinced the educated Indians that the motive which underlay Lord Curzon's policy was the tightening of government control, the strangling of all independence in matters educational and the eventual weakening of all national movement and national sentiment.

Lord Curzon's Secret Educational Conference

The fact that Curzon admitted no Indian to the meeting of the Secret Educational Conference held at Simla, when he formulated the government policy, strengthened that idea. His University Legislation shocked the country beyond measure and left no doubt whatsoever that what he aimed at was a complete official control of all education in India. Educated Indians read between the lines and concluded that it was a mistake to look to the Government to do things or to follow a policy which might quicken the national pulse, strengthen the Nationalist sentiment, or add to the efficiency of the people so

as to fit them to stand on their legs and desire to get rid of the leading strings in which they were held by the British.

Indians and Lord Curzon at Cross Purposes

Indians saw that they and Lord Curzon were at cross purposes. They aimed at self-government and freedom; Lord Curzon aimed at prolongation of the period of their bondage and the permanence of the existing political conditions. We wanted independence; he wanted us to be dependent on the British. We wanted to quicken the pace of national advance; he wanted to slacken it. We wanted to be assertive and self-reliant; he wanted us to be submissive and under permanent control and tutelage. We wanted to go forward, he mistrusted us. We wanted a policy of confidence; instead of that he inaugurated a policy of suspicion. We wanted unity, he proceeded to bring into existence fresh causes of friction between community and community. We wanted the marshalling of our forces in the common cause, he proceeded to divide us and to keep us apart. We wanted consolidation, and he started active disintegration. We wanted an extension of representative government, Lord Curzon did his best to discredit the institutions that had been granted and to set back the hands of the clock.

The Congress Deputation to England in 1905

The leaders of the Indian National Congress saw all this; they resisted Lord Curzon's policy rather boldly; they spoke with courage; they sought his patronage and sent their president to wait on him. Lord Curzon refused to see him and thus slapped the Congress in the face. He characterised their activities as the letting off of "gas". Their resolutions he looked upon with contempt because, as he said, nothing had ever come out of them. The leaders felt offended, and they fretted and fumed. But all they resolved to do was to appeal to the British public. So a deputation was sent to England in 1905 to place the grievances of India before the British public.

This deputation was composed of Messrs. Gokhale and the writer of this book. They addressed a large number of meetings in Great Britain, made many friends, saw some politicians; but they were not very hopeful as to the results. One of them on his return (the present writer) struck an unmistakable note of despondency. He frankly told his people that the British democracy was too busy with its own affairs to do anything for them, that the British press was not willing to champion Indian aspirations, that it was hard to get a hearing in England, and that the influence and the credit of the Anglo-Indians was too strong to be met successfully by the necessarily inadequate agitation which the Congress could set up in England. On his return to India the message which he brought to his people was, that if they really cared for their country, they would have to strike the blow for freedom themselves, and that they would have to furnish unmistakable proofs of their earnestness.

His message was in no way different from what Mr. Hume had told the graduates of the Calcutta University in 1883, or in his pamphlets "The Star in the East" and the "Old Man's Hope".

The Congress of 1905

This was the first time that an Indian publicist had spoken in that strain. The *Swadeshi* and *boycott* had already been started in Bengal during his absence from India. Even Mr. Gokhale approved of the boycott as a political weapon. So the message which he brought fell on willing ears. The country was in a mood to listen to it, and it did listen. The Congress Session of 1905, held at Benares, gave an opportunity for comparing notes and for settling a programme. The reception accorded to Mr. Gokhale and the rather uproarious meetings of the Subjects Committee afforded ample evidence of the temper of the people. Gokhale was cautious, careful, but enthusiastic. His presidential address was inspiring, though strictly moderate. His Bombay friends, however, would not let him go

sufficiently far. The very first night the Subjects Committee sat, it appeared that a split was inevitable and the proceedings could not be as unanimous and harmonious as was customary. The old Congress leaders were accustomed to unanimity, but the younger generation soon convinced them that unanimity on the old lines was impossible.

When the meeting of the Subjects Committee broke up after its deliberation on the first night, no unanimity had been reached with regard to a resolution welcoming the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. The dissentients threatened to oppose it in the Congress. The reception committee and the older leaders were all furious, threatened all sorts of retribution, and predicted all sorts of evil consequences, but the younger men would not listen. The whole of the morning was spent in efforts to induce them to withdraw their opposition, but young Bengal refused to agree. The meeting was delayed; Gokhale then made a personal appeal to the Mahratta and the Punjab leaders, and they prevailed on their Bengalee friends to absent themselves from the meeting and let the resolution be passed in their absence. The resolution relating to Swadeshi, boycott and national education again evoked lively discussion resulting in compromise, wherein the principles for which the Nationalists stood were conceded.

In the Congress camp, the younger generation had met in open conference to discuss their future programme. It was then that Mr. Tilak gave out the idea of passive resistance. No formal resolutions were passed, but the better mind of the people present decided to inaugurate an era of self-help and self-reliance based on an active boycott of government service and of the semi-government institutions.

Object of the Passive Resistance Movement

The object was twofold: first, to destroy the hypnotism that had caused the people and the country to have faith not only in the omnipotence of their rulers, but also in their altruism. In the words of one of the leaders of the Nationalist

thought (Babu B.C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, page 42), the people had been hypnotised to believe in the altruism of their foreign rulers :

“Untrained in the crooked ways of civilised diplomacy, they had believed what their rulers had said, either of themselves or of their subjects, as gospel truth. They had been told that the people of India were unfitted to manage their own affairs, and they believed it to be true. They had been told that the people were weak and the Government was strong. They had been told that India stood on a lower plane of humanity and England’s mission was to civilise ‘the semi-barbarous native’. The Nationalist school took it upon themselves to expose the hallowness of all these pretensions. They commenced to make what are called counterpasses in hypnotism, and at once awoke the people to a sense of their own strength, and an appreciation of their own culture.”

In the second place, the object was to create a passionate love of liberty, accompanied by a spirit of sacrifice and readiness to suffer for the cause of the country. This was to be done more by example than by precept. What the programme was may better be stated in the words of the leader whom we have quoted above :

“Boycott both economic and political, boycott of foreign and especially British goods, and of all honorary associations with the administration, national education implying a withdrawal of the youths of the nation from the officialised universities and government-controlled schools and colleges, and training them up in institutions conducted on *national* lines subject to *national* control and calculated to help the realisation of the *national* destiny, national civic volunteering, aiming at imparting a healthy civic training to the people by the voluntary assumption of as much of the civic duties, at present discharged by official or semi-official agencies, as could be done without any violation of the existing laws of the country,—duties, for instance, in regard to rural sanitation, economic and medical relief, popular education, preventive

police duties, regulation of fair and pilgrim gathering,—settlement of civil and non-cognisable criminal disputes by means of arbitration committees :—these were the “proclaimed methods of the Nationalist schools.”

As to the subjects of this scheme, we will again quote the same writer :

“The evident object was to create in the first place a strong civic sentiment in the people with the help of co operative organisations for the furtherance of the common good, and thus to train them gradually for the larger and heavier responsibilities of free citizenship, and, in the next place, to cover the whole country with a network of active political organisations which would place the leaders in direct and living touch with the people, and enable them to bring, from time to time, the irresistible pressure of organised public opinion to bear upon the Government, helping thereby the gradual expansion of popular rights.”

Now it should be noted here in passing that with the exception of boycott and volunteering, every item in this programme had been tried, with varying success, in all parts of the country, but more particularly in the Punjab and Maharashtra, even before this. The Deccan Education Society and the Poona Fergusson College were the offshoots of the desire to further the cause of education by self-imposed sacrifices, with the underlying motives of quickening the patriotic impulse and the Nationalist spirit. Similarly Swadeshi, co-operative organisations and private arbitration courts had been thought of and tried. The motives underlying these attempts were absolutely patriotic, combining an element of philanthropy in them. The private college in Bengal, started by Vidyasagar and others, were also due to the same impulse, and so was the Pachaipiya College at Madras. Bombay had its own schemes and was ahead of the rest of India in purely industrial and trade organisations. Similarly in the Punjab the idea of Swadeshi had been started as early as 1877. The motives were economic and patriotic. The idea of national education had found expression in the D.A.V. (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic) College, and that of

national co-operative organisations in the "Punjab National Bank", the "Bharat Insurance Company" and other joint-stock concerns. Religious and philanthropic motives had brought into existence the Hindu orphanage movement, the famine relief movement, and so on. A little volunteering had also been attempted in connection with the famine relief movement and the Kangra earthquake relief movement. Long before 1905, the Punjab had a network of privately organised, privately financed, unaided schools and other charitable institutions, over which the Government had little effective control. Patriotism and philanthropy were the underlying motives of these institutions, but *not politics*.⁵

The ruling bureaucracy did not quite like these activities, but they could not suppress them. Individual officers sometimes sympathised and even helped these movements. So far Bengal had been rather backward in the matter of national development on these lines. So, when Lord Curzon proclaimed the partition of Bengal, attacked the veracity of the orientals in his Calcutta University convocation speech, and on other occasions called them cowards, wind-bags, unpractical talkers, and mere frothy patriots, the Bengalees awoke to a consciousness of their weaknesses, and resolved to revenge themselves upon Lord Curzon, and prove to the world at large that Lord Curzon was a liar.

SURAT SPLIT

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION

(*Surat, December, 28, 1907*)

After the adjournment of the 23rd Indian National Congress *sine die* under the most painful circumstances on the afternoon of the 27 December, a large number of the leading delegates met the same evening at about 4 p.m. in Sir P.M. Mehta's quarters to consider what steps should be taken to continue the work of the Congress.

5. Moreover, the keynote of these organisations was association and co-operation with government, and not independent self-assertion.

At this meeting it was unanimously resolved that a National Convention be held at Surat on the next day (28th December) and the following notice calling the Convention was issued.

The 23rd Indian National Congress having been suspended *sine die* under painful circumstances the undersigned have resolved with a view to the orderly conduct of future political work in the country to call a Convention of those delegates to the Congress who are agreed :

(1) That the attainment by Indian of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by her in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members is the goal of our political aspirations.

(2) That the advance towards this goal is to be by strictly constitutional means by bringing about a steady reforms of existing system of administration and by promoting National Unity fostering public spirit, and improving the condition of the mass of the people.

(3) And that all meetings held for promotion of the aims and objects above indicated have to be conducted in an orderly manner with due submission to the authority of those that are entrusted with the power to control their procedure and they are requested to attend at 1 P.M. on Saturday the 28th December 1907, in the Pandal lent for the purpose by the Working Committee of the Reception Committee of the 23rd Indian National Congress.

(Signed)

Rash Behari Ghose
 Pherozeshah M. Mehta
 Surendranath Bannerjee
 G.K. Gokhale
 D.E. Wacha
 Narendranath Sen
 Ambalal Sakeral Deasi
 V. Krishnaswami Iyer
 Tribhovandas N. Malvi
 Madan Mohan Malaviya
 and many others.

The Convention met at the Congress Pandal at 1 p.m. on the 28th December. Over nine hundred delegates subscribed to the terms of the Convention and attended it.

Dr. Ghose, accompanied by the Moderate leaders arrived at 1 p.m. and received a tremendous ovation.

Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta, in opening the Convention, said :

“I remember that once from the Congress platform I spoke of an unconventional Convention for the purpose of promoting the interests of the country. I did not think then that in process of time we should really have to meet in the form of a convention for the purpose of resuscitation, if you will, reincarnating if you desire, the work which has gone on for 23 years with the co-operation of all provinces of this country. You were asked to attend here today for the purpose of forming, a convention of that character. I think you will all agree with me that we can ask no better person than Dr. Ghose to take the chair on such a memorable occasion and preside over our deliberations. I therefore request him to take the chair.”

Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerjee in seconding said :

“We are about to enter upon what may be regarded as a new stage in the development of this great movement. ‘The King is dead : long live the King’—Congress is dead. (Cries of ‘no, no.’) Only to live long, I am perfectly certain, that with a constitution revised and resuscitated. We now enter upon a stage of usefulness fraught with the momentous results to the fortunes of this country.”

Lala Lajpat Rai who rose to support was received with great demonstrations of sympathy and affection, the gathering responding enthusiastically to a call for three cheers. He said :

“While thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the kind reception you have accorded me, I beg to associate myself with the proposal that has just been made. I wish it was not necessary for me to associate myself with the proposal today.

Had we gone on with the proceedings in a normal manner it would have been unnecessary but as misfortune will have it that was not determined to continue our work and thereby give proof to the world that with all our national quarrels we are all agreed in the service of the country and that under no circumstances are we going to desert the banner under which we have been fighting.”

Several other supported the motion which was put and carried unanimously.

Dr. Rash Behari Ghose took the chair and said :

“You are all aware of the painful circumstances under which I was most reluctantly and painfully compelled to suspend the sittings of the Congress yesterday. We have met this afternoon, not in Congress but in Convention and that Convention consists of delegates who have subscribed to what I may describe as two fundamental articles of our creed.

With the object of formulating a constitution for the Congress, and laying down the lines on which our political agitation should be carried on it is proposed to form a representative committee who will frame rules for the orderly conduct of our future political work in the country. He then called upon Mr. Gokhale to move the resolution appointing the Committee.”

Mr. Gokhale said that the Committee he was to name would draw up a constitution on the lines laid down in the declaration of the creed which all of them had signed.

The Committee he was to propose would consist of over 100 members. It was difficult to say when the Committee would finish its labours. If possible the Committee would meet during Easter. If not in September. The Committee would meet that day for the first time after the dissolution of the Convention. Speaking on his own authority he would say that so far as one could see the programme of the body they were trying to bring into existence would for all practical purposes be the same as

that of the Congress for which they had worked for 23 years. He then read the names of the Committee which included all leading Congressmen from all the Provinces who had signed the articles of creed that day.

Mr. Gokhale formally moved the adoption of all these names for the Committee which was also to make arrangements for the first meeting of the body to be brought into existence under the new constitution.

Dewan Bahadur Govendaraghava Iyer seconded the motion and said that he had no doubt the Committee would fully justify the confidence reposed in them by drawing up a constitution which would be for the good of the body and last for a good length of time.

Mr. A. Chaudhuri supported it. The motion appointing the Committee was carried unanimously.

On the motion of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Messrs Gokhale and the D E. Wacha were appointed Joint Secretaries to the Committee.

Sir Pherozeshah in moving a cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Ghose exhorted the delegates from all Provinces to prepare well reasoned and carefully drawn memorials in regard to the new reform proposals. Bombay was preparing such a memorial and it was the duty of every Province to send well reasoned representations in support of the views of the country on proposals which attacked educated Indians, especially lawyers, in an absolutely unjustifiable and undeserved manner. All these must be put down in their representations. He also advised that the delegates assembled there might have an informal conference and discuss this and other matters of interest.

The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation.

The Convention was then dissolved by Dr. Ghose.

Preliminary

Last year when the Congress was held at Calcutta under the presidency of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Congress, consisting of Moderates and Nationalists, *unanimously* resolved to have for its goal Swaraj or Self-Government on the lines of the Self-Governing Colonies, and passed certain resolutions on Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education. The Bombay Moderates, headed by Sir P.M. Mehta, did not at the time raise any dissentient voice, but they seem to have felt that their position was somewhat compromised by these resolutions, and they had since then been looking forward to an opportunity when they might return to their old position regarding ideals and methods of political progress in India. In the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Surat in April last, Sir P.M. Mehta succeeded by his personal influence in excluding the propositions of Boycott and National Education from the programme of the Conference. And when it was decided to change the venue of the Congress from Nagpur to Surat, it afforded the Bombay Moderate leaders the desired-for opportunity to carry out their intentions in this respect.

The Reception Committee at Surat was presumably composed largely of Sir Pherozshah's followers, and it was cleverly arranged by the Hon. Mr. Gokhale to get the Committee nominate Dr. R.B. Ghosh to the office of the President, brushing aside the proposal for the nomination of Lala Lajpat Rai, then happily released, on the ground that "we cannot afford to flout Government at this stage, the authorities would throttle our movement in no time." This was naturally regarded as an insult to the public feeling in the country, and Dr. Ghosh must have received at least a hundred telegrams from different parts of India requesting him to generously retire in Lala Lajpat Rai's favour. But Dr. Ghosh unfortunately decided to ignore this strong expression of public opinion. Lala Lajpat Rai, on the other hand, publicly declined the honour. But this did not satisfy the people who wished to disown the principle of selecting a Congress President on the above ground, believing as

they did that the most effective protest against the repressive policy of Government would be to elect Lala Lajpat Rai to the chair.

The Hon. Mr. Gokhale was entrusted by the Reception Committee, at its meeting held on 24th November 1907 for nominating the President, with the work of drafting the resolutions to be placed before the Congress. But neither Mr. Gokhale nor the Reception Committee supplied a copy of draft resolutions to any delegate till 1-30 P.M., on Thursday the 26th December, that is to say, till the actual commencement of the Congress Session. The public was taken into confidence only thus far that a list of the headings of the subjects likely to be taken up for discussion by the Surat Congress was officially published a week or ten days before the date of the Congress Session. This list did not include the subject of Self-Government, Boycott and National Education, on all of which *distinct* and *separate* resolutions were passed at Calcutta last year. This omission naturally strengthened the suspicion that the Bombay Moderates really intended to go back from the position taken up by the Calcutta Congress in these matters.

The press strongly commented upon this omission, and Mr. Tilak, who reached Surat on the morning of the 23rd December, denounced such retrogression as suicidal in the interests of the country, more especially at the present juncture, at a large mass meeting held that evening, and appealed to the Surat public to help the Nationalists in their endeavours to maintain at least the *status quo* in these matters. The next day a Conference of about five hundred Nationalist Delegates was held at Surat under the chairmanship of Srijiut Arabindo Ghose where it was decided that the Nationalists should prevent the attempted retrogression of the Congress by all constitutional means, even by opposing the election of the president if necessary; and a letter was written to the Congress Secretaries requesting them to make arrangements for dividing the house, if need be, on every contested proposition including that of the election of the President.

In the meanwhile a press note signed by Mr. Gandhi, as Hon. Secretary, was issued to the effect that the statement, that certain resolutions adopted last year at Calcutta were omitted from the Congress programme prepared by the Surat Reception Committee, was wholly unfounded ; but the draft resolutions themselves were still withheld from the public, though some of the members of the Reception Committee had already asked for them some days before. On the morning of 25th December, Mr. Tilak happened to get a copy of the draft of the proposed constitution of the Congress prepared by the Hon. Mr. Gokhale. In this draft the object of the Congress was thus stated : "The Indian National Congress has for its ultimate goal the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the other members of the British Empire" and etc. Mr. Tilak addressed a meeting of the delegates the same morning at the Congress Camp at about 9 A.M. explaining the grounds on which he believed that the Bombay Moderate leaders were bent upon receding from the position taken up by the Calcutta Congress on Swaraj, Boycott and National Education.

The proposed constitution, Mr. Tilak pointed out, was a direct attempt to tamper with the ideal of Self-Government on the lines of the *Self-Governing Colonies*, as settled at Calcutta and to exclude the Nationalists from the Congress by making the acceptance of this new creed an indispensable condition of Congress membership. Mr. Tilak further stated in plain terms that if they were assured that no sliding back of the Congress would be attempted the opposition to the election of the President would be withdrawn. The delegates at the meeting were also asked to sign a letter of request to Dr. Ghosh, the President-Elect requesting him to have the old propositions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education taken up for reaffirmation this year : and some of the delegates signed it on the spot. Mr. G. Subramania Iyer of Madras, Mr. Kharandikar of Satara and several others were present at this meeting and excepting a few all the rest admitted the reasonableness of Mr. Tilak's proposal.

Lala Lajpat Rai, who arrived at Surat on the morning of that day, saw Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde in the afternoon and intimated to them his intention to arrange for a Committee of a few leading delegates from each side to settle the question in dispute. Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde having agreed, he went to Mr. Gokhale to arrange for the Committee if possible; and Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde returned to the Nationalist Conference which was held that evening (25th December). At this Conference a Nationalist Committee consisting of one Nationalist delegate from each Province was appointed to carry on the negotiations with the leaders on the other side; and it was decided that if the Nationalist Committee failed to obtain any assurance from responsible Congress officials about the *status quo* being maintained, the Nationalists should begin their opposition from the election of the President. For the retrogression of the Congress was a serious step, not to be decided upon only by a bare accidental majority of any party, either in the Subjects Committee or in the whole Congress (as at present constituted), simply because its session happens to be held in a particular place or province in a particular year; and the usual unanimous acceptance of the President would have, under such exceptional circumstances, greatly weakened the point and force of the opposition. No kind of intimation was received from Lala Lajpat Rai this night or even the next morning regarding the proposal of a Joint Committee of reconciliation proposed by him, nor was a copy of the draft resolutions supplied to Mr. Tilak, Mr. Khaparde, or any other delegates to judge if no sliding back from the old position was really intended.

On the morning of the 26th December, Messrs. Tilak, Khaparde, Arbindo Ghose and others went to Babu Surendranath Banerjee at his residence. They were accompanied by Babu Motilal Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* who had arrived the previous night. Mr. Tilak then informed Babu Surendranath that the Nationalist opposition to the election of the President would be withdrawn, if (1) the Nationalist party were assured that the *status quo* would not be disturbed; and (2) if some graceful allusion was made by any one of the

speakers on the resolution about the election of the President to the desire of the public to have Lala Lajpat Rai in the chair, Mr. Banerjee agreed to the latter proposal as he said he was himself to second the resolution; while as regards the first, though he gave an assurance for himself and Bengal, he asked Mr. Tilak to see Mr. Gokhale or Mr. Malvi. A volunteer was accordingly sent in a carriage to invite Mr. Malvi, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, to Mr. Bannerji's residence, but the volunteer brought a reply that Mr. Malvi had no time to come as he was engaged in religious practices. Mr. Tilak then returned to his camp to take his meals as it was already about 11 A.M.; but on returning to the Congress pandal an hour later, he made persistent attempts to get access to Mr. Malvi but could not find him anywhere. A little before 2-30 P.M., a word was brought to Mr. Tilak that Mr. Malvi was in the President's camp, and Mr. Tilak sent a message to him from an adjoining tent asking for a short interview to which Mr. Malvi replied that he could not see Mr. Tilak as the presidential procession was being formed. The Nationalist Delegates were waiting in the pandal to hear the result of the endeavours of their Committee to obtain an assurance about the maintenance of the *status quo* from some responsible Congress official, and Mr. V.S. Khare of Nasik now informed them of the failure of Mr. Tilak's attempt in the matter.

First Day

It has become necessary to state these facts in order that the position of the two parties, when the Congress commenced its proceedings on Thursday the 26th December at 2.30 P.M., may be clearly understood. The President-Elect and other persons had not taken their seats on the platform; and as no assurance from any responsible official of the Congress about the maintenance of the *status quo* was till then obtained, Mr. Tilak sent a slip to Babu Surendranath intimating that he should not make the proposed allusion to the controversy about the presidential election in his speech. He also wrote to Mr. Malvi to supply him with a copy of the draft resolutions if

ready, and at about 3 P.M. while Mr. Malvi was reading his speech, Mr. Tilak got a copy of the draft resolutions which he subsequently found were published the very evening in the *Advocate of India* in Bombay clearly showing that the reporter of the paper must have been supplied with a copy at least a day earlier. The withholding of a copy from Mr. Tilak till 3 P.M. that day cannot, therefore, be regarded as accidental.

There were about thirteen hundred and odd delegates at this time in the pandal of whom over 600 were nationalists, and the Moderate majority was thus a bare majority. After the Chairman's address was over, Dewan Bahadur Ambalal Sakarlal proposed Dr. R.B. Ghosh to the chair in a speech which though evoking occasional cries of dissent, was heard to the end. The declaration by the Dewan Bahadur as well as by Mr. Malvi that the proposing and seconding of the resolution to elect the President was only a *formal* business, led many delegates to believe that it was not improbable that the usual procedure of taking votes on the proposition might be dispensed with; and when Babu Surendranath Banerji, whose rising on the platform seems to have reminded some of the delegates of the Midnapur incident, commenced his speech, there was persistent shouting and he was asked to sit down. He made another attempt to speak but was not heard, and the session had, therefore, to be suspended for the day. The official press note suggests that this hostile demonstration was pre-arranged. But the suggestion is unfounded. For though the nationalists did intend to oppose the election, they had at their conference held the previous day expressly decided to do so only by solidly and silently voting against it in a constitutional manner.

In the evening the Nationalists again held their Conference and authorised the Committee, appointed on the previous day, to further carry on the negotiations for having the *status quo* maintained if possible, failing which it was decided to oppose the election of Dr. Ghose by moving such amendment as the Committee might decide or by simply voting against his elec-

tion. The Nationalists were further requested, and unanimously agreed, not only to abstain from joining in any such demonstration as led to the suspension of that day's proceedings, but to scrupulously avoid any, even the least, interruption of the speakers on the opposite side, so that both parties might get a patient hearing. At night (about 8 P.M.) Mr. Chuni Lal Saraya, Manager of the Indian Specie Bank and Vice-Chairman of the Surat Reception Committee, accompanied by two other gentlemen, went in his un-official capacity and on his own account to Mr. Tilak and proposed that he intended to arrange for a meeting that night between Mr. Tilak and Mr. Gokhale at the residence of a leading Congressman to settle the differences between the two parties. Mr. Tilak agreed and requested Mr. Chuni Lal if an interview could be arranged to fix the time in consultation with Mr. Gokhale, adding that he, Mr. Tilak, would be glad to be present at the place of the interview at *any* hour of the night. Thereon Mr. Chuni Lal left Mr. Tilak, but unhappily no word was received by the latter that night.

Second Day

On the morning of Friday 27th (11 A.M.) Mr. Chuni Lal Saraya again saw Mr. Tilak and requested him to go in company with Mr. Khaparde to Prof. Gajjar's bungalow near the Congress Pandal, where by appointment they were to meet Dr. Rutherford who was trying for a reconciliation. Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde went to Prof. Gajjar's, but Dr. Rutherford could not come then owing to his other engagements. Prof. Gajjar then asked Mr. Tilak what the latter intended to do ; and Mr. Tilak stated that if no settlement was arrived at privately owing to every leading Congressman being unwilling to take any responsibility in the matter upon himself, he (Mr. Tilak) would be obliged to bring an amendment to the proposition of electing the President after it had been seconded. The amendment would be to the effect that the business of election should be adjourned, and a Committee, consisting of one leading Moderate and one leading Nationalist from each Congress Province, with Dr. Rutherford's name added, be appointed to consider and settle the differences between the two parties, both

of which should accept the Committee's decision as final and then proceed to the *unanimous* election of the President. Mr. Tilak even supplied to Prof. Gajjar the names of the delegates, who in his opinion should form the Committee, but left a free hand to the Moderates to change the names of the representatives if they liked to do so.* Prof. Gajjar and Mr. Chunni Lal undertook to convey the proposal to Sir P.M. Mehta or Dr. Rutherford in the Congress Camp and asked Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde to go to the pandal and await their reply. After half an hour Prof. Gajjar and Mr. Saraya returned and told Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde that nothing could be done in the matter, Mr. Saraya adding that if both the parties proceeded constitutionally there would be no hitch.

It was about 12.30 at this time, and on the receipt of the above reply Mr. Tilak wrote in pencil the following note to Mr. Malvi, Chairman of the Reception Committee :

“Sir,—I wish to address the delegates on the proposal of the election of the President after it is seconded. I wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal. Please announce me.

Yours Sincerely,
B.G. Tilak,
Deccan Delegate (Poona).”

The proceedings of the day commenced at 1 p.m., when Babu Surendranath Banerji was called upon to resume his speech, seconding the election of the President. Mr. Tilak was

*The names given to Prof. Gajjar were as follows : United Bengal—Babu Surendranath Bannerjee, A. Chaudhuri, Ambikacharan Mazumdar, Arobindo Ghose, Ashwinikumar Dutt. United Provinces—Pandit Madan Mohan, Jatindranath Sen. Punjab—Lala Harkisenlal, Dr. H. Mukerji, Central Provinces—Roaji Govind, Dr. Munje. Berars—R.N. Mudholkar, Khaparde, Bombay—Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, B.G. Tilak. Madras—V. Krishnaswami Iyer, Chidambaram Pillai ; Dr. Rutherford. This Committee was to meet immediately and decide on the question at issue. The names of the Nationalist representatives in the above list, except Mr. A. K. Dutt, were those of the members of the Committee appointed at the Nationalist Conference on the previous day.

expecting a reply to his note but not having received one up to this time asked Mr. N.C. Kelkar to send a reminder. Mr. Kelkar thereupon sent a chit to the Chairman to the effect that "Mr. Tilak requests a reply to his note." But no reply was received even after this reminder, and Mr. Tilak who thought he was allotted a seat on the platform was sitting in the front row of the delegates' seats near the platform-steps, rose to go up the platform *immediately* after Babu Surendranath, who was calmly heard by all, had finished his speech. But he was held back by a volunteer in the way. Mr. Tilak, however, asserted his right to go up and pushing aside the volunteer succeeded in getting to the platform just when Dr. Ghosh was moving to take the President's chair. The Official Note says that by the time Mr. Tilak came upon the platform and stood in front of the President, the motion of the election of Ghose had been passed by an overwhelming majority; and Dr. Ghose being installed in the Presidential chair by loud and *prolonged* applause, had risen to begin his address. All this, if it did take place as alleged, could only have been done in a deliberately hurried manner with a set purpose to trick Mr. Tilak out of his right to address the delegates and move an amendment as previously notified. According to the usual procedure Mr. Malvi was bound to announce Mr. Tilak, or if he considered the amendment out of order, declare it so publicly, and to ask for a show of hands in favour of or against the motion. But nothing of the kind was done; nor was the interval of a few seconds sufficient for a prolonged applause as alleged.

As Mr. Tilak stood up on the platform he was greeted with shouts of disapproval from the Members of the Reception Committee on the platform, and the cry was taken up by other Moderates. Mr. Tilak repeatedly insisted upon his right of addressing the delegates, and told Dr. Ghose, when he attempted to interfere, that he was not properly elected. Mr. Malvi said that he had ruled Mr. Tilak's amendment out of order to which Mr. Tilak replied that the ruling, if any, was wrong and Mr. Tilak had a right to appeal to the delegates on the same. By this time there was a general uproar in the pandal, the

Moderates shouting at Mr. Tilak and asking him to sit down and the Nationalists demanding that he should be heard. At this stage Dr. Ghose and Mr. Malvi said that Mr. Tilak should be removed from the platform ; and a young gentleman, holding the important office of a Secretary to the Reception Committee, touched Mr. Tilak's person with a view to carry out the Chairman's order. Mr. Tilak pushed the gentleman aside and again asserted his right of being heard, declaring that he would not leave the platform unless bodily removed. Mr. Gokhale seems to have here asked the above-mentioned gentleman not to touch Mr. Tilak's person. But there were others who were seen threatening an assault on his person though he was calmly standing on the platform facing the delegates with his arms folded over his chest.

It was during this confusion that a shoe hurled on to the platform hit Sir P.M. Mehta on the side of the face after touching Babu Surendranath Bannerji, both of whom were sitting within a yard of Mr. Tilak on the other side of the table. Chairs were now seen being lifted to be thrown at Mr. Tilak by persons on and below the platform, and some of the Nationalists, therefore, rushed on to the platform, to his rescue. Dr. Ghose in the meanwhile twice attempted to read his address, but was stopped by cries of "no, no" from all sides in the pandal, and the confusion became still worse. It must be stated that the Surat Reception Committee, composed of Moderates, had made arrangements the previous night to dismiss the Nationalist Volunteers and to hire *Bohrah* or Mahomedan goondas for the day. These with lathis were stationed at various places in the pandal and their presence was detected and protested against by the Nationalist Delegates before the commencement of the Congress proceedings of the day. But though one or two were removed from the pandal, the rest who remained therein now took part in the scuffle on behalf of their masters. It was found impossible to arrest the progress of disorder and proceedings were then suspended *sine die* ; and the Congress officials retired in confusion to a tent behind the pandal. The police, who seem to

have been long ready under a requisition, now entered into and eventually cleared the pandal; while the Nationalist Delegates who had gone to the platform safely escorted Mr. Tilak to an adjoining tent. It remains to be mentioned that copies of an inflammatory leaflet in Gujrathi asking the Gujrathi people to rise against Mr. Tilak were largely distributed in the pandal before the commencement of the day's proceedings.

It would be seen from the above account that the statement in official note to the effect that Dr. Ghose was elected President amid loud and prolonged applause before Mr. Tilak appeared on the platform, and that Mr. Tilak wanted to move an adjournment of the whole Congress are entirely misleading and unfounded. What he demanded, by way of amendment, was an adjournment of the business of the election of the President in order to have the differences settled by a joint Conciliatory Committee of leading delegates from both sides. Whether this was in order or otherwise, Mr. Tilak had certainly a right to appeal to the delegates and it was this consciousness that led Mr. Malvi and his advisers to hastily wind up the election business without sending a reply to Mr. Tilak or calling upon him to address the delegates. It was a trick by which they intended to deprive of Mr. Tilak of the right of moving an amendment and addressing the delegates thereon. As for the beginning of the actual rowdyism on the day some of the members of the Reception Committee itself were responsible. The silent hearing given by the Nationalists to Mr. Surendranath on the one hand, and the circulation of the inflammatory leaflet and the hiring of the goondas on the other, further prove that if there was any pre-arrangement anywhere for the purpose of creating a row in the pandal, it was on the part of the Moderates themselves. But for their rowdyism there was every likelihood of Mr. Tilak's amendments being carried by a large majority and the election of President afterwards taking place smoothly and unanimously. But neither Dr. Ghose nor any other Congress officials seemed willing to tactfully manage the business as Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji did last year.

Dr. Ghose's speech though undelivered in the Congress pandal had been by this time published in the Calcutta papers, and telegrams from Calcutta received in the evening showed that he had made an inoffensive attack on the Nationalist party thereon. This added to the sensation in the Nationalist camp that evening, but the situation was not such as to preclude all hope of reconciliation. Srijut Motilal Ghose of the *Pa'rika*, Mr. A.C. Moitra of Rajshahi, Mr. B.C. Chatterji of Calcutta and Lala Harkisen Lal from Lahore accordingly tried their best to bring about a compromise, and, if possible to have the Congress session revived the next day. They went to Mr. Tilak on the night of 27th and the morning of 28th to ascertain the views of his party, and to each of them Mr. Tilak gave the following assurance in writing :

“Surat, 28th December, 1907”.

“Dear Sir,—With reference to our conversation and principally in the best interests of the Congress, I and my party are prepared to waive our opposition to the election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as President of 23rd Indian National Congress, and are prepared to act in the spirit of forget and forgive, provided, *Firstly* the last year's resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education are adhered to and each expressly reaffirmed ; *Secondly*, such passages, if any, in Dr. Ghose's speech as may be offensive to the Nationalists Party are omitted.

Your etc., B.G. Tilak”.

This letter was taken by the gentlemen to whom it was addressed to the Moderate leaders but no compromise was arrived at as the Moderates were all along bent upon the retrogression of the Congress at any cost. A Convention of the Moderates was, therefore, held in the pandal the next day where Nationalists were not allowed to go even when some of them were ready and offered to sign the declaration required. On the other hand, those who did not wish to go back from the position taken up at the Calcutta Congress and honestly desired to work further on the same lines met in a separate

place the some evening to consider what steps might be taken to continue the work of the Congress in future. Thus ended the proceedings of the 23rd Indian National Congress ; and we leave it to the public to judge of the conduct of the two parties in this affair from the statement of facts hereinbefore given.

Surat
31st December, 1907.

B.G. Tilak
G.S. Khaparde.
Arabindo Ghose.
H. Mukerjee.
B.C. Chatterjee.

Appendix to the Extremists Version

HOW THEY WANTED TO GO BACK
THE CONGRESS IDEAL

At the Calcutta Congress, under the presidentship of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, it was resolved that the goal of the Congress should be Swaraj on the lines of the Self-governing British Colonies, and this goal was accepted by all Moderates and Nationalists without a single dissentient voice. The resolution on Self-Government passed there is as follows :

“Self-Government : This Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing British Colonies should be extended to India and that as steps leading to it, urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out.” (Here followed certain administrative reforms such as simultaneous examinations in England and India, reforms of Executive and Legislative Councils, and of Local and Municipal Boards.)

The Congress Reception Committee at Surat did not publish the draft Resolution till the commencement of the Congress Session : but a Draft Constitution of the Congress, prepared by Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, was published a day

or two earlier. In this draft the goal of the Congress was defined as follows :

“The Indian National Congress has for its ultimate goal the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members of the British Empire and a participation by her in the privileges and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with the other members; and it seeks to advance towards this goal by strictly constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reforms of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public-spirit and improving to condition of the mass of the people.”

“Those who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress, shall be members of the Provincial Committee.”

“All who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress..... shall be entitled to become members of a District Congress Committee.”

“From the year 1908, delegates to the Congress shall be elected by Provincial and District Congress Committee only.”

Remarks : It will at once be seen that the new Constitution intended to convert the Congress from a national into a sectional movement. The goal of Swaraj on the lines of the Self-governing colonies as settled last year, was to given up; and in its stead Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members (not necessarily self-governing) of the British Empire was to be set up as the *ultimate* goal evidently meaning that it was to be considered as out of the pale of practical politics. The same view is expressed by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in his interview with the correspondent of the *Times of India* published in the issue of the *Times* dated 30th December, 1907. The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale must have taken his cue from the same source. The *reform* of the existing system of administration, and not its gradual replacement by a popular system, was to be the immediate object of the

Congress according to this constitution ; and further no one, who did not accept this new creed, was to be a member of provincial or district committees or possibly even a delegate to the Congress after 1908. This was the chief feature of retrogression, which Sir P.M. Mehta and his party wanted to carry out this year at a safe place like Surat. It is true that the old resolution of Self-Government was subsequently included in that Draft Resolutions published only after the commencement of the Congress Session. But the Draft Constitution was never withdrawn.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT

The Calcutta Resolution on the Swadeshi Movement was as follows :

“The Congress accords its most cordial support to the *Swadeshi* Movement and calls upon the people of the country labour for its success by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries, and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by given them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice.”

At Surat, the Draft Resolution on the subject was worded as follows :

“The Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi Movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success by earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference, where possible, over imported commodities.”

Remarks : Last year the words “even at some sacrifice” were introduced at the end after the great discussion and as a compromise between the two parties. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale or Sir P.M. Mehta now wanted to have these words expunged, converting the old resolution into a mere appeal for preference for the indigenous over imported goods.

BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

The Calcutta Resolution was as follows :

“Having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration and that their representations to Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against partition of that province was and is legitimate.”

The proposed Resolution at Surat was :

“Having regard to the fact that the people of the country have little or no voice in its administration and that their representatives to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that Province was and is legitimate.”

Remarks : This subject was not include in the list of subjects published at first but seems to have been subsequently inserted in the Draft Resolutions, when the first omission in the list was severely noticed in the press. The words *Boycott Movement* in the old Resolution have, however, been changed into *Boycott of foreign goods*.

National Education

The Calcutta Resolution was as follows :

“In the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of education—Literary, Scientific, Technical—suited to the requirements of the country on National lines and under National Control.”

The proposed resolution at Surat runs thus :

“In the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise an

independent system of education, Literary, Scientific, Technical—suited to the requirements of the country.”

Remarks : The change is significant inasmuch as the word “on National lines and under “National control” are omitted in the Surat draft, for “control” is the most important factor in this matter. This phrase “an independent system” does not convey all that is desired.

K P.P.

G.K. Gokhale and the Extremists Version

The Extremists version of what occurred at Surat, which was under preparation has at last been published. It is full of gross mis-statements, some of which concern me personally, and these with your permission, I would like to set right in your columns.

1. The version says : “It was clearly arranged by the Hon. Mr. Gokhale to get the (Reception) Committee to nominate Dr. R B. Ghose to the office of President, brushing aside the proposal for the nomination of Lala Lajpat Rai.” Dr. Ghose had been nominated for the office of President by all the Provinces consulted except Berar. The overwhelming preponderance of opinion in the Reception Committee at Surat was also in his favour. The reason why I attended the meeting of the Reception Committee at which the nomination took place was that rowdyism had been threatened to make its proceedings impossible as at Nagpur unless the proposal of the Extremists to elect Lala Lajpat Rai was accepted. The Reception Committee had barely a month at its disposal for making the required preparations, and any hostility to it on the part of a section however small would have meant abandoning the Congress Session at Surat. I went there as Joint General Secretary of the Congress in the interests of harmony, and for the time my appeal to those who wanted to bring forward Lala Lajpat Rai’s name proved effective. The harmony brought about lasted till Mr. Tilak’s emissaries from Nagpur repaired to surat and stirred up trouble about a week after the meeting of the Reception Committee.

2. I am charged with "brushing aside the proposal for the nomination of Lala Lajpat Rai" on the ground "we cannot afford to flout the Government at this stage. The authorities would throttle our movement in no time." The unscrupulous distortion of stray sentences from a private conversation, taken apart from their context, has now been pushed to such lengths that it is necessary to put aside the feeling of delicacy that has hitherto restrained me in the matter. The conversation was with two Extremist gentlemen of Surat with whom I discussed the situation at some length prior to the meeting of the Reception Committee on the 24th November. I pointed out to these gentlemen the unwisdom of bringing forward Lala Lajpat Rai's name for the Presidentship of the Congress, and this I did on three grounds :

First, that with only a month at the disposal of the Reception Committee for making arrangements which, in other places, had taken at least three to four months, any division among the workers at Surat was most undesirable as it was sure to hamper the progress of their work.

Secondly, that there was absolutely no chance of their carrying their proposal about Lala Lajpat Rai, their strength being only five or six out of about two hundred, who were expected to attend that afternoon's meeting and that the rejection of Mr. Lala Lajpat Rai's name would only be a painful and wanton humiliation for him and, thirdly and lastly, that though Lala Lajpat Rai had been personally restored to freedom, the larger question of principle involved in his deportation had yet to be fought out, and it would best be fought out by keeping up the feeling of the country united and intact behind him, and that this feeling was sure to be divided if one section of the Congress tried to run him as a party candidate. I next point out that there were other ways in which we could all honour Mr. Lajpat Rai, and then I added, "if your object is simply to flout the Government, I can understand your proposal." To this one of the two gentlemen said, "Yes, even if we do nothing else, we want to show that we are prepared to flout the Government." I thereupon said, "I don't believe in such flouting "

The Congress must, of course, express its condemnation of Government measures when necessary, but it has other important work to do. We cannot do without the help and co-operation of Government in many matters at our present stage. The conversation then turned to what our goal should be, and what the Congress should try to do. And the gentlemen in question—a young man who had only recently returned from England—urged on me his view that the Congress should work for absolute independence, and that it should try to teach the people of the country to hate the present foreign Government as much as possible. It was in reply to this that I said, “you do not realise the enormous reserve of power behind the Government. If the Congress were to do anything such as you suggest, the Government will have no difficulty in throttling it in five minutes.” It is out of this conversation that the story which has been kept going for some time past with a hundred variations has been concocted. There were about twenty people present when the above conversation took place.

3. “The Hon. Mr. Gokhale was entrusted by the Reception Committee at its meeting held on the 24th November 1907, for nominating the President with the work of drafting the Resolutions before the Congress.”

This is not correct. No resolution whatever was passed on the matter at the meeting of the Reception Committee. About the beginning of December, when I went to Bombay from Poona, I was informed by one of the Secretaries of Reception Committee, Mr. Manubhai Nanabhai, that the Working Committee, had decided to ask me to undertake the drafting of the Resolutions to be laid before the Subjects Committee. I was at that time pressed with other work, and so I suggested that the draft should, in the first instance, be prepared by either Mr. Manubhai himself or by his colleague Mr. Gandhi, and that I would then touch them up if required. Mr. Gandhi wrote back at once to say that he could not undertake the work as he had no time, Mr. Manubhai began to collect the material necessary for drafting the resolutions, but he was so terribly overworked

that he too could not give any time to the actual work of preparing the drafts, and at last about the 15th December, he told me that I should have to do the whole work in that respect myself.

4. "Neither Mr. Gokhale nor the Reception Committee supplied a copy of the Draft Resolutions to any delegates till 2.30 P.M. on Thursday, the 26th December." This was due to the fact that printed copies were not till then available. On the 15th December, I settled the headings of the Resolutions in Bombay, but I could get no quiet there for the work of drafting, and so I went to Poona on the 19th December to prepare the drafts. It was by no means easy work. The Resolution that gave the greatest trouble was about the proposed reforms. I wrestled with it as well as I could in Poona, but I could not produce a satisfactory draft. When I arrived in Surat on the morning of the 24th the Draft Resolution on the proposed Reforms was still not ready. I then gave the other drafts to Mr. Gandhi, Secretary of the Reception Committee, in charge of this work, who immediately sent them to the press.

For the draft on the Reform proposals I asked for a day more. There were, however, a thousand things to distract one's attention and though I gave to the draft all the time I could spare on the 24 and the morning of the 25th I was not able to finish it. So, with much regret, I asked Mr. Gandhi to get the other drafts printed leaving a blank in the place of the Resolution on Reform proposals. New Surat is a small place and its printing resources are not equal to those of Calcutta, Bombay or Madras, and the press took a day to give printed copies of the drafts to Mr. Gandhi. It was only when I went to the pandal at 2.30 P.M. on the 26th that I learnt from Mr. Gandhi that copies had arrived from the press, and the first printed copy which I myself saw was the one which I procured from Mr. Gandhi to pass on to Mr. Tilak who had just then asked Mr. Malvi for a copy. The copies were available in good time for the deliberations of the Subjects Committee which in the

usual course, was expected to sit that afternoon and for whose use alone the drafts have always been prepared.

Three things must here be noted. First, though the Draft Resolutions have in previous years been published beforehand, whenever there has been time to do so, it is not true that they have *always* been so published. Last year, for instance, at Calcutta, some of the Draft Resolutions were not ready till the last minute, and this, in spite of the fact that our Calcutta friends had much more time at their disposal than the one month in which Surat had to make its preparations.

Secondly, never before in the history of the Congress was an attempt made as at Surat to attach an absurdly exaggerated importance to the Draft Resolutions. Everyone knows that these drafts bind nobody, and that they are merely material laid before the Subjects Committee for it to work upon. I don't remember a single Congress at which the Subjects Committee did not make important and sometimes even wholesale alterations in the drafts placed before it by the Reception Committee. The final form in which Resolutions have been submitted to the Congress has always been determined by the Subjects Committee and the Subjects Committee alone.

Thirdly, no Reception Committee has ever in the past merely reproduced the Resolutions of the previous Congress on its agenda paper for the Subjects Committee. The Calcutta Reception Committee of last year did not merely reproduce the Benares Resolutions, neither did the Benares Committee reproduce the Bombay Resolution. Every Reception Committee has exercised its own judgement as to the wording of the Draft Resolutions, and the Surat Committee or those who were working for it were merely following the established practice when they prepared their own drafts.

5. "While Mr. Malvi was reading his speech, Mr. Tilak got a copy of the Draft Resolutions, which he subsequently found were published the very evening in the *Advocate of India* in Bombay, clearly showing that the reporter of the paper must

have been supplied with a copy at least a day earlier." The reporter must have been procured a copy from Mr. Gandhi as soon as copies arrived from the press and must have wired the Resolutions to his paper, or it is possible that he may have obtained a proof from the press before copies were printed. Certainly no printed copies were available to me till I went to the pandal on the 26th. I wanted to give a copy to Lala Lajpat Rai that morning, but could not do so as no copies had arrived from the press till then.

I now come to the wording of the Draft Resolutions.

Coming to the wording of the Draft Resolutions, I would like to point out at the outset that the cry set up by Mr. Tilak in connection with these drafts was his third attempt to discredit the Surat Congress since the middle of November.

He began by denouncing the change of venue from Nagpur to Surat and by misrepresenting, beyond all recognition, the proceedings of the All-India Congress Committee which decided upon the change - and this, without even the excuse of ignorance, since he was personally present at the meeting of the Committee and knew exactly what had taken place.

When he found that he could not make much impression on the country by these attacks, he played his second card. He started his agitation to have the election of Dr. Ghosh set aside in favour of Lala Lajpat Rai. In this, however, he was foiled by Lala Lajpat Rai's own letter which put an effective extinguisher on the agitation.

Then the cry was raised that it was the intention of the Reception Committee to drop certain resolutions altogether this year. The ball was set rolling by a telegram from Poona to certain Madras and Calcutta Papers about a week before the meeting of the Congress that the Reception Committee had made up its mind to omit certain resolutions from its agenda paper and that there was intense indignation in the "Nationalist circles" in consequence. This manufacture of "Nationalist indignation" was pushed forward so energetically that, when I

went to Bombay on the 22nd December, I found a considerable amount of feeling stirred up in certain quarters against the Reception Committee on this account. On that day I met Lala Lajpat Rai and he asked me what the truth was about the resolutions in questions. I told him that the resolutions were all there with slight verbal alterations made in one or two of them to remove ambiguity and that the Subjects Committee would decide in what form they should finally be submitted to the Congress. I understand that Lala Lajpat Rai communicated the substance of this conversation that same evening to Mr. Tilak. In spite of this communication, Mr. Tilak definitely and deliberately stated at the extremists Conference at Surat on the 24th December that the Reception Committee had decided to omit the resolutions and this naturally caused great excitement among the delegates assembled ! Mr. Gandhi, the local secretary in charge of the resolutions, came to know of this in the evening and he immediately issued a Press Note contradicting Mr. Tilak's statements as wholly unfounded.

But the cry was kept up the whole of the next day, *i.e.*, the 25th. On that day, in the afternoon, Lala Lajpat Rai, who was going to visit the Extremist Camp, asked me if he might personally assure the leaders on that side that they were under a misapprehension about the resolutions and that they would find them all on the agenda paper when it arrived from the press. I readily agreed and Lala Lajpat Rai went and gave the assurance. That same evening I addressed about 200 delegates in the Madras tent of the Congress Camp, especially for the purpose of removing the misapprehensions and there I not only assured them that the resolutions were all on the agenda paper, but also mentioned the exact verbal alterations that had been made. About 11 P.M. that night I met Babu Ashwani Kumar Dutt of Barisal at the President's residence, and I repeated to him what I had told the Madras delegates and he expressed himself satisfied. The next day, *i.e.*, on the 26th, on going to the pandal as soon as I heard of the copies having arrived from the press, I procured and gave one to Mr. Tilak as I have mentioned in my last letter. The Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan

Malaviya was sitting by Mr. Tilak at the time and I heard it afterwards from him that he asked Mr. Tilak if he was satisfied that the resolutions were all there and Mr. Tilak had to admit that it was so. Only the slight verbal alterations that had been made would have to be amended. And now as regards the wording of the four Resolutions :

(a) Taking Self-Government first the Extremists' version says : "At the Calcutta Congress, under the Presidentship of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, it was resolved that the goal of the Congress should be *Swaraj* on the lines of self-governing British Colonies." This is not accurate. The word *Swaraj* was not used in any of the resolutions of the Congress last year though it was used by Mr. Dadabhai in his own speech. Neither was there any mention of a goal in any of last year's resolutions. What last year's Congress had done was to prefix a preamble about Self-Government to certain specific proposals of reform and that preamble was in these words : "This Congress is of opinion that the system of government obtaining in the Self-Governing Colonies should be extended to India and that, as steps leading to it, it urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out." Now a reference to this year's draft resolutions will show that the whole of this resolution, Preamble and all, was reproduced by the Reception Committee on the agenda paper with only a slight alteration in one of the clauses rendered necessary by the appointment of two Indians to the Secretary of State's Council. Mr. Tilak, however, compares last year's resolution on Self-Government, not with this year's draft resolution on the same subject, but with the preamble to another draft resolution—that on the constitution of the Congress, and he charges the Reception Committee with "a direct attempt to tamper with the ideal of Self-Government on the lines of the Self-Governing Colonies as settled at Calcutta." Now the portion of the preamble to the proposed constitution referring to Self-Government was as follows : "The Indian National Congress has, for its ultimate goal, the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members of the British Empire and a participation by her in

the privileges and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with the other members." This is interpreted by Mr. Tilak as meaning that "the goal of *Swaraj* on the lines of Self-Governing Colonies, as settled last year, was to be given up and in its stead Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members (not necessarily self-governing) of the British Empire was to set up as the ultimate goal." I should have thought it incredible that any one with any pretention to a knowledge of practical politics could put such an atrocious misconstruction on the preamble of the draft constitution, but for the fact that Mr. Tilak has actually done it.

Whoever talks of the form of Government obtaining in the Crown Colonies or Dependencies of the British Empire as Self-Government? Whoever talks of their participating in the privileges of the Empire? However, as soon as Mr. Tilak's construction was brought to my notice, I at once altered the expression "Self-Government enjoyed by other members of the British Empire," to "Self-Government enjoyed by the Self-Governing members of the British Empire," so as to leave no room for his ludicrous objection and it will be seen that the Convention afterwards used this wording for its creed. In this connection, I would like to observe that it is most curious that Mr. Tilak should charge me with a desire to abandon the idea of Self-Government, as in the British Colonies, being the goal of our aspiration. Ever since I began to take an active interest in the national affairs this has been a part of my political faith. In the prospectus of the servants of India Society which was started in June 1905, I have mentioned this goal in clear and explicit terms. "Self-Government on the lines of English Colonies," the prospectus says, "is our goal." From the Presidential Chair of the Congress at Benares in December 1905, I declared the same thing. "The goal of the Congress" I then stated, "is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves and that, in course of time, a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the Self-Governing Colonies of the British Empire." In 1906 in a Paper read before the East India

Association in London on "Self-Government for India" I elaborated the same idea. On the other hand, Mr. Tilak has not always known his own mind in this matter. After the Benares Congress, Mr. Shyamji Krishnavarma denounced me in his *Indian Sociologist* for my idea of Self-Government on colonial lines and later on Mr. Tilak following Mr. Shyamji's lead joined in that denunciation in his *K. sari*. Last year, however, Mr. Tilak veered round to the position that the goal of our political works was of equality for the Englishman and the Indian in the British Empire, but this year again at the Extremists' Conference he coquetted with the views of Bengal School of Extremist politicians and yet it is Mr. Tilak who attributes to me a desire to alter the resolution of last year on this subject.

(b) As regards Swadeshi, there never was the least intention to alter a single word in last year's resolution and it was by a mere accident that the words, "even at some sacrifice," happened to be left out in the Reception Committee's drafts. It happened this way. The report of the Calcutta Congress was not out when the draft resolutions were prepared. So far the text of last year's resolutions I had to rely on a newspaper file. Now, the only file I had with me containing those resolutions was of the journal *India* which had published all the resolutions of last year in its issue of 1st February 1907. As no change of even a word was contemplated in the resolution on *Swadeshi*, I had got one of my assistants merely to copy it from the *India* and include it among the drafts. Unfortunately the text as published in *India* was defective and did not contain the words, "even at some sacrifice," as a reference to the issue of that journal of 1st February, 1907, will show.

And the omission, perfectly unintentional, remained unnoticed till the meeting of the informal Conference which followed the Convention when the words which had been left out were at once restored. It is unnecessary to say that they would have been similarly restored if the Agenda paper had gone as usual to the Subjects Committee for consideration.

(c) In the resolution on Boycott, the only verbal alteration made was to substitute the words "the boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal" for the words "the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal" and the resolution was placed under Partition as the Boycott approved was "by way of protest against the Partition." The change in the wording had been rendered necessary by the unfair and unjustifiable attempt made by an Extremist leader from the Congress platform last year and by Mr. Tilak and others in the Press throughout the year to construe the phraseology employed last year as approving a universal boycott of all forms of association with the Government.

(d) In regard to National Education the slight alteration made was only with the object of improving the phraseology without altering the meaning in any way. It must be mentioned here that the wording adopted last year on this subject had not been considered in the Subjects Committee, there being no time for doing so. In last year's resolution, the word "National" appeared three times—national education on national lines and under national control. It appeared to me that the words, "a system of national education" suited to the requirements of the country and "independent of Government" really expressed all that had to be expressed and that this phraseology was more restrained and more in accord with what was being actually attempted in different parts of India. It will thus be seen that, in drawing up its draft resolutions on the four subjects, the Surat Committee had not intended or attempted any alteration in meaning, though verbal changes had been made here and there to remove ambiguity or to improve the phraseology. I have already pointed out that in making such changes, it was only following the practice of previous years. Moreover, as I have stated in my last letter, there were only drafts that bound nobody and the Subjects Committee would have determined the final form in which they were to be submitted to the Congress. All the storm raised in connection with them was really more to discredit the Surat Committee than for furthering any national interest, real or fancied.

The Extremist Statement speaks of certain attempts made by certain gentlemen to arrange "a compromise" and it mentions three gentlemen as having undertaken to speak to me—Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee and Mr. Chunilal D. Suraya. Of these, Mr. Chunilal never saw me in any such connection. Lala Lajpat Rai had a brief talk with me—it was on the 24th December in the evening at the Railway Station when we had gone there to receive the President—about a proposal made by Mr. Tilak that five men on his side and five men on the other side should meet together and settle the wording of the different resolutions. I pointed out to Mr. Lajpat Rai that it was the business of the Subjects Committee to settle the wording and that a Committee such as Mr. Tilak suggested had never been appointed before. Moreover, it was easy for Mr. Tilak whose followers were meeting in a Conference day after day to nominate five men to represent his side, but amidst the excitement and bitterness of feeling then prevailing, what five men, I asked, could claim the authority or undertake the responsibility to act in the name of the other delegates? And I said to him, "Let the Subjects Committee meet to-morrow and let us see if any differences remain to be adjusted. And, if any remain, you can make this proposal to the Subjects Committee." Lala Lajpat Rai saw the force of this and did not press the suggestion further. Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee mentioned to me on the opening day of the Congress, only a few minutes before going to the Pandal, that he had had a conversation that morning with Mr. Tilak that Mr. Tilak had said to him that if he (Mr. Banerjee) and myself guaranteed the passing of the four resolutions in the same form as last year, there would be no trouble in connection with the President's election. I pointed out to Mr. Banerjee how Mr. Tilak had shifted his ground—how, till the previous evening, the cry was for an assurance that the four resolutions would be on the agenda paper and how he now demanded a guarantee that they would be passed in the same form as last year and I said, "It is outrageous that Mr. Tilak should make such a demand and threaten now with trouble. How can any individual member with any sense

of responsibility guarantee what would be done by Subjects Committee not yet appointed or by a Congress of sixteen hundred delegates? These men denounce us in one breath for autocracy and, in the next, they ask us to take upon ourselves such an impossible responsibility." The conversation then ended. Before passing away from this point, I would like to contradict here, in the most emphatic manner possible, the report to which such wide currency has been given, that Mr. Tilak tried three times at Surat to see me and that every time I declined to see him. There is not a word of truth in this report. Mr. Tilak never gave me to understand directly or indirectly that he wanted to meet me at Surat. He never wrote to me or sent me word with any one to express such a desire. He never came to my place and to my knowledge he never tried to meet me anywhere else.

Only one more matter in the Extremists Statement concerns me personally. It is the version that it gives of what took place first between Mr. Malvi and Mr. Tilak and then between Dr. Ghosh and Mr. Tilak, when Mr. Tilak came to the platform to move the adjournment of the Congress. The version is in direct conflict with the official version issued immediately after the break up of the Congress over the signatures of Dr. Ghosh, Mr. Malvi, Mr. Wacha and myself. Now, all four of us had heard every word of the conversation that took place between Mr. Tilak on the one side and Mr. Malvi and Dr. Ghosh on the other. On the other hand, though the Extremist version is signed by five gentlemen, four of the five were not on the platform and could not have heard a syllabus of what was said. The conflict between the two versions thus means the word of us four is against the word of Mr. Tilak and there I am content to let it stand. Here I must close and I would do so with one observation. The Reception Committee of Surat had not departed on a single particular from the established practice of the last twenty-two years. It had made its arrangements for the holding of the Congress and for the comfort of the delegates in the usual way. It had prepared the agenda paper for the Subjects Committee in the usual way. It had

elected the President under a special rule adopted by the Congress itself last year. Having made these preparations in the course of single month, for which cities like Calcutta and Bombay have taken three to four months—having turned its nights into days for the purpose—it awaited for the Congress meeting and conducting its deliberations in the usual way. On the other hand, all the innovations were on Mr. Tilak's side. He set up a separate camp of his own followers. He harranged them daily about the supposed intention of the Reception Committee and the high-handedness of imaginary bureaucracy in the Congress. He made from day to day wild and wreckless statements, some of which it is difficult to characterise properly in terms of due restraint.

He created a pledge-bound party to vote with him like a machine, whatever the personal views of individual delegates might be. He demanded guarantees from individual members on the other side unheard of in the history of the Congress. On the first day some of his followers by sheer rowdyism compelled the sitting to be suspended. On the second day when the sitting was resumed there was no expression of regret forthcoming for the discreditable occurrence of the previous day and though one day out of three had been already lost, Mr. Tilak himself came forward to interrupt the proceedings again by a motion of adjournment. Under the mildest construction this was a move of obstruction, pure and simple, for as long as the rule under which the Reception Committee had elected Dr. Ghosh remained unrescinded, there was no possible way to get that election set aside. On the platform, Mr. Tilak openly and persistently defied the authority of the Chair. Over the painful incidents that followed, it is perhaps best now to throw a pall. But in all this I do not see where the responsibility of the Reception Committee comes in.

CALCUTTA }
13th January, 1908 }

G.K. GOKHALE

EXTREMISTS VERSION CONTRADICTED

It is with great reluctance that I take up my pen to write on an event, the tragical nature of which cannot be left more acutely by any one than by those who for the last twenty years and more have been devoting their best energies to the one great national institution, which gave hope of a better future, and who struck steadfastly to it when the leaders of the newly arisen new party were trying to stay it by ridicule, misrepresentation and calumny. Having been an eye-witness of all that happened on the two memorable days, the 26th and the 27th December, I thought that deplorable, disgraceful and utterly unworthy of gentlemen as those occurrences were, even those who had so far forgotten what they owe to themselves, to the country and to posterity as to have indulged in rowdyism and open violence, would, despite party passions, admit the real facts and express their sorrow for the grievous mistakes committed by them. It is, therefore, humiliating—nay, disgusting to see that men of education and position, who must be regarded as representatives, have shown an open disregard for truth which augurs ill for the progress of our motherland. Whatever room for misapprehension there might have been as to the intentions and plans of the Bombay leaders and whatever scope one or two unintentional acts or omissions might have afforded for criticism there could be those who would not wilfully disregard the evidence of their senses.

No doubt the whole rowdyism, unseemly squabbles and resort to sticks and physical violence, which disgraced the last session of the Congress, was due to Extremists and that the responsibility for the *fracas* lies upon the leaders of that party. It appears that Mr. G. Subramania Iyer has written to the *Hindu* stating that he has modified the views which he had first expressed. I have not seen the letter, but, if the criticism which the *Indu Prakash* makes on it is well based, I must say, it is curious if Mr Iyer throws on the Moderates any responsibility for the disorderly scenes on the 26th and the attack of the 27th. He was sitting next to me on the first day and when

the din of cries, shouts and unparliamentary terms was raised against Mr. Surendranath Banerjee by some Nagpurians, Benarsees and Madrasis, he became very angry and exclaimed excitedly : "This is most disgraceful, most shameful. This is all due to Tilak and Khaparde. They are responsible for all this " He further said to me "this is all the doing of your Central Provinces. Nagpur has brought troubles on the Congress." I felt that taunt and replied sharply, "your rebuke is, I must admit, sorrowfully true so far as men of my province are concerned, but are there not 8 or 10 Madrasis, who are even wilder than they ?" On the 27th, he was, again, not far from me and saw all the incidents and when we met again shortly afterwards he threw the whole blame on those same persons On both occasions, the remarks were voluntarily made. On the following days, I remonstrated with several Berar Extremists and told them what Mr G. Subramaniya Iyer had said, leader though he was till late of the Extremist party of the Madras Presidency.

Everyone, who has the least regard for truth, will unhesitatingly say that every word in the statement issued under the signatures of Dr. Ghosh and Messrs. Malvi, Wacha and Gokhale is true. It is now well known from what quarter the shoe came and that it was aimed at Sir P.M. Mehta. It is a wicked lie to say that it was aimed at Mr. Tilak. It can be proved by the testimony of hundreds of eye-witnesses that signals were given by prominent Extremists and that thereon a number of persons from the Central Provinces and Berar, some of whom were delegates and some visitors, rushed to the platform wielding big long sticks. When Mr. Tilak was escorted, he was surrounded by more than 50 of his followers armed with these *lathies*. Is it usual for delegates or even visitors to carry about *lathies* ? One fact throws a most lurid light on the affair. Among the Extremist delegates and visitors taken from Berar were gymnastic teachers, gymnasts, proclaimed touts, workmen from factories, fitters, oilmen, etc.

There were, I am told, barber delegates from Nagpur, who for the money spent on them, made some small return by

shaving the Nationalist delegates. These men are too poor to pay their travelling expenses, much less, their delegation fee. Who supplied the money and what was the object in taking such persons? For, most of them do not know English and have never taken part in public matters. With my own eyes, I saw Extremist delegates, holding two degrees, brandishing long and powerful sticks or rushing wildly and frantically at the occupants of the platform. I myself stopped the progress of a chair which was hurled at either the President or Sir Pherozechah. The man picked up another and I snatched it away from him. He was then thrown down by some Gujarati gentlemen. He was a visitor from these provinces. Why did he rush on the platform? I rebuked sharply some C.P. graduates who were rushing towards Sir P.M. Mehta, who was being taken out by the hind entrance. They said, "We have no grievance against you. We want to punish these Parsee rascals." What again is the meaning of Mr. Khaparde rushing to the platform with a thick stick uplifted? Only half an hour previously he had like Mr. Tilak declined to take his seat in the chair reserved for him on the dais. Two Patels from the Akote Taluq who were staying in my quarters received on the 27th at about noon a warning from two men of their caste who lived in the Nationalist camp that day there would be enacted scenes far worse than those of the previous day and advised them either to stay away or to occupy back seats. These gentlemen tried to communicate the warning to me but they could not succeed. A well-known Extremist of these provinces has been taking credit that he sent me word "begging" me to leave the prominent seat I occupied on the platform. The word never reached me and even if it had I would not have left my place. All the same the fact is significant. Then again scan the list of Nagpur delegates and their occupations and literary qualifications. Not that the educated graduates were behind the uneducated rowdies in creating disturbance. But the extraordinary advent of the unruly element leaves little room for doubt that the whole disturbance had been planned, organised and deliberately brought about.

To me it is small comport that hooliganism was shown by Extremists and not by Moderates, and I would not have written a word for publication in regard to these disgraceful performances, but for the monstrous lies that are studiously being circulated by the foolish, misguided sinners and their culpable and designing leaders. Rowdiness and violence are bad enough but to add wicked untruthfulness to it is infamous. The facts are all plain and lie on the surface and if people would only drive away the cloud of dust which the breakers of the peace purposely raise in order to conceal the real issues, there would be little room for doubt as to where the guilt lies.

The campaign of vilification of the Moderate party was commenced in the first fortnight of January last by Mr. Tilak at Allahabad where the people and especially the young men were exhorted to pull down their leaders and the high ideal was impressed upon them that morality had no place in politics. Mr. Khaparde followed in a few days by a most outrageous speech at Nagpur in which the Moderate leaders were called "infamous," "the most debased of human kind," etc., and the fraternity of men who ventured to hold views different from those of the "New School" was questioned. In about 4 weeks more came the meeting at Nagpur for the formation of the Working Committee when a respected old C P. leader of 60 years of age was greeted with a shoe, burning powder was sent in a letter to the President of the meeting, Dr. Gour, and threatening letters were sent to some other prominent men. Simultaneously with this and four months after this, the *Kesari* at Poona and the *Deshasewak* at Nagpur carried on a regular crusade against those members of the Moderate party whose opposition to Mr. Tilak's Presidentship was feared by them. Week after week and month after month men like Mr. Gokhale became the subjects of the foulest calumnies and most wanton perversions of truth. It would be well if the articles in these papers and others of that school are translated word for word so that the whole Indian world might know how low have fallen those from whom much was expected. It is dispiriting to see the literary and moral garbage on which the new generation of Maharashtra is sought to be brought up.

The occurrences of 22nd September at Nagpur (which were the direct offspring of the spirit created and fed by these writings) are well known. The concerted rowdyism within the hall, the pre-arranged hooliganism outside and worse than all the shameless effrontery with which these proceedings are white washed and defended (which are the most distressing developments of the "New Spirit") need not be recounted.

Then came the All-India Congress Committee's meeting in which after refusal by Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde to adhere to the compromise which they had accepted only three or four hours previously, the resolution was arrived at to transfer the venue of the Congress to Surat. And then followed the most vitriolic, venomous and bitter attacks on Sir P.M. Mehta, Mr. Gokhale and the Surat people, the language of which would put to shame even the street brawlers. It deserves to be noted that the *Deshasewak* and other Tilakite papers distinctly used the threat that no efforts would be spared to make a Congress at Surat impossible.

First, a difficulty is sought to be created by dragging in Mr. Lajpat Rai's name against his expressed wishes. Even when he definitely and openly put his foot down, attempts to prevent Dr. Ghosh from taking the presidential chair was persevered in and carried out. Finding that Mr. Lajpat Rai would not allow himself to be made a catspaw the story is next invented and studiously spread that the Reception Committee wanted to go back on the propositions in regard to Self-Government, Swadeshi, Boycott in Bengal and National Education. On the evening of the 24th I told a number of delegates that there was no valid basis for this assertion and that propositions on the subjects substantially the same in spirit as those of last year would be put before the Subjects Committee. On the 25th at noon when Mr. N.C. Kelkar was at the place where I was putting up, I told him the same thing and begged that scenes and split be avoided. That day in the evening, Mr. Gokhale made a detailed statement to the delegates in the Congress Camp. About 150 attended and he told them the exact wording of the Resolution drafted by him as the drafts-

man of the Subjects Committee. Mr. R.P. Karandikar of Satara and other friends of Mr. Tilak were present on the occasion. In spite of this conclaves were held in the Nationalist Camp and the resolution arrived at to oppose the election of the President and other obstruction and organise rowdyism at every stage of the proceedings.

On the 26th, when thousands were present in the Congress Pandal, Mr. Khare of Nasik went on shouting from block to block that Mr. Tilak had sent word that the election of the President was to be prevented. In the face of all these facts, can there be any doubt left that the rowdyism and violence carried out had been deliberately planned and organised? It is admitted that before time for proposing the President came, Mr. Tilak had in his possession a copy of the draft resolutions containing the ones on "Swaraj," "Swadeshi," "Boycott" and "National Education." And yet the row was made, carried on and persisted in and not the least efforts made to check it. It is sickening to see the ignoble tactics and dishonourable methods adopted by the leaders of the rowdies, and the lies that were invented and busily spread, even after contradiction, so as to create prejudice against the Moderates in general and Mr. Gokhale in particular.

One word and I shall conclude this already too long communication. What is said in the Manifesto issued by the Extremist leaders or by their very "impartial" friend and ally Babu Motilal Ghosh, is sufficient to prove the main charge that these people wanted to impose their will upon the Moderates who formed the majority and if that could not be done to create an uproar and to resort to the use of force. They only acted in obedience to a telegram which had been received from their headquarters at Calcutta : "Blow up if everything else fails."

Bengal Protest

After the rowdyism of the first day, the Bengal delegates met at Bose's Bungalow in the evening, when the following Resolution was passed on the motion of Mr. Didnarayan Singh of Bhagalpur :

“We, the undersigned delegates of United Bengal, deeply regret the unseemly demonstration made at the Congress Pandal to-day, when Babu Surendranath Banerjee was seconding, the resolution proposing the election of the Honourable Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, and say that we entirely dissociate ourselves from those that were guilty of such demonstration and irregular proceedings.”

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INDIAN NATIONALISM IN THE PRE-GANDHIAN PHASE

What happened at the Surat session of the Congress in 1907 failed to go without yielding positive results. In spite of the fact that the 'extremists' left the Indian National Congress, they also left behind their protagonists in the camp of the 'moderates' who appreciated the call for 'swaraj' as the birth-right of the Indian people. The cult of 'swadeshi' and boycott had taken deep roots. It was quite clear that the moderate leaders were no longer prepared to follow dogmatically the trend set by Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji for the obvious reason that they abandoned the path of 'pure mendicancy' and took to the ways of *agitation* by peaceful means. Regardless of their accusations directed at each other, the utterances of the moderate and the extremist leaders revealed that the difference between the two was more of a degree than that of a kind as both aspired for swaraj or 'self-rule within the Empire'. The growing trend could well be identified with moderate extremism or extremist moderatism.

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THE PRESENT INDIAN PROBLEM

In politics and statecraft, there is, I think, only one vital problem before the Government and the people of India at this moment. How to work up a reasonable reconciliation between the legitimate requirements of Indian Nationalism on the one side and of the British Empire on the other, is that problem. All other political problems that face us dwindle

*From B.C. Pal : *Nationality and Empire*, Chapter IV.

into utter in consequence before it. The value of every political or administrative programme or policy in India must now be judged by its capacity to help this reconciliation. And the worth of every political or administrative reform must be determined by the same test.

Unfortunately, however, it is so far practically an unappreciated problem. There are not many people—neither among Indian Nationalists nor among British Imperialists—who seem to have got as yet a thorough grasp of it. The Nationalists, as a body, are inclined to take a very narrow view of Nationalism; while the so-called Imperialists have no conception of the real meaning and significance of the Empire-Idea as a lofty and uplifting social synthesis. The Nationalist, distracted by the passions and prejudices of the passing conflict between the ideal and the actual in his present political life, cannot seize the individualities or personalities of their own, not only in the United States of America, but even in the British Dominions of Canada and South Africa. And the fact that these new combinations of the members of different nationalities with developed and distinctive notes and marks of their own, do not destroy national differentiations but instead of seeking self-fulfilment in any shapeless and formless and undifferentiated cosmopolitanism or internationalism, rather create new national organisms, proves the truth of the essential postulate of the Philosophy of Nationalism, namely, that every composite people either living together in one common territory, under one common State, or inheritors and workers of a common culture and civilisation, whether primitive and simple or advanced and complex, from time immemorial, or thrown recently into one another's company, as members of the same State, have or develop a distinct personality of their own. International admixture does not destroy the personality of a new nation, but, on the contrary, develops it and gives it a new shape and form, in which the older types are not entirely obliterated, nor from which the older spirit is absolutely eliminated, but where these are simply transformed and transmuted. The law of conservation of energy and transmu-

tability of force is not absent even from social evolution. And all these prove, it seems to me, the positive value of nationalism as a principle and law of social evolution.

THE POLITICAL EMPHASIS OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

Very few people even among those who claim to be very staunch Nationalists in this country, seem to have as yet grasped the true meaning of Nationalism or to have imbibed its inner spirit. To many of us Nationalism is only a political cry. It had its origin in our political conflicts with the British Bureaucracy in the country, and has for its ultimate ideal some sort of political freedom. With the so-called "Moderates," Nationalism aims at the attainment of Colonial Self-Government, whatever that may mean. With a section at least of those who are called "Extremists" by their enemies, the ultimate goal of Nationalism is absolute political independence, howsoever it may have to be realised. And in this, there is absolutely no difference between Indian and European Nationalism. For in Europe Nationalism has so far had an exclusively political meaning. We hear of it only among what are called dependent or subject peoples. It had been the cry of Young Italy, in the last century, when "Italia" was under the heel of the Austrian oppressor. It has also been the cry of the Irish patriots smarting under a sense of political subjection of Great Britain. It is the bitter cry of the Poles and the Finns crushed under the weight of the Russian autocracy. And it would serve no useful purpose to shut our eyes to the fact that many of us in India have caught this cry from these European peoples. This is why even among us also Nationalism has so far been practically a political propaganda. And it shows how, all our bitterest antagonism against European ideas and institutions notwithstanding, we are, whether we affect heterodoxy and cosmopolitanism or orthodoxy and conservatism—much too overwhelmingly under the spell of European thought and culture, to be able to take an independent and truly Indian view of any of our present-day problems, whether social or economic or political. This incapacity is entirely responsible

for the almost exclusive political emphasis of Indian Nationalism, as this emphasis, in its turn, has led to all the criminal excesses that have tarnished the fair fame of this new and soul-stirring patriotic movement among us.

Mazzini has so far been the only prophet of Nationalism in Europe. As I have pointed out previously, his is the best definition of the term that we have so far had in European thought. Mazzini defines "Nationality" as "the Individuality of a People." And individuality is that which marks out different human units from one another. My individuality is that which impresses those who come in contact with me that I am unlike their other friends and acquaintances. I have the same physiological organs and the same psychological powers as other humans of my class, but still I am not absolutely like them. There are certain undeniable but inexplicable tricks of nature which impart a distinctness to my physical and mental life and activities, and thus separate me from others. This is a matter of very common experience. And as there are these subtle characteristics that differentiate one human from another, though they may both belong to the same race, speak the same language, profess the same religion, observe the same social code, may even claim a common percentage, and may have received the same training from their infancy onward; even so there are certain characteristics which are usually found to differentiate one nation or people from another. This differentiation between the collective life and character of different social units constitutes the very soul and essence of the Nation-idea. Mazzini seized this fact very correctly, and his definition of Nationality is so correct because it is based upon this fact of universal experience.

But neither Mazzini nor any one else in Europe, so far as my limited knowledge goes, seems to have subjected this generalisation to any further analysis with a view to reach out to a still higher synthesis. Owing to the want of this higher synthesis, modern European sociologists have hardly been able to discover as yet the true postulates of their

specific science. This explains, I think, the excessive biological and anthropological emphasis of current sociological speculations in the West. In the study of historic evolution and social phenomena too much attention has been paid to what M. Taine calls environments and epochs and much too little to what may be called the original race consciousness of different social groups. In seeking to explain the phenomena of racial differentiations, too much emphasis has been put on environments and associations, and too little on heredity. And the reason of it is also evident. For, racially all Europe has practically been one. They all belong to the same original stock. Their race-consciousness is the same. They have the same physical or physiological, the same social and economic, and the same mental structure. Difference of historic evolution or national character in Europe has thus been very largely the result of environments and epochs and not of original race-consciousness. And the fact that almost for the last two thousand years Europe has been under the influence of one and the same credal religion, has helped very much to still further level down real national differentiations among different European peoples. Culturally all Europe has for centuries past been practically one. The different nations of Europe have had for centuries past one common social economy, and one common economic structure. The course of social evolution has been practically the same in all the great European countries. Nationalism means, therefore, really very little of vital importance in Europe. Modern European thought hardly realises, therefore, the significance of the nationalist philosophy or recognises the need of any nationalist ideal or inspiration. It understands internationalism. It aspires after the highest cosmopolitan ideal. But it has not as yet clearly grasped the fact that as the universal cannot exist without the particular—viewed apart from the particular, the universal is only an abstraction, like Hegel's Pure Being which is equal to Pure Nothing; even so cosmopolitanism, unless based upon nationalism, is a mere abstraction, a fancy, a mode of thinking, and not a reality. And the very feeble emphasis that modern

European thought has so far laid upon nationalism, and the consequent absence of any true and lofty philosophy of it in modern European speculations, is entirely due to the fact that in Europe, the different nations are practically one people. They all have the same thought-structure and the same social structure. They are all moved, practically, by the same worldly or other-worldly aspirations.

In Europe, Nationalism can never get rid, therefore, of its political incubus. It cannot, without a much deeper analysis of the social life and experience, be raised to the dignity of philosophy or the sanctity of a religion. The isolation of the life and authority of the different European States, based upon their respective territorial demarcations, and the consequent conceit of separate political and economic interests, unreconciled, and under present conditions apparently unreconcilable with one another, and the conflicts and competitions arising out of this separatist sentiments—these are about the only things that mark the real difference between one European nation and another. Patriotism in Europe is, therefore, mainly a geographical virtue. It has only a supreme territorial reference. Its general aim and end is to procure the political independence of one's own country, and, with a view to enhance its political power or strengthen its economic and industrial position, to deprive the weaker nations of the world of their political independence, in the name of civilisation and humanity. The desire for political freedom for one's own people, and this longing for political ascendancy over other peoples, these have always been the most vital object of national ambitions in Europe. It is these meaner rivalries that have, for centuries past, been the actual contents of the nation-idea among European peoples. It is very natural, therefore, that nationalism should be a term of the political life only, in Europe. It has consequently but little moral inspiration or spiritual strength in it.

The Nation-Idea in India

But our history and evolution have been somewhat different. We did not develop the nation-idea in the sense

and in the way that Europe developed it. Our language has, in fact, no word corresponding to the English word nation. We are now using the word "jati" जाति for nation. But "jati" really means *genus*. We had, thus, the terms "go jati" गोजाति and *manushya jati* मनुष्यजाति which mean the genus cow and the genus man, but nothing like "Engrez jati" —अंगरेजजाति or "Bharoteeya jati" or "Hindu jati"—to indicate the English nation, the Indian nation, or the Hindu nation, in our old literature. And the reason of it is that our old social synthesis practically stopped with the race-idea. The individual, the family, the caste, the clan, and after the clan—universal humanity or the genus *homo*—these are practically all the terms of our social philosophy. We never had, therefore, this nationalist ideal or aspiration before. Sociologically race comes after clan as the formula of a higher synthesis and a broader human fellowship; and nation comes after race; for many races frequently combine to form a nation. But ethnic systems, like those, for instance, of the Hindus and the Hebrews, are inherently opposed to these racial fusions. The Hindu and the Hebrew have, therefore, persisted, almost to our own time, as distinct ethnic units. In fact, the Hebrew has preserved her ethnic integrity perhaps even more successfully than the Hindu. There has not only been much greater miscegenation among the Hindus than among Hebrews; but through his Varnasrama or caste-and-order scheme, the Hindu has developed a type of inter-ethnic or inter-racial union and association unknown to Hebrew history and culture. In one sense, therefore, we did develop a nation-idea and a national type of our own, even without the term nation. But it was not a political synthesis only.

In Europe, racial fusion took place, at first, mainly through the propagation of Christianity. Religious unity was the basis of inter-ethnic or inter-racial unification. The acceptance of a common creed, and submission to a common socio-religious discipline, organised in a uniform system of sacraments and ceremonies, absolutely binding upon all, irrespective of their race or colour or country or culture,

helped to obliterate the old ethnic divisions in Europe. The old ethnic institutions of the Christian converts were either entirely destroyed or absolutely absorbed by the new creed and culture. Linguistic differences, geographical boundaries, and political isolation or independence—these are all that remained now to indicate the difference between the different Christian peoples of Europe. These have continued even to our own time as the principal notes or marks of national differentiation there. On the other hand, the influence of the credal in their religious life, which demanded an absolute uniformity of beliefs and practices in the followers of Christ, developed an ideal of homogeneity in their national life. Unity of geographical or territorial habitat, unity of language, unity of social life and economy, as much as unity of religious beliefs came, thus, to be regarded as absolute conditions of national unity in Europe. And as there was already unity of religious and social life among the various nations of Europe, difference of geographical habitat and state-authority and organisation, became naturally the most vital elements of the national life and differentiation among them.

In India, among the Hindus, social evolution took a very different course. It developed a federal type almost from the very beginning. And the main reason why we have been able to preserve this type is that we never came under the dominating influence of any credal systems like Christianity, for instance. Buddhism too is credal, like Christianity and Islam. But Buddhism though born in India, did not entirely overthrow the old religion of the country, but was itself practically thrown out as a foreign body. Buddhism expanded but did not absorb Hinduism. It contributed new elements to Hinduism, but did not kill its original life as Christianity killed the life of Paganism in Europe. Christianity took in all the nobler elements of the old Pagan religions and having absorbed all their life and sap, threw them away like a sucked orange. Buddhism could not do so in India, but, on the contrary, was sucked dry by the revived philosophy and culture of the older religion of the people and thrown out as

useless afterwards. The expulsion of credal Buddhism from India had, thus, been the salvation of the integrity of Indian culture.

National differentiations among us, therefore, have not been based upon territorial demarcations only, or upon political or economic competitions and conflicts, but upon differences of culture. Under the Moslems we had, whether Hindus or Mahomedans, one common Government, but that did not destroy the integrity of Hindu culture. We took many things from our Mahomedan neighbours, and gave them also something of our own, but this interchange of ideas and institutions did not destroy our special character or our special culture. And that special character and culture is the very soul and essence of what we now understand as Nationalism. This is by no means a mere political idea or ideal. It is something that touches every department of our collective life and activity. It is organised in our domestic, our communal, our social, and our socio-economic institutions. In fact, politics forms, from some points of view, the least important factors of this nation-idea among us. The so-called free political institutions of Europe might, indeed, hinder, instead of helping the growth of our real national life; while under conceivable conditions, mere political subjection might not be able to touch even the outermost fringe of that life.

Practically, England's rule in India has been very vitally affecting our national life and integrity. But that is because British rule means a good deal more than mere political sovereignty. This rule is organically bound up with a special system of economics, for instance. The British rulers are not satisfied with simply exercising political authority over us; they must, in pursuance of their own ideal of statecraft, develop our material resources also. The spirit of European capitalism has, thus, been wedded to the administrative policy of the British Government in India. And it is here that the real conflict between Indian Nationalism and British Ad-

ministration arises. The capitalistic spirit of the British Government in India has inspired from the very beginning its economic policy, and has developed a kind of State-Socialism among us which is almost fatal to our real national life. This fact cannot be ignored, and its importance must not be sought to be minimised. But this danger will not be removed by any expansion of our so-called political rights and privileges. Such expansion will, necessarily, mean greater co-operation and closer partnership with the present capitalistic and socialistic administration in the country. It will not change the capitalistic character of the Government or alter its policy of state-socialism. This being so, the expansion of so-called political franchise may spell only an increased menace to the true nationalist ideal among us.

The Right Nationalist Policy

So far as our present political life is concerned, the only right policy and attitude of the Indian Nationalist must, to my mind, be what is called *laissez faire*. This policy is forced upon us by the conflict of civilisations between the rulers and the ruled in this country. In view of this conflict, it is essential that, for the preservation of the integrity of our own thought and culture and for securing to our people sufficient freedom to grow in their own way, following the trends of their own special history and evolution, without being overwhelmed by any alien influences—the activities of the Government should be restricted, as far as possible, to the discharge of their primary functions only. And in this the Government must have our whole-hearted support. The preservation of peace and order is the primary function of every State. The failure of any Government to efficiently discharge this function spells anarchy, and leads ultimately to the break-up of the social organisation. It means, practically, the rebarbarisation of humanity. There is absolutely no excuse, therefore, for any community wantonly obstruct the discharge of this primary function by the Government under which they may have to live. No considerations regarding

the character of their state-constitution—whether it is autocratic or democratic—or concerning the nationality of the person or persons in whom the State authority may be vested for the time being—whether they are foreigners or of the people—no considerations of this kind can absolve them of their paramount obligation to help their Government in the efficient discharge of this primary function. To deny this obligation is not Nationalism, but Anarchism. There are occasions when particular measures of a Government may have to be resolutely opposed. There are circumstances which, in the opinion of some political philosophers, even justify open revolt, provided it has the practical sanction of the *whole* nation. Political philosophy, recognises all these in extreme cases. But no philosophy except that of anarchism—which is the ultimate logic of every form of absolute individualism, such as dominated the social philosophy of Europe for the greater part of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries—has any plea or justification for any people to deliberately obstruct the discharge of the primary functions of the State by the Government established among them. And as no Government can exist anywhere unless it is generally acceptable to the people whom it rules—except where they are kept in absolute physical subjection by sheer force of superior numbers—any attempt on the part of a small minority to paralyse the machinery of the Administration by a campaign of secret assassinations or organised lawlessness, is not merely an attack on the Government, but upon Society itself. It is the worst conceivable form of tyranny; because it really means an attempt on the part of a small and impatient minority to force the majority of their people into a position which they are either unwilling or unprepared to face.

In times of abnormal excitement even noble men sometimes lend themselves to ignoble acts, which they sincerely regret or repent afterwards. It happened among us also. The young men who started this campaign of terrorism in 1907-1908, and who are doing penance for their acts now

in the Andamans, were only misguided, but not devoid of either intelligence or conscience. Theirs was an act of madness. They never incited neurotic youths by secret circulars to sacrifice their lives, while they themselves were safe out of harm's way. They did not cherish the fatuous folly of securing "independence" for their country by a campaign of secret assassinations. I knew one or two of those young men personally and intimately. I know they were as tender as a woman, incapable of causing wanton pain to man or beast. It was a passing frenzy that possessed their spirit. Those who are planning secret murders and organising so-called political dacoities, may appeal in their name but are not made of their stuff. They have caught a few catch-phrases and have learnt to copy a few impassioned exhortations, that is all. This, and their bitter hatred of the British Government and the British people, are their only stock-in-trade. And I have hesitation in saying that these men, whatever their number, who from the safety of their hiding are trying to keep up this anarchical campaign in the country, when all parties are so sincerely anxious to discover some rational and peaceful settlement of the vital issues of our present and future political life, are the worst enemies of Indian Nationalism.

Both their ideal and their inspiration are European, and not Indian. Political independence, they declare, is their ideal-end. But this so-called political independence is a fundamentally foreign concept. It is, as I have often tried to point out, a negative something, an essentially anti-social idea. It is associated with the European doctrine of rights, which, as Mazzini rightly declared, is a formula of resistance, and not a principle of reconciliation. Association, not isolation; co-operation, not competition; socialism, in the highest and truest sense of the term, and not merely what it is understood to mean by the followers of Marx—this socialism, and not individualism; duty, and not right—these are the rudimentary concepts of our social and political philosophy. These are the fundamental ideas of Indian Nationalism. Our "Individuality"

as a people is based upon these distinctive notes or marks of our thought and evolution. These are the primary factors of our differentiation from other nations of the world. Humanity needs these larger social concepts, to be able to work up the next higher social synthesis. They are our moral title to live as a nation Europe is groping after these. For us to seek isolation in the name of independence ; to seek selfish competitions with other nations, under pretence of furthering our national interests ; to set up individualism in place of collectivism as the true social goal ; or give preference to a narrow and selfish, a competing and fighting nationalism, over the broader, altruistic, humanitarian ideal of co-operative internationalism and universal federation—is really to strangle, with our own hands, that very Nationalism, to which so many of us are ever ready to swear deathless allegiance. If we are to preserve the distinctive character of our thought and culture, we must perpetually keep Autonomy, as distinguished from Independence, as our ideal political end.

Independence vs Autonomy

In fact, Svaraj, the accepted political ideal of the Indian Nationalists, does not connote the same thing as what is called “independence” in English. The correct rendering of Svaraj is autonomy and not independence. Autonomy is a positive, while independence is a negative, concept. Independence means isolation. Autonomy implies no necessary severance of outside connections or associations. Nationalism implies that, collectively, we, the composite Indian community, are a distinct, and individual social organism ; and as such, we have a distinct end unto ourselves and a specific law of our own National Being, through which we must seek to reach and realise that end. And because autonomy means the act and the power of living according to one’s own law, it is a legitimate nationalist ideal. For nationality implies that we have a special character, a distinct individuality of our own ; a law of our being, by submitting to which alone we can perfect and realise our collective life. It is just for this reason that national autonomy is an absolute condition-precedent of the pursuit and realisa-

tion of the nationalist ideal. And we must deprecate, by every means in our power, this spirit of bitter antagonism to the British Government and the British people, which some people seem to mistake for an ardent devotion to the nationalist cause, for the very simple and sufficient reason that it has an inevitable tendency to lower our own ideals, confuse our thought, blur our vision of the Mother, in a word to simultaneously denationalise and dehumanise us. For anger is not merely secret murder, it is also incipient insanity. And hatred ultimately, like every other evil in God's world, defeats its own purpose. Cherished and inveterate hatred, by a strange psychological law, leads to the possession of the hater by the inner spirit of the very thing or person he hates. This is being proved before our very eyes. Their bitter hatred of Europe is visibly Europeanising the inner soul of many of our people. This passionate antagonism towards the British Government inevitably leads to a constant contemplation of their evil-side. And no man can ever find his own good by fixing his mind constantly upon the evils that another may have in him. This insensate antipathy towards the British Government really leaves us little time to think out our own problems soberly or recognise our present duty correctly. The frenzied vision of the misguided Indian patriot must inevitably see only the brute in the British ; and this vision of the brute in the British, by an unfailing psychological law, calls out not the God, but only the brute in him also. This conflict is, thus, brutalising both parties equally. Centuries of moral and spiritual disciplines had considerably laid the brute in us. But this political frenzy by calling out the brute in our rulers is, in its rebound upon us, rebrutalising our people also. It is striking at the very root of our "individuality" as a people. And it is just for these reasons that I hold that this bitter and unreasonable antipathy towards the British people is suicidal to the very spirit of Indian Nationalism, and should never, therefore, be indulged in or encouraged by those who are truly devoted to the nationalist cause in this country.

All this may require some culture to understand and appreciate. But a little reflection will show how this bitterness

is a very serious menace even to that political freedom, which seems to have obsessed the minds of a good many of our young men. It is a very real danger to our political future. That future will no longer be settled by the issues of any conflict that may arise between India and England, but by the future developments of what may well be described as the present world-situation. We may ignore that situation, but let us not fancy that it will ignore us. Three terrible combinations threaten to come into conflict with one another in the coming century. A world-wide confederacy of the white races is gradually being formed in Europe and America. Imperial Federation on the one side and the new diplomatic idea of what is called "Peace-and-Arbitration-Treaties" on the other, are clear signs of it. The practical extinction of Turkey as a European Power, whatever immediate conflicts or complications may arise out of it, will gradually bring about a situation which will be settled in no other way, except through a treaty of peace and arbitration among the various Powers vitally interested in keeping the *status quo ante* in the Bosphorus. To try to solve this more-than-a-century old problem of the Bosphorus in any other way would set all Europe ablaze; and even after any possible all-European War, the settlement of it will have to come through some clear and friendly understanding between the European Powers, in reaching which they will very likely settle most of their other outstanding differences also. And this will pave the way to the ultimate evolution of a Pan-European Confederacy. Then, there is the possibility of a Pan-Islamic combination. The fall of Turkey will not, to my mind, destroy but rather on the contrary most effectually enhance the possibilities of this combination. To think that the fall of Turkey and the imminent partition of Persia will break the backbone of Pan-Islamism, is to take a very superficial view of the situation. The real strength of the Pan-Islamic sentiment, and its menace to world-peace, never lay in the political power of the Mahomedan States—in their navy or their army. In these matters, Islam can never hope to approach the European nations. The chief strength of Pan-Islamism lies in the so-called fanaticism of the Moslem popula-

tions of the world. The fall of Turkey and the partition of Persia, should it come about, will not allay but increase this danger a hundred-fold. In fact, these petty and disorganised Mahomedan States are, from some points of view, not helps but rather a hindrance to the spread of Pan-Islamism. They have diverted people's thoughts from their own strength to that of the armies of these Moslem potentates. The dispersion of these armies, will intensify the sense of communal wrong among the Moslems and strengthen the determination of the *people* to avenge that wrong. Fanaticism is stronger than guns; and popular upheaval spread over wide latitudes more invincible than trained army corps. Nothing short of a Pan-European combination will be able to successfully face a world-wide Pan-Islamism, should it ever come into existence. Thirdly, there is the possibility of a Pan-Mongolian Confederacy also. And I want my Nationalist friends to calmly ponder over these political possibilities, and then see which way the future of Indian autonomy and the possibilities of Indian Nationalism actually lie. Of these three possible combinations, Pan-Europeanism will affect our future least of all, as long as the present British connection continues. Pan-Islamism and Pan-Mongolianism offer, therefore, the greatest menace to India's future and to the realisation of the dream of the Indian Nationalists.

Pan-Europeanism

These three possibilities are before us. Most people, I think, would accept, the first as even a probability. European politics, all the apparent international jealousies and enmities notwithstanding, is distinctly moving towards some sort of a Pan-European combination. Socialism is openly advocating a universal federation of labour, which means a federation of the European *people*, as distinguished from their present rulers—the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. One of the professed aims of this federation of the world's workers is to prevent war. The idea of an organised international strike among the working populations of belligerent countries, with a view to force the hands of those who make these wars, is

already openly discussed in the prominent organs of the Socialist Party both in Great Britain and the Continent of Europe. And it shows that the principle of arbitration will have to be adopted before long for the settlement of all international disputes among the nations of Europe. Treaties of arbitration and peace will, thus, be gradually formed with one another by the European powers ; and this will be the forerunner of a general European Confederacy not only with its authorised International Courts of Arbitration, but, by and by, also with the other organs and instruments of a wide and complex federal relationship. The present century will mark this new development in modern world-politics and work civilisation.*

This Pan-European combination will be a very serious menace to the non-European world. It will be bound to come into serious conflict with both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Mongolianism. If Europe can settle her internal jealousies betimes, she will be able to dominate easily both the Islamic and the Mongolian world. Nothing will prevent in that case the parcelling out of the Moslem lands on the one side, and of China on the other. But that is not very likely. It will take, at least, as long a time for the European chancellories to forget their past jealousies and present rivalries, as it will take for China, now that she has awakened from the sleep of ages, to put her own house in order and organise her leviathan strength to hold her own against all the world. The same thing is likely to happen in the Islamic world also ; and the fall of Turkey in Europe will hasten this combination. It will not be an organised confederacy like that of China and Japan, but a far more dangerous, because more subtle, combination of the

*Even the present European war calls for no reconsideration of this prognosis of the present world-situation ; because, if anything, at the close of this war the need of a Pan-European Confederacy will be brought home to the different European States ruinously weakened by this struggle, more clearly and vitally than it would otherwise likely to be ; and already there is in the English Reviews some discussion of what is called the coming "United States of Europe."

hearts of countless hordes who hold nothing so dear, neither land nor life, as their religion. And the real strength of this Pan-Islamic outburst will come from Egypt and India, where it will be safe from the crushing weight of the Pan-European confederacy. England will not allow her European confederates to interfere with her own domestic affairs; such interference would break up the Confederation at once. She will have to settle this Pan-Islamic problem, so far as it may affect her own dominions, herself.

And it is just here that our safety from this possible Pan-European Combination also lies. Because of the British connection, India will have nothing to fear from any possible combination of the European Powers. The same is also true of Egypt, though perhaps in a lesser degree. Our real menace will come not from Europe but from Asia, not from Pan-Europeanism but from Pan-Islamism and Pan-Mongolianism. These dangers are, however, common, both to India and Egypt and Great Britain. To provide against it, Great Britain will have to find and work out a satisfactory and permanent settlement of the Indian and the Egyptian problem, and we, on our part, will have also to come to some rational compromise with her. British statesmanship must recognise the urgent and absolute need of fully satisfying the demands of Indian and Egyptian Nationalism, and India and Egypt will have to frankly accept the British connection—which is different from British subjection—as a necessary condition of their national life and freedom. To wantonly seek to break up this connection, while it will only hurt Great Britain, may positively kill every chance and possibility of either Indian or Egyptian Nationalism ever realising itself.

Indian Nationalism, in any case, has, I think, really no fear of being permanently opposed or crippled by Great Britain. On the contrary, the British connection can alone offer it effective protection against both the Pan-Islamic and the Pan-Mongolian menace. As long as we had to consider Great Britain alone or any other European Power for the matter of that, while thinking of the future of Indian Nationalism, the

problem was comparatively simple and easy. But now we have to think of China on the one hand, and of the new Pan-Islamic danger on the other. The sixty million of Mahomedans in India, if inspired with Pan-Islamic aspirations, joined to the Islamic principalities and powers that stand both to our West and our North-West, may easily put an end to all our nationalist aspirations, almost at any moment, if the present British connection be severed. The four hundred millions of the Chinese Empire can, not only gain an easy footing in India, but once that footing is gained, they are the only people under the sun who can hold us down by sheer superior physical force. There is no other people who can do this. This awakening of China is, therefore, a very serious menace— in the present condition of our country, without an organised and trained army and a powerful navy of our own—to the maintenance of any isolated, though sovereign, independence of the Indian people. Even if we are able to gain it, we shall never be able to keep it, in the face of this Pan-Islamic and Pan-Mongolian menace. And when one considers these terrible possibilities of the world-situation as it is slowly evolving before one's eyes, one is forced to recognise the absolute need of keeping up the British connection in the interest of Indian Nationalism itself, for the very simple and sufficient reason that there is absolutely much greater chance of this Nationalism fully realising itself with rather than without this connection.

India and Britain : Community of Interests

In fact as it is to the interest of Indian Nationalism to seek to perpetuate the British connection, so it is equally to the interest of British Imperialism itself to help and foster the spirit of Nationalism both in India and in Egypt, and to co-ordinate these great forces with those of Great Britain and her Dominions. For it should be clearly realised that the real strength of this new Pan-Islamic idea comes not half so much, if it comes at all, from its religious devotion as from the sense of the political servitude of Egyptian and Indian Mahomedans and of the political impotence of the so-called independent Moslem States. Indeed, the backbone of Pan-Islamism is not

in Persia or Afghanistan, much less in Algeria or Abyssinia, but in India and Egypt. This sentiment is the strongest among Egyptian and Indian Moslems. And if the legitimate aspirations of these two sections of the Mahomedan world, to take their due share in present-day world-politics, can be reasonably satisfied within the British Empire, the Pan-Islamic menace may be reduced almost to a vanishing point. In her own interest, therefore, Great Britain will have, before long, to come to terms with Egyptian Nationalism on the one side, and cure the conceit of separate political interests and superior political claims of the Indian Mahomedans on the other, and lead the Indian Moslems to recognise that their future is absolutely bound up with that of the larger and composite Indian Nation. This is the only remedy against the Pan-Islamic menace so far as it affects Great Britain; and it affects Great Britain more seriously and intimately than any other European Power. Nationalism, both in India and Egypt, is the only antidote against Pan-Islamism so far as the British Empire is concerned. Lord Curzon did not understand it. Lord Minto could not realise it. But the far-sighted statesmanship of Lord Hardinge has clearly seized, it seems to me, this fundamental fact. And his lordship's policy has been largely shaped by a recognition of it. Nationalism is also the only protection of Great Britain's interests in India against any possible menace from China. The moment British policy in India makes its peace with the ideals and aspirations of the Indian Nationalists, the Chinese menace too will be reduced to a vanishing point. With the people of India at her back, Great Britain can defy the whole world; without their support she will be at the mercy of the weakest of her enemies. And to secure this support, British policy will have to make room for the fullest realisation of our nationalist ideal. Lord Hardinge understands it. The authorities at White Hall are also more or less conscious of it. The King's visit proves it. The repeal of the Partition of Bengal confirms it. This is the only reasonable meaning and interpretation of Lord Hardinge's memorable speech of August 1911. And in view of all this, it seems to me an act of suicidal folly on the part of anyone

who really cares for the future of Indian Nationalism, even as a mere political ideal, to keep up the old attitude of bitter and uncompromising opposition to the Government.

In fact any bitter and unreasonable antagonism to the British connection will, it seems to me, be the greatest menace, under existing conditions, to our political future. For, the gradual evolution of some sort of self-rule in India is far more likely with the continuance of the British connection than without it. In the first place, we must not forget the fact that the present British rule in India, however autocratic and irresponsible it may just now be, is really based, not upon the superior physical strength of the rulers, but upon the sufferance of the ruled. The people of India have so far acquiesced in this rule, and it is therefore that it is with us. This fact is our greatest strength. It is our greatest strength, because it makes the problem of national autonomy in British India an essentially psychological problem. We wish to be ruled by England ; therefore England rules us so easily. This is the secret of the government of three hundred millions of people by about one hundred thousand Britishers, civil and military, officers and men, all told. How to maintain this quiet acquiescence of the people to their rule, has been the one ever-present thought in the minds of British statesmen. British statesmanship has, therefore, been always anxious at least to apparently reconcile British rule to the wishes and sentiments of the people. It was seen immediately after the Mutiny, in the spirit and wording of the Queen's Proclamation. It was seen during the Administration of Lord Ripon, who, coming after Lord Lytton who had somewhat estranged and irritated the educated middle classes, took every means in his power to rally them around his Government. We have seen it, more recently, in the "Reforms" of Lord Morley ; and finally, in the repeal of the Bengal Partition. Irresponsible scribes may talk of the sword. Unimaginative administrators may prescribe repression. We are pretty familiar with all this folly. But responsible statesmen know that India was not won by the sword, is not ruled by the sword, and can never be

kept by the sword. The idea is physically preposterous. The very talk of it only betrays the antics of the panic-struck bully. And it is upon the physical preposterousness of this idea, that our faith in the absolute certainty of an orderly, a peaceful, and evolutionary expansion of popular political freedom in India, is based. The imperious necessity which inspired the Queen's Proclamation in 1858 ; which, subsequently, led to the formulation of Lord Ripon's scheme of so called Local Self-Government ; which brought about the reform and expansion of Indian Legislatures, by Lord Cross's India Councils Act ; which pushed Sir K. G. Gupta into the Secretary of States' Council and Mr. S. P. Sinha into the Executive Council of the Viceroy ; which promoted Lord Morley's "Reforms" and led to the Repeal of the Bengal Partition—the imperious need which helped to bring about all these, will gradually bring about a real reconciliation between Indian Nationalism and British Imperialism. It will be bound to lead to a Federation of the British Empire, in which India and Egypt shall be equal co-partners with Great Britain and Ireland and the British Dominions overseas—a Federation which will secure to all these Federated States absolute freedom of self-rule and self-evolution, without breaking up their federal relation of co-ordination and co-operation with the empire as a whole on the one side, and with its other parts on the other. This Imperial Federation is Britain's imperious necessity. It should be our considered ideal. Great Britain, to maintain her own position as a great world-empire, must do everything in her power to keep India to herself. And the only way to do it is to reconcile her own interests with those of the Indian people. India's desire for self-rule will have to be satisfied. And the only reconciliation between England and India is possible in a scheme of real Imperial Federation. For the freedom of the parts in the unity of the whole, is of the very essence of the Federal idea. Great Britain in her own large self-interest will have to gradually work up this Federation. India, in her own interest, to secure her own national autonomy, shall have equally to work for this Federation. This way lies her only safety from any possible complications of either Pan Islamism.

or Pan-Mongolianism. This is what every Indian Nationalist must clearly realise. Nationalism in India has no other future before it. In its own interest, Indian Nationalism must seek to keep up the British connection. Ideally, Federalism is a higher thing than Nationalism. Practically, federations do not grow to order, but gradually evolve out of the existing relations of different peoples. Why seek federation with Britain, and not with China or Japan?—is, therefore, a foolish question. We cannot seek federation with China or Japan for the simple reason that there is, at present, no basis for it. There are no historical conditions or possibilities that force the new relation upon both India and China or India and Japan. In the next place, there can be no federation between an independent and sovereign State on the one side and a dependency of another State on the other. But the federal relation can naturally and easily be worked up between a Sovereign State and its Colonies and Dependencies. In fact, in our time this is the only way to preserve the integrity of extensive world-empires. And these are the reasons that compel us to seek Federation with Great Britain instead of with China, Japan, or any other country. This is the easiest and the most reasonable thing for us to do, with a view to realise the highest Nationalist Ideal. And I strongly deprecate the spirit of bitter antagonism to the British connection which seems to have obsessed some of our people, because it threatens to seriously hinder this natural evolution. It is this bitterness which lends silent support to the propaganda of political violence in the country. These anarchial propaganda finds excuse for bureaucratic repressions. These repressions, in their turn, increase and deepen popular discontent, and make active revolutionaries of those, especially among the youthful and the most impressionable section of the community, who had before been only indifferent spectators of this degrading conflict. This propaganda of crime and this policy of repression, which, the very secrecy of the criminal propaganda forces to be more or less indiscriminate in its application—these two acting and reacting upon each other, are continually increasing this spirit of bitterness in the community. And no Indian Nationalist, who has any appreciation

either of the true Nationalist Ideal or of the fearful possibilities of the present world-situation, can afford to allow this bitterness to grow in the country. For unless we are able to induce a more sober and reasonable attitude in our people, any outside enemy of England, either Mongol or Moslem, may take advantage of this growing unrest and simultaneously sever Britain's connection with India and kill India's hope of national autonomy. To combat the unreasonable excesses of the present unrest in India is, therefore, the common duty of the Indian Government and the Indian Nationalist.

Unfortunately, however, there has so far been very little real co-operation between the Government and the leaders of the people in a matter of such vital moment to both. There is as yet very little basis of it. The very first condition of this co-operation is a frank and unreserved acceptance by the Government of the Ideal of an Imperial Federation in which India shall be a free and equal partner with Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Colonies. We know that the actual working out of this ideal will take considerable time. Both parties will have to be educated in the idea, and trained by practice for the due and efficient discharge of the ultimate federal functions. We do not demand an immediate formation of a Federal Constitution. It would be foolish to desire it. But we may well demand an assurance from the responsible Ministers of King George that they frankly accept this as the ultimate goal of the Imperial Policy of Great Britain. Lord Hardinge suggested it in his Despatch. But Lord Crewe repudiated it in Parliament. This was a very unwise thing to do. Of course, the fate of nations is not determined by royal pledges and promises, or by the despatches and pronouncements of particular statesmen or administrators. Public policies, though enunciated by politicians and administrators, are really formed by actual pressure of historic or economic situations. I set considerable value upon Lord Hardinge's Despatch because I see at the back of it a clear consciousness of the world-situation as it is slowly but unmistakably evolving before us. The value of that Despatch lies in the fact that it takes

silent note of the rejuvenescence of China, the birth of Pan-Islam, the needs of a closer and formal union between Great Britain and the British Colonies, and the quickening of a new life in India itself and the consequent presence among us of the "Unrest" which represents really the "growing-pains" of our teeming multitudes. The statesmanly policy shadowed in Lord Hardinge's Despatch has grown out of a sober consideration of all these various forces. His lordship honestly believes that his policy will be for the good of India. But if these forces disappear altogether from the present Indian and world-situation, his policy will also lose inevitably its reality. Lord Hardinge's Despatch may then go the way of the earlier documents of the British Government concerning the ideals or the methods of their Indian Administration; though it will not impugn his lordship's sincerity, or disprove his good-will towards India. Public policies are not the result of personal feelings, but are controlled by inexorable historic needs. There is, however, very little chance of these needs disappearing from modern world-politics altogether. And because of the reasonable certainty of these various forces persisting for many years to come, that I think, a frank and unreserved acceptance of the Federal Ideal for India also, on the same lines in which it is being gradually accepted for the Overseas Dominions of Great Britain, will have a very healthy effect upon the Indian mind, and clear the ground for that mutual confidence and co-operation between the Government and the people without which the present situation can never be saved. It seems to me that Lord Hardinge is not unwilling to declare this ideal and thus rally the sober and saner Nationalist sentiments in the country around his Indian policy. But this difficulty is with his official superiors on the one side, and with his own countrymen in India on the other. Lord Morley is still the force behind the India Office in London; and he is a child of the middle nineteenth century. His lordship's social and political philosophy moves still in the grooves of the old and attenuated British Liberalism of Gladstone and Bright. His lordship has no acquaintance with our culture and character, except what he has made through books written by men who

themselves understood us less. He has, therefore, no appreciation of the Indian Problem. Lord Crewe's last word is that the future of India is on the knees of the gods and we must leave it there, and rest content with doing the day's work during the day. It is not possible for such lazy and improvident statesmanship to offer any lasting solution of so complex and far-reaching a problem as that which faces the Government of India to-day. With the possible exception of Lord Haldane, I doubt if there is any prominent Minister in England now, who understands or appreciates the significance of Lord Hardinge's Indian policy. There is much less understanding of it in India, among those upon whom every Vic roy has, of necessity, to depend for the due execution of his ideas. They do not seem to understand what Lord Hardinge's policy means both to their own country and to India. In fact, such statesmanly grasp of complex political issues are not found in the permanent officials in any country. They spend their lives working out the details of the Administration which they serve; and have neither the time nor the training to recognise large principles or understand broad and far-reaching policies. In other countries, permanent officials are carefully kept in their places, and are not permitted to meddle with public policy or play at state-craft. The Indian Civil Service is, perhaps, the only body under the sun, which claims this right and enjoys this privilege to a very appreciable extent. There are, undoubtedly, men of very superior intellectual calibre among Indian civilians, who have got the making not only of the successful administrator but even of the capable statesman in them. But their number is, naturally, very small; while the traditions of the service to which they belong, and the loyalty to their class which, almost from the birth of this service, has been demanded of every Indian Civilian as a great public virtue, make it very difficult for even these few men to go out of the old grooves of thinking, and take any broad and original view of the growing and changing complexities of the situation in India. The social atmosphere in which they live is also unfavourable to the growth of high statesmanly qualities in them. And it is they to whom the Indian Viceroy, coming

to rule a country of which he had little or no previous experience, has necessarily to look for help and guidance. The Viceroy comes for five years and goes away just when, perhaps, he begins to feel his ground a little; while these permanent officials remain to impart their knowledge and their prejudices both, to the new ruler. Even Viceroys are men, and have the common weakness of all conscientious men not to go against larger experience and expert counsel. Lord Hardinge's first difficulty is that neither the British Ministry nor the Indian Civil Service, as a body, have a clear grasp of the Indian situation.

The Congress Ideal : Confusion of Thought

On the other hand, his lordship has, I am afraid, so far received but little help from those who are accepted as leaders of Indian opinion, in this matter. The Indian National Congress, which has still the ear of the British bourgeoisie, as the spokesman of educated India, has done so far practically nothing to clarify public opinion in these matters. Frankly speaking, the Congress has not been renowned for very clear thinking. With very rare exceptions, the pronouncements of the Congress have been marked more by perfunctory repetitions of the catch phrases of English politicians than by any original analysis of Indian life and thought or any direct knowledge of Indian conditions. The arguments of the Congress have been inspired by the political philosophy of European Democracy and have been based almost exclusively upon the Blue-Books of the Indian Government. The Congress, during the last twenty-seven years of its life, has not collected, I am afraid, one scrap of original information, regarding either the economic condition of the people or how their life and evolution are affected by the current methods of British Administration of the country. The Congress platform has only been resonant all these years either with official quotations or patriotic declamations. The inevitable result has, therefore, been only increased antagonism to the policy and measures of the Government, without any clear thinking of the actualities of our situation or any definite policy or programme of our own.

It is, therefore, that there has, so far, been but little real appreciation of Lord Hardinge's Indian policy in Congress circles. The only thing that the Congress leaders seem to have recognised in this policy is its sympathy and leniency. They are thankful to Lord Hardinge for the Repeal of the Partition, and the slight relaxation of the rigours of the Minto *regime*. In a vague way, some of them have recognised the value of the policy of "Provincial Autonomy" enunciated in his lordship's Despatch. But few Congress leaders have given so far any convincing proof of their appreciation of the far-seeing statesmanship of that memorable public document. On the contrary, the very commendation of the Congress-leaders of Lord Hardinge's Despatch, as a proof of the acceptance of the ideal of Self-Government by the Government, as the regulating principle of British Administration in India, has lent support to the opponents of his lordship's policy, both in India and England. The Anglo-Indian Press, especially, in Bengal, smarting under a sense of wrong which the removal of the Capital from Calcutta inflicted on them, condemned the Despatch as offering a false and dangerous ideal to the Indian politician. The British Press, and even responsible Ministers of State in England, found it easy to openly repudiate the interpretation that India put on Lord Hardinge's Despatch, because of the utter impossibility of the realisation of the declared ideal of the Congress, without practically sacrificing every British interest in India. This so-called Colonial-ideal, which forms the very first article of the Congress-creed, is a false ideal for India. Either we understand its falsehood, and use it only as a cover for something more substantial and fundamental, which we have not the courage to proclaim: or we do not know and understand what the Colonial relation implies and actually is, and have set it up simply to save the face of the Congress, which could not, for obvious considerations, accept the more inspiring cry of Swaraj. In either case, this so-called Congress ideal stands self-condemned. The Colonial relation is based upon racial unity. The self-governing Colonies are attached to Great Britain by pure sentimentalities in some cases, and by considerations of pure self-

interest in others. So long Great Britain offered protection to the Colonies by her naval and military resources. So long the Colonies needed also very little actual protection from the Mother-Country. But still, the moral support was there, and that was all that the Colonies required in the past. But recent developments in world-politics have been creating new and real needs of self-protection for the British Colonies. Australia stands in mortal fear of Japan and China ; while the growing naval strength of the Continental Powers has created nervousness in all the British Colonies, that are exposed to the sea, and have no navy of their own to protect their extensive sea boards, which, in the event of a Continental War, will be at the mercy of Great Britain's enemies. And with this new consciousness of danger, there is also a corresponding anxiety in all the Colonies to build Dreadnaughts and contribute to the Naval strength of the Empire. These developments will demand, by-and-by, the building up of a formal Constitution for the British Empire, the different members of which hang together very loosely now, by mere sentimentalities. And if the present loose relation cannot possibly subsist for long between Great Britain and her Colonies, how can it be set up as a permanent ideal of her relation with a Dependency like that of India ? We have nothing in common with Great Britain, neither race, nor religion nor language, nor literature, nor tradition, nor history. The things that inspire British patriotism, and evoke the devotion of the British Colonials to the British Empire, have no appeal for us. The British Colonies are, to all intents and purposes, so many sovereign States, that have, in their own self-interest, hitherto imposed certain limitations, more or less formal, upon themselves in return for the real prestige and the protection which the British connection gives them. Neither this prestige nor this protection will be a condition of the political existence of a self governing India ; and, consequently, Colonial self-government cannot mean the same thing in India, as it means in Australia, or Canada, or even in South Africa. Anglo-Indian publicists and British statesmen have every force of logic and statesmanship on their side, when they condemn this

Congress-ideal of Colonial self-government as unreal, and dangerous to their interest in India. To interpret Lord Hardinge's ideal as shadowed in his Despatch of August 1911, as the same as this Congress-ideal of self-government, is to convict his lordship either of rank folly or deliberate dishonesty. And Lord Crewe repudiated only this foolish interpretation of that Despatch. But neither Lord Crewe, nor any other intelligent politician, with any perception of the Indian situation on the one hand, and the slowly evolving world-situation on the other, can so loftily dispose of the interpretation that Indian Nationalists have put upon Lord Hardinge's Despatch. The ultimate political ideal for India can never be this so-called Colonial-ideal. It should not be, for the reasons indicated above, that of isolated, sovereign, independence. The continuance of the British connection is a necessity, both ideally and practically, for the fullest fulfilment of the ideal of Indian Nationalism. It is a great and imperious a necessity for our self fulfilment under existing conditions, as national autonomy itself. And in a true and real federation of the different members of the Association, now known as the British Empire, there is the only possible ground of reconciliation between these two imperious needs of Indian Nationalism. A federal constitution, with well-defined rights and obligations of the Federated States, must first of all be formed, before any real and substantial measures of self-government can be secured by India "within the Empire." The British Empire is visibly evolving towards this federal type. The final passage of the Irish Home Rule Bill will be the first step of a new reconstruction of the United Kingdom, upon a federal basis. Home Rule in Wales and Scotland, each with a local Parliament of its own and an Executive subject to the authority of that Parliament, will soon follow the establishment of Home Rule in Ireland. And this will lead to a reconstitution of the British Parliament upon a federal basis, preceded, of course, by the establishment of a local Parliament and a local Government for the English countries also. All these developments will come about within the life-time of a generation. And when the time comes for the reconstitution

of the British Parliament upon a federal basis, to meet the needs of the new developments in the United Kingdom, the British Colonies also will put in their demand for their proper place in the Imperial Parliament. Even the blind may see all this. And then will come the real crisis in England's relations with India. Will India be left out of this Federation? *Can* she be left out? Will it be possible, will it be safe, to leave her in her present "dependent" position, to be lorded over not only by the Britishers, but also by *parvenu* Colonials? There are many things which India may suffer, for "auld lang syne" —from Englishmen; it is inconceivable that she will suffer the same things from the Australian or the Boer. India *must* be given an equal place with the others, in the coming Federation of the British Empire. This *must* will admit of no excuse or apology. Lord Hardinge clearly foresees it. And his scheme of Provincial Autonomy is the first step towards the training of India for this coming Federalism. His lordship knows that Provincial Autonomy can never be reconciled with Imperial Autocracy. The growth of Provincial Autonomy will inevitably develop National Autonomy; which will be bound to seek and find organised expression in a truly Federal Government for All-India. This is the inner meaning of the transfer of the Capital from Calcutta to Delhi. This is a significance of the constitution of a new Province subject to the direct control of the Imperial Government, like that of the District of Columbia in which Washington is situated, in the United States of America. His lordship is not a reckless rhetorician. All his life has been spent in the silent atmosphere of modern diplomacy. His lordship has been trained to weigh every word that he uses before uttering it. He could not have, possibly, referred to Washington, and Sydney and Toronto, in his Despatch, while discussing the question of the transfer of the Capital from Calcutta, without a full sense of their significance. His lordship knows that he has to deal here with an educated community who knows the value of these words. His lordship would not use words that would simply create a false enthusiasm in the public mind. His reference to Washington, Toronto, and Sydney is deliberate and carefully-

considered. His pronouncement concerning Provincial Autonomy is equally deliberate and carefully thought out. And all these indicate that this lordship wants to lay down a policy for the Government of India which will gradually evolve something like a United States of India in the country, and this, in turn, will form the basis of a real Federation between India and Great Britain and Ireland and the British Colonies. This is how we read Lord Hardinge's Despatch. This is the only rational interpretation of the policy which it indicates. Its supreme value lies in the fact that it offers a true synthesis of the Indian political situation, and provides a basis of permanent reconciliation between Indian Nationalism and British Imperialism. Our people should clearly understand and frankly recognise it. British statesmen in England and British Administrators here should seize the inwardness of this far-seeing statesmanship and loyally support it. Anglo-Indian publicists should ponder over it, and accept it in their own interest. If all parties are once agreed upon this policy, mutual co-operation for fighting the criminal excesses of the present unrest will not be difficult. This is the only basis of any such co-operation. There is none other.

II*

THE CONGRESS : A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

For a long time the claim the Congress to be styled a national movement was strenuously, if not quite seriously, disputed by its critics. Some derisively called it a 'Bengalee Congress,' although the Bengalees had clearly no more hand in it, either in its inception or in its development, than the Parsis, the Maharattas, or the Madrasis, and the Bengalees would have been simply proud to accept the doubtful compliment paid to them if only it were the barest truth; others, professing to be a little more catholic, dubbed it as a "Hindu Congress" as if the Hindus were altogether a negligible factor in the country and

*From Ambika Charan Mazumdar : *Indian National Evolution*, Chapters XIII and XIV.

that such a disqualification was sufficient for its disparagement in the estimation of the public and to discredit its weight and importance with the authorities : while the more adroit among these critics denounced it as an organization of the "Educated Minority" in the country, as though it were an established fact, that the recognized political associations in all other civilized countries were, as a rule, composed of their illiterate majority and that where such an element failed an organization, however, strong in its moral, intellectual or material equipment, must stand forfeited of all claims to be recognized as a national institution. The truth, however, seems to be, that early exiled from the healthy public life of their own native land, trained in all the ways of a dominant race in a subject country and nurtured in the traditionary legends of their racial superiority, the Anglo-Indian community naturally received a rude shock at the first appearance of the new spirit and taxed all the resources of their ingenuity to nip it in the bud.

These captious critics, to whom history apparently furnished no logic of facts, had the catching expression of "microscopic minority" coined for them by a high authority, while they themselves were not slow to invent a few more smart phrases to discredit the movement in this country and prejudice public opinion in England. No abuse was deemed too strong and no criticism too severe for the condemnation of the new movement whose aims and objects were regarded not only as a threatened invasion of their prescriptive rights and privileges rendered indefeasible by long enjoyment, but also as a serious disturbance of the established order of things permanently sanctioned by custom, usage and tradition of the country. "Dreaming idealists," "impotent sedition-mongers," "self-constituted delegates," "disappointed place-seekers," "pretentious body of irresponsible agitators," and many other elegant phrases of the same description were among the weapons offensive and defensive forged by these critics to dispose of the members of the Congress and to discredit the movement.

But if the movement was really as nothing, it is rather difficult to appreciate why so much powder and shot were simply wasted for destroying such a tiny gnat and why such severe attention was paid to a handful of political somnambulists. It was, however, not found possible to sustain these reckless charges for a long time, as quite a different verdict was pronounced at an early stage both here as well as in England establishing the claim of the Congress to represent the enlightened views of the Indian public without distinction of caste or creed, colour or race. It may be perfectly true, that all the communities in the country have not equally distinguished themselves on the Congress platform ; but it can hardly be denied that the better minds of every community have been throughout in perfect agreement with its aims and objects and have never dissented from its programme.

It has already been pointed out, that so far back as 1890, when the Congress was but five years old, the Government of Lord Lansdowne recognised that the Congress was regarded as representing the advanced Liberal Party in India as distinguished from the powerful body of conservative opinion ruling the country. Since then Lord Morley, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Sir William Hunter, Sir Charles Dilke, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Herbert (now Lord) Gladstone, Sir Richard Garth and many other distinguished and responsible authorities have from time to time admitted the character of the Congress as a national assembly fairly representative of the Indian people. Speaking in 1890 Sir Charles Dilke said :

“Argument upon the matter is to be desired, but not invectives, and there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Great Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, who do it in reasonable and cautious form and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way.”

There is the testimony of Mr. Herbert Gladstone who said that :

“The national movement in India, which has taken a purely constitutional and loyal form and which expresses through the Congress the legitimate hopes and requirements of the people, is one with which I sincerely sympathise. I should consider it a high honour in however small a degree to be associated with it.”

Sir William Hunter, than whom there is hardly a more experienced Indian authority, observed :

“The Indian National Congress is essentially the child of British rule, the product of our schools and universities. We had created and fostered the aspirations which animated the Congress, and it would be both childish and unwise to refuse now to those aspirations both our sympathy and respectful consideration.”

Lord Morley, speaking from his place in the House of Commons as the responsible minister for India, said :

“I do not say that I agree with all that the Congress desires ; but speaking broadly of what I conceive to be at the bottom of the Congress I do not see why any one who takes a cool and steady view of Indian Government should be frightened.”

The Right Hon. Sir Richard Garth, *Kt.*, Chief Justice of Bengal, writing in 1895, said :

“It seems to me that so far from being in any way objectionable, the Congress affords an open, honest and loyal means of making the views and wishes of the most intelligent section of the Indian people known to the Government.”

And, above all, His Imperial Majesty George V, was himself pleased to accord his recognition to the Congress by accepting its message of welcome and thanking it for its loyal devotion to the Throne on the occasion of his auspicious visit to India in 1911. It seems unnecessary to multiply further evidence in support of the official as well as the popular verdict in

favour of the claim and character of the Congress as a representative institution. It may simply be added for the satisfaction of those who may still continue to be at heart dissatisfied with that verdict, on the ostensible ground of the mass of the population not being in evidence on the Congress platform, that the "microscopic minority" in every country, whether in the East or in the West, have always represented the telescopic majority, and that nowhere have the inarticulate mass of a people spoken except through the mouth of the educated few. Then as regards the old, orthodox and favourite argument of the Anglo Indian community based upon the assumed differences between the classes and the masses it were well to remember, that even in the seventies of the century that has just closed over us John Bright had to complain that the Parliament of Great Britain was not after all a "transparent mirror of public opinion" and that the Labour party in that Parliament representing the masses of England is only of very recent growth and as yet furnishes but a wholly inadequate representation of its immense working population.

It may be no mere disputatious argument to advance, that if the Mother of Parliaments, which in its origin was no more than an assembly of a handful of "wise men," and which even in its later developments was composed of a hereditary aristocracy and a few hundred chosen representatives drawn only from the ranks of advanced enlightened communities could have constitutionally governed for centuries the destinies of the greatest empire in the world, it would hardly be decent to put forward any pretext based upon a question of class interest to dispute the representative character of an advisory political organization without any legal origin or statutory constitution. Nobody contends that the Congress is a "transparent mirror of public opinion" in India; but if it is not so transparent as the Parliament of Great Britain, or the Chamber of the French Republic, is it really very much more opaque than the Duma of Russia, even the Reichstag of Germany, as far as reflection of public opinion is concerned? If there has been no

objection to the National League representing the cause of Ireland for more than half-a-century, with one of its four divisions in open arms against it, the title of the Indian National Congress, with only one of its many communities partially standing aside as neutral and passively watching the fight, may not be deemed so extravagant as to form a point in a serious discussion on such general issues as are involved in this great movement. The Congress is not even thirty years old, and if within this short period it has established its claim to be the mouthpiece of the teeming millions of India even in some respects and has never done anything to forfeit their tacit confidence, then nobody need fairly grudge its just and legitimate aspiration to be called a National Assembly.

It is certainly not the essential condition of a national institution that every member of even every community of the nation should be actively associated with it ; for if it were so, even the most thoroughly representative of Parliaments would cease to be a national institution. An institution is quite national if it possesses in the main a representative character, embodies the national spirit and is guided by aims and objects of national advancement. It may sometimes fail to be a transparent mirror of public opinion particularly where such opinion is in such a nebulous condition as to be unable to cast a distinct reflection even on the most powerful camera ; but it is always expected faithfully to reflect an interest which once it is presented in proper shade and light, at once catches the attention of public and attracts the national sympathies and energies towards its attainment. In this way national organizations have everywhere preceded national awakening in its widest sense, and sometimes a single individual gifted with extraordinary vision has revolutionized an entire national life.

Nations are not born but made, and the highest evolution of national, like individual, life is attained through a slow and laborious process of organized efforts. Judged by the above test the claim of Congress to be recognized as a national assembly could hardly be disputed by any but the most

perverse critics. If Mr. Disraeli, Lord Hartington, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour and other millionaires could represent the labouring classes of England, because a percentage of them were able to exercise their forced votes in their favour, then surely men like Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjee, Pherozechah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjee, Rash Behary Ghose, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Budruddin Tyabjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Abdul Rasul, Ananda Charlu, Krishnaswami Iyer, Sirdar Dayal Singh, Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malviya, Muzur-ul-Haque, Hasan Imam and many others, men all born of the people, might well have been depended on to voice forth more faithfully the wants and wishes of the voiceless millions of India than the editors of the *Pioneer*, the *Civil and Military Gazette*, the *Englishman*, the *Statesman* and other birds of passage of nearly the same feather, whatever their pretensions may be in the position which they occupy in the administration of the country.

Among the Indians themselves the Parsis as a community were no doubt for a short time wavering in their attitude ; but the great personality of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and the firm attitude of men like Sir Pherozechah Mehta and Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha settled the question, and that important community bodily cast in their lot with the national movement. The Eurasian community, having its stronghold in Madras, did not fail to realise its true position during the Albert Bill controversy and having wisely stood aloof, at least in the Southern Presidency, from that controversy it heartily joined the new movement under the leadership of Messrs. W.S. White, and W.S. Gantz ; while Captain Banon from the Punjab, Mr. Howard, the President of the Anglo Indian and Eurasian-Association at Allahabad, Captain Hearsay from Dehra-Dun, Mr. Crowley of the firm of Messrs. Crowley & Co., and Mr. George Yule from Bengal with many other Europeans and Eurasians of note from time to time joined and strengthened the rank and file of the organisation.

An artificial and mischievous manoeuvre was engineered by a section of the Anglo-Indian Press which with the active

support of a shortsighted bureaucracy doted on the mean policy of *Divide-et-impera* and captured the great but backward Mahomedan community who were taught the unworthy tactics of lying in wait for the other communities to draw the chestnuts out of the fire, so that they might comfortably mounce them without burning their fingers in the fire of official displeasure. At the first Congress in 1885 Mr. Rahimtullah Sayani was the only Mahomedan present, and the Anglo-Indian Press of the time complacently remarked that even he did not take an active part in its deliberations. But it would appear from the subsequent presidential addresses of both Mr. Budruddin Tyabji and Mr. Rahimtullah Sayani that they were heart and soul with the movement from the very beginning. In the Second Congress the number of Mussalman Delegates was 33, while at Madras in 1887 their number rose to 81. At the fourth Congress at Allahabad the Mahomedan Delegates numbered 221 out of a total of 1,248 Delegates. Thus the interest of that great community in the national movement, in spite of the siren song of the Anglo-Indian Press, was steadily and rapidly increasing. But since the Allahabad Congress, when the attitude of the authorities became more pronounced, the Mahomedans began to secede, and their "approved loyalty," which some silly persons on the other side irreverently called "oily", was turned into a "valuable asset" by certain designing people.

It is no doubt true that in the fifth session of the Congress held at Bombay the number, though not the percentage, of Mahomedan Delegates rose higher than at the preceding session at Allahabad. There were 254 Mahomedans out of a total of 1,889 Delegates. But it should be remembered that it was a historic session commonly known as the "Bradlaugh Congress" which, as has been already pointed out, attracted an unusually large number of people, including even officials in secret to see and hear the great champion of democracy, and that a large majority of these Mahomedan Delegates attended from the Bombay Presidency where the Mahomedan community, though numerically smaller, has been until very

recently ever more progressive than in the rest of India. It is however worthy of notice that two of the Mahomedan Delegates at this very Congress, one hailing from the Punjab and the other from the United Provinces made no secret of their racial opposition to the Congress proposal as regards the reform of the Legislative Councils. Besides, the remarkable dearth of Mahomedan Delegates at all subsequent sessions of the Congress, until the last sessions held at Karachi, conclusively proved that the official reporter of 1889 was quite premature in his forecast of growing Mahomedan interest in the national movement.

It is doubtless true that advanced Mussalmans like Mr. Abdul Rasul in Bengal and Mr. Comuruddin Tyabji in Bombay not to speak of stalwarts like Messrs. Budruddin Tyabji and Rahimtullah Sayani, never swerved from their allegiance to the national cause ; but the bulk of the Moslem community were led astray and successfully kept back for a long time from joining the movement. Several unfortunate incidents also contributed towards widening the breach between the two main communities in the country, while their separation from a common platform served not a little to make the relation between them more and more strained under the continuous fanning of the Anglo Indian community who scarcely made any secret of their policy of playing one against the other. But the game has happily been almost played out. The intelligent Islamic community, with the rapid growth of education, are gradually awaking to a consciousness of the ignominious position into which they have been led and are steadily pressing forward to take their legitimate place by the side of the other communities, fighting shoulder to shoulder for the attainment of their common destiny.

The Moslem League, whatever the object of its founders and the attitude of some of its early members may have been, has, in the dispensation of an inscrutable providence, done for the Mahomedans what the Congress had done much earlier for the other community in the country. It has slowly imbued them with the broad vision of national interests and inoculated

them with ideas of common rights and responsibilities, what at the last Session of the League they openly embraced the common political faith so long preached by the Congress. If men like Mazur-ul-Haque, Hassan Imam, Wazir Hussain, Ibrahim Rohimutullah, Jinnah, Mahomedali and last but not least the present Agha Khan could have appeared in the Eighties and joined hands with Messrs. Budruddin Tyabji, Rahimatullah Sayani and Abdul Rasul the history of the Indian National Congress might now have been written in an altogether different style. But it must be said to credit of the Mahomedan community, that although for a long time they kept themselves aloof from the Congress, they never could be persuaded to start any active movement to counteract its progress. The fictitious counter-agitation was kept up only by the selfish Anglo-Indian press at the instance of a narrow and nervous bureaucracy in the ostensible name of the Mahomedan community, and there is sufficient reason to believe the intelligent Mahomedans were not wanting who saw through the bluff and thoroughly understood in whose interest the agitation was really engineered, though from prudential considerations they were unable openly to denounce it.

The great sage of Aligarh, who during his lifetime was the recognized leader of the community, did not fail frankly to acknowledge that the Hindus and the Mussalmans in India "were like the two eyes of a fair maiden" and that "it was impossible to injure the one without affecting the other," and, he might well have added, without disfiguring the maiden altogether. It is worthy of remark, that the Congress from an early stage took care to safeguard the interests of all minorities and with a view to remove all possible misapprehension from the minds of the Mussalmans distinctly provided, that when any community in the Congress being in the minority should appear to be even nearly unanimous in opposing any motion, such motion shall be dropped. Besides, it is an incontrovertible fact that the Congress has up to this time never passed a single resolution advocating the interests of any particular community, or of the classes against those of the masses. On

the contrary, it has throughout recognized that the future destiny of the country largely, if not solely, depended upon the harmonious co-operation of all the communities and the amelioration of the condition of its huge working and agricultural population, and has as such persistently urged for educational facilities for the backward communities in the country. Education is the only leaven that can leaven the whole lump, and the Congress has never failed to realize that as education advances the apparently heterogeneous elements in the country are bound to coalesce and solidify into a homogeneous mass.

In the meantime, however, in the midst of the perennial controversy that raged between a jealous bureaucracy and distrustful public and in spite of the opposition, calumny and misrepresentation which never ceased to dog its footsteps, the movement went on gaining strength both in volume and intensity every year. In its majestic march it swept away all obstacles presented by differences of creed and caste, of language as well as of customs, habits, and manners, and the process of unification went on apace rounding off those local and racial angularities which stood in its course and bearing down those treacherous shoals and bars which the opposition fondly hoped would wreck it one day. It has passed through many trials and tribulations and tided over many dangers and difficulties which lay in its way. Many were the "candid friends" who in season and out of season raised their warning voice against what they deemed its "mad career"; but the collective wisdom of a renovated people under the guidance of a higher inspiration has gone on working in the sacred cause with stout heart and sincere devotion. The acuteness of the opposition has now nearly died out; while with the falsification of the ominous prophecies of the "birds of evil presage" their shrieks are heard growing fainter and fainter as the day of the inevitable seems to be approaching. It is no less an authority than Sir William Hunter who has borne his ungrudging testimony to the fact that "the Indian National Congress has outlived the early period of misrepresentation; it has shewn that it belongs to no single section of the population"; while it may be fairly remarked

that Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians, all have been proud of the honour of occupying the presidential chair of the Congress as the highest distinction in the gift of the country and its people.

It is however still argued, that although the Congress may be a national assembly it can never hope to attain its chimerical object in view—the establishment of an Indian nationality ; for there are said to be four essential conditions for the constitution of a nation, in that there must be a common race, common government, common tongue and a common religion, and that India being a congeries of people lacking in all these essential elements can never hope to evolve a nationality out of a Babel of confusion into which she has been hopelessly plunged by centuries of revolutions and changes unparalleled in the history of the world. These are all plausible arguments no doubt ; but not one of them will probably stand the test of careful examination in the light of modern political evolution of the world. The race question, strictly speaking, is more or less of a larger or smaller formula of ethnological classification. The modern Indians are broadly divided into two races, the Hindus and Mussalmans, the former having larger and sharper sub divisions than the latter ; but both descended from a common *Aryan* stock, more agnatic in their relation to each other than most of the European peoples. The Hindu anthropology indeed traces them to one common descent within the legendary period of ancient history. However that may be, the question is, does this difference in races constitute a permanent bar to their so uniting as constitute a political unit or nation ?

Without going far back into antiquity it may be confidently asked, is there any nation of modern times which is not composed of distinct and different racial units which have been welded together by forces other than those of mere ethnology ? The Picts and the Scots, the Angles and the Saxons, the Celts and the Welsh are all incorporated in the great British nation, although they one and all still retain distinctive racial characteristics of their own to no small extent. In Germany the Teutons and the Slavs, the Prussians, the Bavarians and the

Silicians and in that curious Dual-Monarchy of Austria-Hungary the Germans, the Magyars or Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Slavs, Serbs, Croats and Roumanians are all distinct racial units consolidated into a national federation of no ordinary solidarity and strength. So it is idle to contend that racial differences in India can by themselves stand as an insuperable difficulty in the way of the Hindus and Mussalmans, with an intermediate link of the Parsis between them, coalescing and forming a political unit. The process has already started and it is only a question of time when they will become completely fused into a consolidated national organization.

As regards religion, it must be admitted, that although in the early stages of social evolution and even down to the end of the middle ages religious faiths constituted the strongest cement of national unity, a mighty change has taken place in modern times all over the world. With increased facilities of communication, both through land and water, and ever increasing expansion of trade and commerce, a rapid diffusion of people throughout the world has taken place converting every civilised country into a congeries of people, each with distinct habits, manners and religious beliefs. The ancient territorial distributions on the basis of religious ties have all been broken up and with advancement of science and development of materialism a nation has received the connotation of a political organization than of a religious confederacy, freedom of conscience and religious toleration have revolutionized every country and every society, and different and even divergent faiths no longer count against the forces of a national evolution. Even education has been secularized throughout the world, and the spirit of Martin Luther's reform, which first effected in Europe a permanent divorce of Education from Religion has permeated the entire civilization of the world and considerably weakened, if not completely shattered, the influence of the church and clergy of every creed in moulding and shaping the destinies of nations.

A nation, therefore, is now more a political unit than a religious organization. The differences between the *Saivas*

and *Vaishnavas* and *Saktas*, or for the matter of that between the Hindus and the Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs are not more marked than those between the Catholics and the Protestants, the Methodists and the Greek Church. Then are there not Unitarians and Positivists, Free-thinkers and Non-conformists side by side with members of the Orthodox Churches in every country in Europe and America forming integral parts of one, indivisible nation? No man now cares more about the religious convictions of his neighbour than of his private character. It is now the public life of a people, as reflected in public interest and public opinion, combined with a singleness of purpose and unity of aims and objects which constitutes the national spirit. It was not at all suggested that other moral and spiritual qualities do not go far to exalt the individual as well as the nation; but these higher attributes are not among the inseparable accidents of national life.

Common government and common language no doubt form the basis of a national organisation, the one furnishing articulate expression of common interests and common sentiments and the other translating them into action. In India the English language has become the *lingua franca* of the educated community whose number is daily increasing and whose ideas, thoughts and actions are purveyed to the rest of the population through the medium of a number of allied dialects all derived from a common source, and it is no more difficult for the people of the different provinces to understand each other than it is for the mass of the Irish, Scotch and Welshman to understand the Englishman. A common script for all the Indian languages would undoubtedly facilitate, as it has facilitated in the case of Europe, the study of the various dialects in this country; but even if that is not possible the difficulty may be solved by introducing some of these languages in an inter-provincial curriculum of the departments or universities at certain stage of the educational system of the different provinces. The Bengalee, the Hindustani, the Mahrattée and the Telugu are the most important

among the spoken and written languages in the country and if these are taught in our schools or colleges of all the provinces the linguistic connection between the different races may be satisfactorily established.

As regards government, the Indian peoples occupy a still more favourable position. For the evolution of a national life it is absolutely necessary that the entire population of geographical unit, whatever differences there may be in their racial, linguistic or religious composition, should be under one and the same rule. Where this condition fails there is disintegration even among people belonging to the same race, speaking the same language and professing the same faith, and each integral section under a separate rule forms a distinct nation. As has already been said, a nation in the modern acceptance of the term is now a political unit formed out of community of interest, community of laws and community of rights and responsibilities. These are all created and conserved under the guidance and inspiration of a force which is generated by a common rule whether it be monarchical, democratic or republican in its character. There was a time when the Bengalees, the Panjabis and the Mahrattas formed distinct nations, as the Prussians, the Bavarians and the Silicians on the one hand and the Bohemians, the Magyars, the Czechs and the Slavs on the other did at one and no distant time. But being brought under the same rule, subject to the same laws and invested with the same rights and responsibilities, emanating from the same fountainhead, the Bengalee, the Panjabi and the Mahratta are now but different factors of one and the same political unit or nation. Thus the Parsi or the Mahomedan in India no longer owes any temporal allegiance to the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Turkey, nor do they belong to the Persian or Turkish nation. They are both incorporated in the body of vast Indian Nation. The Government is the cement of a national organization and without such a cement even the most advanced countries in the world would fall to pieces like a house of cards.

It is quite true, that under the existing conditions it is simply impossible for India to aim at sovereign independence and yet maintain its nationalism; for no sooner such an attempt is made it must stand split up into its racial factors, the cement would be gone and the vast fabric of its national organization tumble down entirely broken up. There may be then a Bengalee, or a Punjabi, or a Mahratta State, but no longer an United-India, or an Indian Nation. For the higher evolution of such a nationality the Indian National Congress from the very beginning set up an ideal on the permanent basis of a great confederacy under a common rule such as was furnished by the paramount authority of Great Britain. The Congress certainly aims at freedom; but not separation. On the contrary, it is the freedom of the different members of a body which while they are perfectly free to discharge their respective functions independently are at the same time dependent upon one another for their vital existence as a whole, and which in their mutual relation imply no subjection, but enjoin equality and interdependence. It is in this conception that lies the true inwardness of Indian nationalism and it is this deal which constitutes the just claim of the Indian National Congress to be styled a national movement.

Lord Hardinge's famous despatch of the 25th August 1911 gives a correct expression to the spirit of that movement and clearly indicates the only legitimate development of a permanent British rule in India. However much British diplomacy may turn and twist the plain terms of that important document to wriggle out of an inevitable situation, it is bound to work out its peaceful solution at first in the formation of a confederacy of autonomous units within the country and at the consummation in the evolution of a large, stronger and prouder unit, self-contained, self-adjusted, self-reliant, and standing side by side and co-operating with the other self-governing limits of the Empire. Such a conception must no doubt take time to materialize itself; but it is by no means a fantastic dream. Besides, the world has always dreamt

before its waking and evolved its sternest realities out of its wildest dreams. But even without indulging in dreams it is permissible to read the signs of time which in its onwards and irresistible march is visibly arraying the moral forces of humanity for a thorough revision and re adjustment of the destinies of the world from which India alone cannot be excluded. If the Philipinos in the Pacific, the Poles in Central Europe, and even the Negroes of Liberia have succeeded in evolving their destinies as self-governing people, the claim of India for an equal partnership in the federation of the British Empire may be neither so extravagant, nor so remote and visionary as to be altogether beyond the range of practical politics.

THE SUCCESS OF THE CONGRESS

Unification

Human nature, says Hobbes, is a strange admixture of contraries. It is always dissatisfied with the present, and while the eternal law of progress incessantly impels it to court the future, it seems never tired of its lamentations for the "good old days" which it has deliberately changed and which never can return. If such inconsistency is only an aberration of human nature in general, it is the marked characteristic of the Indian temperament. To the present it can hardly be reconciled until it has vanished into the Past, while its feeble attraction for the Future loses all its force even as it makes a new approach to the living Present. While the robust living nations of the world, believing as they do in its perpetual evolution, generally look to the past only to receive inspiration for the future, old decaying people like the Indians, whose only pride is in their past, regard the moral progress of that world as having long passed its meridian and as now being on its descending node. They have no faith in the world's resurrection until its annihilation and as such very little confidence in its future. Centuries of revolutions and changes have made them sceptical of the justice and conscience of a materialistic world, while the teachings of a mystic philosophy, which

represents that world as a delusion, furnish them sufficient consolation for patient submission to "the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune." Like hopeless bankrupts they fondly dote upon the legends of their vanished glories and while bitterly complaining of the present they are more inclined to suffer the evils which they know than to fly to others which they know not. Their loyalty and devotion to time-honoured institutions and established order of things make them generally averse to a change and naturally dispose them to drift. Their contact with Western culture, has however, gradually changed the angle of their vision and from the dreamland of their mystic philosophy they are slowly awakening to the realities of a living world.

The Congress working on Western ideas and ideals has been largely instrumental in breaking down this inertia and in infusing a spirit of useful activity in the national character. It has dissipated the wildest fancies of a people who, in their philosophical contempt for this life, seemed to have acquired more intimate knowledge of the unknown than of the known, more of the next world than of this. It has inspired them with a living consciousness which has diverted their mind from the dead past to the living present and fixed their attention on the coming future with hope and confidence. But though the consciousness has come, the latent poison in the system seems not to have entirely lost its deleterious effects. In the Indian temperament a moral aversion to fight and a habitual love of repose act in the first place as a deterrent to the assumption of an aggressive attitude for the assertion of any right, and when force of circumstances constrains it to take the defensive, or to seek for a change, that temperament cannot keep up a long and sustained struggle and naturally demands a speedy solution. One score and eight years are nothing in the life of a nation, and yet within this short period there are not few people who seem to have become tired of the fight. It is besides a strange feature of the situation, that those who have rendered the least active service are the most sceptical of success and in their inert pessimism despondently,

if not derisively, ask what has the Congress done for a quarter of a century ? But a little reflection would show that the Indian National Congress has done more for India in twenty-five years than what the National League with all its superior advantages did in about fifty years for Ireland.

Next to the national consciousness which it has awakened the first and foremost work done by the Congress is the unification of the various and diverse races inhabiting this vast country. It has moulded a vast heterogeneous population into a homogeneous whole. If the Congress had done nothing else, this one achievement alone would have justified its existence for twenty-five years. A generation ago the stalwart and turbulent Punjabi, the intelligent and sensitive Bengalee, the orthodox and exclusive Madrassi, the ardent and astute Maharatta, the anglicised Parsi and the cold, calculating Guzerati, were perfect strangers to one other, and if they happened to meet anywhere they learnt only to despise each other. Their hereditary tradition was one of mutual distrust, while their past history was marked only by internecine feuds, pillage and bloodshed. But what are they to-day ? They are now all united by a strong and indissoluble tie of brotherhood, overriding all distinctions of caste and creed, and inspired by mutual appreciation and common fellowship. Hatred has given place to love and callousness to sympathy. In the prophetic words of Dr. Rajendralala Mitter "the scattered units of the race have coalesced and come together."

The "geographical expression" has become a political entity and the "congeries of people" have come to form a nation. The descendants of the Burgis are now among the fastest friends of the Bengalees and many a young man now in the Gangetic delta wonder why there ever was such a thing as the Maharatta Ditch, or how the sweet lullaby with which the Bengalee baby is composed to sleep was ever invented by the

matrons of an earlier generation.* A magnetic current has been established from North to South and from East to West and a common pulsation now vibrates throughout the land. A Land Alienation Bill or a Colonization Bill in the Punjab, a revision of Land Settlement in Bombay or Madras, a territorial redistribution in Bengal and a mosque dispute in the United Provinces—now all strike the national chord and the whole country resounds in unison, and whatever administrative measure injuriously effect one province is now sorely felt and automatically resented by the other provinces. India is no longer a menagerie of wild and discordant elements and its peoples can now hardly be used as game-cocks to one another. They are now imbued with a national spirit and are daily growing in solidarity and compactness. The Congress has thus laid the first concrete foundation for the colossal work of nation-building and the establishment of an united Indian federation under the aegis of the British Crown.

Development of National Character

During the last thirty years the national character and characteristics have also undergone a remarkable change. As under the breath of the new spirit the popular mind has expanded and narrow communal sentiments have broadened into wider visions and conceptions, so the national character has also acquired a corresponding hue of healthy tone and complexion. Ideas of self-respect, self-reliance and self-sacrifice, though not yet fully developed, are quite manifest in almost every grade of society and in nearly every phase of life : while greater love of truth, courage and straightforwardness, sometimes bordering even on impertinence, are among the notable

*As the Germans are nick-named by the French as *Boches* so the Maharattas who used to carry on depredations in Bengal and levy the *chouth* were the called *Burgls* by the Bengalees. The doggerel to which reference is made may be rendered as follows : "My baby sleeps ; the neighbours have gone to rest ; but the *Burgls* have come ; the locusts have destroyed the crop, and whence shall I pay the *chouth* ?" The *Burgl* at one time was the *Bona* of India.

traits in the character of the educated young men in the country. The sense of humiliating dependence even in domestic relation is fast dying out, while in some places even the time-honoured corporate character of the family, the special feature of Indian social organisation, has become so much loosened as to be almost threatened with a collapse. Individualism is the most marked characteristic of the educated community and whether young or old they are all animated by a manly desire to think and act for themselves, although this tendency is too often carried to extravagant excess, on the one hand through blind, indiscreet attempts to enforce implicit obedience, and on the other hand from inordinate conceit and impatience of control. It is in fact in this development of their character, even more than in their higher conceptions of future hopes and aspirations, that the educated community as a whole have come into direct contact and conflict with the notions and traditions of an orthodox bureaucracy which, unable to divest itself of its long-standing prejudices, starts at every change and suspects every fresh development to be a malignant growth.

A claim for better treatment, tendency to resent gratuitous insults and resist forced exactions of homage, so long enjoyed as *abwabs* by a dominant race, and above all a demand for justice and fairness are the natural outcome of the education which the people have received and the new consciousness to which they have awakened. Whether in official or public life there is no longer in the country that heavy atmosphere of cringing servility which provoked Lord Macaulay's highly coloured picture of the Indian character towards the middle of the last century, and if the noble lord had been living to-day he might well have been surprised to find, that while the people themselves have so largely shaken off the moral weaknesses with which they were so lavishly charged, there are those among his own countrymen who secretly regret the change and would fain perpetuate in this country the spirit which he so strongly and eloquently condemned. It may be said with pardonable pride that in uprightness and integrity, in honesty

of purpose and devotion to duty, in fortitude and patience no less than in their intelligence and aptitude for work, Indians in the inferior ranks of the public services, to which their lot is generally confined, fully hold their own against Europeans who are sometimes very much their artificial superiors in position, authority and influence; while as regards the larger body of the educated public it may be no exaggeration to say, that with all their defects and shortcomings, they are on the whole now a manlier race imbued with higher ideas of public duties and responsibilities in the discharge of which their own patriotic impulse supplies the only motive power and for the fulfilment of which they neither claim nor expect a higher reward than the appreciation of their countrymen and the approbation of their own conscience.

Whether it be a disastrous flood or a decimating famine, an awful outbreak of pestilence or an overwhelming pressure of a vast religious concourse, everywhere they are ready bravely to face the situation and make the necessary sacrifices. Even in anarchism, the ugliest development of the present situation, which is regarded in this country not simply as a social crime but as a mortal sin, there is a spirit of wreckless courage which, if directed in proper channels, might have proved a valuable asset towards a higher development of the national life, and many a young man like Kanayelal Dutt might have under better guidance and with proper opportunities died as martyrs, rather than as murderers, in the service of their King and their country.* It is not at all suggested that this national character is above reproach, or has become even properly developed. On the contrary, it still suffers from many a serious defect which serve training and systematic discipline alone can eradicate. It lacks that vigour and tenacity, patience and perseverance, and above all that stiffness and elasticity which consti-

* The present European war has opened such an opportunity. Indeed the French who are nothing if not original in everything have formed regiments of their "criminal heroes" who are giving good account of their desperate character and a similar experiment in this country might prove equally successful.

tute the backbone of a people and make human nature proof against reverses and despair. People still want that confidence in themselves and trust in others which respectively form the asset and credit of the corporate life of a nation. However unpalatable and humiliating the confession may be, if we are only true to ourselves, it must be frankly recognized that one of the darkest spots and weakest points in our national character is jealousy. Many years ago in course of a private conversation, a European friend, who subsequently rose to the position of Commissioner of a division, asked the writer of these pages,—What was the distinguishing feature between the Indian and European character which made merit rise so slow in India and so fast in Europe? The writer began by referring to the superior intelligence, sagacity and industry of the European; but before he could proceed further his friend interrupted him saying, that he was mistaken and going in a wrong line, as the real explanation lay in another and in quite a different direction. The average European, he said, was not more intelligent than the average Indian, while as regards industry he had always found to his surprise that the ill-paid Indian ministerial officers worked more assiduously and with greater devotion than any European officer could be expected to work under similar conditions. The real answer to his question according to him was to be found in the national trait and not in any individual characteristic of the two races. “In a Western country,” he said, “when a man shows signs of an extraordinary talent in any direction the whole community rushes in to push him up; but in India the general tendency is to pull him down.”

Although there are other material differences in the circumstances of the two races and much may be said against a generalization of this kind, it seems impossible to deny that there is considerable force in this observation. The Indian character has no doubt attained, as has already been observed, a higher level in many directions; but it can hardly be denied that even now public men have more detractors than admirers and that appreciation of public services, which is the most potent

incentive to public action, is yet very feeble and inactive in this country. If we are really anxious to elevate ourselves in the scale of nations we must not deceive ourselves by putting the flattering unction to our soul. True patriotism does not consist either in blind, idolatrous veneration of a dead past, or in subtle ingenuity to extract metaphysical secrets out of metaphorical aphorisms for the gratification of vanity and egotism. A thoughtful writer has somewhere observed that "there are natures which can extract poison from everything sweet," and it will be found upon close examination, that a spirit of captious criticism wanting in due appreciation of merit, whether in a friend or an adversary, is a mental disease which in its chronic stage works as a slow poison to the understanding as well as to other mental faculties and in the end terminates fatally to the moral nature also. There are always two sides to a question, and a cultivated mind ought carefully to weigh the *pros* and *cons* before pronouncing judgment on it. A well-regulated, disciplined character is the first requisite of a national development. A license is not liberty, so arrogance is not independence. Leadership is not a privilege but a responsibility, and one must learn to follow before he can aspire to lead a community where everybody is ready to command and none to obey must be either a Bable, or a Bedlam, or a Billingsgate.

Social and Industrial Progress

Next in order of importance is perhaps the inauguration of social reform and industrial development to both of which the Congress has so largely contributed. It will be remembered that at the outset many were the "candid friends" who advised the movement to be directed towards social and industrial reforms rather than towards premature political activities. The members of the Congress, however, neither overlooked nor under-estimated the importance of these reforms, as they were perfectly conscious that in the process of an evolution all the three were handmaids to one another, although it was equally clear to them that with all the diversities of manners, customs,

habits and even laws and religions of the various races inhabiting such a vast continent, it was not possible directly to bring all the people together except upon a political platform. As the three reforms were inter dependent, moving on a common axle, they understood that if a force could be imparted to one of the wheels, the other two also would automatically move with it. It is a well-known fact, that it was largely the members and the supporters of the Congress who individually and in their respective spheres of influence started social and industrial movements which gradually spread throughout the country, the Congress itself being the centre from which the forces emanated in different directions

The Social Conference started in 1888 and the Industrial Conference inaugurated in 1904 were two important bodies, which, like two satellites revolving each on its own axis, have moved round the Congress in its annual course and contributed not a little towards social and economic advancement of the country. The Hon'ble Mahadev Govinda Ranade on the social and the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur R.N. Mudholkar on the industrial side are two of the outstanding figures of the Congress whose services to the cause of these reforms must be acknowledged with gratitude and respect. The Congress as a huge deliberative body cannot, as a matter of course, concern itself with the details of these reforms which depend upon different conditions in different provinces, but it cannot fairly be denied that it has always acted as the pivot of all the public movements and the mainspring of all the activities which are now at work in all direction and throughout the country. Whether it be the question of sea voyage or of the "depressed classes," whether it is the cause of marriage reform or scientific education, the actual working bodies may and must be different ; but the motive impetus generated and manifested in all these directions may easily be traced to one common source—the spirit of national consciousness evoked by the Congress. It has roused a slumbering people from the lethargy of ages and vivified them into new life. The Indians have drifted too long ; but they are no longer disposed to

drift. Conferences, associations and organizations have become the order of the day, and whether it be literary or historical researches, or scientific studies, or the resuscitation of decaying arts and industries, or the solution of knotty social problems, everywhere there is the manifestation of a new spirit. The restlessness and commotion which are observable almost in every walk of life, the zeal and earnestness which characterise the activities of almost all classes and communities for bettering their status and prospects in life and the high ideals which animate the people, are all symptoms of a mighty evolution that is noiselessly working its way. In the ferment of this evolution some objectionable things here and there have no doubt come to the surface, but this was unavoidable. It is impossible to extract the crystal without bringing the impurities of sugar on the surface in the boiling cauldron. The Congress no doubt is primarily a political organisation ; but its social and economic aspects cannot also be disputed. Mr. Hume in his celebrated reply to Sir Auckland Colvin clearly enunciated the real aim and object of the movement. They were, he said, at that early stage of the institution, "the regeneration of India on all lines, spiritual, moral, social, industrial and political." "The main body of the Congress," he added, "was directed to national and political objects upon which the whole country was able to stand on a common ground."

But, as was pointed out, "the social requirements varied according to race, caste and creed, so they had to be dealt by separate organizations suited to each province or community." Thus while the actual working machineries were different, the electric installation which supplied the motive power for all of them was one and the same, which led Sir William Wedderburn to point out that as a matter of fact "the workers for political progress were the most active friends of social reform," and, he might well have added, that they were also among the early pioneers of the industrial movement and the founders of not a few of the small industries which made such marked progress during the last few years. Some of

these enterprises have no doubt suffered a serious collapse ; but these occasional lapses are almost incidental to a nascent stage. Children stagger and stumble before they acquire a steady use of their limbs. Want of training and absence of sound knowledge and experience and possibly some lack of moral strength also are at the root of these failures which, however deplorable in themselves, afford no just ground either for alarm or despair. The South Sea Bubble in England and the Panama enterprise in France were far greater disasters ; but both the British and the French people have long out-lived these misadventures. A spirit of enterprise once created cannot die ; but fanned by its own wings Phoenix-like it is bound to rise out of its own ashes.

The much-abused Swadeshi movement has a history of its own. Bombay was earlier in the field of industrial development with modern appliances and machineries ; but Bengal and Madras had an indigenous textile industry on a more extensive scale which was practically extinct under foreign competition. The situation was everywhere viewed with grave anxiety, though nowhere, except in the Western Presidency, any active effort was made to grapple with it until a cry for the revival of the indigenous industries was raised in Bengal where the immortal patriotic song of Mr. Mon Mohan Bose, the founder of the now defunct Swadeshi Mela, is still heard with thrilling interest. The necessity for preferential treatment of indigenous article was vigorously pressed at some of the earlier Provincial Conferences in Bengal, notably at Burdwan in 1894, and also on several other occasions where ardent Congressmen drew prominent attention to the growing poverty and helplessness of the people for want of sufficient encouragement of indigenous industries. A formal proposal for preferential treatment of home-made products was for the first time submitted to the Subjects-Committee of the Congress held at Ahmedabad in 1902 ; but owing to a divergence of opinion it failed to pass through the Committee. In 1905 the people of Bengal exasperated by a violent disruption of the province adopted a general boycott of all foreign articles.

On the 7th of August, a huge and unprecedented demonstration was held at the Calcutta Town Hall in which at a modest calculation over thirty thousand people took part in three different sections, two in the upper and lower floors of the historic hall and the other and by far the largest section in the spacious open *maidan* in front.

So intense was the feeling that the spirit of the movement marched like wild fire and the contagion spread in no time from Lahore to Tuticorin and from Assam to Guzerat. It was generally based upon economic grounds; but it cannot be denied that the movement had its origin in Bengal as a protest against the Partition. The Congress, while not countenancing the boycott, gave formal sanction to the *Swadeshi* in 1906 and enjoined the people to give preference to indigenous articles "wherever practicable and even at a sacrifice." With all its lapses and indiscretions, which are almost inseparable from all movements which have their origin in tremendous popular excitement, the *Swadeshi* movement must be admitted to have given a great impetus to the development of indigenous industries in this country. That development may not yet have been very remarkable; but it is doubtless gratifying that it has revived the weaving industry and directed the energies of the people into new channels of activity. For soap and scent, shoes and trunk, nib and ink, socks and vests, pottery and cutlery, as well as various kinds of woollen and sliken stuff, the country can now well afford to stand, though not in the best style, substantially on its own leg; while the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works started under the initiative and guidance of that eminent Indian scientist, Dr. P.C. Ray, have elicited the unstinted admiration of even those who are disposed to draw a sharp distinction between true and false *Swadehi*.

Above all, the patriotic labours of Mr Jamsedji Nesseservanji Tata have created an epoch in the industrial regeneration of India. Bombay received her early initiation in Industrialism from the American Civil War of 1861-65 when her attention was drawn to her opportunities in cotton trade. Although

Bombay has never ceased to complain about the arbitrary and exacting system of her land settlement under the operation of which the fruits of the agricultural labours are periodically shorn off like the proverbial sheep to meet the demands of the State, she may yet find sufficient consolation in the thought that the industrial activities and enterprises of her people may be due in no small measure to the depressing conditions imposed in their case upon agricultural pursuits which appear to have so largely absorbed the comparatively indolent population of the permanently settled provinces; while her own people driven from the fields to the factories have found ample compensation for the precarious doles of nature in the larger bounties of arts and industries. The first cotton mill in Bombay was started in 1855 by Cowasji Nanabhoy Davar who was followed by a noble band of equally enterprising industrialist among whom the names of Roychand Premchand, Sir Jamsedji Jejeebhoy and Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit are known throughout the country.

But the greatest and brightest of this galaxy of stars who ushered in the industrial renaissance of modern India was perhaps Jamsedji Nasservanji Tata. Full of patriotic ideas and sentiments Mr. Tata established in 1886 a new cotton mill which he appropriately styled the "Swadeshi Mills." But the greatest work of Mr. Tata which will ever enshrine his name in the grateful memory of his countrymen is the Scientific Research Institute for which he made a princely donation of 30 *lakhs* of rupees and which planned and matured during his lifetime was subsequently established, with the help and co-operation of the Government of India and of Mysore, by his worthy son Sir Dorab Tata at Bangalore within the territories of the latter. Mr. Tata's Vulcan Steel and Iron Factory recently established at Sakchi within the territories of another Indian prince, the Maharajah of Morbhunj in Orissa and his Electric Installation at Bombay for utilizing the waters of the Western Ghats, are colossal projects which bear testimony not only to his extraordinary genius and enterprise, but also to the vigour and robustness of the industrial renaissance which

has dawned upon the country with the first awakening of its national consciousness. Truly has the biographer of M. Tata remarked that he "was Swadeshi of Swadeshists long before Swadeshism was boomed in Bengal."

The Co-operative Movement, which has made such rapid strides during the last few years throughout the country and particularly in Bengal, is another evidence of the spirit of self-help which has come to animate the national character and of the aptitude which the people have acquired for the management for their own affairs. It is indeed a matter of as much regret as of gratification, that in all this healthy developments the people had so little to count upon the active help and co-operation of the State and so largely to depend upon their own resources. With the notable exception of Tata Iron Works there appears to be no industrial project in which the Government has as yet either taken the initiative or generously extended a substantially helping hand. Whether for training men in scientific and industrial education in foreign countries, or in starting new industries at home, the people have had practically to depend upon their unaided efforts and their extremely limited resources ; while the examples of Japan and China in the East and of the Philippines in the West have served only to tantalize and mortify a people proverbially the poorest in the modern civilized world.

The patriotic efforts of Messrs. Norendra Nath Sen and Jogendra Chandra Ghose in Bengal and J.N Tata in Bombay for giving technical education to our young men were movements in the right direction ; but for want of adequate support and encouragement they practically collapsed after a short but very useful carrer of existence. It may be remembered, that even in the seventies and eighties of the last century it was almost a fashion in certain quarters to twit the people with their universal hankering after services under the State which it was truly impossible for any Government to satisfy ; but now that the people have realized their mistake and turned their attention to industrial and other developments,

men in authority are not wanting to remain them that "India is essentially an agricultural country," and that as such their hands should be directed to the plough and not to the steam-engine : while a responsible member of the Supreme Government, being recently driven almost to a corner on the question of State aid to some of the crippled industries in the country, plainly said that India need not care about her industrial development when there was England to supply all her requirements. What a frank confession and bitter disappointment ! If England could have supplied all the wants of India it would not have been possible for Germany to swamp her market

Besides, where is the Ordinance of Nature which has made this classification among mankind and provided that some people must not learn to govern themselves, but be content with being well-governed, and that some countries must extract only raw materials from Mother Earth leaving others to convert them into more valuable finished articles ? Providence certainly has nowhere prescribed these conditions and sanctioned this division of labour. True it is that all people are not at all times equally trained and equally competent to participate in the blessings of arts and sciences ; but it should be the highest aim of a benevolent Government, whether foreign or indigenous, to foster and stimulate as far as lies in its power the energies and activities of the people committed to its care in every right direction for the advancement and amelioration of their economic condition. Even free and resourceful countries like Germany and Japan have had to count upon state bounties and subsidies for their economic development, and India cannot fairly be expected to work out her salvation through more enquiries, reports and exhibitions. The present European war has opened a vast field for the expansion and development of Indian industries. The extensive trade of Germany and Austria have been driven out of the Indian market and if prompt measures could be taken to replace them by indigenous productions, the economic problem of the country might be easily solved and at

the same time the position of Government materially strengthened. But the Government seems hardly to realise the importance of this opportunity which has arisen as a unique good coming out of a dire evil. This Congress at its last session as well as the Indian public, earnestly pressed the question on the attention of Government, nor has the European mercantile community altogether failed to express its views on the subject. Mr. Ledgard, as Chairman of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce, is reported to have pressed at its last annual meeting "the importance of vigorous preparations for stepping into Germany's shoes in the matter of trade" and regretted that the "Government had not been able to give any indication of a policy of assistance towards industrial enterprise that might enable the country to take advantage of the situation." It may, however, be hoped that it is not yet too late to indicate that policy, so that the precious opportunity may not be entirely lost.

*Local Self-Government and Freedom of Judicial
Administration*

The efforts of the Congress towards the expansion of Local Self-Government and the reform of the Judicial Administration have not, however, met with any encouraging success. Nearly thirty years have elapsed since Lord Ripon introduced the principle of Self-Government in the administration of the local affairs of the people in the ardent hope that it might prove the stepping-stone towards their attainment of National Self Government in the higher administration of the country. But within this period the institution has not advanced one step forward and it is still held in the same leading string with which it was started, though it seems doubtful if in certain directions its tether has not been even appreciably shortened. The number of the municipal corporations, which are properly speaking the really self-governing bodies in the country, has undergone no perceptible increase, while their powers and privileges have clearly not been enhanced, although in not a few cases they have been ruthlessly curtailed. As regards the larger bodies of District and Local

Boards, these have been practically converted into a department of the District Administration directly under the District Officer, and it certainly looks strange that not a single District has been found within the life-time of a generation fit to be entrusted with a non-official Chairman for this institution. Times without number has the Congress pressed for a provisional experiment which the law expressly provides, and at least one Commissioner of an important division in Bengal strongly recommended such a trail.

But a consideration of the official prestige of the District Officer, who must be provided octopus-like as it were with a number of tentacles to enable him to maintain his position and dignity, has apparently overridden all claims of justice and fairness, and perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that the Local Self-Government Acts of the different provinces are, to all intents and purposes, a misnomer and the institutions themselves have become fossilized without any possibility of growth of development, though they may of course be liable to further decay. There can be no reasonable complaint against legitimate control. But if the Government has a responsibility in supervising the workings of these popular institutions, it is also not without its corresponding obligation foster, develop and improve them. Control without co-operation is only another name for obstruction. It is in the air, that is the contemplation of Government also to officialize the Co-operative Credit Societies which the people have evolved and worked out partially to relieve their economic pressure. It is to be hoped that a powerful government will not lay itself open to the charge of assuming the sponsorship of institutions in whose baptism it had little or no hand, and however justly responsible it may feel for safeguarding the honesty and integrity of these institutions, it may be fully expected that nothing will be done either to stunt their growth, or to alienate popular sympathies and confidence from them.

As regards the reform of the Judicial Administration, the first principle enunciated by the Congress is practically

admitted, and it is no longer disputed that the administration stands in need of revision ; but here also, as in the case of Local Self-Government, the morbid bugbear of official prestige stands in the way. The Decentralization Commission simply evaded the question ; but the present Public Service Commission will have to decide it either one way or the other. Various palliatives have been suggested by those who are no longer able to defend the existing system, but are at the same time unwilling to part with it. But these are mere make-shifts which can only defer and not solve the question. The question has considerably matured itself and the Congress will have a start to fresh campaign in the light of the Royal Commission's pronouncements to drive the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion.

Parliamentary Enquiries

As has already been observed, the last Parliamentary enquiry into Indian affairs was made in 1854, and ever since the transfer of the rule to the Crown in 1858 both Parliament as well as the Government, whether Liberal or Conservative, were alike indifferent to the Indian administration which was complacently left into the hands of a close bureaucracy. The very first Congress of 1885 vigorously protested against this indifference and pressed for a Royal Commission to enquire into the Indian administration. In 1897 the Welby Commission was appointed, and since then there have been the Decentralisation Commission in 1902 and the Chamberlain Commission and the Islington Commission which are now carrying on their investigations. The Government of India also instituted the Education Commission of 1882 and the Police Commission of 1902. The results of these Commissions may not have so far come up for the fullest expectations of the people and may have in some cases proved even disappointing to them. But they bear undoubted testimony to the growing interest felt both in England, as well as in this country, in the increasingly important and complicated administration of India. It is in the nature of all bureaucratic rules to accord a readier acceptance to retrograde suggestions than to progres-

sive recommendations ; but the Indian Nationalist need not despair. However cautious or dilatory the Government may be in giving effect to the various wholesome recommendations of these Commissions, it can never hope to set them aside. There they are among the permanent archives of the Government laying down policies and principles which may be carried forward, but upon which it would be difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to go back. Stern, necessary changes may be deferred, but cannot be averted when they are pressed by the irresistible force of time and circumstance.

Public Men and Public Spirit

The vitality of a nation is gauged by its power of producing capable men at all critical stages of its life. Mazzini and Garibaldi in Italy, Theirs and Gambetta in France, Yungshikai and Sun-Yet-Sen in China, Enver Bey and Izzat Pasha in Turkey,—all have proved, that though passing through the severest ordeal of their national existence, neither the Italians nor the French, neither the Chinese nor the Turks were among the dead nation of the world. The Indian National Congress, though dealing with a subject race, labouring under enormous difficulties and disabilities, has produced a class of self-sacrificing, self-reliant, resourceful, robust and patriotic men some of whom, at all events, under more favourable circumstances might well have taken their places by the side of some of the foremost men in European politics. Their lot might have forbidden them from commanding the applause of the political world and consigned them to the strictures and captious criticisms of an orthodox and inflated bureaucracy ; but there are men among them who, if their Sovereign had commanded, might have formed a cabinet or held a portfolio. The most obdurate of pessimists will probably admit and the most cynical of critics acknowledge, that with all their shortcomings these men are not altogether unworthy products of the modern Indian renaissance which has dawned under the aegis of the British rule. They have at all events conclusively proved that most of the Indian races still possess

sufficient vitality and moral stamina to aspire to a place in the comity of civilised nations in the world. The public men whom the Congress has produced and spirit of self-help which it has evoked are perhaps among the most valuable working capital of the country.

The nineteen eminent Indians who have so far adorned the presidential chair of the Congress will, no doubt, go down to posterity as among the pioneers of Indian nation-builders. They are all men who have made their mark in India History. But besides these, the Congress has produced a galaxy of men of whom any country might be justly proud. Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, Rajah Peary Mohan Mukherjee, Sir Romesh Chander Mitter, Sir Goorudes Banerjee, Mr. Monomohan Ghose, Mr. Norendra Nath Sen, Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Ashutosh Choudhury, Mr. Baikunta Nath Sen, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mr. A. Rasul, Mr. Motilal Ghose, Mr. Kalicharan Bannerjee and Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu* in Bengal; Maharajah Sir Luchmeswar Singh, Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Hasan Imam, Mr. Dip Narain Singh, Mr. Guruprasad Sen, and Mr. Mazar-ul-Haque in Behar; Pundit Ajudhya Nath, Pundit Biswambhar Nath, Dr. Sunderlal, Mr. Ganga Prasad Varma and Raja Rampal Singh in the United Provinces; Sirdar Dayal Singh Mejhatia, Lala Lajpat Rai and Mr. Mahomed Ali in the Punjab; Mr. M.G. Ranade, Mr. K.T. Telang, Mr. Daji Abaji Khar, Mr. Luxman Nulkar, Mr. Hari Chiplankar, Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah, Dr. Bhandarkar, Mr. Setalvad and Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah in Bombay; and Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer, Mr. G Subramania Iyer, Mr. Veeraraghava Achari, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Sir Subrmaniya Iyer and Mr. Veejararaghava Achari in Madras,— all rank among the shining lights of this period. Many of these distinguished men would ere long have taken their places in illustrious roll of the Congress Presidents but for permature death which seems to be the prevailing curse of India. The public services of some of these men have also been recognised by the Government, while all of them occupy a high position

*Since elected President of the Madras Congress of 1914.

in the estimation of their countrymen as their trusted guides and leaders.

The Public Services

From the very beginning the Congress has persistently urged the larger admission of the children of the soil into the public services of the country, and a mere glance through the pages of the Civil Lists will at once show what substantial advancement the country has made in this direction. Even up to the Sixties of the last century the average people were under the impression, that the Principal Sudder Ameen on the one side and the Deputy Collector on the other were the highest appointments open to the children of the soil and the idea of a native of India sitting as a Sessions Judge or as a District Officer appeared only a dream. The first Indian Civilian who was a Bengali was not appointed to his own province; while the distinguished triumvirate, also Bengalis, who followed in the next decade, received an ovation upon their return in 1871 which is now seldom accorded to the Governor of a province; Whole Calcutta went to the Seven Tanks Gardens in the Belgachia Villa to witness as it were in exhibition of a curious specimen of speaking lions brought from Europe; while no less a sober person than the venerable Dr. K.M. Banerjee in his patriotic pride and exultation cried out at a public meeting that the event was the "second great battle of Plassey fought on British soil." Many a "battle of Plassey" of the same description have since been fought and won without attracting much attention. Compare the earlier picture of the public services with the present and there will be no difficulty in realising the actual measure of the inwardness of that robust optimism which possesses the minds of the veterans of the Congress as regards the future prospects of the people in the administration of the country. Even so late as the Eighties of the last century none dared seriously entertain the faintest hope of seeing Indians on the Council of the Secretary of State, or in the Executive Councils of the Governments in this country, or even in a Provincial Board of Revenue. Yet all these.

are now accomplished facts. The Indians have now fully established their claims from the chartered High Courts and the Executive Governments downwards to almost every branch of the Civil administration, and the question now is only one of percentage, regard being had to alleged efficiency of the services and exigencies of the State.

There is still a sharp distinction drawn between what are called the Imperial and the Provincial Services in the general administration, as well as in the Education, Medical and almost all other departments of State; but this is a shallow, artificial device to keep up a monopoly which cannot, however, be long maintained, and a systematic vigorous campaign is all that is necessary to break down this racial and colour-fencing which still bars the people's entrance into the inner sanctuary of the administration. But as the irritating and invidious distinction cannot be defended on any rational principle and as breaches have been effected at certain points, the surrender of the strongholds of a close, selfish bureaucracy can only be a question of time. Attempts may be made, as are not infrequently made, to repair these breaches, but the ultimate fall of these citadels is inevitable. It is, however, a matter of great regret, if not of surprise, that men are not wanting even among people of this country who having themselves risen high in the rung of the public services as the result of persistent public agitation should be among those who denounce such agitation lest further agitation might interfere with their future prospects. There is a grim humour about such an attitude which is not unlike that of a belated railway passenger who, before he reaches his station, eagerly wishes that the train might be a little late; but as soon as he has comfortably secured his own berth begins to grow impatient that it should be any more late in starting. Apparently with a view to cover their own selfishness these good people confidently assert, that public agitation has stopped the right of public meeting and necessitated the Press Law. But can these critics picture even in their own mind a public meeting without some sort of agitation behind it? Or can they conceive of any use of the valued right of the

freedom of public meeting and of speech if it were to be divorced from agitation either for the removal of existing grievances, or for the acquisition of fresh rights ?

Public meetings cannot be always confined to singing *requiem* to an ex judge or a retired magistrate however brilliant his career may have been, nor does the salvation of the country wholly depend upon the success of a few subservient officers who seem to have learn the art of "kicking the ladder behind" almost to gymnastic perfection. As for the new Press Act, or the other repressive measures which the Government has latterly introduced, it is the grossest ignorance that can attribute these to public agitation which the British constitution not only allows, but also encourages. Even the authors of these reactionary measures did not attribute them to public agitation, but to some other condition too well known to require any particular reference. It is healthy agitation that invigorates public life in every civilised country ; and it is a well-recognised fact that it is opposing forces which, in their resultant action, keep up the vitality of a system, and serve to maintain and strengthen it. Those who are afraid of agitation and enamoured of the calm repose of an easy-going, smooth, indolent life ought to remember that the stagnant water of a pool, though transparent and tempting to the naked eye, is always full of noxious germs and injurious to the system : while the muddy water of the running stream is not only wholesome to drink, bur is also fertilising to the ground which it inundates.

The Young Men Volunteers

Another achievement of which the Congress may justly be proud is the healthy and vigorous impetus which it has given to the development of moral courage and discipline of the Indian youths. The system of "Volunteers," which was first introduced in connection with the Second Congress held in 1886 and was more fully organised in Madras in the following year, was a very useful institution for the training of our young men not only for the immediate object with which it was

started, but also for preparing them to become proper and efficient citizen-soldiers for the battle of life. These "Volunteers" no doubt came to carry a bad odour with the authorities at a subsequent stage and in connection with a situation for which no one perhaps deplored more deeply or suffered more grievously than the Congressmen ; but the Indian public have never been able to divest themselves of the belief that the "Congress Volunteers" were really more sinned against than sinning and that they had a bad name given to them only to justify their being afterwards hanged for it. If their open and occasional services to the Congress really could have anything to do with the secret, abominable practices of a disreputable gang of fanatics, why, then, the drilling and the gymnastic exercises in the schools and even the laboratories in the colleges, for which the Government itself so amply and generously provided, might with equal, if not greater, propriety have been held responsible for these untoward and disgraceful developments. It seems to have been well remarked by a shrewd Frenchman that "when John Bull begins to suspect he generally begins at the wrong end." This suspicion has no doubt succeeded in a large measure in segregating the youths of the country, not sparing even young men in colleges, from the sphere of all political activities ; but no reasonable explanation is forthcoming as to how beardless boys are strangely developing criminal instincts and dispositions being practically confined within what may not be improperly called as insecure goals under a strict politico-educational surveillance.

In a laudable anxiety to protect the boys the schools have been practically converted into plague camps where, completely cut off from the bracing atmosphere of healthy public influence, these unsuspecting and impressionable innocents fall easy prey to the insidious, pestilential spirits which are abroad and which, working in secret, find ample opportunity to penetrate into the closest recesses to misguide these immature lads under grossest misrepresentations and allure them to their ultimate ruin. It seems extremely doubtful if the moral nature of man can be entirely governed by physical laws and regu-

lations. Stunt that nature in its normal development in one direction, it will burst out in a malignant growth in another. Besides, there are to be found a few black sheep in almost every flock to poison the rest. Thus schools may be barricaded and students segregated and circularized ; but there seems to be no island of Juan Fernandez where a resourceful mind may not devise means for its occupation and ultimately escape out of it. It seems a grievous mistake to exclude impressionable young minds altogether from the chastening influence of public opinion and try to turn useful citizens out of cloisters and dormitories. The public is a great monitor and a force, and if it sometimes misleads, it oftener exercises a healthy influence in shaping and moulding social life. Whatever that may be, the Congress Volunteers practically discharged from the Congress service have found scope for more active occupation in other and more useful directions. Mr. Gokhale's *Servants of India*" in Bombay and Mr. Krishna Kumar Mitra's "*Irregulars*" in Bengal are highly useful bodies whose invaluable services in time of distress and difficulty have not failed sometimes to elicit the unstinted approbation and admiration of even responsible officers of government. They may not yet be recognized as occasional, useful adjuncts to the administration ; but they are undoubtedly a most valuable help to the public on many a pressing occasion. On the whole, these institutions are a training academy for the Indian youths which have made them ever so many, so enduring, so courageous, so resourceful and so self-sacrificing in their life and conduct.

The Expansion of the Legislative Councils

Among the many minor reforms effected at the instance of the Congress may be mentioned the increase in the taxable minimum for the Income Tax ; the raising of the age-limit for the Civil Service Examination ; a further extension of Trial by Jury though on a very limited scale ; a partial redress of forest grievances ; the re-imposition of the import duties on cotton, though with a countervailing excise duty on the indigenous products which practically operates as a protection to British

manufactures, and the repeal of the English duty on Silver plates, for all of which the Congress carried on a persistent agitation both in this country as well as in England. But by far the greatest political achievement of the Congress is perhaps the reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils and the appointment of Executive Councils for the major provinces in which at least one Indian member has found a place. All the provinces and administrations, whether under Lieutenant-Governors or Chief Commissioners, are provided with local Legislative Councils of their own. The number of members for the Councils has been increased and the area of representation considerably widened. The right of interpellation with the power of putting supplementary questions and the right of moving resolutions and introducing Bills, are all important privileges secured, the value of which cannot be under estimated. The Congress strenuously fought for these reforms ever since 1885, and it is these substantial privileges, which were partially conceded in 1892 and more fully granted in 1910, that have led many an alarmist to cry, 'halt' and to urge that the Congress having achieved its main object has no just ground for its further existence. To the Indian Nationalist, however, it is only the thin end of the wedge, and if ever there was a time to strike vigorously that time has now arrived.

The Congress has never made any secret of its ultimate goal, and while that goal is yet faintly looming in the dim, distant future, it cannot afford to rest on its oars, nor regard its mission as even partially fulfilled. If the attainment of national self-Government within the empire is its aim, if India is to throw off the yoke of a Dependency and acquire the status of a Dominion, then it must be admitted that the Congress has only just entered on a career of useful existence and that these reforms mark only the beginning and not the end of its arduous task. It is no doubt a matter of rejoicing that a breach has at last been effected in the outer ramparts of a benevolent Despotism; but if the inner citadel be the real objective it would be simply foolish to pass the live-long day in only dancing and revelling over that breach. Besides, what

are the reforms that have really been effected ? Without being guilty of want of proper appreciation it seems quite permissible to point out that these reforms are mere faint adumbrations of a rough political sketch, the full representation of which in its true colours has yet to be evolved. It is only the shadow and not the real substance which has been thrown on the screen. The representation granted as still very inadequate and the electorates highly defective ; the majority is still with the Government and where it has been conceded to the people it is simply nominal and illusory. The representatives of the people have yet no control over the finances and the resolutions which they are privileged to move, and upon which they are entitled also to divide the council, too often prove to be the proverbial Dead-Sea Apple that crumbles to the touch. They have yet no binding force and cannot influence the policy of Government. As regards the substantial modification introduced in the composition of the Executive Councils of both the Imperial and the Provincial Governments it has to be noticed, that public opinion does not count for anything and popular representatives of unquestioned ability, judgement and independence, who fought for the reform, are carefully excluded from the list. Men like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr G.K. Gokhale,* Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee and Dr. Raj Behary Ghose have no place in these Councils, and the people cannot be very much blamed if they still labour under the impression that the bureaucracy are ill-disposed to admit their equals and that there is still a marked tendency to take away with one hand what is given with the other.

The voice of the people thus still continues to be practically the same cry in the wilderness that it used to be before, with this difference that, that voice has found a channel for its articulation and cannot now be stifled. People are not there-

*Alas ! Mr. Gokhale is no more ! Since these pages were sent to the press the saintly politician has passed away leaving a void in this ill-fated country which is not likely to be soon filled up.

fore wanting who honestly think that the present Councils are at best counterfeit representations of representative institutions as understood in the British constitution. They certainly bear a striking family resemblance to not a few of the mimic reforms which have found their way in this country and among which mention may be made of the system of trial with the aid of assessors with which a renowned political juggler, more than thirty years ago, hoodwinked the people of this country as being as fair substitute for Trial by Jury. From this, however, it must not be inferred that these reforms are altogether discounted. In fact they are neither such shams as some hyper-critics among us would represent them to be ; nor are they the very quintessence of British statesmanship as Sir Valentin Chirol and others of his schools would have us believe. They undoubtedly mark a distinct advance in Indian politics and constitute a substantial instalment of political enfranchisement of the people. If they have done nothing else, these reforms must be admitted to have furnished the people with powerful weapons for clearing the ground before them, while they are not yet out of the wood. Lord Morley's imagination may not be able to pierce through the prevailing gloom to catch the faintest glimpse of India's future destiny ; but all the same he may have been the unconscious instrument in the hand of an inscrutable Providence to work out her salvation, and it may be the proud privilege of the future historian to reckon him as the Simon de Montfort of an Indian Parliament. The Congress from the very outset pressed either for the abolition or for the reform of the Council of the Secretary of State. Although no statutory reform has yet been introduced, the appointment of two Indians to this Council has gone a great way towards a fair recognition of the principle of representation in this Council so persistently advocated by the Congress ; while the recent attempt of Lord Crewe for the reform of this Council was an augury of considerable importance towards a satisfactory solution of the question, though unfortunately that attempt has proved abortive at least for the present.

Such is the brief survey of the work done by the Congress during the last twenty-eight years of its existence. With all its lapses and shortcomings, it must be fairly conceded even by its worst critics, that this is no mean record of its achievements ; while its friends will readily admit that the Congress has worked out almost a revolution in the country unprecedented in the history of a subject people under an alien rule. Apart from its political aspects the Congress has been the fountain-head and mainspring of not a few of the activities which have manifested themselves in various directions during the last quarter of a century and inspired the people with ideas of a noble, manlier and healthier life.

The Native States—An Object Lesson

It may not be in the recollection of many at this distance of time, that at one of the early stages of the Congress a question was actually raised and discussed in the Press as to whether the sphere of the movement should not be extended to the independent Native States. It was, however, wisely decided that the subjects of these States should be left to themselves and the work of the Congress confined to British India only. But the blessed contagion did not take much time in crossing the frontiers and spreading far beyond the British territories when the echo of the Congress was also heard in some of these independent principalities, although it was there the Princes rather than the People who took time by the forelock and adopted the initiative in advanced administration. The enlightened rulers of Baroda, Mysore and Travancore have set an example even to the paramount power, the significance of which cannot be lost upon the minds of the more advanced British subjects. Much has been said and written on the supposed differences between the East and the West and where logic has failed, fallacies have been invoked to support the contention that India is constitutionally unfit for the advanced institutions of the West and that no attempt can therefore be made to cultivate them even in a hot-house in this country. But these Indian princes have, among other

things, conclusively proved that representative institutions are not altogether foreign to Indian instincts and that there need be no nervousness about either the introduction of free and compulsory education among the masses, or in the separation of the judicial and the executive functions of a State. What a sad commentary this is to the vacillating policy of a mighty, distrustful bureaucracy !

NON-VIOLENT NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

The course of our anti-colonial struggle had a basically different turn when Mahatma Gandhi took over the leadership of the Congress and declared at the special session held at Calcutta in September, 1920 under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai that the British government was a 'Satan' with whom no cooperation was possible.* The adoption of Gandhi's proposal of non cooperation at this session and its confirmation at the regular session of the Congress held at Nagpur in December, 1920 made it very clear that henceforth not reforms but a revolution by truthful and non-violent means became the motto of the national organisation. Thus the way was cleared for the ushering in of a new era of the revolutionary movement of the masses following the path of truth and non-violence. In this way, the creed of the Congress changed from the proclamation of the aim of securing self government within the Empire by constitutional means to the new aim of the attainment of swaraj 'without the Empire if necessary' by all peaceful and legitimate means. The non-cooperation movement should be regarded as the first popular agitation for winning swaraj and though Gandhi's hope of getting it within a year could not be fulfilled, this movement certainly paved the way for its eventual fulfilment.

*A little earlier on 15 August, 1919, Lalaji had said these words in his 'Message to the Punjabis' ; "We are neither fit nor ripe for a militant revolutionary struggle. We want a revolution but not force or violenceorganise the middle class, the peasants, the workers. Follow Gandhi."

SWARAJ THROUGH NON-COOPERATION**I***

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

I am too weak to stand and deliver my address. My friend, Mr. Sri Krishna Singh, has told you that last year when the coolies of Jamalpur were on strike he came over to see me at Ahmedabad and requested me to come to Jamalpur. But I was engaged in some other important work and so failed to comply with his request. I say frankly I like the occupation of a *kisan* more than I like the profession of a barrister. To my heart a labourer has a higher place than a pleader. Last year when I heard of the distress of the coolies of Jamalpur, I was sorely aggrieved, but on account of my preoccupation with some other work I pleaded my inability to come. Today I am much pleased to meet you all, especially the coolies of Jamalpur. Your gathering today is very large and I fear my voice will not reach each and every one of you. So I shall be very brief in my say. It is the duty of every Indian, whether he be Hindu or Mohammedan, Arab or Afghan, male or female, to think deeply over the present condition of India—to analyse minutely the situation. It is also the duty of every one of you to devise ways and methods for the weeding out of the present-day evils. The Government has disappointed seven crores of our Muslim brethren. It has broken its pledge to Turkey and has practically dismembered it. This Government has forced our brothers in the Punjab to crawl on their bellies and has offered sundry other unthinkable humiliations to them. It has caused our students, even infants of six or seven years of age to walk sixteen miles a day in the noon-day scorching sun four times to salute the Union Jack—in consequence of which some of the tender boys gave up their ghosts. This Government has massacred 1,500 innocent men in the Punjab and now tells us to forget it. It says that it has no hand in the destiny of the Khilafat. I ask you never to bow down, never to salute this Government. I ask you not to participate in the actions of the Government. We can remove Satan only by

*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at Monghyr on 11 December 1920.

forsaking its company. If we admit that this Government has inculcated Satanic elements in us, then I say it is our duty to forsake it. If this Government does not confess its blunders, if this Government does not give out to the world that the way in which the Punjab and the Khilafat affairs have been disposed of is wrong, if the Government does not repent of its misdeeds and beg pardon for them, we shall know no rest. We can remove the Satanic Government by two means : one, by means of the sword, and the other, by means of non-co-operation. The greybeards of the Hindus and Mussulmans have come to the decision that we cannot succeed if we unsheathe our swords. If we once do so, instead of bringing the Government to its knees we ourselves shall be no more and all wrongs and atrocities that have been perpetrated will go unrevenged. But if we adopt non-violent non-co-operation, we are bound to succeed. If you admit that we should bid adieu to Satan, then we should seek the help and favour of God, as has been enjoined on us by the Koran, the *Gita* and *Tulsidas*. We should see that we do not grow angry with anyone, see that we do not abuse any Englishmen, nor like to cut their throats. We don't want to show contempt to any Khan Bahadur who does not renounce his title, we don't want to abuse a pleader who does not suspend his practice. We don't want to coerce any student who does not leave his college or school. The only thing that we want is that if they do not accede to our requests we should non-co-operate with them. Neither should we help them in any way nor should we receive help from them. It will not harm anybody. God will come to our help and realize the extent of our misery. I have asked you all to non-co-operate, but I ask you all to co-operate with yourselves. Hindus and Mohammedans should live in unity ; they are the sons of a common mother. The Hindus should stick to their own religion and so should the Mohammedans. But there seems no reason to me why they should fall out with one another. We should offer our heads for the sacrifice at a time when the religion of our seven crore Muslim brethren is at stake. If you keep away wrath and apply yourself whole-heartedly to non-co-operation, I

assure you that you shall have swaraj, undo the Punjab wrongs and wrest away Mesopotamia, Thrace and other places within one year. There are six items in the non co-operation movement. First, the renunciation of titles, etc. ; secondly, withdrawal from schools and colleges—those students who are above sixteen years of age should ask leave of their parents to leave college and school ; if they do, well and good ; if they do not, they should leave college and school of their own accord ; thirdly, suspension of practice by pleaders and decision of cases in arbitration courts ; fourthly, boycott of Councils and of persons who have entered Councils ; fifthly, use of swadeshi goods and cloth. We should prepare more cloth with the help of the charkha as the cloth turned out by Indian mills is not sufficient to meet Indian demands.

II*

The very fact that so many of you cannot understand Hindi, which is bound to be the national medium of expression throughout Hindustan in gatherings of Indians belonging to different parts of the land, shows the depth of the degradation to which we have sunk, and points to the supreme necessity of the Non-co-operation Movement which is intended to lift us out of that condition. This Government has been instrumental in degrading this great nation in various ways, and it is impossible to be free from without co operation amongst ourselves which is in turn impossible without a national medium of expression.

But I am not here today to plead for that medium. I am to plead for the acceptance by the country of the programme of non-violent, progressive non-co-operation. Now all the words that I have used here are absolutely necessary and the two adjectives 'progressive' and 'non-violent' are integral parts of a whole. With me non-violence is part of my religion, a matter of creed. But with the great number of Mussulmans non-violence is a policy ; with thousands, if millions of Hindus, it is equally a matter of policy. But whether it is a creed

*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at Calcutta on December 13, 1920.

or a policy, it is utterly impossible for you to finish the programme for the enfranchisement of the millions of India without recognizing the necessity and the value of non-violence. Violence may for a moment avail to secure a certain measure of success but it cannot in the long run achieve any appreciable result. On the other hand all violence would prove destructive to the honour and self-respect of the nation. The blue-books issued by the Government of India show that inasmuch as we have used violence, military expenditure has gone up, not proportionately but in geometrical progression. The bounds of our slavery have been forged all the stronger for our having offered violence. And the whole history of British rule in India is a demonstration of the fact that we have never been able to offer successful violence. Whilst therefore I say that rather than have the yoke of a Government that has so emasculated us, I would welcome violence, I would urge with all the emphasis that I can command that India will never be able to regain her own by methods of violence.

Lord Ronaldshay, who has done me the honour of reading my booklet on Home Rule, has warned my countrymen against engaging themselves in a struggle for a swaraj such as is described in that booklet. Now though I do not want to withdraw a single word of it, I would say to you on this occasion that I do not ask is India to follow out today the methods prescribed in my booklet. If they could do that they would have Home Rule not in a year but in a day, and India by realizing that ideal wants to acquire an ascendancy over the rest of the world. But it must remain a day-dream more or less for the time being. What I am doing today is that I am giving the country a practicable programme not for the abolition of law-courts, posts, telegraphs and of railways but for the attainment of parliamentary swaraj. I am telling you that so long as we do not isolate ourselves from this Government, we are co-operating with it through schools, law courts and Councils, through service, civil and military, and payment of taxes and foreign trade.

The moment this fact is realized and co-operation is effected, this Government must totter and fall to pieces. If I knew that the masses were prepared for the whole programme at once, I would not delay in putting it at once to work. It is not possible, at the present moment, to prevent the masses from bursting out into wrath against those who come to execute the law : it is not possible that the military would lay down their arms without the slightest violence. If that were possible today, I would propose all the stages of non-co-operation to be worked simultaneously. But we have not secured that control over the masses ; we have uselessly frittered away precious years of the nation's life in mastering a language which we need least for winning our liberty ; we have frittered away all those years in learning liberty from Milton and Shakespeare, in deriving inspiration from the pages of Mill, whilst liberty could be learnt at our doors. We have thus succeeded in isolating ourselves from the masses ; we have been westernized. We have failed these 35 years to utilise our education in order to permeate the masses. We have sat upon the pedestal and from there delivered harangues to them in a language they do not understand and we see today that we are unable to conduct large gatherings in a disciplined manner. And discipline is the essence of success. Here is therefore one reason why I have introduced the word 'progressive' in the non-co-operation resolution. Without any impertinence I may say that I understand the mass mind better than anyone amongst the educated Indians. I contend that the masses are not ready for suspension of payment of taxes. They have not yet learnt sufficient self-control. If I was sure of non-violence on their part I would ask them to suspend payment today and not waste a single moment of the nation's time. With me the liberty of India has become a passion. Liberty of Islam is as dear to me. I would not therefore delay a moment if I found that the whole of the programme could be enforced at once.

It grieves me to miss the faces of dear and revered leaders in this assembly. We must miss here the trumpet voice of

Surendranath Banerji, who has rendered inestimable service to the country. And though we stand as poles asunder today, though we may have sharp differences with him, we must express them with becoming restraint. I do not ask you to give up a single iota of principle. I urge non-violence in language and in deed. If non-violence is essential in our dealings with the Government, it is more essential in our dealings with our leaders. And it grieves me deeply to hear of recent instances of violence reported to have been used in East Bengal against our own people. I was pained to hear that the ears of a man who had voted at the recent elections had been cut [off] and night-soil had been thrown into the bed of a man who had stood as a candidate. Non-co-operation is never going to succeed in this way. It will not succeed unless we create an atmosphere of perfect freedom, unless we prize our opponents' liberty as much as our own. The liberty of faith, conscience, thought and action which we claim for ourselves must be conceded equally to others. Non-co-operation is a process of purification and we must continually try to touch the hearts of those who differ from us, touch their minds and their emotions, but never their bodies. Discipline and restraint are the cardinal principles of our conduct and I warn you against any sort of tyrannical social ostracism. I was deeply grieved therefore to hear of the insult offered to a dead body in Delhi and feel that if it was the action of non-co-operators they have disgraced themselves and their creed. I repeat we cannot deliver our land through violence.

It was not a joke when I said on the Congress platform that swaraj could be established in one year if there was sufficient response from the nation. Three months of this year are gone. If we are true to our salt, true to our nation, true to the songs we sing, if we are true to the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Koran, we would finish the programme in the remaining nine months and deliver Islam, the Punjab and India.

I have proposed a limited programme workable within one year, having special regard to the educated classes. We seem to be labouring under the illusion that we cannot possibly live without Councils, law-courts and schools provided by the Government. The moment we are disillusioned we have swaraj. It is demoralizing both for the Government and the governed that a hundred thousand pilgrims should dictate terms to a nation composed of three hundred millions. And how is it they can thus dictate terms? It is because we have been divided and they have ruled. I have never forgotten Hume's frank confession that the British Government was sustained by the policy of 'Divide and Rule.' Therefore it is that I have laid stress upon Hindu-Muslim unity as one of the most important essentials for the success of non-cooperation. But it should be no lip unity, nor bania unity; it should be a unity broad-based on a recognition of the heart. If we want to save Hinduism, I say, for God's sake do not seek to bargain with the Mussulmans. I have been going about with Maulana Shaukat Ali all these months, but I have not so much as whispered anything about the protection of the cow. My alliance with the Ali brothers is one of honour. I feel that I am on my honour, the whole of Hinduism is on its honour, and if it will not be found wanting, it will do its duty towards the Mussulmans of India. Any bargaining would be degrading to us. Light brings light, not darkness, and nobility done with a noble purpose will be twice rewarded. It will be God alone who can protect the cow. Ask me not today, 'What about the cow?' Ask me after Islam is vindicated through India. Ask the Rajas what they do to entertain their English guests. Do they not provide beef and champagne for their guests? Persuade them first to stop cow-killing and then think of bargaining with Mussulmans. And how are we Hindus behaving ourselves towards the cow and her progeny? Do we treat her as our religion requires us? Not till we have set our own house in order and saved the cow from the Englishmen have we the right to plead on her behalf with the Mussulmans. And the

best way of saving the cow from them is to give them unconditional help in their hour of trouble.

Similarly what do we owe to the Punjab ? The whole of India was made to crawl on her belly inasmuch as a single Punjabi was made to crawl in that dirty lane in Amritsar : the whole womanhood of India was unveiled inasmuch as the innocent women of Manianwalla were unveiled by an insolent officer ; and Indian childhood was dishonoured in that school-children of tender age who were made to walk four times a day at stated places within the Martial [Law] area in the Punjab and to salute the Union Jack, through the effect of which order two children, seven years old, died of sunstroke having been made to wait in the noonday sun. In my opinion it is a sin to attend the schools and colleges conducted under the aegis of this Government so long as it has not purged itself of these crimes by proper repentance. We may not with any sense of self-respect plead before the courts of the Government when we remember that it was through the Punjab courts that innocent men were sentenced to be imprisoned and hanged. We become participators in the crime of the Government by voluntarily helping it or being helped by it.

The women of India have intuitively understood the spiritual nature of the struggle. Thousands have attended to listen to the message of non violent non-co-operation and have given me their precious ornaments for the purpose of advancing the cause of swaraj. Is it any wonder if I believe in the possibility of gaining swaraj within a year after all these wonderful demonstrations ? I would be guilty of want faith in God if I underrated the significance of the response from the women of India. I hope that the students will do their duty. The country certainly expects the lawyers, who have hitherto led public agitation, to recognize the new awakening.

I have used strong language but I have done so with the greatest deliberation. I am not actuated by any feeling of revenge. I do not consider Englishmen as my enemy. I recognise the worth of many. I enjoy the privilege of having.

many English friends, but am a determined enemy of the English rule as conducted at present and if the power—*tapasya*—of one man could destroy it, I would certainly destroy it, if it could not be mended. An Empire that stands for injustice and breach of faith does not deserve to stand if its custodians will not repent, and non-co-operation has been devised in order to enable the nation to compel justice.

I hope that Bengal will take her proper place in this movement of self-purification. Bengal began swadeshi and national education when the rest of India was sleeping. I hope that Bengal will come to the front in this movement for gaining swaraj and gaining justice for the Khilafat and the Punjab through purification and self-sacrifice.

III*

The resolution which I have the honour to move is as follows :

The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.

I do not propose to detain you for any length of time over proposing this resolution to you in a few English words. I am already absolved from that infliction because Lala Lajpat Rai has already arrived and he has undertaken the task of explaining that resolution to you in English. I just want to say a few words, personal words, to those who may not have followed my Hindustani. In my humble opinion, the Congress will have done the rightest thing if it unanimously adopts this resolution.

There are only two kinds of objection, so far as I understand, that will be advanced from this platform. One is, that we may not today think of dissolving the British connection. What I say is that it is derogatory to national dignity to think

*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the Nagpur Congress on 28 December, 1920.

of permanence of British connection at any cost. (Hear, hear.) We are labouring under a grievous wrong which it is the personal duty of every Indian to get redressed. This British Government not only refuses to redress the wrong but it refuses to acknowledge its mistakes, and so long as it retains that attitude it is not possible for us to say that all that we want to get is by retaining the British connection. No matter what difficulties lie in our path, we must make the clearest possible declaration to the world and to the whole of India that we may not possibly have the British connection if the British people will not do this elementary justice. I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end the British connection at all costs unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India we do not want to destroy it. But if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then it is our bounden duty to destroy it. There is room in this resolution for both ; those who believe that by retaining the British connection we can purify ourselves and purify the British people and those who have no such belief. As for instance, take the extreme case of Mr. Andrews. He says all hope for India is gone for keeping the British connection. He says there must be complete severance, complete independence. There is room enough in this creed for a man like Mr Andrews also. Take another illustration—a man like myself or my brother Shaukat Ali. There is certainly no room for us if we have eternally to subscribe to the doctrine that, whether these wrongs are redressed or not, we shall have to evolve ourselves within the British Empire : there is no room for me in that creed. Therefore, this creed is elastic enough to take in both shades of opinion, and the British people will have to beware that, if they do not want to do justice, it will be the bounden duty of every Indian to destroy that Empire.

Then we have some argument as to the means. I will have the right of reply, so I do not want to address myself on that question now.

I want just now to wind up my remarks with a personal appeal drawing your attention to an object-lesson that was

presented in the Bengal camp yesterday. If you want swaraj, you have got a demonstration of how to get swaraj. There was a little bit of skirmish, a little bit of squabble and a little bit of difference in the Bengal camp, as there will always be differences so long as the world lasts. I have known differences between husband and wife because I am still a husband. I have noticed differences between parents and children because I am still a father of four sons and they are all strong enough to destroy their father so far as bodily strength is concerned. So I possess that varied experience of husband and parent. I know that we shall always have squabbles, we shall always have differences. But the lesson that I want to draw your attention to is that I had the honour and privilege of addressing both parties. They gave me their undivided attention and, what is more, they showed their attachment, their affection and their fellowship for me by accepting the humble advice that I had the honour of tendering to them, and I advised them: "I am not here to distribute justice; the justice that can be awarded is only through our worthy President. But I ask you not to go to the President. You need not worry him. If you are strong, if you are brave, if you are intent upon getting swaraj, and if you really want to revise the creed, then you will bottle up your rage, you will bottle up all the feelings of injustice that may rankle in your hearts and forget these things here under this very roof." And I told them to forget their differences, to forget the wrongs. I do not want to tell you or go into the history of that incident. Probably most of you know. I simply want to invite your attention to the fact. I do not say they have settled their differences. I hope they have. But I do know that they undertook to forget the differences. They undertook not to worry the President, they undertook not to make any demonstration here or in the subjects committee, and all honour to those who listened to that advice. I only want my Bengal friends and all the other friends, who have come to this great assembly with a fixed determination, to seek nothing but the betterment of their country, to seek nothing but the advance of their respective rights, to seek nothing but the

conservation of the national honour. I appeal to everyone of you to copy the example set by those who felt aggrieved and who felt that their heads were broken. I know, before we are done with this great battle on which we have embarked at the special session of the Congress, we have to go probably, possibly, through a sea of blood, but let it not be said of us or any of us that we are guilty of shedding blood, but let it be said by generations yet to be born that we suffered, that we shed not somebody's blood but our own; and so I have no hesitation in saying that I do not want to show much sympathy for those who had their heads broken or who were said to be even in danger of losing their lives. What does it matter? It is much better to die at the hands at least of our own countrymen. What is there to revenge ourselves about or upon? So I ask everyone of you that if at any time there is blood boiling within you against some fellow countryman of yours, even though he may be in the employ of the Government, even though he may be in the secret service, or he may belong to the detective department, you will take care not to be offended and not to return blow for blow. Understand that the very moment you return the blow from the detective your cause is lost. That is your non-violent campaign and so I ask everyone of you not to retaliate but to bottle up all your rage, to dismiss your rage from you, and you will rise braver men. I am here to congratulate those who have restrained themselves from going to the President and bringing the dispute before him. Therefore I appeal to those who feel aggrieved to feel that they will have done the right thing in forgetting it and if they have not forgotten I ask them to try to forget the thing— and that is the object-lesson to which I wanted to draw your attention.

If you want to carry this resolution do not carry it only by acclamation, though I shall want your acclamation for this resolution. But I want you to accompany the carrying out of this resolution with a faith and a resolution, which nothing on earth can move, that you are intent upon getting swaraj at the earliest possible moment, and that you are intent

upon getting swaraj by means that is legitimate, that is honourable, and by means that is non-violent, that is peaceful. You have resolved upon this thing : that, so far as we can see today, we cannot give battle to this Government by means of steel but we can give battle by exercising what I have so often called soul-force and soul-force is not the prerogative of one man or a sannyasi or even of a so called saint. Soul-force is the prerogative of every human being, female or male, and therefore I ask my countrymen, if they want to accept this resolution, to accept it with that fixed determination and to understand that it is inaugurated under such good and favourable auspices as I have described to you. I have done. If there is anything which I have got to explain I shall do so in my reply. I thank you very much for giving me this patient hearing. May God grant that you will pass this resolution unanimously. May God grant that you will also have the courage and the ability to carry out the resolution and that within one year.

IV*

I have before me the original resolution along with the various amendments, including one about our remaining in the Empire and another suggesting omission of the word "republic". I still maintain that, if our grievances remain unredressed, we should sever the British connection. This is why we are amending the constitution. If redress is available, the possibility of arriving at a compromise on swaraj through discussions is not ruled out. There is no trickery in this. In the form proposed, the Congress creed leaves the door open to both parties. If this is trickery, we should welcome it. Legitimate and peaceful means are the very foundation of the Congress programme. We should proclaim to the Europeans that their lives are safe in our country, that their guns and other things are no weapons of destruction but are mere toys. At the moment, there seems to be no possibility of violence.

*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the conclusion of the Subjects Committee debate on 28 December, 1920.

So far we addressed ourselves to the educated classes, but now we should address ourselves to the masses. If we can have swaraj only through unworthy means, that swaraj itself will be an unworthy thing. If we wish to undo the humiliation offered to Islam we should remain peaceful, otherwise the movement would collapse. If we take to violence the Congress will be declared an illegal body and crushed out of existence. We should achieve our goal by honourable means. "Responsible government" is a misleading phrase. No dictator will rise to power in India, since swaraj will be rule by the people themselves. If the people in the country themselves want dictatorship, nobody can prevent its rise.

V*

The Resolution means that the aim of the National Congress is to achieve swaraj, and that by just, pure and peaceful means. The Congress believes that we should secure swaraj as early as possible, this very day if we can have it.

In this Resolution, the Congress also indicates what we should do to achieve swaraj. It says that we do not want to secure it by the power of the sword. We do not want it through falsehood or by sacrificing truth. On the contrary, our means should be as pure as our aim. The Resolution, therefore, means that we pledge ourselves to secure swaraj and to adopt just, truthful and peaceful methods for the purpose.

I consider it my good fortune that I have an opportunity of moving such an important resolution in this Congress. Let me remind you that till now the aim of the Congress was to secure what they call "Responsible Colonial Government" within the Empire, such as what the other colonies enjoy, and to do this by means consonant with law. Law here means the law of the British Empire. We should respect the law of this Government, even though it refuses to offer a satisfactory

*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the plenary session of the Congress held at Nagpur on 28 December, 1920

solution of the Khilafat problem and, on the Punjab issue does not even admit its error, let alone doing justice. We may not seek to end the Government, if we wish to remain in the Congress—this was what the [Congress] constitution meant till this day. It is impossible for Hindus and Muslims to submit any longer to a Government which has perpetrated such naked injustice and refuses to repair it. We, therefore, declare through this Resolution that we want swaraj. It is only when we have swaraj that we shall have justice in the matter of the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs.

But I do not want that we should adopt the methods of the West for securing swaraj. I know that Hindus and Muslims have not renounced for all time the use of force for securing swaraj, but everyone realizes that today we cannot succeed in our aim by using force and hence it is that we have resorted to non-co-operation. We cannot save anything, ourselves or our dharma or the Empire, by using force. If you agree with me in this, let none of you oppose this Resolution.

I know that there are two parties among our thinking men, and to one of them belongs the Hon'ble Pandit Malaviyaji, who is like an elder brother to me. He has got a cold today and is running a temperature and hence could not come here to express his views. I shall, therefore, tell you what he thinks. There are not many who serve their country as well as he does and you know this. Even if we cannot agree with a man like him, we should listen to him patiently and respectfully. He argues that we talk of bringing down the British Empire, but that it is beyond our power. How can India, unarmed and weak, bring down such a mighty Empire? He says that we should not mislead the people by talking to them about what is beyond their strength. That anyone who leads them to attempt such a thing is a fool. If, as he says, it were really beyond the people's strength to bring down this Empire, I would certainly accept his advice. On this point, however, I differ from him. I believe that every man or woman has in him or her the necessary strength for winning swaraj. While

we have the assurance in our heart that this body is inhabited by an *atman*, so long, I believe, we have it in us to win swaraj. The 33 crores of Hindus and Muslims are staunch in their faith, have God ever on their lips and would welcome death in His name. For one cow slaughtered, a thousand Hindus are ready to shed blood, others' and their own. For any Muslim humiliated, large numbers of others are ready to shed their blood, and to take others'. While India has such Hindus and Muslims, I shall never say that it is impossible for the country to win swaraj and I shall never permit this goal of ours, winning swaraj, to be relegated to some distant future.

This Empire has been guilty of so many crimes that living under its flag is tantamount to being disloyal to God. It is, therefore, my humble prayer to you all to give your approval to this Resolution.

Those among us who feel that we are much too weak, that with the strength we have we cannot win swaraj, even to them this goal should be acceptable since we wish to secure it peacefully and without sacrificing truth. That being so, we may place the highest ideal before us.

Those who feel that the Empire may yet come round, that an Empire of this character will sooner or later be persuaded to do justice, that we shall succeed, after entering the Councils, in bringing it to see reason, even such persons will have a place in the Congress in virtue of this Resolution.

We have no desire to punish the Empire. The Resolution does not say that we should necessarily end our connection with it in order to have swaraj. If this same Empire agrees to do justice and grant us our rights, we are ready to stay in it. I claim that this path is the path of justice and that, following it, we can come to no harm.

Therefore, if you accept this Resolution, if you agree that we must win swaraj and that in the manner suggested in this Resolution, I would ask you to pledge yourselves solemnly to

that effect. Your task will not be over when you have passed the Resolution. If you take a solemn pledge, you will most assuredly win swaraj and succeed in getting the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat injustice redressed.

You will also have speakers tell you [from this platform] that we should be free to employ any means to achieve our aim. I shall give my reply at the right time. At the moment, I shall merely say that, in defining the aim of the Congress, we should take the existing circumstances into account. For me, personally, it is a matter of dharma not to seek swaraj through violence even if it could be won in that manner, not to seek even *moksha*, if it were possible to attain it through violence. If I could perform an act of *bhakti* to God, I would not have such *bhakti* [through violence]. For us, the means, non-violence and truth, as suggested in this Resolution are the only right ones. Through them alone will you succeed in securing redress for the injustices inflicted on you.

I do not wish to tell you anything more than this. Knowing the great awakening in the country, I believe that is no need to tell you more.

Before concluding my remarks, I wish to tell you of an incident which was in the nature of an object-lesson [to us]. There was a minor scuffle in the Bengali camp yesterday. I was grieved to hear about it. I went to the spot to explain to the people how we should behave if we wanted to win swaraj. I told the friends very respectfully, what I wished to. I told them I could not say which party was in the right and which in the wrong, but I appealed to them, if they wanted to see their strained relations repaired, if they wanted swaraj for India and wished to wash their hearts clean and pure, to forget all that had happened and bury the entire quarrel at that spot before leaving it. Both the parties saw the reason of this. If we want swaraj, we should not appeal to the Government when a brother has injured us, has even broken our head. Why should we approach the President either? If anyone assaults me with a stick, I would bow to him in return. The occasion is the right

opportunity to win him over. If we do not behave in this manner, we can achieve nothing. If you are firm, if you are brave, if you are determined to win swaraj and if you really wish to change the Congress creed, you will have to conquer your anger. If any sense of wrong is gnawing at your hearts, you will have to repress it and forget everything about the matter. And so I ask this favour of my friends from Bengal and all others who are attending this great assembly with an earnest determination, that they will not spend their efforts on anything except the task of making their country strong, will not be concerned over anything except advancing their own rights and will not think of anything except upholding the self-respect of their country. I commend to you all the example of those who were agitated yesterday and felt that their heads had been broken. Before the great fight on which we embarked at the special session of the Congress is over, we shall, perhaps, have to cross a sea of blood. I know this full well. But we should see that none of us is charged with having shed others' blood. Let it be said by future generations that we did not take others' lives, but gave our own. I, therefore, feel no hesitation in saying that I do not want to show much sympathy for those whose heads were broken and who are said to have been in danger of their lives. What does it matter if it was so? Death at the hands of one's countrymen is to be welcomed. For what and on whom should we seek revenge? Even if a detective or a Government official assaults me, I would not complain to the Government against him; I would complain to God. Till we learn to co-operate among ourselves to the utmost, we shall not be free. My Bengali friends fell out among themselves, but they recovered their balance the moment they realized what they had done. I shall say nothing to those who approve of violence, but I can certainly urge my views on those who describe themselves as non-co-operators. The friends from Bengal have promised not to lose their temper. I congratulate the Bengal delegates on this. If you all do what they have done, I have not the slightest doubt that you will get swaraj. If you forgive a man, do not do so out of weakness. I would not, out of cowardice, submit to an assault;

there is courage, however, in forgiving out of compassion for the man, even a person who has inflicted a cruel outrage on me. In placing this Resolution before me, I present this object-lesson to you.

Simultaneously, I expect from you such faith and determination as nothing in the world can shake. I know that you are determined to get swaraj as early as possible and that you wish to secure it with legitimate, honourable, non-violent and peaceful means only. We cannot match the Government's armed strength, but we can pit against it what I have called soul-force. No person, whether a sannyasi or a so-called Mahatma, has a monopoly of this force. All human beings, men and women, have it in them to employ it. I ask those who wish to accept this Resolution to do so with determination and believe that it will have been accepted at an auspicious moment such as I described earlier. May God move you to vote for it unanimously and inspire in you courage and strength to see its aim fulfilled within a year.

RESOLUTION ON NON-CO-OPERATION*

Whereas in the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country ; and

Whereas the people of India are now determined to establish swaraj ; and

Whereas all methods adopted by the people of India prior to the last Special Session of the Indian National Congress have failed to secure due recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially with reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab ;

Now this Congress while reaffirming the resolution on non-violent non-co-operation passed at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta declares that the entire or any part or parts of the scheme of non-violent non-co-operation, with the

*Passed at the Nagpur Congress session on December 30, 1920.

renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress or the All-India Congress Committee and that in the meanwhile, to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf :

- (a) by calling upon the parents and guardians of school-children (and not the children themselves) under the age of 16 years to make greater efforts for the purpose of withdrawing them from such schools as are owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government and concurrently to provide for their training in national schools or by such other means as may be within their power in the absence of such schools ;
- (b) by calling upon students of the age of 16 and over to withdraw without delay, irrespective of consequences, from institutions owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, if they feel that it is against their conscience to continue in institutions which are dominated by a system of government which the nation has solemnly resolved to bring to an end, and advising such students either to devote themselves to some special service in connection with the non-co-operation movement or to continue their education in national institutions ;
- (c) by calling upon trustees, managers and teachers of Government affiliated or aided schools and municipalities and local boards to help to nationalize them ;
- (d) by calling upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspend their practice and to devote their attention to national service including boycott of law courts by litigants and fellow lawyers and the settlement of disputes by private arbitration ;
- (e) in order to make India economically independent and self-contained by calling upon merchants and traders

to carry out a gradual boycott of foreign trade relations, to encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in that behalf by having a scheme of economic boycott planned and formulated by a committee of experts to be nominated by the All-India Congress Committee ;

- (f) and generally, inasmuch as self-sacrifice is essential to the success of non-co-operation, by calling upon every section and every man and woman in the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement ;
- (g) by organizing Committees in each village or group of villages with a provincial central organization in the principal cities of each Province for the purpose of accelerating the progress of non-co-operation ;
- (h) by organizing a band of national workers for a service to be called the Indian National Service ; and
- (i) by taking effective steps to raise a national fund to be called the All-India Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund for the purpose of financing the foregoing National Service and the non-co-operation movement in general.

This Congress congratulates the nation upon the progress made so far in working the programme of non-co-operation, specially with regard to the boycott of Councils by the voters, and claims in the circumstances in which they have been brought into existence, that the new Councils do not represent the country and trusts that those who have allowed themselves to be elected in spite of the deliberate abstention from the polls of an overwhelming majority of their constituents, will see their way to resign their seats in the Councils, and that if they retain their seats in spite of the declared wish to their respective constituencies in direct negation of the principle of democracy, the electors will studiously refrain from asking for any political service from such Councillors.

This Congress recognizes the growing friendliness between the police and the soldiery and the people, and hopes that the former will refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfilment of orders of their officers, and, by courteous and considerate behaviour towards the people, will remove the reproach hitherto levelled against them that they are devoid of any regard for the feelings and sentiments of their own people.

And this Congress appeals to all people in Government employment pending the call of the nation for resignation of their service, to help the national cause by importing greater kindness and stricter honesty in their dealings with their people and fearlessly and openly to attend all popular gatherings whilst refraining from taking any active part therein and, more specially, by openly rendering financial assistance to the national movement.

This Congress desires to lay special emphasis on non-violence being the integral part of the non-co-operation resolution and invites the attention of the people to the fact that non-violence in word and deed is as essential between people themselves as in respect of the Government, and this Congress is of opinion that the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of non-co-operation

Finally, in order that the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs may be redressed and swaraj established within one year, this Congress urges upon all public bodies, whether affiliated to the Congress or otherwise, to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violence and non-co-operation with the Government and, inasmuch as the movement of non-co-operation can only succeed by complete co-operation amongst the people themselves, this Congress calls upon public associations to advance Hindu-Muslim unity and the Hindu delegates of this Congress call upon the leading Hindus to settle all disputes between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, wherever they may be

existing, and to make a special effort to rid Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability, and respectfully urges the religious heads to help the growing desire to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes.

GANDHIJI ON THE SECRET OF SWARAJ

The Congress resolution has rightly emphasized the importance of swadeshi and thereanent of greater sacrifice by merchants.

India cannot be free so long as India voluntarily encourages or tolerates the economic drain which has been going on for the past century and a half. Boycott of foreign goods means no more and no less than boycott of foreign cloth. Foreign cloth constitutes the largest drain voluntarily permitted by us. It means sixty crores of rupees annually paid by us for piece-goods. If India could make a successful effort to stop that drain, she can gain swaraj by that one act.

India was enslaved for satisfying the greed of the foreign cloth manufacturer. When the East India Company came in, we were able to manufacture all the cloth we needed, and more for export. By processes that not be described here, India has become practically wholly dependent upon foreign manufacture for her clothing.

But we ought not to be dependent. India has the ability to manufacture all her cloth if her children will work for it. Fortunately India has yet enough weavers to supplement the out-turn of her mills. The mills do not and cannot immediately manufacture all the cloth we want. The reader may not know that, even at the present moment, the weavers weave more cloth than the mills. But the latter weave five crore yards of fine foreign counts, equal to forty crore yards of coarser counts. The way to carry out a successful boycott of foreign cloth is to increase the output of yarn. And this can only be done by hand-spinning.

To bring about such a boycott, it is necessary for our merchants to stop all foreign importation, and to sell out, even at a loss, all foreign cloth already stocked in India, preferably to foreign buyers. They must cease to speculate in cotton, and keep all the cotton required for home use. They must stop purchasing all foreign cotton.

The mill-owners should work their mills not for their profits but as a national trust and therefore cease to spin finer counts, and weave only for the home market.

The householder has to revise his or her ideas of fashion and, at least for the time being, suspend the use of fine garments which are not always worn to cover the body. He should train himself to see art and beauty in the spotlessly white khaddar and to appreciate its soft unevenness. The householder must learn to use cloth as a miser uses his hoard.

And even when the householders have revised their tastes about dress, somebody will have to spin yarn for the weavers. This can only be done by everyone spinning during spare hours either for love or money.

We are engaged in a spiritual war. We are not living in normal times. Normal activities are always suspended in abnormal times. And if we are out to gain swaraj in a year's time, it means that we must concentrate upon our goal to the exclusion of everything else. I therefore venture to suggest to the students all over India to suspend their normal studies for one year and devote their time to the manufacture of yarn by hand-spinning. It will be their greatest act of service to the motherland, and their most natural contribution to the attainment of swaraj. During the late War our rulers attempted to turn every factory into an arsenal for turning out bullets of lead. During this war of ours, I suggest every national school and college being turned into a factory for preparing cones of yarns for the nation. The students will lose nothing by the occupation : they will gain a kingdom here and hereafter. There is a famine of cloth in India. To assist in removing this dearth is surely an

act of merit. If it is sinful to use foreign yarn, it is a virtue to manufacture more swadeshi yarn in order to enable us to cope with the want that would be created by the disuse of foreign yarn.

The obvious question asked would be, 'If it is so necessary to manufacture yarn, why not pay every poor person to do so?' The answer is that hand-spinning is not, and never was, a calling like weaving, carpentry, etc. Under the pre-British economy of India, spinning was an honourable and leisurely occupation for the women of India. It is difficult to revive the art among the women in the time at our disposal. But it is incredibly simple and easy for the school-goers to respond to the nation's call. Let no one decry the work as being derogatory to the dignity of man or of students. It was an art confined to the women of India because the latter had more leisure. And being graceful, musical, and as it did not involve any great exertion, it had become the monopoly of women. But it is certainly as graceful for either sex as is music, for instance. In hand-spinning is hidden the protection of women's virtue, the insurance against famine, and the cheapening of prices. In it is hidden the secret of swaraj. The revival of hand-spinning is the least penance we must do for the sin of our forefathers in having succumbed to Satanic influences of the foreign manufacturer.

The school-goers will restore hand-spinning to its respectable status. They will hasten the process of making khaddar fashionable. For no mother, or father, worth the name will refuse to wear cloth made out of yarn spun by their children. And the scholars' practical recognition of art will compel the attention of the weavers of India. If we are to wean the Punjabi from the calling not of a soldier but of the murderer of innocent and free people of other lands, we must give back to him the occupation of weaving. The race of the peaceful *julahis* (weavers) of the Punjab is all but extinct. It is for the scholars of the Punjab to make it possible for the Punjabi weaver to return to his innocent calling.

I hope to show in a future issue how easy it is to introduce this change in the schools and how quickly, on these terms, we can nationalize our schools and colleges. Everywhere the students have asked me what new things I would introduce into our nationalised schools. I have invariably told them I would certainly introduce spinning. I feel, so much more clearly than ever before, that, during the transition period, we must devote exclusive attention to spinning and certain other things of immediate national use, so as to make up for past neglect. And the students will be better able and equipped to enter upon the new course of studies.

Do I want to put back the hand of the clock of progress? Do I want to replace the mills by hand-spinning and hand-weaving? Do I want to replace the railway by the country cart? Do I want to destroy machinery altogether? These questions have been asked by some journalists and public men. My answer is: I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such. What I want to do at the present moment is to supplement the production of yarn and cloth through our mills, save the millions we send out of India, and distribute them in our cottages. This I cannot do unless and until the nation is prepared to devote its leisure hours to hand-spinning. To that end we must adopt the methods I have ventured to suggest for popularising spinning as a duty rather than as a means of livelihood.

GANDHIJI ON THE CONDITIONS OF SWARAJ

Swaraj is easy of attainment before October next if certain simple conditions can be fulfilled. I ventured to mention one year in September last because I knew that the conditions were incredibly simple and I felt that the atmosphere in the country was responsive. The past five months' experience has confirmed me in the opinion. I am convinced that the country has never been so ready for establishing swaraj as now.

But it is necessary for us as accurately as possible to know the conditions. One supreme indispensable condition is the continuance of non-violence. The rowdyism, hooliganism, looting that we have recently witnessed the disturbing elements. They are danger signals. We must be able to arrest their progress. The spirit of democracy cannot be established in a year in the midst of terrorism whether Governmental or popular. In some respects popular terrorism is more antagonistic to the growth of the democratic spirit than the Governmental. For the latter strengthens the spirit of democracy, whereas the former kills it. Dyerism has evoked a yearning after freedom as nothing else has. But internal Dyerism, representing as it will, terrorism by a majority, will establish an oligarchy such as will stifle the spirit of all free discussion and conduct. Non-violence, therefore, as against the Government and as between ourselves is absolutely essential to speedy success. And we must be able to devise means of observing it on our part in spite of the gravest provocations.

The next condition is our ability to bring into being the Congress organization in terms of the new constitution, which aims at establishing a Congress agency in every village with a proper electorate. It means both money and ability to give effect to Congress policies. What is really needed is not a large measure of sacrifice but ability to organize and to take simple, concerted action. At the present moment we have not even succeeded in carrying the Congress message to every home in the 7½ lakhs of villages of India. To do this work means at least 250 honest workers for as many districts, who have influence in their respective districts and who believe in the Congress programme. No village, no circle need wait for instructions from headquarters for founding their respective organizations.

There are certain things that are applicable to all. The most potent thing is swadeshi. Every home must have the spinning-wheel and every village can organize itself in less than a month and become self-supporting for its cloth. Just imagine what

this silent revolution means and there would be no difficulty in sharing my belief that swadeshi means swadeshi and *swadharna*.

Every man and woman can give some money—be it even a pice—to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. And we need have no anxiety about financing the movement. Every man and woman can deny himself or herself all luxury, all ornamentation, all intoxicants at least for one year. And we shall have not only money but we shall have boycotted many foreign articles. Our civilization, our culture, our swaraj depend not upon multiplying our wants—self-indulgence—but upon restricting our wants—self-denial.

We can do nothing without Hindu-Muslim unity and without killing the snake of untouchability. Untouchability is a corroding poison that is eating into the vitals of Hindu society, *Varnashram* is not a religion of superiority and inferiority. No man of God can consider another man as inferior to himself. He must consider every man as his blood-brother. It is the cardinal principle of every religion.

If this is a religious battle, no argument is necessary to convince the reader that self denial must be its supreme test. Khilafat cannot be saved, the Punjab inhumanity cannot be redressed, without godliness. Godliness means change of heart—in political language, changing the angle of vision. And such a change can come in a moment. My belief is that India is ripe for that change.

Let us then rivet our attention on :

1. Cultivating the spirit of non-violence.
2. Setting up Congress organizations in every village.
3. Introducing the spinning-wheel in every home and manufacturing all the cloth required for our wants through the village weaver.
4. Collecting as much money as possible.
5. Promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, and

6. Ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying ourselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs.

Have we honest, earnest, industrious, patriotic workers for this very simple programme? If we have, swaraj will be established in India before next October.

DIVIDE AND RULE*

Sir William Vincent's speech before the Legislative Assembly makes painful reading. I shall hope that he has been kept in utter darkness by his informants and that the speech is ignorant, not unscrupulous.

It is a plausible defence of the Government's policy of repression. It is a distortion or concoction of fact. It is an appeal to our cupidity and a misinterpretation of the motives of non-co-operationists.

He says that the declared object of non-cooperationists is paralysis of the Government and that "in their efforts to achieve the object there is no source of discontent which they have not used." Now both these statements are half truths. The primary object of non-co-operation is nowhere stated to be paralysis of the Government. The primary object is self-purification. Its direct result must be paralysis of a Government which lives on our vices and weakness. Similarly, it is a dangerous half-truth to say that we have left no source of discontent unused. We could not help using sources of legitimate discontent. But non-co-operationists have rigidly refrained from using any and every discontent, if only because we would weaken our cause if we did. The illustration of what I mean will be best seen from the refutation of the very next sentence which Sir William has spoken in support of his contention: "Wherever they find discord between employer and employee, there some agent or emissary of non-co-operation party proceeds at once to foster discontent and promote

*Gandhiji's rejoinder to the statement of Home Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

ill-feeling." This is not only untrue, but it is an incitement to the two to oppose non-co-operation. The avowed policy of non-co-operation has been not to make political use of disputes between labour and capital. They have endeavoured to hold the balance evenly between the two—we would be fools if we wantonly set labour against capital. It would be just the way to play into the hands of a Government which would greatly strengthen its hold on the country by setting capitalists against labourers and *vice versa*. In Jaharia, for instance, it was a non co-operator who prevented an extending strike. The moderating influence in Calcutta was that of non-co-operators. The latter will not hesitate to advance the cause of strikers where they have a just grievance. They have ever refused to end their assistance to unjust strikes. "Where there is a racial ill-feeling", declares Sir William Vincent, "there emissaries hurry on their evil errand." He must know that this is a false statement. There is a racial feeling between Englishmen and Indians. There is the memory of Jallianwala—an evergreen. But "these emissaries" have been veritable messengers of peace. They have everywhere restrained the fury of the unthinking. And I make bold to say that but for the existence of the spirit of non-violence, there would have been more innocent blood spilt in spite of the threat of Dyerism and O'Dwyerism. Our fault has lain in refusing to lick the boot that has kicked, in withdrawing co-operation until there was frank repentance. Non-co-operators are to be blessed for turning the fury of an outraged people from Englishmen to the system they are called upon to administer.

But Sir William is nothing if he is not thorough in his attempt to divide and rule. He declaims: "Where there are quarrels between landlord and tenant, have we not seen this in the United Provinces—there again proceed these emissaries of evil to propagate unrest, and stir up disorder." Sir William should know that the tenant movement is under the control of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru whose one purpose regarding the tenants has been to educate them to be patient

and calm. Sir William has simply attempted to set the landlords against the non-co-operation movement. Fortunately the landlords know as well as the tenants that, so long as they are just, they have nothing to fear from non-co-operators.

“The movement”, says Sir William, “is purely destructive, and so far as I have been able to ascertain contains no element of constructive ability”. It is undoubtedly destructive in the sense that a surgeon who applies the knife to a diseased part may be said to make a destructive movement. This destructive movement bears in it the surest seed to construction as the surgeon’s knife contains the seed of health. Is temperance destructive? Are national schools springing up everywhere destructive? Are the thousands of spinning-wheels destructive of a nation’s prosperity? They will destroy foreign domination whether it hails from Lancashire or is threatened from Japan.

Having attempted to set classes against masses, Sir William proceeds to paralyze both with the feelings of helplessness and the fear of internal strife and aggression from without. Is Hindu-Muslim unity such flimsy stuff that we shall begin to quarrel as soon as the British guns are withdrawn from our shores? Were we sixty years ago less able to protect ourselves than we are now? Or is it not a fact that, judged by the Western standard, we were never so helpless as we now are? Self-government, as I have said before, connotes the power of self-protection, and a country which cannot protect itself is not prepared for immediate and complete self-government. In this one sentence Sir William has unwittingly condemned British rule and proved the necessity of immediate mending or ending of that rule. According to my method—the method of suffering or soul force,—the country is today prepared for self-protection. According to Sir William’s standard, the reforms have nothing in them to enable India even in a hundred years to arm herself for defence against a combination of world powers. Judged by that standard, the reforms do forge stronger the chains that bind India and make her feel

helpless. The speaker talks glibly of impending destruction of every vested interest. He needs to be reminded that the greatest vested interest of India—her self-sufficiency—was destroyed by this foreign domination and the speaker's plan will still further deepen India's poverty.

Even as Sir William has misrepresented non-co-operators' motives, so has he misconstrued their methods. We have not failed in our effort regarding the educated classes. I admit that the response in practice might have been greater from them. But I make bold to say that the vast majority of them are with us in spirit, though the flesh being weak, they are not able to make what from their point of view is a sacrifice. We have been trying to act on the masses from the commencement. We regard them as our mainstay, for it is they who have to attain swaraj. It is neither the sole concern of the monied men nor that of the educated class. Both must subserve their interest in any scheme of swaraj, and as soon as the masses have attained sufficient self-control and learnt mass discipline, we shall not hesitate, if necessary, to advise them to suspend payment of taxes to a Government that has never truly looked after their welfare and that has exploited and terrorized them every time they have shown the least symptom of rising against their exploitation.

Sir William has been extremely disingenuous in describing the Government's methods of dealing with non-co-operation. Defence of India Act, he will not use against men who have hurt nobody and who are restraining people from committing violence. But he is using ordinary statutes against them in an extraordinary manner under a licence given to him by non-co-operators who will not challenge orders in a court of law. He will not conciliate the malcontents by granting swaraj, for that would head to anarchy. He does not bother his head about the two things which have caused all the unrest and which have acted like two active and corroding poisons in the Indian body—the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs. He does not tell us what catastrophe is likely to befall India if

the Khilafat promises were redeemed and the Punjab wound healed.

He has ornamented his extraordinary speech with an ungentlemanly and insinuating attack upon the Ali Brothers who are putting up a noble fight for Islam and India, and a still more ungentlemanly attack on a 'gentleman of the name of Yakub Hasan', and an ungracious reference to his Turkish wife.

As I have said it was painful for me to read the speech, still more painful to have to criticize it. I assure the reader that, self-restrained as I am in language, the speech has been a severe strain upon my capacity for restraint. I have scored out many an adjective which I believe would accurately describe Sir William's performance. I am sorry.

*The Viceroy Speaks**

What the Viceroy said with reference to Mr. Shafi's speech is perhaps equally true of his own. For His Excellency described Mr. Shafi's speech as postprandial oratory. I have been, in my early days, a student more or less accurate of the so-called historic speeches delivered by various Prime Ministers at the Mansion-house. They seemed to me to have always an air of unreality about them. And it grieves me, after having studied the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy, to have to say that this one also has the same air of unreality about it. Not that Lord Reading had intended to clothe his speech with any such air. On the contrary, there are in it evident traces of his having laboured to deliver a true message to an expectant India. But the speech has failed, in my humble opinion, in doing so, because of the many limitations that the office of a Viceroy carries with it. He could not, for instance, override the tradition of claiming infallibility for British rule. He laid it down as a proposition, "beyond the possibility of a doubt", that "here in India there can be no trace and must be no trace of racial inequality." There is no more unreal proposition to

*Gandhiji's reply to the statement of Viceroy Lord Reading on his views critical of non-cooperation movement.

the ear of the Indian than this, because his experience, be he ever so tall, belies it. Superiority of race is a passion, has become almost a religion with the average Englishman. Nor does he strive to conceal it from view. It obtrudes itself upon you in India as it does in the Colonies. It is written in the statute-book. One misses in the Viceregal speech a frank recognition of the many failures of the past and, therefore, a sincere desire for opening a new page.

If His Excellency, in my humble opinion, was hardly happy in his statement of the 'fundamental principle of British rule', he was, I fear, even less so in his reference to Maulanas Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali. I recognize that he has been exceedingly cautious in his speech. He has attempted not to wound susceptibilities. As a matter of fact, there was no question of wounding susceptibilities. He need not have spared the Maulanas where they might have erred. The statement made by the Brothers was instigated by me and me alone. It is an apology tendered to friends, and not to the Government. It is made not to evade prosecution, but to put themselves right with their own conscience and with their friends. The assurance to them, therefore, that there would be no prosecution so long as they abided by their undertaking was gratuitous, if not offensive. Lord Reading's Government is free to take up prosecution against the Brothers at any moment they choose.

This campaign of non-co-operation has no reference to diplomacy, secret or open. The only diplomacy it admits of is the statement and pursuance of truth at any cost. The Viceroy showed me the speeches; I realized that some passages in them did not read well. They were capable of being interpreted as an incitement to violence, and I realized that, prosecution or no prosecution, there was no doubt in my mind as to the advice I should tender to the Brothers. I venture to suggest to His Excellency that, if he is anxious to disarm non-co-operators, he will do so only by becoming undiplomatic and absolutely frank. The latter seek and need no shelter or protection, and I invite His Excellency to reciprocate by not shielding the offenders amongst the governing class.

Indeed, there is no room in the India of to-day and of tomorrow for a governing class. His Excellency will therefore find out his mistake, if he clings to the belief that "Indians will respond whole heartedly to the just rule which we (British) intend to carry on." I venture to prophesy that it is not what the British intend that will count for the future destiny of India, but what the Indians themselves intend. And they are claiming, more and more insistingly to govern themselves, anyhow. Good government, they are coming to see, is no substitute for self-government.

The fear, then, is not about His Excellency's intentions, which I am convinced are good, but the fear is as to the ideal he is working for. He thinks of a high destiny which is in store for India at some indefinable period, whereas non-co-operators at any rate are of opinion that India's high destiny is even now being frustrated by the existing system, which appears to them to be devised for her prolonged, if not perpetual, subjection. Sometimes a difference of degree itself constitutes a difference of ideals. And I hold it to be an ideal totally different from India's, when anybody considers, that, whilst the distant goal must be one of freedom for India, its present state must be that of tutelage, Swaraj is India's birth-right, as the late Lokamanya Tilak truly said. And India throughout these long, long years, has been balked of her birthright. No wonder that she has become impatient.

Lord Reading will, perhaps, now better appreciate the truth of the proposition he has read and heard, viz, that any action of the Government that falls short of the fullest reparation, however good it may appear in itself, will, by non-co-operators at least, be charged with a bad motive, that of prolonging India's agony in her slave-state. British rule, today, lies under a shadow. It is tainted with the blood of the innocent victims of Jallianwala, and with treachery towards Islam. And even as the purest milk poured into a poison bowl will be counted by every sane man as poison, so will every act of the British Government be judged in the light of its immediate past. The unrest of India can only be cured by dealing with the causes

which have brought it about, never by covering the bitterness thereof by sweets of office or other privileges, no matter how tempting they may be, if they are not capable of dealing effectively with the causes themselves.

TAGORE'S CRITICISM OF NON-CO-OPERATION

I*

It is in the fitness of things that Mahatma Gandhi, frail in body and devoid of material resources, should call up the immense power of the meek, that has been lying waiting in the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India. The destiny of India has chosen for its ally, Narayana, and not Narayanasena,...the power of soul and not that of muscle. And she is to raise the history of man, from the muddy level of physical conflict to the higher moral altitude. What is swaraj? It is *maya*. It is like a mist, that will vanish, leaving no stain on the radiance of the Eternal. However we may delude ourselves with the phrases learnt from the West, swaraj is not our objective. Our fight is a spiritual fight,...it is for Man. We are to emancipate Man from the meshes that he himself has woven round him,...these organizations of National Egoism. The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of higher value than the shelter of the cocoon. If we can defy the strong, the armed, the wealthy,... revealing to the world the power of the immortal spirit, the whole castle of the Great Flesh will vanish in the void. And then Man will find his swaraj. We, the famished, ragamuffins of the East, are to win freedom for all Humanity. We have no word for 'Nation' in our language. When we borrow this word from other people, it never fits us. For we are to make our league with Narayana, and our victory will not give us anything but victory itself; victory for God's world. I have seen the West; I covet not the unholy feast, in which she revels every moment, growing more and more bloated and red and dangerously delirious. Not far us is the mad orgy of midnight,

*Letter dated 2 March, 1921.

with lighted torches, but awakenment in the serene light of morning.

II*

The idea of non-co-operation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education but to non-education. It has at its back a fierce joy of annihilation which at its best is asceticism, and at its worst is that orgy of frightfulness in which the human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of normal life, finds a disinterested delight in an unmeaning devastation, as has been shown in the late War and on other occasions which came nearer to us. *No* in its passive moral form is asceticism and in its active moral form is violence. The desert is as much a form of *himsa* (negligence) as is the raging sea in storm; they both are against life.

I remember the day, during the swadeshi movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me in the first floor hall of our Vichitra house. They said to me that if I would order them to leave their schools and colleges they would instantly oblige. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland. And yet long before this popular ebullition of excitement I myself had given a thousand rupees, when I had not five rupees to call my own, to open a swadeshi store and courted banter and bankruptcy. The reason of my refusing to advise those students to leave their schools was because the anarchy of a mere emptiness never tempts me, even when it is resorted to as a temporary measure. I am frightened of an abstraction which is ready to ignore living reality... You know that I do not believe in the material civilization of the West just as I do not believe in the physical body to be the highest truth in man. But I still less believe in the destruction of the physical body, and the ignoring of the material necessities of life. What is needed is establishment of harmony between the

*Letter dated 5 March 1921.

physical and spiritual nature of man, maintaining of balance between the foundation and superstructure. I believe in the true meeting of the East and the West. Love is the ultimate truth of soul. We should do all we can not to outrage that truth, to carry its banner against all opposition. The idea of non-co-operation unnecessarily hurts that truth. It is not our hearth fire, but the fire that burns out our hearth and home.

III*

Today, at this critical moment of the world's history, cannot India rise above her limitations and offer the great ideal to the world that will work towards harmony in co-operation between the different peoples of the earth? Men of faith will say that India requires to be strong and rich before she can raise her voice for the sake of the whole world. But I refuse to believe it. That the measure of man's greatness is in his material resources is a gigantic illusion casting its shadow over the present-day world—it is an insult to man. It lies in the power of the materially weak to save the world from this illusion and India in spite of her penury and humiliation, can afford to come to the rescue of humanity...

...The ideal of India is against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others, and which inevitably leads to ceaseless conflicts. Therefore my one prayer is, let India stand for co-operation of all peoples of the world. The spirit of rejection finds its support in the consciousness of separation, the spirit of acceptance in the consciousness of unity. India has ever declared that unity is Truth, and separateness is *maya*. This unity is not a zero, it is that which comprehends all and therefore can never be reached through the path of negation. Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide. If in the spirit of national vaingloriousness we shout from our house-tops that the West has produced nothing that has an infinite value for man, then we but create a serious

*Letter dated 13 March, 1921.

cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. For it is the mind of man in the East and West which is ever approaching Truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision ; and if it can be true that the strength of West has betrayed it into an utter misdirection, then we can never be sure of the standpoint of the East. Let us be rid of all false pride and rejoice at any lamp being lit at any corner of the world, knowing that it is a part of the common illumination of our house....

The West has misunderstood the East which is at the root of the disharmony that prevails between them. But will it mend the matter if the East in her turn tries to misunderstand the West ? The present age has powerfully been possessed by the West ; it has only become possible because to her is given some great mission for man. We from the East have to come to her to learn whatever she has to teach us ; for by doing so we hasten the fulfilment of this age. We know that the East also has her lessons to give, and she has her own responsibility of not allowing her light to be extinguished, and the time will come when the West will find leisure to realize that she has a home to hers in the East where her food is and her rest.

THE FAULTS OF THE PROGRAMME*

The principles and the policy of the movement (N.C.O.) are substantially sound and have achieved unexpected success. But, with every month that has passed, the need has been felt in many quarters of revising and adjusting the programme in the light of previous experience. When dispassionately judged by such experience it will be found that some details of the Congress programme have not achieved the desired success, on the contrary, they have formed weak links in the main. When these items were undertaken, they evoked a large volume of adverse criticism in the ranks of Congress workers. Many of them have, no doubt, subordinated their differences, out of loyalty to the main cause, and quite a large number,

*M.R. Jayakar's critical reactions given in his presidential address at the Third Thana District Conference in 1921.

out of their esteem and regard for the persona'ity of the selfless and saintly promoter of the movement. But, notwithstanding this admirable display of loyalty among Congress men, the fact remains and has to be reckoned with, that many items have proved unsuccessful and perhaps act, in consequence as a clog on the movement. The soreness, which some of these details have caused, still remains and is operating to divide some from others and makes them lukewarm or unwilling to throw their whole heart into this movements. If these co-workers of ours could be placated by a revision of the Congress programme, so that most of the earnest-minded workers for the cause could substantially agree to its adoption, it would be a great advantage. And herein perhaps, lay the chief merit of the amendment moved by Mr. B.C. Pal, which was rejected by the majority at Calcutta. Taken at its highest, our success has gone much beyond what that amendment would have made possible. It would have had the further advantage of retaining within our ranks many of our former associates, who are, at present, either lukewarm or hostile.

When once the necessity is recognized of revising the programme in the light of these comments, which are being made throughout the country, it will not be difficult to find out in what directions the programme has not achieved the expected success and the reasons for the same. For instance, the boycott of schools and colleges has not succeeded and even persons of known and undoubted loyalty to the cause complain that *the action of Congress workers has caused more harm than good*. They concentrated too much on the disruption of existing institution and less on the creation and maintenance of new ones on "national" lines. They forgot that a student cannot be left idle in the street and that, if the Congress must call him out, it can only be after it has provided for him a good substitute. In Bombay we let pass the psychological movement when we could have founded and reared up an excellent college with various branches. Public enthusiasm was ripe for it in the early part of the year, but we let it evaporate in declamation and emotional exaltation. Some went so far as

to suggest that it was no part of the Congress programme to start national Colleges, though the terms of the Congress Resolution specially provided for it. 50000 boys are out in idleness, says Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, some may glorify in this catastrophe, but there are many who regard this disruptive event with sad dismay. We have experimented too much in youthful sacrifice. Our youth have reciprocated with more live and tenderness than we have shown for their welfare. The few good institutions which Congress workers have created, are suffering from our neglect and apathy and dragging a weary existence. The shadow of a name has, very often been pursued to the abandonment of the substance, and we now find a large number of boys in the country, who are practically loafing in the streets, with a vague ambition "to do something patriotic."

Our ban on lawyers has, likewise, not attained much success. Few lawyers, whose sacrifice of their practice has added strength to the Congress cause, have responded to the call. The prestige of British court in civil suits between an *Indian and Indian* has not been destroyed and can not be so easily destroyed; for, ordinarily this variety of legal contest is not much coloured with injustice, as political trials are. If lawyers had been called out, because, being a trained class of workers, the country wanted their undivided time and attention at this critical hour, it would have been a different matter, and, perhaps, if the call had been so made, many more would have responded to it. But it was put the wrong way, and the lawyer was made to appear as if, in pursuing his profession, he was acting sinfully and must atone for it by a complete withdrawal from practice. The result was that, out of sheer self respect, many really good lawyers have declined to respond to the call. Many could not give up their practice for pecuniary reasons and were too honest to adopt subterfuges calculated to create a semblance of sacrifice. Lawyers have become "pariahs" of our present political life. Some of them had borne the brunt of public agitation for more than two decades; their place is vacant and no class of workers of equal intelligence and keenness has come forward to take it.

This part of the Congress programme has created a foul atmosphere of hypocrisy, intolerance, imposture and conceit in the Congress Camp, in which modesty, self-respect and honesty often find it hard to hold their place. In our enthusiasm, we forget that many lawyers value their profession for the training it affords in courage, truthfulness, honour and toleration. No other profession trains a young man so well to withstand and expose injustice and to uphold the tradition of truth and honour. Our past political history of thirty-three years is a brilliant record of the services rendered by lawyers to the Congress cause. If a greater sacrifice than before was needed now on their part, a direct call on their self-respect and patriotism on this footing should have been made, but no good has arisen from putting the lawyer under the ban of ridicule and infamy. The call made upon them was singularly harsh. No other class of public workers was required to give up his means of livelihood. The importing merchant supports British prestige as much as, if not more than, the lawyer and yet he stalks unabashed in the Congress camp without closing his shop. No ban was put on litigants, without whom the lawyer cannot thrive. I am, therefore, surprised that notwithstanding so much hardship, so many lawyers have come out and are to be found in the vanguard of the movement. The few courts of justice, we called into existence, had not have enough support and are a mockery.

The failure of these parts of the programme is now practically admitted and they are now pushed into the background. It would be better if, in revising the programme in the next Session of the Congress, these limbs, which have ceased to function or respond to the laws of our growth, are boldly amputated. In any event, they make clear the necessity of a revision, so as to render the programme more effective, elastic and practical.

The fight requires to be carried on in manifold ways. Some may carry it in the Councils, face to face with the officials. Why cannot "Non-Co-operation," in its proper sense, be practised in the Councils? Sir P.M. Mehta, when he left the

Council Hall with his colleagues on a memorable occasion or when he, face to face with the then Home Member mercilessly uncloaked the preposterous pretensions of the bureaucracy, was fighting with weapons and a spirit which many Non-Co-operators or the true and accredited brand may envy in these days. If Non-Co-operation is an *attitude* of the mind, as its eminent author conceives it, and not so much a programme or a creed, a Council Hall is as fitting a place for its display as a mass meeting in a Marwadi Vidyalaya. The spirit resides in the mind and is independent of the environment. It is no ground to say that, often times, the environment frightens a weakling, for we do not build our doctrines only on the possibility of men being weak and timid.

We have already departed from the original rigor of our programme in this behalf. A Non Co-operator can now compete at Municipal elections. He can offer advice to Government in or outside private interviews. Non-co-operator papers do report the proceedings of the Legislative Bodies, comment on them, and suggest remedies for the benefit of the Government, Scarcely a non-cooperator now-a-days speaks without referring to gubernatorial utterances and orders in Council. He comments on the policies of Government, suggesting remedies as he goes on with his comments. Several lawyers in Bombay, who are still in practice, are now allowed to occupy prominent places as speakers at Non-Co-operation meetings. This is as it should be, for we cannot afford to ignore or despise, in the stunted state as our resources, the co-operation of any honest workers, prepared to make a sacrifice commensurate with his capacity. This is all done now silently and as a concession. My plea is for making the programme so wide, elastic and natural, as to turn these concessions into acknowledged rights. The Congress creed calls upon us to obtain Swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means. All weapons, all avenues of work and all manner of public workers are enjoined on us, for the attainment of the common end. Why set up acetic standards, unpractical tests, and unnatural bans, which may often let in the dishonest but keep

out the honest man, whose co-operation, even with a difference, is often worth loving. The programme may become theoretically less perfect, perhaps logically less consistent, but it will certainly be more natural, real and effective.

The exact form of the modification must be left to future discussion. I would, therefore, suggest as follows :

(1) That foreign propaganda, so summarily put an end to at the last Congress, be resumed and if possible extended within proper bounds. The Indian view has to be put forward before the civilised world. This is an urgent need of the hour. The Government are doing it from their own point of view, and we ought to do the same from ours.

(2) That the time limited be abandoned, for reasons mentioned in para 25 below.

(3) That the elections to Legislative Bodies, whenever a chance should occur, should be contested perhaps with the limitation, that in the Provinces, unless complete autonomy is introduced, Congressmen should not accept office under the present system of Government. This may be, if so desired, made conditional on Government agreeing to dissolve the present Bodies.

(4) A large modification of the educational boycott, including the total abrogation of the compulsory part of it. Attention should be concentrated more on the creation of national institutions than on the withdrawal of students as a set propaganda. When such institutions are projected, and some of them actually in existence, and they compete favourably with state-aided institutions. I have no doubt that sufficient impulses have been generated in the country to secure the exercise of the option in favour of the former. Side by side with this, an intensive propaganda should be carried on in the Councils and outside, having for its object the popularisation of the Universities by a change of the Act governing them, and also the "nationalisation" of the existing system of state-aided education, so as to bring it into greater accord with the

present-day requirements and aspirations of the people. To me, it seems to be such a pity that we have deserted this avenue of agitation, to be feebly utilised by a few persons in the present Councils, struggling against an unsuitable environment. Nine crores, which is nearly the total output on State education, we are not in a position to despise, and it seems wrong to wait for this reform till complete Swarajya is attained, which may or may not be for some time yet. Considerable harm has been done to the cause of education by the exclusion of this avenue of work from the programme of Congress activities. The fate of primary education in the Bombay presidency will clearly illustrate the point I am making.

(5) A large modification of the ban against lawyers, so as to admit of several grades of sacrifice from complete abstention from practice to a giving up of the entirety or a part of the earnings. A way should be found for getting as many lawyers as possible to work in this movement provided they are prepared to give the cause at least a part of their time or money. The Congress ought to modify its call, so as to make it possible for all honest-minded lawyers to bear the burden of the country's cause, commensurate with their capacity to sacrifice.

Similarly, in the matter of conducting defence in British courts, some curious departures have come to be made from the strict Congress rule. The departures only indicate that, in its operation, the rule has been found unpractical and irksome. Congressmen are not to engage pleaders nor offer a defence with legal aid. They are simply to make a "statement". A statement is as much an aid to the administration of justice as a lawyer-made defence, and in so far, it equally supports the prestige of British courts. Only, it has the disadvantage of being prolix and unconvincing. It, therefore, fails of its mark more often than a lawyer's defence.

Who can urge that the long and interesting statements made by the Ali Brothers and their co-accused in the trial at Karachi were out of place? Yet they had all the feathers

of a lawyer-made defence, as an aid to the court. The evidence was discussed, legal objections raised, relevancy commented on and the prosecution evidence answered. All this assistance was given to the court, helping it to arrive at truth and justice, precisely in the same way as a practising lawyer aids judicial administration.

If a statement is permitted, why cannot a lawyer be employed in Court to make it more convincing and exculpatory? A statement must be based on facts, and these facts become material only when proved. On what rational grounds can, therefore, a statement permitted and yet the material evidence supporting it disallowed? It is no answer to say that the statement is meant for the guidance of the *Swaraj* Courts when the same are established, for when that eventuality happens, a statement supported by evidence will be of any better help to these *Swaraj* Courts than a mere statement? It is obvious that no *Swaraj* Court will liberate a man merely on his own statement, without further inquiry.

We are on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi undertaking an important part of his programme by starting Civil Disobedience in a district of Surat. It is very difficult to offer any useful comment on this undertaking because, beyond the general lines, his programme in its detail is not yet before the country. We can only hope that the resistance to law will not be so undertaken as to be widely interpreted as a sort of charter for general lawlessness. That would be a catastrophe for which the country is not prepared. This seems also to be Mr. Gandhi's opinion, for he has very prudently circumscribed the practice of the resistance with very severe restrictions, involving a moral and economic preparation. To disobey specific orders of Government or their officials, which have no moral sanction behind them or are illegal in their inception, is a comparatively easy matter, fraught with no far-reaching harm to the community. The disobedience, in such a case commands the moral approval of the civilised community, and ends only by affecting the prestige of the promulgator of

the order. But when a campaign is undertaken involving a wholesale and general defiance of order and authority, forces may arise, which, in the hands of inexperienced and enthusiastic associates or partisans, may reach extreme limits, involving the community in chaos, disorder and possibly violence. The country has had only a year's training in his (Mr. Gandhi) counsels of non-violent resistance—far too short a period for his countrymen to imbibe his spirit, in a manner worthy of his teaching. May we, therefore, hope that in launching on this undertaking he will seriously consider this aspect of the case? We shall, of course, watch this experiment but with concern and solicitude, feeling secure in the hope, created by his magnificent personality, that in his hands the destinies of the country are perfectly safe.

SWARAJ OR ANARCHY*

Swaraj or Home Rule

The Resolution of the Congress says that on account of the failure of Government to redress these grievances we must have 'Swaraj'. It is important to remember that long before these occurrences Mr. Gandhi had come to the conclusion that we must have Independence. It would accordingly seem dishonest on his part to say that these events led him to the demand for Swaraj or Home Rule.

In his scheme of "Home Rule for India" Mr. Gandhi said :

"Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English became Indianised, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilisation, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things."

Then in reply to the question that it is impossible that Englishmen should ever become Indianised, he says :

*From C. Sankaran Nair : *Gandhi and Anarchy*, pp. 51-115.

“To say that is equivalent to saying that the English have no humanity in them. And it is really beside the point whether they become so or not. If we keep our own house in order, only those who are fit to live in it will remain. Others will leave of their own accord.”

It is something that he gives a loophole to the Englishman to remain in India. To the question that there may be chaos and anarchy on account of the Hindu Mahomedan position, he states :

“I would prefer any day anarchy and chaos in India to armed peace brought about by the bayonet between the Hindus and Musalmans”.

When it was pointed out to him that the dissensions amongst the Hindus themselves may cause the same result, he is not dismayed. He says :

“We are not to assume that the English have changed the nature of the Pindharries and the Bhils. It is, therefore, better to suffer the Pindhari peril than that some one else should protect us from it and thus render us effeminate. I should prefer to be killed by the arrow of the Bhil than to seek nominal protection.”

When it was pointed out to him that for Home Rule at this stage we have not got an army for our own protection, he said the other day :

“I am here to confess that we are fully able to take charge of all military dispositions in the country and that we feel able to deal with all foreign complications. The worst that may happen is that we may be blotted out from the face of the earth”.

The following report is interesting ; we give it below from the Daily Express :

Q.—Are you anxious to take over the whole control of the army at once or would you make an exception of that object ?

A.—I think we are entirely ready to take up the whole control of the Army which means practically disbanding three fourths of it. I would keep just enough to police India.

Q.—If the army were reduced to that extent, do you not apprehend anything aggressive from the frontier territories ?

A —No.

Q.—My information, derived from Military sources, is that there are over half-a-million armed men on the frontier.

A.—You are right, I agree.

Q —These tribes have frequently attacked India hitherto. Why do you think they will refrain from doing so when India possesses home rule ?

A.—In the first instance, the world's views have changed and, secondly, the preparations that are now made in Afghanistan are really in support of the Khilafat. But when the Khilafat question is out of the way, then the Afghan people will not have any design on India. The warrior tribes who live on loot and plunder are given lakhs of rupees as subsidy. I would also give them a little subsidy. When the charkha comes into force in India, I would introduce the spinning wheel among the Afghan tribes also and thus prevent them from attacking the Indian territories. I feel that the tribesmen are in their own way God-fearing people.

But for the fact that he is well known to be a Saint and Mahatma, I would have had no hesitation in saying that his last observations about the Afghans show him to be either a fool or a knave.

He said on the 10th February 1921,

“There must be complete independence, if England's policy is in conflict with the Moslim sentiment on the Khilafat question or with the Indian sentiment in the Punjab”.

And in his recent speech at the Congress opposing the resolution for Independence it was said that if the Punjab and Khilafat demands are complied with Independence is not necessary. Well, he knows or ought to know they are impossible demands. The implication is plain and taken in conjunction with what has been said above as to the Western civilisation and the Indianisation of the English people, the conclusion that he is really aiming at Independence is inevitable. To certain Boy Scouts on the 23rd March, he was quite plain. He said :

“No Indian could remain loyal in the accepted sense to the Empire as it was at present represented and be loyal to God at the same time. An Empire that could be responsible for the terrorism of the martial law regime, that would not repent of the wrong, that could enter into secret treaties in breach of solemn obligations could only be reckoned as a Godless Empire. Loyalty to such an Empire was disloyalty to God”.

These have to be borne in mind when we consider the question of the Swaraj that he has put forward. The Swaraj that he works for is thus described :

“Swaraj means full Dominion status. The scheme of such swaraj shall be framed by representatives duly elected in terms of the Congress constitution. That means four anna franchise. Every Indian adult, male or female, paying four annas and signing the Congress creed will be entitled to be placed on the electoral list. These would elect delegates who would frame Swaraj constitution. This shall be given effect to without any change by the British Parliament”.

A more preposterous demand cannot be imagined. He excludes all these who do not belong to his Congress. Those who do not pay annas four and sign the Congress creed form the majority of the population. Again to ask the British Parliament to accept the scheme framed by his party however absurd, without examination of the same is absolute nonsense.

If Mr. Gandhi and his party can frame a scheme of Swaraj for the consideration of the rest of India, have it discussed with others, modified if necessary after such discussion, it may be, and it ought to be, placed before the Government and Parliament. But this is the last thing he will do, for various reasons. Mr. Gandhi himself will never do it because I doubt whether he has any correct idea of the Dominion status and all that it involves. Mr. Gandhi is not a student but an impulsive fanatic indifferent to facts but obsessed by phantasmagoria. He jumps to what he calls conclusions but which have in fact no premises. Again he will not see it done because what he really desires is not an honest settlement which will give India a further instalment of Swaraj but, as the preceding extracts show, what he wants is really absolute independence according to his professions but really anarchy or soul force. If he were honest in his desire to secure Swaraj he and his followers would not have boycotted the Councils but would have entered them to take further steps towards its attainment.

I am therefore satisfied that Mr. Gandhi does not aim at a fair settlement of the Punjab difficulties. He does not want an equitable peace satisfying the just claims of the Mahomedans. He does not want Parliamentary Swaraj or Home Rule. But for tactical purposes, he is putting them forward to destroy the English Government in order to attain his object of a society outlined in his "Indian Home Rule", some features of it I have set forth above. A society without Government, Railways, Hospitals, Schools, Courts, etc. His programme is therefore put forward to clear the way to obtain his object. This Swaraj is to be attained by, in the words of the Resolution, non-violent non-co operation with Government. And among others the following steps were recommended for adoption : (1) Boycott of Government-aided at schools and colleges and establishment of National schools and colleges, (2) Boycott of British Courts by Lawyers and litigants (3) Boycott of Reformed Councils (4) Boycott of foreign goods and use of spinning-wheels. Out of these I shall naturally take up the question of the boycott of Government-aided institutions

and the nature of education sought to be imparted by Mr. Gandhi.

Education

The system of Education which Mr. Gandhi apparently wants to introduce has already been tried in some parts of India. The results of a teaching confined to Eastern classics and vernaculars had already been apparent. It has produced a mentality amongst Hindus and Mahomedans which has divided them from one another. It has separated still further the Brahmins from non-Brahmins, the caste Hindus from the non-caste Hindus. It has again produced amongst those who have received that education a vague longing for speculative theories and a distaste for experiment and research by which theories may be tested. Of course, Mr. Gandhi does not know these results. His speeches and writings do not show that he ever cared to enquire into these questions. He does not want education to be imparted to the masses and western education to be imparted to anybody for the reason that it would make them discontented with their present lot in life, *i.e.* in other words he wants each class to remain in its present condition, the lower castes, slaves of their masters, the higher classes. This consequence follows from his acceptance of the caste system. He says "Varanashram (caste system) is inherent in human nature and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science. It does attach by birth. A man cannot change his Varna by choice. Prohibition against inter-marriage and inter-dining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul". He would relegate those Hindus outside the pale of caste, the panchamas or the so-called degraded classes, by whatever name they are called, to degradation for the service of the higher castes. His writings or speeches do not show any knowledge of Indian history and having spent the main portion of his life in a far-off country, the evils of the system perhaps never came to his knowledge. Otherwise he would have learned the following facts. It is this caste system which has brought about the conquest of India by the Mahomedans and the

Englishmen, both of whom were always supported by the lower castes against the higher. It is responsible for the large conversions to Christianity and Mahomedanism. It is responsible for a degradation of humanity for which no parallel can be found in slavery, ancient or modern. It is responsible for a good deal of Hindu-Mahomedan, Brahmin non-Brahmin problem and stands in the way of our social, economical and political progress. Yet Mr. Gandhi supports the system, though he advocates the removal of one or two blots which hardly affect the main structure. He enters on an elaborate disquisition on the benefits and necessity of caste which will not do credit to Macaulay's fourth form schoolboy. He shows no knowledge of the vast literature on the subject or of the main arguments against it. He is supporting the caste system to secure the support of the higher castes, without whose financial support his agitation must collapse. One of his own followers would have told him that caste has killed all the arts and sciences in this country. Sir P. C. Ray points out in his history of Hindu chemistry "the fear of losing caste was thus responsible for the loss of the faculty of independent enquiry and hence for the decline and decay of all the arts and science for which India was once so famous." Of course, he does not want that education which is indispensable for those who occupy the higher Government offices in the country. He does not want that education which is essential for the development of Indian manufacturing industrial and development of mineral resources.

Mr. Gandhi accordingly made his wicked attempt to destroy the National Hindu University of Benares and the Mahomedan University of Aligarh. They combined Eastern and Western learning. The attempt was happily unsuccessful. Strong pressure was put upon the students to leave the Schools and Colleges. Looking to the final results as disclosed in the Report of the Congress Secretary reviewing the work of 1921, Government have reasons to congratulate themselves. By far the majority of the aided institutions in Bengal have been recognised by the Educational Authorities to be very inefficient

and they have been attempting either to disaffiliate them or reduce their numbers to give more efficient instruction to those who remain, as a good number of them were institutions started for commercial purposes. It is remarkable that the great majority of the students who obeyed the Congress cause belonged to these aided institutions. Those who left the Government Schools and Colleges with better discipline and more efficient teaching were very few if any. I would refer the reader for further information as to the results of the education campaign to the speech of the President of the Thana conference, a genuine patriot (M R. Jayakar) who happens, however, to be one of Gandhi's followers.

Mr. Gandhi asked all the boys to withdraw now from the schools on the pretence that until the Government punishes the Punjab offenders in the manner advocated by him and satisfies the claims of the Khilafatists we should no longer associate with the Government, and we can thereby hasten the advent of Swaraj. This is a mere pretext. He advocated the substitution of the national kind of education as outlined by him in favour of the present system of education long before there was any Punjab or Khilafat questions. He advocated them in 1908 in his book "The Indian Home Rule." To say now that he advocated them on account of those reasons is sheer hypocrisy. The step will not hasten but might retard Swaraj. Even if the Punjab wrongs are redressed in the manner suggested and even if the Khilafatists are satisfied and Parliamentary Swaraj obtained, he will still be an advocate of the abstention from English Schools in favour of the system of national education as above set forth.

Vakeels and Courts

The same is the case about his propaganda about the Vakeels and the Courts. It never had any chance of success. I shall not dwell however upon this but would refer to Thana President's (M.R. Jayakar) speech to which in connection with education attention has been already drawn. He now puts them forth ostensibly for the purpose of compelling the

Government to redress the Punjab and other wrongs. As a fact he advocated them long before that in 1908, as I have already pointed out above. Here again it is sheer hypocrisy to say that they are advocated not as an end in themselves but as a means for the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs. He dare not openly advocate this as desirable in itself as he would then be laughed at.

Boycott of Councils

The other step that he advocates is abstention from the new councils. His followers generally have not voted at the elections or have stood for election. His reason given at the Calcutta Congress (September 1920) when he moved his resolution on non-co-operation is this : "I now come to the burning topic, viz , the boycott of the councils. Sharpest difference of opinion existed regarding this and if the house was to divide on it, it must divide on one viz., whether Swaraj has to be gained through the councils or without the councils. If we utterly distrust the British Government and we know that they are to-day unrepentant now, can you believe that the councils will lead to Swaraj and not tighten the British hold on India"? I can only ask him to read the history of the Parliamentary struggle for freedom in England which will show how freedom is won from reluctant monarchs and privileged classes. Even in India the subsequent history of the Legislative Councils has shown that the Government is willing to meet the councils half way and almost every question taken up by the councils has been advanced nearer solution. But I doubt whether there is any use of arguing with Mr. Gandhi. The real truth is as he has candidly avowed in "Indian Home Rule" that Parliamentary Government is in itself bad and India should not strive after it as it will stand in the way of his spiritual Swaraj. I need not argue this point so far as the followers of Gandhi are concerned as they are heartily sorry that they boycotted the councils. I refer on this point again to the Thana Conference President's (M.R. Jayakar) speech. They feel ashamed of themselves and the majority of them

desire the dissolution of the present councils and a re-election so that they might utilize these councils for more powerful Parliaments. Perhaps I should add that considering the undisciplined fanaticism of the non-co-operator and his total ignorance of development of political organization it is probably just as well that the councils were in their inception preserved from such a calamitous invasion. The council and the assembly have even in the short duration of their existence, achieved good results which are carrying us far and quietly on that true road to Home-Rule from which Mr. Gandhi seeks to divert us. Had the Non-Co-operators been members of these councils and had they acted in their present temper, they might well have wrecked the Reforms and have set back the clock of India's progress even more than they have done already. The boycotting is therefore in all probability a blessing though designed as a curse. Still the fact remains that the Councils might have done even more had Mr. Gandhi been dowered with the wisdom to see that India's interests would best be served by using the councils and the assembly as levers to obtain further freedom on sane, safe and constitutional lines.

*Boycott of Foreign Goods and the Universal use of
Spinning Wheels*

There is not only no objection to the latter but it is very much to be commended. It is very useful as a cottage or home industry and will find an occupation to many who might otherwise be idle. But it will not displace foreign goods at least without the aid of mills by foreign machinery.

All these with other minor ones are only steps to be taken to carry out the policy of non-violent non-co-operation for the attainment of Swaraj and Mr. Gandhi asks everybody, in fact the people of India, to carry on non-violent non-co-operation with the Government so as ostensibly to attain Swaraj but really I have no doubt as an end in itself.

I have already pointed out that non-violent submission to suffering and the consequent attainment of self-control over

oneself which he called Swaraj was the end which he had in view. He found that there was no use in directly advocating it. He therefore puts it forward as the chief instrument for obtaining the Parliamentary Swaraj which the people of India wanted. He based his appeal to the Hindus on the well-known doctrine of "Ahinsa". I will not stop here to discuss how far suffering for the purpose of inducing another to follow a particular line of conduct is included in the scope of Ahinsa. I myself believe it is not only not so included but is totally inconsistent with it. I will merely point out that this principle has already been condemned by the Penal Code which makes it a crime for a creditor to realise his debt by Dharma. For my purpose it is only necessary to say that this principle of non-violence if accepted in practice generally will lead to chaos and anarchy. If applied to Government alone by refusal to recognise the jurisdiction of the courts, it will lead to the same results. How it will lead to 'Parliamentary Swaraj' it is impossible to see. Mr. Gandhi says if all the people of India adopted it, the machinery of Government is bound to come to a standstill. But that all will adopt it without leaving sufficient men with the aid of those who will be imported from England and elsewhere to carry out the administration is only the fantasy of a diseased imagination. Non-violence is a guarantee on the part of those who carry it out that the Government has nothing to fear from physical force. If they use force then they abandon the weapon of non-violence. Mr. Gandhi and his followers are agreed that physical force is now out of the question on ground, according to Mr. Gandhi, that we will be crushed. I cannot help thinking that when we take this aspect of the matter along with others already mentioned that Mr. Gandhi himself does not consider this as any effective step towards the attainment of the 'Parliamentary Swaraj,' but only to attain his "spiritual Swaraj". This explains what he is so fond of re-iterating that when Lajpatrai, Motilal Nehru, and C.R. Dass and others were arrested and went to Jail without complaint, or resistance denying the jurisdiction of the courts, in pursuance of the policy of non-violent non-cooperation though Parliamentary Swaraj was not attained, the

spiritual 'Swaraj' of which he was in search has been attained to his intense satisfaction. If he had advocated abstention from schools, boycott of Councils and Courts, non-violence as a means of attaining his (spiritual) Swaraj, giving up Punjab, Khilafat and Parliamentary Home Rule, no one would perhaps have any right to complain, and it would have been a straightforward and honest course. But he has adopted underhand methods which appear to me, unless a satisfactory explanation is given, little short of dishonest and fraudulent.

But it may be asked whether anybody would have accepted a policy of non-violent non-co-operation in the circumstances of the case unless there was some reasonable prospect of success within any measurable time. Here we come to the most sinister aspect of the matter. In moving his resolution on non-co-operation in the National Congress held at Calcutta in September 1920, he said : "If there is sufficient response to my scheme I make bold to reiterate my statement that we can gain Swarajya in the course of one year" and he laid down certain conditions, the more important of which have been mentioned. That period has been extended subsequently by a few months. Even that extended period has elapsed. When charged with his failure to attain Parliamentary Swaraj within the period asked for by him he had effrontery to state that the conditions mentioned by him have not been complied with. A political leader has no right to put forward before the country any scheme under conditions which he has no reasonable belief of being likely to be complied with. Did he honestly believe that those conditions named by him would be complied with and Parliamentary Swaraj obtained within the time mentioned by him ? Looking to the nature of the conditions I do not think he believed that they would be complied with, not only in one year but at any time ; and even if complied with I have no doubt he did not believe that Swaraj would come, though he might assert the contrary. He put the lure forward simply for the purpose of persuading the Congress to make an important change in the policy which the country had hitherto adopted. The National Congress, carried away by its hostility towards

Government, accepted his programme. Some of the younger men may have believed in it. The older and the most experienced, I have no doubt, never believed in its possibility but considered it a means, of rousing the people of the country from their political lethargy, to put pressure on the Government for further and more extensive reforms. They may also have felt that this might be a means of Mahomedan co-operation for their policy. I do not deny that according to English political life this is a perfectly legitimate manoeuvre though none of these leaders believed in the soundness of the policy put forward by Mr. Gandhi and many of them said so.

Having attained his purpose by a representation, the truth of which I cannot help thinking he did not believe, and could not have believed, and having committing the Congress to a certain course of action, he is now able to carry the Congress with him for revolutionary action, as it finds it has gone too far on this course to revert to its own natural methods of progress. But as a matter of fact he went further than this.

On 29th December, 1920, *i.e.*, three months after the change of programme, he said, "my experience during the last months fills me with the hope that within the nine months that remain of the year in which I have expected Swaraj for India, we shall redress the two wrongs and we shall see Swaraj (Parliamentary) established in accordance with the wishes of the people of India." But I do not think for a moment he believed what he said. He used these words to dupe the people of India to follow him yet a step further and to pay him money. After about a month on the 21st of January 1921—he again confirmed his previous statement. He said: "Four months of this one year have already gone by and my faith has never burnt as brightly as it burns to-night as I am talking to the young men of Bengal". And he added "that in case of his death before the expiry of eight months he is satisfied that the people of India will secure Swaraj before the year is out". Is this not a definite statement that the Indian people are going to get Swaraj? A few days later the purpose comes out. In a

public address to the merchants of Calcutta on the 30th January, 1921, he said; "What I proposed to do I can accomplish in a certain line. I must attain Swaraj. If thirty crores of people say that they are not with me yet I shall do my work and win Swaraj...If you wish to accomplish work of thirty crores of men then come out with your money. Try to have money and ask me to give an account of the same. I point some one treasurer...If you know that you yourself can not attain Swaraj then help one with money. If you do not help with money Swaraj will be difficult but not impossible to attain. If the students of India do not help me, it does not matter. If the pleaders do not help, it does not matter". The old conditions of the boycott of schools and of the courts as conditions indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj are dropped. And he promises Swaraj and asks for money for getting it in nine months. He collected money on the faith of that representation. Earlier on the same day he got ten thousand rupees, and on the spot a large sum is said to have been collected. On the same date in addressing the students he said. "If the response continues as it has begun there is no doubt of Swaraj coming within the time prescribed". On the 23rd February 1921 he again said: "Last five months' experience has confirmed me in the opinion. I am convinced that the country has never been so ready for establishing Swaraj as now." To me only one conclusion is possible that he was collecting money from the people who understood him to say that Swaraj will be attained within the period mentioned by him. In March he said: "The last Congress has given a constitution whose working in itself is calculated to lead to Swaraj. It is intended to secure in every part of India representative committees working in conjunction with, and under willing and voluntary submission to a central organisation—the All India Congress Committee. It establishes an adult suffrage open to men and women subject only to two qualifications—signing of the creed and a nominal payment of four annas. It is intended to secure due representation of the parties and communities, if then, it is honestly worked, and commands confidence and respect, it can oust the

present Government without the slightest difficulty. For, the latter has no power except through the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people. The force it exercises is almost through our own people. One lac of Europeans, without our help, can only hold less than one seventh of our villages each and it would be difficult for a man, even when physically present, to impose his will on, say four hundred men and women—the average population of Indian village”. He said that we have therefore to concentrate our attention up to the 30th of June on getting :—

- (1) One crore of rupees for Tilak Swaraj Fund.
- (2) One crore members on the Congress register.
- (3) The spinning wheel introduced in twenty lacs of homes.

He added, however :

“This programme does not mean cessation of the other activities of Non-co-operation. They go on. Drink and untouchability must vanish. The education movement is steadily going forward. The National institutions that have sprung up will, if they are efficiently managed, make headway and attract students who are still hesitating. The pleaders, always a cautious and calculating class by training, will, as they see the movement progressing more and more, fall in line with the rest of the country. Boycott of law courts by the public is making fair progress. These things do not now require concentration of universal effort. They apply to special classes. But the three things mentioned by me are the most essential : they must be done now, and without them the movement, as a mass movement must be pronounced a failure.” *Young India, 30th March.*

After this it is impossible to rely upon boycott of schools & c. as conditions for Swaraj within a year. It is now admitted and the Secretaries report that the money demanded has been collected. Such money was paid on the fraudulent representation of Swaraj within the year. Judged by ordinary standards Mr. Gandhi's whole procedure with promises, the persuasions,

the evasions, the subterfuges and all the other manoeuvres, would be characterised by men of the world and of sane judgement in language I hesitate to reproduce, for the simple reason that I believe that Mr. Gandhi is honest in his self-hypnotisation. I believe he does not really know what he is doing. At least this is the only possible charitable assumption when we watch his feats of political acrobatics which have the power of deluding such vast numbers of people, making them passionately intolerant, violently intolerant often of the slightest criticism of their hero.

When the Congress was asked in September to change its policy, Mr. Gandhi's idea to start an organisation to supersede the existing Government was not brought before them. It is the first direct step in the path of revolution. His followers have been by this time brought to a proper frame of mind. The use of the money to be collected was, as stated on the 13th April, to be as follows: "The only activity involving financial obligations is that of spinning, organising national service, in some cases supporting lawyers, who might have suspended practice and can not be included in the national service as for supporting national educational institution." It will now be understood why some lawyers were willing to suspend practice. Before the expiry of one year period however other conditions were imposed which would put off Swaraj practically for a very long time to come, the removal of untouchability of the lower classes in India without which, it was said, Swaraj would be a meaningless term. This means, as I have no doubt, Mr. Gandhi knew, he was putting off Swaraj indefinitely. If this had been mentioned as condition when the Congress was asked to change its policy it is very doubtful whether he would have got the Congress to agree with him. As to these two conditions themselves they are admirable. With a little tact the Government might turn the tables on Mr. Gandhi. If proof of untouchability consists only in the admission of the boys of these classes to schools of higher classes, it does not mean much, though it is a notable advance. If a contact with a low class person is placed on the same foot-

ing as contact with caste man, it may be said that we have got rid of untouchability. But this will not come throughout the greater portion of India for years. On these questions the education of Mr. Gandhi has only commenced. He will find that without abrogating the ceremonial law on which the caste system rests, there will be no practical reform. He is apparently not aware of the far more heinous custom of distance pollution, i.e., not only pollution by touch but by approach within a certain distance. This far from being a move against Government would support the Government contention against reform.

About temperance also the move is salutary. If the system of picketing adopted by the volunteers is abandoned and peaceful persuasion alone is attempted, no one has any right to complain. What all this has to do with Parliamentary Swaraj or Home Rule one finds it difficult to understand. But they are necessary for the 'Gandhi Swaraj' advocated in his 'Indian Home Rule,' and I have little doubt that like his other proposals they were intended to attain that object.

It is admitted in the Report of the Secretaries that one crore Rupees which was required to be collected, as stated above, has been realised. About the middle of July he said he still looked forward before the next meeting of the Congress for the satisfaction of his demands about the Punjab and the Khilafat and full immediate Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of its chosen representatives. August and September were devoted to the insensate campaign of burning foreign cloth which in his view was an act of non-violent non-co-operation with the Government. On the 27th of October Mr. Gandhi speaks of his "threat to seek the shelter of the Himalayas should violence become universal in India, and should it not have engulfed me." As *New India* points out: "That would be interesting to know when this threat was made. We all know that Mr. Gandhi said that if there was violence he would go to the Himalayas. There was a riot, but he did not go, but excused himself by saying that if it occurred a second time, he

would go. A second riot occurred ; he said nothing but did not go. Now we hear that he had made a threat to go, should it 'become universal in India. When and where was this said ?" Towards the end of the month the *Times of India* observed : "Writing in the latest issue of Navajivan, his Gujarati newspaper, Mr. Gandhi makes the interesting announcement that if Swaraj is not obtained by December, he will either die of a broken heart or retire from public life, leaving the heedless people of India to their resources". Were so clear a pronouncement by any other politician, we could say definitely that when the new year dawns, Mr. Gandhi will no longer be actively engaged in politics ! He is still alive and not retired from public life. Can there be any possible doubt that all these statements were made by him in order to impress upon his dupes the fact that they were going to get Swaraj within a year and to deceive his followers to follow him and finance him. Yet what was the situation ! Almost every item in his programme has been tried and found useless to attain Home Rule I would again draw attention to the speech of the President of the Thana District conference for a review of the situation as it then stood in the opinion of one of his prominent followers, This is the opinion of most of his prominent supporters who have been opposing Mr. Gandhi's programme from the very beginning and accordingly the programme was practically shelved and at the Congress held at the end of the year it was resolved to suspend all the activities of the Congress on which stress was so much laid. The programme of the volunteer organisation throughout the country was to be carried out on a more extensive scale and the laws of the country were to be defied by disobeying the notifications issued by Government. The Congress also recommended civil disobedience as the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion and recommended individual disobedience as well as mass civil disobedience when the mass of the people have been sufficiently trained in the practice of non-violence. And the activities of the Congress were to be suspended for that purpose Offensive civil disobedience herein recommended is thus defined

ed. Offensive civil disobedience means "deliberate and wilful breach of State-made non-moral laws—that is, laws the breach of which does not involve moral turpitude—not for the purpose of securing the repeal of, or relief from, hardships arising from obedience to such laws, *but for the purpose of diminishing the authority of, or overthrowing, the State.*"

What took place at the Congress itself was remarkable. The President of the Moslem League, Moulana Hasrat Mohani, who was also a member of the National Congress, proposed his resolution for complete independence. He is reported to have said that although last year they have been promised Swaraj, the redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs within a year, they had so far achieved nothing. Mr. Gandhi denied that there was any limitation of the year when the creed was accepted in Nagpur and Calcutta. The special representative of the Congress organ, the *Bombay Chronicle* says: "The feeling in general appears to be in favour of Moulana Hasrat Mohani's resolution", though it was not carried on account of the passionate appeal of Mahatma Gandhi against it. It is instructive to read the resolutions that were then passed. Thus Swaraj was to come on September 1-1921, October 1-1921, October 31-1921, December 13-1921. At the Congress in December, 1921, Mr. Gandhi gave up fixing any date for the attainment of Swaraj.

The resolution passed in September, 1920, was seditious. The resolution passed in December, 1921, is openly revolutionary, and in fact Gandhi made no secret of it. He says: "Lord Reading must clearly understand that the non-co-operators are at war with the Government. They have declared rebellion against it inasmuch as it has committed a breach of faith with the Mussalmans. It has humiliated the Punjab and insists upon imposing its will upon the people and refuses to repair the breach and repent for the wrong done in the Punjab". (*Young India*). Mr. Gandhi also said: "The Government want to goad us into violence or abject surrender. We must

do neither. We must retort by such civil disobedience as would compel shooting." The volunteer organizations were pledged to act accordingly. Yet when the Government notified those illegal associations and punished those who defied them, the rebels indignantly remonstrate against what they call coercion and interference with the liberty of person and security of property. They want to be in the limelight to evoke the admiration of America and Europe for their patriotism in rebelling against a Satanic Government. But they are wanting in the redeeming features of these rebels elsewhere—their contempt of danger and death. That is left here to the ignorant masses—the dupes of these men who seek to protect themselves from danger by their doctrine of non-violence.

Non-Violent Non-Co-Operation

How on earth is it possible to imagine that all activities would be non-violent when those who are carrying them on proclaim themselves rebels against constitutional authority and are bent upon destroying it; when they say that they must commit civil disobedience of a character that would compel the officials to shoot them! when we know that one large section of it, the Mahomedans, follow a militant religion which not only sanctions but requires them to use force to vindicate what they consider to be their religious law. When we consider further the nature of the activities of those who carry on the Non-co-operation movement there can be still less room to doubt that riots ending in bloodshed are bound to follow. In order to carry out the Non-co-operation campaign, India is divided into various Congress provinces. Congress Committees are formed consisting of members who are also pledged to carry out the Congress principles: there are also volunteer organizations formed. The function of these bodies is to impress upon the people of the country the enormity of Government's crime with reference to the Punjab and the Khilafat and the consequent necessity of Home Rule or Swaraj. For attaining such Swaraj they advocate progressive non-co-operation by "peaceful" methods. Such methods

consist of various steps which are described in the speech of Mr. Macpherson, extracted below. Starting, perhaps, peacefully they soon exhibit a tendency to violence and when Mahomedan sentiments are involved, when appeals are made to Mahomedan religious feelings, that tendency becomes almost irresistible in their case. Opposition to constituted authority inflames them into violence and instead of submitting to violence at the hands of authorities according to the dictates of Gandhi—a counsel of perfection—they retort—and murder is the result. The process is so well put by Mr. Macpherson in the Behar Legislative Council that I take the liberty of quoting the following extract from his speech :

“It is necessary to consider what is the essence of the non-co-operation movement, what are its ultimate objects and what are its methods. From the moment Mr. Gandhi first unfolded his plan of campaign—that was, I think, at a Benares or Allahabad Conference in 1920—there has never been any doubt in my mind that the objects of the movement were entirely unconstitutional, that its methods were illegal and that its prosecution to the bitter end is bound to result in violence, disorder and anarchy, however much non-violence may be proclaimed as the watch-word of its leaders. The movement cannot be judged by its earlier and comparatively innocuous stages, as if these stood by themselves. I refer to the resignation of titles, the boycott of Government schools and colleges, the abandonment of their profession by legal practitioners and other such manifestations of non-co-operation, although all these items in the programme have done an infinite amount of harm, especially to the youth of the country, and even these earlier stages have been marked by repeated outbursts of violence, by a concerted system of intimidation and social boycott, and by the excitement of racial hatred which has had deplorable results in individual cases. No, the plan of campaign must be taken as a whole, and judged by its closing stages, the enforcement of civil disobedience towards the laws of the country, interference with the police and the judicial administration, the invasion of

police stations, picketing of Courts, the seduction of the troops from their allegiance, and the refusal to pay taxes or rent or revenue. The movement must indeed be judged by its ultimate object, which is the paralysis and subversion of the existing Government and by its inevitable result general disorder and bloodshed and widespread misery amongst all classes and communities. If pursued to the bitter end, it will assuredly have this result, whether it succeeds or fails, and should it (which God forbid) succeed, the end can only be a state of chaos which will make India the pray of the violent tribes that dwell around her borders or the hungry hordes of Central Asia who, in the course of history, have more than once invaded India. The object of the movement being what it is, the overthrow of the existing Government in India, what is the use of telling us that either its leaders or its followers have signed a pledge of non-violence? The pledge is a farce, it has already been broken a hundred times over, and the longer the movement continues and the further it advances, the more it will be broken."

That this has been the case is illustrated by almost all the riots which have taken place. Malabar stands first in its unenviable notoriety. There the Congress committees were formed; the Khilafat committees were formed which were intended perhaps to be peaceful in their efforts to secure Swaraj. Gandhi and Shaukat Ali visited Malabar, preached their sermons and the usual result followed. With Mahomedans Swaraj was only their secondary aim, their principal object being the redress of the Khalif's wrongs and the establishment of a Khilafat kingdom in the country. When, therefore, the British Government interfered with the activities of some of the Khilafat leaders the Mahomedan population as a whole rose in rebellion and invited the Hindus to join them. The Hindus as a body remained loyal; and the results were disastrous both to the Mahomedans and to the Hindus, more than two thousand Mahomedans killed by troops according to official estimates, thousands more in other ways; far larger numbers wounded; the Hindus butchered in circumstances of

barbarity, skinned alive, made to dig their own graves before slaughter, running into thousands ; women and purdah women too, raped, not in a fit of passion but systematically and with calculated revolting and horrible cruelty for which I have not been able to find a parallel in history. Thousands were forcibly converted. All this done in the name of, and to enforce, the Khilafat movement : all this due directly to the visit of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali and to the organization of Khilafat associations. They carried on their activities openly without any obstruction by the authorities ; the Government of Madras was prevented from interfering with Khilafat agitators by the Government of India who are therefore as responsible as if they had directly ordered all this frightfulness.

I take the United Provinces next and will refer not only to the activities of the volunteers but to the entire situation as it developed itself from the commencement of the year 1921. That will also show the earnest efforts which were made by the Government to co operate with the constitutional party to work the Reform Scheme in a sympathetic spirit.

In welcoming the Legislative Council on 22nd of January, 1921, Sir Harcourt Butler drew attention to the great efforts which were being made by Mr. Gandhi's party to achieve their objects, to their aim, to their failure till that time to achieve any appreciable success. By March the situation had become worse and he narrated the circumstances which compelled him to extend the Seditious Meetings Act to some of the districts. By the end of the year the situation became intolerable. Sir Harcourt Butler has described the efforts of the Non-co-operators, and the success they have achieved, in his speech on the 17th December 1921.

And finally Sir Ludovic Porter, a member of the Government, described the whole situation, including the various efforts that were being made by the Non-co-operators on the 23rd of January 1922. This will explain also the nature of the associations of volunteers formed under the

Resolution of the Congress already referred to, their efforts and their illegal character. And more recently we now hear of far more serious disturbances in Gorakhpur where a mob of volunteers and villagers about 2000 in number led by the former killed 21 policemen and chowkidars and at Rai Bareilly where there was a serious collision. In order to understand the *modus operandi* I give an official narrative of the events at Larabanki. About Behar we have the speech of Mr. Macpherson, a member of Council, in which he refers to the plans of the non-co-operation party to win Swaraj, gives the organization of the national volunteers, describes how the Government offices were to be taken possession of, civil disobedience was to be started, gives the deplorable conditions in various districts brought about by the non-co operation campaign and describes the revolutionary character of the movement in that province. The chief secretary, Mr. Hammond, in his speech gives various instances of tyranny practised by the non-co-operation volunteers, a practical speech which proves his contention. In Bengal, on November 20 Lord Ronaldshay drew attention to the nature of Gandhi Swaraj and Turkish administration. In November 1921, he spoke about the intended boycott of the Prince of Wales. In another speech he pointed out the lies that were being spread about the bombardment of Mecca. In December 1921, he described the activities which led to the interference of Government. A brief extract will be found in Finally, in February 1921, he made a lengthy reference to the political outlook. In the Legislative Council Sir Henry Wheeler a member of Government described the situation.

In the Legislative Assembly also the matter was fully discussed. Sir William Vincent summed up the situation, various instances of their activities among which will be found a particularly revolting statement about the corpse of a diseased person who was loyal to the Government, and therefore obnoxious to Gandhi's party, being due out of the grave.

This completes my review of the situation. Considerations of space have compelled me to exclude many speeches which would throw further light on the situation.

I will, therefore, content myself with giving a list of the disturbances and riots throughout India, so far as I have been able to get them due to Gandhi's movement.

For more than thirty years the constitutional Reform party have been fighting for various indispensable reforms in the administration of the country with but moderate success. At last, however, in 1919 they obtained a Reform scheme which brought India directly on to the path leading to Home Rule. In fact the Reform Act made Home Rule inevitable within a comparatively short time, and indicated the nature of the constitutional method of its early attainment. Mr. Gandhi was here for some years before that date. He scarcely lent any assistance to the Reform party. Considering his principles he could not. After having obtained the Act, the Reform party proceeded to work it, to carry out the administrative reforms needed, to educate the masses to enable them to claim and exercise larger political powers, in order to claim at as early a date as possible that further instalment of Reform provided for and contemplated in the act itself. Mr. Gandhi is standing right athwart their path, thus preventing or at least retarding and dangerously imperilling, the indispensable reforms, regardless of the sufferings of the people entailed thereby, in order to carry out his own wild principles which have not the slightest chance of acceptance provided they are understood by the people of the country for what they are, emotional speculations without any considered relation to existing conditions. Mr. Gandhi, to take him at his best, is indifferent to facts. Facts must submit to the dictates of his theories. The only difficulty in his way is that they don't. Will o'the wisp politics are of no use to a people who have to live in a world which, from long and bitter experience, has at last come to realise that dreams of distorted brains are not the stuff of which contended Nations are made. Gandhi in fact is

seeking not only to destroy the fruits of the long endeavour of the constitutional reformers, but to blast for ever any hopes of Indian regeneration.

To push forward the working of the Act has been the work before the Reform party which is thus so perniciously thwarting. They had to take up in the Legislative Councils the question of the redress of the grievances under which the people suffered, not only to agitate for their removal, but to show the people that by constitutional agitation, sooner or later, they can get what they want. The most important question with which the constitutional Reformers had to deal was one concerning the great poverty of the country. For this it is necessary to consider the question of the Land Tax—its nature, incidents, relation to other taxes, its necessity, the distribution of the land produce between the Government and the classes that own the land. This is a question in which the landholding classes are very much interested. They would have understood the arguments addressed to them and therefore it would have served as a means of political and social education. The Councils have already been dealing with it, and, considering the conditions, satisfactorily. The Government have been meeting them in a sympathetic spirit and are trying to give effect to their proposals as much as possible. What is Mr. Gandhi's advice? He does not seek to co-operate to make the tax less oppressive. He would have the people pay no land tax to Government. Only the dreadful consequences that would ensue prevent him in this case, from giving full effect to his intentions. In any case, it is not the oppressive nature of the tax that he relies on, nor is it alleged that it is an innovation of the British Government, which of course it is not. He objects to the tax, not for itself, but because it is another weapon with which to destroy the Government.

A cognate question is that which arises between the landlords and tenants. In this also all the landholding classes are deeply interested, and a discussion of the nature of the distribution of the produce between the landlord, farmer and agricultural labourer would have been of great educative value.

The Legislative Councils are dealing with the question. Government in this matter also are showing the greatest possible consideration for the feelings of the people of the country. Yet Mr. Gandhi and his friends would not only take no part in the deliberations of the council but would prevent an amicable settlement by steps which have produced riots between the classes interested in the land, with the object of discrediting the Reform Scheme and paralysing the Government of the country.

Closely connected with this is the question of Indian manufactures industries and the development of mineral resources, which, besides, conferring other benefits, will relieve undue pressure on the land. Our industries have been destroyed by English competition and constitutional reformers are determined to take all the steps necessary to enter into healthy competition with English industries in Indian interests and to develop their own mineral and other resources. In so doing they have to take care that the conditions which accompanied the rise of industrial prosperity in the West are not reproduced in India. They have to see that wage earners receive adequate protection. What are the tactics of Mr. Gandhi and his friends? All these industries are to him the devil's own agency to destroy the soul! He says they cannot add an inch to India's moral stature. Starvation due to the absence of industries may destroy the body and certainly hinders the development of the soul. But to him this does not matter. He and his followers would taboo machinery, without which competition or development is hopeless. Without attempting to promote an amicable settlement between English capitalists and Indian labourers they have, on the contrary, been responsible for a deliberate widening of the chasm between the races.

The administration of justice is another matter in which all are interested; and already the Legislative Councils are dealing with the question of the separation of Judicial and Executive functions. The Government again are not only not standing in their way but are rendering every assistance towards

the solution of the problem. This is also the case with reference to the removal of discriminations between Europeans and Indians in the administration of justice. The people of the country understand this question well as they are deeply interested in it. Mr. Gandhi is asking the people of the country to avoid all courts and thus not to interest themselves in the improvement of judicial administration.

I might take many other questions relating to finances, army, etc., and show the baneful influence of his propaganda. In all these Mr. Gandhi's campaign against Government has hampered the reformers who would otherwise have made the redress of these grievances a more effective plank in their platform ; these questions would have been more widely discussed throughout the country. But such discussion is now almost impossible with the result that these questions are not settled as satisfactorily as they might otherwise be. But it is as regards education that the reformers have most felt the want of that popular support necessary to carry out the reforms needed.

Mr. Gandhi will never be forgiven by all true lovers of sound National Education for India for the campaign he has carried on against real education. The education that has been hitherto imparted had been, as everybody, including Mr. Gandhi also recognised, lamentably defective. The reformers had to insist on the imparting of suitable primary education to the masses, to the workers, to the labouring men and others, to enable them to improve their condition, because no class can generally rise except under the ultimate stress of its own will and ability. They had to demand suitable higher education, which was required not only in the interests of the culture but also for the industrial regeneration of the country and for the development of India's natural resources, In the laboratories of Europe, America and Japan students are devoting themselves to discover means for the alleviation of misery and pain. Nay, higher claims are advanced, for it has been declared by scientists that we are on the eve of discovery of

means for a practically indefinite prolongation of life under certain conditions which make us intensely expectant to know whether they are the same as described in our ancient books as efficacious for that purpose, descriptions which have hitherto been contemptuously discarded as worthless. Archaeologists are almost every day unveiling to us ancient remains and writings which give us a different and a startling conception of ancient History and Civilisation. Indian History is being rewritten. When we hear of the Marconi wireless, our young men turn to our own ancient descriptions of the training of human body and mind which make these fit to receive and convey messages regardless of space and distance and they show eagerness to take part in experiment and research. When we find rays penetrating solid matter, our young scientists whether after all the stories of great seers whose vision, not of the material eye, is not bounded by time or space or distance, may not be true and wonder whether we should not now take up the training prescribed to attain those results. Researches are made in the laboratories to control the forces of nature, to increase human comforts and happiness, to increase productivity in all directions. Researches have already attained brilliant results. The lessons of the survey of the regions above by the telescope, of all below by the microscope, and generally speaking all these marvels of science which lend fresh light and new significance to the lesson of ancients as to the all pervading of the universe are all anathema to Mr. Gandhi.

He wants to hold back our boys from the Universities and postgraduate studies and research that they may go back to their ploughs while the Universities of the Western world are sending their delegates all over the world to take stock of what has been done and to devise means for the intellectual and moral uplift of the Nations.

The constitutional reformers and the Councils have the great task before them of reconciling the Hindus and Mahomedans on a basis for their unity other than the one which arose out of the Mahomedan fury against the British Govern-

ment for its failure to support Mahomedan interests in the West. They have also to promote goodwill between the Hindus and the Mahomedans on the one side and the Europeans on the other, both in India and in the colonies. They have to face the rising antagonism between the dark, the fair and the white an antagonism which threatens in course of time to engulf the whites with all that modern civilisation, whatever be its faults, is standing for. The Reform party wants India to take her rightful place in the Indo-British commonwealth, the first place, in fact, to which her natural genius and her resources entitle her, with all its responsibilities. The conditions are all favourable to India Governorships of Provinces are thrown open to Indians. There are Indians in the Viceroy's and other Councils. But Mr. Gandhi and his friends will not only do practically nothing in that direction but they have created what threatens to be a permanent gulf between the Mahomedans and non-Mahomedans, and they are dangerously widening the gulf between the Indians and Europeans. The reformers have to improve the conditions of women both amongst the Mahomedans and the Hindus, as without such improvement India is not entitled to take her place among civilised nations. They have practically to get rid of the caste system as with such a cancer political progress is impossible. Mr. Gandhi, on the other hand, panders to Mahomedan vanity and justifies the racial differences as between different classes of Hindus. He insists upon the necessity of our going back to our own caste system, which is responsible for the condition of our women and of the lower classes. He has given a handle to those who want to maintain the repressive laws, and is really responsible for the retention of them. He has not only thrown doubts as to our fitness for self-government but has rendered it possible for our opponents to urge with plausibility that danger would accrue to the Empire and to India itself by granting Home Rule to India. He has thus to the best of his sinister ability attempted to prevent all reforms and has tried to paralyse all the efforts of the reformers in every direction, fomenting racial and class differences, as I have already explained.

Everywhere we see a class of narrow thought in the white-world raising the colour sentiment against the Asiatics, and against Indians in particular, proclaiming that there is no place for Indians in British Empire on terms of equality. These are not the intellectual leaders of the white races, nor are they those who set the best standards of morality. On the other hand, we see the noblest of them proclaiming and striving with all their might, with varying degrees of success, to enforce the opposite ideal. We know also that in India the question is only one of time and within a short period absolute equality in every respect will be carried out. We see further that our countrymen elsewhere are weak and comparatively helpless, and till we in India attain our manhood they must continue at the mercy of the white races. What is it, then that not only Religion, Universal morality, or good, but also policy and prudence, dictate? There can be only answer. We must strengthen the hands of those who are fighting for race equality and give no opportunity to those who maintain that the Indians are a peril to the white race. What is Mr. Gandhi doing? He is doing everything possible to increase racial and class hatred.

We see the wonderful phenomenon of Australian ladies begging pardon for the atrocious treatment of their Indian sisters by a few Englishmen in Fiji and elsewhere. We see the Universities and professors, ashamed of themselves for their aberration during the great War, hastening to make amends by trying to bring together all classes and races of men. We see white women trying to band themselves and other women of whatever colour and creed into one sisterhood, without any difference, to throw themselves into all social and political movements for sex enfranchisement and uplift; to work for the good not only of themselves but of children in particular, and generally to devote themselves to all activities of mercy. We find various Nations calling to one another across seas, deserts and mountains to join in a common fellowship, not to work in opposition to one another. Everywhere, after the fearful cataclysm through which we have passed, there is wistful

yearning for fellowship and brotherhood to carry out in practice the teachings of the ancient prophets and seers, Budhha, Confucious, Zoroaster, the seers of the Upanishads, Christ, Mahomed, in opposition to the Churches and the dogmatic religions identified with their names. And is it not extraordinary, we see this man, uninfluenced by this tremendous intellectual and moral upheaval, waging a bloody and racial struggle for what? that if successful Indians may not take part in any of these movements, shun them all, since God has not created man with his limited means of natural locomotion to labour for general good, and may, therefore, retire to their village to lead a solitary life.

If he had followed this advice for himself, or had retired to the Himalayas to live a mahatmaic life he would have saved the lives literally of thousands, prevented horrible outrages worse than death, saved thousands from incalculable misery. Instead of paying the penalty themselves, he and his lieutenants stalk about the country dripping with the blood of the victims of their policy.

Who is responsible for all this? The Government of India cannot divest themselves of their responsibility and India will hold the Indian members primarily responsible for the present situation. For no Viceroy will venture to disregard their advice in a matter of this sort. They do not seem to have strengthened the fibre of the Government. Nor have the Legislative Councils who also must share the responsibility advanced the claim for the transfer of the administration of justice to popular control. The Gandhi movement will no doubt collapse by internal disruption as it is composed of various elements drawn from Tolstoy, Lenin, communism, socialism, Rigid Brahmanism, militant Mahomedanism mutually repellent and explosive when they come into contact with one another and already producing the natural terrible results. But before the final collapse comes it will have produced appalling misery and bloodshed unless it is dealt with firmly and with statesmanship. The Government should give Mr. Gandhi and some of his chief

lieutenants who accept the whole programme, the rest they sadly need. And the Congress and the Khilafat associations must be treated as they themselves wish to be treated as disloyal illegal associations.

Since the above pages were sent to the press certain events have occurred which require attention. Mr. Gandhi had issued an ultimatum to the Government of India that if within a certain period of time his demands formulated in his ultimatum were not conceded he would start what is called mass civil disobedience at Bardoli, that is to say, the people of Bardoli would be asked to refuse to pay taxes etc. The Government of India issued a communique in reply in which reviewing the situation they pointed out the grave dangers that would follow such civil obedience and gave him a stern warning. This attitude no doubt surprised him. The Government he thought was on the run, when they had submitted meekly to his contemptuous refusal for a conference at Calcutta and he had apparently therefore expected them to beg for an armistice. There was a remarkable change. He or rather the working committee of the Congress suspended mass civil disobedience having found a pretext in the occurrence of a riot about this time at Gorakhpur. So far as the campaign against the Government is concerned the following are the important resolutions.

Bardoli, February, 12

“The Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere be suspended and instructs the local Congress Committees forthwith to advise the cultivators to pay the land revenue and other taxes due to the Government and whose payment might have been suspended in anticipation of mass civil disobedience and instructs them to suspend every other preparatory activity of an offensive nature.” “The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued till the atmosphere is so non-violent as to ensure the non-repetition of popular atrocities such as at Gorakhpur, or hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras

respectively on the 17th November, 1921 and 13th January last. In order to promote a peaceful atmosphere the Working Committee advises till further instruction, all Congress organisations to stop activities specially designed to court arrest and imprisonment, save normal Congress activities including voluntary *hartals* wherever an absolutely peaceful atmosphere can be assured, and for that end all picketing shall be stopped save for the bona fide and peaceful purpose of warning the visitors to liquor shops against the evils of drinking. Such picketing to be controlled by persons of known good character and specially selected by the Congress Committee concerned."

"The Working Committee advises, till further instructions, the stoppage of all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of the notification regarding such meetings. This, however, shall not interfere with the private meetings of the Congress and other committees or public meeting which are required for the conduct of the normal activities of the Congress".

The Working Committee advised all Congress organisations to be engaged in the following activities :

"To enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress. The workers should note that no one who does not pay the annual subscription can be regarded as a qualified Congressman."

"To continue the Swaraj fund and to call upon every Congressman or Congress-sympathiser to pay at least one hundredth part of his annual income for the year 1921. Every province to send every month 25 per cent of its income from the Tilak Memorial Swaraj fund to the All-India Congress Committee."

The above resolutions were directed to be placed before the All-India Congress Committee for revision if necessary. They were accordingly brought before the All-India Congress Committee whose Resolution runs thus :

“The All-India Congress Committee having carefully considered the resolutions passed by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th instant, confirms the said resolutions with the modifications noted herein and *further resolves that individual civil disobedience whether of a defensive or aggressive character, may be commenced in respect of particular places or particular laws, at the instance of, and upon permission being granted therefore, by the respective provincial Committee.*

“Provided that such civil disobedience shall not be permitted unless all the conditions laid down by the Congress or the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee are strictly fulfilled.

“Reports having been received from various quarters that picketing regarding foreign cloth is as necessary as liquor picketing, the All-India Congress Committee *authorises such picketing* of a bona fide character on the same terms as liquor picketing mentioned in the Bardoli resolutions.

“The All-India Congress Committee wishes it to be understood that the resolutions of the Working Committee do not mean an abandonment of the original Congress programme of non-co-operation or the permanent abandonment of mass civil disobedience, but considers that an atmosphere of necessary mass non-violence can be established by the workers concentrating upon the constructive programme framed by the Working Committee at Bardoli. The All-India Congress Committee holds *civil disobedience to be the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed whenever the State opposed the declared will of the people.*”

Individual Civil Disobedience

Note.—Individual civil disobedience' is disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore, a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no

unauthorised admission is allowed, is an instance of individual civil disobedience, whereas a prohibited meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of mass civil disobedience.

“Such civil disobedience is defensive, when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive, if it is held, not for any activity, but merely for the purpose of courting arrest and imprisonment.”

This shows that there is practically no change in the situation. This may be read with the resolution of the Congress of 28th December 1920. Gandhi's agitation continues revolutionary.

A large and influential section of his followers desire a conference with the Viceroy to consider the political situation. Gandhi has said in a recent issue of his paper that “a round table conference is bound to prove fruitless.” He has been insisting over and over again upon his demands including those about the Punjab and the Khilafat being considered as unalterable. One of his adherents has however carried from him a letter to the Viceroy to say that if he is persuaded at the Conference that his demands are not just and proper he may not insist on them. He is not pleased to say therein whether he would allow the Viceroy to be represented by Counsel to plead before him. Till he himself asks for it and announces a change of heart by not insisting upon anything as a preliminary condition he can not be invited to a Conference. Personally he would obviously like to attend a Conference. It was Lord Chelmsford's frequent discussions with him on political questions that enhanced his importance in the eyes of the people of the country.

So far as the Khilafatists are concerned, as long as they want Mahomed Ali or Shaukat Ali or men who accept their views as their spokesmen a conference is impossible in view of what I have stated above. If His Highness the Aga Khan or

Mahomedan nobles like the Raja Mahomedabad or the Ruling Princes and Chiefs wish for a Conference the request should be complied with. Their representations will no doubt receive careful consideration. It is unnecessary that any Hindu should be a party to it. As both Gandhi and the Mahomedan leaders have announced that the non-co-operation campaign will be continued on the present basis, despite the settlement if any of the Khilafat question, it is immaterial so far as this agitation is concerned how the Turkish question is settled. It is only useful as the Mussulman leaders put it, to produce a peaceful atmosphere.

As to reforms a discussion is desirable subject to certain conditions. It can easily be shown that it is impossible to carry out the intentions of Parliament without material modifications in the reform scheme. It is also the case that there are many questions lying outside the scope of the Government of India Act which have now assumed great importance and ought to be dealt with.

For this purpose it would be well to appoint a Committee. If it consists of only Indian Non-officials, the report should be treated as the demand of Indian constitutionalists for considerations by the Government. If the Committee consists of both officials and non-officials, Englishmen and Indians, there must be an understanding that in the absence of special reasons the report must be accepted by the Government. If Mr. Gandhi is willing to attend the Committee on these conditions he may of course come in.

Further than this it is not desirable at present to go. My reasons are that without a preliminary agreement between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, as the Lucknow pact in 1916, there is scarcely any chance of success. The non-Mahomedans are not likely now to come to any such arrangement with the Muslim League as long as it is dominated by the Khilafat agitators of views the same as of Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali. Such a preliminary arrangement between these two bodies would be a real step in the interests of further reform.

My second reason is this. Before 1919 the Indian political leaders were anxious for power to remove the great obstacles to Home Rule which lay in the disunion between classes, between Hindus and Mahomedans, between various classes of Hindus and various classes of Mahomedans. They were sanguine that with the attainment of power they would be able to remove all the legal obstacles that stood in the way of unity amongst all these classes. Those expectations have not been realised. The Mahomedans, Mr. Gandhi and his followers, i.e. Extremists and the Legislative Assembly that is the Moderates, are all standing out against the removal of the legal disabilities. Until therefore the Indian political leaders show that they are willing to take practical steps to bring about this unity, no further political progress is really possible.

6

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

In March, 1930 Mahatma Gandhi launched his civil disobedience movement (also known by the name of Salt Satyagraha) that was like a reiteration of his first movement launched ten years back. The celebration of the first Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) Day on 26 January, 1930 virtually cleared the way for the Mahatma to start this agitation as he was very much concerned with the force of violence raging its head in the country in an unorganised form by a section of his own over-enthusiastic young men and in an organised form by the foreign rulers. The AICC at its meeting held on 14-16 February, 1930 entrusted Gandhiji with full powers to launch his contemplated civil disobedience movement. Thus, he made a series of requests to the Viceroy which could be of no avail. On 2 March he wrote a letter to the Viceroy in which he regretted: "On bended knees I asked for bread and received a stone in stead." On 12 March he embarked on his Dandi March with a vow to break the salt law. This was the start of his movement with most of the items of his non-violent non-cooperation movement.¹ The movement had a success and it came to an end

1. On 9 April, 1930 Gandhiji made his conception of the movement quite clear in a note of instructions saying: "Our path has already been chalked out for us. Let every village fetch or manufacture contraband salt, sisters should picket liquor shops, opium dens and foreign cloth dealers shops. Young and old in every home should ply *takli* and spin and get woven heaps of yarn every day. Foreign cloth should be burnt. Hindus should eschew untouchability. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians should all achieve heart unity. Let the majority rest content with what remains after the minorities have been satisfied. Let students leave Government schools and colleges, and Government servants resign their service and devote themselves to the service of the people, and we shall soon find that Purna Swaraj will come knocking at our door."

when Mahatma Gandhi signed a truce with Viceroy Irwin on 5 March, 1931. It made the matter of Mahatma's leadership once again an object of criticism. The radical elements interpreted it as a tame surrender of Indian nationalism to British imperialism. He was accused of sidetracking a vigorous movement and abandoning the fight for swaraj abruptly. It was said that he "recanted from the struggle as a concession to Indian capitalism."² Gandhiji, however, dispelled all such allegations of his critics at the Karachi Congress that endorsed his truce with Viceroy Irwin. As a matter of fact, he carried the Congress with him by emphasising that his movement had demonstrated the great power of non-violence and that swaraj could never be achieved by means of violence.³

GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

March 2, 1930

Dear Friend,

Before embarking on civil disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.

I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil

2. Rajni Palme Dutt : *India Today*, p. 273.

3. See H.N. Brailsford : *Rebel India*, Chapter 1.

of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

And why do I regard the British rule as a curse ?

It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of cruel disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But, when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full Dominion Status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy.

The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me but to take steps to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its Session in 1928.

But the Resolution of Independence should cause no alarm, if the word Dominion Status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by responsible British statesmen that Dominion Status is virtual Independence? What, however, I fear is

that there never has been any intention of granting such Dominion Status to India in the immediate future.

But this is all past history. Since the announcement many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India or require an impartial and close scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever-increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1/6 ratio which by a stroke of the pen drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes to help you to crush that attempt in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand and keep before all concerned the motive that lies behind the craving for independence, there is every danger of independence coming to us so changed as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions for whom it is sought and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that reason that I have been recently telling the public what independence should really mean.

Let me put before you some of the salient points.

The terrific pressure of land revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo considerable modification in an independent India. Even the much vaunted permanent settlement benefits the few rich zamindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only, then, has the land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised as to make the ryot's good its primary

concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich man both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue, too, is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but, in reality, is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so called responsible part of dyarchy, so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus, from the very beginning, rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy minister wipes out this revenue he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, *i.e.*, hand spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth. The tale of India's ruination is not complete without reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public Press. It must be the duty of a free India to subject all the liabilities to the strictest investigation, and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair.

The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month, besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £ 5,000 per year, *i.e.*, over Rs. 5,400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day against India's average income of less than annas 2 per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five

thousand time India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended kness I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary you get. Probably the whole of your salary goes for charity. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence. Hence, in my opinion, the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

Not one of the great British political parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often, in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

Nevertheless, if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed Conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve forces enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

It is a common cause that, however disorganized and, for the time being, insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organized violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force as well against the organized violent force of the British rule as [against] the unorganized violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above mentioned. Having an unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

This non-violence will be expressed through civil disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its various limitations.

I know that in embarking on non-violence I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another, far more numerous, far more ancient and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk.

I have deliberately used the word "conversion." For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non violence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them. I served them up to 1919 blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I convinced non-co-opera-

tion, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have in all humility successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them even as the members of my family acknowledged it after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection, it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence. I respectfully invite you then to pave the way for immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help the commerce equally suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon the communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of government, they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the 11th day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the

Salt Act to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the Statute-book.

I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will, however, do me the favour not to deflect me from my course unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore, I am having it especially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME*

I am happy that you have on your own come here in such large numbers on this the last day of the self-purification week, but you will not be happy if I do not say something to you on this occasion.

I have just concluded the women's conference. You will like to know your place in what I have told the women to do. The women have resolved to picket shops selling foreign cloth as also those who use it, and those who sell liquor as also those who drink it. We men may not interfere in this work. Let us treat this as the special field of women.

The success of this work depends entirely on the self-control of men. The assumption behind this is that men cannot easily control their anger, cannot easily practise non-violence, while women can do so. Renunciation and non-violence come

*Gandhiji's speech at Dandi on 13 April, 1930.

naturally to women. Having been inspired by this idea I have tried to explain it to women. If my assumption is false, my conclusion will also be false to the same degree.

It is the duty of men to make the atmosphere congenial for women to do their work. We men should go to the dealers in liquor and foreign cloth and try to convince them that now that the women of India have come out, they should give up trade in these two things.

Confronted by the large groups of women liquor-booth owners and owners of shops selling foreign cloth will be startled and give up their trade. I know it is not easy to give up one's trade. But, at a time when the atmosphere is filled with national pride and patriotism, the people's capacity for renunciation automatically increases. During this week alone this capacity has increased a hundredfold, but it should increase a thousandfold.

Dealers in foreign cloth still seem to be calculating whether to give up their trade. They take a vow for three months or a year. Behind this act there is a lurking belief that they will be able to buy foreign cloth after a year. They do not make the effort that is needed to secure swaraj. This is because they lack the faith. But as this movement makes progress—trading in liquor and foreign cloth cannot but come to an end.

When hundreds of thousands of our countrymen have sacrificed their all, even these sceptical traders are bound to develop the strength to make sacrifices.

If women lack funds to continue the work after once starting it, I shall stretch out my hand to you, though at present, by the blessing of God, I am able to get more funds than I need. Only today, about a thousand rupees were collected at the women's meeting and a lady belonging to the Galiara family of Kathor gave four gold bangles without even being asked.

If we men are not indifferent and being the work on our own, if, for instance, for want of enough khadi it becomes necessary to wear only a loin-cloth and we start doing so, to that extent we shall have lightened the burden of our women-folk.

Miss Mayo has accused us saying that many of our men have no consideration for women, that we make them work as drudges, as if they were born to be slaves. The world will be convinced that what Miss Mayo said was not true when women wake up and accomplish the tasks of boycotting foreign cloth and of prohibition.

The stocks of khadi in the country are dwindling and I am therefore asking everyone to spin and wear khadi and I am demonstrating this before you every day by spinning on the *takli*. Just as we grind and cook cereals which are available in every home we ought to spin the large quantities of cotton which grows in India into some kind of yarn, make cloth from it and then wear that cloth. When spinning becomes a universal activity in the country, you can rest assured that the trade in foreign cloth will come to an end.

Mills can never entirely meet the cloth needs of India and as most mills in India are either wholly or partly foreign, cloth made by only a few of them can be used if the need arises.

Women from good families have come out to take up these activities. Divan Shri Manubhai's daughter Shrimati Hansa Mehta and some other ladies have only recently issued a circular and begun the work of prohibition in Bombay. If Gujarati women continue to work in this spirit and if the men lend them support this activity will become widespread in India. All these three things are easy. When we have accomplished these three things we shall have saved six crores from the salt-tax, twenty-five crores from prohibition and sixty crores from the boycott of foreign cloth—ninety-one crores in all. We shall have become purer and added to our strength, and then it will not take long for us to secure swaraj.

Finally, we should take care that we do not lose what we have gained during these seven days.

I have just received news that some youths in Calcutta, who were reading out passages from prescribed books at meetings, were dispersed. On seeing the police committing such atrocities, Shri Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, also started reading out paragraphs from those banned books and was immediately arrested.

Dr. Suresh Chandra Bannerjee, the able khadi worker of Abhoy Ashram, who at one time he received a salary of Rs. 600 a month from the Government, has been sentenced to a term of two and a half years' rigorous imprisonment for violating the salt law.

Notwithstanding such atrocities, just as we in Gujarat have not become frightened and given in, there too, they are not only not frightened but have become more resolute. Whatever the atrocities perpetrated on us, we do not want to use force on anyone or to insult anyone. A certain gentleman has informed me that in Bombay when they were making bonfires of foreign cloth, caps from other people's heads were forcibly removed and burnt. I do not know how far this is true. But if it is true, rest assured that this struggle cannot go on. If force is used, people will not tolerate it ; they will start fighting amongst themselves and the Government will take advantage of this situation.

If people do not want swaraj through the boycott of foreign cloth, we cannot make them do good under compulsion. In order to melt their hearts, we must make greater sacrifices and even practise satyagraha against them if it becomes necessary to do so.

What should I do if I was convinced that people were deceiving me, that having decided to boycott foreign cloth through khadi alone they pledged themselves to do so and then broke their pledge ?

If I was convinced that I had become purified and wholly compassionate, I should, when the occasion arose, offer satyagraha and go on a fast. What should I do if you should raise your hands every day, say that if there is not enough khadi you will wear *lungotis* and then it should turn out that not a single sister spins? I might perhaps even at this advanced age have to say the same thing I said when I saw that the labourers of Ahmedabad had broken their pledge, and do what I did at the time of the riots in Bombay. I would do so unwillingly if I felt that we were deceiving God daily. I have faith that the people of Gujarat will never deceive me.

We want to live in peace and win swaraj peacefully. I do not wish to live to see disturbances in the country.

You just came on this day of my fast and I have said simply what I wanted to. You must prevent any use of force whether in Bombay or elsewhere. Whenever I hear of one of our men having abused someone, having been discourteous to someone or having used force against someone I feel deeply hurt and truly my heart begins to thump violently. If a doctor were to examine me at the time he would hear the sound. Despite this, I am able to survive, for at such times I close my eyes for a couple of seconds and repeat Ramanama. If I did not do so, my heart would stop beating there and then. You all may well call me Mahatma, but my task is that of a weak person. Do not, therefore, deceive me, at any time in this struggle. It will be all right if you sit at home, but once you join the campaign work sincerely.

GANGHIJI'S LETTER TO VICEROY

May 18, 1930

Dear friend,

The authorities having permitted the use of newspapers, I am able somewhat to follow the course of events in the country. I should fail in my duty if I did not express my opinion on your latest statement.

You seem to ignore the simple fact that disobedience ceases to be such immediately masses of people resort to it. Do you not see that hundreds of men who have been known for their peaceful nature, who have an unbroken record of service to their credit and whose integrity is beyond suspicion are imprisoned? They are no law-breakers; they are no haters of the English. And what of the most peaceful demonstration of thousands of simple villagers who are by instinct the most law-abiding? To describe the movement of such men and women as lawlessness is, in my opinion, doing violence to the language. The very motive which is the essence of crime is lacking. It is the noblest of motives which takes away men like the hoary-headed Abbas Tyabji from their soft ease to court the hardships of a jail life.

You protest your affection for India. I believe in your profession. But I deny the correctness of your diagnosis of India's disease. The best constitution that can be devised will fail to bring real contentment and peace unless the grievances on which public attention is concentrated are immediately removed. The salt tax cannot remain. The liquor revenue must go. The foreign cloth importation which has produced a partial paralysis of the village life must be stopped. Have you not noted the strength of popular feeling in these matters? Or are the hundreds of thousands of men and women who are taking part in the movement wicked-minded or misled or fools and the English officials the best judges of what is good for India?

If I am not mistaken, you will find the spirit of the people to be proof against repression, no matter how severe it may be. You will not coerce millions of people into subjection for all time. India must not live for England. She must live for herself, so as to enable her to make her contribution to the world's progress. As a slave nation she is a mere burden on earth because it is a false life. No Round Table Conference can therefore be of any avail, unless you see things from our standpoint and, leaving coercion, rely simply on carrying con-

viction. Even those who you think are with you are with the Congressmen so far as wants are concerned.

Provisional Settlement

The following settlement by the Governor-General-in-Council published in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* of 5th March 1931 gives the conditions on which the civil disobedience movement is to be suspended pending final terms of settlement.

1. Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and M. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued, and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and local Governments.

2. As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part: so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations.

3. In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of the 19th of January 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.

4. The settlement relates to activities directly connected with the civil disobedience movement.

5. Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by Government. The effective

discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance further-
of, by whatever methods pursued and, in particular, the follow-
ing :

(1) The organized defiance of the provisions of any law.

(2) The movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues.

(3) The publication of news-sheets in support of the civil disobedience movement.

(4) Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade terms to resign their posts.

6. As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved : firstly, the character of the boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement to Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. But the boycott of non-Indian goods (except of cloth which has been applied to all foreign (cloth) has been directed during the civil disobedience movement been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organized for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which

the settlement is intended to secure. It is, therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement, the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

7. In regard to the method employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods, or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing, except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

8. Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police, and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In present circumstances Government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and counter-charges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

9. The action that Government will take on the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs.

10. Ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement will be withdrawn. Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

11. Notifications declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn,

provided that the notifications were made in connection with the civil disobedience movement.

The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of this provision.

12 (i) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with civil disobedience movement and relate to offences which do not involve violence other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) The same principles will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(iii) Where a local Government has moved any High Court or has initiated proceedings under the Legal Practitioners' Act in regard to the conduct of legal practitioners in connection with the civil disobedience movement, it will make application to the Court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings, provided that the alleged conduct of the persons concerned does not relate to violence or incitement to violence.

(iv) Prosecutions, if any, against soldiers and police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

13 (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence, not involving violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted, or if a prosecution relating to an offence of this character is pending against such a prisoner, it will be withdrawn.

(iii) Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders—in the very few cases that have occurred—will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

14. Fines have not been realized will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, and the security has not been realized, it will be similarly remitted.

Fines which have been realized and securities forfeited and realized under any law will not be returned.

15. Additional police imposed in connection with the civil disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money, not in excess of the actual cost, that has been realized, but they will remit any sum that has not been realized.

16 (a) Movable property, which is not an illegal possession and which has been seized in connection with the civil disobedience movement under the Ordinances or the provisions of the Criminal Law, will be returned, if it is still in the possession of Government.

(b) Movable property, forfeited or attached in connection with the realization of land revenue or other dues, will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay, genuinely require time for the purpose, and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Compensation will not be given for deterioration.

(d) Where movable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed of by Government, compensation will not be

given and the sale proceeds will not be returned, except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which the property may have been sold.

(e) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.

17 (a) Immovable property of which possession has been taken under Ordinance IX of 1930 will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

(b) Land and other immovable property in the possession of Government, which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realization of land revenue or other dues, will be returned unless the Collector of the district has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulter, while willing to pay, genuinely requires time for the purpose, and if necessary the revenues will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Where immovable property has been sold to third parties, the transaction must be regarded as final, so far as Government are concerned.

Note. Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that according to his information and belief some, at least, of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government on the information before them cannot accept this contention.

(d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

18. Government believe that there have been very few cases in which the realization of dues has not been made in

accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature, and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

19. Where the posts rendered vacant by the resignations have been permanently filled, Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the reappointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

20. Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the salt administration, nor are they able, in the present financial conditions of the country, to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts.

For the sake however of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions, on lines already prevailing in certain places, in order to permit local residents in villages, immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages, but not for sale to, or trading with, individual living outside them.

21. In the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order.

H. W. Emerson
Secretary to the Government of India

GANDHIJI ON PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT*

Our young brothers and sisters are unhappy about the settlement. I have nothing but love in my heart for them. I can understand their sorrow. They have every right to doubt the wisdom of this settlement. Their opposition does not irritate me. I am not even angry. We opposed the Round

*Speech at the Karachi Congress on 30 March, 1931.

The Congress Working Committee resolution No. 3 of April 2 read : "With reference to the Congress resolution No. 5 [on Provisional Settlement] appointing the delegation to the Round Table Conference, the Working Committee is of opinion that Mahatma Gandhi should be the sole delegate on behalf of the Congress." Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a note on this subject in which he said :

"In consequence of the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, a period of truce has been proclaimed. It is with regret that, on the morrow of this agreement, I have to strike a note of discord. I recognize that, in many respects, the terms of settlement are honourable and give evidence of the strength that the nation has gained by the sacrifice and suffering of the past year. I recognize also that the settlement is provisional, leaving all the vital questions open, and the final settlement is yet to come. But I feel that there is a certain commitment in it regarding the scope of discussions and a certain limitation of our ideal as laid down at Lahore. Safeguards and reservations are referred to and, although these are said to be in the interest of India, they may be, and I fear will be, interpreted to mean a limitation of our freedom in regard to defence, external affairs, finances and the public debt. The Congress and the Working Committee are pledged to the full control by the people of India of the defence services, the financial and economic policy, and the...many of my colleagues of the W.C. are of opinion that the reference to safeguards and reservations does not limit their freedom in any way to work for the independence of India. I hope they are right and will prove their contention by their achievements in the coming Conference. But, as I cannot get over my doubts in regard to this phraseology, I am unable to accept or reconcile myself to any reference to safeguards and reservations. I do not desire however that any impediment should be placed in the way of those who interpret the words differently from me and who propose to extract independence out of them. Truce having been proclaimed by the Working Committee, I trust all of us will honour it and carry out the directions of the W.C. in regard to it."

Table Conference ; we were also saying that we would get nothing from this Conference. What has happened now to justify our hopes of gaining something by attending the Conference ? There is no magic in me, nor is there any in the Congress that will change the attitude of the Round Table Conference, and that we will attain everything. Therefore, please understand clearly that I make no promise that by attending the Round Table Conference we shall secure complete independence. My mind is full of misgivings and again and again I ask myself the question : "What shall we gain by attending this Conference ?" Between what we demand today, and the demands that have been put forward at the Round Table Conference up to date, there is such an ocean of difference that the usefulness of going there may will be doubted.

But it is a sin not to do what circumstances have made it a duty to do. It is a principle of satyagraha that if there is an opportunity for talks with the party against whom satyagraha is being offered, then talks should be tried. We should strive to win over by love the person whom we consider our enemy. To conquer him in this manner should be the satyagrahi's resolve. If he does not possess this attribute but harbours enmity, jealousy and hatred in his heart, then he cannot be called a satyagrahi but a *duragrahi*. In the oft-repeated goal of the Congress there is no place for wilfulness. There is only place for truth and non violence. Therefore, if we admit that there can be no compromise with those with whom we have tried the method of satyagraha, then that will be a great mistake. This error must be dispelled. Truly, I myself am doubtful of the outcome. Still, when we have been invited, when we have been asked to say what we want, to state our position rather than fight, then what other duty can we have but to do that ? This is what the Prime Minister has said. The Viceroy also has uttered similar words. When I was in prison, even then he sent word to say that I could meet him whenever I wished to do so. Then he delivered a speech ; and after that we were released. On my release, I wrote him a letter and as a result we decided to meet. Our meetings and talks ended

in the present settlement. There is nothing in the settlement for us to be ashamed of. I do not want to explain here why certain things are not in the settlement and why certain matters were left untouched. But I shall explain to you how it became the duty of the Working Committee to make this compromise. When the Government set free the Working Committee, it became the duty of the latter either to break the law by offering civil disobedience and go back to prison, or do something other than that. Had we not exercised our discretion in choosing this second course, the world would not have cheered us, it would have censured us.

This is one question. Another thing is that we have not ended this struggle because we had grown weary. I did not like what Swami Govindanand said. He said, "We were prepared to continue the struggle for another year." I agree. I may even go further and add that we could have continued this fight not for one but for another twenty years to come. We are thirty crores in number out of which one crore would fight. And a satyagrahi fights on even when all have wearied and given up the struggle. So, it is not right to say that the Working Committee has accepted the settlement because we had become tired. He who suspends satyagraha because he is tired, deceives God, deceives the nation, deceives his country. But this settlement was not concluded in this manner. It was concluded because it had to be. We cannot argue that we should continue to fight because we have the strength to fight. Even if we had continued the fight for another year more, in the end this very same question would have come up. Would you even then say, "No, we shall continue to fight"? That soldier who says, "I shall keep on fighting", has false pride, and is guilty in the eyes of God. Therefore, the settlement ought to have been concluded.

Then, another thing. We do not yet quite know whether we shall reach the stage of the Round Table Conference or not. Even if we do, there is no reason to assume that we shall bring back something from there. Even if we return empty-handed

you have no right to abuse us, nor can you laugh at us. Because I do not promise that, if I go, I shall necessarily bring back something or other. This is certain however : we shall not return with slavery. We shall not bring anything that is not contained in this resolution. But if we do not bring anything, how does it follow that we should hand over the work of the Congress to others ? Even today the work of the Congress is in your hands. It is you that made Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel your President today. If you choose you can remove him from office tomorrow. If you wish to change the Working Committee you can do so. Therefore, please do not say that it is the Mahatma who is behind this resolution. The Working Committee is behind it ; so you have to let go the Mahatma. It is far better that you do not vote for the resolution. It should not be that simply because some of us have done something we should be kept on. If we have proved ungrateful or if we have acted foolishly, then certainly remove us from office. And instead of removing us on our return from the Round Table Conference, you can do so now. We are your servants ; we shall resign and get away. Even if there is the slightest self-respect in us, we shall resign, and you will not be blamed for this. The world will say we did the right thing.

But if you feel that because I am a Mahatma this cannot be done, then it is weakness on your part. If swaraj cannot be had without the Mahatma, then, believe me, you will never be able to rule yourselves. When I left for Dandi, I said that even if all the leaders were jailed, the fight would not stop. Those outside would continue it. You have shown it in action. Not only all the leaders, but all the workers were jailed, yet our work did not stop. The women took it up and were in turn imprisoned ; even then the work did not stop.

Was Kikibehn Lalwani, who was dictator of Karachi, fit to be made dictator ? The poor lady was suffering from phthisis. But she plunged into the battle, became dictator, and entered jail. The sick woman was cured, and she became a brave fighter. So, you can see that the Mahatma is not indispensable.

I may add further that to the extent I deserve the title Mahatma, it was given to me for my spirit of service. Once I give up serving others I shall cease to be Mahatma from that very moment. Therefore do not feel that because this resolution was drawn up by the Mahatma, or by the Working Committee, therefore it cannot be opposed. If after deep consideration you reject this resolution then I shall defend you before the world.

But if you accept that you must do exactly as you are told by those who have started the fight, then I tell you to be with me and put up a sincere fight. That is, do not worry if your spokesman returns empty-handed. If he brings back something so much the better ; but if he does not bring anything we shall fight again. So many have gone to jail, so many have faced lathi charges, and undergone hardships that we do not wish unnecessarily to repeat all this. But, having done our duty, if we do not get what we asked for, then our resolve to fight stands. And, when we are there those who remain here—supporters and opponents—must finish the work that remains.

I do not agree with Dr. Kitchlew that when we are away attending the Round Table Conference, the work that remains to be done should be done by the youth. Who else can picket like the women who picketed the foreign-cloth shops and the liquor shops ? They shall abide by the rules of picketing that we have laid down and do the work of picketing. Men like Jamshed Mehta, who is known here by the name of 'Baghat', had to complain strongly—bitterly—against us. Let all read his article, and avoid the mistakes that he has pointed out and do picketing according to the rules laid down. Khadi work should be taken up in order to complete the boycott of foreign cloth. All this work is not only for the youth to do but for all.

I shall say a few words about the simple and candid speech of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan—a speech that so well becomes a Pathan I was very glad to hear what he said. It is good that we invited him and gave ourselves that opportunity of hearing

him. I have lived among the Pathans. I have had Pathans as my clients. I know the Pathans' nature. If the Pathans believe that they have benefited by the Congress—and I believe that they have—then I wish to assure them further that we shall do nothing that will curtail their freedom. We shall do our best to see that the Frontier Province attains the same kind of independence as the other States will receive. I had intended to visit that province, but I regret that I shall not get the opportunity to do so. I was told that the Afghans on the other side of the Frontier Province also wished for my release. Why should the Afghans have wanted my freedom? I have worked for the Pathans of the Frontier, but I have done nothing for the Afghans. Yes, I shall certainly say that in our freedom lies theirs too. Today, however, beyond showing this much of fellowship, we are not able to render them any special assistance. On attaining freedom India has no designs to fight any other country. I can give this assurance to the Pathans and the Afghans. It is a great thing for the Pathans to join us in our fight, because we shall have a whole army of fighters.

I will say one or two words with reference to what has been left out in the resolution before you. One thing that has been left out is the Federation. What is the meaning of the word 'Federation'? Is it a Federation between the princes or the States on the one hand and the provinces put together on the other? What are the conditions under which that Federation is to take place we do not know at all. But the princes have taken up one position, *viz.*, that there shall be no intervention on the part of the Federal Government in their internal affairs. All I have suggested in connection with the Federation is that they should acknowledge that the fundamental rights of the people of the States should be the same as those of citizens in what is called British India. If those rights are guaranteed under the federal constitution, then there should be naturally some federal institution to protect those rights, *i.e.*, a federal supreme court or whatever you might like to call it, to which an appeal would lie. I hope the princes will of their own accord recognize these two things and also allow representation

for the subjects of the States. To do this would possibly be somewhat of a derogation from the sovereignty which the princes enjoy. But if they would be part of the Federation in which the larger part is to be governed by a spirit of absolute democracy, it is up to them to part with some of their power and that of their own accord and free will. I am hoping that some such thing would happen and that is why you find no mention made of Federation in this resolution.

Supposing that we do not arrive at any settlement whatever over this delicate question of Hindu Muslim unity, what is to be the position of the Congress? So far as I can see at the present moment, it will be useless for the Congress delegation to take part in the Conference if we cannot possibly arrive at a proper communal solution. But I am not able just now to give you my final decision or final opinion. I do not know. Many things may happen, which may make it necessary or highly desirable that the delegation should take part in the Conference. But that is for the future really to decide.

If the Congress rejects the settlement summarily, nothing can possibly be said against the Congress. The Congress is a paramount authority. The Working Committee is its creature. The action taken by the Working Committee, or taken by myself, may not commend itself to you. There should be, therefore, no question of toleration or patronage. It is open to everyone of you to reject the resolution and to repudiate the settlement if you wish to. But if you endorse the settlement, then it is also your duty actively to support it, carry out all its items faithfully and honourably and do the various things which are set out before you in the resolution, so that you daily increase the power of the Congress and make it possible for the Congress delegation to vindicate the position of the Congress and possibly to bring the very thing for which you have suffered for the last twelve months.

One thing more. If this delegation goes as far as the Conference, it does not mean that the delegation will bring in its pocket *Purna swaraj*. If it does not bring *purna swaraj*, it does

not mean that it returns humiliated. Nothing of the kind. All that we expect to be able to do is to go and tell the British people and the British Minister what we want, and if we do not get what the Congress expects the delegation to accept within the terms of the resolution, we are bound to return empty-handed and receive your compliments, not curses. But you will be entitled to give us curses if we return having sold the interests of the country. That is what you have a perfect right to do. But it will not be proper for you to say, 'you were not able to fulfil your promises.' No promise has ever been made. No promise is being made now that if the deputation goes to the Conference, whether here or in England, or enters upon further negotiations, that deputation is going to bring *purna swaraj*. *Purna swaraj* will come when the full authority of the Congress has been manifested and not a minute before. It will be the greatest achievement of the Congress to bring *swaraj* if it does. All that I promise faithfully to you on my own behalf and on behalf of any delegation that you might wish to send with me is that we shall not be disloyal to the Congress in any shape or form.

AN IMPRESSIVE ACCOUNT OF THE MOVEMENT*

Salt suddenly became a mysterious word, a word of power. The Salt Tax was to be attacked, the salt laws were to be broken. We were bewildered and could not quite fit in a national struggle with common salt. Another surprising development was Gandhiji's announcement of his 'Eleven Points.' What was the point of making a list of some political and social reforms—good in themselves, no doubt—when we were talking in terms of independence? Did Gandhiji mean the same thing when he used this term as we did, or did we speak a different language? We had no time to argue for events were on the move. They were moving

*From Jawaharlal Nehru : *An Autobiography*, Ch. XXIX.
(Excerpts).

politically before our eyes from day to day in India ; and, hardly realised by us at the time, they were moving fast in the world and holding it in the grip of a terrible depression. Prices were falling, and the city dwellers welcomed this as a sign of the plenty to come, but the farmer and the tenant saw the prospect with alarm.

Then came Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy and the beginning of the Dandi Salt March from the Ashram at Sabarmati. As people followed the fortunes of this marching column of pilgrims from day to day, the temperature of the country went up. A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Ahmedabad to make final arrangements for the struggle that was now almost upon us. The Leader in the struggle was not present, for he was already tramping with his pilgrim band to the sea, and he refused to return. The A.I.C.C. planned what should be done in case of arrests, and large powers were given to the President to act on behalf of the Committee, in case it could not meet, to nominate members of the Working Committee in place of those arrested, and to nominate a successor for himself with the same powers. Similar powers were given by Provincial and local Congress Committees to their presidents.

Thus was inaugurated a regime when so-called 'dictators' flourished and controlled the struggle on behalf of the Congress. Secretaries of State for India and Viceroys and Governors have held up their hands in horror and proclaimed how vicious and degraded was the Congress because it believed in dictatorships ; they, of course, being convinced adherents of democracy. Occasionally the Moderate Press in India has also preached to us the virtues of democracy. We listened to all this in silence (because we were in prison) and in amazement. Brazen-faced hypocrisy could hardly go further. Here was India being governed forcibly under an absolute dictatorship with Ordinance laws and suppression of every kind of civil liberty, and yet our rulers talked unctuously of democracy. Even normally, where was the shadow of

democracy in India? It was no doubt natural for the British Government to defend its power and vested interests in India and to suppress those who sought to challenge its authority. But its assertion that all this was the democratic method was worthy of record for future generations to admire and ponder over.

The Congress had to face a situation when it would be impossible for it to function normally; when it would be declared an unlawful organisation, and its committees could not meet for consultation or any action, except secretly. Secrecy was not encouraged by us, as we wanted to keep our struggle a perfectly open one, and thus to keep up our tone and influence the masses. But even secret work did not take us far. All our leading men and women at the centre, as well as in the provinces and in local areas, were bound to be arrested. Who was then to carry on? The only course open to us was, after the fashion of an army in action, to make arrangements for new commanders to be appointed as old ones were disabled. We could not sit down in the field of battle and hold committee meetings. Indeed, we did so sometimes, but the object of this, and the inevitable result, was to have the whole committee arrested *en bloc*. We did not even have the advantage of a general staff sitting safely behind the lines, or a civilian cabinet in still greater safety elsewhere. Our general staffs and cabinets had to keep, by the very nature of our struggle, in the most advanced and exposed positions, and they were arrested and removed in the early stages. And what was the power we conferred on our 'dictators'? It was an honour for them to be put forward as symbols of the national determination to carry on the struggle; but the actual authority they had was largely confined to 'dictating' themselves to prison. They could only function at all when the committee they represented could not meet on account of *force majeure*; and wherever and whenever that committee could meet, the 'dictator' lost his individual authority, such as it was. He or she could not tackle any basic problems or principles; only minor and superficial phases of the move-

ment could be affected by the 'dictator'. 'Congress 'dictatorships' were really stepping-stones to prison ; and from day to day this process went on, new persons taking the place of those who were disabled.

April came, and Gandhiji drew near to the sea, and we waited for the word to begin civil disobedience by an attack on the salt laws. For months past we had been drilling our volunteers, and Kamala and Krishna (my wife and sister) had both joined them and donned male attire for the purpose. The volunteers had, of course, no arms or even sticks. The object of training them was to make them more efficient in their work and capable of dealing with large crowds. The 6th of April was the first day of the National Week, which is celebrated annually in memory of the happenings in 1919, from Satyagraha Day to Jallianwala Bagh. On that day Gandhiji began the breach of the salt laws at Dandi beach, and three or four days later permission was given to all Congress organisations to do likewise and begin Civil Disobedience in their own areas.

It seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released ; and all over the country, in town and village, salt manufacture was the topic of the day, and many curious expedients were adopted to produce salt. We knew precious little about it, and so we read it up where we could, and issued leaflets giving directions, and collected pots and pans and ultimately succeeded in producing some unwholesome stuff, which we waved about in triumph, and often auctioned for fancy prices. It was really immaterial whether the stuff was good or bad ; the main thing was to commit a breach of the obnoxious Salt Law, and we were successful in that, even though the quality of our salt was poor. As we saw the abounding enthusiasm of the people and the way salt-making was spreading like a prairie fire, we felt a little abashed and ashamed for having questioned the efficacy of this method when it was first proposed by Gandhiji. And we marvelled at the amazing knack of the man to impress the multitude and make it act in an organised way.

I was arrested on the 14th of April as I was entraining for Raipur in the Central Provinces, where I was going to attend a conference. That very day I was tried in prison and sentenced to six months' imprisonment under the Salt Act. In anticipation of arrest I had nominated (under the new powers given to me by the A.I.C.C.) Gandhiji to act as Congress President in my absence, but, fearing his refusal, my second nomination was for father. As I expected, Gandhiji would not agree, and so father became the acting-President of the Congress. He was in poor health, nevertheless he threw himself into the campaign with great energy; and, during those early months, his strong guidance and enforcement of discipline was of tremendous benefit to the movement. The movement benefited greatly, but it was at the cost of such health and physical fitness as had remained in him.

Those were days of stirring news—processions and *lathi* charges and firing, frequent *hartals* to celebrate noted arrests, and special observances, like Peshawar Day, Garhwali Day, etc. For the time being the boycott of foreign cloth and all British goods was almost complete. When I heard that my aged mother and, of course, my sisters used to stand under the hot summer sun picketing before foreign cloth shops, I was greatly moved. Kamala did so also, but she did something more. She threw herself into the movement in Allahabad city and district with an energy and determination which amazed me, who thought I had known her so well for so many years. She forgot her ill-health and rushed about the whole day in the sun, and showed remarkable powers of organisation. I heard of this vaguely in gaol. Later, when my father joined me there, I was to learn from him how much he had himself appreciated Kamala's work, and especially her organising capacity. He did not at all fancy my mother or the girls rushing about in the hot sun, but, except for an occasional remonstrance, he did not interfere.

The biggest news of all that came to us in those early days was of the occurrences in Peshawar on April 23rd, and sub-

sequently all over the Frontier Province. Anywhere in India such a remarkable exhibition of disciplined and peaceful courage before machine-gun firing would have stirred the country. In the Frontier Province it had an additional significance, for the Pathans, noted for their courage, were not noted for their peaceful nature; and these Pathans had set an example which was unique in India. In the Frontier Province also occurred the famous incident of the refusal to fire on the civil population by the Garhwali soldiers. They refused to fire because of a soldier's distaste for firing on an unarmed crowd, and because, no doubt, of sympathy with the crowd. But even sympathy is not usually enough to induce a soldier to take the grave step of refusing to obey his officer's orders. He knows the consequences. The Garhwalis probably did so (in common with some other regiments elsewhere whose disobedience did not receive publicity) because of a mistaken notion that the British power was collapsing. Only when such an idea takes possession of the soldier does he dare to act according to his own sympathies and inclinations. Probably for a few days or weeks the general commotion and civil disobedience led some people to think that the last days of British rule had come, and this influenced part of the Indian Army. Soon it became obvious that no such thing was going to happen in the near future, and then there was no more disobedience in the army. Care was also taken not to put them in compromising positions.

Many strange things happened in those days, but undoubtedly the most striking was the part of the women in the national struggle. They came out in large numbers from the seclusion of their homes and, though unused to public activity, threw themselves into the heart of the struggle. The picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops they made their preserve. Enormous processions consisting of women alone, were taken out in all the cities; and, generally, the attitude of the women was more unyielding than that of the men. Often they became Congress 'dictators' in provinces and in local areas.

The breach of the Salt Act soon became just one activity, and civil resistance spread to other fields. This was facilitated by the promulgation of various ordinances by the Viceroy prohibiting a number of activities. As these ordinances and prohibitions grew, the opportunities for breaking them also grew, and civil resistance took the form of doing the very thing that the ordinance was intended to stop. The initiative definitely remained with the Congress and the people, and as each ordinance law failed to control the situation from the point of view of government, fresh ordinances were issued by the Viceroy. Many of the Congress Working Committee members had been arrested, but it continued to function with new members added on to it, and each official ordinance was countered by a resolution of the Working Committee giving directions as to how to meet it. These directions were carried out with surprising uniformity all over this country—with one exception, the one relating to the publication of newspapers.

When an ordinance was issued for the further control of the Press and the demand of security from newspapers, the Working Committee called upon the Nationalist Press to refuse to give any security, and to stop publication instead. This was a hard pill to swallow for the newspapermen, for just then the public demand for news was very great. Still the great majority of newspapers—some Moderate papers excepted—stopped publication, with the result that all manner of rumours began to spread. But they could not hold out for long, the temptation was too great, and the sight of their moderate rivals picking up their business too irritating. So most of them drifted back to publication.

Gandhiji had been arrested on May 5th. After his arrest big raids on the salt pans and depots were organized on the west coast. There were very painful incidents of police brutality during these raids. Bombay then occupied the centre of the picture with its tremendous *hartals* and processions and *lathi* charges. Several emergency hospitals grew up to treat the victims of these *lathi* charges. Much that was remarkable happened in Bombay, and being a great city it had the advantage of publicity. Occurrences of equal importance in small towns and the rural areas received no publicity.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

The second World War broke out in 1939 and the British Government declared that India was on the side of the Allies in it. The leaders of the Indian National Congress resented as to why such a declaration was made by the British Government without consulting the Indian leaders. At the Ramgarh session in 1940 the Congress reiterated its stand that nothing short of complete independence could be acceptable to the people of India. It issued an appeal to all classes and communities of India to take part in the civil disobedience struggle for the cause of the freedom of the whole nation. The progress of the war became a cause of concern when Japan started invading the countries of South-East Asia entailing serious danger to the security and territorial integrity of the country. The blunt statement of the British Prime Minister (Churchill) that he had not taken his office to 'preside over the liquidation of the British empire' forced even Gandhiji to change his views who had so far been harping on the thesis that non-violence required rendering assistance to the enemy during moments of difficulty. In such a situation Gandhiji plainly asked the British to walk out after leaving India in any condition whatsoever. The national organisation came out with its 'Quit India' demand asking the British 'to lose the Empire and win the War, to leave India and gain India'. This came as the third and the last experiment of Mahatma Gandhi in the series of his anti-colonial struggles. Most of the items of the programmes of the earlier two movements were repeated,¹ but the

1. Gandhiji thought of conducting this movement on these lines :
 (i) There should be an All-India strike. (ii) All freedom-loving Indians should join the struggle. (iii) The students should leave Government-controlled institutions. (iv) As a last resort every Congressman would be his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. (v) Every satyāgrahi should vow that he would be either free or would die in the attempt to make himself so."

uniqueness of this movement was to ask the British to quit even at the cost of leaving India 'in a state of anarchy'. It gave such a terrible jolt to the foreign rule that Britain, though victorious in the War, preferred to free India as it, in stead of remaining like a peerless asset, was going to be a massive liability for her.

Kiran Shanker Roy's Criticism (Extracts)

(September 18,1942)

The Congressmen of Bengal, especially the A-ICC members who are staunch followers of Mahatma Gandhi having been taken away abruptly, the province lost the lead of the Congress and various other organisations, revolutionary and otherwise, have taken up the lead and hence these troubles, so said Mr. Kiran Shankar Roy. He has been frightened away and so also is Amar Ghosh. At present "the party" formed by the remaining members of the Jugantar group, Anushilan Bengal Volunteers is trying to guide the movement. The pamphlet "Do or Die" printed in red ink used to be distributed by Upan Sinha who was in charge of the Burma evacuees. Both Jyotish Bhowmic and Hemanta Tarafdar are missing and it is suggested that all the literature surreptitiously published in the name of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee are being drafted by them. No organisation has been set up by the B.P.C.C. as it could not function with the arrest of Kali Mukherji. Whatever noise is being created in the province is being done by autonomous groups who assert that every group has a right to act according to its own way. The only pamphlet issued by the B P.C.C. is the "Instructions of A-ICC to Provincial Congress Committees."

Kiran Shankar Roy has been advising the Ad Hoc Congressites to keep absolutely aloof from what is going on in this and other provinces. His reasons are :

1. The shape the movement for freedom has taken is not at all to the liking of Mahatmaji who was given absolute

dictatorship. This is evident when one follows the course of action taken by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and his colleagues in the Frontier Province. He has kept the movement in that Province absolutely non-violent.

2. The terrorist parties have combined and non-violence which they never accepted as their creed has been forsaken by them though they pose to belong to Congress.

3. The Communists, being heavily paid by the interested parties are smuggling themselves with unwary Congressmen and are acting as agent provocateurs and are creating opportunities for the Government to launch conspiracy case against non-violent Congress workers to stifle the Congress movement in Bengal.

4. The formation of the Bengal Ministry with the revolt group of the Congress namely the Forward Block group and its acceptance by the Bengal Governor on the one hand and by large number of public because of the trumpeting of these ministers to the effect that they have been able to do away with the communal tension in Bengal have curbed the influence of the official Congressmen to a large extent.

5. A large number of youths of Bengal are followers of Subhas Bose. When he was compelled to leave the Congress, these youths condemned the official Congress in Bengal and in the very eyes of the Government took to violence to break up the peaceful meetings of the Congress which were called only to preach the good side of practising non-violence. Now these youths have stood against the Government and are creating most harmful disturbances.

According to Kiran Babu when these rowdyism, hooliganism and terrorism will subside, then only the time for Congressmen shall begin.

As most of the official Congress leaders in Bengal have been arrested, there is no link left behind between different dis-

tricts. But the founders of "The Party" have issued confidential circulars to their party members in different districts to take up the lead and to unite all the groups and try to sabotage the present government by all means, foul or fair.

Mrs. Labanya Prova Dutt, President, Bengal Congress Committee which asked on 6.9.42 whether she has appointed any one of the office-bearers of the B.P.C.C. to organise any district in Bengal, she emphatically replied 'No'. She further said that as at the instigation of the R.S.P. (Revolutionary Socialist Party, formerly known as the Anushilan Group), the Jugantar group and the Students' Federation, violence has been introduced in the fight for freedom in the name of the Congress she has severed all connections from the present movement.

*Review of Revolutionary Activities in Bengal According
to an Official Assessment*

(September 24, 1942)

On the 23rd, six A-ICC members, who were known to have been supporting Gandhiji's move from before, were arrested on their return from Bombay. It was seen, however, that all with the exception of Kamani Kumar Datta and others.

In the third week of August A-ICC Bulletin for workers was noticed in circulation in Calcutta. This advocated non-violent raids and dispossessing the Police of their weapons and suggested the following line of work : (1) every one of the 7 lakh villages to organise meetings for the declaration of freedom, (2) disobedience of Government authority, specially the Defence of India Rules, illicit manufacture of salt and stoppage of recruitment and war contribution, (3) organisation of Freedom and Fraternity marches, and (4) thanas and tehsils and district/headquarters to be put out of action through non-violence. Another Congress leaflet, headed.....(Directions of the Congress to the People of the Country) and issued in the name of the B P.C.C., urges the people to unite, cut off all train, telephone and telegraph connections, capture the post

offices, thanas, subdivisional courts, to snatch away arms from the thana police and destroy them, close schools and colleges and thus paralyse Government between the 9th and 15th September. Another leaflet issued by the B.P.C.C. was..... (India's Struggle for Independence) the substance of which is that everybody should try to paralyse Government and stop its source of income and that rails should be removed.

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Kiran Shankar Roy's attitude.—As a result of discussion with Sadik Ali who visited Kiran Shankar Roy on the 19th August, the latter, despite his belief in the unwisdom of the present movement, is reported to have agreed to take part in it, provided non violence was observed. He is also reported to have said that after the recent hooliganism, a reaction had set in among the students, and that district workers should refrain from sabotaging telegraph, telephone and railway communications.

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Financial support.—A Dacca Congressman who attended the A-ICC meeting at Bombay is reported to have said on his return that the members of the Working Committee obtained a large sum of money through G.D Birla from the Bombay Mill Owners' Association, the members of which were extremely displeased with the policy of the Supply Department. He also said the Congressman believed that they could carry on the movement with the mill owners' money till next winter, by which time Britain's domination over India would come to an end. Reports have been received from various sources that the Marwaris in general, and Birla Bros. in particular, have been financing the movement in Bengal.

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Plans followed in districts.—In conformity with the grant of district autonomy as regards the movement, most districts evolved their own plans of work which are based on Instructions to P.C Cs. from the A-ICC but modified to suit local circumstances. In Tippera Dr. Nripen Basu, Secretary, D.C.C.,

issued a 14-items programme headed **Bandemataram**, and Congress workers decided to launch the movement with a meeting in the Town Hall on the 15th August. In Dacca the A-ICC programme brought by delegates from Bombay was locally printed and circulated. A Council of Action was formed at Dacca and a War Council at Munshiganj under Dr. Indra Narayan Sen (Congress) who mobilised terrorist support to carry out acts of sabotage. The Faridpur D.C.C. was reported to have received Rs. 1,000 from the B.P.C.C. to meet the expenses of the movement, and Nani Gopal Bhattacharji of Chaocha (Secretary, Gopalganj B.D.C.C.) brought a large stock of Congress leaflets from Calcutta. District Congress Committee in Tippera, Dacca, Bakarganj, Burdwan and Bankura issued their own programmes of action. In Nadia Haripada Chatarji, M.L.A. (member A-ICC), who attended the Bombay meeting made extensive tour in the district to organise the movement. In Dinajpur copies of propaganda leaflets received from Calcutta were circulated to all Primary Congress Committees for action. An open Congress meeting was held at Contain in Midnapore on the 17th August at which the A-ICC programme was approved.

It is well known that the aim of the Congress was a simultaneous struggle all over the country and that instructions were given to the effect that simultaneous raids should take place in the best organised tehsils in the province and should culminate in raids on district headquarters. In Bengal this plan was unworkable. The mob demonstrations at Beldanga in Murshidabad district, at Bolpur and Dabrajpur in Birbhum district, at Mahisadal in Midnapore district, at Harishchandra-pur in Malda, at Jamalpur in Burdwan, at Balurghat in Dinajpur district and at Siliguri in Darjeeling district were not simultaneous, nor did they lead to the paralysis of the local administration. It is noteworthy that these are all places where there was no special armed force quartered.

In Bengal the first manifestations of the movement were marked by intense student activities, but there was a lull by

the third week of August and enthusiasm had to be whipped up by the issue by B.P.C.C. of a week's programme to be observed by all districts from the 9th to 15th September. After this, attacks were directed on defenceless post offices, and telegraph wires were cut extensively in the districts of Dacca, 24-Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Midnapore and Bakarganj. Rails were also removed in Comilla, Rampurhat, 24-Parganas, and one or two other places but nothing like a deadlock in communications was produced. Industrial strikes, where these were attempted, were in all cases very shortlived and were also mixed up with economic issues.

Elements of population involved.—Those taking part in the present movement are predominantly Hindu students, on whom the Congress and the terrorist leaders have always depended. They have always regarded themselves as the "Army of Freedom" and psychologically they are emotional and impressionable youths in whom the revolutionary urge seems to have come to stay. Teachers and professors have played no inconsiderable part in encouraging them. There is evidence to show that teachers in private institutions have participated in secret dissemination of Congress leaflets. Teachers have pretended inability to attend classes on account of picketing, thus directly contributing to the closing of schools and the release of students for the Congress programme. At some places the protests of Muslim students against frequent interference with their studies were not heeded by the school and college authorities, who are in almost all caste Hindus with a natural bias towards the Congress.

Women have not played a conspicuous part in the movement yet, but intercepted correspondence shows that many are worked up to a fever pitch of emotion. The women workers of Midnapore district held a Conference at Tamluk on the 11th August, in which they passed resolutions expressing complete faith in Gandhi's leadership and their determination to fulfil his mission. The necessity of organising a Women's Congress Committee was also urged. Leading female workers

who gave trouble in 1920 attended the Conference. A few women have been attending meetings, taking part in processions, or picketing schools, in Birbhum (including the Head Mistress of the Rampurhat Girls' School), Dacca, Barisal, Bankura, Siliguri (Darjeeling), Jessore, Dinajpur, Bogra, Rajshahi and Gaibandha (Rangpur).

Suspension of newspapers—The restrictions imposed by Government on the publication of news about the Congress movement resulted in pressure being brought to bear upon Hindu-owned papers in Calcutta to stop publication and threats of mischief were held out, should proprietors not stop publication, or defy the restrictions. The Hindu newspapers could not afford to lose their business, but at the same time, were anxious to save face with the supporters of the movement who formed their clientele. The demand on their "patriotism" in these circumstances resulted in the temporary suspension of the following Calcutta newspapers from the 21st August:— (1) Amrita Bazar Patrika, (2) Telegraph, (3) Ananda Bazar Patrika, (4) Daily Basumati, (5) Advance, (6) Bharat, (7) Jugantar, (8) Matribhumi, (9) Hindusthan Standard, (10) Biswamitra, (11) Dily Krishak, (12) Lokamanya, (13) Pratyaha and (14) Jagriti. This was part of an all-India Nationalist Press gesture, and they began to reappear on the 31st August, the last to resume publication being the Hindusthan Standard on the 7th September.

Tendencies towards violence—Kiran Sankar Ray's repeated insistence on refraining from acts of sabotage and other forms of violence, was not headed, not even by the khadi group,—Gandhiji's own party. There was no disposition to deprive the movement of such a sure weapon by which youthful revolutionaries might help to keep up enthusiasm for the movement. For instance, at a meeting of the Munshiganj (Dacca) War-Council held on the 20th August, a proposal to desist from acts of sabotage was turned down and the A-ICC programme was adopted in toto including interference with means of communication and raids on Government's nerve centres. Acids

have been thrown on passengers in trams in Calcutta and on Europeans coming out of a cinema. Information has been received that the Congress prisoners in the Barisal Jail have a plan to induce the ordinary convicts and under-trial prisoners to break open the jail and escape.

General—The constant arrests of members of the Congress and the secret parties who have been instigating and participating in the movement, the raids on presses and temporary Congress headquarters in Calcutta, and the searching and sealing up of several Congress offices in the districts, have undoubtedly prevented the movement from reaching anything approaching the organised scale that was intended. Central control of the movement is weak because it has been difficult for the leaders who are at large to meet and formulate plans, and there is no close network of Congress organisations throughout the province. Various parties have formed a temporary alliance for conducting the movement, but signs of mutual mistrust have already appeared. Except in the parts of West and North Bengal where the peasantry has been roused and where extensive operations may yet prove necessary, the movement may be said to have lost some of its vigour, but there is no sign that the rebelliousness of the political classes and the anti-British feeling roused by them among the Hindu public have diminished in any way.

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It is noteworthy that the places where violent demonstrations by peasants have occurred are in those parts of Bengal where the population is predominantly Hindu or where there are colonies of aboriginals. There have been no violent demonstrations by mobs of peasants in Eastern Bengal where the population is predominantly Moslem. In Midnapore, particularly in the Contai and Tamluk sub-divisions, meetings have been held in many villages, where it has been impossible for the police to prevent them. The result has been the stirring up of the peasantry to a dangerous pitch of excitement. On the 8th September a mob of 5,000 mostly Mahisya (Hindu) cultivators, who had looted a boat-load of rice and were

attempting to loot a rice-mill, attacked a party of police, who were compelled to open fire, in a village in the Tamluk sub-division. On the 20th a mob of 5,000 assembled near the Bhawanipur police station in the Contai sub-division but were persuaded to disperse by the police who were, however, subsequently surrounded by a mob of 1,000 when they went to arrest one of the student ring leaders. Again, on the same date, when a Congress camp was raided, a mob of 1,000 assembled and had to be dispersed by a lathi-charge. On the 22nd, a mob of 2,000 who were obstructing the repairing of breaches in a road in Contai sub-division attacked a party of police who were compelled to open fire.

Planting and Organisation of the Movement

(December 11, 1942)

A bulletin is said to have been issued by the A-ICC group giving fresh directions for the intensification of the present movement. The letter enclosing the bulletin is dated December 11, 1942. The bulletin reads "Freedom Struggle Front", the struggle of revolt.

The Need for Plan

There can be no doubt essential saneness of this technique whatever the opinion about its universal applicability for all militant action, there can be no gainsaying that it is the only feasible move in the present circumstances of the country. But the stress it lays on the individual which is the secret of its unique efficacy is also the source of weakness one must most carefully guard. The individual is thrown on his own resources of thought. Again how small these resources are in a suppressed people we know. There are some who would eternally postpone the struggle on that account, forgetting that it is only through that they may enlarge their resources. To these limiting factors dictates the form which the struggle must take. The objective must be immediately appealing to the common man, because immediately satisfying the vital lack

(sic) clearly defined so as to be easily grasped by the commonest intelligence. The ultimate issue, the final goal is perceived and maintained aloft only by a sustained process of reasoning and must be allowed to emerge before the fighting ranks only in careful stages through a progressive series and secondary and immediate aims. The final goal of the struggle must be kept steadily in view by some : the stages to its attainment must be carefully set by some. This is the task of planning. The scope of planning. This movement is decentralised, individualistic, anarchically achieved because it is a movement and not an involuntary exploration of pent up energy, its attraction and its anarchy is deliberate and purposeful. The object of planning is to set the direction in form and animate the participants with the parties but the scope of central direction and control in movement of this atomistic character is directly limited. The function of planning in this movement is three-fold : it must furnish the ideological perspective at each stage ; it must engage the broad principles which will stage ; it must engage the broad principles which will guide action : it must provide a general co-ordination of groups and individuals, by arranging contacts, dissemination of intelligence, staging avoidance and cancelling connections. Central direction cannot attempt much more without destroying the elucidity and decentralised initiative which constituted the essential quality of this movement. The detailed application of the general principle in concrete acts and manoeuvres must be left to the primary fighting units. The movement will not conform to a uniform pattern in all areas for this reason. This outward manifestation will exhibit as great authority and as great variety as local problems and circumstances will vary. This unfounded diversity of expressions should be welcome. It is bewildering to the enemy and should be encouraged by working up and bringing to a head the particular local grievance which is most acute in any year—it may be shortage of foodgrains in one place, the exaction of Rent Collector in another, the refusal of permission to irrigate the fields in some other, the realisation of collective fine is still another. Each such problem is the focal point for the

initiation of the movement in the area. The general plan will attract the search for such force ; points out that our festering economic source will be the most suitable starting point for local agitation being the most deeply felt, and the quickest most naturally, and the most unifying inciting agents for the local people ; how these areas can never be slaved within the framework of the existing system ; and as this understanding spreads and the agitation has reached a sufficient pitch, suggest the precipitation of the next wider areas, taking the people forward to the next higher phase of struggle.

The Machinery for Planning

The machinery set up to undertake this planning must be suited to its specially limited purpose. That purpose is, as indicated already to outline the general policy and direction and to provide a loose and flexible coordination of the work of the party especially parties, groups and individuals to whom the slightest discretion is to be left in carrying out the day today programme of the struggle. These are old organisations claiming the membership of disciplined bodies of men and women who have been already working for subversion and the present orders of things for a long time. They may have varying methods and varying creeds, but as long as they do not plan counter to the general direction of this movement, they will be welcomed and will find a place. The invitation must be open even to individuals in their own right as children of this country. This struggle is a total struggle in its present phase, the upsurge of a whole people—it is not sectional, partisan, exclusive, but total and inconclusive at this stage. The class war may have to come, but that is not yet, not till after the riddance of foreign exploitation. It is arguable that in the course of the struggle the shift of force will come before the proletariat even in the process of overthrowing the foreign hold. The two vital phases being simultaneous not successive. Be that as it may, this must be clear now that the organisation requires that central guidance of the movement in its present stage is not the rigid organisation of an exclusive party.

professing a dogmatic creed and enforcing an iron discipline. We do not want to set up a new party which must immediately come into conflict with existing parties and can only prevail by fighting and destroying them. What we need to set up is a meeting place for parties and groups, a forum for discussion, a clearing house of ideas where the greatest common measure of agreement on policy can be worked out. What we need is a coming together of parties, not their suppression by a new body. What we need is a confederation, a joint enterprise, a common stand ; what we need is the freedom struggle front where every group, every party, every class and section and every individual can find a place to fill without (? losing) their separate identities. There are many revolutionary parties in the field. They differ in their methods, their traditions, their special experience of particular lines of work, but there is little difference in the ultimate goal of their endeavours. Their organisation, discipline, resources, special talents and aptitude for special tasks must all be utilised. They can be all roped in on the common platform of freedom struggle front and this can be done in the present phase of the struggle without calling upon them to renounce their immediate loyalties. To a much more limited extent yet for some measure the same is true of social group also. There is no class or section which is not against the present state. Let that discontent and frustration in each layer of society be exploited and calls into disruptive force if the rich mill-owner or banker is welcome to finance the revolution—let his help be eagerly seized. He may be acting from calculated self-interest, desiring an easier return for his capital invested ; he may be moved in respect of himself by the abstract change in the era. In any case the course of the development of the struggle which can only succeed through the people awakening to power, he must either identify his interest with that of the masses or be submerged in the rising tide of their power. Let not a virginly horror outrage the class issues stand in the way of seeking and taking his help ; let him be roped in too.

The Programme of Action

There are so many vital fronts and in this war as there are classes and sections and individuals waging it, and action on all fronts is simultaneous, but the most extensive and significant field of work lies in the country-side, where our peasantry offers the biggest reserve of man power and where village economy is threatened with imminent breakdown. Let peasant representative in the villages be approached by our central agents. The agents themselves be selected from tried workers of existing organisations and parties. Some now disbanded by law such as the Spinners Association, some just countenanced openly such as the Krishak-Projas who have already established connections in the interior. Let them select the initial targets for assault in each village or group of villages ; let the rising and simmering discontent against these immediate grievances be churned up into an angry ferment, first through informal discussions then through open meetings, while attempting to relate the immediate problems to wider and bigger issues in simple understandable terms. Open conflict with authority should be avoided at this stage by representing the agitation as a lawful demand for economic concessions. As soon as the discontent is crystallised to some extent, orderly but confident processions should be organised, for its collective representation before the local authorities. On their failure to redress, which is inevitable, the more extreme and militant specimen of the peasants should be helped to take the lead and prepare the man for direct action : by organised and orderly seizure of stocks of essential goods ; by refraining by means of rents and debts ; by refusing to part with crops, by ignoring court processes for distraint and refusing to attend or bid at sales ; by taking possession of the machinery of local administration, such as union boards, chowkis, thanas and running it themselves ; by setting up new machinery where necessary. If the developments can be firmly synchronised in a number of years from the centre—and to a great extent this will be helped by the natural infectuousness of the process—the forces of the state will be helpless to check those processes,

the disturbances will be too widespread and scattered. The police and the military may advance on one village and raid it to arrest but the rare and the front will be constantly harassed ; their communications will be constantly cut off, their feeding supplies will be precarious. The tactical plan of defence in the villages will be very ideal to organise scouts to give warning of the enemies approach, retire and disperse before its advance and return like the tide when the enemy most presently withdrew having nothing to do and little too explicit. The sufferance of the villagers will be great but the stakes are also high. If they have been made to realise these at the outset, if they know that the government is in action and suffering no less, they have trained mind to expect and do, then this suffering will not break them—then each time they will return to their razed villages with a grimmer determination of spirit and increased bitterness of heart ; and the news of happenings in every village, every district must filter through to fortify their resolve.

Other Friends

We have a better organisation and a greater organisation of work among the industrial labour. Here also unrest must be brought to a head on immediate economic issues. The situation will be directly helped by the commotion in the villages. It will dry up the source of full supply and raw materials to the urban and industrial areas. Dearness Allowance can never keep pace with price and will sore higher and higher with a progressive inflation of the currency. Price control will shoot up as the senseless dissipation does. Strike should be easy to organise in this context. Propaganda should be meanwhile pressed home on the capitalist front, appealing to this class on emotional patriotic grounds to view the strike programme with favour. The bourgeoisie must be exhorted to keep up political discontent at high pressure, 'declassé' price of the petit Bourgeois sections must be recruited to lead militant demonstrations of students and labourers. The Indian officialdom should be approached for secret directions in money and information and sabotage of vital

processes of the administration. The precise points and methods of that must be left to their own decision. In this as in other cases but countless illustrations can be cited and innumerable members discovered once the general lines of our movement are clearly grasped. General analysis of the struggle must be made known in every suitable case.

Administrative Task

The training of workers, the issue of leaflets, news sheets, slogans, the organisation of contacts, the raising of funds, frequent reviews of progress, issue of directions to the fighting line—these are the urgent administrative problems of the freedom struggle front. Help is pouring in from all States, the tasks will be done. But when the administration has any programme, greatest decentralisation should be provided for. In that, rather than in secrecy for which the scope is directly limited in a movement of this character, lies the biggest safeguard against its suppression.

A Rejoinder to Government's Pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for Disturbances"

(February 28, 1943)

In reply to the Government's pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for Disturbances," a bulletin was brought out which has been named as People's War No. 34 dated 28th February, 1945. It reads :

Finding that international opinion is quickly rallying around for the release of Mahatma Gandhi to save him from the jaws of death, the Government of India has come out with a charge-sheet against the Indian National Congress, fastening on the Congress all responsibility for the disturbance and sabotage taking place after August 9. It is significant that the press summary does not attack the Congress leaders and the Mahatma with deliberate pro-Axis, pro-Japanese activities an unjustifiable, false charge which was once levelled by interested parties and it was the stock in trade

of all reactionaries especially in Britain. The press instead charges that the National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was promoting violence, anarchy and sabotage as part of the plan of struggle. The evidence which they bring out in support of their contention is a letter of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain. In the first place Jai Prakash Narain was in jail when the Congress leaders were arrested. He escaped from the jail during the course of the struggle and whatever he writes can hardly be taken as the authoritative voice of the Congress Working Committee and much less of the Mahatma. Besides it has been a well-known fact that Mr. Narain has of late been more in sympathy with the Forward Bloc than with the official leadership of the Congress. The Government might as well have quoted Subhas Bose's broadcast over Berlin in their charge sheet. Secondly, the Government relies on quoting Gandhiji out of context and seeks to make out a case through sheer suppression of real meaning. The charges probably by the Government are a mere propaganda stunt to influence world opinion which is rallying for the release of Mahatmaji. The large mass of the people in Britain and America will not be decided by this stunt. Since the Cripps Mission Governmental credit for veracity has been completely undermined. The people abroad have realised the basic fact that Gandhiji's stand for Indian freedom and that the cooperation of Indian people is essentially for common victory.

A telegram dated February 27, 1943, from the Governor-General to the Secretary of State for India, London, reads :

"You will have seen from informal telegram No. nc 44 of February 25th to your Information Department giving Indian press reactions. Criticism is based on (1) one-sided nature of document being prosecution case only, (2) unpropitious moment for release, (3) material contained not new. Point to be made is that document was prepared and published in response to widespread public clamour and Government should produce it against Congress ; it was already under

preparation before Gandhi's fast and was not timed to coincide with it though claims made by Gandhi in correspondence with lend us to expedite publication; material is admittedly not complete and mostly not new but is here brought for the first time into coherent whole. It is highly significant that *Hindustan Times*, most important national daily at present in publication which had been prominent among those who press for presentation of Government case against Congress has refused publicity to pamphlet on strictly specious ground that precensorship order precludes it from replying to allegations made.

2 Foreign reaction : American correspondents generally adopt neutral attitude and are inclined to reserve judgement also taking point that pamphlet is a prosecution case only. American Associated Press says in effect : "Books which offer little new material amounts to prosecution a member for endless debate between Indian and British nationals. Congress leaders who could answer are all in jail." Chicago Tribune says that this book may be said to have achieved its object as far as that is possible by a well argued lawyer's belief, other side to which is unheard ; there is an abundant evidence that Congress foresaw that it "is impossible movement and would lead to violence and even of its planning violence after arrest of Congress leaders." British correspondents are more favourable and leave little doubt that in their opinion an unanswerable case against Congress is made out, though there is some criticism of style of production. Marcuse of French Section of Min. of Information considers this book a document of considerable importance as it places before public conclusive evidence of not only of Congress responsibility but also of tendency of Congress to capitulate Japan. Jevons Yu of Central News Agency, Chung King, dismisses this book as an attempt to prove that responsibility for present disturbance lies with Congress ; he adopts the detached attitude referring to "alleged" Congress bulletins.

3. Immediate reactions are on the whole slightly more favourable than we expected with possible exception of

Muslim members, which tends to throw neutral attitude adopted by Jinnah over Gandhi's fast. It is of interest that public demand for sale copies at 4 annas per copy is very large, one bookseller alone having ordered 10,000.

GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO LORD SAMUEL*

(dated 19 May, 1943)

I enclose herewith a cutting from *The Hindu* dated the 8th April last, containing *Reuter's* summary of your speech in the House of Lords, during the recent debate. Assuming the correctness of the summary, I feel impelled to write this letter.

The report distressed me. I was wholly unprepared for your unqualified association with the one-sided and unjustified statement of the Government of India against the Congress and me.

You are a philosopher and a Liberal. A philosophic mind has always meant for me a detached mind, and liberalism a sympathetic understanding of men and things.

As it seems to me, there is nothing in what the Government has said to warrant the conclusions to which you are reported to have come.

From the summary I select a few of the items which, in my opinion, are inconsistent with facts.

1. "The Congress Party has to a great extent thrown over democratic philosophy."

The Congress Party has never "thrown over democratic philosophy." Its career has been one progressive march towards democracy. Every one who subscribes to the attainment of the goal of Independence through peaceful and legitimate means and pays four annas per year can become its member.

Gandhiji's letter to a Liberal M.P. in appreciation of his speech in the House of Lords on 6 April, 1943. (Excerpts)

2. "It shows signs of turning towards totalitarianism."

You have based your charge on the fact that the Working Committee of the Congress had control over the late Congress Ministries. Does not the successful party in the House of Commons do likewise? I am afraid even when democracy has come to full maturity, the parties will be running elections and their managing committees will be controlling the actions and policies of their members. Individual Congressmen did not run elections independently of the party machinery. Candidates were officially chosen and they were helped by all-India Leaders.

"Totalitarian," according to the Oxford Pocket Dictionary, means "designating a party that permits no rival loyalties or parties." "Totalitarian State" means "with only one governing party." It must have violence for its sanction for keeping control. A Congress member, on the contrary, enjoys the same freedom as the Congress President, or any other member of the Working Committee. There are parties within the Congress itself. Above all, the Congress eschews violence. Members render voluntary obedience. The All-India Congress Committee can at any moment unseat the member of the Working Committee and elect others.

3. "They (Congress Ministers) resigned (not?) because they had not the support of their Assemblies. They resigned because while *de jure* they were responsible to their electorate, *de facto* they were responsible to the Working Committee of the Congress and the High Command. That is not democracy. That is totalitarianism."

You would not have said this, if you had known the full facts. The *de jure* responsibility of Ministers to the electorate was not diminished in any way of their *de facto* responsibility to the Congress Working Committee for the very simple and valid reason that the Working Committee derives its power and prestige from the very electorate to whom the Ministers were responsible. The prestige that the Congress enjoys is

due solely to its service to the people. As a matter of fact the Ministers conferred with the members of their parties in their respective assemblies and they tendered their resignations with their approval.

But totalitarianism is fully represented by the Government of India which is responsible to no one in India. It is a tragic irony that a Government which is steeped in totalitarianism brings that very charge against the most democratic body in India.

4. "India is unhappy in that the line of party division is the worst any country can have.....it is division according to religious communities."

Political parties in India are not divided according to religious communities. From its very commencement the Congress has deliberately remained a purely political organisation. It has had Britishers and Indians, including Christians, Parsis, Muslims and Hindus as Presidents. The Liberal Party of India is another political organisation, not to mention others that are wholly non-sectarian.

That there are also communal organisations based on religion and they take part in politics, is undoubtedly true. But that fact cannot sustain the categorical statement made by you. I do not wish in any way to minimise the importance of these organisations or the considerable part they play in the politics of the country. But I do assert that they do not represent the political mind of India. It can be shown that historically the politico-religious organisations are the result of the deliberate application by the Government of the 'divide and rule policy.' When the British Imperial influence is totally withdrawn, India will probably be represented solely by political parties drawn from all classes and creeds.

5. "The Congress can claim at best barely more than half of the population of India. Yet in their totalitarian spirit they claim to speak for the whole."

If you measure the representative character of the Congress by the number of members on the official roll, then it does not represent even half of the population. The official membership is infinitesimal compared to India's vast population of nearly four hundred millions. The enrolled membership began only in 1920. Before that the Congress was represented by its All-India Congress Committee whose members were mainly elected by various political associations.

Nevertheless the Congress has so far as I know, always claimed to speak the mind of India, not even excluding the Princes. A country under alien subjection can only have one political goal, namely, its freedom from that subjection. And considering that the Congress has always and predominantly exhibited that spirit of freedom, its claim to represent the whole of India can hardly be denied. That some parties repudiate the Congress does not derogate from the claim in the sense in which it has been advanced.

6. "When Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery."

I never said that when the British quitted India, "the Congress would take delivery." This is that I said in my letter to H.E. the Viceroy dated 29th February last.

"The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August Resolution asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Quaid-I-Azam Jinnah to form a National Government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected Assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee except Shrimati Sarojini Devi I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind."

7. "If this country or Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa or the United States had abstained from action as the Congress in India abstained.....then perhaps the cause of freedom everywhere would have gone under..... It is a pity that the leaders of the Congress do not realise that glory is not to be won in India by abandoning the cause of mankind."

How can you compare India with Canada and other Dominions which are virtually independent entities, let alone Great Britain or the United States wholly independent countries? Has India a spark of the freedom of the type enjoyed by the countries named by you?

India has yet to attain her freedom. Supposing the Allied powers were to lose, and supposing further that the Allied forces were to withdraw from India under military necessity which I do not expect, the countries you name may lose their independence. But unhappy India will be obliged to change masters, if she is even then in her defenceless state.

Neither Congress, nor any other organisation, can possibly kindle mass enthusiasm for the Allied cause without the present possession of Independence, to use your own expression either *de jure* or *de facto*. Mere promise of future independence cannot work that miracle.

The cry of "Quit India" has arisen from a realisation of the fact that if India is to shoulder the burden of representing, or fighting for the cause of mankind, she must have the glow of freedom now. Has a freezing man ever been warned by the promise of the warmth of sunshine coming at some future date?

The great pity is that the ruling power distrusts everything that the Congress does or says under my influence it has suddenly discovered is wholly evil. It is necessary for a clear understanding that you should know my connec-

tion with the Congress and Congressmen. It was in 1935 that I was successful in my attempt to sever all formal connection with the Congress.

There was no coolness between the Congress Working Committee members and myself. But I realised that I was cramped and so were the members, whilst I was officially connected with the Congress. The growing restraints which my conception of non-violence required from time to time, were proving too hard to bear. I felt, therefore, that my influence should be strictly moral.

I had no political ambition. My politics were subservient to the demands of Truth and Non-violence, as I had defined and practised for practically the whole of my life. And so I was permitted by the fellow members to sever the official connection even to the extent of giving up the four anna membership. It was understood between us that I should attend the meetings of the Working Committee only when the members required my presence for consultation in matters involving the application of non-violence or affecting communal unity.

Since that time, I have been wholly unconnected with the routine work of the Congress. Many meetings of the Working Committee have, therefore, taken place without me. Their proceedings I have been seen only when they have been published in the newspapers. The members of the Working Committee are independent-minded men. They engage me often in prolonged discussions before they accepted my advice on the interpretation of non-violence as applied to problems arising from new situations.

It will be, therefore, unjust to them and to me to say that I exercise any influence over them beyond what reason commands. The public know how, even until quite recently, the majority of the members of the Working Committee have on several occasions rejected my advice.

8. "They have not merely abstained from action, but the Congress has deliberately proclaimed the formula that

it is wrong to help the British war effort by men or money and the only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance. In the name of Non-violence they have led a movement which was characterised in many places by the utmost violence and the White Paper gives clear proof of the complicity of the Indian Congress leaders in the disorders."

This charge shows to what extent the British public has been misled by imaginary stories, as in the Government of India publication statements have been torn from their context and put together as if they were made at one time or in the same context.

The Congress is committed to Non-violence so far as the attainment of freedom is concerned. And to that end the Congress has been struggling all these twenty years, however imperfectly it may be, to express Non-violence in action, and I think it has succeeded to a great extent. But it has never made any pretence of war resistance through Non-violence. Could it have made that claim and lived up to it, the face of India would have been changed and the world would have witnessed the miracle of organised violence being successfully met by organised Non-violence.

But human nature has nowhere risen to the full height which full Non-violence demands. The disturbances that took place after the 8th August were not due to any action on the part of the Congress. They were due entirely to the inflammatory action of the Government in arresting Congress leaders throughout India and that at a time which was psychologically wholly wrong. The utmost that can be said is that Congressmen or others had not risen high enough in Non-violence to be proof against all provocation.

It surprises me that although you have admitted that "this White Paper may be good journalism but it is not so good as a State document," you have based your sweeping judgment on the strength of that paper. If you would read

the very speeches to which the paper makes reference, you will find there ample material to show that the Government of India had not the slightest justification in making those unfortunate arrests on August 9th last and after, or in making the charges they have brought against the arrested leaders after their incarceration—charges which have never been sifted in any court of law.

9. "Mr. Gandhi faced us with an utterly illegitimate method of political controversy, levying blackmail on the best of human emotions, pity and sympathy, by his fact. The only creditable thing to Mr. Gandhi about the fast was his about it."

You have used a strong word to characterise my fast. H.E. the Viceroy has also allowed himself to use the same word. You have perhaps the excuse of ignorance. He had no such excuse for he had my letters before him.

All I can tell you is that fasting is an integral part of Satyagraha. It is a Satyagrahi's ultimate weapon. Why should it be blackmail when man, under a sense of wrong, crucifies his flesh.

You may not know that Satyagrahi prisoners fasted in South Africa for the removal of their wrongs; so they have done in India. One fast of mine you know, as I think you were then a Cabinet Minister, I refer to the fast which resulted in the alteration of the decision of His Majesty's Government. If the decision had stood, it would have perpetuated the curse of Untouchability. The alternation prevented the disaster.

The Government of India *communiqué* announcing my recent fast, issued after it had commenced, accused me of having undertaken the fast to secure my release. It was a wholly false accusation. It was based on a distortion of the letter I had written in answer to that of the Government. That letter dated the 8th February was suppressed at the time when the *communiqué* was issued.

If you will study the question, I refer you to the following which were published in the newspapers :

My letter to H.E. the Viceroy dated, New Year's Eve, 1942.

My letter dated, January 19, 1943.

H.E.'s reply dated, January 25, 1943.

My letter dated, January 25, 1943

H.E.'s reply dated, February 5, 1943.

My letter dated, February 8, 1943.

Sir R. Tottenham's letter dated February 7, 1943.

My reply dated February 8, 1943.

And I do not know from where you got the impression that I ended the fast, for which supposed act you give me the credit. If you mean by it that I ended the fast before its time, I would call such an ending a discredit to me. As it was the fast ended on its due date for which I can claim no credit.

10. "He (Lord Samuel) considered that the negotiations broke down on points on which they would not have broken down had there been any real desire on that part of the Congress to come to a settlement."

The statement made by the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Nehru, who carried on the prolonged negotiations, I venture to think make it quite clear that no true man could have shown more real or greater desire for a settlement. In this connection it is well to remember that Pandit Nehru was and I have no doubt still remains, an intimate friend of Sir Stafford Cripps at whose invitation he had come from Allahabad. He could therefore leave no stone unturned to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The history of the failure has yet to be written; when it is, it will be found that the cause lay elsewhere than with the Congress.

I hope my letter has not wearied you. Truth has been overlaid with much untruth. If not justice to a great organisation, the cause of Truth, which is humanity, demands an impartial investigation of the present distemper.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) M.K. GANDHI

MASS UPHEAVALS AND THEIR SUPPRESSION*

In the early morning of August 9th, 1942, numerous arrests were made all over India. What happened then ? Only scraps of news trickled through to us after many weeks, and even now we can form only an incomplete picture of what took place. All the prominent leaders had been suddenly removed and no one seemed to know what should be done. Protests, of course, there had to be, and there were spontaneous demonstrations. These were broken up and fired upon, and tear-gas bombs were used ; all the usual channels of giving expression to public feeling were stopped. And then all these suppressed emotions broke out and crowds gathered in cities and rural areas and came in conflict with the police and the military. They attacked especially what seemed to them the symbols of British authority and power, the police stations, post offices, and railway stations ; they cut the telegraph and telephone wires. These unarmed and leaderless mobs faced police and military firing, according to official statements, on 538 occasions, and they were also machine-gunned from low-flying aircraft. For a month or two or more these disturbances continued in various parts of the country and then they dwindled away and gave place to sporadic occurrences. 'The disturbances', said Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons, 'were crushed with all the weight of the Government', and he praised 'the loyalty and steadfastness of the brave Indian police as well as the Indian official class generally whose behaviour has been deserving of the highest praise.' He added that 'larger reinforcements have reached India and the number of white troops in that country is larger than at any time in the British connection'. These foreign troops and the Indian police had won many a battle against the unarmed peasantry of India and crushed their rebellion ; and that other main prop of the British Raj in India, the official class, had helped, actively or passively, in the process.

This reaction in the country was extraordinarily widespread, both in towns and villages. In almost all the provinces and in

*From Jawaharlal Nehru : *The Discovery of India*, pp. 514-22.

a large number of the Indian states there were innumerable demonstrations, in spite of official prohibition. There were *hartals*, closure of shops and markets and a stoppage of business, everywhere, varying in duration from a number of days to some weeks and, in a few cases, to over a month. So also labour strikes. More organized and used to disciplined group action, industrial workers in many important centres spontaneously declared strikes in protest against Government action in arresting national leaders. A notable instance of this was at the vital steel city of Jamshedpur where the skilled workers, drawn from all over India, kept away from work for a fortnight and only agreed to return on the management promising that they would try their best to get the Congress leaders released and a national government formed. In the great textile centre of Ahmedabad there was also a sudden and complete stoppage of work in all the numerous factories without any special call from the trade union.* This general strike

*It has been stated by high Government officials, and frequently repeated by others, that these strikes, especially in Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad, were encouraged by the employers and millowners. This is hardly credible for the strikes involved the employers in very heavy losses, and I have yet to know big industrialists who work against their own interests in this manner. It is true that many industrialists sympathise with and desire India's independence, but their conception of India's freedom is necessarily one in which they have a secure place. They dislike revolutionary action and any vital change in the social structure. It is possible, however, that influenced by the depth and widespread character of public feeling in August and September, 1942, they refrained from adopting that aggressive and punitive attitude, in co-operation with the police, which they usually indulge in when strikes take place.

Another frequent assertion, almost taken for granted in British circles and the British press, is that the Indian Congress is heavily financed by the big industrialists. This is wholly untrue, and, I ought to know something about it as I have been general secretary and president of the Congress for many years. A few industrialists have financially helped from time to time in the social reform activities of Gandhiji and the Congress, such as, village industries, abolition of untouchability and raising of depressed classes, basic education, etc. But they have kept scrupulously aloof from the political work of the Congress, even in

in Ahmedabad continued peacefully for over three months in spite of all attempts to break it. It was a purely political and spontaneous reaction of the workers, and they suffered greatly, for it was a time of relatively high wages. They received no financial help whatever from outside during this long period. At other centres the strikes were of briefer duration, lasting sometimes only for a few days. Cawnpore, another big textile centre, had, so far as I know, no major strike, chiefly because the communist leadership there succeeded in averting it. In the railways also, which are Government owned, there was no marked or general stoppage of work, except such as was caused by the disturbances, and this latter was considerable.

Among the provinces, the Punjab was probably the least affected, but there were many *hartals* and strikes even there. The North-West Frontier Province, almost exclusively Moslem in population, occupied a peculiar position. To begin with, there were no mass arrests or other provocative action there on the part of the Government, as in the other provinces. This may have been partly due to the fact that the frontier people were considered inflammable material, but also partly to the policy of Government to show that Moslems were keeping apart from the nationalist upheaval. But when news of happenings in the rest of India reached the Frontire Province,

normal times, and much more so during periods of conflict with government. Whatever their occasional sympathies, they believe, like most sober and well-established individuals, in safety first. Congress work has been carried on almost entirely on the petty subscriptions and donations of its large membership. Most of the work has been voluntary and unpaid. Occasionally, in the cities, the merchants have helped a little. The only exception to this was probably during the general elections of 1937 when some big industrialists contributed to the central election fund. Even this fund, considering the scope of our activity, was inconsiderable. It is astonishing, and it will be incredible to westerners, with what little money we have carried on our work in the Congress during the last quarter of a century—a period when India has been convulsed repeatedly by political activity and direct action movements. In the United Provinces, one of our most active and well-organized provinces, and one with which I am best acquainted, almost our entire work was based on the four anna subscriptions of our members.

there were numerous demonstrations and even aggressive challenges to British authority. There was firing on the demonstrators and the usual methods of suppressing popular activities were adopted. Several thousands of people were arrested and even the great Pathan leader Badshah Khan (as Abdul Ghaffar Khan is popularly known) was seriously injured by police blows. This was extreme provocation and yet, surprisingly enough, the excellent discipline, which Abdul Ghaffar Khan had established among his people, held, and there were no violent disturbances there of the kind that occurred in many parts of the country.

The sudden, unorganized demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people, culminating in violent conflicts and destruction, and continued against overwhelming and powerful armed forces, were a measure of the intensity of their feelings. Those feelings had been there even before the arrest of their leaders, but the arrests and the frequent firings that followed them, roused the people to anger and to the only course that an enraged mob can follow. For a time there seems to have been a sense of uncertainty as to what should be done. There was no direction, no programme. There was no well-known person to lead them or tell them what to do, and yet they were too excited and angry to remain quiescent. As often happens in these circumstances, local leaders sprang up and were followed for the moment. But even the guidance they gave was little ; it was essentially a spontaneous mass upheaval. All over India, the younger generation, especially university students, played an important part in both the violent and peaceful activities of 1942. Many universities were closed. Some of the local leaders attempted even then to pursue peaceful methods of action and civil disobedience, but this was difficult in the prevailing atmosphere. The people forgot the lesson of non-violence which had been dinned into their ears for more than twenty years, and yet they were wholly unprepared, mentally or otherwise, for any effective violence. That very teaching of non-violent methods produced doubt and hesitation and came in the way of violent action. If the Congress, forgetful of its

creed, had previously given even a hint of violent action, there is no doubt that the violence that actually took place would have increased a hundred-fold.

But no such hint had been given, and, indeed, the last message of the Congress had again emphasized the importance of non-violence in action. Yet perhaps one fact had some effect on the public mind. If, as we had said, armed defence was legitimate and desirable against an enemy aggressor, why should that not apply to other forms of existing aggression? The prohibition of violent methods of attack and defence once removed had unintended results, and it was not easy for most people to draw fine distinctions. All over the world extreme forms of violence were prevailing and incessant propaganda encouraged them. It became then a question of expediency and of intensity of feeling. Then there were also people, outside or in the Congress, who never had any belief in non-violence and who were troubled with no scruples in regard to violent action.

But in the excitement of the moment few people think; they act in accordance with their long-suppressed urges which drive them forward. And so, for the first time since the great revolt of 1857, vast numbers of people again rose to challenge by force (but a force without arms!) the fabric of British rule in India. It was a foolish and inopportune challenge for all the organized and armed force was on the other side, and in greater measure indeed than at any previous time in history. However great the numbers of the crowd, it cannot prevail in a contest of force against armed forces. It had to fail unless those armed forces themselves changed their allegiance. But those crowds had not prepared for the contest or chosen the time for it. It came upon them unawares and in their immediate reaction to it, however unthinking and misdirected it was they showed their love of India's freedom and their hatred of foreign domination.

Though the policy of non-violence went under, for the time being at least, the long training that the people had received

under it had one important and desirable result. In spite of the passions aroused there was very little, if any, racial feeling, and, on the whole, there was a deliberate attempt on the part of the people to avoid causing bodily injury to their opponents. There was a great deal of destruction of communications and governmental property, but even in the midst of this destruction care was taken to avoid loss of life. This was not always possible or always attempted, especially in actual conflicts with the police or other armed forces. According to official reports, so far as I have been able to find them, about 100 persons were killed by mobs in the course of the disturbances all over India. This figure is very small considering the extent and area of the disturbances and the conflicts with the police. One particularly brutal and distressing case was the murder of two Canadian airmen by a mob somewhere in Bihar. But, generally speaking, the absence of racial feeling was very remarkable.*

Official estimates of the number of people killed and wounded by police or military firing in the 1942 disturbances are: 1,028 killed and 3,200 wounded. These figures are certainly gross under-estimates for it has been officially stated that such firing took place on at least 538 occasions, and besides this people were frequently shot at by the police or the military from moving lorries. It is very difficult to arrive at even an appro-

*A revealing incident is reported in 'British Soldier Looks at India,' being letters of Clive Branson. Branson was an artist and a communist. He served in the International Brigade in Spain, and in 1941 joined the Royal Armoured Corps, in which he was a sergeant. He was sent to India with his regiment in 1942. In February, 1944, he was killed in action in Arakan in Burma. He was in Bombay in August, 1942, after the arrest of the Congress leaders, and at a time when the people of Bombay were seething with anger and passion and were being shot down. Branson is reported to have said: 'What a clean healthy nationalism you have! I asked people the way to the Communist Party's office. I was in uniform. Men like me were shooting unarmed Indians, and naturally I was a little worried. I wondered how I would be treated. But everyone whom I asked was anxious to help—not one tried to insult or mislead me.'

ximately correct figure. Popular estimates place the number of deaths at 25,000, but probably this is an exaggeration. Perhaps 10,000 may be nearer the mark.

It was extraordinary how British authority ceased to function over many areas, both rural and urban, and it took many days, and sometimes weeks, for a 'reconquest', as it was often termed. This happened particularly in Bihar, in the Midnapur district of Bengal and in the south-eastern districts of the United Provinces. It is note-worthy that in the district of Ballia in the United Provinces (which had to be 'reconquered') there have been no serious allegations of physical violence and injury to human beings caused by the crowds, so far as one can judge from the numerous subsequent trials by special tribunals. The ordinary police proved incapable of meeting the situation. Early in 1942 however, a new force called the Special Armed Constabulary (S.A.C.) had been created and this had been especially trained to deal with popular demonstrations and disturbances. This played an important part in curbing and suppressing the people and often functioned after the manner of the 'Black and Tans' in Ireland. The Indian army was not often used in this connection, except for certain groups and classes in it. British soldiers were more often employed, and also the Gurkhas. Sometimes Indian soldiers as well as the special police were sent to distant parts of the country where they functioned more or less as strangers, being unacquainted with the language.

If the reaction of the crowd was natural, so also, in the circumstances, was the reaction of the government. It had to crush both the impromptu frenzy of the mob and the peaceful demonstrations of other people and, in the interests of its own self-preservation, attempt to destroy those whom it considered its enemies. If it had had the capacity or desire to understand and appreciate what moved the people so powerfully, the crisis would not have risen at all and India's problem would have been nearer solution. The government had prepared carefully to crush once for all, as it thought, any challenge to its autho-

rity ; it had taken the initiative and chosen the time for its first blow ; it had removed to its prisons thousands of men and women who had played a prominent part in the nationalist, the labour, and the peasant movements. Yet it was surprised and taken aback by the upheaval that suddenly convulsed the country and, momentarily, its wide-spread apparatus of repression was disjoined. But it had enormous resources at its command and it utilized them to crush both the violent and non-violent manifestations of the rebellion. Many of the upper and richer classes, timidly nationalist, and sometimes even critical of government, were frightened by this exhibition of mass action on an All-India scale, which cared little for vested interests and smelt not only of political revolution but also of social change. As the success of the government in crushing the rebellion became apparent, the waverers and the opportunists lined up with it and began to curse all those who had dared to challenge authority.

The external evidences of rebellion having been crushed, its very roots had to be pulled out, and so the whole apparatus of government was turned in this direction in order to enforce complete submission to British domination. Laws could be produced over-night by the Viceroy's decree or ordinance, but even the formalities of these laws were reduced to a minimum. The decisions of the Federal Court and High Courts, which were creations and emblems of British authority, were flouted and ignored by the executive, or a new ordinance was issued to override those decisions. Special tribunals (which were subsequently held by the courts to be illegal) were established, functioning without the trammels of the ordinary rules of procedure and evidence, and these sentenced thousands to long terms of imprisonment and many even to death. The police (and especially the Special Armed Constabulary) and the secret service were all powerful and became the chief organs of the state, and could indulge in any illegalities or brutalities without criticism or hindrance. Corruption grew to giant proportions. Vast numbers of students in schools and colleges were

punished in various ways and thousands of young men were flogged. Public activity of all kinds was prohibited unless it was in favour of the government.

But the greatest sufferers were the simple-hearted, poverty-stricken villagers of the rural areas. Suffering, for many generations, had been the badge of their tribe; they had ventured to look up and hope, to dream of better times; they had even roused themselves to action; whether they had been foolish or mistaken or not, they had proved their loyalty to the cause of Indian freedom. Their effort had failed, and the burden had fallen on their bent shoulders and broken bodies. Cases were reported of whole villages being sentenced from flogging to death. It was stated on behalf of the Bengal Government that 'Government forces burnt 143 Congress camps and houses in the sub-divisions of Tamuk and Contai before and after the cyclone of 1942.' The cyclone had worked havoc in that area and created a wilderness but that made no difference to the official policy.

Huge sums were imposed on villages as a whole as punitive fines. According to Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons, the total collective fines amounted to rupees ninety lakhs (9,000,000), and out of this Rs. 7,850,000 were realized. How these vast sums were realized from starving wretches is another matter, and nothing that took place in 1942 or after, not the shooting and the burning by the police, caused such an intensity of suffering as this forcible realization. Not merely were the fines imposed realized, but often much more, the excess vanishing in the process of realization.

All the conventions and subterfuges that usually veil the activities of governments were torn aside and only naked force remained as the symbol of power and authority. There was no further need for subterfuge for the British power had succeeded, at least for the time being, in crushing both the non-violent and violent attempts made to replace it by a national authority and stood supreme in India. India had failed in that final test

when strength and power only count and all else is mere quibbling and irrelevance. She had failed not only because of British armed might and the confusion produced by the war situation in people's minds, but also because many of her own people were not prepared for that last sacrifice which freedom requires. So the British felt they had firmly re-established their rule in India and they saw no reason to loosen their hold again.

UNDER-GROUND AND VIOLENT ACTIVITIES

*The Freedom Struggle Front**

(Excerpts)

"India is stirring as she has never stirred before. Robbed of organisation and leadership, denied of guidance and plan-

*Finding that the Congress was not developing along leftist lines, the Socialists decided to leave the parent body and organised themselves as a separate party outside it. The Congress Socialists were active in Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, and Bihar, and particular attention was paid to propaganda among students. Yusuf Mehrali, a Bombay leader, issued programme for movement stressing need for individual initiative, mass strikes, boycott, interference with communication. Since beginning of disturbances numerous instructions emanated from Congress Socialists advocating violence on widest scale. It is interesting to note that on 23 December 1942, a document entitled *The Freedom Struggle Front*, a typical production of the Congress Socialists, attracted the notice of Sir R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India. It contained an ambitious plan which the underground organization wanted to put into operation. The Government was convinced it had "dangerous potentialities", particularly in its stress on economic and agricultural grievances, and accordingly warned the Provincial Governments to be on their guard against any tendency towards developments along the lines outlined in the plan. *The Freedom Struggle Front* contained fresh directions for the intensification of the movement but it was not known whether this production was the work of Ram Manohar Lohia or some other Congress-Socialist. According to Gaganbihari Lal Mehta, (President of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) who passed it on to the Government, the document was received by him at Bombay from Mrs. Asaf Ali who is reported to have said that it is the A.I.C.C.'s fresh line of action for the second phase of the Congress movement. The Government sent copies of this document to all Provincial Governments as it was bound to cause a good deal of trouble.

ning, the people of our country have started their revolutionary march to freedom. There is a tenseness in the air—every section, every man and woman is deeply moved and feels impelled to action. Established authority is feeling under its impact, and is striving to beat down the upheaval with desperate repression. There are faint hearts which are appalled, muddled heads that search their condemnation, servile bodies that bend to crush this upsurge to spirit. But the fact of this outburst is here. It is the profoundest fact of recent history.’”

“Undirected, uncontrolled and leadersless, the masses are surging, heaving, swaying in their struggle for release. Every individual, every group is acting on its own, impelled by diverse motives, diverse ideals. In this lies at once the strength and the weakness of the movement. This strength Gandhiji invoked when he called out to each Indian to feel free. That feeling stirring in his breast makes him rise. The appeal is to individual direct; the response is of the individual direct. The medium of a party or organisational machine becomes redundant. The active units in this battle are individuals, not mass formations dependent for every move on extraneous command. This feature invests the movement with a spontaneity, flexibility and deathlessness, an elemental and all-embracing quality which is thrillingly unique in its national and international possibilities. Gandhiji has given us a new technique in revolution. It is ethically superior to all other methods in that it eschews collective massacre and entails the minimum of bloodshed. It is a weapon of self-defence, self-expression and liberation of a people, not of territorial aggression or exploitation of another. It is economical in resources in that the enemy is fought, not with a colossal army of costly armour, but by paralysis of its organisation by individual resistance. It is a process of mass education on the most extensive scale, offering an inherent guarantee of the permanence of its achievement, in that it strengthens each individual participant by bringing to him a consciousness of his latent powers and a realisation of his

unity of interest with his fellow fighters. Unity is not to be looked for in a static formula of percentage, but is realisable only through this dynamic struggle, while pursuing an obvious political objectives, it simultaneously solves the problem of fear, ignorance and disunity. In laying stress on the common man and awakening him to power, it makes sure that he will be the centre round which the structure of the new state will be raised."

"There can be no doubt about the essential soundness of this technique. Whatever the opinion about its universal applicability for all militant action, there can be no gain-saying that it is the only feasible method in the present circumstances of this country. But the stress it lays on the individual which is the secret of its unique efficiency, is also the source of weakness one must most carefully guard. The individual is thrown on his own resources of thought and action. How small these resources are in a suppressed people we know. These are some who would eternally postpone the struggle on that account, forgetting that is only through struggle that they may enlarge these resources. But this limiting factor dictates the form which the struggle must take. The objective must be immediately appealing to the common man...The ultimate issue, the final goal is perceived and maintained aloft only by a sustained process of reasoning and must be allowed to emerge before the fighting ranks only in careful stages, through a progressive series of secondary and immediate aims. The action demanded to cover each stage must be of the most direct and simplest kind. Else there will be perplexity and false manouverings and despair. The final goal of the struggle must be kept steadily in view of some; the stages of its attainment must be carefully set by some; that is the task of planning."

"This movement is decentralised, individualistic, anarchical. Yet because it is a movement and not an involuntary explosion of pent up energy, it has a direction, and its anarchy is deliberate and purposeful. The object of planning is to set

the direction, inform and animate the participants with the purpose. But the scope of central direction and control in a movement of this atomistic character is strictly limited. The function of planning in this movement is threefold : It must furnish the ideological perspective at each stage ; it must indicate the broad principles which will guide action ; and it must provide a general co-ordination of the efforts of groups and individuals, by arranging contacts, dissemination of intelligence, suggesting avoidance of overlapping or mutually cancelling actions. Central direction cannot attempt much more without destroying the elasticity and decentralised initiative which constitute the essential quality of this movement. The detailed application of the general principles in concrete acts and manoeuvres must be left to the primary fighting units. The movement will not conform to a uniform pattern in all areas for this reason. Its outward manifestation will exhibit as great a variety as local problems and circumstances will vary. This infinite diversity of expression should be welcome. It is bewildering to the enemy and should be encouraged by working up and bringing to a head the particular local grievance which is most acute in any area. It may be a shortage of foodgrains in one place, the exaction of rent-collector in another, the refusal of permission to irrigate the fields in some other, the realisation of collective fines in still another. Each such problem is the local point for the initiation of the movement in that area. The general plan will direct the search for such force ; point out why our festering economic sores will be the most suitable starting points for local agitation, being the most deeply felt and the quickest, most natural and the most unifying inciting agents for the local people ; explain how these issues can never be solved within the framework of the existing system ; and as this understanding spreads and the agitation has reached a sufficient pitch, suggest the precipitation of the next wider issues, taking the people forward to the next higher phase of the struggle."

"The machinery set up to undertake this planning must be suited to its special and limited purpose. The purpose is,

as indicated already, to outline the general policy and direction and to provide a loose and flexible co-ordination of the work of already established parties, groups and individuals to whom the widest discretion is to be left in carrying out the day to day programme of the struggle. These are old organisations claiming the membership of disciplined bodies of men and women, who have been already working for the subversion of the present order of things for a long time. They may have varying methods and varying creeds but as long as they do not plan counter to the general direction of this movement, they will be welcome, and will find a place. The invitation must be open even to individuals in their own right as children of this country. This struggle is a total struggle in its present phase, the upsurge of a whole people. It is not sectional, partisan, exclusive, but total and inclusive at this stage. The class war may have to come, but that is not yet, not till after the riddance of foreign exploitation. It is arguable that in the course of this struggle the shift of forces will get power to the proletariat even in the process of overthrowing the foreign hold, the two vital phases being simultaneous, not successive. Be that as it may, this must be clear now that the organisation required for central guidance of the movement in its present stage is not the rigid organisation of an exclusive party, professing a dogmatic creed and enforcing an iron discipline. We do not want to set up a new party which must immediately come into conflict with existing parties and can only prevail by fighting and destroying them. What we need to set up is a meeting place for parties and groups, a forum for discussion, a clearing-house of ideas where the greatest common measure of agreement on policy can be worked out. What we need is a coming together of parties not their supersession by a new body. What we need is a combination, a joint enterprise, a common stand. What we need is the Freedom Struggle Front, where every group, every party, every class and section and every individual can find a place...There are many revolutionary parties in the field. They differ in their methods, their traditions, their special experience of particular lines of work ; but there

is little difference in the ultimate goal of their endeavours. Their organisation, discipline, resources, special talent and aptitudes for special tasks must be all utilized. They can be all roped in on the common platform of the Freedom Struggle Front, and this can be done in the present phase of the struggle without calling upon them to renounce their immediate loyalties. To a much more limited extent, yet in some measure, the same is true of social groupings also. There is no class or section, no social or functional unit, which is not disaffected against the present State. Let then discontent and frustration in each layer of society be exploited and nursed into a disruptive force. If the rich mill owner or banker is willing to finance the revolution, let his help be eagerly seized. He may be acting from calculated self-interest, desiring a freer field for his capital investments; or as happens more often than the text book communist will think, he may be moved in spite of himself by the patriotic change in the air. In any case, the course of development of the struggle which can only succeed through the people awakening to power, he must either identify his interest with that of the masses, or be submerged in the rising tide of their power. Let not a virginly horror of outraging the class issues stand in the way of seeking and taking his help. Let him be roped in too.'

“There are as many battle fronts in this war as there are classes and sections and individuals waging it, and action on all fronts is simultaneous. But the most extensive and significant field of work lies in the countryside where our peasantry offers the biggest reserve of man-power and where village economy is threatened with imminent breakdown. Let peasant representatives in the villages be approached by our central agents. The agents themselves must be selected from tried workers of existing organisations and parties, some now disbanded such as the Spinners' Association, some still countenanced openly, such as the Krishak-Prajas, who have already established connections in the interior. Let them select the initial targets for assault in each village or group of villages. Let the rising and simmering discontent against these

immediate grievances be churned up into an angry ferment ; first through informal discussions then through open meetings, all the while attempting to relate the immediate problems to wider and bigger issues in simple, understandable terms. Open conflict with authority should be avoided at this stage by representing the agitation as a lawful demand for economic concessions. As soon as the discontent has crystallised to some extent, orderly but confident processions should be organised, for its collective representation before the local authorities. On their failure to redress, which is inevitable, the more extreme and militant spokesmen of the peasants should be helped to take the lead and prepare the men for direct action ; by organised and orderly seizure of stocks of essential goods ; by refraining payment of rents and debts ; by refusing to part with crops ; by ignoring court processes for distraint and refusing to attend or bid at sales ; by taking possession of the machinery of local administration, such as Union Boards, Chowkies, Thanas and running it themselves ; by setting up new machinery where necessary. If the developments can be fairly synchronised in a number of areas from the centre,—and to a great extent this will be helped by the natural infectiousness of the process,—the forces of the State will be helpless to check this progress, the disturbances will be too widespread and scattered. The police and military may advance on one village and reduce it to ashes. But their flanks and rear and front will be constantly harassed, their communications will be constantly cut off, their food supplies will be precarious. The tactical plan of defence for the villagers will be to isolate their area, organize scouts to give warning of the enemy's approach, retire and disperse before its advance and return like the tide when the enemy must presently withdraw, having nothing to do and little to subsist on. The suffering of the villagers will be great. But the stakes are also high. If they have been made to realise these at the outset, if they know that the alternative is inaction and suffering no less, if they have been trained what to expect and do, then this suffering will not break them, then each time they will return to their razed villages.

with a grimmer determination of spirit, an increased bitterness of heart. And the news of happenings in other villages, other districts must filter through to fortify their resolve.”

“We have a better organisation and greater experience of work among industrial labour. Here also unrest must be brought to a head on immediate economic issues. The situation will be directly helped by the campaign in the villages which will dry up the sources of food supply and raw materials to the urban and industrial areas. Dearness allowances can never keep pace with prices, which will soar higher and higher with a progressive inflation of the currency. Price control will show up as the senseless deception it is. Strikes should be easy to organise in this context. Propaganda should be meanwhile pressed home on the capitalist front appealing to this class on emotional patriotic grounds to view the strike programme with favour. The bourgeoisie must be exhorted to keep up political discontent at high pressure, ‘declass’ members of the petit bourgeois sections must be recruited to lend militant demonstration of students and labourers. The Indian officialdom should be approached for secret contributions in money and information and sabotage of vital processes of the administration. The precise points and methods of attack must be left to their own decision in this as in other cases, but countless illustrations can be cited and innumerable opportunities discovered once the general lines of our movement are clearly grasped. That general analysis of the struggle should be made known in every suitable case.”

MESSAGE OF SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*

“Friends as you know already, I have been through all the campaigns between 1921 and 1940, and I know the causes of

*Extracts from a speech delivered by Subash Chandra Bose from a North German Station in the Azad Hind Service on the 1st September, 1942 clearly depicting the programme to be followed by Forward Bloc during the movement.

their failure. I have now had the opportunity of taking the expert advice with regard to tactics of guerilla warfare, and am in a position to offer you some suggestions as to how this present campaign should be brought to a victorious end. The object of this non-violent guerilla campaign should be a two-fold one. Firstly, to destroy war production in India, and secondly to paralyze the British administration in that country. Keeping this object in view, every section of the community should participate in the struggle. Firstly, stop paying all taxes that directly or indirectly bring revenue to the Government. Secondly, workers in all industries should either launch a "stay-in" strike or try to hamper production. They should also carry out sabotage with such methods as the removing of nuts and bolts in order to impede production. Thirdly, students should organise secret guerilla bands for carrying on sabotage in different parts of the country. They should also invent new ways of annoying the British authorities, for example burning stamps, etc , in a post office, destroying British monuments etc. Fourthly, women and especially girl students should do underground work of all kinds especially as secret messengers or to provide shelters for the men who fight. Fifthly, Government officials, who are prepared to help the campaign should not resign their posts, but, in Government offices and in war industries, should give all available information to fighters outside, and should try to hamper production by working inefficiently. Sixthly, servants who are working in the houses of Britishers, should be organised for the purpose of giving trouble to their masters, for example by demanding higher salaries, cooking and serving bad food and drinks etc. Seventhly, Indians should give up all business with banks, firms, insurance companies etc. Eighthly, listen to the broadcasts of Col. Britton in the European service of the B.B.C. and apply the Colonel's tactics to the Indian situation."

"For the general public, I also suggest the following kind of work :

- (a) Boycott of British goods, including burning of British Stalls and Government stores.

- (b) Total boycott of all Britishers in India, and of those Indians who are genuinely pro-British.**
- (c) Holding of public meetings and demonstrations, in spite of official prohibition.**
- (d) Publishing of secret bulletins, and setting up secret radio stations.**
- (e) Marching to the houses of Government officials, and demanding their departure from India.**
- (f) Organising of processions for entering and occupying Government offices, secretariat buildings, lower courts etc., with a view to hampering the administration.**
- (g) Arranging to punish police officers and prison officials who oppress and persecute the people.**
- (h) Begin erecting barricades in the streets where there is a likelihood of attack from the police and the military.**
- (i) Setting fire to Government offices and factories which are working for war purposes.**
- (j) Interrupting postal, telegraph and telephone communications as frequently as possible and in different places.**
- (k) Interrupting railway, bus or tram services, whenever there is a possibility of hampering the transport of soldiers, or of war materials.**
- (l) Destroying police stations, railway stations and jails in isolated places."**

INSTRUMENTS OF INSTRUCTIONS

The number of persons arrested throughout U.P. by the end of September was about 900. Of these the most important was Kesho Deo Malaviya, General Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. The police recovered two important

documents which were in his possession at that time. It contained anti Government matter and laid stress on the following points :

1. To keep the Congress flag flying in the air.
2. People should not bother about or be deterred by imposition of fines, attachments and acquisition of property, arrest, etc. and should stick to their duty.
3. The rule of the masses has to be established—all signs of Government existence should be removed from villages.
4. It should be made difficult for any villager who does not cooperate to live in any village. He should be socially boycotted but none should be killed.
5. Efforts should be made to win over the Police. Thanas should be rendered useless for Government. If any policeman goes against the Congress, he should be socially boycotted and treated harshly which should be the last step. Efforts should be made to secure the weapons in the possession of the Police.
6. Recruitment from villages should be stopped.
7. No-rent campaign should be carried on vigorously —as also against the collective fines.
8. Rewards by Government should not be accepted.
9. Shops should be closed occasionally.
10. Colleges and schools should not be allowed to function.
11. Railways should be tampered with in such a way that lives of people are not lost and people should be warned that there is danger to their lives if they travel by the rail after the 15th October, 1942.

The other document was a Hindi circular addressed to the organizers of Congress Committees and other Congressmen. It read as follows :

“Our national struggle is going to complete its second month. We can pride ourselves on the happenings of the past

two months. We can perk ourselves up as we are making the history of our country. Our coming generations will regain their lost independence through our sacrifices and they will hold their heads high before the other nations.

“Our struggle, however, is still going on and it has yet to wind its way through more dismal paths. The enemy is displaying his strength at present. Beware, lest you are caught napping. Show your mettle and on such an occasion. Do not flinch! Do not equal at the hour of trial. Do not retrace your steps but march onwards. The public, the student world and the youth are all looking up to Congressmen with great expectation. At some places our comrades have baulked the public of its hopes for they have been guilty of dereliction of duty as they left their post. To such of our workers we have only to say that the future will judge them by their deeds. If they fail in their duty, the country will not wait for them to come forward. The public will choose its leadership anyway.

“But generally speaking, Congress workers have given a good account of themselves; they have fought bravely against the enemy and are still fighting heroically. I appeal to them to strain every nerve in keeping the Congress flag flying in their respective circles. They should carry on their work effectively taking little notice of the threats of fines and attachments. Their future line of action has indicated in the previous circulars and leaflets. They have to establish proletarian rule in the villages. They have to see that every institution which smacks of British autocracy is boycotted completely. Social boycott should be carried on of those who do not cooperate with us. Every possible influence should be exerted but it is your first and foremost duty to persuade the people by argument. Villages should be made too hot to hold those misguided men who are thinking of betraying the country in this movement, but no life should be taken.

“The Police should anyhow be won over. The Police Outposts should be rendered useless for the so-called Govern-

ment to function. It is my personal experience that policemen will not institute proceedings against you in the villages on account of your winning attitude but wherever they persist in taking action against you, you should boycott them, non-cooperate with them and ill-treat them. But this should be done as a last resort. In no case should anyone be deprived of his life. If possible, their weapons must be taken into possession.

“Recruitment in the villages should be completely stopped because lakhs of our innocent brethren have been sacrificed like goats by this murderous Government. You should prevent your relations and members of your family from enlistment in the army. You should also bring your influence to bear on other families and prevent them from enlisting in the army. Under the pretext of recruitment in the Police Force, this tyrant is forcibly sending tender-aged lads to the Sitapur regiment. Tell them not to be duped in this way. Make every effort to prevent the manufacture of (war) material in your villages.

“No-rent campaign propaganda should be launched from now. Make a declaration that the national struggle will terminate only when the peasants are given full compensation. Whatever they lose in the no-rent movement, on account of their arrest and attachment of their property and valuables, will be returned to them. Any peasant who takes the auctioned land of any other peasant will have to suffer loss. Tell the Zamindars not to pay revenue and in case they do not listen to you, ask the peasants not to pay rent to them.

“The alien Governor has imposed collective fines on hundreds of the villages of the province. You should carry on agitation for withholding the payment of these fines. In no case should any one pay fines.

“Only recently the Governor has announced rewards for information leading to the arrest of patriotic Congressmen. You should make a counter-declaration on behalf of the Pro-

vincial Congress Committee that those traitors who accept these rewards will have to repay every pie of such money.

“You should make every effort for the success of strikes in factories and schools in urban areas. At frequent intervals big demonstrations should be staged. An appeal should be made to the police and military to stop their work or if they do if they should do very slowly. Stop fresh recruitment and persuade those who are under training to turn away. Handbills bearing the words “Englishmen go away” should be pasted throughout the cities.

“In no case should schools and colleges be allowed to reopen. In places where they open, the attending students should be persuaded to take out processions. At intervals shops should be closed. We have neither to take life nor to incite people to kill. We shall never forsake our principle of non-violence. It is no violence to get the vital communications suspended or to prevent the functioning of railway stations, tehsils and police stations, or to take possession of property found there. You have also to make every effort to prevent the running of railways. As far as possible you must ensure that no life is lost in this connexion. Distribute handbills in villages announcing that no one should travel by train after October 15th, or else his life will be in danger.

“It is hoped that you will strain every nerve in carrying on this sacred war unflinchingly. You must do or die this time”.

**CIRCULAR OF ANDHRA CONGRESS
COMMITTEE***

Programme of work for the attainment of complete independence

1. Cutting off of all telephone and telegraph wires.

*In 1943 the Government published a booklet ‘*Congress Responsibilities for the Disturbance, 1942-43*’ (86 pages) to prove once again that for everything violent that happened in India after Gandhiji’s arrest, Gandhiji and the Congress were responsible. They wined up the whole thing with the query “who must bear responsibility for

2. Removal of rails, wherever possible, and demolition of bridges, red flags being posted (at places where demolition work is undertaken) to avert possible danger to human life.

mass uprisings and individual crimes which have disgraced and are still disgracing the fair name of India ? and they themselves obliged us with the answer, "Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi." It is clearly mentioned in this pamphlet that the Government of India took serious objection to (i) the wording of A.I.C.C. Resolution of August 8. sanctioning mass movement on widest possible scale in which every man and woman must function for himself or herself (ii) the activities of Gandhiji, Members of Working Committee and other leading Congressmen prior to the passing of the A.I.C.C. resolution and particularly during period after passing of Working Committee's Resolution of July 14 ; (iii) Gandhij's writings in *Harijan*, references to anarchy, to the coming struggle as "a fight to the finish" in which he would "not hesitate to run any risk however great" ; finally his press interview after passing Resolution of July 14 when he said "there is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion...My intention is to make it as short and swift as possible", (iv) speeches of Rajendra Prasad, Shankarrao Deo, Vallabhbai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru making it clear that coming struggle would be on widest possible scale and that Congress would not be deterred in this fight to finish by violence or by Chauri Chaura incidents ; these leaders made particular point of approaching students ; thus Patel and Shankar Rao Deo publicly exhorted Bombay students to assume leadership should Gandhiji and other leaders be arrested, to discord students and to take an active part in movement ; in Bihar Congress ex-Premier and others urged students to join the "thick of the fray" ; in Eastern U.P. Nehru concentrated on students particularly Banares Hindu University. Finally Abul Kalam Azad in his speech on July 17 said, ' We will not be responsible for the masses who may turn violent.' The pamphlet, while referring to the programme of sabotage, set the seal on Congress responsibility for the outbreak of lawlessness by giving publicity to instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which definitely included in the programme the cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, removal of rails and demolition of bridges. One item included in the programme intended 'to impede the war efforts of the Government' and another 'to run parallel Government in competition with the British Government'. It is noteworthy that this circular itself quotes as its authority Gandhiji's "*Do or die*" message.

3. Travelling in trains without tickets and pulling the chains to stop trains.

4. Visiting military camps and telling the military personnel to leave their jobs.

5. Visiting Police and other Government offices and forcing Government servants to resign their jobs.

6. Yarn and grains to be collected in villages which are self-sufficient.

7. Running our own post-offices and arranging for prompt delivery of letters.

8. Picketing the law courts, occupying the seat of the magistrate and performing his functions and also settling disputes with the help of panchayats.

9. Not to pay land tax, sale tax, etc.

10. To arrange to inform the village munsiffs and karnamas that British rule in India has come to an end and that India has attained independence.

11. If the village officers refuse to believe the above, they should be replaced by new officers.

12. If, however, replacement of the village officers by new ones is not practicable, they should be disowned by the villagers.

13. To organise hartals and news-propaganda centres.

14. To organise picketing today and attack depots, foreign cloth shops and Government offices.

15. To pass, if necessary, no-confidence motions against Government servants.

16. To impede the war efforts of the Government.

17. To tell the shop-keepers that British Government is no more in India and that the panchayat system of Government has taken its place.

18. Ryots and merchants to refuse to pay any kind of tax to the Government.

19. To arrange to prepare a seal, on the model of that of the Government of India, bearing the inscription "Government of Free India" or "Swaraj Sarkar" and use it.

20. To run parallel Government in competition with the British Government.

21. British currency notes have no value hereafter. Exchange your currency notes for silver coins."

The Government also objected to the twelve-point programme which was drawn up and copies of which were distributed in the provinces. Here are the instructions it contained for all our countrymen :

1. "There shall be hartal throughout the country, in all the cities and villages of India. The hartal will be peaceful. The hartal will be the country's protest against the arrest of Gandhiji, Congress President and members of the Working Committee. It will also be a symbol of our determination to carry on the struggle, which started with the arrest of Gandhiji, to its successful conclusion. If participation in a hartal carries with it any penalties they should be cheerfully borne.

There will be meetings in the evenings in villages and cities where we will deliver the Congress message "Quit India." If there are bans on the meeting, they should be resisted.

2. Salt is a prime necessity of our life. Our countrymen should consider themselves free to manufacture it wherever they can do so whether in coastal or inland areas. Laws prohibiting its manufacture should be resisted at all costs.

3. Our struggle is 'non-violent non-cooperation' on the widest possible scale. The teeming millions that inhabit the 7,00,000 villages form the backbone of our struggle. They have the biggest and most vital part to play. Let them withhold all co-operation from the alien administration that has

reduced them to servitude and abject poverty. Let them, when the time comes, withhold payment of all revenue to the Government. Where there is Zamindari system the Zamindar may be given his share of the revenue provided he throws in his lot with the people and refuses all co-operation with the Government.

4. The students are the vanguard of our struggle. It is their solemn and sacred task to rouse and awaken and vitalise the dumb millions from one end of the country to the other. It is unthinkable that they can be passive spectators of the grand fight for freedom that is going on about them. Let students above sixteen leave the Colleges and Universities and conduct the non-violent struggle on its victorious conclusion. They are the intelligentsia of the country and know full well how our leader wants them to act. Our leaders have been arrested. The few that remain will soon be clapped if worse does not befall them. Students alone can fittingly supply the gap. There is no doubt they will prove worthy of the great call that has come to them.

5. The members of the Government Services are faced with the choice. In this titanic clash between the people and the alien Government what is their place? Must they, as it part of their duty to suppress, to betray their people? Must they earn their livelihood by betraying their country at a time when it is engaged in a mortal and deadly struggle? Do they like to win the blessings of the present and future generations of their curses? The days of the administration which is giving them their bread and butter are now numbered. Why lean on a broken reed? Those who do not have the strength to resign their jobs should have at least the courage to say 'No' to all orders that are designed to suppress and crush our people. If the saying of 'No' involves dismissal let it be cheerfully courted. Every such dismissal will be a nail in the coffin of the Empire that is throttling us.

6. As Gandhiji said let every Indian soldier in the army consider himself a Congressmen. If his officer issues orders

which hurts his conscience as a Congressman let him disobey them and take the consequences cheerfully. It can be no part of their duty to lathi charge, tear gas, or shoot non-violent crowds, peaceful processions or meetings. India hopefully looks to them to play their worthy part in the great struggle. Their fellow soldiers in other lands fraternised with the people when they rose in revolt against misrule and oppression whether indigenous or foreign. Let our Indian soldiers follow their glorious example.

7. The Indian States are a part and parcel of India. The struggle of to-day is as much their as of the so-called British India. Gandhiji at the A.I.C.C. issued an appeal to the Princes to make common cause with Indian people and throw off the common yoke. Whatever the response of the Princes to Gandhiji's appeal, let our brothers in Indian States make it their own struggle. Their fight to-day is not with the princes but with the alien master who is keeping them and the people in subjection. If the princes side with the alien master it will be the paitiful duty of the people to wage struggle against a combination of the princes and alien master.

8. Gandhiji has time and again stressed the viial and decisive part that our women-folk can only play in the non-violent struggle. It is for them to justify Gandhi's faith in them. If they bring to the struggle the non-violent sacrifice and sufferings of which they are capable, our struggle will inevitably be short and swift. Let it fall to them to rouse and energise the people of India at this fateful period in her history.

9. Let every man and woman in the country carry on his person a badge bearing the motto : "*Do or Die*". This will proclaim our determination to be free or perish in the attempt to be free.

10. This is a struggle in which all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians have to participate. Freedom's struggle knows no communal or racial distinction. If there

must be competition between communities let it be one in sacrifice and suffering for the great cause.

11. Ending of foreign rule is our objective. Whatever helps in the attainment of that objective is, subject to the inexorable condition of non-violence permissible and legitimate. People in the provinces have to devise and adopt all non-violent ways for paralysing the administration. Every man is his guide and leader. All provinces have full provincial autonomy in the matter of carrying on the struggle. Let them remain true to non-violence and all will be well with the struggle. There is no place for fear in the struggle. It should be banished from our mind and heart. Each one of us should feel and assert that he is a free man. Suffering that comes in our way as a consequence of this assertion and our acting on it shall be cheerfully borne. Our leaders have done their part ; it is for those who are left out to do theirs. The burden of carrying the struggle also rests on them. Let them carry their burden worthily.

12. Last but not least, let us not forget "Spinning" so dear to Gandhiji. If millions spin, it will administer a powerful stimulus to the struggle " *DO OR DIE.*"

The U P. Government seized another interesting document issued in the name of the "War Council, U.P. Congress," which contained detailed instructions regarding attack on communications and police stations :

"There should be a map in each district showing (a) Kachcha and Pucca roads, railway stations with their distances from one another, railway bridges and culverts, whether patrolled by police guards or not. (b) Petrol and Kerosine installations, showing the quantity and protective measures, if any. (c) Aerodromes and Government grain stores, cantonments, war production centres. (d) Hydro-electric stations. (e) Police stations and post offices, showing the total strength of the force and the number of arms and ammunition kept and the distance from head-

quarters. (f) Lists of persons bearing arms and the number of arms. (g) Lists of persons who opposed Congress. (h) Lists of persons who can shelter Congress workers at the time of necessity. (i) Lists of absconding Congress workers and details of their work, close touch should be maintained with them. (j) Cutting of wires should be continued. Insulators on tops of poles should be destroyed. (k) Transport of war materials should be hindered. (l) The destruction of Government records and papers is beneficial to the tenants.”

Even a more comprehensive scheme was issued in the name of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee :

1. “Let single workers proceed to a particular area, organize 200/500 people there and explain to them the working programme. Let the people also be explained that there may be firing and lathi charge as a result of doing this and so let them come prepared. Let a day be fixed as soon as possible. Care should also be taken for this. In the event of any apprehension, it is better not to go armed. A brave and fearless person should be the leader of this batch.
2. All the roads nearer to the police station should be examined before, Arrangements should be made to cut down trees on the side of those roads and to block the roads by them on the night previous to the raid. It should be seen that no reinforcement can reach there from outside.
3. When there is a post office close to the police station, both should be raided simultaneously. Immediate information may be transmitted through post office. Therefore, cut the wire communications and bury the posts on the previous night, as if they cannot be replaced quickly.

4. The work will commence in the last part of night when the police employees will not be on the alert and in the morning than as will be raided.
5. Surround first of all the magazine. Then ask the police employees to surrender. Don't allow any one of them to go outside. As a matter of the first sign of their surrendering, they should set fire to their uniform and records. Ask them the key and take away whatever arms are there to safe unknown place. Some people armed with lathis should guard the police. Then set the Thana house on fire. The place where arms would be kept concealed should not be disclosed to others. This work should be done by very reliable persons. If there is no such opportunity, then throw them into a river nearby or into the thana tank. In order to test the police employees, keep them under watch for some days. If their family and children are with them, take care that they are not ill-treated.
6. Just after the capture of thana, send information everywhere. Then after a few days convene a big meeting there and announce the formation of a small panchayat... It will be an advantage if this sort of work is done simultaneously in the police stations nearby. The earlier the better.

As regards funds, the underground activists initially received good response from the Indian business community and were able to collect a good amount of money in the name of the Indian National Congress. At a later stage, guerilla bands were encouraged to undertake political dacoities in order to raise funds for local units."

The underground resistance movement received a great fillip with the escape, on 9 November 1942, of Jayaprakash Narayan, the general Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, along with five other political prisoners from the

Hazaribagh Central Jail in Bihar.* He moved from place to place, contacted hindling Congress workers, and inculcated in them a fighting spirit to prolong and intensify the struggle against the British Raj. In order to organise the whole underground resistance movement in a proper way, to train up guerilla fighters, and in general to prepare for the launching of a new offensive in the near future, Jayaprakash Narayan soon issued his first letter, *To All Fighters For Freedom* (15 pages) from "somewhere in India." He also issued two pamphlets dealing with the organization of guerilla bands and their training. One was named *A.B.C. of Dislocation* (16 pages) and the other *Instructions—Sabotage and Communications* (24 pages). The second booklet was prepared with the help of "restricted" official work, *Demolitions Field Engineerings Pamphlet No. 7*, published by Engineer-in-Chief's branch in 1940.

Justifying the use of violence, Jayaprakash Narayan argued that the Congress was bound by the Bombay resolution to fight aggression with violence. Once Britain was named as an aggressor, there was every justification now to fight her with arms. As he put it :

"My own interpretation of the Congress position—not Gandhiji's—is clear and definite. Congress is prepared to fight aggression violently if the country became independent. Well, we have declared ourselves independent, and also named Britain as an aggressive power; we are, therefore justified within the terms of the Bombay resolution itself to fight Britain with arms. If this does not accord with Gandhi's principles, that is not my fault. The Working Committee and the AICC themselves have chosen to differ from Gandhiji and to reject his conception of non-violence as applied to the war."

*These five were—Ram Nandan Mishra, Jogendra Sukul, Suraj Narayan Singh, Saligram Singh and Gulali Sonar of Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. All of them were members of the Congress Socialist Party.

“I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practised on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but where such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.”

To keep up mass-enthusiasm during an ebb period in the ‘Evolution of a Revolution,’ Jayaprakash Narayan wanted the guerilla bands to continue “skirmishes,” “frontier activities,” “minor clashes,” “sniping,” “patrolling” etc. as a preparation for the second offensive.

The *A.B.C. of Dislocation* was full of guidelines for sabotage works. Participant groups in each district of the province would be known as “Azad Dastas.” Each group was to be a band of shock troopers, a sort of advance guard. With proper technical and political training, they were to wage guerilla warfare against the enemy. There were two hundred and fifty districts in India. In a district of average size two hundred and fifty Azads might be organized into five Jathas with fifty Azads each, which could be further sub-divided into twenty-five Dastas with ten Azads each. Every member of the Dasta could use the title of “Azad” as a suffix to his surname. An Azad had to take the following pledge before entering into the Dastas :

“I, a citizen of the Republic of India and true son of Mother India, do solemnly pledge that I, as an Azad, shall not cease fighting the British usurper till the Republic of India is established and the free flag of the Republic flies from one end of country to the other.

“I pledge my unquestioned loyalty to the Indian Revolution and do solemnly declare that I shall be ready to lay down my life in its service.

“I pledge further to obey implicitly the orders of my officers and to observe strict military discipline.

“Should I by weakness, cowardice or evil design, violate this oath and betray the interest of my people, may I suffer any punishment, including death, at the hands of my comrades.”

The second booklet, *Instruction—Sabotage and Communications*, was meant for the Azad Dastas. It gave a detailed exposition of the methods of committing acts of sabotage. It dealt with (i) dislocation of communications—telegraph and telephone wires and installations, railways, roads and highways, postal services, wireless etc. ; (ii) industrial dislocation—factories, mines and docks ; and (iii) incendiarism—burning of records, petrol pumps etc.

To deal with the shortage of arms, Jayaprakash Narayan recommended the Karnatak pattern of violence to be adopted by the guerillas at all places. The Karnatak pattern of violence envisaged a type where targets were to be small, and situated in the rural areas ; the easiest types of governmental dislocation were to be practised ; guerillas had to work in their own areas, small groups had to carry out surprise raids ; and non-killing and non-injury to human life was strictly enjoined.

Jayaprakash Narayan also decried the controversy regarding the use of violent methods which had sprung up since the publication of the correspondence between Gandhi and Linlithgow. His formula was : “Every fighter for freedom is free to choose his own method. Those who believe in similar methods should work together as a disciplined group. And the least that those who follow a different path should do is not to come in the way of one another and waste their energies in mutual recrimination.

THE JUSTIFICATION

The Congress supporters while referring to resolutions passed by the working committee between 14th July and 8th August said : “We challenge the Government to show from the language used anywhere in all these, that either Mahatma

Gandhi or the Working Committee meant to encourage violence in any form. As to instructions 'issued in the name of the Congress,' the Congress or Mahatma Gandhi cannot be held responsible, and the Government cannot have a right to question the bonafides of the Congress thereafter.

"If the charge is that the Congress wanted to take advantages of Britain's danger it is not much of a charge. Having taken lessons in politics at the feet of such excellent matters as the Britishers, the Congress would be fool to let go such an opportunity, when full two decades and over ago Gandhiji's illustrious predecessor the late Lokmanya Tilak continuously cried from the house-top that "England's difficulty must always be India's opportunity." Politically there is nothing immoral in it and the Britishers have absolutely no right to complain on this score.

"If the charge is that Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to take the risk of violence emerging from his proposed programme, this cannot be a charge. A.R.P. instructions are issued in time. The sirens blow timely. There are very good shelters throughout the town. If in spite of all these very good precautions, some of the townsmen choose to be loitering on the road while bombing is on, the Government can never be held responsible for the loss of life by such reckless persons. Mahatma Gandhi gave all reasonable opportunity to the Government to reconsider the Indian question again and again. He agreed not to embarrass them. He gave proof after proof of his readiness to saddle the resources of the country to fight the Jap menace as one of the Allies but all this was enough to induce the Government to hand over power to India. When every method of reasoning failed sheer duty and self-respect left no other alternative to Gandhiji.

"Government would be justified in all their arguments if only they can tell us that slavery is India's final and permanent lot and that India must be content to remain a slave in the British Empire, satisfied with what crumbs she can get from them. So long as they say that it is even their purpose to put

India on the level of a self-governing country with the status of an equal partner with England, they cannot object to anything Gandhiji can do to achieve that end. For sheer patience they cannot claim that they have been more patient than Gandhiji, for two reasons, firstly because Gandhiji is constitutionally anxious to give all possible opportunity to an adversary and secondly because he is fighting on behalf of an armless population.

“So if you must saddle someone with the responsibility for the disturbances, it is the Government themselves. Gandhiji’s only fault lies in cornering them into a flat denial of India’s inherent rights and exposing their pretensions beyond hope, wherefore, the Government, having lost their balance, drove Gandhiji from step to step to a point from where a return was impossible. The opportunity was all along open to Government to have conceded India’s demand and there would have been no internal problems in our land. It is not so much Gandhiji as the Government themselves who decided to face the dangers and risks of possible violence. Are they not doing it again at this moment when they have standing police and military preparations throughout the country to face any contingency arising out of Gandhi’s fast? And for the fast too and the risk to Mahatmaji’s life involved the Government again say that he himself is responsible. Let us tell the Government plainly that none of us can ever believe that the lamb is polluting the wolf, drinking water, which the Government want us to believe, can flow against gravity.”

Gandhiji also explained the position regarding his responsibility for the disturbances. On 24 July 1944 he issued the draft of instructions for the guidance of civil resisters which was prepared on August 7, 1942 and was placed before the Working Committee and discussed on August 8. The Working Committee was again to have met on the morning of August 9. But that was not to be.

Gandhiji had to put this draft before the Working Committee in order to explain his view of the negotiations he had

to carry on with the Government. They were to cover a period of at least three weeks. The instructions were to see the light of day only on failure of the contemplated negotiations. Explaining the object of publishing the draft, Gandhiji said :

“It shows how my mind was running at the time. The draft is an additional answer the adverse suggestions made in the Government indictment about my non-violence. The second and more relevant object is to let Congress workers know how I would have acted at the time ..I have come to know that my name was freely used to justify acts of sabotage and the like. I would like every Congressman and for that matter every Indian to feel that on him and her lies the responsibility of freeing India from the incubus of foreign rule. Non-violent suffering is the only way. Freedom of India means everything for us but it means also much for the world. For freedom won through non-violence will mean the inauguration of a new order in the world...There is no hope for mankind in any other way.”

The following is the literal translation of draft instructions for the guidance of civil resisters :—

“On the day of the *hartal* no processions should be taken out, nor meetings held in the cities. All the people should observe a twenty-four hours’ fast and offer prayers. If the owners of shops approve of our Satyagraha struggle, they will all close their shops, but no one should be made to close his shop under coercion. In the villages, however, where there is no fear of violence or disturbance, meetings may be held and processions taken out and responsible Congressmen who believe in mass Civil Disobedience should explain the meaning of the contemplated Satyagraha struggle to the people. The object of our Satyagraha is to secure the withdrawal of British rule and the attainment of independence for the whole of India. After the withdrawal of British rule, the constitution of the future Government of the country will be settled by the joint deliberation of the whole nation, including all parties. That Government will belong not to the Congress,

not to any particular group or party; but to the entire 35 crores of the people of India. All Congressmen should make it clear that it will not be the rule of the Hindus or of any particular community. It should also be well explained that this Satyagraha is not directed against Englishmen but against British rule only, for we regard no one as our enemy. This should be brought home to villagers.

“Local Congress workers should send all reports about the *hartal* and other activities to their Provincial Congress Committee and the latter to the Central Congress Office. In case, the leader in a particular place is arrested by the Government, another should be chosen in his place. Every province should make necessary arrangements suited to its particular circumstances.

“In the last resort, every Congressman is his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. A final word: No one should think that those whose names are on the Congress registers are the only Congressmen.

“Let every Indian who desires the freedom for the whole of India and fully believes in the weapon of truth and non-violence for the purpose of this struggle, regard himself as a Congressman and act as such. If anybody has the spirit of communalism or harbours hatred or ill-will in his heart against any Indian or Englishman, he will best help the struggle by keeping aloof. Such an individual will hinder the cause by joining the struggle.

“Every Satyagrahi should understand before joining the struggle that he is to ceaselessly carry on the struggle till independence is achieved. He should vow that he will be free or die.

“These employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices, etc., may not participate in the *hartal*, because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate Japanese, Nazi or Fascist invasion, nor British rule.

“Therefore, we shall not for the present interfere in the above mentioned Government departments. But an occasion may certainly arise when we shall——all those people who are employed in Government offices to give up their positions and join the Satyagraha struggle.

“But all Congress members in the Central and Provincial Assemblies ought to vacate their seats and come out forthwith. In case an attempt is made to fill their places with enemies of the country’s freedom, or henchmen of British Government, local Congressmen should be put up to oppose their election.

“The same applies to the Congress members of the Municipalities and other public bodies. As conditions in different provinces are not the same, every Provincial Congress Committee shall make arrangements suited to its special circumstances.

“If any Government servant is called upon to perpetrate excesses or injustice it will be his clear duty to resign at once, giving the real reasons. For Indian Government will be under no obligation to continue in its service all those Government functionaries who are at present serving the Empire on huge salaries, nor will it be under an obligation to continue the large pensions which are being drawn at present.

“All students reading in institutions conducted or controlled by the Government should come out of these institutions. Those who are above sixteen years of age should join the Satyagraha. Those who to leave these institutions should do so with a clear understanding that they are not to return to them until independence is achieved. There should be no coercion whatsoever in this matter. Only those who of their own free will wish to do so, should come out. No good can come out of coercion.

“If excesses are committed in any place by the Government, people should offer resistance and endure the penalty. For instance, if villagers, labourers or householders are ordered to vacate their farms or homes, they should flatly refuse to

obey such orders. If an adequate compensation is offered or if they are suitably provided for by grant of land, etc., elsewhere, they may vacate their farms or homes. Here there is no question of Civil Disobedience, but of simply refusing to submit to coercion or injustice. We do not want to hinder military activities, but neither shall we submit to arbitrary high-handedness.

“The salt tax causes great hardship to the poor. Therefore, wherever salt can be made, the poor people may certainly manufacture it for themselves and risk the penalty.

“Land tax is due only to a Government which we recognize as our own. It is long since we have mentally ceased to recognize the existing government as such, but until now we have not gone to the length of refusing the payment of land tax because we felt that the country was not prepared to go so far.

“But the time has now come when those, who have the courage, and are prepared to risk their all, should refuse to pay it.

“The Congress holds that the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else. If they part with share of the produce to anyone, it is for the furtherance of their own interest. There are various systems of collecting land revenue. Where the Zamindari system prevails the Zamindars pay the tax to the Government and the ryot to the Zamindar. In such cases, if the Zamindar makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if Zamindar wants to side with the Government, no tax should be paid to him. This will, in the immediate present spell ruin to the ryot. Therefore, only those who are prepared to face utter ruin should refuse payment of land revenue.

“It, therefore, becomes clear that the disturbances were not created by the Congress but were only the outcome of repression. This repressive policy failed to restore real peace; on the contrary, it encouraged and stimulated the movement in

every town and village in India. However, one can easily get an idea of this policy by analysing the methods employed by the British Government to crush this movement. Here is a summary of what was done at that time :

- (a) All members of the Working (Executive) Committee of the Congress were arrested, as well as Congress leaders in many Provinces. They were detained indefinitely without any trial.
- (b) The arrest of Congress leaders in the Provinces was stated to be "at the discretion of Governments." But in six of Provinces there was no Government—the Ministers resigned early in the war—and in each the British Governor ruled with the power of an absolute dictator.
- (c) The All-India Congress Committee and all the Provincial Committees were declared illegal associations. The Provincial "Governments"—that is in six cases out of eleven the British Governors—were given discretion to proscribe the district, town and village organisations of Congress. Think of the anger which would be aroused in their own country (Britain) if the Labour Party were suppressed. Congress was a larger party than the Labour Party.
- (d) A press censorship was established so that no factual news regarding Congress resistance or Government action could be published unless it was sent out from official sources or from registered agencies and correspondents. No speeches or statements supporting the Congress campaign were allowed to be published.
- (e) In most of the leading cities of India meetings of five or more persons were prohibited.
- (f) Provincial Governments were allowed to supersede any local authorities which supported Congress action.

- (g) Curfew was imposed in leading centres. Shopkeepers were prohibited from closing their shops.
- (h) Congress buildings in all large centres were seized.
- (i) In Bombay a Whipping Act was passed. Whipping could now be inflicted on any one convicted of rioting and causing hurt, or of arson. This Act was subsequently extended to whole of India. By common consent civilised people have criticised whipping as an inhuman relic of a barbaric past. There was no justification for the revival of this most uncivilized and primitive form of punishment. The number of sentences of whipping inflicted upto December 1943 came to 2,562, but the number of arrests made in this connection was 90,400.
- (j) Collective fines imposed by Government throughout the country deserve severe condemnation. The scheme of imposition of collective fines on Hindus alone, irrespective of their guilt, was a British revival of the ancient policy of Jaziya for which Aurangzeb made himself famous. Amounts were imposed in many cases without any regard to the total damage caused or to the part played by the inhabitants concerned. The amount of collective fines imposed upto 31 December 1943 came to Rs. 9,007,382.
- (k) Processions and meetings were broken up by lathi-charges and tear gas. When stone-throwing or violence was done by masses, police and troops fired on the crowds. In the process between August 1942 and December 1943, Police opened fire 601 times. The number of casualties inflicted—fatal was 763, non-fatal 1941. The number of casualties suffered—fatal was 63 and non-fatal 2,012.”

In an open letter to Lord Linlithgow, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said : “You men have stripped Indian mothers naked, tied them up to trees, made play with their limbs and killed them. You men have stripped Indian mothers naked, forced them on road, raped and killed them. You talk of fascist

reprisals : you men have raped and killed wives of patriots you could not seize...

“You say you have killed less than a thousand patriots. You have killed over fifty thousands and wounded many times more.

“Scores of Jallianwalla Bagh have been enacted over the country during the past six months. There is one difference. Your system has been far more murderous but our crowds are no longer trapped men. The unarmed common man of Hindustan has shown divine courage in facing the bullet and yet marching onwards...The history of the unarmed common man begins from the Indian Revolution of the 9th August.

“You against the background of fifty thousand patriots killed and many more wounded ; the killing of less than a hundred of your men is regrettable...There must be some secret of this strength. There was no organisation to guide the people for you had smashed it up. There was only an inner discipline. Tens of millions in excited crowds on the gravest provocation have shown this discipline that arises from within.

“Your administration knows how to smash up speedily. Within a few days, after 9th August, you jailed the Congress. And yet the Congress is also out. Every true Indian or Congressman ..unlike revolutionaries elsewhere, has refrained from aiming to kill or injure. Far from attacking innocent men... they did not want to kill or injure the worst murderers of the people...but...for stray exceptions...The passion for freedom will haunt you until you surrender.

“No plan was imposed from above on the revolution that broke out on the 9th of August. There was the living reality of India with its great memories, there was the passion for a whole people to be free, there was 23 years’ work of a master.

“...This revolution is not the work of an armed minority but of people as a whole. For first time in history, the common man has revolted. His weapon is his spirit, for he does not own arms.”

Statistics connected with Congress

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Madras</i> | <i>Bombay</i> | <i>Bengal</i> | <i>U.P.</i> | <i>Punjab</i> |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| A. Government servants (Excluding those of the Central Government) | | | | | |
| (i) Police | | | | | |
| 1. No. of occasions on which Police fired : | 21 | 226 | 63 | 116 | 1 |
| 2. No. of Casualties inflicted— FATAL : | 39 | 112 | 87 | 207 | — |
| 3. No. of Casualties inflicted— NON-FATAL : | 86 | 406 | 149 | 458 | — |
| 4. No. of Casualties suffered— FATAL : | — | 6 | 5 | 16 | — |
| 5. No. of Casualties suffered—NON-FATAL : | 91 | 563 | 180 | 333 | — |
| 6. No. of defections from Police : | 1 | 6 | — | 2 | — |
| (ii) Other Government Servants | | | | | |
| 7. No. of attacks on other Government servants— FATAL : | — | 1 | — | 3 | — |

disturbances for the period ending December, 1943

Bihar C.P. Assam NWFP Orissa Sind Delhi Coorg Total

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|---|------|
| 96 | 42 | 4 | 1 | 9 | — | 22 | — | 601 |
| 166 | 45 | 15 | 3 | 69 | — | 20 | — | 763 |
| 508 | 181 | 19 | 13 | 111 | — | 10 | — | 1941 |
| 26 | 8 | — | — | 1 | | 1 | — | 63 |
| 342 | 256 | 17 | 52 | 26 | 90 | 62 | — | 2012 |
| 205 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 216 |
| 4 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 10 |

| Category | Madras | Bombay | Bengal | U.P. | Punjab |
|---|--------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| 8. No. of attacks on other Government servants—NON-FATAL : | 19 | 50 | 14 | 141 | — |
| 9. No. of defections from other Government services : | — | 3 | — | 9 | — |
| B. Damage to Property (Excluding Central Government Property) | | | | | |
| 1. No. of Police Stations or Outposts etc, destroyed or severely damaged ; | 5 | 46 | 4 | 42 | — |
| 2. No. of other Government buildings destroyed or severely damaged : | 50 | 318 | 95 | 45 | |
| 3. No. of public buildings other than Government buildings, e.g., Municipal, property, Schools, Hospital setc., destroyed or severely damaged : | 57 | 152 | 58 | 37 | 4 |
| 4. No. of important private buildings destroyed or severely damaged : | 11 | 38 | 29 | 3 | 5 |

Quit India Movement**543**

Bihar U.P. Assam NWFP Orissa Sind Delhi Coorg Total

87 39 — — 13 — 1 — 364**4 — — 5 — — — 1 22****72 29 4 — 5 — 1 — 208****103 41 64 1 25 — 4 1 749****92 45 66 — 8 2 4 — 525****119 2 61 — 2 1 2 — 273**

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Madras</i> | <i>Bombay</i> | <i>Bengal</i> | <i>U.P.</i> | <i>Punjab</i> |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 5. Estimated loss to Government : Rs. | 225192 | 845410 | 171876 | 363366 | 1000 |
| 6. Estimated loss to other parties : Rs. | 916025 | 563581 | 55391 | 102778 | 105000 |
| C. Cases of Sabotage | | | | | |
| 1. No. of Bomb Explosions : | 17 | 447 | 51 | 60 | — |
| 2. No. of Bombs or Explosives discovered without damage : | 35 | 738 | 106 | 157 | 1 |
| 3. No. of cases of sabotage to roads : | 32 | 78 | 57 | 84 | — |
| 4. No. of cases in which collective fines imposed : | 41 | 73 | 20 | 7 | — |
| 5. Amount of collective fines imposed : Rs. | 1034359 | 817950 | 605503 | 3176973 | — |
| 6. No. of sentences of whipping inflicted : | 295 | 17 | 2 | 1252 | — |
| 7. No. of arrests made : | 5859 | 24416 | 4818 | 16796 | 2501 |
| 8. No. of local authorities superseded under Defence Rule 38 B Otherwise : | 27 | 19 | 11 | 7 | — |

Source : National Archives of India,

Quit India Movement**545*****Bihar C.P. Assam NWFP Orissa Sind Delhi Coorg Total***

354720 424840 384582 200 46459 1904 15456 120 2735125

495231 167270 194847 — 33598 1935 370376 245 300727

8 10 10 1 — 50 — 10 664

218 18 9 1 — 13 11 12 1316

169 7 43 — 4 — — 474

16 3 1 — — 5 — 7 173

2660765 344595 339487 — 27750 — — — 9007382

340 282 — — 9 365 — — 2562

16202 8753 2707 2393 2806 3689 90 860 91836

3 35 — — 5 — 1 108**New Delhi, File No. 3/52/43 Poll. (1)**

Statistics connected with Congress disturbances for the period ending December, 1943

| <i>Sr. No.</i> | <i>Provinces</i> | <i>Mad- ras</i> | <i>Bom- bay</i> | <i>Ben- gal</i> | <i>U.P. Jab</i> | <i>Pun- jab</i> | <i>Bihar</i> | <i>C.P.</i> | <i>Assam</i> | <i>NWFP</i> | <i>Coorg</i> | <i>Orissa</i> | <i>Sind</i> | <i>Delhi</i> | <i>Ajmer</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Use of Explosives</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Number of casual- ties caused to Government ser- vants—FATAL | 5 | — | 12 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 17 |
| 2. | Number of casual- ties caused to Government ser- vants—NON- FATAL | 2 | 95 | 3 | 9 | — | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 115 |
| 3. | Number of casual- ties caused to the public (including those to bomb- makers etc. them- selves)—FATAL | — | 18 | 1 | 9 | — | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | 33 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 4. Number of casualties caused to the public (including those to bomb-makers etc. themselves)--NON-FATAL | 1 | 1 | 142 | 5 | 23 | -- | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | -- | 11 | -- | 5 | -- | 208 |
| 5. Number of casualties caused to | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (a) Women and | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (b) Children-- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FATAL (Out of b) those included in item (3) : | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 6 |
| 6. Number of casualties caused to | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (a) Women and | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (b) Children-- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NON-FATAL (Out of those included in item (4) : | 1 | 29 | 1 | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 37 |

Source : National Archives of India, Home Political File No. 3/52/43.

Statement showing the number of persons detained during 1943

| | Jan. | Feb. | March | April | May | June | July | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Convictions under all laws in connection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (a) With Congress movement month ending on 15th | 2870 | 3337 | 2485 | 2163 | 1732 | 1091 | 803 | 603 | 544 | 284 | 414 | 438 |
| (b) Progressive total upto 15th of the month | 29681 | 32812 | 34895 | 35731 | 38764 | 44267 | 45295 | 46269 | 47458 | 47524 | 47807 | 48204 |
| (c) Undergoing imprisonment on 1st of month | 18809 | 22725 | 23071 | 22781 | 23286 | 22548 | 18453 | 20506 | 19284 | 16498 | 15763 | 15163 |
| 2. Detentions under Rule 26 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (a) For month ending on 1st | 1388 | 748 | 735 | 1259 | 817 | 414 | 148 | 282 | 139 | 114 | 102 | 167 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| (b) Progressive total upto 15th of the month | 10223 | 10933 | 11623 | 12841 | 13683 | 12110 | 16096 | 16598 | 17229 | 17212 | 17412 | 17482 |
| (c) Undergoing detention on 1st of the month including those detained under Rule 129 | 11674 | 12324 | 12300 | 12823 | 12704 | 9941 | 8759 | 9119 | 8081 | 7928 | 7267 | 5570 |

Source : National Archives of India, Home Political File No. 18/14/43.

Statement connected with the Congress.

| <i>Sr. No.</i> | <i>Provinces</i> | <i>Madras</i> | <i>Bombay</i> | <i>Bengal</i> | <i>U.P.</i> | <i>Punjab</i> |
|---|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. No. of courts set up under the Special Criminal Courts Ordinance : | 53 | 21 | 149 | 269 | — | — |
| 2. No. of cases disposed of by these courts : | 183 | 49 | 856 | 4658 | — | — |
| 3. No. of persons convicted by such courts : | 897 | 206 | 1623 | 10146 | — | — |
| 4. No. of cases disposed of by ordinary courts : | 1682 | 4199 | 506 | 1609 | 542 | — |
| 5. No. of cases disposed of by military courts : | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 6. No. of persons convicted by ordinary courts : | 3202 | 9005 | 625 | 2833 | 903 | — |
| 7. No. of persons convicted by military courts : | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 8. Total number of death sentences imposed : | 2 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 9. No. of death sentences confirmed : | 2 | — | — | — | — | — |

Source : National Archives of India, .

disturbances for the period ending December, 1943

*Bihar O.P. Assam NWFP Orissa Sind Coorg Delhi Ajmer Total
Mer-
wara*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|-----|----|-----|----|-------|
| 138 | 141 | — | — | 9 | 1 | — | 10 | — | 797 |
| 2821 | 1590 | 133 | — | 230 | 2 | — | 168 | — | 10690 |
| 8424 | 3737 | 125 | — | 684 | 9 | — | 552 | — | 26402 |
| 1445 | 477 | 989 | 1508 | 723 | 291 | 36 | 20 | — | 14987 |
| — | — | — | — | — | 82 | — | — | — | 82 |
| 1821 | 692 | 1643 | 1643 | 1037 | 851 | 42 | 28 | 33 | 23358 |
| — | — | — | — | — | 313 | — | — | — | 313 |
| 19 | 36 | 4 | — | 1 | 2 | — | 3 | — | 67 |
| 10 | 26 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 41 |

Home Political File No. 3/52/43.

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT*

The revolt of 1942 ended in failure in so far as its immediate aim was concerned. This aim was the attainment of independence by forcing the withdrawal of British rule and was sought to be achieved in a short period of time by paralysing the entire machinery of administration and thereafter seizing power. It is evident that the revolt was crushed within three months and law and order was restored throughout the country after this short period.

The failure was more marked in the case of the 1942 revolt than was the case with the movements of 1921 and 1930. The earlier movements had been in the nature of preparatory training for a final struggle. They were intended to create a national consciousness in the masses who had been emasculated through centuries of subjection to a foreign rule. The movement of 1921 was intended to revive the spirit of self-respect among the people by removing the fear of going to jail for the love of the country. The object of self-government was there but it was realised that that was still a distant goal. The movement of 1930 was further stage in the direction of independence. It was sought to remove the fear of loss of property and thereby to create a spirit of sacrifice. The objective of independence was there but there was a realization that still more sacrifices were needed. The movement of 1942, however, was intended to be the last stage in that struggle and, therefore, the supreme sacrifice of one's life was required to attain independence. The call was "do or die" and the mass slogan was "we shall do or die." It is for this reason that the word failure was more appropriately applicable to the revolt of 1942 than it was to the earlier movements, which had constituted preparatory stages for the goal of independence.

A subsidiary motive was to arouse the people from the state of "sullen passivity" and to convert this passivity into a spirit of non-submission and resistance.¹ Beginning with resistance

*From Amba Prasad : *The Indian Revolt of 1942*, Chapter VI.

1. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (New York, 1946), p. 483.

to the British authority, it could be turned into resistance to the Japanese whose invasion was expected to take place soon.² There is no doubt that, if the revolt had succeeded, and a national government had been established, the popular enthusiasm which had brought about this result, would have continued, needing only to be diverted against a new foreigner. But what if the revolt had failed and the Japanese had attacked? As the invasion did not take place, it is difficult to speculate how the people would have reacted. But judging from the state of affairs in the country in September 1942, when the leaders were removed from all contact with the people and anti-British feeling was at its highest, it would probably be correct to say that Indians would have given them no resistance. Perhaps they would have welcomed them, coming as they were, heralded by S.C. Bose who had tremendous influence with the Indian people. Already the 200,000 radio receivers were receiving broadcasts from Berlin, Tokyo, Rome and Bangkok.³ Certain it is that the Japanese occupation could not have been allowed to last longer than the period of the war. In fact Gandhiji was not simply thinking of a revolt but was kindling a revolution in the minds of the people by his powerful writings and speeches. The movement of 1942 was both a revolt and a revolution. The revolt failed but the revolution succeeded.

Though the revolt of 1942 failed at the time, it prepared the ground for independence in 1947. When people have reached a stage where they can demonstrate that they can lay down their lives for national independence, it becomes impossible for a foreign power to continue to impose its will on them for any length of time. The revolt of 1942 made the British nation realize, supreme realists as they have been, that their rule was no longer wanted by India. Woodrow Wyatt, who was adviser to the Cabinet Mission to India throughout their negotiations, was of the opinion in 1946, that "if the British fail to find

2. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

3. *Washington Post*, August 19, 1942.

soon a way of handing over smoothly, there may first be a revolution to drive them out.”⁴ There was a deep and widespread anti-British feeling existing after 1942, mostly created by the revolt of that year.

No one could appreciate better than Gandhiji himself the depth of feeling of the people before and after the revolt and he thus expressed this appreciation in July 1944, two years after the revolt :

“There is not a shadow of doubt that passing through fire and suffering by thousands of Congressmen and Congress sympathisers has raised the status of India and the strength of the people.... The difference between now and August 1942 is that at that time I had no knowledge of the response the people both pro-Congress and anti-Congress would make. Now I know the kind of response they made. The heroism, suffering and self-sacrifice of those who took part in this struggle are beyond praise.”⁵

Another gain to Indian nationalism was that world opinion was focussed on the Indian question and what was once Britain's domestic question, became a matter of concern for other countries also, particularly America. Though the British Government avoided committing themselves to granting independence to India after the hostilities were over, or accept mediation by the United Nations, far less agree to a United Nations guarantee, the moral pressure of public opinion in the United States and even in England itself was so strong, that Britain found it difficult to withhold independence from India after the war. The world public opinion was against the “ill-timed” revolt but was sympathetic to the aspirations of India for independence.

A further gain was to those parties who wanted to give precedence to national independence over the international question of fighting against Axis fascism. This was shown most significantly in the failure of the Radical Democratic

4. *New Statesmen and Nation*, July 20, 1946, p. 40.

5. *Hindustan Standard*, 20th July, 1944.

Party and the Communist Party of India to continue their hold on labour. Soon after the war the Congress and the Socialists gained control of the Labour Unions. In the popular mind, the sufferings undergone by the Congressmen for the independence of the country, became the uppermost thing. The urge for national independence was stronger than any ideological consideration.

But it is nevertheless important to inquire why the revolt of 1942 failed. Negatively, it did not fail because the time was not well chosen or for want of popular support. It was well timed. The crisis of the war was just reached, the contending parties held one another in a precarious balance. There was a serious threat of Japanese invasion and a fear that it would be difficult to hold out in India. The economic unrest was rising up ; the complaints against administrative corruption, bribery, black marketing, racial discrimination and scorched earth policy were reaching a high pitch. Nor did the revolt fail for lack of mass enthusiasm. India is a land of the peasantry. The peasantry was in revolt. The Moslem attitude was one of sympathetic detachment to the movement but was definitely anti-British. In fact, communalism was at the lowest ebb just before and during the movement. There was enough popular material that went into the revolt. The revolt did not, therefore, fail for any lack of spirit on the part of the people.

The revolt failed because of the three main causes : (1) tactical mistakes of organisation and planning ; (2) loyalty of the services ; and (3) superior physical strength of the Government.

Since it was a mass movement and involved a programme of action much wider in scope than that of any of the earlier movements, it required a different technique from the one Gandhiji was used to in his *satyagraha* campaigns. It was necessary that leaders should know the entire strategy and go underground before the Government clapped them into jails. As we have seen no one knew what course of action had to be taken. Gandhiji was proceeding on two assumptions : firstly, that the British would be willing to negotiate, if threatened.

with a mass movement at that moment of crisis, since he credited them with a high sense of realism ; secondly, he had hoped that he would not be arrested as was the case in 1930 when the Government did not arrest him because they knew that, if he were outside the jail, he would keep the movement within the bounds of non-violence. There is the testimony of Nehru who writes that "Gandhiji, to our surprise, still clung to the belief that a settlement with the British Government was possible, and he said he would try his utmost to achieve it. And so, though he talked a great deal about action, he did not define it or indicate what he intended to do."⁶ Gandhiji's assumptions proved wrong. The Government did not negotiate and arrested all leaders including Gandhiji himself before they could do anything.

The result was a revolt without leaders and without any definite programme of action. A revolutionary pamphlet issued towards the end of January 1943, six months after the starting of the revolt and under the signature of Jai Prakash Narain, India's staunchest fighter, had very lucidly brought out this weakness. It said that "the lack of organisation was so considerable that even important Congressmen were not aware of the progress of the revolt and, till late in the course of the rising, it remained a matter of debate in many Congress quarters whether what the people were doing, was really in accordance with the Congress programme."⁷ The revolt remained a series of isolated attempts to paralyse the administration, there was no co-ordination, no strategy and no leadership. Those who led the movement were divided in their views on the course of action. Nobody knew what to do.

Moreover, after the first phase of the rising which consisted in destroying the emblems of authority, not much evidence of positive programme was to be seen. There was more of sentimental and frenzied outburst than an attempt at consolidation of the gains. The result was that the temporary successes of the revolution were soon ending in failure.

6. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

7. C.nd. 6430, Appendix IX.

On the other hand, the Government had its administrative machinery serving loyally. The police and civil servants remained loyal. The success or failure of the risings in villages and local areas depended on how the police would act. The police remained loyal in most places. A high Government official told the special correspondent of the *New York Times* in an interview that "of 23,000 police, of whom less than a thousand were British all remained loyal to their salt."⁸ The constables discovered that if they took a firm line with the mobs, they were safe but if they showed softness, they were overwhelmed and ran the risk of being killed.⁹ Except for a few cases, the civil servants remained loyal. The White, Gurkha and Baluchi soldiers who were generally employed, had not much respect for the life of an Indian peasant.

Thus it was the superior physical power of the Government which succeeded in putting down the revolt. On the one side were large unarmed masses, unorganised, leaderless, hesitating in their minds whether what they were doing would be approved by Gandhiji or not; on the other side was the power of the uniformed, disciplined policeman and soldier, armed with rifles and guns, and the power of law and the use of all means of communications. If necessary, the machine-gunning would be done from the aeroplanes. In such a situation, the revolt could only succeed, if it were a simultaneous rising which would paralyse administrative machinery in the shortest possible time. At its best it was a *satyagraha* of mass movement; at its worst, it was an unorganised revolt of a violent character and, in the latter form, it gave the Government a good excuse to crush it down with force.

When all has been said about the failure and weaknesses of the revolt, one fact stands out outstandingly. The people of India, young and old, showed great heroism and courage and were willing to sacrifice their all, even their lives, at the altar of independence. But there was lurking somewhere in their minds a fear—prompted by the comments of a few

8. *New York Times*, Oct, 27, 1942, 11 : 1.

9. *Ibid.*

armchair critics—that Gandhiji would not countenance all that they had done in their spontaneous uprising. This was set at rest by Gandhiji, Nehru and other leaders who made it clear that they were proud of the doings of the people. Gandhiji told Sir Reginald Maxwell in unequivocal terms: ‘I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it. I have no reparations to make for I have no consciousness of guilt.’¹⁰ Nehru declared: ‘I am very proud of what happened in 1942...I make it plain that I cannot condemn those who took part in the 1942 movement.’¹¹ Sardar Patel’s strong words were: ‘Never before had such wide-spread uprisings happened in India in the history of the British Raj, as they did during the last three years. We are proud of the spirit in which the people reacted.’¹² Six days later he made it clear that ‘those who have put their signatures under the August Resolution will not betray those who had laid down their lives for the national cause.’¹³ Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that as a result of the movement, ‘courage and power of resistance of the people had increased much to the benefit of the country’s cause’¹⁴ A similar opinion was expressed by Pandit Pant.¹⁵ Acharya Kripalani said: ‘We are not to sit in judgment over the actions of those who even indulged in violence..If there had been instructions of any kind for violent struggle, then the movement would have assumed a terrific shape.’¹⁶ There is thus the imperative duty of the Indian people who have lived to enjoy the fruits of independence, not to forget those who sacrificed their lives for the emancipation of the country. Only in this lies the secret of India’s future greatness.

10. Letter of Gandhiji to Sir Reginald Maxwell.
11. Nehru’s speech in Lahore, F.P.J. 25th July, 1945.
12. Sardar Patel’s speech in Bombay, F.P.J. 29th June, 1945.
13. *Ibid.* E.P.J. 5th July, 1945.
14. Address to Congress workers, F.P.J., 26th June, 1945.
15. Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant’s speech, F.P.J., 23rd July, 1945.
16. Speech at Allahabad, F.P.J., 25th July, 1945.

PART II

BRITISH COLONIAL INTERPRETATIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS

World Federation is far beyond the capacity of the human race at present. The British Commonwealth could not hold its American Colonies and now cannot hold India.

**—George Bernard Shaw
(Statement in December, 1942)**

Gandhi should be at once released and those responsible for his arrest should apologize to him for the mental defectiveness of the Cabinet. That would do what is possible to save the Indian situation.

**—George Bernard Shaw
(Statement in May, 1943)**

OFFICIAL STAND ON KHILAFAT AND NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENTS

BUTLER'S REACTION*

Mr. President and Members of the Legislative Council.

Great efforts have been made to draw away young men from schools and colleges and to induce professional men to give up their careers. Great efforts have been made to prevent voters from going to the polls. But these efforts have met with little success. The elections have undoubtedly given the province a really representative legislative council. The chief opponents of the reforms have shown by word and act that their aim is not the ordered development of political institutions in India but the expulsion of Western civilization from India—a course involving the reversion to the conditions of disorder, lawlessness and internecine strife such as prevailed in the unsettled times before the advent of British rule.....

The tenantry were widely stirred up. The criminal classes took advantage of the occasion and serious trouble ensued in which there was regrettable loss of life. A full report on the Rae Bareli disturbances will be published within a few days. It was fortunately possible to restore order without calling in military aid from outside, and for this I have already congratulated the local authorities and other concerned. Statements, I may say that all reports from both Rae Bareli and Fyzabad indicate that the tenantry are actuated by no hostility to

*Extracts from the Speech delivered by His Excellency Sir Harcourt Butler, Governor of the U.P. of Agra and Oudh at the opening of the U P. Legislative Council, Lucknow, 22nd January, 1921.

Government or to Europeans. The agitators have endeavoured to stir up such hostility.

As for my Government I have chosen as colleagues without favour strong and independent men. They will have my complete confidence in all matters, and it is my desire that we should work together as far as possible as one Government. I shall endeavour to secure that we all, Europeans and Indians, work together on harmonious lines as brother-subjects of the King-Emperor ; and I pray that the Reforms Scheme which we are commencing to-day will and largely and effectively be to the well-being and happiness of this ancient land of Hindustan.

VICEROY LORD CHELMSFORD ON KHILAFAT*

Gentlemen,

I am very glad to have had this opportunity of meeting you here this afternoon and at having had laid before me one more representation on behalf of the Muslim community with regard to the present situation I need hardly remind you, though perhaps it is worth while doing so, that I and my Government have repeatedly brought your contentions to the notice of His Majesty's Government and of the Peace Conferences which have been sitting in Europe on this question. May I remind you that early in the stages of the Peace Conference the Secretary of State, Lord Sinha and the Maharaja of Bikaner, who were then representing India at the Peace Conference, stoutly fought your case before the Peace Conference. But inasmuch as none of these gentlemen could be said to represent strictly your community, I asked certain other gentlemen to go actually before the Peace Conference itself and plead the Mohamedan cause, and they were His Highness the Aga Khan, Mr. Aftab Ahmad and Mr. Yusuf Ali, and these gentlemen

*This was delivered in Calcutta on February 24, 1921, to a deputation representing elected Muslim members in the Bengal Legislative Council and Assembly, who had urged modification of the Turkish Peace Terms.

were heard. Now not only have we done this, but every memorial which any sections of your community have forwarded to me has been forwarded to the Secretary of State and has been supported in the most strenuous terms, not only by official documents from my Government, but by personal telegrams from myself. So that I can assure you, from first to last and long before the non-co-operation movement began, that we, as a Government, and I, as the head of the Government, strongly supported your contentions, not only before His Majesty's Government but also before the Peace Conference. And lately in order that we should leave no stone unturned for your case to be represented, not only adequately, but to your own satisfaction, we have again asked certain gentlemen unofficially to go to Europe and present your case there—His Highness the Aga Khan, Mr. Hasan Imam, and Mr. Chhotani, and Mr. Chhotani is accompanied by Dr. Ansari, who will be acting as his secretary.

I should think that a recapitulation of what we have done and what we have attempted to do, such as I have laid before you this afternoon, ought to convince you and, I hope, does convince you, that we have left nothing undone which we could do in order to support your case. I am not acquainted with what is going on in London at the present moment; I have no knowledge, either official or private, of the Conferences which are taking place; but I can assure you that, from first to last, we have espoused your cause and we have fought it in a way which, if I was at liberty to place before you the communications which we have sent home, I think would satisfy every individual.

In conclusion I must again express my great sympathy with you and my determination to the last moment to press every point which we can in favour of your representations.

VICEROY LORD CHELMSFORD ON NON- CO-OPERATION*

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

This is the fourth time on which I have had the privilege and pleasure of being the guest of the Calcutta Club. Naturally at the end of five years one looks back upon sins of omission and commission and it is a matter of regret to me that in 1917 when you were so good as to invite me to be your guest, the preoccupations of the work which I was doing with Mr. Montagu of the time prevented me from accepting your kind invitation. Otherwise I should have been your guest every year that I paid a visit to Calcutta. I hope that this practice which you have followed in my case will be followed in the case of my successors because I can conceive no more convenient method of bringing the Viceroy into contact with prominent men, and prominent men into touch with the Viceroy, than these annual dinners. In April 1916, on my assumption of office, I paid a short informal visit to Calcutta to leave, as I said at that time, my card at the former capital. Today I have been able to do no more than spare a few days in order to leave my P.P.C. card. I hope, however, that you, gentlemen, who belong to Calcutta, will have realized from my constant visits to Calcutta my fondness for your great city and my regret that fate has rendered it impossible for me to live amongst you as all my predecessors have done.

Now, as I look back upon the past five years, I realize the great changes that have taken place. There is an old Latin tag *coelum non animum mutat qui trans mare current*. They change their sky and not their mind who cross the sea. I do not believe myself that this was true even of the days when the poet wrote, because environment has a great influence upon the mind of those who are subjected to change. The principle of it is undoubtedly not true of those

*Delivered on February 23, 1921, at a dinner given in his honour by the Calcutta Club.

who have crossed the floor of a House from the Opposition to the Ministerial Bench, because, naturally, for the first time they cease to be critics and become the criticized. This is inherent in the nature of Parliamentary institution everywhere, but it is inevitable that a man who, for the first time, is made acquainted with the reasons for Government action should see greater justification for that the Government does than in the old days when he was not so well acquainted with facts and was inclined to think that nothing that the Government could do was right.

Now I am sure you will forgive me, on this last occasion of a visit to your Club, if I dwell for a few moments on the unrestful times through which we are passing. I think I may assume that the mere fact of your presence here tonight proves you to be co-operators with Government. We are not the only country which is subject to unrest at the present moment ; indeed, look where you like over the world, unrest is almost the order of the day. But you may naturally ask : Granted that this is so, what is your policy with regard to the present situation ? Let me summarize the position as I see it. I understand that those who have refused to-co-operate with Government do so on the broad ground that I and my Government are Satanic ! I am glad to think I still have a sense of humour. I have had many epithets applied to myself in my time, but the epithet of "Satanic" has broken entirely new ground. Apart, however, from what I conceive to be its peculiar inappropriateness to myself, it surely must appear singularly ill-chosen when Indians are at the present moment forming the bulk of the Provincial Governments and a large proportion of the Government of India. I pass on however. The Reforms have been inaugurated and responsibility has been in large measure transferred to Indian hands. How amazing it is then that at such a time those who have for years been asking for greater share in the Government should now, like children, be refusing to play ! It reminds me of an American quatrain which I came across in the course of my reading the other day :

“Mother, may I go and swim ?
Yes, my dearest daughter.
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But don't go near the water.”

I cannot help feeling that this quatrain sums up the situation so far as the non co-operators are concerned. And now as to our policy with regard to the non-co-operation movement. The Reforms and the Reformed Councils are the keynote of our policy. Indians now share responsibility with the Government. Therefore I think the Government may well claim from Indians help in combating this agitation. Non-co-operation is spread by propaganda : it behoves us then, British and Indians, to counter it by propaganda. Non-co-operation takes hold of grievances where they may exist : it behoves us, so far as in us lies, to remedy these grievances. Non-co-operation has failed in many of the objects which it set out to attain. An answer in the Imperial Legislature the other day showed how poor the response had been to the demand for the surrender of titles. The existence of the Imperial Legislature and the Provincial Councils shows in this respect too the authors of non-co-operation have not had their way. I much regret that there are many who have felt themselves obliged to stand out from the Councils. The Council would have been the better for their help and their views in their deliberations, but the outstanding fact remains that the Councils have been established, are composed of admirable material and are doing their work. Non-co-operation was attempted in the *hijrat* movement into Afghanistan. The trail of death and suffering imposed by that exodus upon the unfortunate misguided people who took part in it has, I believe, killed any attempt to revive any such exodus from India. Non-co-operation succeeded temporarily in inducing emotional boys to leave their schools and colleges—but here again as soon as the emotional ebullition had passed, the students have returned in large numbers to their class-rooms. We have then every reason to take heart with regard to the success of the policy which

we have adopted. But the non-co-operators having failed with the classes, especially the educated classes, are now devoting their attention to the masses. Here again, we must endeavour by co-ordinated effort to teach the masses aright.

There is a Muslim aspect of the present situation. No one could have done more than I to bring Muslim views and sentiments of the community to the Peace Conferences which have been considering to Turkish Peace Terms, and no one—not a Muslim—could have shown more dislike than I to the terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty. I say then that we have every reason to be especially tender and sympathetic to those Mohammedans who have been led into the non-co-operation movement by their views with regard to the Turkish Peace Treaty. But a moment may come when our policy fails, and when the two alternatives of order on the one hand, or anarchy on the other, alone face us. In such an event there can be only one course for the Government to pursue and that is to uphold the cause of order. We shall then ask all responsible men to range themselves on the side of order, and here I am confident that the Reformed Councils will play their part. We, as a Government, will place all the facts before them and all our cards on the table and I am confident that when we prove to them that the alternative is between order and anarchy, there will be only one response made and that is that “we will support you in any action that may consider necessary to maintain order in the country.”

This is my last visit to Calcutta, and I feel that I cannot leave without paying an acknowledgment to Lord Ronaldshay and his colleagues. I should like to acknowledge the loyal co-operation of the Bengal Government with my Government. I should like to recognize the wisdom and sagacity which have marked their administration, and personally thank Lord Ronaldshay for the friendship and support which he has always accorded me. Differences there may have been from time to time, but these differences do not detract from that general policy of loyal co-operation which I have always

experienced at the hands of Lord Ronaldshay and his colleagues.

MEETING THE ARGUMENT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT*

The manifesto issued by Mr. Gandhi on the 4th February justifying his determination to resort to mass civil disobedience contains a series of misstatements. Some of these are so important that the Government of India cannot allow them to pass unchallenged. In the first place, they emphatically repudiate the statement that they have embarked on a policy of lawless repression and also the suggestion that the present campaign of civil disobedience has been forced on the non-co-operation party, in order to secure the elementary rights of free association, free speech and of a free press. The Government of India desire to draw attention to the fact that the decision to adopt a programme of civil disobedience was finally accepted on the 4th November, before the recent notification relating either to the Seditious Meetings Act of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, to which Mr. Gandhi unmistakably refers were issued. It was in consequence of serious acts of lawlessness, committed by persons who professed to be followers of Mr. Gandhi and the non-co-operation movement, that the Government were forced to take measures, which are in strict accordance, with the law for the protection of peaceful citizens in the pursuit of their lawful avocations.

Since the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement the Government of India actuated by a desire to avoid anything in the nature of the repression of political activity, even though it was of an extreme character, have restricted their action in relation thereto to such measures as were necessary for the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of public tranquility. Up to November no steps,

*Government of India's 'Communique' on Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy, Delhi, 6 February, 1922.

save in Delhi last year, were taken against the volunteer associations. In November, however, the Government were confronted with a new and dangerous situation. In the course of the past year, there had been systematic attempts to tamper with the loyalty of the soldiers and the police, and there had occurred numerous outbreaks of serious disorders, directly attributable to the propaganda of the non-co-operation party amongst the ignorant and excitable masses. These outbreaks had resulted in grave loss of life, the growth of a dangerous spirit of lawlessness, and an increasing disregard for lawful authority. In November they culminated in the grave riots in Bombay, in which 53 persons lost their lives and approximately 400 were wounded. On the same date dangerous manifestations of lawlessness occurred in many other places, and at this period it became clear that many of the volunteer associations had embarked on a systematic campaign of violence, intimidation and obstruction, to combat which proceedings under the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal procedure had proved ineffective.

In these circumstances the Government were reluctantly compelled to resort to measures of a more comprehensive and drastic character. Nevertheless, the operation of the Seditious Meetings Act was strictly limited to a few districts in which the risk of grave disturbance of the peace was specially great, and the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 was confined to associations, the majority of the members of which had habitually indulged in violence and intimidation. It is impossible here to set out in detail the evidence which justified the adoption of these measures in the different provinces. Abundant proof is, however, to be found in the published proceedings of the various legislative bodies, in the *communiqués* of the different local Governments and in the pronouncements of the heads of the provinces. While resolute in their determination to enforce respect for law and order and to protect loyal and peaceful subjects of the Crown, the Government have at the same time taken every precaution

possible to mitigate where desirable the conditions for imprisonment and to avoid any action which might have the appearance of vindictive severity. Ample proof of this will be found in the order issued by the local Government. Numerous offenders have been released, sentences have been reduced and special consideration has been shown in the case of persons convicted of offences under the Seditious Meetings' Act or the Criminal Law Amendment Act. There is thus no shadow of justification for the charge that their policy has been one of indiscriminate and the lawless repression.

A further charge, which has been brought of Mr. Gandhi, is that the recent measures of Government have involved a departure from the civilised policy laid down by His Excellency at the time of the apology of the Ali brothers, namely, that the Government of India should not interfere with the activities of the non-co-operators so long as they remained non-violent in word and deed. The following citation from the *communiqué* of Government of India issued on the 30th May, conclusively disproves this statement :

“After explaining that in view of the solemn undertaking contained in the statement over their signature it had been decided to refrain from instituting criminal proceedings against Messrs Mahammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, the Government of India observed it must not be inferred from the original determination of the Government to prosecute for speeches inciting to violence and promoting disaffection of a less violent character is not an offence against the law. The Government of India desire to make it plain that they will enforce the law relating to offences against the State, as and when they may think fit against any persons who have committed breaches of it.”

It remains for the Government of India to deal with the allegation that His Excellency summarily rejected the proposal of a conference, although the terms put forward by the conference at Bombay and accepted by the Working Com-

mittee of the Congress were quite in keeping with His Excellency's own requirements as indicated in his speech at Calcutta. How far this is from being the case will manifest from a comparison of His Excellency's speech with the terms proposed by the conference. His Excellency in that speech insisted on the imperative necessity, as a fundamental condition precedent to the discussion of any question of a conference of the discontinuance of the unlawful activities of the non-co-operation party. No assurance on this point was, however, contained in the proposals advanced by the conference. On the contrary, whilst the Government were asked to make concessions which not only included the withdrawal of the notifications under the Criminal Law Amendment and Seditious Meetings Acts and the release of persons convicted thereunder but also this release of persons convicted of offences designed to affect the loyalty of the army, and the submission to an arbitration committee of the cases of other persons convicted under the ordinary law of the land, there was no suggestion that any of the illegal activities of the non-co-operators other than hartals, picketing and civil disobedience should cease. Moreover, it was evident from the statements made by Mr. Gandhi at the conference, that he intended to continue the enrolment of volunteers in prohibited associations and preparations for civil disobedience. Further, Mr. Gandhi made also it apparent that the proposed round table conference would be called merely to register his decrees. It is idle to suggest that terms of this character fulfilled in any way the essentials laid down by His Excellency or can reasonably be described as having been made in response to the sentiments expressed by him

Finally, the Government of India desire to draw attention to the demands put forward in the concluding para of Mr. Gandhi's present manifesto which exceeded even the demands made by the Working Committee of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi's demands now include : (1) the release of all prisoners convicted or under-trial for non-violent activities ; (2) a guarantee that Government will refrain absolutely from

interference with all non-violent activities of the non-co-operation party, even though they fall within the purview of the Indian Penal Code, or in other words an undertaking that Government will indefinitely hold in abeyance in regard to the non co-operators the ordinary and long established law of the land. In return for these concessions he indicated that he intends to continue the illegal and seditious propaganda and operation of the non-co-operation party and merely appears to postpone civil disobedience of an aggressive character until the offenders now in jail have had an opportunity of reviewing the whole situation. In the same paragraph he re-affirms the unalterable character of the demands of his party. The Government of India are confident that all right thinking citizens will recognise that this manifesto constitutes no response whatever to the speech of His Excellency at Calcutta and that the demands made are such as no Government could discuss, much less accept.

The alternatives that now confront the people of India are such as sophistry can no longer obscure or disguise. The issue is no longer between this or that programme of political advance, but between lawlessness with all its dangerous consequences on the one hand, and on the other the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised Government. Mass civil disobedience is fraught with such danger to the State, that it must be met with sternness and severity. The Government entertain no doubt that in any measures which they may have to take for its suppression, they can count on the support and assistance of all law-abiding and loyal citizens of His Majesty.

STATEMENT OF HOME MEMBER*

I say, Sir, from that time we have always avoided systematically and steadily any excessive severity *vis-a-vis* this move-

*Sir William Vincent's speech in the Central Legislative Assembly, on 18 January, 1922.

ment. Later, there were a number of seditious speeches, including incitements to violence, particularly by Mr. Muhammad Ali and his brother, and Government were prepared to take action against them. What ensued is well known to the Members of this Assembly. There were meetings between Mr. Gandhi and His Excellency, and later Muhammed Ali and his brother offered to the public certain undertakings on which the Government withdrew the prosecutions against them. In a letter of June, 1921, addressed to Local Governments after this undertaking we indeed expressed some hope that it might be possible to reduce the number of prosecutions. We were anxious not to force the pace and although we always maintained our determination to keep order we sought to avoid-over-drastring action against the less dangerous or less violent adherents of the movement. At the same time we indicated to Local Governments that they were not to prosecute persons, the prosecution of whom might have great effect outside the province, without consulting the Government of India. In that letter, further, we invited Local Governments to give certain other convicted persons the same *locus poenitentia* which had been given to Muhammad Ali and his brother. We have throughout avoided very carefully any suggestion, any action which might create the impression that we desired to interfere with a legitimate political movement. I defy any Member of this Assembly to say otherwise. We have indeed frequently been reproached with weakness on this account. I maintain that it was not weakness but patience. At the same time, we made every effort to meet the legitimate wishes of educated opinion in this country. I have no time today to recapitulate all we have done but I should like to mention such matters as the compensation to persons injured in the Punjab disorders, the further review of the Punjab sentences, the Committee on the Press Act, the results of which will be before this Assembly very shortly; again, the Committee on repressive measures and the Committee to inquire into racial distinctions in criminal proceedings. In fact, there was no question that came before us in which we did not honestly seek to meet moderate Members of the Assembly in order to

consolidate the moderate party into a great working power in the country for good. What has been the response of Mr. Gandhi and his followers? I maintain that it has been one steady stream of sedition, one steady attempt to subvert Government, one method of promoting this object being adopted after another. Sometimes it has been the boycott of piece-goods in order to injure British trade although Mr. Gandhi had himself, I believe, at one time said that 'boycott' was a word that was entirely inconsistent with his principle of 'Ahimsa'. Later this movement took the form of attempts on the loyalty of our troops' attempts on the police and there were constant incitements to disorder. These have resulted in serious outbreaks of violence in many parts of the country, the most important of which was the Moplah outbreak. Sir, there has recently been some attempt to minimise the cruelties committed by the Moplahs in Malabar. I refer in particular to the remarks of Mr. Abdul Bari and Mr. Husrat Mohani on this subject. Mr. Abul Bari spoke of the pure spirit of the Moplahs and denied the veracity of these accounts of their atrocities. Mr. Husrat Mohani justifies them in the following words :

“At such a critical juncture when they are engaged in war against the English, their Hindu neighbours not only do not help them or observe neutrality but aid and assist the English in every possible way. They can indeed contend that, while they are fighting a defensive war for the sake of their religion and have left their houses, property and belongings, and taken refuge in the hills and jungles it is unfair to characterise as plunder their commandeering of money, provisions and other necessities for their troops from the English and their supporters.”

Many of us, however, have, I believe, some knowledge of the atrocities committed by these men, atrocities which I am certain in my mind that every Mussalman in this House deplores as deeply as I do, and they will appreciate what a misrepresentation of the facts this is. The barbarities of the Moplahs have been indefensible. I will cite one instance

from 'New India' in support of what I say. Writing of a respectable Nair, an article in this paper states :

'When on the 26th he threatened other steps, the rebels forced their way into his house, dragged him out, along with his wife and two children, carried them to the mosque and bathed all four and compelled them to recite verses from the Koran and dress as Moplahs. At mid-night they were led home and imprisoned. Next day the deponent's head was shaved and ten days later a certain notorious criminal (now in custody) forcibly cricumcised the deponent. Three weeks later he and his family and other converts (some being Christians) escaped to Shoranur.'

Sir, I am one of those who have been to Malabar, I have seen myself refugees, a thousand in one refuge, hungry, homeless, lacking clothes, and I can assure Members of this Assembly that it was a pitiable sight to see. I only mention the facts because this attempt has been made and because this rising, these acts of cruelty and murder are one of the direct results of the Khilafat movement. I do not put it (I never have put it) that Mr. Gandhi is responsible for this directly, but I do say that his supporters—his Muhammadan supporters—were the cause of this terrible loss of life. Indeed you have only got to read Mr. Hasrat Mohani's speech to see what the character of the rising was. Now, if the Moplah outbreak had been an isolated instance of disorder, as I said in the last Session, the Government might not have been forced to take action against this non-co-operation movement. It might well have been argued that the circumstances were exceptional. But have Members of this Assembly read the report which is attached to the Repressive Measures Committee? Have they read the appendix setting out a list of 34 outbreaks of disorder of a serious character within a year? Sir, we have been told that after the declaration of policy by this Government in March last, the non-co-operation movement was dying down. I think that I am correct in making this statement; and I hope I am not misrepresenting anybody. Is there any foundation for it? Does not every Member of this Assembly know

that that is absolutely in accurate? Does not every Member here know that the movement of disloyalty to the Crown, intended to paralyse Government, intended to subvert the administration, has been growing day by day throughout the year? Can any man here say that actually the movement was losing strength? Do not these disorders tell a different story—these outbreaks which culminated in the riots in Bombay on the 17th November? Before I come to that, however, I want to deal with another point. May I inform this Assembly that, during the present year, it has been necessary to call out the military to suppress serious disorder no less than 47 times? May I tell them that, during the last three months, military assistance has had to be invoked—I have here the figures from His Excellency the Commander in—Chief—no less than 19 times? Does that look as if the forces of disorder were losing strength before the Government took this action?

And now, Sir, I want to turn to the rioting in Bombay in which the lawless tendencies of those who follow Mr. Gandhi—not of Mr. Gandhi himself—culminated. Bombay is a city in which Mr. Gandhi is supposed to exercise the greatest influence. He himself was present there on the 17th November. The occasion was one, one would have thought, when at least every loyal citizen of the Crown, whatever his political views, would have avoided any disorder or riot. It was the occasion of the landing of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the heir to the Throne of England. That was the occasion chosen by the non-co-operators in Bombay for an outbreak of violence which, I believe, has not been paralleled in that city for many many years, and what was the object of those who embarked upon this campaign of violence? I say the object was vengeance, vengeance on those who dared to differ from them politically, vengeance on those who dared to go forth to welcome His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in spite of Mr. Gandhi's direction—that was the sole crime of the unfortunate people so maltreated. That, Sir, is the result of non-violent non-co-operation. Was

Mr. Gandhi able to exercise any influence to stop the demand? Why, it was pathetic to read his words next day. He was full of sorrow, but he had not thought of the consequences of his act before. After all he had warning on previous occasions. Well, Sir, I do not know that I need go through the even's of these terrible days. You have heard from my Honourable friend, Mr. Dwarka Das, how women were assaulted in the public streets, you have read in the papers how harmless Europeans and Indians, including many Parsis, were murdered, or assaulted, how one unfortunate engine driver, going home from his work, a harmless individual, was suddenly attacked and murdered by a cruel mob. All this was result of this non-violent movement. The reports say that it began in intimidation and that was not checked, those who had been guilty of intimidation thought they could proceed with impunity to violence. The damage done to property also—the property of private individuals—was very great. I read, in one report, of 187 shops being looted and that is an under-statement of all the damage.

Now, let us see what was happening in other places on that day? In Delhi there was *hartal* enforced by systematic threats and intimidation. And I assert here, and I dare any one to contradict me, that intimidation was practised by men posing as volunteers; men dressed as volunteers who paraded the streets and interfered with the liberty of law-abiding citizens in a manner that is intolerable in any civilised community. Is it surprising that we received many complaints actually of absolute want of any Government control at the time? In Calcutta, again, there was *hartal* promoted by general intimidation and violence on the part of volunteers. It is idle for any one to deny it. Mr. Abdul Kasem and other Members were in Calcutta and they know the facts. The Government of Bengal, writing on the 25th November, reported that an incessant stream of seditious speeches was being poured forth, that money was being freely spent in the employment of paid agents; and here I may tell the Assembly that many of these volunteers,—I do

not say all of them because that would be wrong,—but many of these volunteers are merely paid men, paid a rupee a day, and, in fact, when the supply of money dries up,—and there have been places where this has happened,—the supply of volunteers has run short. We were also told by the Bengal Government that on the 7th there was general suspension of activities of all kinds and the riff raff of the city, under the guise of volunteers, was abroad, terrorising and abusing law-abiding folk, and there were numerous instances of molestations of Europeans and Indians. The authority of Government was openly flouted ; and law-abiding citizens were depressed because of Government's failure to protect them. I have got instances here of the different kinds of speeches made in Bengal. I do not think I need cite them except to mention that one of them says :

“That the Bengalees had discovered the death-arrow of the English. Remember Kansi and Khudiram Bose and others of Bengal.

I do not suppose the Members of this Assembly know who they were ; they were prominent murderers ; some, if not all of them, were banged. Well, Sir, the whole effect of the activities was that, on the 17th of November in Calcutta there was an absolute effacement of the authority of Government, and general intimidation throughout the whole of the city. I am told now that we exaggerated all this. There was a *hartal*, it is true, but there was nothing more than a voluntary one. Well, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, itself stated on the morning of the 18th a most significant fact—I cite it because it is testimony coming from an adversary—it said on the 18th ‘Writ large on the *hartal* of Calcutta is revolution’. Now I ask the Assembly to ponder those words.

I may say that throughout all this period the most desperate efforts were made to create racial animosity. Those who were in Calcutta in December last—I was there—know how true this is and it was a very dangerous factor in the situation. There was also at that time every reason to believe

that if the activities of these so-called volunteers were not curtailed, we should have a repetition in Calcutta of what we had in Bombay. Now the total deaths in Bombay were 53 people killed, and I think something like 400 injured went to the Hospital. The problem before the Government, therefore, was : are you going to sit quietly, or as my Honourable friend said, 'with folded hands and watch with apathy and inertia this slaughter of innocent people, or are you going to take action while there is yet time ? The Assembly remember also that previously, on the 14th of November, there had been already a dangerous riot in Calcutta at Belgatchia, in which over 5,000 people had been engaged. Now, I maintain that, in such circumstances, the Bengal Government were fully justified in taking the action that they did. We have abundant testimony that, whatever be the professions of those who inaugurate these volunteer movements, their practice and precept are poles apart. You may say that they enter into a solemn vow of non-violence, but in practice they are repeatedly, constantly and persistently, guilty of intimidation and violence. Let me turn to another province. I have got a report here from the Bihar Government. We called for these reports to see on what grounds they had proceeded against these associations. The replies show that Local Governments were satisfied that the members of the prescribed associations went in systematically for this class of offence. To return to Bihar, on the 10th of December, I received a report from the Local Government which says that these volunteers had been guilty of intimidation, violence and other forms of criminal action on no less than 122 occasions reported in the last year. One of the incidents is worthy of special mention, indeed many of them are. The one to which I refer was the case of a poor Muhammadan who had the misfortune to be a law abiding subject of the Crown. He died in Ranchi and his funeral had to be performed. But the non-cooperators said : 'No', he shall not be buried by the Muhammedans. Well, some over daring spirit said : "Oh his was not so great an offence that we should allow this oppression ; men who differ from others in their political views are entitled to a

little toleration." So they took the body in the graveyard with police protection and buried it. What was the new action of the extremists? The non-cooperation volunteers dug up the corpse and dishonoured it. Well that is the conduct of those non-violent non-cooperation volunteers. Again, on the 17th in Calcutta, there were unfortunately two Muhammedans who died in the Ballygunge of natural causes and those who wished to bury them not procure the necessary assistance, they were unable to procure bearers or *Khatias* or anything else and the bodies remained unburied for the whole of that day. There was many a sick man and woman in Calcutta on the 17th who could not procure medical attendance. No conveyances for medical practitioners, and when doctors walked to the patients and attended on them, they would not get medicine, because the dispensaries were not allowed under the strict orders of the non-co-operators to sell medicine even to save life on that day. Now, is that intimidation or is it not? I have been told that Government interferes with the liberty of the subject in prescribing these associations. I am amazed at the audacity of those who make such an accusation, whether it comes from the Members of this Assembly or from those who are of different political opinions, and I include Mr. Gandhi. Who in reality has interfered with the liberty of the subject to the same extent as members of his party? Who is it that will not allow those who wish to welcome the Prince to do so? Who prevents reasonable respect being shown to the dead! Who boycotts and intimidates those who venture to serve the Crown or wish to sell or buy foreign piece goods? Who will not allow any member of the Assembly to address a public meeting without interruption? Who, then, is it that is really guilty of interference with the liberty of the subject? What extremist can make, with justice, this accusation against the Government? What has the Government done in this matter?

And now, Sir, I wish to turn to our instructions of 24th November, in so far as the Criminal Law Amendment Act

goes. They were to the effect that where associations practised intimidation, violence and obstruction, it was necessary to suppress those activities and that the Act of 1908 should be used for that purpose. I believe, up to a certain point at any rate, it has been successful. What followed? A number of young men—many of them in Calcutta, hired from the mills—joined these associations as volunteers for a money reward. Many are doing it in Delhi now and a rupee a day is the price. They join the volunteers in defiance of all orders and then complain bitterly and pose as patriots, if they are arrested. In Delhi, when the movement first started and arrests took place, the authorities were anxious not to impose too severe penalties on accused and the consequence was, they were sentenced to simple imprisonment. Many of them were quite pleased, they were able to get free meals and had nothing to do, so later it was found necessary to sentence others to rigorous imprisonment. At once there was a general feeling that this was very unfair, though it was really a very natural consequence. Throughout, however, the Government have been very anxious to avoid any appearance of undue severity; to avoid any appearance of unreasonable harshness we have made various suggestions to the Local Governments, with which I will deal later. Apart from this, however, His Excellency was never unmindful of the dangers of a purely repressive policy and as every Honourable Member knows he received a deputation on the 21st December in Calcutta and listened to their views on the the action of Government and the possibility of a conference between different sections of the community and Government. And I should like to read to Honourable Members one or two words from His Excellency's reply to that deputation because, to my mind, big words breathe a lofty tone of statesmanship and indicate a deep desire to find a solution of the problem to tell the difficulties with which the Government are faced. He spoke words over which every Member of this Assembly would well ponder. Referring to a suggestion that Government should cease making use of measures now enforced and release prisoners convicted under the law, he said :

"I cannot believe that this was the intention, of the deputation, when originally suggested, for it would mean that throughout the country intimidation and unlawful oppression and other unlawful acts should be allowed to continue, while Government action to maintain order and protect the law-abiding citizen would be largely paralysed. I need tell you that no responsible Government could even contemplate the acceptance of such a state of public affairs. I wish, with all my heart, that it had been possible to deal with these problems in a large and generous spirit, worthy of such an occasion in the history of India. Had there been indications to this effect before me to-day in the representations which you have made in your address on the part of the leaders of non-co-operation, has the offer been made to discontinue open breaches of the law for the purpose of providing a calmer atmosphere for discussion of remedies suggested, my Government would never have been backward in response. We would have been prepared to consider the new situation in the same large and generous spin and I would have conferred with Local Governments for the purpose."

Sir, now what was Mr. Gandhi's reply to this? This is what Mr. Gandhi said ;

'I am sorry that I suspect Lord Reading of complicity in the plot to unman India '

I would ask Honourable Members of this Assembly they would take that view. He proceeded to say :

'I was totally unprepared for what I most respectfully call his mischievous misrepresentation of the attitude of the Congress and the Khilafat organisations in connection with the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.'

* * *

This country is, in truth, faced with a very grave crisis, we have civil disobedience looming before us. We have threats of organised violence from an influential section of the Mussalman population. We have had outbreaks of violence

of a dangerous character showing what may happen in a more extended degree in future. We have had the most terrible bloodshed and loss of life. We are face to face with a situation in which there may be, I fear, greater loss of life and greater bloodshed. It is for the Assembly to say whether they are now going to encourage the forces which make for ruin and disorder. It is for them to say whether, consistently with their oath of allegiance to the Crown, most solemnly sworn here, they can conscientiously and deliberately encourage those who intend to overthrow this Government by any means that is possible. Lastly, it is for them to ponder their responsibility not only to the Assembly, not only to the Government and to the country, but also to themselves. It is for them to say whether they will take such a course as will facilitate a real and very grave danger to their own properties, to their own lives, to their own honour.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND CONSTITUTIONAL TANGLE

PRIME MINISTER'S DECLARATION AT R.T.C. (January 19, 1931)

The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government.

His Majesty's Government, whilst making this declaration, is aware that some of the conditions which are essential to the working of such a constitution as is contemplated, have not been finally settled, but it believes that as a result of the work done here, they have been brought to a point which encourages the hope that further negotiations, after this declaration, will be successful.

His Majesty's Government has taken note of the fact that the deliberations of the Conference have proceeded on the basis, accepted by all parties, that the Central Government should be a Federation of all-India, embracing both the Indian

States and British India in a bi-cameral legislature. The precise form and structure of the new Federal Government must be determined after further discussion with the Princes and representatives of British India. The range of subjects to be committed to it will also require further discussion, because the Federal Government will have authority only in such matters concerning the States as will be ceded by their Rulers in agreements made by them on entering into Federation. The connection of the States with the Federation will remain subject to the basic principle that in regard to all matters not ceded by them to the Federation their relations will be with the Crown acting through the agency of the Viceroy.

With a Legislature constituted on a federal basis, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to recognize the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature.

Under existing conditions the subjects of Defence and External Affairs will be reserved to the Governor-General, and arrangements will be made to place in his hands the powers necessary for the administration of those subjects. Moreover, as the Governor-General must, as a last resort, be able in an emergency to maintain the tranquility of the State, and must similarly be responsible for the observance of the constitutional rights of minorities, he must be granted the necessary powers for these purposes.

As regards finance, the transfer of financial responsibility must necessarily be subject to such conditions as will ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India. The Report of the Federal Structure sub-Committee indicates some ways of dealing with this subject including a Reserve Bank, the service of loans, and Exchange policy, which in the view of His Majesty's Government will have to be provided for somehow in the new constitution. It is of vital interest to all parties in India to accept these provisions to maintain financial confidence.

Subject to these provisions the Indian Government would have full financial responsibility for the methods of raising revenue and for the control of expenditure on non-reserved services.

This will mean that under existing conditions the Central Legislature and Executive will have some features of dualism, which will have to be fitted into the constitutional structure.

The provision of reserved powers is necessary in the circumstances and some such reservation has indeed been incidental to the development of most free constitutions. But every care must be taken to prevent conditions arising which will necessitate their use. It is, for instance, undesirable that Ministers should trust to the special powers of the Governor-General as a means of avoiding responsibilities which are properly their own, thus defeating the development of responsible Government by bringing into use powers meant to lie in reserve and in the background. Let there be no mistake about that.

The Governor's Provinces will be constituted on a basis of full responsibility. Their Ministries will be taken from the Legislature and will be jointly responsible to it. The range of Provincial subjects will be so defined as to give them the greatest possible measure of self-government. The authority of the Federal Government will be limited to provisions required to secure its administration of Federal subjects, and so discharge its responsibility for subjects defined in the constitution as of all-India concern.

There will be reserved to the Governor only that minimum of special powers which is required in order to secure, in exceptional circumstances, the preservation of tranquillity, and to guarantee the maintenance of rights provided by Statute for the Public Services and minorities.

Finally, His Majesty's Government considers that the institution in the Provinces of responsible government requires both that the legislatures should be enlarged, and that they should be based on a more liberal franchise.

In framing the Constitution His Majesty's Government considers that it will be its duty to insert provisions guaranteeing to the various minorities, in addition to political representation, that differences of religion, race, sect or caste shall not themselves constitute civic disabilities.

In the opinion of His Majesty's Government it is the duty of the communities to come to an agreement amongst themselves on the points raised by the Minorities sub-committee but not settled there. During the continuing negotiations such an agreement ought to be reached and the Government will continue to render what good offices it can to help to secure that end, as it is anxious not only that no delay should take place in putting the new Constitution into operation, but that it should start with the goodwill and confidence of all the communities concerned.

The various sub-committees which have been studying the more important principles of a Constitution which would meet Indian conditions have surveyed a considerable part of the structure in detail and the still unsettled points have been advanced a good way to an agreement. His Majesty's Government, however, in view of the character of the Conference and of the limited time at its disposal in London, has deemed it advisable to suspend its work at this point, so that Indian opinion may be consulted upon the work done, and expedients considered for overcoming the difficulties which have been raised. His Majesty's Government will consider, without delay, a plan by which our co-operation may be continued so that the results of our completed work may be seen in a new Indian Constitution. If, in the meantime, there is a response to the Viceroy's appeal to those engaged at present in civil disobedience, and others wish to co-operate on the general lines of this declaration, steps will be taken to enlist their services.

I must convey to you all on behalf of the Government its hearty appreciation of the services you have rendered not only to India but to this country, by coming here and engaging in these personal negotiations. Personal contact is the best way

of removing those unfortunate differences and misunderstandings which too many people on both sides have been engendering between us in recent years. A mutual understanding of intention and difficulty, gained under such conditions as have prevailed here, is by far the best way for discovering ways and means of settling differences and satisfying claims. His Majesty's Government will strive to secure such an amount of agreement as will enable the new Constitution to be passed through the British Parliament and to be put into operation with the active goodwill of the people of both countries.

VICE ROY LORD IRWIN'S STATEMENT

New Delhi,

January 26, 1931

"In order to provide opportunity for the consideration of the statement made by the Prime Minister on the 19th January, my Government, in consultation with local Governments, have thought it right that the members of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress should enjoy full liberty of discussion between themselves and with those who have acted as members of the Committee since 1st January, 1930.

"In accordance with this decision and with this object, and in order that there may be no legal bar to any meeting they may wish to hold, the notification declaring the Committee to be an unlawful Association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act will be withdrawn by all local Governments and action will be taken for the release of Mr. Gandhi and others who are now members of the Committee, or who have acted as such, since 1st January, 1930.

"My Government will impose no conditions on these releases, because we feel that the best hope of the restoration of peaceful conditions lies in discussions being conducted by those concerned under terms of unconstitutional liberty. Our action has been taken in pursuance of a sincere desire to assist the creation of such peaceful conditions as would enable the

Government to implement the undertaking given by the Prime Minister that if civil quiet were proclaimed and assured, the Government would not be backward in response.

“I am content to trust those who will be affected by our decision to act in the same spirit as inspires it. And I am confident that they will recognize the importance of securing for those grave issues calm and dispassionate examination.”

VICEROY'S CABLE TO SECRETARY OF STATE

Immediate, Private and Personal

1. Have had two long talks with Gandhi. Apart from the variety of important points relating to actual terms on which Congress would call off civil disobedience to which I will refer later, the main matters of substance we discussed were :

- (a) The scope of future constitutional discussions ;
- (b) The invention of the Congress, if they came into the discussions, regarding potential resumption of civil disobedience.

2. As to the first I told him that three main principles of the conference were federation, safeguards and Indian responsibility, that these were fundamental, but detailed application of these principles was open to further discussion.

3. He asked about the right to raise in discussion the question of dissolution of partnership by which he presumably meant the right of secession from the empire. I said that I presumed he could raise it, if he so desired, but that it would be very damaging if he made any public statement to this effect. I gather he did not attach much importance to the point and this impression has been confirmed by Sapru and others.

4. He also mentioned question of state subjects. I said I presumed he could raise the matter in discussion, but that he would find himself up against the princes. Here again, my impression is that he does not wish to press the matter.

5. I feel we must be very careful not to get into a position of confusion and misunderstanding about the constitutional position. I have, I hope, kept it clear up to date ; but I am sure it would be dangerous to permit Congress to say to the world that everything was open for discussion, and that they had made it clear as a condition of participation that if they were not satisfied they would resume civil disobedience, in such circumstances it would probably be better not to have them in at all. Much depends upon a clear statement of the scope of discussion. If this is confused, we may later get a big landslide in all parties both here and at home and so lose all the advantage gained by the conference. Prime Minister in his announcement promised that steps would be taken to enlist services of those who wish to co-operate on general lines of his declaration, but I feel that in dealing with the Congress it is necessary to have clearer definition, and I am inclined to a statement in the following sense. Federation is an essential of the scheme, so also are safeguards securing Crown control of defence and external affairs, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations. The exact method by which effect may be given to principle of federation and to such safeguards is matter for discussion. If Congress cannot accept this position then discussion with them would be unprofitable. I should be grateful if you could consider and be prepared to let me have as precise a statement as possible showing the position of his Majesty's Government in these matters. I discussed this with Sapru, Sastri, Jayakar and Safi today and they agreed to above definition of scope of discussions. They were averse to any more narrow definition.

6. In regard to potential resumption of civil disobedience movement after its abandonment, Gandhi told me that he could not give assurance that Congress would in no circumstances resume civil disobedience movement, but that if they came into these discussions they would do so with the genuine desire to make them a success and would not, in any case, resume civil disobedience before their conclusion. I under-

stood his meaning to be that there would be no question of resumption while the constitutional discussions continued in India, but that he could not bind himself further than this. Sapru and the others regarded it as essential that there should be definite understanding that peaceful atmosphere should prevail during discussion in India, and they considered that if this was not forthcoming it was useless for the Congress to come in. I agree with this view, but doubt whether we can tie him down more closely.

7. Matters relating to Government action, such as amnesty, salt, etc., will only arise if constitutional position is satisfactorily cleared up. I anticipate considerable trouble in regard to them, but we shall of course consult you before we come to any conclusion, if we get so far.

8. General atmosphere of our discussions was quite friendly and I have learnt privately that Gandhi is pleased and wants peace, but I am very apprehensive of the manoeuvring you and us into a position where Congress could plausibly represent that they had got behind the work of the conference and had secured the right to reopen the whole subject. The problem therefore is how to secure ourselves against this, without refusing too full a latitude of discussion within the widest limits that conference agreements leave possible.

9. If discussions are to proceed further I feel that they must resume wider scope. On receipt of your reply I propose to see Gandhi myself and state to him precise limits of constitutional discussions. If he accepts these or if after hearing these he is prepared to pursue the matter further, I propose that outstanding questions should be examined at a conference over which I would preside and consisting of senior European Indian members of my Council—Home Secretary, Sapru, Sastri, Jayakar, Safi, Chhattari, probably another Muhammadan, a European non-official member of the assembly with Gandhi and two or three Congress representatives named by him. I anticipate that, if everything went well, this conference might meet about the 27th and would ask for your approval to it.

VICEROY'S CABLE TO SECRETARY OF STATE

Private and Personal

March 4, 1931

Conversation with Gandhi concluded satisfactorily last night, we are telegraphing to you officially giving text of statement that we shall issue as soon as you have finally approved, and as soon as we are assured, which I hope we shall be today, that the Working Committee accepts. If they have any minor verbal amendments to suggest, we will telegraph them for simultaneous announcement as you desire. We are telegraphing officially about time of release for publication.

Text of statement is, I think, self-explanatory. Important sections are boycott, picketing, police and salt. Scope of discussions. The first two are as satisfactory as I could secure, and we are pretty well assured that we have got it in a form that makes it certain that picketing in its offensive forms will quickly disappear and probable that any form of picketing would only be practised on very small scale. The police formula is good. Salt is a concession I do not like on political grounds, though on revenue grounds it is unimportant. But it was impossible to secure settlement without it. You will observe that we have varied the formula about constitutional discussions and on this I was disappointed that owing to misunderstanding he was unable to approve as I had thought original wording. But I think this formula gives us essential we want.

On question of debts and secession which are not mentioned, Gandhi's position remains as stated in my telegram of February 28th, except that he assures me he does not think there will be any difficulty about his not walking out of conference on any debt question before conclusion of conference discussions.

He has given me assurance that in no case will he restart civil disobedience till conclusion of conference discussions, and that after that he would hope not to restart at all, though he cannot give definite undertaking beyond conference stage.

I much hope you will feel able to approve statement as it stands.

WHY INDIA FOLLOWED GANDHI*

From my memories of a recent stay in India, a scene stands out which staged Mr. Gandhi's movement for an English on-looker in its bewildering passivity. It happened in a little country town not far from Agra. Ferozabad is a busy commercial centre. Mechanical lorries make their way through the crowded bazaar between the camels and the bullock carts. The little place lives by making glass bangles for the peasant women. Through a twelve-hour day, squatting in the infernal heat before a clay oven, without a pause for meals, men deftly convert by a turn of the wrist molten glass into bracelets, each served by a little boy who may start his brief life of labour at six years of age. Among these workers one sees no gray heads.

This stirring little town is ardently nationalist, as all commercial India is. In its main street I met a singular procession. Ten adherents of the Indian Congress party were being led to prison for the offence of picketing shops in order to enforce the boycott of British goods. On their wrists they wore steel handcuffs, and they walked within a moving fence of ropes. Behind them, in orderly files, marched a crowd of sympathisers. Some of them carried sticks : all were angry and excited. In chorus they shouted the slogans of the Congress movement, and broke into snatches of song. They numbered a full hundred or more. What force restrained them ? I could count only four Indian policemen. In any Western country, that crowd, knowing that the nearest troops were thirty miles away, and sure of the support of every man with a brown skin, would have rescued its friends.

*From H.N. Brailsford : *Rebel India*, Chapter 1.

This scene reproduced the Indian sub-continent in little. Everywhere its millions, no longer passive and acquiescent, bent, none the less, before a force which could not have withstood their united assault. The significance of this monumental restraint is obscured by the usual description of Gandhi's followers as "extremists." The word is doubly misleading, for it suggests a minority holding the most radical views. Uncompromising the Congress may be, but to the "left" of it there are groups of young men ready for terrorist action and guerilla warfare, which wait only for the acknowledged failure of its non-violent tactics. A minority it certainly is not. In all the vast area north of Bombay it has the active support and allegiance of the mass of the Hindoo population, in the villages no less than the towns. Its few critics are inaudible in the crowd. The Moslem minority stands aloof as an organised body, but even its more conservative leaders will admit that it neither opposes Congress nor supports the Government. Its younger educated generation is wholly with Congress. A police inspector in Bombay estimated this section as a third of the whole Moslem population; six Moslem barristers with whom I talked, put the proportion at a half. The South is relatively apathetic, less easily regimented, less willing to face the test of imprisonment, less devoted to the person of the Mahatma, but it too shares the aspirations of the more active North. At an election, if the Congress deigned to take part, it would sweep the Peninsula.

Throughout this year of agitation, Congress contrived to pervade the entire life of India. One could never forget it. Cars in the street carried its colours. The children sang its songs. It dictated the course of trade. Bombay, one soon perceived, had two governments. To the British Government, with all its apparatus of legality and power, there still were loyal the European population, the Indian sepoys who were in uniform, and the elder generation of the Moslem minority. The rest of Bombay had transferred its allegiance to one of His Majesty's too numerous prisoners. In Mahatma Gandhi's name Congress ruled this city. Its lightest nod was obeyed.

It could fill the streets, when it pleased, and as often as it pleased, with tens of thousands of men and women, who shouted its watchwords. It could with a word close the shutters of every shop in the bazaar. When it proclaimed a *hartal* (a day of mourning¹), which it did all but every week, by way of protest against some act of the other government, silence descended upon the streets, and even the factories closed their doors. Only with its printed permit on a scrap of coloured paper, dare a driver urge his bullocks and his bales past its uniformed sentries, who kept watch, day and night, in every lane and alley of the business quarter. They had their guardrooms. Their inspectors entered every warehouse and shop, and watched every cotton-press. They would even confiscate forbidden goods, which a merchant had tried to smuggle past their patrols. Every day began with its public ritual. The city prayed and sang. At dawn and even before it, from every street there issued a little procession of white-robed figures. All wore the home-spun costume of *kadi*, which is the symbol of India's resolve to provide for her own needs. The men had on their heads the white Gandhi cap. A few had Indian drums or triangles; all sang. This movement could talk English to the educated few: it had its vernacular press for those who could read only their mother tongue; but the unlettered mass knew by heart its numberless rhymed songs and ballads, which extolled its leader, called for a boycott of British goods, and proclaimed its vow to win liberty or die. These little bands numbered ten or twelve persons, sometimes men, sometimes children, sometimes women. They set the keynote of each day's life. You could not escape them; you could not forget them. Every man had heard them before he entered office or shop, nor did they muffle their challenge as their songs followed the car of a British official.¹

1. This description of Bombay applies to the earlier period of the struggle. At the end of October 1930, more stringent ordinances came into force. The Congress was declared an illegal organisation: all its buildings and other property were liable to confiscation: meetings were unlawful merely because it summoned them, and all its directing committees and officials were liable to arrest. These decrees to a certain

As the day wore on, even in the European streets one noticed that in ones and twos Indian women were seating themselves on chairs at the doors of certain shops. They all wore the graceful Indian dress, but their *sari* (the long scarf) was of orange, a colour that has in this land its heroic associations. Few entered these shops. You might catch a glimpse of the owner reading or playing chess. But if anyone attempted to enter, the lady joined her hands in supplication : she pleaded, she reasoned, and if all else failed, she would throw herself across the threshold and dare him to walk over her body. These women have been known to fling themselves in front of a car, and lie upon the ground before its wheels, until its owner yielded and took back into the shop the forbidden goods which she had bought. But these were the exceptional shops which had refused to give the pledge to sell no foreign cloth and no British goods. Most of the Indian shops gave

extent drove Congress underground : it no longer dominated the streets as ostentatiously as before, but the change was less marked than one might have expected. Its bulletins were still printed or manifolded on secret machines and distributed in the streets. A few volunteers, circulating through the town, could still by word of mouth collect a great crowd for a meeting, which would be duly dispersed. The severity of the repression varied with the temperament of the local officials. In the United Provinces it was relatively gentle. I saw the tricolour flag still flying in November over the late Motilal Nehru's house in Allahabad, which served as the national headquarters of Congress, and to and from this centre the local leaders and couriers from the provinces came and went undisturbed. Here and there, mildness and good-temper disarmed the local agitation. I heard of one magistrate, very popular with the people, who successfully treated the defiance of the Salt Monopoly as a joke. The local Congress leaders made salt openly, in front of his bungalow. He came out : bought some of the contraband salt : laughed at its bad quality : chaffed the bystanders, and went quietly back to his house. The crowd melted away, and no second attempt was made to defy this genial bureaucrat. On the other hand, any exceptional severity, especially if physical brutality accompanied it, usually raised the temper of the local movement and roused it to fresh daring and further sacrifices. This was not so, however, in the South. Severity does seem to have checked it in the Andhra district of Madras, where at first it was vigorous.

this undertaking, and where pickets were posted, it rarely happened that an Indian purchaser tried to defy them. The picketers went in their hundreds to prison, but always there were more to take their place. It was in this readiness to suffer that the moral power of this movement resided. When thousands will go gladly to prison, tens of thousands will give money, and hundreds of thousands will obey. It reminded me, in its temper and outlook, of the militant suffrage movement in England, save that it avoided even the minor acts of violence in which these fore runners indulged. A disarmed people had instinctively adopted these tactics. It courted suffering; it faced it, as women will, with a noble, if passive, courage. Women were the natural exponents of its gospel. Out of the seclusion of centuries they stepped at the call of patriotism, and nothing in this astonishing movement was so surprising as their joyful devotion. If they have not yet won *Swarnj* for India, they have completed the emancipation of their own sex.

Like the Suffragists, Congress had an instinct for colour and display. The struggle was not all suffering: this movement could be gay. Its volunteers marched in its processions in military formation. With the Indian tricolour flag, the orange scarves of the women's contingents, and the white home-spun of the men, they made a bright pageant in the dazzling light. After the procession would come the mass-demonstration which in Bombay would often gather, in the park by the sea-shore, as many as twenty thousand people. More sober and orderly meetings I never saw. No Western gathering was ever so silent and passive as these Indian crowds. Few stood; they squatted upon the ground, the women in one wing, the men in another, and so, motionless and silent, in regular files, they listened to speeches and songs, Rabindranath Tagore's national anthem, or the older *Bande Mataram*. The speeches were certainly what lawyers call "seditious," but they were never incitements to disorder: invariably they preached non-violence. Sedition comes near to orthodoxy when a hundred million of one's fellows agree with every word.

While the speakers talked, the more devoted members of the audience, men as well as women, would take out the little hand-spindle, the *takli*, and twist it placidly and indefatigably as they listened. In official circles the dispersal by *lathi* charges of such a gathering was described as "maintaining order."²

2 I did not myself see any of these *lathi* charges: the practice varied greatly, and while I was in Bombay, these demonstrations were tolerated. I questioned many European eye-witnesses, however, including police inspectors, and saw many photographs. I believe that with one or two possible exceptions, the meetings should have been tolerated; the mistake lay with the higher authorities who prohibited them. Latterly all Congress meetings were forbidden, and as regularly dispersed. If they had been tolerated, there would have been no disorder, and sooner or later the audiences would have grown bolder. As it was, especially in Bombay, the policy of rough dispersal moved the whole city to anger. The fact the *lathi* charges became a point of honour, and in a spirit of martyrdom volunteers went out in hundreds to be beaten. They gave a display of disciplined, passive courage: we (as all India thought) of brutality. Again and again, I heard descriptions by Europeans of the beating of slight and passive youths by sturdy constables which made one feel physically sick. They did not exaggerate. I have a photograph which shows the "volunteers" squatting, motionless on the ground in their files, while from behind, the police (in this case Englishmen) rain blows upon their heads with the *lathi*—a heavy staff, which can inflict disabling bruises and wounds.

That the police, even under English officers, often meant to inflict physical punishment for disaffection I could not doubt. In Calcutta some students, witnessing from a balcony of the University brutal beating of participants in a peaceful procession, shouted "Towards!" Two hours later the police returned, rushed into the University under an English officer, invaded the classrooms, and beat the students indiscriminately as they sat at their desks, till the walls were spattered with blood. The University made a protest, some faint expression of official regret followed, but no punishment. I heard details of this affair from professors whose repute in the European scientific world stands high. An Indian Judge of the High Court, whose student son had been beaten, spoke with a vehemence which I wish some member of the Government could have heard. A similar affair occurred at Lahore, where the police, again under an English officer, invaded a college and beat not only students in class but the professor also. These blows were rarely mortal. The victims survive and hate. Many a terrorist has been made by a beating.

To understand why this nation, at last so nearly united, remained non-violent, one must discard all one's Western heritage. Non-violence is more than a religious tenet; it is a racial instinct. What Gandhi has done is to reaffirm it, against the drift of Western example and teaching. India believed in it, while our fore-fathers were still barbarians. It has formed her conduct. It has even regulated her diet, for it will tolerate no taking of life. For the first time in her recent history India gained in Gandhi a leader who based himself on her silent assumptions, the beliefs that have moulded her body. She had had in her political life commanding figures before his day, but Western thought had shaped their minds. Gandhi, it is true, studied law in London; but did anything remain with him from his Western education, save his command of our language? When India listened to him, she heard herself thinking aloud. He has, indeed, borrowed his Nationalism from the West, but he dares to preach that it can triumph by adopting in its struggle the ancient Hindoo tactic.

With that word, however, misunderstanding begins. There are millions of Indians for whom non-violence is nothing more than a tactic which one practises because one lacks arms and the military tradition against an enemy who has both. Non-violence is, indeed, a tactic from which one expects somewhat contradictory effects. It may embarrass one's opponent, as a general strike might do, by making it impossible to conduct the normal course of administration and trade. That is its mechanical aspect, which we of the West grasp readily enough. If none obeys when we command, if no one pays taxes, or buys what we export, empire comes to an end.

But *ahimsa* (non-violence) has also a mystical meaning. One overcomes one's enemy by love—an effect hardly likely to follow from the boycott of his trade. Again, by one's own self-restraint, one awakens shame within him for his violence. In the mind of the Mahatma and his immediate followers, *ahimsa* is but part of a moral discipline through which India must pass if she would be free. The deepest conviction of the

Indian tradition is that the saint who can control himself may command the universe. Hindoo legend loved to tell of the ascetic who won the power, by his austerities, to control the stars in their courses, and bend emperors to his will. The insignificant figure of Mr. Gandhi squatting, in contemplation, on the ground with nothing but a loin cloth to cover him, recalls to the Indian's imagination those stories of the *yogi's* greatness. In his own mind, however, the loin-cloth has another meaning. In this land where naked poverty contrasts with purple wealth, he has ranked himself with the lowest. He will wear no garment and eat no food that might divide him from the outcasts of the village. In this unfamiliar kernel of religion lies the originality of this unique movement, and one, at least, of the secrets of its power.

Men will respond even in the India of to-day to a religious appeal, undistracted by the hum of our aeroplanes and the clatter of our armoured cars. I heard from a scrupulous man of science this evidence from his own experience. He was among the Santals, a primitive aboriginal of the hills, which from time immemorial has lived by hunting. The legend reached them of this saint who had arisen in the plains below. Over one sentence of his message they pondered deeply, and then with implicit obedience they acted. The saint had said, "Let the creatures of the forest have peace." They burned their bows and arrows and snares and, for the first time in uncounted centuries, took to tilling the soil.

Politics for this singular leader are a mere consequence and by-product of his ethical teaching. From his prison cell, amid the turmoil of this passionate struggle, he issued his weekly sermon. Now it enforced the duty of truth ; again it commanded literal and absolute chastity. His disciples tried at least to follow this difficult teaching. In a gymnasium in Baroda State, organised by the Congress movement, I saw, decked with fresh flowers, an altar to the god of chastity which the young men had erected beside the parallel bars.

Indians quote the sayings of the Mahatma in a tone of loving reverence, such as one has heard only from the simplest of believing Christians when they cite their Master's words. Scarcely a shop in the Hindoo quarters of Bombay fails to exhibit his photograph. I have seen it in the wattled hut of an aboriginal tribesman so poor that he owned nothing else, save his tools and his earthen pots. It is sold by peddlers with the gaudy lithographs that portray the adventures of Krishna, and one may buy it, contrary to the law of Islam which forbids portraiture, on the steps of the great mosque at Delhi. By putting this man in prison we made him omnipresent.

This mystical doctrine of self-control, incarnated in the spare person of this all but naked saint, has given to the best among the sixty thousand who have faced the privations of Indian jails, the strength to withstand. One face from among them stands out in my memory : its owner, a lawyer, may have been too fine a spirit to be typical, but his thinking was characteristic of Gandhi's movement. He had been the chief speaker at one of the few meetings (near Meerut) which were dispersed by rifle fire. He had tried to calm an angry crowd, and had stationed a cordon of volunteers round the police station to protect it. He was, none the less, arrested, beaten by the police, and shot by one of them, while under arrest, at close range. The police kicked him as he lay on the ground, and five hours passed before he received first-aid. His right arm had to be amputated, and a day after the operation he was carried from hospital to prison. He told the story without a trace of bitterness, his face lit by a triumphant serenity. "In prison," he went on, "my friends and I were happy and even gay. 'Now we know,' one said to the other, 'that India is free. We have kept the master's sayings. We have faced even the rifle, and refrained from anger.'" As one looked at the face of the man, proud in its gentleness, one ceased to pity the mutilated arm.

When one grasped the psychological meaning of this movement, as Gandhi conceived it, it became easier to under-

stand his uncompromising stiffness in the negotiations of mid-summer, 1930. He was in no hurry to achieve an immediate political end. The immense volume of pain, anxiety, and material loss which the struggle had brought with it counted for little in his mind in the balance against the mental gain. It was, as he saw it, a preparation for freedom. The nation which resists subjection, though it be without violence, achieves liberation in its own soul. It was against the degradation of a servile acquiescence in foreign rule that he rebelled. His methods were designed to make continuance of British rule impossible, but even more, to train the people of India in self-respect. These methods, accordingly, form a series of steps, each more difficult but also more effective than the last.

This ladder of difficulty began several years ago, with the revival of hand spinning. One can imagine nothing, from our Western standpoint, more fantastic. To spin had become for Gandhi's devout followers a species of ritual. One came down to breakfast to discover one's host, a doctor with a Scottish training, squatting at his antiquated hand spindle, bent on completing his obligatory hour's task. In the train a lady will take a folding spindle from a case, assemble it, and calmly set to work. These were the oddities of a most original movement. It is of more consequence that in many a village one might see the peasants, when field work was at a standstill, turning the spinning wheel as they squatted in the shade. This revival of a hopelessly uneconomic craft signified, first of all, Gandhi's revolt against our mechanical civilisation—for he is a rebel, reminiscent of Tolstoy rather than of Ruskin, against Western machines no less than the British flag. It was, secondly, a way of freeing India from her tribute to Lancashire.

But chiefly it is a simple device to help the villager in his inconceivable poverty. Save where there is canal irrigation, the Indian climate and the traditional methods of husbandry make it impossible for the peasant to labour in the fields for more

than seven or eight months of the year. He may do a little carting, if he has sturdy bullocks. He may work in a mill, if he is in reach of a textile centre. But the great mass is condemned to helpless and compulsory idleness through one-third of the year.

With capital one might create village industries, but it is scarce. A spinning wheel may be made at home, or bought for a couple of shillings, and the marketing of the yarn calls for no organisation : one has only to take it to the weaver, who in most villages still contrives, half-starved and loaded with debt, to compete with the mills. True, one can earn by a day's spinning only one or two pence. But when a field labourer's day commands, from dawn to dusk, a wage that ranges from five pence to two pence halfpenny, and no field work is to be had, is a penny to be despised ? There is to day a demand for hand-woven cloth, for patriotism favours it. Even the Indian official, who must wear European cloth at his desk, will change in the evening into coarse homespun. One can help the Indian village and deal a blow at Lancashire as one dons it.

One enters the zone of sedition with the next method, the attempt to smash the Government's salt monopoly. It is the kindergarten stage of revolution. One smiles at the notion that the King-Emperor can be unseated by boiling sea water in a kettle. Even this mild activity is, however, an attack on the revenue, and it landed thousands of Indians in prison, including Gandhi himself. He knew his public. He staged his salt-making as a quasi-religious pilgrimage. Its pathetic innocence helped this law-abiding people to take the first plunge into disobedience. Here, too, one could argue that one was helping the impoverished peasant, and the protectionist motive made itself felt. Why import salt from Liverpool, if one can evaporate salt water by the sun's heat on the shores of Bombay and Bengal ? I suspect the play of a traditional association. Salt in the ancient world was a magical substance. If one ate a man's salt one dare not betray him. To eat an overlord's salt was always to incur a debt of loyalty. The

salt *gabelle*, on the eve of the French Revolution, roused the same passions. It is a bad tax, as all indirect taxes are, and it greatly enhances the cost of what is often the one relish in the miserable diet of the labourer. To be sure, it works out at no more than 3½d. per head per annum, but even that may mean four days work in the year for the head of a labouring family.

With the attack on the drink monopoly one reaches a subversive method of greater potency. From this monopoly the provincial governments derive in some instances as much as a quarter of their revenue. Custom, save among the more degraded castes, and teaching of both the great religions of India unite to forbid the use of alcohol. The Congress had Indian morality behind it when it organised a boycott, through peaceful picketing, of the Government's toddy shops. To a great extent it gained its end. In Bombay the usual annual auction of licenses collapsed, and they were sold by private treaty for half the usual figure. In many towns the toddy shops were closed; no Indian dare brave the condemnation of his fellows by entering them. In some places the all-powerful caste organisations re-enforced the prohibition of the Congress. The Government was at length driven to permit the sale of spirits anywhere and anyhow, without the usual restrictions—a sure sign of demoralisation. The most interesting aspect of this agitation was the part which women played in it. I have seen these slight figures, accustomed to a life of ease, take their place for eight hours as pickets over the back door of a liquor shop, beside an open drain, amid the unspeakable degradation of the slums.

Reluctantly, since it contradicted his gospel of love, Gandhi consented to the next method—the boycott of foreign goods, and especially of British cloth. It was organised with enthusiasm all over India, and though the motive—if one could believe the Mahatma's intimates—may have been rather to help Indian industry than to injure England, one was made to feel the popular resentment, when the passengers in a passing

omnibus shouted "Boycott !" as they caught sight of one's white skin.

Congress began by exacting pledges from merchants and retailers that they would neither import these forbidden goods, nor sell the stocks which they already had in store. To impose such a veto with general success was an amazing proof of the solidarity of Indian society. The test of the authority of Congress came while I was in Bombay. The merchants who import cotton piece goods had ceased for six months to buy foreign cloth, but they had in stock quantities worth £3½ millions, suited only to the Indian market. They could not be re-exported, and were deteriorating in the warehouses. The merchants met, and in a somewhat apologetic resolution, declared that they would sell these stocks, and thereafter buy no more. The Congress refused to compromise, and as the event showed, it did not over-estimate its strength. Hundreds of its women volunteers marched down to the wholesale market. They would picket every shop and office. Some of them declared that they would go on hunger strike, until the merchants withdrew their resolution. A meeting was held at which some of the leading Nationalist orators spoke. And then, even before the pickets had taken up their stations, the struggle was over. The clerks and porters refused to open the warehouse shutters, or to handle one bale of the cloth. Congress had won.

The figures of the other Customs service, the British Board of Trade, showed clearly enough the effects of this boycott. By the autumn of 1930 imports of cotton piece goods had dropped to between a third and a fourth of what they were in the same months of the previous year. Imported cigarettes had fallen in value to a sixth of the old figure. Sixteen British owned mills in Bombay had been closed down, and thirty-two thousand textile workers were idle. There were casualties in this bloodless warfare. On the other hand, the Indian-owned mills which had given the pledge were often working double shifts, and were adapting their machinery to spin the finer counts, which hitherto had been imported.

If India is difficult to understand, it is because her idealism belongs to her own tradition, while the heavier clay of human nature is of one texture the world over. Inextricably they mingled in this movement. Gandhi may have thought out these methods in order to brace the Indian character for freedom, but in fact all of them, save the "dry" campaign, had their roots in economic nationalism. India already enjoys a tariff which gives to her industries a moderate degree of protection, even against British imports. But the cry is everywhere for high protection, both to encourage existing and to foster new industries.

In addition to the reasons of self-respect and wounded pride which all Indians have behind their nationalism, the growing industrial group, especially strong in Bombay, found its account in a movement which boycotted foreign goods. These people may be conservatives by temper and interest; yet by generous gifts of money, and sometimes by taking personal risks, they supported an agitation which may end by kindling a revolutionary flame. Some of the wives and daughters of these Bombay millionaires even went to prison.

This demand for protection has mass support, because India suffers from chronic unemployment and grinding poverty among the educated class. To tens of thousands of young men no door opens as they leave school or college, and they are easily induced to believe that if India controlled her own economic life, there would be room for them in her industries or her banks, her railways or her public services—which may be true, though few of them have had a training which could fit them for productive work.

This economic discontent was increased by the action of the Indian Government in raising the exchange value of the rupee from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. Like Mr. Churchill's raising of the sterling exchange, it had the effect of favouring the creditor and *rentier* class, while it encouraged imports and penalised exports. In short it favoured, on the whole, British

as against Indian interests. It increased by 11 per cent. every debt which India owed to England.

But one might continue indefinitely the catalogue of economic grievances which have ranged Indian capitalists and merchants almost solidly on the side of the Congress, in spite of the indescribable disturbance which its agitation has caused to the whole mechanism of credit and trade. They bowed submissively to its decrees, even when it closed their mills and shops and virtually confiscated their stocks of imported goods, confident that the gains of the future would compensate for the losses of to-day.

If the action of the Indian Government in establishing a gold standard with the rupee fixed at an unduly high value offended the mercantile class, another phase of its monetary policy struck at the peasants. It de-monetised silver, threw its reserves on the market, and so in some five years helped to bring the value of silver tumbling to a half of what it had been. That halved the peasant's credit. There are no banks in the Indian village: there are few even in the towns. In this primitive society men hoard their savings. Their wives carry them upon their persons, chiefly as silver ornaments, and on the security of these, the peasant borrows. This drop in the value of silver halved the savings of the village, such as they are, and lowered its barriers against famine.

For background, this movement of economic discontent had the world depression. The catastrophic drop in the prices of agricultural produce explained the wave of revolution which swept over South America. On India it fell with the fury of a tropical tornado. The peasant saw the value of his crops tumbling, from one harvest to another, to one-half or a third. On the Ganges plain, wheat in three years fell from seven, through four, to two rupees per *maund* (eighty-two lbs.). The jute grower of Bengal had the same experience. The village was ruined. Its savings were halved. Its crops would fetch barely half the wonted price. But its debts, its taxes and its rents stood stolidly at the old figure. Life, it

knew not why, had suddenly become impossible. If it paid, it must starve ; if it did not pay, it must turn rebel. While it hesitated, the voice that it revered spoke the word it wished to hear. Mr. Gandhi proclaimed the patriotic duty of tax-resistance. In a sense it was an easy duty ; the village could not pay. So it was that the world's mysterious dealings with gold and the price level suddenly swung these silent, apathetic villages into politics, ranged them behind Congress as its staunchest supporters, and over wide areas of Northern India prepared them for the final phase of the struggle—the refusal to pay taxes. It was never general, for it did not touch the South, or the Punjab. It began in Gujarat (Bombay Presidency) with a refusal to pay land revenue. In Bihar and parts of Bengal the police rule was resisted. In the United Provinces, in the later phases of the struggle, the peasants resisted both rent and tax. While this went on, the headmen and other local officials were summoned to lay down their offices, and in countless villages they responded. In some districts the peasant defied the regulations which conserve the forests. But the struggle in the villages merits a fuller narrative.

The unique personality of Mr. Gandhi played a decisive part in firing India for this struggle. Without him she could not have achieved this spectacular unity. He touched, as no leader before him had ever done, her traditional springs of emotion. He gave her effort the solemnity of a high moral endeavour, and appealed to a faith that had its root in racial instinct. But without this material background, the nationalist movement would never have attained these dimensions, would never have roused the villages, nor enlisted the capitalists in its ranks. It was easy to induce shop-keepers to put up their shutters for a *hartal* : they sold little on other days. It was easy to refrain from buying foreign goods : one lacked the means to buy. Above all, it was satisfactory that patriotism agreed with one's empty purse in rejecting the tax-gatherer's demands. Finally, among the legion of unemployed young men the movement found it easy to recruit its volunteers. To

say this is not to belittle it, or its leader, nor to question its passionate sincerity. It is to recognise the play of economic causes in making history.¹

1. The MacMillan Committee's Report (p. 92) has some interesting reflections on this subject, though it does not specifically mention India. "A study of history," it writes, "would, we believe, confirm the opinion that it is in changes in the level of prices, and in the consequential alteration in the position of debtors and creditors, entrepreneurs and workers, peasants and the tax-gatherers, that the main secret of social trouble is to be found."

The fall in wholesale prices was rather more rapid in India than elsewhere. In the first year of the slump (*i.e.*, up to September 1930) wholesale prices had fallen 20 per cent. in India, as against a fall of 13 per cent. in the United States and 15 per cent. in the United Kingdom. By July 1931, the Calcutta index, which stood at 98, showed a fall over two years of over 30 per cent. This index, weighted, presumably, to suit the commerce and industry to a great city, underestimates the force of the drop in the villages of Bengal where nothing matters but jute and rice : they fell, roughly, by a half.

An appreciation of gold so sudden and violent as this, transforms the whole relationship of a debtor country to the outer world. If this level of prices should become permanent (and it may fall further), then India's indebtedness to Great Britain has been increased in two years by a third. The Imperial creditor, without any fresh service, has had his tribute raised in the same proportion. This is, moreover, only the last step in a long process. The deliberate raising of the rupee exchange had already (in 1925) raised it by about 11 per cent. A fluctuating measure of value, mischievous enough in our own home life, works untold oppression in our indebted dependencies.

BRITISH REACTION TO QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT*

“On the basis of all the information at present available, we cannot absolve the Congress from responsibility for these very grave events,” declared Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, in the Central Assembly moving consideration of the present situation in the country.

Sir Reginald estimated the total damage done during the disturbances so far as well over a crore of rupees and dwelt on certain special aspects of the disturbances, which, he pointed out, were inconsistent with the theory that these disturbances were spontaneous outburst arising out of the arrests of Congress leaders. He enumerated points which in his view supplied evidence of previous organisation having the most sinister possible motives.

“To-day,” the Home Member went on, “although many terrible things have happened, control has been established almost everywhere and the country as a whole is quiet; and although this suicidal movement is not yet finally quelled, we can feel some justifiable confidence in our power to deal with any situation that may yet arise.

“There are some who charge Government with overhastiness in taking action when they did. The answer is that had Government given opportunity for three or four weeks more of Congress propaganda of the kind that was then in progress, it is very doubtful if this rebellion could have been quelled without very much more destruction than has now taken place.

*Statement of the Home Member, of Viceroy's Executive Council in the Central Legislative Assembly on 15 September, 1942.

“What has happened is bad enough : but delay might have meant an appalling disaster for the whole people of this country.

“There are those, again, who say that repression is not the right remedy and that in order to restore peace, steps should be taken to release all those who have been endangering the country’s defences and put them in a position to conduct the further war effort of India.

“That is, I think, the underlying significance of some of the amendments that have been tabled. Well Sir, the position of this Government has been made clear in the *communiqué* to which I have already referred and there is little that I can add to it.

“One thing quite plain is that with an enemy at our gates and another enemy within them the prime duty of this Government is to undo the harm that has been done as soon as possible and to put this country in a state of defence against both.

“The picture which I have been compelled to place before the House is one that will give no satisfaction to thinking people or to those who are jealous of this country’s honour and repute.

“They will regret the orgy of destruction and the waste of Indian lives and property—things that can only bring loss and hardship to Indians themselves.

“They will regret that the forces that should have been facing the enemy at our gates should have been diverted to the task of quelling an attempted internal revolution.

“They will regret that, with Indian soldiers’ repute never standing higher in the world : with victory drawing ever nearer and with it the promised fulfilment of India’s *highest dreams* : one political party, for its own ends, should have descended to acts of sabotage as a means of enforcing its demands, regardless of the help thereby given to the enemy.

"I have before now given warning in this House of the danger of arousing the passions of the excitable masses through irresponsible agitation.

"These events afford more than sufficient justification for the preventive action taken by Government in the past, for which we have often been attacked.

"They show how real is the peril in this country of unleashing the forces of disorder and how quickly, when that is done, the reign of hooliganism—always latent and waiting for its opportunity—tends to establish itself, so that no man's life or property is safe.

"Now that the danger has become apparent to all it is, I am sure this House will agree, not only for Government but for all who wish to save the country from very terrible danger to dedicate themselves, at whatever personal sacrifice, to the task of mobilising the active help of the people themselves in preventing further acts of violence and disorder.

"It is not enough to condemn these things in the abstract : it is for every citizen to see that they do not happen."

Earlier in his speech the Home Member made following points :

"The Muslim community and the Scheduled Castes have as a whole stood entirely aloof from the disturbances.

"One of the high-lights of the situation had been the manner in which not only the police on whom the deadliest attacks usually fell, but all ranks of Government servants—even the humblest—had in the country as a whole stood firm and done their duty in the face of all attempts to subvert or terrorise them.

"We shall not forget those who have given their lives in the execution of their duty and we may well claim, that the loyalty of all classes of Government servants has proved their faith in the administration that they have served so well."

“Another source of encouragement had been the steadiness of the country as a whole, notwithstanding the inconvenience and loss caused to the general population by these widespread disturbances.

“What I would emphasise is that this movement cannot in any true sense be described as a people’s movement. The whole thing is engineered and not spontaneous. There are already encouraging signs of a revulsion of public opinion against the madness of the past weeks and cases have come to notice in which the villagers themselves have intervened to prevent damage to public property. But until the malign influences that have been at work have been fully counteracted, the country cannot feel safe from further attempts to disturb the life of the people.”

Giving figures the Home Member said : “A very large number of policemen have been injured while 31 are reported so far to have been killed. These include a number of brutal murders, in some cases of unarmed policemen.

“In addition to the police there was a very wide use of troops, British and Indian, in aid of the civil power. In no less than sixty places, troops were called out, while on a number of occasions the stood by.

“These forces have not been used to open fire on crowds engaged in peaceful or legitimate political demonstrations. Had that been the case the word “repression” that we so often hear might have had some application. But in disorders of the kind that have occurred, the mobs or gangs of persons engaged in sabotage were in every case the aggressors.

“It has already been made clear in the Government *communique* of August 8 that the purpose of Government is preventive rather than punitive and this is the principle that has governed and will govern our action. Complaints of the use of excessive force have no real meaning in situations such as those with which the police have had to deal. It cannot be

expected of a small band of police confronted by a threatening mob that they should make mathematical calculations of the precise amount of force necessary to disperse it. We have to think of men doing their duty in the face of daily and even hourly danger to their lives, men charged with responsibility for the protection of vital communications.

“Hesitation at these moments would mean that they were overwhelmed or that the mob would attain its object. Their first concern is to take effective action and it is their duty to do so.

“Cases will no doubt be quoted in which it is alleged that force was used with no such provocation. I would ask Hon’ble Members to be sure that such stories are well verified before they give currency to them. If, however, any such act has occurred anywhere it is a breach of discipline with which the Provincial Governments and the officers in command of their forces are as much concerned as any member of the public. I would, therefore, deprecate any sweeping allegations as regards the conduct of the police at a time when the whole country owes so much to their courage and steadfastness.

“The proper course in such cases will be to bring the allegations, if they are well authenticated to the notice of the authorities immediately responsible for the discipline of their forces, and it can be assumed that, if satisfied, they will do what is proper. But it is putting an entirely wrong perspective on the matter to lavish sympathy on those who have brought on themselves the consequences of their own aggression and to attempt to put the police or other Government forces on their defence whenever they have found it necessary in the circumstances of emergency to use force in the exertion of their duty.”

Replying to the question ; “Who is responsible for these disorders,” the Home Member said ;

“Attempts have been made and will no doubt continue to be made to exonerate the Congress leaders or to repre-

sent that recent events are not the outcome of the mass movement sanctioned by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. The terms of the resolution which they then passed are such that they can hardly disclaim responsibility for any events that followed it. But apart from that it is impossible to interpret the utterances of the Congress leaders except on the assumption that they knew and approved of what was likely to occur."

After referring to the *communiqué of the Madras Government which published the instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee*, the Home Member said: "It may be said that there is no proof that these bulletins carry the authority of Congress or the Congress leaders, although they profess to do so. I have, however, elsewhere brought out the point that the acts of sabotage that have occurred could not have been planned in a moment and show clear evidence of previous organisation. Whatever part the Congress leaders may have taken in the actual work of this organisation, it is impossible to believe for a moment in the light of their own utterances that they were ignorant of its existence or that their plans did not contemplate that it would be brought into play when they launched their mass movement.

"I am not at present prepared to say whence this organization drew its inspiration. It will be our business to find out more of what we do not yet know. But if any doubt remained as to the identity of the Congress with these disturbances it could easily be removed by quoting the very numerous instances in which known Congressmen, particularly, in Bihar, have been observed openly inciting mobs to violence and sabotage; while many others went underground immediately after the Bombay meeting and have remained there for reasons best known to themselves. On the basis of all the information at present available, therefore, we cannot absolve the Congress from responsibility for these very grave events."

The Home Member declared that on the basis of all the information then available he could not absolve the Congress

from responsibility for these grave events which occurred since the 8th of August. He estimated the total damage done during the disturbances till then as a whole at a crore of rupees and combated the view that the disturbances were spontaneous. He took pride over having restored order out of chaos. It would have been infinitely worse he said, if more time had been given to the Congress. He deeply regretted the orgy of destruction, and the waste of Indian life and property, things that could only bring loss and hardship to Indians themselves. He pointed out that the Muslim community and the Scheduled Castes had as a whole stood entirely aloof from the disturbances and rejoiced over the fact that not only the Police but also all the ranks of Government had as a whole stood firm and lent their duty in all disputes to baffle or terrorise them. Not a few gave their lives in execution of their duty. He noticed welcome signs of revulsion of public opinion against the madness of the previous weeks and cases had come to his notice in which the villagers themselves had intervened to prevent damage to public life and property. In no less than 18 places troops were called out while in a number of cases they stood by. They had not been used to fire on crowds of peaceful and legitimate political demonstrations. But any particular instance of use of excessive force he would regard as a breach of discipline over which the Provincial Governments themselves would be as much concerned as any member of the public.

The debate was such that certain points required clearing up. It was one-sided and therefore, indecision was inevitable in that the trial so to speak before the Legislature, took place in *absentia* of the accused. The absence of the Congress members made it easy for Government to make statements which went unchallenged. For instance, there was the reference to the Madras Government's issue of a press note on 29th August, 1942 regarding what they alleged to be the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee's instructions. Here is the *Press Note* :

"It has been stated more than once that the attacks upon Government and railway property, accompanied by

arson and other violence, which have occurred in different places throughout the presidency were the work of local hooligans and could never have been sanctioned by the Congress leaders. Government have in their possession documents which prove :

“That the instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress contained a list of methods by which the Civil Disobedience campaign was to be conducted and that this list included among other activities, cutting of telephone and telegraph wires ; removal of rails and demolition of bridges ; pulling alarm chains in trains and travelling in trains without tickets ; visiting police and other Government offices and forcing Government servants to resign their jobs ; organising hartals ; organising picketing today and *arruck* depots ; and impeding the war efforts of Government.

“That the instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee were prepared towards the end of July and those of the Tamil Nad Provincial Congress Committee before August 6, in both cases before the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay on August 7.

“Government have also seen reports of a number of speeches made by officials of Congress Committees advocating the infliction of damage on railway property, the cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, and the destruction of other Government property. From the information in their possession Government have no doubt that these instructions originated with the Congress Working Committee.”

The public might well ask whether Sir Reginald Maxwell had before him the full information that Mr. Amery had a couple of days earlier than himself. If so, one might ask whether it was fair that he should not have stated on the 15th September what Mr. Amery had thought it fair to state in his

speech in the Commons published in India on the 14th September, namely, "It says that rails should not be removed and that there should be no danger to life." But even more astonishing is Sir Mahommed Oosman's charges in this behalf a week later, in spite of Amery's connection, and the most astonishing feature of the debate was that there was not one among the Honourable Members of the Upper House to put *two* and *two* together and ask why Government made *three* and not *four*. They could have quoted Amery's aforesaid answer to Mr. Maxton and asked Sir Mahommed why he was indulging in *suppressio veri* in his statement as the Leader of the Upper House. In the Government publication, "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances" it is stated on page 20 : 'it will suffice here to mention that although the removal of rails was in these instructions specifically forbidden, this ban was significantly raised by a written amendment immediately the arrest of the leaders took place.' Who raised the ban is not mentioned, nor is the amending circular published in that publication.*

VICEROY LORD LINLITHGOW'S LETTER TO GANDHIJI

Personal

January 13, 1943

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your personal letter of December 31 which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank and as entirely personal as your letter itself.

2. I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months ; first, by the policy that was

*From B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 446-449.

adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression), no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona, I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired, I felt certain that the details those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well-founded—I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as lawbreakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims)

3. But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And, if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned

to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight, and to approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feeling and your motives.

Yours sincerely
Linlithgow

LORD LINLITHGOW'S LETTER TO GANDHIJI

February 5, 1943

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Many thanks for your letter of 29th January which I have just received. I have read it, as always, with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

2. In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply, you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request, were it not that your letters gave no indication such as I should have been entitled to expect, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter, you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything. But, in fact,

the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress resolution of the 8th August declared a "mass struggle" in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorized all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that followed it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence ; and that you were prepared to condone it, and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 15th September last and, if you need further information, I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the Press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has since come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee, that well-known Congressmen have organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder ; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others, the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe ; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world, if you can. And if in the mean while you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to

find an easy way out, the judgment will go against you by default.

3. I have read with some surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi Settlement of the 5th March, 1931, which you refer to as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". I have again looked at that document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain "reciprocal action" would be taken by Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

4. To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements, described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of the 14th July and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation and that after all it was an open rebellion, are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to "do or die". But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee

made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude, if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

5. Let me, in conclusion, say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and your age, the decision that you tell me that you now have in mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone, and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution; and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification and, understood from your own previous writings, that this was also your view.

Yours sincerely,
Linlithgow.

**LETTER FROM HORACE G. ALEXANDER TO
SIR ROGER LUMLEY**

February 24, 1943

Dear Sir Roger Lumley,

I am venturing to send you the enclosed note of what Mr. Gandhi said to me yesterday. In view of the message that I received from Col. Bhandari on my return from Bombay on Monday, I did not know quite how it was best to proceed; but, as Mr. Gandhi was expecting me to raise this subject with him, I thought it right to do so, and it was clear that he wished to speak about it. I did not tell him that the proposal had already been put to the Viceroy and, as I understood, rejected. But you will note that he himself was speaking, not in terms of

possible calling off of the fast before the end of the 21 days but of possible development later on.

There are two or three further points that I would like to add. First, as to the fast itself, he seems very confident that he will survive it and he even referred playfully to it as a "fraudulent fast", since he is now, under medical advice, taking rather more orange juice. I do not think he is much interested in the movement for his release. It is a 21-day fast and, he would, I rather think, only welcome release, if he thought it meant that the Government is assured that he, as a free man, will be an asset, not a liability.

The second point is this: he is evidently under the most acute stress of mind at the sense that he, who has devoted his life to the promotion of non-violence, is now suspected—or under accusation—by men whom he respects, as being not merely the unwitting and misguided agent but the deliberate instigator of the violence which is admittedly rampant in some parts of the country today. I believe the main reason why he chose to open up in the way he did (and I believe he wanted to say a good deal more, but we naturally had to end the talk so as to avoid tiring him) to me was that he felt he must express this distress of mind to some Englishman who still believes in his good faith.

If, as I rather gathered from the message Col. Bhandari gave me, the Viceroy does not think it appropriate for me to do anything further in this matter, I can only express the hope that someone may be found, as soon as Mr. Gandhi is a little stronger, who could go into the matter further, as he seems so genuinely anxious to find means of restoring goodwill.

In a few days I ought to return to my work in Bengal. Would you feel able, I wonder, to allow me a few minutes of your time before I leave, when I could perhaps give you a rather fuller report?

This house is not on the telephone ; but, on receipt of a telegram or other message, I could come to Bombay at any time.

Yours sincerely,
Horace G. Alexander

PS.

Although it seemed to me proper to address this to you, I realize that, if you think it sufficiently important, it would be forwarded to the Viceroy.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER OF "CONGRESS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DISTURBANCES, 1942-43"

Chapter VI : Conclusion

At the risk of some repetition, it is necessary to emphasize again the fact that Mr. Gandhi knew that any mass movement started in India would be a violent movement. He knew this from his bitter experience of the movements he had led ten and twenty years before. In spite of this knowledge, he was prepared to take the risk of outbreaks of rioting and disorder—a risk which in his writings he tried to minimize but in his mind he must have estimated correctly. Consider again this series of statements :

1. Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy. (*Harijan*, 24-5-1942)

2. That anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. (*Harijan*, 24-5-1942)

3. This ordered, disciplined anarchy should go, and if there is complete lawlessness in India as a result, I would risk it. (*Harijan*, 24-5-1942)

4. I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait... The people have not my *ahimsa*, but mine should help them. I am sure, there is ordered anarchy around and about us. I am sure that the anarchy that may result because of the British withdrawal or their refusal to listen to us, and our decision to defy their authority, will in no way be worse than the present anarchy. After all, those who are unarmed cannot produce a frightful amount of violence or anarchy, and I have a faith that out of that anarchy may arise pure non-violence. (*Harijan*, 7-6-1942)

5. I don't want rioting as a direct result. If, in spite of all precautions rioting does take place, it cannot be helped. (*Harijan*, 19-7-1942)

Once it is realized, as has been clearly demonstrated, that Mr. Gandhi, the fountain-head of non-violence, knew perfectly well that the Indian masses were incapable of non-violence, a new light is shed on the events of the six months which have elapsed since the August arrests. It follows that every reference to non-violence, in the forecasts of the forms the movement would take, made by Mr. Gandhi and his Congress disciples and in the post-arrest programmes and instructions, is nothing more than a pious hope, or at best a mild warning, which was known to have no practical value. Since such references have been shown to be valueless, they may be ignored and the pre-arrest forecasts and post-arrest instructions may be examined shorn of their "non-violence" mask. Omitting these valueless references, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* of 19th July, 1942, "It would be a mass movement... It will include all that a mass movement can include"; and again in *Harijan* of 29th July, 1942, "The programme covers every activity included in a mass movement... I would not hesitate to go to the extremest limit, if I find that no impression is produced over the British Government or the Allied powers... (It will be) my biggest movement.... (With the arrests of leaders) it should gain

strength, if it has any vitality” The Working Committee of Congress in the resolution passed at Bombay on August 4 and endorsed by the All-India Congress Committee on August 8 stated : “The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India’s inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on the widest possible scale so that the country might utilize all the strength it has gathered during the last 22 years.” Again, omitting the lip-service to “non-violence”, the 12-point programme called for “non-co-operation on the widest possible scale” in a “titanic clash between the people and the alien Government”, a struggle in which “victory or death” is to be the motto of every son and daughter of India, a struggle which would “include all activities that a mass struggle can include”, a struggle in which “whatever helps in the attainment of that objective” (of ending foreign rule) “is permissible and legitimate” and in which “people in the provinces have to devise and adopt all ways of paralysing the administration.” As a description of what actually occurred, these instructions present a very accurate picture bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the prompt and firm action taken by the Central and Provincial Governments and the lack of sympathy for the Congress programme in large sections of the population.

In the face of all this evidence—the evidence of the atmosphere produced by Mr. Gandhi’s writings in *Harijan*, the evidence of the speeches of the members of the Working Committee before and at Bombay, the evidence of the programmes involving violent action distributed at the time of the arrests, the evidence of the form of the uprising, the evidence of known Congressmen personally proved guilty of violent action, the evidence of the pamphlets broadcast in the name of the Congress—only one answer can be given to the question as to who must bear the responsibility for the mass uprisings and individual crimes which have disgraced and are still disgracing the fair name of India. That answer is—the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi.

**LETTER FROM SIR RICHARD TOTTENHAM
TO GANDHIJI**

Home Department,
October 14, 1943

Sir,

I am directed to reply to your letter of the 15th July in which you have attempted to controvert certain passages appearing in the Government publication *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43*. At the outset I am to remind you that the document in question was published for the information of the public and not for the purpose of convincing you or eliciting your defence. It was supplied to you only at your own request and forwarding it Government neither invited nor desired your comments upon it. Since, however, you have thought fit to address Government on the subject, I am to say that Government have given due consideration to your letter.

2. Government regret to observe that, although your letter contains lengthy quotations from your own utterances and writings, it contains no fresh or categorical statement of your own attitude in regard to the material issues or any clear repudiation of the disastrous policy to which you and the Congress party committed yourselves in the series of events leading up to the Congress resolution of the 8th August, 1942. The purpose of your letter appears to be to suggest that you have been misrepresented in some way in *Congress Responsibility* but in what substantial respect is not clear. No attempt was made in the book, as you seem to think, to charge you with pro-Japanese sympathies and the sentence at the end of the first chapter, to which you have taken exception in paragraph 18 of your letter, was merely an echo of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's own words quoted on the previous page. He has not, as you wrongly allege, repudiated those words in the published statements to which you refer. It was, however, one of the purposes of the book to find an explanation of your actions in your own defeatist outlook towards the threat from Japan and

your fear that, unless the Allied forces withdrew in time, India would become a battle-field in which the Japanese would ultimately win. This feeling was attributed to you by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself in the course of his remarks to which reference has been made above and your own draft of the Allahabad resolution makes it plain that, both in the "Quit India" campaign and the Congress resolution which was intended to enforce it, your object was to be left in a position in which you and the Congress would be free to make terms with Japan. The Government of India note that your letter makes no attempt to meet this imputation which they still regard as true. It is the only explanation which is consistent with your own statement that "the presence of the British in India is an invitation to the Japanese to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait." Nor have you been able to explain, on any theory other than that suggested in the book, the contradiction between this statement and your subsequent avowal of your willingness to permit the retention of Allied troops on Indian soil.

3. The Government of India are not disposed to follow you into the various verbal points that you have raised. They do not deny that owing to your habit of reinterpreting your own statements to suit the purposes of the moment, it is easy for you to quote passages from your utterances or writings which are in apparent contradiction to any view attributed to you. But the fact that you admit the discovery of important gaps in them, or that you have found it necessary from time to time to put glosses on what you have said, is itself evidence of the incredible levity with which, in a movement of grave crisis, you made pronouncements in regard to matters of the most vital importance to India's defence and her internal peace. Government can only interpret your statements in the plain sense of the words as it would appear to any honest or unbiased reader and they are satisfied that the book *Congress Responsibility* contains no material misrepresentation of the general trend of your utterances during the relevant period.

4. You have devoted considerable space in your letter to an apparent attempt to disown the phrase attributed to you in the A.P.I. report of a Press conference which you held at Wardha on the 14th July, 1942, where you are reported to have said : "There is no question of one more chance. After all, it is an open rebellion." This Press message was reproduced at the time in newspapers throughout India. You now wish the Government of India to believe that you first became aware of it on the 26th June, 1943. They can only regard it as highly improbable that, if it did not correctly represent what you said, it should not have been brought to your notice at the time or that you should have left it uncontradicted during the following weeks while you were still at liberty.

5. The Government of India also note that you still seek to cast on the Government the responsibility for the disturbances for reasons which they can only regard as trivial and which have already been answered in your published correspondence with His Excellency the Viceroy. The point which is clearly established by the book *Congress Responsibility* is that those disturbances were the natural and predictable consequence of your declaration of an "open rebellion" and the propaganda which preceded it. That you yourself could have foreseen those consequences is clear from the statement which you yourself made in court, in 1924, when you admitted the impossibility of dissociating yourself from the "diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages in Bombay" and went on to say that you knew that you were playing with fire, but you had taken the risk and would do so again. If you now contend that the consequences were unintended and unforeseen, this fact is itself an admission of your own inability to judge the reactions of your followers. You now seek to excuse, if not to defend, the barbarities committed in your own name and that of the Congress rather than to condemn them. It is clear where your sympathies lie. Your letter does not contain one word of explanation of your own message "Do and Die", nor does it throw any light on your message quoted in Appendix X of the book, which, if you cannot disown it, is sufficient to

retute your contention that no movement had been launched by you at the time when the disturbances took place.

6 I am finally to refer to your request for the publication of your letter. In the first place, I am to remind you of your own position, which has already been explained to you, viz., that, so long as the grounds for your detention remain unchanged, Government are not prepared to afford you any facilities for communication with the general public, nor are they prepared themselves to act as agents for your propaganda. In the second place, I am to point out that you had ample opportunity during the months preceding the Congress resolution of the 8th August, 1942, to make your meaning unequivocally clear before you were arrested. The fact that your own followers interpreted your intentions in the same way as Government, leaves no scope for further explanations. I am to inform you, therefore, that Government do not propose to publish your letter unless and until they think fit. This decision is, however, without prejudice to the freedom of Government to use, at any time and in any manner which they think fit, the various admissions contained in the communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them.

7. To the extent that your present letter may be designed to relieve you of responsibility for the Congress rebellion and the connected events that have taken place, Government regret that they cannot accept it as in any way relieving you of that responsibility, or indeed, to their regret, as a serious attempt to justify yourself. They observe again with regret that you have taken no step in your letter to dissociate yourself personally from the Congress resolution of 8th August, 1942 ; to condemn unequivocally the violent outrages which took place in your name after the passing of that resolution ; to declare yourself unequivocally in favour of the use of all the resources of India for the prosecution of the war against the Axis powers and in particular Japan, until victory is won ; or to give satisfactory assurances of good conduct in the future. And, in the absence of any sign of any change of mind on

your part and of any disclaimer of the policy, as the result of which it has been necessary to restrain your movements and those of the Working Committee of the Congress, they are unable to take any further action on your present communication.

I am etc.

R. Tottenham.

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