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would become the rallying centre of pacifism. No  
higher tribute could be paid to a Christ than the Cross.  
No higher tribute could be given to Gandhiji than that  
wars could not be safely waged without his being  
entombed.

From this point of view I have no doubt that this  
book will serve a useful purpose.

K. M. MUNSHI

**To**

**Men and Women of the United Nations  
who have taken up the challenge of  
the dark forces of Evil and Tyranny.  
We are all in the fight against Fascism  
and dedicate our lives to the building  
and ensuring of a brave new world.**

CATALOGUED

# THE CONGRESS CASE

JAG PARVESH CHANDER



FREE INDIA PUBLICATIONS  
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## INTRODUCTION

**N**EVER in the history of Indian Nationalism has the Congress been so completely gagged and outlawed.

The way in which its motives have been maligned and its intentions misrepresented is tragic.

All that has been written and said against Congress Leaders is like the opening speech of the prosecution counsel.

The tragedy becomes more poignant when even the semblance of a facility is denied to the accused to defend their case or refute and deny the charges framed.

As a student of Indian Politics I have taken upon myself to present "The Congress Case." Officially I hold no brief for the great patriotic organisation. Hence the book is an unprejudiced account of the last four critical years in Indian national life. It is unaffected by party politics and every aspect of the situation is weighed in the Historian's balance and adjudged from the viewpoint which every freedom-loving individual has.

I thank Miss Dhanwanti Chandra for spending so much of her valuable time in reading the proofs of this book. Though she is as yet an apprentice in the fascinating profession of journalism, she has the enviable knack and gift of putting her finger on every mistake of grammar or misuse of an idiom.

## TO CHURCHILL

You are a hero of the combatative hour. But you should not look at only one aspect of the situation; let not the ardour of your one-pointed zeal exercise a perilous spell on you. Even Nehru has paid you the glowing and richly deserved tribute : "Churchill's leadership is brilliant in the sense that it has kept the morale of the British people," but Imperialism runs in your blood and that is why Nehru said that your, "leadership is a dead weight in the sense of the real psychological leadership of the world."

When the final verdict of History is passed, let it not be pronounced that you acted as a Shylock of the British dependencies. Remember the words of H. J. Laski that, "A nation can justly stand as trustee of another people when it can be shown that no vested interest of its own is safeguarded by that trusteeship."

You preferred to jump across the Atlantic and made friends with America which once revolted against your country; you shook hands with Stalin whose doctrines are incompatible with the system you uphold, maintain and work for; you promised help to China with whom you had no previous connection and whose name was not respectable enough to be mentioned in the London society; but you do not show any broadmindedness in dealing

## TO CHURCHILL

with India which never revolted and in the words of Gandhi that "nakid faqir" whom you unfortunately detest, "had no desire to score off Britain, while the latter was suffering from the fury of the Nazi onslaught."

India was always prepared to contribute its all for the eradication of the pestilence of the gruesome tyranny of the Nazis and share the joys, sorrows and tribulations of the Allied Nations but instead of her hearty co-operation you preferred her passive acquiescence, sullen submission and disgruntled co-operation instead of full-blooded comradeship.

It would have been better if you had appealed to India's love of freedom, peace and democracy than to her fear of the dreadful consequences of a Fascist victory. Indians despite their good wishes for England in her sacred and perilous fight against Fascism were forced to say, that it was but a slave owner's argument.

At a moment of dire peril you offered Union with France to its Government, perhaps the largest proposal of constitutional change in English history. Did you not promise and grant Independence to Syria when it was a bloody theatre of war?

But towards India you remain the same diehard of diehards. To-day your life's ambition as expressed by you long time back "sooner or later to crush Gandhi and Congress and all they stand for," is outwardly being realized.

## TO CHURCHILL

Your policy may be apparently successful ;  
you may have the temporary elation in stifling  
the voice of India and deceptive pride in mis-  
representing The Congress Case but Gandhi  
can well say :

That which the world miscalls a jail  
a private closet is to me,

Whilst a good conscience is my bail,  
and innocence my liberty ;

Locks, bars, and solitude together set,

Make me no prisoner, but an anchoret.

LORD ARTHUR CAPEL

*Written in Confinement.*



## TO ROOSEVELT

Yours has been the prosperous oasis of liberty in the midst of a soul-killing desert of savage-like dictatorship. Your Four Freedoms inspired and renewed faith in us and fanned the flames of liberty from the smouldering heap of despair and abject surrender to slavery. But your studious and uncanny silence about the restricted scope of the Atlantic Charter as given by Churchill after his visit to America, threw a wet blanket on our new born hopes.

Your public pronouncements about the inherent dignity of man to live the life of freedom, unmolested by force, and undeterred by fear, are pathetically inconsistent with your attitude of indifference towards India. She expected nothing from Churchill but she had pinned her faith in your great and glorious Arsenal of Democracy. To-day her hopes are shattered, her aspirations smothered and even her faith smashed at least for the time being.

You have heard the story of "rebellion" in India from interested propagandists. A grossly false picture that the Congress is a pro-Fascist organisation has been painted in your country. The August Resolution which was in substance a genuine offer of co-operation with the United Nations was interpreted by mischievous plubiscists as a stab in the back of the Allies. Believing in the sincerity of your professions, we believe that you have been a victim of propaganda.

Remember the words of Goeth that, "one man's word is no word, we should quietly hear both sides."

## TO JINNAH

Not long back India was proud of you and your talents. In your inspiring speeches she heard her sentiments expressed and in your ideals her aspirations fulfilled. Do you remember your Presidential Address at the Muslim League Session in 1916 ? Had Lenin, Lincoln and Sun-yat-Sen been your audience, spontaneously would they have proclaimed : "Here is a great man with lofty ideals, and high hopes, backed by sincerity of purpose and determination to make sacrifices for their realization." Alas ! to-day evil councils are abroad and dragon's teeth are being sown.

At a public meeting in the good old days you addressed Mohd Ali as Mr. and not as Moulana. The people resented the use of this prefix. But you stood firm and with confidence asserted that religion should be completely divorced from politics. Such was your sensitive mind.

The Congress as a mark of appreciation for your services built the magnificent Jinnah Hall at Bombay.

Look what propaganda Amery has been doing. He paints India as a land of warring creeds. He makes the world believe that there would be an orgy of knife stabbing if British rule is withdrawn and that heads will be on pikes and ladies on

## TO JINNAH

tumbrils will be marched to the guillotine. Do you not realize and feel that this gloomy picture is only a piece of political strategy? Because you do not come to terms with the Congress, the two communities are damned and condemned and are laid bare as snarling at each other, ready to cut throats and thirstying for blood. By continuing the deadlock and by abusing the Congress you strengthen the hands of Amery and furnish him with the basis and premises to build his case for not parting with power.

Read again the Resolution of the A. I. C. C. at Bombay.

"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 the units." Mark the words Units instead of Provinces; the resolution did not rule out the Pakistan States.

In reply to Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, Nehru said:

"Personally I must confess to you that I am not enamoured of this as I think the modern tendency is against it and rightly so.....Nevertheless we have agreed to this to meet the wishes of any of our friends who consider it important."

In the light of the above, can you maintain that your demand, so far as it is just, has not been conceded? Even in Russia where the minorities or Republics are supposed to have

## TO JINNAH

been given self-determination the residuary powers are vested in the centre. But the Congress consistent with its policy and desire to settle the communal tangle went so far as to delegate the residuary powers to the different Units. For all practical purposes the Units comprising the Federation would have been Sovereign States.

As regards the interim arrangements Nehru said :

“The only kind of Provisional Government would be a composite Government representing the major parties in India to their satisfaction, namely, the Congress, the Muslim League and important groups. Any person who is responsible for making that Government will have to satisfy these groups, otherwise he will have to face great difficulties at a time when the greatest measure of agreement is essential.”

Further Gandhiji in endorsing Azad's offer that power may be handed over to the Muslim League said :

“The Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it to-day exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India. And Congress will not only not obstruct any Government that the Muslim League may form on behalf of the people, but will even join the Government in running the machinery of the Free State.”

## TO JINNAH

From the above statements, it is clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the Congress is prepared to accomodate you to the fullest extent. The Congress wants and stands for the freedom of India, it does not matter who runs the Free State. The Congress is not a party with sectarian ideas or sectional policies. It is a movement for the liberation of India.

And so far as the ultimate determination of Indian Constitution is concerned you have yourself rightly said :

“ I will agree to a proviso that the decision on the Pakistan issue be registered by a plebiscite of the Indian Muslims at the time of constitution making.”

In spite of this complete surrender on the part of the Congress your attitude is getting stiffer and more authoritarian. Perhaps in the chaos of communal tangle you see your leadership assured and you fear that in an agreement with the Congress it will vanish and you will be thrown into the oblivion by the younger and dynamic leadership of the masses.

In the good name of India, justice and morality rise above the baser planks of egotism and unmask Amery by coming to terms with the Congress. India shall rank you as one of her great sons.

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# 1. Into The Cauldron

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*The very fact of a treaty with Russia would be the signal for a new war. Its end would be the end of Germany.*

## HITLER'S "MEIN KAMPF"

THE Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact was ratified by the Supreme Soviets on August 31, 1939. Hitler ordered his troops to march into Poland on September 1, 1939 and he also announced the return of the Danzig Free City to Germany. He neither presented any formal ultimatum, nor even intimidated the Poles with a customary warning.....only the marching orders were given. Dramatically King George VI rushed to the Houses of Parliament to give audience to the Premier. This unprecedented step was taken in order to waste no time.

Mr. Chamberlain announced to Parliament which had met in a special session that an ultimatum had been despatched to Germany to withdraw her forces from Polish territory, failing which the Anglo-Polish Pact would be given effect to. France declared her intention to abide by her guarantees to Poland. The ultimatum fell on deaf ears. Another was sent on September 3, 1939. The German reply was handed over to Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin. It said among other things: "The German Government and the German people refuse to receive, accept, let alone fulfil the demands in the nature of ultimatum made by the British Government."

At 11-15 on Sunday morning September 3, 1939, Mr. Chamberlain broadcast to the nation:

**"THIS COUNTRY IS AT WAR WITH GERMANY."**

In his speech, full of, pathos, but vibrating with determination to crush Hitlerism, he said:—

"It is a sad day for all of us, but for none it is sadder than for me. Everything I have done, worked for,

hoped for and believed in during my public life has crashed in ruins. The only thing left to me is to devote what powers I have for victory. I cannot tell what part I may be allowed to play, but I trust I will live to see the day when Hitlerism is destroyed and a restored and liberated Europe has been re-established."

Hitlerism will certainly be annihilated, but it is a pity that Chamberlain only thought of a liberated Europe and forgot all about India, one-fifth of the world's population.

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## 2. Gandhi Blesses Britain

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*The Viceroy or Governor-General was armed with all the powers of a Hitler or a Mussolini. By a stroke of the pen he could scatter the constitution and decree any law to be passed or martial law, which was no law at all. Of all these he was the sole judge. Such a functionary was a dictator and he had a very powerful army.*

**CHURCHILL**

[attacking the White Paper on Constitutional Reforms for India 1934.]

**I**MMEDIATELY after the announcement of Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Linlithgow declared India to be at war with Germany.

It is noteworthy that South Africa took four days to declare war, while Canada took seven, and that Ireland decided to remain neutral.

On September 1, 1939, the Government of India Act Amendment Bill was passed in a few minutes by the British Parliament. The new Section 126-A provides that on the declaration of war, the executive authority of the Federation (which for the time being means the Governor-General-in-Council) shall extend to the giving of directions to a province as to the manner in which the executive authority thereof is to be exercised, and so on. The Viceroy, having been invested with such unlimited powers, promulgated the Defence of India Ordinance and made and published rules thereunder. Since then he has issued many more ordinances.

The Viceroy, after having effected India's entry into the war, invited Gandhi and Jinnah to have interviews with him in Simla. Gandhi, both by temperament and habit, is essentially a man of peace. His non-violence would never permit him to take advantage of his opponent's weakness or difficult position. In South Africa when his "passive resistance" movement was at its height, the Whites declared a



strike. He not only refused to make common cause with the strikers, but actually suspended his offensive for the time being and let General Smuts deal with the strikers unembarrassed. When the strike was settled, he resumed his march. General Smuts had nothing but praise for such a "counter-revolutionary" step. Gandhi when he was in jail in South Africa, made a pair of sandals for General Smuts. In this connection the Premier of South Africa has said :

"I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then; even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."

This is one of the numerous instances to show that Gandhi fights with love as his "sword."

On September 5, 1939, Gandhi issued a statement and said that if there was to be any understanding it had to be between the Congress and the Government.

"Having, therefore, made my position *vis-a-vis* the Congress clear, I told His Excellency that **my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian stand-point.** I told him that I could not contemplate, without being stirred to the very depths, the destruction of London, which has hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before me the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down."

Strange, indeed are the ways of Gandhi. If they look outlandish that is because the ethical values which guide him are regarded as irrelevant by most of us. To him everything must harmonize with the absolute truth, for us relative worldly advantages are ideals of a practical commonsense life. In the twinkling of an eye, he glided over the relations between India and England of the last 150 years. The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh slipped into oblivion before the possible destruction of the British Parliament—a Parliament which passes acts that tighten more firmly of British hold on India. Gandhi, ungrudgingly and devoid of any mental reservations, blessed the Allies with his sympathies. He gave his moral support to England.

Jawaharlal Nehru had gone to China at the request of the Government of that country. The Congress Working Committee summoned him back. From Rangoon on September 8, 1939, he issued the following statement:—

“ We have repeatedly said that we are not out to bargain. We do not approach the problem with a view to taking advantage of Britain’s difficulties. **In a conflict between Democracy and Freedom, on the one side, and Fascism and aggression on the other, our sympathies must be on the side of Democracy** and we cannot tolerate with pleasure ideas of victory for Fascist and Imperialist aggressors. But mere repetition of phrases about democracy and freedom does not mean that the struggle is for Democracy.....The real test as to whether this struggle is for Democracy and Freedom does not lie in loud enunciation of principles, but in practice.....If England stands for self-determination, the proof of that should be India .....I should like India to play her full part and throw all her resources into the struggle for the new order.”

India’s sympathies were definite and deep but her grievances persisted. *The Manchester Guardian* on September 9, 1939, sounded the warning, “Not only because of possible Congress objections but because of our own welfare India deserves now to be treated as a full equal.”

India in fact realised what a catastrophe would follow if the Fascists won, but did not know what an Allied victory would mean to her.

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### 3. Between Equals Only

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*It is no longer possible for me to retain any respect for that mockery of civilization which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all. By the miserly denial of all that is best in their civilization, by withholding true human relationship from Indians, the English have effectively closed for us all paths of progress.*

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE.**

THE declaration of war by Britain dragged India into the war as she is tied firmly to the chariot wheels of the British Cabinet. India had no status of her own. It was but natural that Nationalist India should be forced to ask as to what she was fighting for.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on September 14, 1939 to review the international situation and decide its policy towards the war. Consistent with its past policy it declared its strong condemnation of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism, their glorification of war and violence and suppression of the human spirit. It also reprimanded the Axis Powers for repeatedly indulging in acts of aggression and for sweeping away well-established principles and recognized standards of civilized behaviour. But as regards giving her support the Committee said :

“If co-operation was desired in a worthy cause it must be co-operation between equals by mutual consent.....A free democratic India would gladly associate with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation.....The Congress Working Committee call upon the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged.”

The Working Committee also declared that the Indian people had no quarrel with the German or the Japanese people or any other people as such but they had a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which denied freedom and were based on violence and aggression.

On September 4, 1939, Chamberlain in a broadcast to the German people said: "We are not fighting against the German people, but against the tyrannous and foresworn regime, which betrayed their own people and the whole of Western civilization and all you and we hold dear." This has been quoted because such phrases by the Congress as "we have no quarrel with the German or Japanese people" have been mischievously construed to show that the Congress has secret pro-Axis sympathies.

Commenting on the lengthy resolution of the Congress Working Committee, which was prepared by Jawaharlal, the foreign affairs expert of the Congress, Gandhi said:

"I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally.....But in stating the reason for its conclusion, the Committee desired to show the greatest consideration for the English.....I hope that all the other political parties and all communities will join in the Committee's demand for a declaration of their policy from the British Government with *such corresponding action as is possible amidst martial conditions.*"

Ever since 1933, the Congress had always unequivocally declared its unmitigated detestation of Fascism. It was ever prepared to contribute its all for the eradication of Nazi tyranny from this torn and tormented world. It had time and again condemned Japanese, Italian, and German aggression and, as a matter of fact, accused Britain of pursuing the fatal policy of appeasing these blood-thirsty international gangsters. Over and above this, the Congress in eight provinces had run the ministries for eighteen months. With such a background of deep anti-Fascism and Congress

ministries in eight Provinces and Gandhi giving his unconditional moral support, it was most unfriendly, not to mention unstatesmanlike, on the part of the Viceroy not to consult the people's representatives before declaring war. Even if he was in a desperate hurry to pledge India to war immediately after the declaration by Chamberlain, he should, at least, have told his Congress Ministers that because of the unavoidable emergency, he could not summon them all. A few friendly words with Gandhi would have gone a long way in pacifying matters.

The Viceroy perhaps did not consult the Congress because of the unnecessary and unfounded suspicion that the Government has always been harbouring about the real intentions of the Congress. Did the Government think that Congress hatred of British Imperialism would stand in the way of possible co-operation between them against a common enemy? Or did the Government believe that co-operation, though given by the Congress, would be in name only? Or did the Government regard the Congress as an organisation not powerful enough to be worthy of such consultation? Whatever be the reason and the basis of ignoring Indian opinion, the Viceroy was ill-advised. He set the snow ball of suspicion rolling, and it grew bigger and bigger as the days passed by.

The British Government lost a rare opportunity of taking the Congress into its confidence. Nehru would have been the first to shake hands with the Viceroy and wage a common war against the Axis Powers. Nehru's nationalism is very deep, but it is so beautifully woven with the threads of internationalism that in the pattern thus made you cannot tell which is which. He dreams of a world federation, in which all nations as equal partners would create a new world order based on justice, peace and toleration. Nehru is a prince by birth, but he has thrown away his aristocracy with as complete an abnegation as the Buddha himself. He is essentially a man of letters. His love for literature is instinctive. But the miserable face of starving India with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes made him plunge into the whirlwind of politics.

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## 4. Post Dated Cheques

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*Never will I seek nor receive  
Private individual salvation,  
Never will I enter into final peace alone  
But for ever and everywhere will I live and strive  
For the redemption of every creature throughout the world.*

### PLEDGE OF KUWAYAN-YIN

NATIONALIST India had every sympathy with Britain in her decision to crush the spirit of aggression of Germany and her satellites. The way the Hitlerite hordes plundered and ravished Poland evoked still greater hatred of Fascism. India, even from a selfish point of view, was more concerned to see the expunction of Hitlerism than other bigger powers, because militarily she was lame on both feet.

On September 26, 1939, Gandhi had an interview with the Viceroy for three and a half hours. The occasion for this interview was the Congress demand to know England's war and peace aims.

On the following day, the Marquis of Zetland, in the House of Lords, said that though the re-assertion of the claims of the Congress Leaders towards a fuller form of self-government than at present possessed was natural, it was rather ill-timed. He further observed :—

“It would be a calamity if such men (ardent Indian nationalists) were withdrawn from the Government in the Provinces. They have shown that they are capable of dealing with the problems which face them in their country, and they have co-operated in an admirable spirit with the Governors with whom they have been

associated. I have nothing but praise for the manner in which upto now they have co-operated in carrying through measures which have been associated with the outbreak of war."

Though the ministries were formed in 1937 with the avowed intention of wrecking the constitution, a genuine desire on the part of Congress Ministers to serve the masses made their tenure a singular success. Power did not turn their head but like a fruit-laden tree made them humbler still. The Congress leaders carry the benevolent lamp of service in their hands. The tender and compassionate wick of self-effacement is fed with the rich oil of utmost humility.

Gandhi, commenting on the Secretary of State's speech, appealed with his characteristic humility to the English statesmen to forget the old language of the Imperialists and open a new chapter for those who have been held under bondage. He further added :

" I suggest that the Congress has done nothing strange nor less than honourable in asking for such a declaration. Only a free India's help is of value and the Congress has every right to know that it can go to the people and tell that **at the end of the war, India's status as an independent country is as much assured as that of Great Britain.**"

Let the enemies of the Congress, who have accused this great national organisation of demanding great upheavals in the Indian Constitution during the throes of war digest the above quoted words of Gandhi. The Congress wanted a declaration that at the end of the war India shall frame her own constitution through a Constituent Assembly. No one can deny that the dormant and indifferent masses cannot be aroused unless they know that their blood will not be shed in vain. Have not the Allies been repeating to the subjugated people of Europe that this war is for their freedom, and they should do everything to co-operate with the Allies ? Thus, in an Allied victory, Europe under the terrible yoke of Hitler

sees her liberation and in a German victory her permanent enslavement.

The British Government did nothing to dispel suspicions which subjects always harbour about their masters. History shows that imperialist rulers hold in bondage the awakened subjects less through force, but more through broken words and false pledges. Hopes are created among the slaves that in the immediate future their emancipation is not only assured but even guaranteed. The thirsty traveller in the dreary desert trudges along wearily to quench his thirst, but the mirage ever recedes. With closed lips and a patient heart, many a decade has India waited, but this nerve-wrecking "immediate future" never becomes the "present now." Dominion Status was promised by Lord Irwin in 1929, but to the dismay and deep resentment of all, even the very mention of this term, in the Preamble to the Government of India Act, 1935, was anathema to the ruling classes

General Indian opinion is that England has not so far repaid in full the sacrifices made by Indians in the Allied cause during 1914-18. Gandhi was then a voluntary recruiting sergeant. He worked hard though an invalid, so much so, that he almost sacrificed his life. At that time, he never asked Britain her war aims or questioned her motives. He believed in the ultimate goodness of the British Empire and worked ceaselessly to enlist recruits for a cause which he held dear. But professions proved to be different from practice. After the last War India saw the Rowlatt Act, the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh and repressive laws wholly inconsistent with Britain's promise of freedom for the Indian people. "Reforms" gave only a faint shadow of power to India. The substance of power remained in British hands. The Government of India Act 1935, could also by no stretch of imagination be said to have conferred freedom on India.

By 1939 spiritual India had in spite of everything forgotten the past. There was no ill-will against Britain; on the contrary, there was every sympathy. But, such being the background of recent times, can anyone blame India for asking Britain to declare her war aims in regard to India instead of being



content with the mere word "democracy" as the aim of the Allies in taking up arms.

Was India to wait till the end of this devastating war, in which she was asked to take part before she even knew what the war aims were? Must vast numbers of human beings suffer unto death without knowing definitely what they die for?

India, feeling the weight of subjugation requested Britain to end this degrading and inhuman relation of subject and master and that too after the war. India is conscious that she has a spiritual message for a world immersed in stark materialism. The glamour of Western civilization is like the rosy cheeks of the consumptive patient immediately before his collapse.

On October 3, in the House of Commons, Attlee, then the Leader of the Opposition, said :

"It is very vital in this struggle that we should make clear by deeds, as well as words, that we are standing for democracy and liberty and not just for Imperial interests. We must not think that because there is a war on, the development of self-government in the colonial Empire should stop.....I do not think that the Indian people have been handled tactfully in this matter. I think that the Congress Party which controls Government in a large majority of Indian Provinces, should have been brought into the closest consultation with the Government right from the start. Government should have shown more imagination and insight in dealing with these people. There is an immense fund of good-will among them."

Sir Stafford Cripps, in whom India had found her best spokesman and in whose pronouncements was an expression of her aspirations, issued a stern warning to the Allies: "If we are fighting for democracy, freedom and a new world order, our care for India must be as great as for Poland."

It is a tragedy that the British Labour Leaders, when in Opposition, always talk humanely, but once in power, they act like all imperialists. Either their outcry against injustice in the colonies when leaders of the opposition is a means to power, or the imperialist machinery is too strangulating to let their individual feelings be expressed, or again the larger Imperial interests of England are too fundamental to be swayed by other people's rights, however just and true.

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## 5. The Old Tune

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*There is no use for pronouncements that are not fulfilled, there is no use for pronouncements which take geological epochs to fulfill.*

MONTAGU

[In the House of Commons].

EVER since Hitler plunged the world into a bloody carnage, the Viceroy has been busy having personal consultations with the leaders of all shades of Indian opinion and the representatives of the princely order. In all, he has met 52 leaders and, as a friend of mine remarked, these 52 gentlemen were like the 52 playing cards and the Viceroy himself acted as the joker, more powerful than all the others. No better simile can lay bare the smallness of Indian leaders and bring home the omnipotence of the Viceroy.

On October 17, 1939, Lord Linlithgow issued a long statement. He beat the drum of democracy and his sentiments sounded the bugle of freedom, the inspired British Press played the orchestra of a new order and our Secretary of State as the bandmaster of Indian politics produced in full diapason the differences among the "peoples" of India. A few destitute Indian bearers, who occasionally get a paltry tip from their white masters, bowed in reverence and clapped their hands in satisfaction.

The Viceroy reminded us of the glorious and epoch-making pledge given in the Preamble to the Act of 1919 and the interpretation placed by Lord Irwin in 1929 that: "the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status, and I am authorized now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such

modifications in the Federal part of the Government of India as may seem desirable." As regards the association of Indian opinion with the actual conduct of the war, the Viceroy proposed the establishment of a Consultative Group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General himself would preside and which would be summoned at his invitation.

On October 18, 1939, Gandhi in a statement regretted that: "the Viceregal declaration was profoundly disappointing. It would have been better if the British Government had declined to make any declaration whatsoever."

The much-advertised war aims crumbled into dust at the first touch of reality, the ideals which were bragged about from Allied quarters became only empty catch-words when their application was urged. It became known that the enchanting slogans of "a fight for freedom," and in defence of democracy, were merely meant to hypnotise the awakened coloured races. But intelligent India had learnt much from the beguiling ways of her masters. "Where are we in this world drama, and what is our future, if any, at all" was on every Indian's lips.

India was surging with high hopes about her rightful place in the new world order which was to replace the present decadent, decaying and ramshackle world system. The Viceroy's pronouncement made it abundantly clear that wishful thinking on the part of selfish Indians had given rise to these unrighteous aspirations. Dark and thick clouds of disappointment and frustration gathered on the erstwhile sunny sky of a bright and pleasant future. There echoed and re-echoed thunders of resentment from nationalist quarters.

The Viceregal statement was so vague that it did not even clarify the point that the Dominion Status to be attained by India was to be of the same character as is enjoyed by the self-governing Dominions. The date of even such a plaything was some indefinite and indeterminate future. The Central Government was to remain as irresponsible as ever during the war. The Consultative Committee without any semblance

of power, as suggested, would not have been representative enough to bring India into effective participation in the war.

Attlee and Greenwood, the Labour Leaders, supported India's just demand that she should know that : "the downfall of dictatorship in Europe will herald the day of India's freedom."

The Congress Working Committee considered the declaration of the Viceroy and passed the following resolution :—

"The Working Committee is of the opinion that the Viceroy's statement in answer to the Congress invitation for a declaration of British war aims, particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory. The Viceregal statement is an un-equivocal reiteration of the old imperialist policy. The Committee regard the mention of the differences amongst the several parties as a screen to hide the true intentions of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of Britain's *bona fides* regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups...In the circumstances, it could not possibly give any support to Great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction, the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations." But all the same the Committee warned Congressmen against any hasty action.

The Working Committee had passed a very mild resolution. At its worst, it rebuked Britain that whatever a gentleman professes and pretends, he must live up to. The resolution following the finest traditions of the Congress, gave another chance to Britain to repair the blunder.

The British never realise that they too can do wrong and the India Office persists in the auto-suggestive belief that it can never be unjust. The Secretary of State considers himself the tin god of India's moving corpses. His role has always been destructive. He has never created or given any lead. To trample down India's feelings has been his only practical politics. The Secretary of State, whenever put in the incon-

venient position of justifying the enslavement of India, washes his hands of this guilt with the muddy waters of differences among the various communities in India. It may seem bitter to our rulers but their policy truly has been sweet words coupled with slow and steady but effective denial of freedom to India.

To-day India's proud heritage can only be found as Milton said ; " In copious legend or sweet lyric songs." We are but the orphans of her slavery ; her penury is our culture, her misery our breeding and in her distress we had our training.

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## 6. Pens Down

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*“Dominion Status had already become part and parcel of the Government of India.” And when pray did this miracle take place? “In 1919 at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles”, vouchsafed Mr. Benn, “When India became a separate entity and an original member of the League of Nations.” This is, of course, the most effective way of belittling India’s serious claim to Dominion Status. If Dominions Status had become in 1919 part and parcel of Indian Government, where was the necessity for the Viceroy to make a new pledge of Dominion Status in 1929?*

S. IYENGER

THE Congress Ministries tendered their resignations as a protest against dragging India into the war without consulting the autonomous Provinces and for curtailing arbitrarily their powers and activities. Whatever little initiative the Provincial Governments enjoyed vanished like a dream before the all powerful and naked reality of the Defence of India Ordinance. The high status of the Ministers was reduced to that of the members of the permanent Civil Service by the magic wand of Lord Linlithgow.

On November 1, 1939, the Viceroy extended invitations to Gandhi, Rajindra Prasad—the Congress President—and Jinnah. The object of this joint consultation was to find a *modus operandi* for the association of responsible political leaders with the Central Government of India. A communique was issued making the bare announcement that at the request of His Excellency the three leaders attended a meeting at the Viceroy’s House and a discussion of a general character took place.

On November 12, 1939, a debate on India in the House of Lords was initiated by Lord Snell. The Marquis of Zetland, Secretary of State for India, gave no lead to meet the just demand of India for a declaration of the war and peace aims of Britain *vis-a-vis* India. With his usual self-complacency he reiterated the time-worn and baseless allegations about the serious differences among Indians themselves. Perhaps from the British point of view these "differences" were so many magnetic mines in the great ocean of Indian politics and any attempt to navigate the ship of Dominion Status was fraught with that danger. He told the House :

"It is sometimes said still in India that we are fighting to maintain Imperialism in that country. If by British Imperialism is meant domination and exploitation of one people by another people, I say that if it ever existed, it was abandoned by the Parliament when it accepted the Preamble to the Act of 1919."

Such fictitious and romantic sentiments are very alluring and soothe the ears, but bring no assuagement to the doubts and fears that India has to-day. And the tragedy becomes even more poignant when the credulous world takes them at their face-value. Instead of getting anything, the Indians are impeached and damned before the bar of world opinion on the ground that it is our inveterate feuds that compel Britain, weary of domination, not to end her hold on India.

The Viceroy sent a letter to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, explaining a little further the *ad hoc* arrangement suggested by His Majesty's Government. Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his well-reasoned reply said :—

"At the outset, I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about the clarification of war aims, without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal .....It has pained us to find the communal question being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the

main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of the declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above. Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community, and the Constituent Assembly which will frame India's constitution, will be formed on the widest possible franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned. The British Government in taking and sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction."

Could there be words more emphatic and assurances more authoritative for the protection of the interests of minorities? To safeguard the rights of all minorities has been the moral and bounden duty of the Congress. But Zetland despite his much-bragged about chivalry finds no way to escort Indian aspirations to their destined home. The road is straight and safe, but the will and motive are absent.

The Congress Working Committee at its session at Allahabad on November 23, 1939, passed a resolution saying that :—

"Though a *Satyagrahi* 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 *Times* of London, which is supposed to be the accredited organ of the British Government, on December 5, 1939, admitted that the Congress itself condemns Nazism and Mr. Gandhi reflected the general Indian opinion when he indicated that his own sympathies were, for humanitarian reasons, on the side of Britain and France.

On December 18, the Viceroy opened the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and with reference to the burning question of the day *viz.*, the demand of the Congress, His Excellency said: "There are times when silence about constitutional developments is better than speech and in my judgement this is one of them."

This silence reminds one of funeral solemnity and the few words that the Viceroy said were like the burial service uttered before the final confinement of the Congress demand for war aims to the cemetery.

Before we pass on to the events of 1940, let us put in a nutshell the declarations of British spokesmen defining their war aims.

(1) On September 20, in the House of Commons, Chamberlain said: "Britain's general purpose in this struggle is to redeem Europe from the perpetually recurring fear of German aggression and to enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their liberties and independence."

(2) On November 7, Lord Halifax in the House of Lords said: "We are determined, so far as it is humanly possible, to see to it that Europe shall not again be subjected to a repetition of this tragedy."

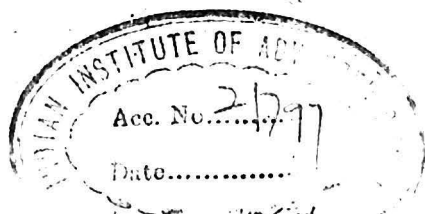
(3) On November 12, King George VI said: "The larger purposes for which my peoples are now fighting, are to serve that Europe is redeemed, in the words of the Prime Minister, 'from perpetually recurring fear of German aggression and to enable peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and liberties' and to prevent the resort to force instead of pacific means for the settlement of international disputes."

(4) On November 26, Mr. Chamberlain in his broadcast said: "Our war aim is to defeat the enemy—not merely the enemy's military forces, but also his aggressive and bullying mentality. Our peace aims would be to establish a new Europe, not in the sense of redrawing the map according to the ideas of victors, but a Europe with a new spirit."

From these authoritative announcements it is absolutely clear that the cause for which Britain had taken up arms was the liberation of Europe from the Hitlerite yoke and the establishment of a better international system on the continent. Asia and Africa were not worthy to figure in the war and peace aims of the Allies. Then why was the Congress pressing again and again for a declaration of Britain's war aims? Were not the pronouncements quoted above a convincing answer? But the Gandhian philosophy rests on the fundamental belief that human nature is essentially good and that it is our duty to show our opponent by argument and reason that the way he is pursuing is wrong. On November 3, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan*:

**"I hold the opinion strongly that whilst by their own action the British Government have made it impossible for the Congress to co-operate with them in the prosecution of the war, the Congress must not embarrass them in its prosecution." Again on December 2, he made it clear that "there can be no civil disobedience for the sake of embarrassing Great Britain."**

Are not the ways of a saint opposite to those of our imperialist rulers? Though crushed with servitude and battered with humiliations Gandhi, who symbolises the living faith of India bears no ill-will to Britain.



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## 7. The Vital Difference

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*O, execrable son ! so to aspire*

*Above his brethren, to himself assuming*

*Authority usurp'd, from God not given.*

*He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,*

*Dominion absolute ; but man over men*

*He made not lord ; such title to himself*

*Reserving, human left from human free.*

MILTON

A DECLARATION that His Majesty's Government's objective for India has been made clear as full Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety, an assurance that their concern was to reduce to the minimum the interval between the existing state of things and Dominion Status, and a fervent appeal to "the leaders of the great political parties of India" to help to terminate as early as possible the present deplorable state of things—these were the high lights of the political pronouncement made by the Viceroy speaking at a luncheon given in his honour at the Orient Club, Bombay on January 10, 1940.

Was there anything new in such phrases of political jugglery? The term "full Dominion Status" was the only innovation in the hackneyed, rusted and boring utterances of the Viceroy. How could India believe in the sincerity of England's promises when no date was fixed for the inauguration of the Dominion Status? It may be one year after the war or it may be a hundred years after. Why the Viceroy should be cherishing almost a religious reverence for securing the unanimous consent of the conflicting interests and parties in India only with regard to the introduction of the Dominion constitution passes understanding. When an undiluted autocracy was

introduced in India under the Emergency Powers Ordinance only the other day, was any plebescite taken to secure the harmonious and united consent of the people? Was the Federal Scheme, on whose relative virtues the Viceroy is so eloquent, based on any such harmonious and full-fledged unanimity of Indian opinion when it was passed into an Act and brought into operation? If the British Government can thrust a course of unbridled autocracy on India, can they not bless us with a Dominion constitution based on universally accepted principles of national democracy and the rules laid down by the League of Nations in connection with the minority problem? The history of constitutional progress in almost all countries shows that such solid and rock-like unity of conflicting interests and parties can never precede in full the introduction of a national constitution but can only follow it.

That Gandhi should seek further clarification on certain points contained in the Viceroy's speech with a view to see if the political deadlock could be ended was the unanimous decision of the Working Committee which met at Wardha on January 21, 1940. No formal resolution was passed. Gandhi commenting in *Harijan* on January 22, said :

“ The latest pronouncement of Lord Linlithgow seems to contain the germs of a settlement honourable to both nations. I am not spoiling for a fight. I am trying to avoid it. I wholly endorse Bose's charge that I am eager to have a compromise with Britain if it can be had with honour. I have not lost faith in Britain.”

Gandhi had an interview with the Viceroy to explore means of coming to a settlement, but the talks ended in smoke. There was hope in the atmosphere, but soon it was dashed to the ground and depressing gloom prevailed everywhere. The Viceroy, while emphasising the British Government's desire that India should attain Dominion Status at the earliest possible moment, drew attention to the complexity and difficulty of certain issues. He declared that the Federal

Scheme was the swiftest stepping stone to Dominion Status and repeated his offer of an expansion of the Executive Council. This was the fifth meeting since the war.

From Delhi on February 6, 1940, Gandhi in a statement said :

"The vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceroy's offer consists in the fact that the Viceroy's offer contemplates final determination of India's destiny by the British Government, whereas the Congress contemplates just the contrary. If Britain cannot recognize India's legitimate claims, what will it be but Britain's moral bankruptcy?" But being an irrepressible optimist, he boldly said that the failure did not baffle him and he would use it as "a stepping stone to success."

On February 11, 1940, in an exclusive interview to the *Sunday Times*, Lord Zetland said : "Long-range bombardment by leading personalities from platform and press is little likely to lead anywhere. What is wanted is escape from the tyranny of phrases and a descent from idealism to realism, from the abstract to the concrete."

Referring to Gandhi's statement that if the British Government would leave the framing of the constitution to Indians themselves, the questions of defence, minorities, Princes and European interests would automatically be dissolved, Lord Zetland said that while he greatly admired Gandhi's optimism, he was unhappily quite unable to share it and felt that as long as the leaders of the Congress maintained their present attitude, the obstacles in the way of an honourable understanding would be greatly increased.

Gandhi expressed his bitterness at Lord Zetland's pronouncement in a statement issued from Wardha on February 2, 1940 :—

"Lord Zetland's recent pronouncement, if reported correctly, sets at rest all speculation regarding the Government's attitude towards the nationalist demand. I have been taught to believe that Dominion Status of

the Westminster Statute variety is akin to independence and includes the right to secede. Therefore, I had thought that there would be no difficulty about Britain allowing India to determine her own status. But Lord Zetland makes it clear that Britain, not India, is to determine it. In other words, the British hold on India must remain. I submit that it is wrong to dismiss the Indian claim by accusing the nationalists of losing realities in idealism. I suggest that it is he who refuses to face realities and is wandering in a forest of unrealities. I cannot accuse him of idealism. I assure him that Nationalist India is dreadfully in earnest. He has banged the door upon the nationalist position."

Does a starving person who asks for food "lose realities in idealism"?

The ways of Imperialist rulers pass one's understanding. A just and natural demand is condemned as a tyranny of phrases. The Secretary of State regards himself as the Oracle of Delhi on Indian problems, and India Office claims to be the fountain head of justice and morality. Such are the age-long traditions of this "benevolent," but always "misunderstood" institution. But it is high time for Britain to know that we are no fools to be deceived by pretentious slogans. The galling pain from which India suffers cannot be allayed by the sugar-coated pills of Imperialist promises.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's health was deteriorating on account of his chronic asthma and he wanted to be relieved of the burden of the Congress Presidentship. Abul Kalam Azad was requested by every nationalist of India to steer the wheel of India's destiny. Though he was reluctant at first, the love of his co-workers compelled him to stand for election. M. N. Roy had the audacity to oppose him. Wherever and in whatever country he has worked, Roy has shown political inconsistencies, and contradictions. He polled 183 votes against 1854 polled by Azad. From this date we find Roy the bitterest opponent of the Congress in India. Roy has hurled more and filthier mud on the Congress than anyone else.

The Congress Working Committee met at Patna on March 1, 1940, and passed the following resolution :—

“.....This preliminary step (resignation of Congress ministries) must naturally be followed by civil disobedience.”

Thus the quietus was given to all rumours giving currency that the Congress High Command was thinking in terms of a compromise. That the resolution of the Working Committee did not close the door to negotiations was the interpretation put by Gandhi in his statement issued from Calcutta on March 2. He further added that Lord Zetland was responsible for the deadlock.

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## 8. We Have No Quarrel

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*My country claims me all, claims every passion, her liberty henceforth be all my thought, for her my life, I'd willing resign, and say with transport that the gain was mine.*

MARTY.

IN great excitement and with feelings running high the Ramgarh Congress Session was held. The general desire of the delegates was that there should be no lowering of the flag of Civil Disobedience hoisted by the Working Committee at Patna. Nehru, with his characteristic outspokenness, said that the cup of anger was full to the brim.

Gandhi, at the Subjects Committee Meeting, said : " Some of you have criticised me for my attempt to arrive at a compromise with the British Government..... I shall go to the Viceroy fifty times if necessary..... I shall even seek an interview with him..... I have accepted the need for a fight, but I shall exercise restraint."

And what was the fight as visualised by Gandhi ? " Let me alone or follow my instructions " with folded hands appealed the *Mahatma*. And he further made it clear that he would not have anybody under him, who did not believe in the *Charkha*. Merely saying that a person believed in the *Charkha* was humbug. " Man may shout for God, only he will reach his God who does His work " was the warning given by Christ to hypocrites. The Civil Disobedience campaign was not to be mere show and bluster but solid work for the amelioration of India's unknown and uncared for masses. In modern parlance, fight and struggle connote enmity and violence but the *Mahatma* fights with love in his heart and charity on his lips. He punishes his opponent by inflicting pain on his own body.



Emphatically did Gandhi lay down: "We have no quarrel with the British people. We want to be their friends and retain their goodwill, not on the basis of their domination over us, but on the basis of a free and equal India."

The Patna Resolution of the Working Committee was passed by the Congress. The Ramgarh Resolution was not drafted in anger or haste, but was the result of calm and detached deliberation. The attitude taken up by the Congress towards the present war did not mean sympathy for Germany. Its hatred of Fascism began in 1933 when Japan unleashed her hounds on Manchuria and since then this execration has been getting stronger and condemnation of Fascist ideology severer and severer.

Gandhi's first slogan of the Civil Disobedience movement, for which preparations were afoot, was, "Purify your heart and mind." He did not want jailgoers who had no ideal, no spirit of sacrifice, no higher cause in their hearts and no faith in the weapon and the leader himself. He wanted true, honest, and selfless servants of India's freedom.

The enemies of the Congress started the 'malicious' whispering campaign that the Congress policy was meant to harrass the British Government during the fierce struggle going on. The *Mahatma's* supersensitive mind is hurt by untruth wherever perpetrated. Immediately he came out with a statement on May 5, 1940.

**"The Congress has caused no embarrassment to Britain. I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support."**

In the meantime the ferocious Hitlerite hordes were attacking country after country on the continent. The ghastly war situation was distressing the nationalist leaders as they did not want Nazi domination of Europe.

The Nazi force was proving itself irresistible. Belgium had given up the fight; the Low Countries had been swept over and France, the home of the second biggest Empire, was

falling. Italy stabbed France in the back; it expedited its crash. England stood alone, calm but not dismayed, and determined to crush this spirit of aggression.

Leaders of nationalist India had deep sympathy with England in her sacred and perilous task. They wanted to share her burden and partake of her sufferings. But they also realised that any help to be effective and worthy of India's great name could only be on the basis of equality. Moreover, every nation has its own life to look after and India could not afford to forget her own problems in the grim enchantment of the Western struggle. It was perhaps not even desirable, even if it had been possible. We cannot serve civilisation by forgetting our rights. We cannot help the Allies by agreeing to be a subject people. On the contrary, such a surrender would help the Fascists by furnishing both a justification and a motive and an edge to their appetite.

There was not only panic in India, but mean jubilation among certain people over Nazi victories. It was felt by them that Britain had not played the game by India, therefore her deeds were being punished by Hitler. Political frustration was the harbinger of such a slavish and unmanly outlook. But Nehru, who always has his stethoscope on the heart of India, immediately issued the warning: "If Hitler or any other Power attacks us, we, Indians, will fight to death..... Panic would not be of any help; rather it would be a standing invitation to perils.....**it would be to our pride and glory to guarantee safety to every English child, woman and man in India during such perilous times.**"

Gandhi defining his attitude towards Britain, whose prestige at that time had touched the nadir, wrote in *Harijan* on June 21, 1940 :—

"I am of the opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the heart of the Allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. The present is no atmosphere for influencing the Britisher in the right direction through civil disobedience."

Astonishing things were happening and we were living in a rapidly changing world. But one of the most astounding of these things was the continuance of the British Government's attitude towards India. The Himalayas might move, but the immobility of India Office has become proverbial. Men may come and men may go, but British policy remains the same. Perhaps it is this very static and unchanging view that has brought so many difficulties and dangers to England. But was India with a spiritual heritage and believing in truth as the *summum bonum* of life to retaliate? No.

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## 9. Gandhiji Absolved

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*Submerged in darkness and untruth humanity has yet to reach perfection. The outer crust of ugliness will be dissolved that day when truth's light will remove the dark forces now rampant. An earnest of that glorious future has been given by great souls like Buddha, Jesus and others. Their messages prove that there is hope for humanity yet. Let us with faith pray, from untruth to truth, from darkness into light.*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

AT Ramgarh the Congress had endorsed the Patna resolution of the Working Committee authorising the *Mahatma* to launch the Civil Disobedience movement. But with this, the Congress leaders had made it clear that in no circumstances would they choose to strike Britain in distress, for that would be against India's sense of chivalry.

France lay crippled and Hitler had practically accomplished what Frederick and Bismarck had begun. He was the sole master of Europe. With Russia as Germany's friend and Japan openly heading towards the Axis camp, and America showing no signs of joining the Allies, England's position was precarious. Her prestige was so low in Europe that when Soviet planes flew over Rumanian territory, growling for the restoration of Bessarabia and the Northern section of Bukovina, Rumania had to submit to these demands. Rumania had so completely lost all faith in Britain's capacity to fulfil her word and stand by her guarantees that on July 3, 1940 she denounced the Anglo-French Guarantees of April 1, 1939. Russia was exploiting the situation fully and consolidating the old Czarist Empire. On June 17, she presented an ultimatum to the helpless little countries, Estonia, Latvia, and

Lithuania, and they had to concede still greater facilities for the passage of Russian troops.

On May 27, Sir Stafford Cripps had left for Moscow for exploratory talks with the Soviet Government, but Russia refused point blank to receive him. They said categorically that the negotiations could be conducted through the British Ambassador in Moscow. Russia had her revenge as previously England had declined to honour Litvinov's credentials as Russian Ambassador. England had no other alternative but to appoint Cripps as Ambassador. When Russia attacked Finland, all the British statesmen including Cripps had condemned this aggression as the renaissance of Russian Imperialism, but now that Cripps was wooing Russia, his first love letter was that the Soviet Government did not believe Hitler and they went to Finland to keep the Nazis at bay. Their main aim was to safeguard their own country and they had no territorial ambitions.

Coming to the East, we find Japan arrogantly warning all powers to take their hands off the Far East, because she was going to create a "new order" in Asia such as Germany had established in Europe. This policy, in fact, was to be the installation of an Eastern Monroe Doctrine. England was then so helpless, though by no means despondent, that she signed an agreement with Japan on July 17, agreeing to close the Burma Road for three months and not send arms and ammunition to China. Chiang Kai-shek warned Britain that perhaps by closing the Burma Road she hoped to shorten the war in the Far East. "I am sure that she will lengthen its duration and widen the scope of hostilities." Prophetic words, indeed!

Commenting on the closing of the life-line of China the Congress President said :

"Its greatest significance lies in the light it throws on British policy which claims to do one thing in Europe and follows an entirely different course in India and China. It is support of a policy against which Great Britain claims to be fighting for in Europe."

All sorts of rumours were current that Germany had given a free hand to Russia to march over Tibet, Afghanistan,

to India. News also appeared in the Press that Russia had mobilized great forces on the Afghan border. There was unprecedented and heartfelt jubilation among the Communists in India that the glorious Red Army was coming to "liberate" India.

As regards the conditions in India there was unusual panic and nervousness. The graveyard peace in India was being marred by sporadic disturbances in the form of looting. People had lost all faith in the paper currency and consequently there was a rush to change them into silver coins. In a few days' time rupee coins were scarce and their scarcity was very disquieting. Government securities also fell.

The Congress Working Committee assembled at Wardha on June 21, to review the situation created by the unexpected crash of the European countries. The Working Committee members as representatives of the Indian masses discussed at length the various problems arising from the menace of foreign aggression and threatening internal disorders. The Committee decided that Mahatma Gandhi should be free to pursue his great ideal of non-violence and it absolved him of the responsibility of carrying out the programme and activities which the Congress had to pursue under the conditions prevailing in India, in regard to aggression from without, and disorders from within. While the Working Committee held that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in India's struggle for independence, it could not ignore the imperfections and failings of the human element.

Gandhi in a statement on June 29, said that he was both happy and unhappy over this decision. He was certain that good must come out of this separation.

Gandhi interviewed the Viceroy at Simla on June 29. The Working Committee met at New Delhi and deliberated for over thirty hours on the proposals made by His Excellency to the *Mahatma*. The resolution passed on July 7, was the briefest on the political situation.

"The Working Committee are more than convinced that the *acknowledgment* by Great Britain of the complete independence of India is the only solution of the

problems facing both India and Britain, and, therefore are of the opinion that such an unequivocal declaration should be immediately made and that, as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a Provisional National Government should be constituted at the centre, which should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the responsible Governments of the Provinces..... The Committee declare that if these measures are adopted it will enable the Congress to throw its full weight in the efforts for the effective organization of the defence of the country."

The Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee were to meet again on July 25 and 27 at Poona to take stock of the situation.

Gandhi, commenting on the Delhi resolution, said on July 8:—

"Up to now for one reason or another the Congress policy was 'no participation in the war, except for the moral influence that the Congress can exercise, unless the vital demand of the Congress was satisfied of Britain's own free will.' Such was not the position of all the members of the Working Committee. Hence, at critical moments, every member had to make up his or her mind independently of the rest. Rajaji was the framer of the resolution. He was as certain of his position as I was of mine. His persistency, and utter humility brought him converts. Sardar Patel was his greatest prize. He would not have thought of bringing up his resolution if I had chosen to prevent him. But I give my comrades the same credit for earnestness and self-confidence that I claim for myself. I had long known that we were drifting away from each other in our outlook upon political problems that face us."

The country appreciated the *Mahatma's* magnanimity. The history of political and party controversies contains few instances in which a great leader threw all his influence and

authority at a critical moment on the side of a majority, which he believed all the time to be hopelessly in the wrong, as the *Mahatma* did in this case. Charity and tolerance like this is not exhibited by ordinary mortals but is practised by prophets.

Gandhi by admitting his defeat rose still further in the indefinable estimation of the masses. He had shown himself a true democrat not only in words but in deed as well.

The enemies of the Congress were hilarious that a rift had been created in the Congress by the passing of the Delhi resolution. Sardar Patel, who detests indiscipline, set these critics at ease when he said on July 19, "Nobody should imagine that there is any split in the Congress Working Committee, or that the Committee is going to be separated from Gandhiji. Nothing can separate us."

It may not be generally realized, but it is nevertheless wholly true that the Wardha and Delhi resolutions represented the logical culmination of the *Swarajist* revolt led by Deshabandhu Das, and Moti Lal Nehru. These two leaders were as much wedded to non-violence in the limited sense in which it is embodied in the Congress creed as any ardent disciple of the *Mahatma*. But facing facts they considered that in making non-violence its sole policy and programme, the Congress under the leadership of the *Mahatma* was losing its grip over the realities of India's actual situation.

Nobody should presume that the question of non-violence *versus* violence cropped up suddenly at Wardha. In September, 1938, Gandhi had raised the issue of non-violence and he wanted Free India to eschew all violence and have no army to defend the country against aggression. The Congress should thus depend entirely upon non-violence for the purpose of dealing with internal disorders and external attacks. Gandhi felt that he had a message of non-violence to give to this war weary world and, if he could not persuade his own countrymen to accept it, it would be difficult for him to preach it to others. The Working Committee felt itself unable to accept the position and explained its difficulties to the *Mahatma*. The issue, however, did not assume any



serious proportions then, as the Munich betrayal postponed the war. Gandhi again raised it in September, 1939, when he went to see the Viceroy and wanted to be relieved of the responsibility. At Ramgarh Gandhi raised it for the third time, but Azad actually "forced" Gandhi not to precipitate a crisis and postpone the issue. At Wardha Gandhi wanted the Committee to make up its mind once for all on such an important matter, as the international situation, had deteriorated.

The Indian National Congress is a political organization pledged to win the political independence of the country. It is not a body for organizing world peace. The Working Committee members could not go as far as the *Mahatma* wanted them to go, and as the Congress President said, "We admit that it is a weakness on our part, but it is a weakness which we share with the entire humanity."

For conciseness, dignity and insight there is hardly any resolution of the Congress on the War to compare with the decision reached at Delhi. It was up to Britain now to prove her *bona fides*.

C. Rajagopalachariar, who framed the resolution, thus spoke on July 10 :

"It was a great decision that has been taken. It is for Britain to consider whether it is worth while to get a free India when she has seemingly lost France. We ask for a big price. The price will add to Britain's glory and not subtract from her prestige. Those who read the Congress resolution in anger will not see its essence. The spirit of friendship and voluntary alliance that is contained in it can be seen only if a disinterested mind is brought to bear on it."

The war had lost its aggressive character. The defence of India was now an integral part of the defence of Britain. This was the key to the understanding of the resolution of the Working Committee.

That the Congress was extremely anxious to play her full part in the titanic struggle that was going on in Europe is clear.

from the resolution and the interpretations put by its author Rajaji and his supporters. Freed from the political shackles that bound India she could in an incredibly short time rise to her full stature and put forth an effort that will tilt the balance definitely in favour of democracy. The declaration of freedom that the Congress demanded did not mean withdrawal from the British plan of defence; it meant a free alliance in a free atmosphere. Such a declaration would have resulted in a better tie than the coercive partnership imposed in spite of India's repeated demands for voluntary comradeship.

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## 11. Something to Fight for

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*In this great task of defending our country we have our difficulties round every corner. The Imperialist Government, it is apparent does not realize the grave urgency of parting with power to the people. It continues to be myopic and covetous in its policies and big purposes continue to be governed by little minds.*

**B. P. L. BEDI.**

ON the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting at Poona, Amery in the House of Commons on July 25, 1940, said with bare-faced assurance that the situation in India was not serious and he had no statement to make. The Congress had sacrificed Gandhi to help Britain in its prosecution of the war. The country's representatives were meeting at Poona to consider the Delhi resolution of the Working Committee, but the pontiff of the India Office had not even the elementary courtesy to say a word about it. Perhaps he wanted to forewarn over-zealous Indians that the British heart was as unresponsive as ever and her ways fixed and immutable. To expect any kindly response from British bureaucracy is like striking one's head against a wall. In the dome of British Imperialism which many in their effeminate helplessness mistake for a benevolent temple, one hears the stark echo of one's own appeals.

But the Congress, unmindful of this iniquitous British attitude, carries on its mission of world peace and works for the ideal of universal brotherhood by urging the freedom of India and other exploited nations so that all countries may join the world federation and eternal peace may reign upon this tormented world and man may lead his natural life of peace, love and goodwill to all, instead of war, hatred and exploitation.

Nehru moved the following resolution at the Poona A.I.C.C. meeting held on July 27. "The A.I.C.C. has considered the statement issued by the Working Committee from Wardha on June 21, 1940, and confirms it....."

By adopting this resolution the Congress had not climbed down, only Gandhi elevated himself still further and remained the beacon light for a world haunted by force and crippled by violence.

Mighty India wanted to jump into the arena to subdue and once for all put a halt to the periodical excursions of Germany and her satellites into other countries. For this crusade she even sacrificed her revered leader, the idol of millions and the ideal of the idealists, who had put the life-giving red corpuscles into India's thin blood. He had replaced despair with hope, dejection with faith and ever-recurring humiliations with the manly courage to resist them and suffer no longer.

There was no reference in the resolution to the failures of the British Government to meet the Indian demand for freedom, nor any criticism of it. It was a plain matter of fact and practical proposition. It had to be so considering the knock out blows that the Allied countries had received. In her hour of trial, India did not want to remind England of her failings, but, at the same time, how could India, tired of British promises, go back even a bit on any of the people's just demands? India had hoped that the dancing star of freedom would emerge out of England's fight for freedom against Fascism, but who knew that nothing but black clouds were to arise out of chaos?

A National Government at the centre was a natural corollary and the condition precedent to India's full participation in the war. There was no question of swapping horses in midstream. If Churchill could replace Chamberlain amidst the agonies of the war, surely representative Indians, commanding the confidence of the people, could easily replace old civilians and unrepresentative Indians. The argument that there may be a constitutional difficulty in recognising India's constitutional independence and the establishment

of a National Government was effectively answered by Rajaji. "Difficulties relating to the constitution need not and should not stand in the way of the British Government accepting the Congress demand." He admired the British respect for their Constitution, but "the constitution is like an apparel that can be changed and is not unchangeable as the skin itself."

This is manifestly true. Wise men are not the slaves of the constitution, and, paradoxical as it may sound, of all the nations in the world the British have the least reason to treat their Constitution as sacrosanct. With all their professed horror and detestation for revolution, there is no nation in the world which more easily accepts a revolutionary change once it has become inevitable than the British. There is only one case on record in which Britain, both immediately and ultimately, failed to rise to the occasion. That was the case of the colonies, which eventually became the United States of America. Even in the case of Ireland, the most conservative of British statesmen felt no hesitation in accepting the inevitable, the moment they were convinced that the only alternative was war. On the one hand, she clings as long and as passionately as she can to an institution or system, not because of its intrinsic merits, but because it exists and serves her immediate purpose. On the other hand, she discards it without excessive and unavailing regret, when she is convinced that it can no longer serve her purpose, that to cling to it any longer would do far greater harm than good. And the best part of the thing is that, once she has parted with the kernel of power she can no longer retain with safety, she does not quarrel about the husk but lets things take their course. This is demonstrated by the complete freedom with which De Valera has been able to tear to pieces one article after another of the Anglo-Irish Treaty until Eire has become a completely Independent State. So much so, that when Ireland declared her neutrality in this war, Britain did not even raise her little finger.

The *Times of India*, an organ of British vested interests wrote :—

"The next move rests with Whitehall and the sooner

it is taken the better, since British policy towards this country has invariably been dogged by the fatal handicap of always being declared too late to be effective."

The Poona resolution contained not even an iota of threat. Consistent with its dignity and high traditions, the A.I.C.C. did not fix any time limit. But, as Nehru had said in moving the resolution, every body had to fix some time limit in his own mind. Maulana Azad on July 31, warned the sleepy British rulers that "we cannot wait indefinitely, nor can we sit idle. The Congress should itself shoulder responsibility if the *Mahatma's* leadership is not available in the next struggle."

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## 13. Missing The Bus

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*But I do fight, let me tell you frankly, as a subject of King George, that I fight for a place in his household and I will not be content with a place in his stables.*

**SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU**

(At the Imperial Conference 1923)

**T**HE Viceroy made a statement on August 8 in reply to the Poona resolution of the A.I.C.C. This statement later on came to be known as the August Offer and it has been the pole star of British policy since then. His Excellency stated that His Majesty's Government had authorised him to invite a certain number of representative Indians to join the Executive Council, and to establish a War Advisory Council, which would meet at regular intervals and which would contain representatives of the Indian States and other interests in the national life of India as a whole. Further, the Home Government empowered him to give the assurance that they would most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the War, with the least possible delay, of a body of representatives of the principal elements in India's national life in order to devise the frame-work of the new constitution and they would lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree. He deplored the fact that the differences in India remained unbridged and said that the minorities would not be allowed to be coerced into submission. He made it clear that there could be no transfer of the ultimate responsibility of the British Government for the peace and welfare of the country. In short, only the Executive Council was to be expanded.

Dr. S. D. Kitchlew, the celebrated old Congressman of the Punjab whose sacrifices for the poor millions of India

have reduced him to one of them, said on August 10 :

"I have been very much amused to read the Viceroy's declaration. I am glad that British Imperialism has made its position clear. The British Government have ignored the Indian National Congress and placed its reliance on reactionary elements. The declaration is an open challenge to the spirit of true and genuine nationalism. Will the Congress take it lying down ? That is the question."

The Viceregal declaration went little beyond the proposals made by him in October 1939.

British statesmanship reaffirmed voluntarily its age-old bankruptcy by refusing to accept the hand of comradeship extended by the Congress on behalf of the prostrate masses of India. It was not the time for hedging and haggling, but for bold statesmanship, for a swift and generous and not tardy and grudging fulfilment of promises. India was not pulling her weight. Why not ? She was dissatisfied, disappointed and even distrustful. In her supreme hour of trial and tribulation England needed at her back a united and self-respecting India, conscious of her free future. Were not her desires bound up with the maintenance of the world freedom for which England professed she was fighting ?

Gandhi on August 13, criticising the declaration said :—

"The Viceregal pronouncement is deeply distressing. It widens the gulf between India, as represented by the Congress and England. Thinking India outside the Congress has not welcomed the pronouncement. It does not dispel suspicion ; neither does the pronouncement take note of the smouldering discontent. My own fear is that democracy is being wrecked. Britain cannot claim to stand for justice, if she fails to be just to India. India's disease is too deep to yield to any make-believe or half-hearted measures."

Having been so grossly insulted by haughty Britain, what was the alternative left for the Congress ? Pandit Nehru said on August 12 : "The Congress must fight on. We cannot compromise with Imperialism. Communalists by putting forth conditions are hindering the struggle for indepen-



dence and seem to prefer slavery to freedom if their conditions are not fulfilled."

Did it not occur to the authors of the statement that in the name of "protecting" the rights of the minorities and "preventing" them from being coerced by the majority they were actually imposing upon India the will of a minority? What was the Government they were going to set up at the centre except the Government of a minority buttressed by their own authority? The Viceroy's treatment of the Muslim League as synonymous with the Muslim community was a blatant and gross misrepresentation of facts as this claim had been denied by all the other Muslim organisations.

Initiating the India debate in the House of Commons on August 14, the Secretary of State said :—

"The constitutional deadlock in India is not so much between His Majesty's Government and a consentient Indian opposition as between the main elements in India's own national life. It can, therefore, only be resolved not by the relatively easy method of a bilateral agreement between His Majesty's Government and representatives of India, but by the much more difficult method of a multilateral agreement in which His Majesty's Government is only one of the parties."

He paid a glowing tribute to Congress leaders who, he said :—

**"Are men inspired by an ardent national patriotism. They have built a remarkable organisation, by far the most efficient political machine in India, of which they are justly proud. They have striven to make that organisation national and all embracing."**

Categorically rejecting the Congress demand for the establishment of a National Government to mobilize India's vast resources for swift and effective war effort in India, he said :—

"If, however, the Congress claim is that members of the Viceroy's Council should be dependent on the

support of the elected members of the Legislature, it is, in fact, a demand for changing the whole basis of the Indian Government in the middle of the war."

In short, Amery once again missed the bus.

India was in extreme despair; the treatment she was receiving from the British bureaucracy was callous. In that mood even a catastrophe, would not have frightened her. These reiterated phrases as to the "separate constituent facts of the complex national life of India" and these restatements of the minority case, marked by a warmth and determination in improvement even of the original, might have been alluring to some parties. But these were fatal pitfalls for the whole nation and for every part of it. A great phrase used by Christ to assure His disciples of the spaciousness of heaven and the all-embracing grace of God was requisitioned by the Secretary of State to justify Ulsterism. But India could not be finally destined to such an unfortunate status and she was determined to overcome all these anti-national moves on the part of her rulers.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on August 22, 1940 to review the situation in the light of the Viceregal pronouncement and the Secretary of State's speech. It passed the following resolution :

"The proposals contained in the Viceroy's statement of August 8 and the Secretary of State's speech in the House of Commons on August 14 are wholly opposed not only to the principle of democracy, acclaimed by the British Government in their War Aims, but also opposed to the best interests of India, and, therefore, the Congress cannot be a party to accepting these proposals or advising the country to accept them.

"The Committee are of the opinion that the rejection of this proposal unmistakably indicates that there is no willingness on the part of the British Government to part with any power, and the demand for Constituent Assembly has been misrepresented as coercion. The desire of the Congress not to embarrass the British

Government at a time of peril for them has been misunderstood and despised. They are imposing on the Congress a struggle to vindicate its position and to act for the preservation of the liberties and the honour of the people. The Congress can have no thought but that of the supreme good of the dumb and toiling millions of India and through them of the whole of submerged humanity."

The Working Committee called the A.I.C.C. to meet on September 15, 1940 at Bombay. The Committee asked the *Satyagraha* Committees that those who had taken the *Satyagraha* pledge should carry on the constructive work and other nation building activities of the Congress.

Rajaji exposed the utter absurdity of Amery's pretended sympathy for the minorities when he said what later came to be known as a "Sporting Offer" :—

"In answer to Amery's difficulty as to the minorities, I may make a sporting offer that if His Majesty's Government will agree to a Provisional National Government being formed at once, I undertake to persuade my colleagues in the Congress to agree to the Muslim League being invited to nominate the Prime Minister and to let him form a National Government as he would consider best. If there is sincerity in the difficulty felt by His Majesty's Government, it should be met by what I offer."

Strangely enough the British Government took no notice of Rajaji's "Sporting Offer" and it kept silent. The offer was obviously undemocratic as it gave power to the Muslim League which is wedded to the two-nation theory. It would have been a tragedy in Indian national life if the Congress had permitted the establishment of an ultra-communal body like the Muslim League in the saddle of the central executive authority in India. But this "Sporting Offer" exposed the pretence of the Government that it wanted to part with power, but that differences among Indians themselves were responsible for the deadlock.

Further, there was a lot of talk of the British Government

not wanting coercion in India. Who wants coercion of any group? Who suggests it? Certainly not the Congress. The Congress has never hankered after power for itself. It was easy enough for Congressmen to get soft jobs at the centre and in the provinces. Evidently the high priests of British Imperialism judge the Congress by their own standards and are surprised that Congressmen refuse jobs. The Congress asked for power to be transferred to the Indian people. But how could Britain transfer power and at the same time give up its special privileges? Therein lies the whole trouble.

During the past year India had put up with much and in spite of provocation restrained itself. But this new British approach was an insult added to the longstanding and ever-increasing injury to Indian nationalism. The Congress could not tolerate it, unless it was to forget its objective, its tradition, its pledges, its past history and finally commit suicide. It was easy enough for the fighters for Indian freedom to escape from the political tangle into prison. But consistent with their sincerest desire not to embarrass Britain in distress, they did not declare civil disobedience. But the continued attempt to emphasise and increase differences and the latest attitude shown by the British Government on fundamental issues had become sickening. The primary problem before the country was one of freedom. Communal and other questions were of secondary importance. The vast changes that were sweeping over the world would also wipe off the communal problem. And Nehru said, "I am always prepared to bow down to my brethren but not to do so before outsiders."

On August 29, the Azad-Linlithgow correspondence was released. The Viceroy had said: "I trust Congress will help." But Azad replied: "There is no meeting ground." He further said, "Apart from other fundamental questions, there is not even any suggestion for a National Government. In the circumstances I am unable to find any scope for further discussion."

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## 14. Protest Without Malice

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*Each petty hand  
Can steer a ship becalm'd ; but he that will  
Govern and carry her to her ends must know  
His tides, his current ; how to shift his sails ;  
What she will bear in foul ; what in fair weather ;  
What her springs are, her leaks and how to stop them :  
The forces and the nature of all winds,  
Gusts, storms and tempests ; when her keel ploughs hell,  
And decks knocks heaven, then to manage her  
Becomes the name and office of a Pilot.*

BEN JONSON : "Cataline."

THE All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay on September 15, 1940. Gandhi, reviewing the situation and chalking out the future programme of the Congress said :

"I may tell you that I am not anxious to go to jail. Of course, it is open to the Government to lock me up any time they like. I wish to make it clear that we do not wish ill to Britain. We do not want her to be defeated. A *Satyagrahi* does not believe in taking advantage of the weakness of his opponent. Whatever we have to achieve we will achieve through our own strength, and that is why we have said that we do not want to embarrass Britain. The Congress claims for itself the freedom to protect civil liberty in this country. We must have the right to state freely what we feel about the war. How can the Government claim that India is with the British Government so far as the war is concerned? They have committed the greatest blunder by declaring that India is with them without even consulting the autonomous provinces. When they did this, we realised the hollowness of so-called provin-

cial autonomy. That is why the Congress ministries resigned.....If I have to face any aggressor, I will court death as a true *Satyagrahi* with a smile on my face.....There is enough room for compromise in this resolution and I shall go to the Viceroy with the resolution and ask him if the present situation is not such as will lead to the extinction of the Congress. There is no question of mass civil disobedience. I am still thinking of something but I have not yet seen the light."

The following resolution was passed :

"The All-India Congress Committee cannot submit to a policy which is a denial of India's natural right to freedom which suppresses the free expression of public opinion, and which would lead to the degradation of her people and their continued enslavement. By following this policy the British Government have created an intolerable situation and are *imposing* upon the Congress a struggle for the preservation of their honour and the elementary rights.....**Congressmen cannot withhold their admiration for the bravery and endurance shown by the British nation in the hour of danger and peril. They can have no illwill against them and the spirit of *Satyagraha* forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarrass them.** But the self-imposed restraint cannot be taken to the extent of self-extinction.....the Committee requests Mahatma Gandhi to guide the country."

London was being heavily pounded and its ancient buildings pulverised by Goering's proud and ruthless Air Force, and Gandhi said :

"The dreaded has happened ; the imaginary has become real. My sympathy is deeper to-day, but it has changed in form. There is no inconsistency. If there is any inconsistency it is due to the ever-changing and, in this particular instance, changed circumstances. I was unprepared for the recent declarations and I claim that it is the genuineness of my sympathy which has made me single out the fact which Britain

can easily recognise and yield without any difficulty in her prosecution of war."

Britain was not only being savagely bombed but there was also the threat of invasion. Gandhi in such perilous circumstances did not press or even whisper about independence for India; he only wanted the elementary right of freedom of speech to be recognised. And the sanction behind the enforcement of this entreaty as we shall see later, was only a symbolic individual *Satyagraha* and that too in a most restricted and innocuous form. It was hatred of Fascism and love for England coupled with sympathy for the Allied cause which compelled Gandhi to take such an action.

On September 27, 1940, the *Mahatma* interviewed Lord Linlithgow. The Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence was released on September 30.

The Viceroy refused point blank to agree to the Congress demand for freedom of speech.

Gandhi emphasising his opposition to Fascism said :

**"I made it plain in the course of our talk that the Congress is as much opposed to victory of Nazism as any Britisher can be."**

Gandhi's faith in Great Britain is unshakeable. "Even if London falls and Great Britain falls, it will not mean that Great Britain has been defeated" was his tribute to British tenacity.

On the eve of the struggle, Gandhi explaining his attitude towards Britain said on October 13 :

**"Let us tell the British where they are in the wrong, but do not let us wish them any harm. We may demand a mental and heart change in their outlook, but we may not pray for their downfall. The defeat of the British would connote the victory of the Nazis which again we do not and must not desire"**

The *New Statesman and Nation*, London, wrote on October 15 : "On the day that Gandhi could broadcast over the ether his satisfaction that his people were free, we should acquire a new personality in the eyes of Europe and of

America. Even M. Molotov would stammer to accuse us of imperialist ambitions. We cannot lead a war of liberation in Europe, if a rebel India hangs about our head."

Time and again Gandhi had made it clear that he was not going to hit Britain below the belt whatever her failings and provocations and however pungent and biting the criticism of the Leftists in India. That is why he was not to court arrest as it would embarrass Britain and he wanted to keep the movement pure and undefiled. He further laid down that the Congress had no desire to surround ammunition factories or barracks and prevent people from doing what they liked.

On October 17, 1940, individual *Satyagraha* commenced and Vinobha Bhave, who was the first nominee, addressed a meeting in the village of Panaur. Gandhi had discussed with Vinobha various plans so as to eliminate even the least possibility of friction, the idea being to sublimate the movement into a moral protest and thus maintain its purity and grandeur. Vinobha's speeches, far from being political or containing anything to arouse the masses against Britain, were an essay on non-violence and the constructive programme. Vinobha, in fact, winged his listeners into the high empyrean of sublime ethics. His successor, Pandit Nehru, was expected to strike more dulcet, more popular, more mundane notes to a much larger and more sympathetic world.

On October 24, Gandhi decided to close down *Harijan* as the Editor received a notice from the District Magistrate of Poona that all news relating to Vinobha's speeches be first submitted to the Press Adviser, Delhi.

Pandit Nehru was arrested on October 31, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Nehru, the bitterest opponent of Fascism, was to get the longest sentence. Did this imprisonment not mean that India's co-operation in the war was not sought as a friend, but demanded as a serf? Willing India was being converted into a resentful stranger. Was not England playing the democrat at home and the dictator abroad?

The Viceroy in his speech to the Central Legislative Assembly on November 20 said: "The proposals in question would place real power and real responsibility in Indian



hands." The proposals did not place *real* power in Indian hands, but even if they did, what was forgotten was that what India wants is not merely that power and responsibility should be placed in any Indian hands but that they should be placed in the hands of *India* herself. She did not want the substitution of a brown for a white bureaucracy, but clamoured for a National Self-Government. No Indian objects to the survival of Britain and her national liberty. But we desire life for India also, and, therefore, liberty. There is between the maintenance of British power in India and Indian liberty a contradiction, which ought to be removed and replaced by a better relationship.

Amery was being criticised for not mentioning India in any of his speeches. On December 12, 1940, he made an "India First" speech. He emphasised at length the unity of India, but if we analyse the speech it comes more to "India nowhere in the picture" than "India first." Mr. M. L. Chowla wrote in the *Tribune*, "what is the use of his pontifically declaring that 'India First' should be the slogan of all Indians, when he offers encouragement to the theocratists by assuring them that nothing would be done without their count? He is responsible for the growth of the mediaeval mentality of the Muslim League." Amery exaggerated the role of England in the drama of Indian Nationalism. We remembered the words of the *New Testament* when Amery said "India First," "The first shall be the last and the last first."

Addressing the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on December 16, the Viceroy declared that he adhered to his statement of August 8, which "embodied a genuine, a sincere and a most generous offer."

The Viceroy in his speech made a strange remark that "at no stage have any constructive proposals capable of realisation in the conditions of the modern world been put forward." Was not the Poona Offer a constructive proposal? Both India and the modern world are intensely nationalistic and the Poona resolution wanted a Provisional National Government. It did not ask for a Congress Government, but for a Government enjoying the confidence of all elected

elements in the Central Legislature.

The Viceroy had stated that the "objective of the Government remains to lead India to the proclaimed goal of Dominion Status." This is neither a novel sentiment, nor a new promise. In fact, it has been the declared policy of the British Government. As far back as 1921, on the inauguration of the Central Legislature, His Majesty the King said :

"For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamt of *Swaraj* for their motherland. You have the beginnings of *Swaraj* within my Empire, and the widest scope and ample opportunity which my other Dominions enjoy."

Even a man like Churchill in 1920 opined :

"We owe India a deep debt and we look forward confidently to the days when the Indian Government and people would have assumed fully and completely their Dominion Status."

In 1928, Ramsay MacDonald, the then Prime Minister, publicly said :

"Within a period of months rather than years there will be a new Dominion added to the Commonwealth of our Nations, a Dominion of another race, a Dominion that would find self-respect as an equal within this Commonwealth."

And what progress has India made ? With what great magnanimity have these promises been fulfilled ?

Does freedom mean no more than a mirage ? Is freedom only another word for anarchy or chicanery or the interest of those who are powerful by violence or cunning rather than reason or merit ?

## 15. Amery's Own Testimony

*It is preposterous to think that the Indian proletariat, and the vast mass, the almost innumerable peoples of India would be likely to live in peace, happiness and decency under the same policy and the same form of Government as the British, Canadian or Australian democracies. It is preposterous not because natives of India are inherently incapable of working modern democratic institutions, but because of the political, social, religious and racial conditions of the country in which they live.*

**CHURCHILL :**

[July, 9, 1931.]

**T**HE political deadlock in India continued. The British Government had said their last word in the August Offer. Instead of trying to show courage and imagination in Indian matters, the Government persisted in their ruinous policy of "do nothing."

Though Gandhi had started his Civil Disobedience campaign, he had given it the most restricted character. The list of the *Satyagrahis* was religiously scrutinized and sifted to eliminate coarser stuff. Care was taken to permit only those who had ground themselves into dust in the millstone of Indian freedom. The *Satyagrahis* had to send a written notice to the District Magistrate that they intended delivering a speech. The name of the place and time were also specified. In most cases they were clapped into prison before they had opened their mouth. There was to be no *Satyagraha* on Sundays and it was suspended during Christmas. In the Cantonments even the *Satyagraha* Committees were abolished. When S. Sampuran Singh was arrested at Lahore, the students held demonstrations. Gandhi immediately rebuked them :

"They have done a great disservice to the national cause. This is no movement to overawe or deliberately to

embarrass the Government whatever may be said to the contrary. It is a movement to express the stern determination of the Congress to pay the highest price required in the shape of self-sacrifice and suffering for vindicating national honour."

The movement, if it can be called a movement at all, was just on the issue of freedom of speech. Gandhi wanted liberty, provided it was not inconsistent with non-violence. In short, he wanted liberty and not licence. What he desired was that man's mind should not be chained and that man should be at liberty to express his views. In explaining the choice that the world's civilization had before it, Roosevelt had discoursed that it was one between religion and godlessness, the idea of justice against force, moral decency against the firing squad, courage to speak out, to act, *versus* the false lullaby of appeasement. Was not Gandhi putting into practice what the President of U.S.A. had counselled as the ideal for mankind?

When the Congress ministries were in power, Gandhi had categorically declared that liberty in the Congress provinces should not be misused as licence and not even a semblance of violence or a shadow of subversive activities would be tolerated. Gandhi would not think of indulging in any acts of sabotage under the cover of freedom of speech which he had asked for. Knowing all this, the British Government did not accede to the moral right of freedom of speech. We are not unaware that in the last war even authors like Lowes Dickenson were put on the black list and men like Bertrand Russell were prosecuted. The Sermon on the Mount would have discouraged recruiting and a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State then announced that "if used for such a purpose that document would be liable to seizure." History bears testimony to the futility of this policy.

A pious Englishman warned his countrymen that "if the British Government took up the task of repression in India, they would do themselves a disservice before the public opinion of the world as great as losing an important battle." But no body listened.

Amery is an artist in blaming others for the wrongs done by himself or his Government. Speaking on January 23, 1941, he reiterated his meaningless dictum that the solution lay in the hands of Indians themselves.

Amery's political philosophy of Indian life is based on differences among the Indians. But who is responsible for the differences in India? Who introduced separate electorates? The system of separate electorates was opposed to the teaching of history, it perpetuated class divisions and stereotyped the existing relations. Hindus and Muslims, who happily lived together for centuries, are now made to gaze fiercely across the table at each other. Catholics and Protestants used to fly at each other's throats, but do they now? To-day, Jinnah is *persona grata* with the authorities. Will the Government follow the remedy that he suggested for the communal malady some years ago when Lord Birkenhead referred to the communal trouble in India? Jinnah suggested to him that Britain should do in the case of India what it had done in the case of Canada, where the differences between the English and the French were on a much bigger scale than those existing between the communities of India. Lord Durham, who arrived in Canada as the Governor-General, realized the racial cleavages and as soon as self-government was introduced the icy differences of race, religion and language melted before the sun of common freedom and common patriotism. The same miracle can happen in India.

There will always be dissenters in every country. If India has to produce a dissent-proof constitution, the establishment of self-government in this country will have to be postponed to the Greek Calends.

The Secretary of State had said that Britain had inherited from the past the responsibility for the peace and welfare of India. But how have the British agents discharged their responsibility? The wide spread illiteracy in India and chronic poverty of the masses throw a lurid light on their administration of this country. In the 19th century people bragged about their domination and felt little shame, but does not Britain still rejoice in the same language in these days of freedom and equality?

Amery's speech did not make any fresh approach; on the contrary, it was bound to lead to serious misgivings. A. G. Gardiner thus anatomized Amery :—

“ He is a diehard who may not see farther than his nose. The story of Ireland, the story of Egypt and the story of South Africa are lost upon him.”

One does not expect anything constructive from Amery, but why was the Labour Party as reticent as a pigeon before a cat? While in the Opposition it prates and chatters of what miracles it will accomplish for India, but when it is in power, it fiddles while India is on fire.

The Civil Disobedience campaign was going on smoothly. Each arrest of a *Satyagrahi* was like a ripple on the mighty ocean of India's political peace. There was no attempt, direct or indirect, to interfere with the Government's war effort. At the background was the deep anti-Fascist stand of the Congress. Admitt ing this anti-Fascist stand of the Congress, Amery on February 24, said :

“ If this campaign strikes a jarring note it does not affect the universal detestation in which all shades of Indian opinion including even the Congress hold Nazi and Fascist dictatorship. The general desire of all India is to see the victory of our cause.”

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## 16. Excuses & Arguments

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*Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants, it is the creed of slaves.*

WILLIAM PITT

THERE is something comic and something tragic about the functioning of the Government of India, for nothing seems to shake it out of its age-long complacency, neither logic nor reason, neither peril nor disaster. The paralysis in British leadership in no way befitted the fast changing world. A feeling of futility was being deliberately inspired in India. Amery was looking at "India First" with the two eyes of the Indian Civil Service and British Imperialism. Perhaps this noisy slogan was like that of a hen cackling but laying no eggs.

Even a moderate leader like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had lost all faith in the British Government's intentions. On March 14, in the utmost perplexity, he cried :

"I maintain and maintain very seriously that there has never been a Government of India more isolated from public opinion and from the main current of thought in the country than the present Government of India."

Neither the sphinx-like silence of Churchill nor the evasive loquacity of Amery discouraged Sapru. The August proposals to Amery still appeared to be like the law of the Medes and Persians, eternal and unchangeable. How long was Amery to jog along with the August proposals which had already become as lifeless as dead mutton ?

Amery in a speech in the House of Commons on April 22, said : "The difficulty lies not so much in the devolution of authority as in making sure that there is an authority in India, which can take over and will not break down or break up in the

process." He repeated that the only solution of the Indian problem depended on Indians themselves. Thus, in these words, the "middle movement" of the Bombay Proposals of the Non-Parties Conference was buried by Amery. His speech had served as a damper to whatever hopes of a resolution of the political deadlock in India the Bombay Conference had aroused in certain quarters. Amery's speeches always leave behind a sense of depression, irritation and frustration. It was bound to engender a spirit of helplessness in the minds of those who were working strenuously to bring about a better understanding between Britain and India. Amery had done greater harm than any other British statesman to imperil prospects of a settlement. He neglected and betrayed a great opportunity for rallying all the Liberals. Perhaps, Amery was not aware that his stereotyped schoolboy arguments and hackneyed objections had ceased even to amuse and provide mirth to the public and the press by their boring repetition. It was high time that he altered his arguments a bit, if only to avoid insipidity and insipience. His words were cold and could not revive faith.

The S.O.S. signalled by the Leaders' Conference at Bombay had gone unheeded. It was a call to save India, and to transmute India's moral revolt into active support by giving something which India could value and fight for.

An incongruous situation prevails in India. Amery will do nothing unless Jinnah agrees and Jinnah will not agree to anything except to Pakistan, to which nobody will submit. Supposing they all comport with Jinnah and he is not horrified at the ghosts he has raised, he will present a scheme of partition to Amery. But Amery is opposed to partition and will not give his assent. So, how to begin and where to end is the quandary of unfortunate India. Above all, Amery does not let you know what exactly his position is and what his views are. There were complaints that Amery never made public his views against Pakistan and he side-tracked the issue by making his "India First" speech. This of course, could only mean one India and not two Indias, though Amery did not say so in so many words—as,



indeed, he should have done. The slogan, however, transmitted a thrill of horror among some politicians who had been encouraging the perilous sentiments of the two-nation theory. Curiously enough, Amery in his subsequent speeches stifled this slogan and stressed consideration of the view point of 90 millions of Muslims.

As regards unanimity in India as a prerequisite of the grant of self-government, let Amery remember that the French and the English in Canada and the Dutch and the British in South Africa were not asked to compose their differences first before power was handed over to them.

And may we remind Amery of what the British Government did when in the Khilafat days the Hindus and Muslims were united like drops in the ocean. This friendship resulted in the ghastly scenes of Jallianwala Bagh. Again, what did they do when all the Hindu and Muslim members at the Second Round Table Conference submitted the Joint Memorandum? What was the response when the Congress, the League and all the elected members time and again rejected Budgets in the past?

The position in a nutshell is that whatever offer has been made, it is subject to conditions which are incapable of fulfilment and as Sir N. N. Sircar put it: "It is no good offering a million pounds conditional on being supplied with a box of hot ice."

From a perusal of Amery's utterances, one concludes that he is more interested in counter-acting the influence of the Congress than in bringing about a settlement with it. And what is his achievement during his tenure of office? He has alienated the Congress, angered the Muslim League and infuriated the Liberals. He is in the strange position of Casabianca standing alone on the burning deck of Imperialism.

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## 17. By Indians for England

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*India is an autocracy without an autocrat. Its rule combines the disadvantages of absolute monarchy with the impersonality and irresponsibility of democratic officialdom.*

H. G. WELLS

PRACTICALLY a year had passed since the announcement of the August Offer, but nothing had been done to give effect to it. On August 8, 1940, the Viceroy had said that they did not feel that they could, any longer, because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Viceroy's Council. On August 11, 1940, Amery had given the assurance : "Lord Linlithgow would, of course, go ahead, prepared to work with those who would work with him and with each other." Was the Viceroy's Council not expanded because Jinnah had not agreed and unless he moved down from the apex of his egoism and self-conceit other political parties did not matter? It was a triumph of the coercing, cajoling and bamboozling policy of the reactionary Muslim League.

The Liberal Leaders sounded a grave warning to the Secretary of State that if any deleterious effect was produced by his statements, he must bear the entire responsibility. Amery's speeches in Parliament had provoked in India a depressing chorus of disapproval tinged with bitterness. And Jinnah's intemperate and vitriolic language was driving even the Liberal Leaders back to their armchairs.

Gandhi on May 4, in his letter to Sapru, wrote :

"My impression is that Jinnah does not want a settlement until he has so consolidated the League position that he can dictate his terms to all the parties concerned including the rulers."

Nationalist India was despairing of the policy of masterly inactivity and something was needed to catch public imagination. At last on July 21, 1941, the Viceroy announced the expansion of his Council. Five new members were added. To see in it any sign of a concession to the Indian democratic demand would be asking for disillusionment. It did not satisfy Indian opinion, nor could it serve the Government's purpose. This expansion even did not meet with the wishes of the Non-Parties Conference held at Bombay. Real power rests with the people, and an executive which is not responsible to the legislature cannot be called a People's Government. The *New Statesman and Nation* wrote, "An Indian majority on the Governor-General's Council without Congress representatives is simply irrelevant." Gandhi on July 22, expressed his feelings, "that the announcement does not affect the stand taken by the Congress nor does it meet the Congress demand."

Mr. M. L. Chowla, commenting on this expansion, wrote in the *Tribune* :

"They are in their own way distinguished men, but with the single exception of Aney not one of them can claim any following in the Central Legislature. The main political parties in the country do not own them, nor have they blessed them."

The expansion was a mockery, with no real meaning. What did this expansion come to? Now there were six Indians in place of three. In the departments which were under Indians before, instead of one man working three would work. Amery said about them that they were a great team of ability not rivalled anywhere in India or elsewhere. The portfolios held by the Englishmen had not been split and transferred to Indians. Civil Defence and Information were new ones. The unofficial majority in the expanded Council was illusive, utterly ineffective and wholly unrepresentative. That the Council had been Indianised to a great extent meant nothing. One does not talk of the Anglicisation of the British Army or the British Government. One talks about the nationalisation of the country's Government or army. One talks of power being transferred.

On August 1, in the House of Commons, Amery categorically said that the transfer of power and authority was not feasible; there was great danger threatening India from internal strife. The Secretary of State said nothing that he had not said before. There was one departure. The impression that one gathered from his earlier speeches was that an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League would heal the communal ulcer and power would, according to British professions, be then transferred to Indian hands. Later, the Princes also came in. They were also to be satisfied. The most obvious of these obstacles was the Princely Order, that hinterland of feudalism on the Indian scene. But Amery had not contented himself with constructing this high hurdle in the way of India's constitutional progress. He now said that "the main elements in India's national life include not only political organisations or great religions and cultural communities, but they also include geographical and administrative elements, provinces of British India, more especially those which have not thrown away the responsibilities of self-government, and the Indian States." The non-Congress Provinces had thus been made into a separate entity to determine the future of India. Nothing could be more dangerous or pregnant with mischief than this newfangled conception of democracy. It was a direct assault on India's unity. It amounted to a perilous encouragement of centrifugal tendencies in the country. Moreover, it is the height of injustice and absurdity, first, to create conditions, in which a responsible Government of the British pattern cannot work and then to flaunt the existence of those conditions as the sole ground for not establishing that form of Government. It is exactly the procedure which has raised suspicion in so many minds in India regarding the *bona fides* of British statesmanship in its handling of the Indian problem.

Further Amery in his speech made the startling declaration: "There is no India, as there is a Belgium or a Holland, for instance, and in many respects India is much more like Europe than it is like an individual country." Thus, he made his slogan, "India First," meaningless and patted the separatists on the back. Had not Amery said in the clearest

and most unambiguous language that he could command that in spite of the diverse elements of which she was composed India had always maintained her unity and solidarity. He is an unimaginative imperialist diehard, and the less he speaks the better for India.

A sense of vexation had seized the people throughout India once again. There was not so much despair or disappointment as indifference. Despair can only follow hope ; the Indian people had ceased to hope months ago.

Now even the figurative shadow of hope that flickered from the burning candle of faith vanished like smoke into the thin air of helplessness.

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## 18. England & America Ltd.

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*Democracy to-day has its chance and democracy may forfeit it. The Atlantic Charter has been promised to all countries subjected by Hitler. The Atlantic Charter must be equally promised to all countries subjected by England or we shall run into another and greater world catastrophe.*

PEARL S. BUCK

THE world had been clamouring for an authentic declaration of the war aims of the Allies. So far nothing concrete had been officially said. At last on August 15, 1941, after the historic meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt somewhere in the Atlantic the Eight-Point Declaration addressed to all the peoples of the world was announced with great pride and elation. It was considered to be the talisman of groaning humanity. In it the people read the long awaited end of the sad era of exploitation and it was to serve as the basis of a people's glorious charter wherein right shall replace might and despotism will be a relic of the hoary past. It was mutually agreed by Churchill and Roosevelt that neither of their countries was out for territorial aggrandizement and both would respect the rights of all peoples to choose their own form of Government and to do what they could to give equal access to trade and raw materials to all States, great and small, victor and vanquished.

How many took this boastfully trumpeted but hollow declaration seriously? The European countries saw their liberty and salvation in the Atlantic Charter but the subject peoples of Asia and Africa read in it the gloomy perpetuation of their political status. The Fourteen Points of President Wilson resulted in the acquisition of territories under the altered names of mandates. Was this Charter to be

as ill-conceived and ill-fated? All over the world was the whispering campaign, "What about India? What about the other countries which were victims of aggression before 1939? Why do not Britain and the U.S.A. start extending the Four Freedoms—freedom of speech and expression, freedom of every person to worship his God in his own way, freedom from want, and freedom from terror in India straightway?"

Churchill had so far maintained a studious and mysterious silence about India. On September 9, 1941, he dilated at length on the scope of the Atlantic Charter. According to him it did not qualify the various statements made from time to time about the development of constitutional Government in India. The British Prime Minister said:

"We have pledged by the declaration of August, 1940, to help India to obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject of course to the fulfilment of the obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests."

Roosevelt's speech of March 15, 1941, in which he was prepared to recognise the inherent right of every nation to its own nationhood, had encouraged hope among subject peoples, but Churchill insolently dashed all such longings to the ground.

Churchill is very clear in his attitude towards India. Nearly a decade ago he had said:—

"The British nation has no intention whatsoever of relinquishing control of Indian life and progress. We have no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel on the crown of the King, which more than all our dominions and dependencies constitute the glory and strength of the British Empire.....England apart from her Empire in India ceases for ever to exist as a great power."

India has been called the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown. Yet her illiterate masses detect no blinding glitter in their lives. And the political leaders in India, men who seek a guarantee of economic progress for a population whose cause they champion, the jewel of the Imperial Crown will

remain a tawdry thing until India has been guaranteed Independence. But still people, overwhelmed with despair and dejection, expect something friendly from this diehard No. 1 of the British Empire.

Attlee, the Deputy Prime Minister, while presenting the Charter to the House of Commons, with the following words sprinkled water on the dying plants of Indian aspirations, in the absence of Churchill in America :

**“ The declaration will be equally applicable to all races, including Asiatics and Africans.”**

This interpretation was natural and logical, but Churchill by distorting facts and violating the solemn promises made, turned this charter of human liberty into a “symbol of hypocrisy” as the *News Chronicle* of London, put it. Was it not just a spectacular piece of propaganda and clever Imperial window dressing? How could Churchill exclude India when it was agreed in the Charter “they respect the right of *all peoples* to choose the form of Government under which they will live?” Even Roosevelt at the Press Conference he held on board the *Pentomac* made it public “Not a single section of a single continent went undiscussed at the Conference\*at sea.” Even Mr. Cordell Hull admitted that the statement of basic ideas of policies were universal in their application.

Attlee’s interpretation of the Charter, was later arbitrarily vetoed by Churchill in the House of Commons. Attlee was the Acting Prime Minister in Churchill’s absence. Who was to initiate the Government policies? Could two members of the Cabinet speak with two different voices? These were the constitutional questions raised. Attlee was constitutionally, morally and politically bound to quit the Cabinet but the British Labour Party when in office dances rapturously to the transporting tune of the Imperial Orchestra.

Thus the Labour Party quietly submitted to one of the grossest pieces of rebuffs sustained by it in modern times. Nothing better or more liberal could be expected from Churchill who is an avowed imperialist. But why was Roosevelt quiet? Nobody shouts more loudly about the



dignity of man and the inherent rights of every nation. One cannot help recalling, "Put not thy faith in Premiers and Presidents."

Even a loyalist like the late Sir Sikander Hyat Khan in his statement of Oct. 1, 1941, asserted:—

"It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister, when he did decide to break his silence about India, should have thought fit to do so with a statement which has created a feeling of despondency and dismay throughout the length and breadth of the country."

The second Inter-Allied Conference met on September 24, 1941, and this bogus and well-dressed charter was ostentatiously placed before it for confirmation. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, presided. India was not represented; it was never even mentioned by Eden in his opening speech. It is customary to announce India along with the Dominions, but this time it was deliberately not referred to. Amery was present in his personal capacity.

Maisky and others were fully cognizant of the non-applicability of the Charter to India. In agreeing to declare the Atlantic Charter as constituting the war aims of the Allies did not Russia traduce her ideals of universal brotherhood? India had expressed her sympathy with the Soviet Union but the Russian representative never bothered to question the interpretation put by Churchill.

In India, the Charter had been condemned by everybody except Jinnah. Gandhi, when asked to express his opinion succinctly said that his silence was more eloquent. Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the Acting President of the Indian National Congress, in a statement to the Press maintained that "the Congress policy and programme stand vindicated on the irrefutable testimony of no less a person than the Prime Minister of England."

The question before every Indian was: "Could we, while helping other nations in attaining their liberty, be oblivious of our duty in enabling our own country to achieve freedom?" India and China were, no doubt deliberately omitted from this declaration, the former as a sop to the ruling classes in

England and its allied interests elsewhere and the latter as a sop to the ruling classes in Japan.

Amery had the hardihood to say that the August Declaration was loftier in its ideals and aspirations than the Atlantic Charter. Why does not Amery promise to us the smaller instead of the bigger? The Atlantic Charter is in its essentials unconditional and unequivocal, whereas the August Statement is fettered by two conditions, which both individually and collectively reduce it to a nullity. We are not expected to frame our constitution freely and unreservedly as "all peoples" according to Article Three of the Atlantic Charter, are to choose the form of Government under which they will live, but subject to certain "obligations" and "responsibilities." Considering the real intentions of our rulers many are forced to say that the war is an Imperialist war for the defence of this straggling ramshackle system of domination, finance, trade and tradition—the British Empire. And whenever the British spokesmen talk of freedom they only mean the liberation of the countries overrun by the Nazis. The curious aspect of the Atlantic Tragedy is that the Charter applies to Belgium, Holland, France and even Germany and Italy. Why should India be black-balled? She is one of the Allies and is shedding her blood in an endless stream. Is there no means of arraigning Churchill and those for whom he speaks before the bar of world opinion?

Sir Francis Younghusband on October 15 wrote in the *London Times* :—

"We have blundered badly in India. While we have expressed our intention to free every other country, we have made special reservations about liberating India."

British behaviour in India should make even an Imperial angel weep, for it is the one large black spot on Britain's case and her cause against the Nazis. It is most unfortunate when humanity was undergoing the agonising travail of rebirth, that the soul of India should have been suppressed and that she was prevented by incorrigible Imperialists from

making her befitting contribution in conformity with her cherished ideals and self-respect in this world crisis. India is fortunate in having the privilege of serving under the leadership of Gandhi, whose eyes, piercing through shifting storms and dense darkness, are as ever steadfastly fixed on eternal verities. The Congress Caravan to achieve independence moves on and on, while many others have straggled and crashed.

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## 19. "Get Out Mr. Amery."

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*It is not the angle of vision that needs changing. It is the eye, purified from pride, that can see clearly and the heart, purged from arrogance, that can beat with healthy strokes.*

ANNIE BESANT.

JAPAN'S attitude towards the democracies was getting stiffer and more authoritarian. Japanese nationals in the Allied countries were leaving post haste for their own country. Britain and America had stopped the shipment of oil to Japan. The Japanese Ambassador at Washington was still conducting negotiations with the U.S.A., when Japanese bombers gracelessly contravening all laws of international morality attacked the American fleet at Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. The damage which America suffered there was incalculable. Thus on December 8, the Nazis of the East were at war with America and Britain. So far India had been immune from any danger of being attacked, but now she was being threatened by these "beasts from the abyss."

The symbolic *Satyagraha* campaign continued to be purely "individual" and symbolic. Gandhi had taken every precaution to avoid any clash with the authorities or to embarrass them in any way. Slogans were shouted instead of long speeches. For the first time Congressmen had forgotten to remind their listeners of their poverty, or their political status. Gandhi had made it abundantly clear that nothing big or immediate should be expected as a result of the Individual *Satyagraha*. The fight was not for the independence of India. "England's own freedom was in jeopardy, how could England confer it on India?" was the argument used by the *Mahatma*. The movement was only a moral protest against

the dictatorial way in which India had been dragged into the war. The autonomous provinces were not consulted or even informed. It was never intended that war work should be tampered with, no sabotage was ever planned, no secret plots contrived.

The Government had realized by now the unbelievable innocence of the movement. The peace of India had not been disturbed. Then, why was the government keeping these harmless gentlemen behind prison bars? The British Government had incurred the criticism of freedom-loving peoples by arresting the born enemies of Fascism. Over and above, the Japanese war lords were brandishing their blood stained swords and their jumping into the arena seemed but a matter of days. With the war drawing nearer to India, it was imperative that the true leaders of the masses should no longer be incarcerated in their cells. On December 5, Nehru and Azad were released. Asaf Ali and Rajagopalachariar had been set free a few days earlier.

The Viceroy addressing on December 15, 1941, the Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta repeated his pet August Declaration. "It was as valid to-day as it was made," he said and urged the people to forget domestic differences. The Viceroy seemed to take the same pride in his August Offer as the father takes in his child.

It was a matter of profound regret that on the eve of the meeting of the Congress Working Committee when it was open for the Viceroy to influence its decision by a generous gesture, His Excellency should have had nothing more to offer to the country than the discredited August Offer. "It is not the fault of His Majesty's Government that matters have not further advanced. "They have done everything in their power," he had said at the last Chambers' meeting in 1940 and now he said, "We have left nothing undone." Is this not to proclaim the utter lack of political resourcefulness on the part of British statesmanship?

Amery speaking in London on December 16, 1941, delivered another sermon to India. "Have moral unity, Indians," he said. Explaining the ethical conception of

freedom, he said : " It is a thing which is not conferred as a kind of titular distinction, but is acquired by moral unity which sustains it within and by the power to defend it against dangers from without." Thus, he applied a coating of moral cosmetic on the face of British Imperialism as easily as a woman covers up her wrinkles with her powder puff. It would be better if Amery kept quiet. His speech only adds to the existing confusion. The kinds of unity that he wants from India have never been demanded of any dominion.

Nehru, replying to the latest sermon of Amery, said : "Get out, Mr. Amery." With Amery in the Cabinet, there could be no compromise between Britain and India.

The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli and passed a resolution on December 30, 1941. The Committee not only relieved Gandhi of his responsibility, but in a way declared its readiness to co-operate in the war effort if certain conditions were satisfied. It is true that the resolution defining the Congress attitude towards war did not specifically make mention of the Poona Offer, but no body can deny that the spirit of the Poona Offer pulsed in every word. Gandhi made it clear that the opening of the door now lay with the Government. "Bardoli has made a generous gesture. Will Delhi and London reciprocate?" was on the tongue of every nationalist.

The Working Committee had wisely declined to state the terms on which the door could be opened. Having been affronted often enough, the Committee would not court any further insult by making any offer.

Explaining the significance of the Bardoli Resolution, - C. R. said on January 4, 1942 :—

" If the British Government would entrust to us the responsibility of the defence of our country, and concede to us the necessary powers we should not shirk the

responsibility and we must organise defence. This is the gist of the Bardoli Resolution."

G. B. Pant the ex-Premier of U. P., on December 31, 1941 said :—

"We want to make a befitting contribution in this world crisis..... Amery has been repeating mischievous inaccuracies. Nevertheless, India has no quarrel with the British people. She wishes them well and she has heartfelt sympathies with the victims of aggression."

The All-India Congress Committee met at Wardha on January 15, 1942. Gandhi once again showed his broad-mindedness and utter humility by asking the members to accept the resolution, which was responsible for the relinquishment of his leadership. Gandhi has a flexibility, which in moments of crisis has saved the country from many a blunder. He is often adamant, but he knows how to yield gracefully when the influx of people's thoughts leaves him no choice even though he is convinced that they are palpably in the wrong. Yet the democratic spirit in him leaves him no other alternative. Azad maintained that the relationship between Gandhi and the Working Committee members was unique.

"There is nothing except death that can part us and the same is the relationship for that matter between Gandhi and the national life of this country."

The All-India Congress Committee ratified the Bardoli Resolution.

The Congress once again sacrificed the adored and trusted captain of India's destiny. His exit has never meant that he has been dethroned from the hearts of Indians, nor does it mean that a rival has stepped into his shoes. His place in Indian politics is permanent and his position as the torch bearer of a new era of peace, goodwill and love is unique. He stands, as he must stand, high above all changing tumults and terrors that destroy mankind to-day and holds aloft like a

wonderful beacon of hope and salvation his beautiful gospel for the redemption of mankind. He is a prophet and his prophetic word will be a sure foundation of a new world that has to be evolved out of the present ruin and tragedy. The Congress, which he has created may not rise to the mountain peaks where he habitually dwells in spirit, but it is inconceivable that he can ever cease to be the light that guides our path towards the cherished goal of freedom.



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## 20. Cripps For India

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*Indifferent and unarmed India may become another Malaya, lost by stupidity. Armed and free, she may unite like China, and become unconquerable. Upon our decision rests hers—and upon that may rest the Balance of Destiny.*

LONDON “PEOPLE.”

(March 8, 1942)

SINGAPORE fell on February 15, 1942. Amid the blazing fires at the great naval base there disappeared in smoke the once impressive legend of the impregnability of this fortification.

The war was approaching the gates of India. The news about the evacuation of Rangoon came on March 7. The Burma Road had been the life line of China. With the evacuation of Rangoon, the artery of China's struggling body with an anguished soul in it was cut. The Japanese descent on the Far East was sudden and swift. What was to be the fate of India? Was the tragedy of Malayan States to be repeated in India? Japan's position was becoming formidable if not invincible. Better ways and more effective means had to be found to resist Japan. India was the only base left from where to operate against Japan. India suddenly came into the limelight of world events. There was an upsurge of public opinion that something must be done to conciliate India and secure her hearty and voluntary co-operation instead of the present passive and disinterested acquiescence. From pubs to Parliament it was gossipped that there was a weak link in the Allied strong chain.

For the first time India was prominent in the war debate in the House of Commons. The burden of the discussion was that without a National Government India's resources could not be fully tapped. The Government's policy was severely censured and a change of outlook urged. Sir Percy Harris

(Liberal) said : "We succeeded in Ireland, but too late. Do not let it be said that we succeeded in India too late. We solved the problem in Canada by the discovery of Lord Durham. Why should we not find another Lord Durham and send him to India with full powers to try with goodwill to solve the urgent and vital problem of India."

So far as reprehension of the Government is concerned, no Indian nationalist could have improved upon this criticism. R. P. Stokes said : "There is something which has moved the whole of China and Russia, but which is lacking in India." Is not this exactly what responsible leaders of the people and responsible organs of public opinion in India had been saying ? It is the fashion in some quarters to describe these men and these newspapers as defeatists and in some cases as fifth columnists. Who will have the impudence to accuse men like Hore Belisha and Lord Samuel, who spoke in the same strain, of being defeatists and fifth columnists ? If they spoke as they did, it is because they took the same realistic view of India's position in relation to war that Nationalist Indian leaders and newspapers have always done.

Sir Stafford Cripps, who replied to the debate in the Commons, found himself in a position of great difficulty because he could only speak on behalf of the Government and the Government had not yet made up its mind.

On March 12, 1942, Churchill announced that Cripps was flying to India to seek the assent of the people to the War Cabinet's proposals. Churchill had thus sprung a surprise, for what was expected was a declaration of policy and not this news of Cripps's visit to India. Cripps's tenure of ambassadorship at Moscow had been historic. Since his arrival, the Russian Press had dropped its hostility towards Britain. Political observers saw that Russia was slowly moving towards the Allied Camp. And finally came the fateful day of June 22. As a mark of gratitude, Churchill gave Cripps a place in the War Cabinet. He was also made Leader of the House of Commons and Churchill was free from the duties of the House of Commons except on supreme occasions.

As we look back we find that the amnesty to Congressmen under detention was granted on the eve of Japan's declaration of war. The Government knowing the irreconcilable anti-Japanese views of the Congress leaders wanted to make full use of these sentiments to arouse the masses and wake them from their slumber of indifference. And now that the Japanese had entered "The Gate of Asia," the danger to India was nearer and clearer. The opinion in England was growing every day in intensity that the Cabinet should rise to the occasion at this supreme hour in India's destiny and shake the supineness of Indian's millions. The British Government was thus by the very force of circumstances compelled to take a step forward. The step was certainly in the right direction, but it was too reactionary to deserve the consent of even a single party in India.

Cripps had been a great friend of India. So deep were his sympathies with the aspirations of the Congress that during his first visit to India he might have even been watched and shadowed by the Police. But towards the end of his stay in India this time, even his own *bona fides* were doubted. His parting speech at Karachi was nothing else but a mass of distorted facts and a jumble of lies. Such circumlocution has blackened Cripps's fair face for all times, so far as India is concerned. He was but following the proverbial tradition of the labour leaders like MacDonald, Attlee and Wedgewood Benn.

Yusuf Mehr Ally says in introduction to *The Mystery of Sir Stafford Cripps*.

"If the Secretary of State for India or some other distinguished British politician had come to India and had played the Imperialist game, that would have caused little surprise. For the Indian people have learnt by travail and bitter experience to expect nothing from them. But Cripps was different. He was a personal friend of several of the principal leaders of the Indian National Congress, especially of Nehru. During an earlier visit he was accorded a reception that was given to no British politician since the days of Lord Ripon."

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## 21. Rejected By All

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*I am against all this surrender to Gandhi. I am against these conversations and agreements between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi. Gandhi stands for the expulsion of the British from India, for the permanent exclusion of British trade from India. Gandhi stands for the substitution of Brahmin domination for British rule in India. You will never be able to come to terms with Gandhi.*

CHURCHILL.

(March 12, 1931)

AS we have seen the British War Cabinet had decided to send Cripps with "a just and final solution" of the Indian problem. Churchill, making the declaration, appealed to all that nothing should be said about the mission which might mar its prospects, and nothing was even whispered against it. India's eagerness to arrive at an honourable compromise was in striking contrast to Britain's step-motherly pretensions. The conditions in India were most favourable and even auspicious for the eagerly awaited success of Cripps when he arrived on March 23 at New Delhi. Cripps stayed at the Viceroy's House for two days where he met all the Governors and the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The terms of the Draft Declaration were made known to them. After that he moved to No. 3, Queen Victoria Road. Here he met the leaders of the different political parties. Cripps appraised these leaders of the terms of the Declaration which consisted of the following clauses :—

"His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and

clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.

His Majesty's Government, therefore, make the following declaration :—

- (a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
- (b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for participation of the Indian States in the constitution-making body.
- (c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to
  - (i) The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union, and arrived at by a procedure analagous to that here laid down.

- (ii) The signing of a Treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands ; it will make provision, in accordance with

the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship to the other Member States of the British Commonwealth. Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation.

- (d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities :

Immediately upon the result being known of the provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

- (e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and

effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."

The preamble to the Draft Declaration to all intents and purposes set at rest the controversy about the ultimate object of the British policy in India. The Constitution-making body was even given the right to secede and Cripps at a Press Conference described the Constitutional Assembly "a sovereign body." This part of the Declaration was not only substantial, but even alluring. But all this referred to "an uncertain future." What about the real present? Japan's unexpected successes in Malaya, Burma and Dutch East Indies were alarming; the duty of statesmanship was to dispel alarm and to organise effective and full resistance immediately. For that immediate changes in the Governmental structure were necessary. But the bureaucracy had complete control and initiative of defence. The interests and the feelings of the masses never entered or even touched its wooden heart. The problem which faced India was not so much about the sovereignty of the constitution-making body, as the effective defence of the country against the Fascist hordes of the Far East. The "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse" had been sunk and the greater part of the British Navy was engaged in the impressive battle of the Atlantic. The American Fleet at Pearl Harbour lay shattered, thus, the Indian seas had little potential resistance. The Indian leaders, knowing the conditions of the land, understanding the psychology of the masses and enjoying their confidence, wanted to mobilize the dormant national, material, and spiritual resources of the country. With the treacherous gloomy Fascist shadow drawing nearer and nearer India, the present loomed large in the discussions that proceeded.

The Cripps proposals were undoubtedly a serious attempt to solve the Indian problem. The phrase "immediately

after the cessation of hostilities " was very refreshing when compared with phrases like " the natural issue," "the ultimate goal," and " the earliest practicable moment."

At its Faizpur Session in 1937, the Congress had demanded that the Indian constitution should be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage. In the proposals now offered the idea had been accepted, but the basis was to be the provincial electorate under the Act of 1935. There was not much adverse criticism of the curtailment of the franchise, but India was not prepared to accept the proposal that the nominees of the rulers in place of the elected representatives of the subjects of the Indian States should frame the future constitution. The States' population is 25% of India and thus there would be a corresponding solid block in the constitution-making body. The States' subjects had not been given any representation at the two Round Table Conferences, and now they refused to accept this undemocratic proposal, which would perpetuate the one-man autocratic rule in States. The States were given the choice to send their representatives or not, as they wished. Could Cripps call himself a Socialist when he wanted the nominees and not the representatives of the States to be the authors of the Constitution ?

The provinces were given the option to secede from the Indian Union. As early as 1933 Sir Samuel Hoare had given an assurance to Sir Prabhashankar Pattani, when the former was questioned by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, that "The Provinces will not be asked whether they are coming in or not. The Provinces will have to come into the Federation under the Constitution Act." But now to placate the propagandists of separatism, Cripps offered this concession. The British had been proud of the achievement of "unity", but now they were undoing what "took" them 200 years to accomplish.

The national demand of India was and has been to make the country one and independent. To miss the import of this truth is to turn into the short-cuts of half-truths. This ill-conceived scheme opened up the ugly possibility of disappearance of India altogether. India was to disintegrate into three different unions—Hindustan, Pakistan and Princistan.



That at the time of the introduction of the Federal Constitution in Canada and Australia, the right of secession was conceded to the units constituting the federation has no validity in the case of India. India to-day is an undivided country. Canada and Australia, on the other hand, consisted of several independent units. The object of federation was to bring them together. The constitutions of Australia and Canada sowed the seeds of integration and not disintegration ; the exact opposite of this was envisaged in the Draft Declaration in the case of India. Secondly, the right of secession where it is conceded is provided by the constitution and not imposed by the third party. The matter ought not to have been prejudged but left entirely to the Constituent Assembly.

Was India to tolerate a State within a State? The unity of India has been an article of faith with progressive Indian opinion. No outsider was to be allowed to inject the cancerous poison of partition in the virile and growing body politic of India. The anxiety to make a concession to a hollow, illogical and unreasonable agitation carried on by a few disappointed separationists in this country betrays a sad failure of British statesmanship.

Did not Cripps, in effect, say to India : bondage or vivisection? And this vivisection would have led to the Balkanisation of India and the setting up of hundreds of Ulsters in this country of common culture and proud heritage which has welded the different communities into one nation. A drop of ocean torn from the majesty of the sea feels helpless and evaporates into nothing. But it is these tiny drops that lose their individuality and form the mighty sea. Each one of the numerous leaves of a tree is different in shape and size, but combined together they constitute the beauty and grandeur of the tree. Pluck a leaf and it is at the mercy of even the softest breeze.

The Congress had demanded the formation of a National Government at Poona. This was to command the confidence of all elected elements in the Central Legislature. The Government's offer in reply was the Declaration of

August 8: As stated earlier, the Viceroy's Executive Council had already been expanded and it was proclaimed that the "participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the councils of their country" had already been secured though no political party had blessed the nomination of these members. Two Indians had already sat in the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council tables, so the "effective participation of the leaders in the councils of the United Nations" had already been secured. So, in the interim arrangement something more and substantial was expected but paragraph (c) as admitted by Cripps in the House of Commons on April 28, 1942, was in "vague and general terms." Its negative part, that defence was to remain as the special responsibility of the Government, was stated in the clearest terms. Rightly it was assumed in nationalist quarters that what was being offered was a national government minus defence, and not the good-for-nothing expansion of the Executive Council.

The danger to India was real and imminent, but not being associated with the Government of the country, the people either did not realise the danger or were indifferent to it. The leaders wanted to turn the British Government's war against Japan into a real peoples' war for the defence of their motherland. But realizing this attitude of indifference which swayed the public mind, the Congress insisted on defence being transferred to an Indian representative. There was a great deal of controversy and haggling over the functions of the Defence Member and of the Commander-in-Chief. The Congress was prepared to accept certain unavoidable limitations on the normal powers of the Defence Minister.

**"We have no desire to upset in the middle of the war the present military organization or arrangements. We accept also that the higher strategy of the war should be controlled by the War Cabinet in London, which will have an Indian Member. The immediate object before us is to make the Defence of India more effective, to strengthen it, to broad-base it on the popular will, and to reduce all red tape delay and inefficiency from it. There is no**

question of our interfering with the technical and operational sides. One thing, of course, is of paramount importance to us—India's safety and defence."

In these words, Maulana Azad made the position of the Congress clear in his letter of April 10 to Cripps. In other words, the actual conduct of military operations was left to the Commander-in-Chief and the Congress wanted that political control should be delegated to the Indian Defence Member. The British Expeditionary Force in France functioned under General Gamelin, but this did not require the cessation of Britain's political control over the Army. General MacArthur has been the Supreme Commander of the Forces of the United Nations in Australia but the political control over the Australian army still rightly vests in the Australian Government. American forces are stationed in all Allied countries, but political control is still exercised over them by their Home Government. Why could not such a practical and necessary division be made in India?

Instead of transferring the defence portfolio to an Indian, Cripps with his staff of liberalism churned out of the proposals and counter proposals, the solution that Army canteens, stationery and non-technical schools, be transferred. How an astute realist like Cripps could offer these wholly unimportant and trivial functions passes understanding. Nehru resented this attitude of Cripps and had nothing else but sarcasm for him in reply. Mr. Rammanohar Lohia thus describes the Defence Minister in his book *Mystery of Sir Stafford Cripps*.

"All told, the Indian Defence Member would have had several faces, a merry spinister, a jolly hotelier, a diplomat commercial traveller, a stationer washing his hands in invisible soap, a harrassed accountant and above all a demon of destruction without the power to heal."

There was much weary haggling over the Defence Portfolio, but the drama of Cripps's tragedy came to an end when the Indian actors asked as to what powers the National Government should have. Though the

number of the Executive Councillors had been raised from 6 to 11, the majority thus given to the Indians did not connote a real transference of power. For firstly, the three important portfolios of Finance, Home and Communications had remained the monopoly of Europeans. The new offices were created by splitting the portfolios already held by Indians, though two new ones were also added. The Commander-in-Chief was exclusively in charge of Defence. Secondly, the Viceroy has got such overriding powers that for all practical purposes, the governance of this continent is a one-man show. Under the shelter of the words "safety, tranquility or interests of British India," it is no secret that the Viceroy has been using his powers of veto even in ordinary matters. When he is on tour, he can exercise the entire functions of the council. It is laid down: "At any meeting of the council, the Governor-General or other person presiding and one member of the council (other than the Commander-in-Chief) may exercise all the functions of the Governor-General in Council. Thus, a quorum of one is fixed for the Council, which is supposed to be in "charge" of the administration of such a big country India. The terms of clause (e) were very vague and that perhaps was done to let Cripps have a full and free hand in the negotiations. At the Press Conference of March 29 and in his earlier interviews with Congress leaders, he made it clear, in so many words that the British Government had no mental reservations. With the sentiments that "the intention of the Government, as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence" is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders, Cripps enthused Congressmen. He left no doubts in the leaders' anxious minds that the Executive Council would be elevated to the status of a Cabinet. He even suggested that if the new arrangements were mutually agreed upon, the existing councillors would have to resign. Though defence was reserved, yet the prolonged nature of the negotiations over defence at least confirmed the illusion that all powers minus defence were to be delegated to the Cabinet members.

Maulana Azad, in his letter dated April 11, to Cripps, wrote: "You told me that there would be a National Government, which would function as a Cabinet, and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet." This statement remains uncontradicted. Pandit Nehru at a Press Conference on April 12, said: "From the first, the impression which Cripps had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself often used the words National Cabinet."

But when on April 9, Maulana Azad and Pt. Nehru went to see Cripps, to their utter dismay and deep disappointment, the rosy picture of the earlier talks was unceremoniously blackened out. Cripps suddenly confounded them by talking "Viceroy's Executive Council" instead of a "National Cabinet." When he was asked about the conventions he proposed, he replied coldly: "I am totally unable to say anything on the subject because it is completely within the discretion of the Viceroy. Go to him later on and discuss the matter with him. I cannot interfere or indicate what should be done." This was his terse and curt advice. The Congress only aspired for an assurance that the advice of the Cabinet would not be brushed aside. The Congress leaders never suggested any topsyturviness in the present constitution. The word in the present Act is that the Viceroy "may" dissent and not "must." So where was the insurmountable hitch in giving an assurance? Ultimately the supreme power for the governance of India rests with Parliament. What the Congress asked for was a gentleman's agreement as it had demanded, consistent with its dignity and prestige, when the provincial offices were accepted. Did a Governor even once act contrary to the advice of his ministers? Congressmen are no lunatics who will run amuck when the spectre of power is placed in their hands. They will not beat right and left the bureaucracy with this Rod of Power; only Gandhi will be able to support his infirm body with it to serve the cause of democracy more effectively.

Amery later on made it clear once for all that a National Government at no stage was contemplated. Further, even if

all the parties agreed and asked for a National Government, such a Government could function within the ambit of the present framework of the Constitution. What was offered, he said, was complete Indianization of the Council. The Commander-in-Chief would be the only official member. The powers of the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the British Parliament were to remain fully intact till the new constitution was framed. Knowing all these absolutist views of the controller of India's destiny, why did Cripps talk in terms of "National Cabinet" and "put power in the hands of the Indian leaders" and the "Viceroy acting as the King does in England"? And what led to the complete *volte face* of Cripps on or about April 8? Were strings pulled by the Viceroy and was Cripps chastised by Amery for transgressing the four corners of his instructions? Why has not Cripps so far issued a rejoinder to the public statements of the Congress President and Pt. Nehru that he did offer a National Government in words as clear and bright as the stars in the sky? Why has not the official version of the press conference of March 29 when Cripps answered questions about the interim arrangements been supplied? Unless the talks that took place between Cripps and Amery and the Viceroy are disclosed, students of Indian politics can only wonder and conjecture.

A paper like *Statesman* of Calcutta on April 11, while Cripps was in India, wrote :—

"So long as the India Office and the Government of India draft the proposals, no emissary can succeed, and no effective effort will be made to cope with the hourly increasing danger to this country.....a clean sweep of personalities is needed.....Sir Stafford Cripps has been made a dupe, but the scheme will overreach itself."

Even Prof. Coupland says in *The Cripps Mission*: "The decisive factor, as has been seen, was the clash between the Congress and the British views as to the character of the proposed National Government."

Whatever may be the causes and whosoever scuttled the paper boat of Cripps proposals, it was wrong to say as

Cripps did in Parliament: "The change which occurred took place on the intervention of Mr. Gandhi. The Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution accepting the proposals. Mr. Gandhi intervened and subsequently the resolution was reversed." Gandhi in *Harijan* on June 28, 1942 contradicted this false allegation. "The deliberations of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part." Azad laid bare this charge of Cripps when at the Press Conference on April 11, he said : " Mahatma Gandhi made it perfectly clear to the Working Committee that they were free to come to any decision on the merits of the proposals." Pt. Nehru and C.R. have denied this charge as well.

Further, was it right on the part of Cripps to say that a National Government could not be formed because the irresponsible and all-powerful majority government would ignore the interests of the minorities and crush their rights and that it would be irremovable ? It would be irremovable in the sense that Churchill's Government is because it is an all-party and truly national government. By saying these words, the socialist became a tory and when he was talking in terms of Hindus and Muslims it was perhaps the effect of communal poison which he too had been administered.

Cripps may be likened to a merchant who brought an imitation diamond and asked our country-men to accept it as Koh-i-Noor on trust that the merchant was a good and genuine friend of India.

When all is said and done, why should the blame of non-acceptance of the proposals be hung around the Congress neck? Did any political party accept it or even say a few good words about it ? It was rejected by one and all, though for different reasons of their own. If by refusing the pseudo-national government, the Congress was responsible for the breakdown of the bogus and farcical negotiations, it has done another great service to the country. The masses have not been betrayed and the country's honour upheld and its own prestige maintained.

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## 22. IN THE NAME OF TRUTH

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*He cannot 'scape their censures, who delight  
To misapply whatever he shall write.*

### MASSINGER—EMPEROR OF THE EAST.

THE war theatre was drawing nearer and nearer to the borders of India. The defeat of the British forces in Burma and their subsequent evacuation was the sounding of the danger signal to India's safety. During the prolonged negotiations with Cripps, the defence of India was most prominent in the Congress Leaders' minds. The Congress wanted to organise the defence on the popular will and broad-base it on the confidence and patriotism of the masses. But as we have seen, for this great task the Indian leaders were offered jobs similar to those of permanent Under-Secretaries of State. Every Congress leader had one passion surging in his heart—to arouse the masses to resist the Japanese. Japanese propagandists had spread stories of Japan's invincibility and racial discrimination against Indian evacuees from Burma. The political repercussions of that propaganda could, at that critical time, only be checked by a National Government possessed of real power. It would be idle to pretend that some unthinking persons did not fall a prey to interested Japanese propaganda.

Gandhi instinctively has his hand on the pulse of the nation and he immediately warned his countrymen against this suicidal way of thinking. He asked them to remove any illusions that a foreign army could be an army of liberation. News that Subhas Bose had joined the Axis Powers was confirmed. Gandhi, as observed earlier, was responsible for the exit of Bose from the Congress High Command. He knew too well the working of Bose's mind. With the fall of Burma, speculation was rife in all quarters that Japanese army under



Bose's command was going to invade and "liberate" India. In an article in *Harijan* on June 21, 1942, Gandhi dispelled all doubts about his secret approval of Bose's methods :

"I have no desire whatsoever to woo any power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign yoke. I have no desire to exchange the British for any other rule. Better the enemy I know than the one I do not. I have never attached the slightest importance or weight to the friendly professions of the Axis Powers. If they come in India, they will come not as deliverers but as sharers in the spoil. There can, therefore, be no question of my approval of Subhas Babu's policy.....he is misguided and his way can never lead to India's deliverance."

Time and again he laid it down in the most emphatic terms that there was to be no pact with Japan.

**"I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India. I want India to oppose Japan to a man."**

In his letter "To Every Japanese," he broadcast the stern warning that :

"India needs no aid from foreign powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity, we should have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago."

The unkindest cut that our rulers have delivered is the charge levelled against Gandhi that he has pro-Axis leanings.

In *Harijan* on June 7, 1942, he wrote :

**"Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters."**

Rightly did Gandhi say that "I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out, for Britain's defeat

in Indian waters may mean only the loss of India, but if Japan wins, India loses everything." In the face of such open and public declarations, how can Britain accuse Gandhi of harbouring pro-Japanese sympathies ?

There is another malicious but equally unfounded item in the charge-sheet that Gandhi was convinced that the British defeat was certain and inevitable. He showed his faith in Britain's traditional and bulldog tenacity when he wrote in *Harijan* on February 22, 1942 :—

"The recent reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged, there have been reverses some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping stones to success. Hence, the saying peculiar to them that they blunder through to success."

The recent British victories justify the depth of Gandhi's confidence in Britain as a fighting nation. Such encouraging and heartening sentiments are not expressed by a "fifth columnist." They are the very negation of defeatism. Again on June 7, 1942, he wrote : " Britain has nothing to lose by waiting. And with America as her ally she has inexhaustible resources and scientific skill. This advantage is not available to the Axis Powers."

Though Gandhi withdrew his moral support after the " ill-fated Cripps proposals," he never desired Britain's humiliation or wished her defeat. As early as September, 1939, he had told his countrymen that " strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the Allies. Willy nilly, this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler." And finally the following admission should have been sufficient to shut the mouths of interested propagandists, who spared no effort to malign and disparage Gandhi. "*Harijan* is not an anti-British paper. It is pro-British from head to foot. It wishes well to the British people. It tells them in the friendliest manner where in its opinion

they err.”—*Harijan*, July 13, 1942. Gandhi has been and will ever remain the truest friend of Britain, whatever may be the provocation or reaction of the latter. Gandhi’s trust in the goodness of human nature is unbounded and remains unaffected by any number of betrayals; this trust borders on blind faith.

And last but not the least here is a passage from Gandhi’s speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting on August 8, 1942, at Bombay :

“Never believe—as I have never believed—that the British are going to fail. I don’t consider them to be a nation of cowards. I know that before they accept defeat, every soul in England will be sacrificed.....we must remove hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart, there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend now of the British than I ever was. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes.” Earlier in July 1942. Gandhi had said. “I have never even in the most unguarded moment expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war.”

All the members of the Congress Working Committee in their speeches and statements expressed their irreconcilable antipathy towards Fascism. If the Britishers turn the search-light inward they will find that the Congress unequivocally condemned every act of aggression wherever committed, even at the time when British foreign policy was doing its best to appease these blood-stained greedy hounds. If the Nine-Power Treaty had been invoked against Japan when Manchuria was going to be swallowed, the peace of Asia would not have been disturbed. If export of oil had been stopped to Italy, events would have taken a different course in Africa and in the Mediterranean. Above all it was the height of short-sightedness to close the Burma Road. It was an ignoble step and a sad betrayal to the brave Chinese. Had not Amery himself in the days of “appeasement” said that if they condemn Japanese aggression in Manchuria, with what face could Britain hold India and

Egypt in bondage ? The Munich Pact is the biggest political scandal and a passive acquiescence if not a direct alignment with the Fascist monsters. Does it lie in the mouth of such "enemies" of Fascism to accuse the Congress leaders of pro-Axis leanings ? The former till the outbreak of war had been "appeasing" the dictators ; the latter had all along been kicking them and exposing the devilish intentions of these robbers of other people's liberty.

Below are given extracts from the speeches of various members of the Working Committee which show the intensity of their detestation of Fascism and genuine sympathy with the democracies. After the fall of Singapore, the defence of India had almost become an obsession with them. The passionate call to their countrymen was to resist the invader and not to surrender. The Government having rejected the Congress hand of friendship, the only method of resistance left open was "stubborn non-violent non-co-operation with your whole soul." The speeches Nehru had been delivering those days might well have been delivered by any member of the British Government. Even the National War Front used quotations from his speeches in their posters. A Government with any sense of foresight and statesmanship would have taken full advantage of Nehru's enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies. May we remind them that Nehru's abhorrence of Fascism is so great that in 1936 when he was in Italy on his way back to India, he refused to see Mussolini in spite of his pressing invitation.

## FIGHT THE FASCISTS

M. K. GANDHI

"I do not subscribe to the doctrine of Asia for the Asiatics, if it is meant as an anti-European combination," said Gandhiji. "How can we have Asia for the Asiatics unless we are content to let Asia remain

a frog in the well ? But Asia cannot afford to remain a frog in the well. It has a message for the whole world, if it will only live up to it."

*Harijan*: Dec. 24, 1938.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Only a slavish mind could

imagine that Japan would give us freedom. If any Indian says that we should welcome the Japanese then all that I can say is that his mentality is slave's mentality which can think only in terms of change of masters and never in terms of his own freedom. Our differences with Britain should not drive us to welcoming the Japanese or any other aggressor.—(From the speech at the A. I. C. C. meeting, Allahabad), April 29, 1942.

#### **Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan**

Indians in the last century have well learnt the way of Imperialist Powers whether European or Asiatic. When the time comes we shall attain liberty without the help of Tojo. Tojo's recent broadcast from Tokio that the Japanese will not attack India is ridiculous. His sympathies for our freedom are not wanted.

June 24, 1942.

#### **Jawaharlal Nehru**

I consider it my duty to oppose any foreign invasion of India. The Japanese assertion that they were coming to India to set us free was absurd and wholly false. That was clear from Japan's misdeeds in China and Korea.

The Congress had made clear its sympathies with the democracies and its opposition to the aggressor countries, Japan no less than Germany.

April 7, 1942.

We parted company with Bose many years ago. We have drifted further apart and to-day we are very apart. It is not good enough for me not to realize that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only can't accept but must oppose if it takes shape. Because any force that may come from outside, it really comes as a dummy force under Japanese control.

Fighting will be done by the armed forces. We will have to take up guerilla warfare.

April 12, 1942.

I reaffirm my opposition to Fascism and Nazism and hold that there is no question of India aligning herself with Japan or any other Axis power, even if she was in a position to do so. I have expressed myself fairly strongly against the Axis Powers. As a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi has also expressed himself strongly against Fascism and Nazism.

June 17, 1942.

We do not want to be slaves of Japan or Germany. We would fight against any nation which wants to enslave us. The German and Japanese radios announce daily that they are fighting to liberate nations and also want to give independence to India. I do not believe in it. We should never be misled by these announcements. We are ready to defend our country. If we are organised we would not be afraid of Japan or Germany but would fight them to the last drop of our blood for the honour and prestige of our country.

June 30, 1942.

### **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**

We can't believe you (Japan) when you are not granting freedom to the countries under your control; we do not want any help from you, but in case you attack India we shall resist you and will not allow you any footing.

August 1, 1942.

### **Sardar Patel**

The sympathies of all Indian leaders are with Britain and France in the present War as they believe Nazism would lead to the extinction of the world.

Nov. 13, 1939.

India can have no trust in Japanese declarations. Look at her empire building acts in Manchuria, China and elsewhere.

August 2, 1942.

### **Dr. Pattabhi Seetaharamya**

Do not think of salvation from above or abroad. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and it is for you to find it or bury it.

July 1, 1942.

### **Asaf Ali**

If the Axis Powers win this War, India would become a worse slave, and Japan, Germany and Italy would prove a great menace to the world.

July 3, 1942.

### **Acharya Kirplani**

I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress is lending support to the enemy by launching a mass movement.

July 26, 1942.

### **Satyamurti**

Japan is the immediate enemy of India and Japan should be fought and defeated immediately.

March 23, 1942.

### **B. G. Kher**

India would never submit to the Japanese. The only writ that will run through India will be of the Indian nation.

April 6, 1942.

**Mira Ben**

It is shameful and ignominious to think that the Japanese would do good to us. No outside power can give us *Swaraj*.

May 27, 1942.

**G. B. Pant**

We want to rid the world of Nazism and Fascism. We want to organise the defence of our country on a national basis whose very safety is in grave danger to-day. This can

be possible only when India is free to shape her policies and to devise, initiate, and enforce effective measures towards this end.

Mr. Amery has been repeating *ad nauseum* mischievous inaccuracies. Nevertheless, India has no quarrel with the British people. She wishes them well and has heartfelt sympathies with the victims of aggression.

Dec. 31, 1941.

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## 23. The Mirage of Power

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*another year*

*the bells toll and the priests bless*

*repeating old performances*

*another year*

*and christ is still in his grave*

*disturbing the old lie*

KRISHAN SHUNGLOO: *the night is heavv*

AT the outbreak of War, the strength of the Viceroy's Executive Council was seven, with three Indian members. In the July, 1941, expansion five "new" portfolios were created and Indians were placed in charge of them. In the new expansion, which the Viceroy announced, the Indian majority was further increased to 11. Ramaswamy Mudaliar and the Jam Sahib were to represent India in the War Cabinet. It would be asking for disillusion to think that the present change if anything, was in the neighbourhood of a National Government. It is not even fully Indianised or non-official Executive Council. In ordinary circumstances, the control of the Secretary of State over the Executive Council which is invisible to the outsider, is effective and supreme. It cannot be less real or persistent in these days when a man like Amery is the presiding deity at the India Office. The fact that it is microscopic to the naked eye or imperceptible to the average man cannot make it the less objectionable. The true dictator of India is now Amery, the one man in the British Empire who is most distrusted by politicians of every school of thought. While the afflicted mind of the world is churning through the sufferings and tortures, the basis of a new human order, men like Amer



stick tenaciously to their antiquated ideas. Such men of the ruling class cost Britain the finest of her American "possession," prolonged the Anglo-Egyptian dispute, protracted the Irish trouble, until they found that the only alternative was war, for which for one reason or another they were not prepared.

There is no pretence that the new Council could in any sense be a sovereign body. Political power rests where it has always rested. The new Council can no more change the political situation than the first expansion of the old Council, for the simple and obvious reason that it is not a National Government reflecting the will of a political majority. It is claimed for the changes that have been made that they represent the implementation of the Cripps Proposals for an interim Government. The Cripps Proposals were rejected by all parties. The creation or rather the bifurcation of the Defence Portfolio under the charge of an Indian Member means no real change in the position. The personnel of the Council may be individually excellent; they may have high sounding portfolios, but these are irrelevant things in a final analysis of the means necessary to secure the wholehearted co-operation of the Indian people in the war effort. Such co-operation can only be secured by the establishment of a Government that reflects the will of the nation and has as the accredited representatives of the Indian people, the substance of political power. The three important portfolios, War, Finance and Home remain in official British hands. The Defence Minister will only be a kind of *liaison* officer between the Commander-in-Chief and the Civil Departments. He will not be able to raise a militia or arm the people generally unless the Commander-in-Chief decides to do so. All the criticism that applied to the first expansion of the Council applies, therefore, *mutatis mutandis* to the new council. How could it enthuse the people, who demand complete Indianisation, complete non-officialisation, a truly, representative Government, in place of one of the Viceroy's nominees? In short, it was only a continuation of the declaration of August 8.

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## 24. They know not what.....

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*In so far as the Congress has demanded the withdrawal of British Power in the sense of its replacement by an Indian National Government, its demand is both just and expedient. It is just because India's right to political independence is in itself inalienable. It is indeed inherent in the very struggle of the Democracies for freedom. It is expedient because unless Indians are in actual enjoyment of freedom they cannot bring the requisite enthusiasm to bear on their war effort. An Indian National Government alone can bring about India's active and whole-hearted participation.*

**M. L. CHOWLA.**

THE political situation in India after the break-down of the Cripps Proposals was rapidly deteriorating. The food situation in the country was grave. Prices of all commodities had reached the point which nobody could even dream of. The British Government did not concede the demand for a National Government, nor did the Government of India itself take any serious steps to control the food situation or prices. Thus, frustration which had become a part of Indian life was intensified. Nationalist opinion in India was convinced during the Cripps negotiations that the British ruling class was not willing to part with power.

Looking beyond the frontiers of India we find that the Allied Fronts in all theatres of War were beginning to show signs of weakness. The Nazi forces in Russia seemed irresistible. Sebastapol had fallen, pressure on Rostov was increasing and the Fascist hordes incensed by the "glory" of their victories were marching with supreme confidence towards Stalingrad. Moscow in despair shouted for the

opening of the second front to relieve the pressure of the Nazi onslaught on the gallant Russian soldiers.

The Japanese after devouring the Malayan States had resumed their offensive in China. The Burma Road was no longer available to the Allies to send supplies to China. The economic situation was precarious and Chungking in utmost helplessness pathetically cried for more and substantial material help.

Tobruk had surrendered and Rommel was virtually the master of the Desert. His forces crossed the Egyptian frontier and continued the victorious march. The gravity of the situation may be realized from the fact that the Germans at one stage were only 90 miles from Alexandria. The British people were indignant with the Government's direction of war in Libya and Sir Wardlaw Milne on July 1, 1942, tabled a censure motion against Churchill's Government. He said : "The motion is not an attack upon the officers in the field but a definite attack upon the central direction here in London. The cause of our failure lies here rather than in Libya." The motion was defeated by 475 against 25, but it was only a personal triumph for Churchill. Yet, a voice of protest against the Government's policy had been raised and registered.

Wardha was also perturbed at these Allied setbacks and the fast deteriorating political and economic situation in India. Wardha, therefore, proclaimed that a National Government should forthwith be formed to handle effectively the political, economic and military situation. This demand was summarised in the slogan addressed to Britain : "Quit India." The slogan meant no more than this, but it was interpreted by the bureaucracy to mean the physical withdrawal of every Britisher from the soil of India. Nehru in an interview on June 17, 1942 elucidated as to what this demand meant by stating that it was never intended that Englishmen as individuals should pack up and go. It meant the transfer of political power completely to India. Further, Nehru gave an effective answer to those who would withhold power from India on the pretext that a Free India might not remain in alliance with the democratic powers.

"The position now is," he said, "that we cannot wipe out the events of the past two or three years. The question of India remaining neutral hardly arises. India's armies are in so many frontiers and I do not see how a Free India can remain neutral. Nationalist India or the Congress has not been neutral in its attitude towards the War. It has its sympathies with a certain cause and with certain countries."

Gandhi on June 19, 1942, explained the implications of this demand in these words :

"I am convinced that the Independence of India which the withdrawal of British Power involves, would ensure China freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis.....The step that I have conceived, immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause and more especially to China which is in immediate danger."

It was thought by some people that Gandhi being a believer in non-violence wanted to prevent India from becoming a theatre of war in case Japan invaded India. Therefore, he would demand the withdrawal of British troops from this country. But Gandhi is a wide-awake realist and faces facts. In answer to a correspondent on June 21, he said, "But I would recognise their own military necessity. They may need to remain in India for preventing Japanese occupation. That prevention is common cause between them and us. It may be necessary for the sake of China also. Therefore, I would tolerate their presence in India, not in any sense as rulers but as allies of Free India."

Again on July 5, he wrote in the *Harijan* :

"It has been pointed out that not to consent to the Allied troops remaining in India during the period of the War is to hand over India and China to Japan, and to ensure the defeat of the Allied Powers. This could never have been contemplated by me. The only answer, therefore, to give was to suffer the presence of the troops but under circumstances the reverse of the existing. They will remain under permission of Free India and not in the role of masters but of friends."

That Gandhi's appeal to the British to withdraw from India meant nothing more than a demand for the grant to India of political independence, both as a matter of right and as the only way in which the man-power and material resources could be employed to their fullest possible extent to resist Japanese aggression and to contribute to the Allied struggle against the Axis Powers is clear from the explanations of the meaning of "Withdrawal" given by Nehru and from Gandhi's own writings. There was no room for doubt left that the appeal did not connote the immediate withdrawal of the British from India in the sense of their leaving this country to rely on its own ill-developed strength to combat foreign aggression. The following quotation from *Harijan* fully bears out this interpretation. "When India finds herself in possession of complete freedom," said the *Mahatma*, "her sullenness and discontent will be changed as if by magic and hearty co-operation with the Allies." And is this not exactly what the Indian Nationalists and freedom loving people all the world over had been saying?

The demand of the Congress was being grossly misrepresented by interested propagandists abroad. This is clear from the following. Amery was asked on July 7, in the House of Commons by Stephen Davies whether "with a view to rendering unnecessary the retention in India of British and American troops now there he will make immediate approaches to the leaders of the Indian National Congress in order to establish a National Government in India so that the people shall be inspired to organise the defence of their own country." Amery said, "No. The forces in India are indispensable for the safety of India and for victory of the Allied cause and will be retained until victory is achieved." Stephen who tried to speak for Indian Nationalists was building his case on a wrong hypothesis as the Congress, as observed earlier, had never demanded the withdrawal of the British troops from India. There was no occasion for the question; and none, therefore, for the answer. Amery should have said that the question did not arise because the Congress had never demanded the withdrawal of British troops.

Congress leaders had made their position clear but the British Government did nothing to conciliate Indian opinion.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on July 15 1942 and passed a resolution demanding political Independence for India. The resolution also empowered Mahatma Gandhi to take such steps as he deemed necessary, including the launching of a mass Civil Disobedience Movement to press that demand.

This resolution in its substance was confirmed by the A. I. C. C. on August 8 at Bombay.

In the early hours of August 9, all the members of the Working Committee were arrested and the Government rounded up Congressmen all over India.

The resolution consisted of two main parts :

(a) The National demand.

(b) The sanction behind it *i.e.*, the threat to launch a mass Civil Disobedience Campaign.

So far as the demand of the Congress on behalf of India for its freedom is concerned, there was nothing new or novel. Even since the Congress came into active politics of the country, the independence of India has been the first article of its creed. Moreover, the British Government in the preamble to the 1919 Act had definitely stated that the ultimate goal of British Policy in India was "progressive realization of self-governing institutions in India." In December 1919, His Majesty spoke of the Act of 1919 in the Royal Proclamation as pointing the way to "full responsible Government hereafter," and "the right of her (India's) people to direct her affairs and safeguard her interests". His Majesty's Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General in para II issued in March 1919, stated, "For above all things it is Our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible Government in British India as an integral part of Our Empire may come to fruition to the end that British India may attain its due place among Our Dominions." In 1929 Lord Irwin authoritatively announced that India shall have the status of a self-governing

Dominion. The Prime Minister on behalf of His Majesty's Government on January 19, 1931 said.

"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 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 several 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 settled, but it believes that as the 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."

Para XVI of His Majesty's Instrument of Instructions in March 1937, to the Governor-General (which is the instrument now in force) enjoins:—"And finally it is Our will and pleasure that Our Governor-General should so exercise the trust reposed in him that *the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within Our Empire may be furthered, to the end that India may attain its due place among Our Dominions.*" (Italics ours) The Cripps Proposals admitted the right of India to frame its own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly after the War and further Cripps in a Press interview gave the assurance that the Constitution-making body will be a sovereign body. According to him India could even secede from the British Empire. So the Congress demand for the Independence for India was not only just but consistent with the British Government's own declarations.

The Congress further made it clear in the Working Committee's resolution that :

“ A Free India will assure this success (of the Allied cause) 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 subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations and give these nations, 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 nations.....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.....”

Ever since the beginning of the War, Congress Leaders had repeatedly been saying that India was prepared to co-operate with the Allies to eradicate and crush Fascism and contribute its all for the reconstruction of the world on the basis of permanent peace. The Working Committee's resolution said :

“ 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.”

The Congress did not look at the freedom of India from an isolationist point of view but from the larger world issues. Nationalist leaders also realized that the desire for freedom among the masses, because it had not been satisfied, was making them indifferent to Britain's future in the War, with which India's future was inextricably allied. It is for this reason that they declared that the freedom of India was the only means to change sullenness into hearty co-operation with the Allies—co-operation which was indispensable to



Britain and necessary for India. That is why, the resolution observed :

“ The Congress is anxious to avoid the experiences 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 securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it, and this is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

“ 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.”

On this question Nehru speaking on July 26, 1942 left no room for doubt :

“ While we desire Independence” he said, “that by itself is not the chief issue at present. The real issue is how to meet the present situation, how to repel aggression on India and how to help China and Russia and the common cause of the Allies.”

The Congress President in the course of his 100 minute peroration at the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay said :

“ What this resolution says is this. Let us not depend upon promises. Let us have a declaration of Indian Independence forthwith and we on our part shall immediately enter into a treaty of alliance with the United Nations for the sole purpose of fighting and winning this war.”

In a reply to the *News Chronicle* of London, Gandhi wired on August 8 :

“ We here feel that Britain cannot be extricated from its critical position unless India's hearty co-operation is secured. That co-operation is impossible without the people realizing that they are independent to-day.”

This part of the resolution is beyond reproach because every country has a right to be free and secondly that right is inherent in the very struggle of the Allies. Moreover Congress leaders had given the assurance that a Free India will throw her body and soul into the struggle of the Democracies to fight Fascism. The Government should have concentrated on this main part of the resolution and showed their constructive statesmanship by conciliating Indian opinion. If the right of India to be free is admitted the operative part of the resolution, *i.e.*, the threat of Civil Disobedience becomes meaningless and unnecessary. But it was most unfortunate that the Government ignored the just demand of the Congress and construed the threat of Civil Disobedience as the determination on the part of the Congress to create chaos and anarchy in India through sabotage and violence. Further, the Congress during the transition stage of the transference of power from British to Indian hands did not visualise a political vacuum but stated, on the contrary, that immediately on the British declaration to part with power a composite National Government representing all the major parties will start functioning. And this National Government would have had only one object in view, *i.e.*, to mobilize all the dormant, spiritual, economic and material resources of India to win this War.

Chamberlain's direction of war was unsatisfactory though he was doing his best. The public wanted a more dynamic leadership and Churchill was asked to take the reins in his hands. It was a step in the right direction. Chamberlain gracefully resigned. Did he ever say that his critics were fifth-columnists and were trying to impede and sabotage England's war effort? In India bureaucracy had the completest control over India and the leaders realized that for the effective prosecution of the war, a National Government was indispensable. England's gain would have been immediate.

Now we come to the operative part of the Resolution for it is because of this part that the Congress has been severely criticised and outlawed. If the Congress had chalked out a

plan with the object ultimately to hinder the war effort whether through sabotage or violence or through any other means, the Congress must be condemned. But can that be said of Congress policy ?

Congress Leaders since the beginning of the War had laid down that under no circumstances was the Congress going to embarrass Great Britain. The Working Committee in its resolution stated :

“ Ever since the outbreak of the World War the Congress has studiously 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 realization of human freedom throughout the world which is in danger of being crushed. These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces.....

“ The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China and Russia whose freedom is precious and must be preserved or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations.”

Dr. Rajendra Prasad explaining the resolution maintained that :

“ The demand for British withdrawal is not actuated by a desire to embarrass Britain or the Allies but the motive behind it is to enable India to defend herself and help the Allies in winning the war by bringing India's whole-hearted support to the Allied cause.”

All the other leaders publicly stated that the Congress had no intention secret or overt to embarrass the British Government.

It must be remembered that the passing of the resolution did not mean the launching of the mass campaign.

For in all the struggles launched by him, Gandhi had never taken any hasty action or precipitated the crisis. Even after making the declaration that the struggle was going to be started, he kept on negotiating with the Government and only when he was despaired of the negotiations and convinced that no honourable compromise was possible, did he take the extreme step. This time also he wanted to negotiate with the Government as is clear from the interview of August 6, 1942 :

“I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can in any way be described as in the nature of negotiation. But a letter will certainly go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but as an earnest pleading for avoiding conflict. If there is a favourable response then my letter can be the basis for negotiation.”

In his letter dated August 14, 1942, that is, after his arrest and after the “disturbances” had begun, Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy :

“The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying this step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you have the approval of your Indian ‘colleagues’ can have no significance except this that in India you can always command such services. That co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say.

“The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So could I have dealt with

every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them, and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand."

From the above two extracts it is obvious that Gandhi would have explored all avenues to arrive at an honourable settlement. One thing in Gandhi's political and private life is certain and has got to be taken for granted that he believes in no secrecy and whatever he says he means. He would definitely have sent a letter to Lord Linlithgow and tried to persuade him and convince him about the real intentions of the Congress. Perhaps the Government thought that under the shelter of negotiations, the Congress wanted time to consolidate its position, strengthen the organisation and issue instructions all over India as to how the struggle was to be conducted. If that was the Government's point of view, all what I can say is that they thoroughly misunderstood their best and sincerest friend in India.

Further, when the War broke out, Gandhi was the first to give his unconditional moral support to Britain. The extremist section had then been clamouring for a mass struggle but consistent with his whole-hearted sympathy for Britain, Gandhi did not take any steps and when he did decide to raise the voice of protest, the individual *Satyagraha* was launched in a symbolic and restricted form only. It is my firm conviction that Gandhi would have kept on delaying

the extreme action and if he had taken it, it would have been in a most innocuous form. The question of indulging in violence and committing shameful acts of sabotage would never have arisen. The Working Committee's resolution had said :

"Should, however, this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the state of affairs involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and the 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 the political rights and liberty."

Gandhi at the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay emphasised at length that non-violence must be practised in thought, word and deed:

"There are people who may say that I say one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow. But I must tell you that there is no change in me. I stick to the principle of non-violence as I did before. If you are tired of it then you need not come with me. It is not necessary or incumbent upon you to pass this resolution. Be non-violent in action, if not in thought, this is the least I expect from you.....The coming in of Japan will mean the end of China and perhaps of Russia too. In these matters Nehru is my *Guru*. I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's defeat nor of China's. If that happens I would hate myself .....give up the attitude of mind which welcomes Japan.....If there is the slightest communal taint in your mind, keep off the struggle. I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed but so far as you are concerned I want you to accept it as a policy. As disciplined soldiers you must accept it *in toto* and stick to it when you join in the struggle."

All the Congress leaders at the A. I. C. C. meeting emphasised the non-violent aspect of the movement.

Congress leaders were, however, arrested before any negotiations could be conducted or any action taken. Thus, it is patent that the Congress never started any movement or struggle. Many ugly things no doubt happened in the disturbances that followed. Acts of violence were committed. But the only accusation that can be based on these disturbances against the Congress is that the Congress should have known that its "struggle" could not remain non-violent. The accusation that the Congress itself contemplated a violent struggle cannot, however, be based on the disturbances. The resolution of the Working Committee, the speeches at the A. I. C. C. meeting ruled out violence altogether. How were the people therefore to assume that violence was desired? The only answer to this question is, that it was never desired. But even that question does not arise, because the Congress never started any movement.

As for the former accusation that the Congress should have known that if it started a struggle, it could not remain non-violent, the same thing was said before the *Mahatma* started his individual *Satyagraha* Movement. It is the consciousness of the necessity not to embarrass Britain and of the fact that sporadic acts of violence may be committed in a non-violent struggle that made Gandhi circumscribe severely the limits of action contemplated under his individual *Satyagraha* Movement. My conviction is that he would have done the same in the second struggle. Again, there is a world of difference between a "movement" and "disturbances." Disturbances are chaotic, and local conditions play a large part in them. The Fifth Column might have been active in the "disturbances." Again, the participants in the disturbances might also have been actuated by motives of vandalism. The story of these disturbances is yet to be written. Until it is written, the historian can do no more than condemn them and rightly so, but the attempt to locate their origin must remain futile. Particularly in view of the public professions of non-violence of the Congress leaders, a very strong case would have to be

constructed to pin the responsibility for violence on the Congress.

The Government on their part have, however, stated that ".....It was from August 11, that the situation began to deteriorate rapidly. From then onwards, apart from the hartals, protest meetings and similar demonstrations that were to be expected, concerted outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder and sabotage took place."

This was a serious charge and further that, "Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi" was responsible for it. There was a universal demand for an independent inquiry to find out whether these ugly acts of violence were a part of pre-concerted plan or the result of mob excitement and resentment at the arrest of Congress leaders. But the Government persistently ignored this just demand of the public. The worst part of the Government's policy as stated by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was "collective fines are being realized from Hindus, I do not know on what principle. Talking to an English friend the other day I asked : 'If you distrust Hindus so much that you cannot discriminate between wreckers and friends, why not hand over all political powers to Mr. Jinnah.'"

Gandhi in his letter of August 14 to the Viceroy wrote :

"The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.....The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement and to suppress Congress altogether ?"

As observed earlier Gandhi had emphatically laid down that non-violence was the basis of the struggle. His soul was in anguish when he was a helpless spectator to mob violence and ruthless repression on the part of the Government. On September 23, 1942 he wrote in the course of a letter to the Viceroy :

"In spite of all that has been said to the contrary,



I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent."

Further correspondence was going on between the *Mahatama* and the Viceroy. The Viceroy accused Gandhi for the disturbances and this was what Gandhi wrote on February 7, 1943 :

" You say that there is evidence that I—I leave my friends out for the moment—'expected the policy to lead to violence,' that I was 'prepared to condone it' and that 'the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders.' I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely, there is nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of British jurisprudence..... You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?"

While the Government deplored the sad happenings which were disgracing the fair name of the country, they withheld the condemnation of violence by Gandhi as stated in his letter of 23rd Sept. On the one hand they

held Gandhi responsible for the disturbances and on the other hand they did not publish his letter in which he had outspokenly disassociated himself from these uprisings and categorically denounced them.

It was only in February that the Indian public learnt of this specific disapproval by the *Mahatma*. But the Government did not give it any publicity abroad. Mr. Sorenson raised the voice of protest and surprised the House of Commons that the opinion expressed in the letter of 23rd September was not made available to the people in England and America. Mr. Sorenson when interviewed said :

“Until I asked my question in the Commons and even now, it has not been made quite clear by the Government that Mr. Gandhi had condemned acts of violence. I think it quite unfair of the Government of India and of the British Government not to have made this quite clear.”

Amery in the House of Commons said :

“.....while referring to the reported deplorable destructions that had taken place, Mr. Gandhi claimed that responsibility for it rests with the Government and not with the Congress Party, and did not categorically condemn acts of violence.”

While Lord Linlithgow had said in his letter of January 25, 1943 :

“I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past.”

The leaders resented this act of the Government of India in not making it known to the public that the *Mahatma* had condemned the acts of violence. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at a press conference said :

“Had that letter been published at that time, the public would have realized that the *Mahatma's* loyalty to the doctrine of non-violence was as strong as before and it would have strengthened the hands of men like

Mr. Rajagopalachari in telling the public that those who were creating the disturbances were doing an injustice to the *Mahatma's* whole life."

In a public statement C. R. said that when he saw the Viceroy in November, 1942, the Viceroy was completely reticent about the letter of 23rd September, and deplored the absence of any condemnation of violence from Gandhi. C. R. confidently proclaimed that, "if he had told me something about the letter, many innocent people could have been saved from much suffering." C. R. further stated that when he saw Gandhi during his fast "he shared my grief that his letters to the Viceroy and the Government of India on the subject had not been published at once and were suppressed for such a long time."

Further, men like Mr. Phillips, and the Metropolitan of India were refused permission to interview Gandhi. If the permission had been granted the *Mahatma* would have appraised them also of his strong and unequivocal condemnation of violence. These men on their part would have warned the participants in the disturbances that they were torturing the soul of Gandhi by indulging in acts of sabotage and violence. If the Government were determined not to solve the political deadlock and to conciliate Indian opinion, was it not their duty to let the public know that the bloody path of violence which they were treading had never been conceived nor sanctioned but was being condemned by their leader?

So far as the resolution of the political deadlock is concerned the Government continued its policy of negation. Public men in England and America pressed the Government to take the initiative and open a new chapter in Indo-British relations. In India the leaders were giving stern warnings to the Government about the fast deterioration in the economic situation and that political frustration was on the border of despair. But the Government did nothing to satisfy Indian opinion.

On February 10, 1943, India was stunned to learn that the *Mahatma* had decided to undertake a fast of 21 days. The Government of India released the correspondence that had

been going on since August 14, 1942 between the *Mahatma* and Lord Linlithgow.

The *Mahatma* in one of his letters wrote :

"I wanted to fast, and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence, and I have to be a helpless victim to what is going on in the country, including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land." He told the Viceroy : "Despite your description of it (the fast) as 'a form of political blackmail,' it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgement Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it." Gandhi resented the propaganda carried on against him and the Congress.

"I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress.....I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth."

Lord Linlithgow was certainly distressed by this decision of the *Mahatma* to fast and wrote to him :

".....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." To this *Mahatma* Gandhi immediately replied : ".....  
... (1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make amends. (2) If you want

me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse."

But the Viceroy refused to agree to these requests and wanted a confession from Gandhi for the guilt in the past and an undertaking for the future :

"If therefore you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of August 9 and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further." Mahatma Gandhi again pleaded that it was "for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*." As the Government would not yield, he wrote to the Viceroy : "If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for *Satyagrahis*, namely, a fast according to capacity.....Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts, but nowadays my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills."

There was a universal demand that Gandhi should be unconditionally released and that his life must be saved. It was asserted from all quarters that the death of the *Mahatma* would create an unbridgeable gulf between Britain and India. But the Government refused to meet the earnest appeals of leaders and to listen to the pathetic cries of anguish and indignation of the masses.

Nobody expected that Gandhi would survive the prolonged ordeal. But his own *tapsya* of a lifetime backed by the passionate prayers of every man and woman in India made him stand this self-inflicted penance and torture of the human flesh. At one stage the Doctors lost all hope but God unto Whom every devotee has to surrender his body as the prerequisite of that boundless faith which sustains life, came to his

rescue. India was more happy with the fact of Gandhi having survived than she would be if *Swaraj* was attained. Gandhis are born after two or three thousand years and the political independence of India can be had at any time if the people not only will but purge themselves of their selfish interests.

The Maker saved Gandhi's life for He knew that the great work which He had entrusted to Gandhi had not been completed. Gandhi's survival was nothing short of a miracle and yet another proof of his prophethood.

# Gandhi against Fascism

JAG PARVESH CHANDER

Recently the Government of India brought out a blue book which sought to fasten responsibility for the August disturbances on the Congress and at the same time tried to represent Gandhiji and the Congress leaders as pro-Axis and pro-Japanese. In this book Mr. Jag Parvesh has sought to disprove these allegations. **The Tribune.** A. C. Bhatia.

This is a useful volume for reference purposes specially when aspects of Mr. Gandhi's policy are disputed.

**Sunday Standard**

Jag Parvesh has rendered a distinct service by presenting the public with relevant extracts from Gandhiji's writings that will dispel at once any lingering suspicion about the pro-Fascist sympathies of the Congress. Even Mr. Amery stands convicted out of his own mouth. **Sunday Times**

The patient labour and love of service involved in the bringing out of the edition do credit to Mr. Jag Parvesh.

The book which is an answer to the propagandist pamphlet of the irresponsible Indian Government, ought to have warm welcome at the hands of all Indian Nationalists.

**Indian Express**

This is a valuable collection of Gandhiji's writings and sayings which make it clear that Gandhiji is not a fifth-columnist in the war against Fascism. **The Hindu**

A thorough perusal of this book will completely disprove the charges made by the Government against Gandhiji and the Congress of their pro-Axis leaning. The editor has taken great pains. **The Industry**

To those who doubt Gandhiji's hatred for Fascism, this book will serve as an eye-opener. **Malabar Herald**

If writings can prove a man, here he is, to question his sincerity would be to question sincerity itself. **The Aryan Path**

The lie that Gandhiji is pro-Fascist is nailed to the counter and let us hope it would not be resuscitated by interested parties. **Federated India**

We congratulate Mr. Chandra on his timely publication. **The Times of Assam**

Altogether, it is a useful and an opportune publication. **Hindustan Review**

What greater error of statesmanship could there be than that the staunchest anti-Fascists are still not free to lead the whole might of the Indian people against Fascism.

**The Social Welfare**

.....is proof eloquent of the consistent position taken up by Gandhi and the Congress against the Totalitarian States. **The Indian Review**

# THE GOOD LIFE

M. K. GANDHI

Edited by JAG PARVESH CHANDER

What is the secret of Gandhiji's inexhaustible store of energy? What sustains him through an ordeal of 21 days' fast in his 74th year? His tremendous and unique will-power excites envy even among his bitterest enemies. His control over all his senses is a phenomenon in the modern age. All this may be a riddle to those who are ignorant of his way of living. But being the benefactor No. 1 of the world, he keeps nothing hidden and not only shares his experiments with the people but implores the suffering humanity to benefit from them. On the Himalayas, pure white snow falls, the plains are covered with dust and dirt. Gandhi's personality is as great as the Himalayas, the snow white thoughts only enter his mind. When he puts these sublime thoughts into sentences, they are like the streamlets which make the Ganges. The Ganges is worshipped by millions; Gandhi's writings have inspired the world.

Gandhi led a life of self-indulgence in the early part of his life. But suddenly the truth glimmered through the dark and 'chaotic surroundings of dissipation that his was but the death dance of an ignorant and self-conceited moth. What he mistook for light was mere brightness. By leading a life of self-indulgence he was like a caterpillar taking the thread from its own mouth and building its cocoon, ultimately to be caught in and suffocated by the same cocoon.

He took a vow of *Brahmacharya*. His conception of *Brahmacharya* is not narrow. Mere physical abstinence is not enough; complete control over all the senses and a mastery over the thoughts is a condition precedent for the attainment of this glorious ideal. To reach this peak of purity he had to develop an unbending will-power. And how he cultivated it forms an important part of this book. All of us know and realize the necessity and benefits of self-restraint but on the slippery desires of the flesh the spirit falls. In this book Gandhi discusses all the aspects of celibacy and shows the way to do it.

It is the duty of every father to present this book to his growing children, to ensure their physical and moral goodness on the alluring and thorny path of life.



# The Unseen Power

M. K. GANDHI

Edited By JAG PARVESH CHANDER

Jag Parvesh Chander's patient labour and research have produced something of great value to every book-lover and to every Indian.

**Freda Bedi—The Tribune**

It contains tons of wisdom, propounded in the inimitable Gandhian style.

**—Civil & Military Gazettee**

Every word of it deserves to be read, re-read and pondered over, for they show us the way to truth and to freedom from worries and troubles.

**—The Searchlight**

Contemporary thought is the richer and fuller for this book.

**—Young Ceylon**

It contains Gandhiji's ideas about God, about Prayer and about Idol-worship.

**—Industry**

Gives the pith of Mr. Gandhi's ideas about God, religion and prayer.

**—Illustrated Weekly**

The book will serve a useful purpose.

**—Sunday Times**

Is a great book by a great man and is full value for the price.

**—Sunday Standard**

Jag Parvesh Chander deserves the heartiest congratulations of all those who are interested in religion.

**—Times of Assam**

There are scores of enlightening passages in the book.

**—Rangoon Daily Naws**

There is hardly any man in this world who is more known and is still more misunderstood than Gandhiji. But what has hitherto appeared as irreconcilable seems plain and natural if one reads this book,

**—Karachi Daily**

It will be read with deep interest by all who are more attracted by Gandhiji's spirituality than by his politics.

**—Ceylon Observer**

The entire work is characterised by a moral and spiritual elevation.

**—Indian Express**

The atmosphere of the book is saturated with fragrance of Divine Faith.

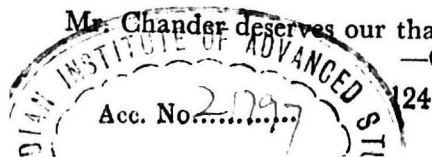
**—Hindu Outlook**

The perusal of this book should bring about a great change in one's religious and moral attitude.

**—Calcutta Review**

Mr. Chander deserves our thanks for this fine collection.

**—Calcutta Municipal Gazette**



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For a very long time we have been requested to translate our various publications into Hindi. To meet the wishes of our readers and booksellers, Hindi editions of the following three Books will be published in the first week of February 1944.

1. The Congress Case.

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