LIFE AND SPEECHES OF SARDAR PATEL

A STUDY OF THE CAREER AND CHARACTER OF SARDAR PATEL, AS WELL AS HIS IDEAS AND IDEALS, INCLUDING HIS IMPORTANT SPEECHES UNTIL HIS DEATH

BY

PROF. ABDUL MAJID KHAN, M.A.,
FORMERLY, INDIAN CONSUL, JEDDAH,
(SAUDI ARABIA)

WITH
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER
BY
SARDAR PATEL

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—VALLABHBHAI PATEL

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Printed and Published by Mr. Narain Das Kumar at the Indian Printing Works, 7A/23 W.E.A. Karol Bagh, New Delhi.

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The First President of the Indian Republic.

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PREFACE

Sardar Patel occupied a pivotal post in the Republic of India and his position, power and patriotism couldnot be over-estimated. He had risen to the highest rung of political authority by dint of his service to the nation; and even though he was the Deputy Premier, he enjoyed an equal position with the Premier in the Councils of the Government as well as in the hearts of the masses.

This book is an intimate study of the great peasant-politician who possessed more grit than any other top leader of India. By ceaseless devotion to the cause of freedom he had risen to the highest pinnacle of glory and his life was a gospel of duty, determination, devotion, and dauntlessness.

This volume is a comprehensive study of the career and character of Sardar Patel and gives his important speeches delivered between 1921 and 1950.

An Autobiographical Letter by Sardar Patel has been included to enhance the value of the book. Equally important are the two articles: Nehru and Patel by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Nehru on Patel. The letter by Sardar Patel appears at the beginning of the book, while the two valuable articles on Sardar Patel to wards the end.

20-2-1951
CONSTITUTION HOUSE,
NEW DELHI.

ABDUL MAJID KHAN.

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It was a singularly good fortune of this country that at the critical time of taking over power we had a man of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's outstanding ability, tact and achievement in the leadership of the country.

There are very few people who have done so much in so short a time and talked so little about it. He had undoubtedly been the architect of Indian unity as Gandhiji had been the architect of Indian freedom.

Sardarji was a man, who, though not a capitalist, is loved by that class; who was really a socialist in action but who was most misunderstood and abused by the socialists. His sympathy for the downtrodden was beyond dispute and what was far more important it was always expressed in action as was done in the historic struggle of Bardoli peasants.

I will not be doing him injustice if I say that he was not wedded to any particular school of economic thought. It will be just to describe him that he was not a doctrinaire but essentially a man of action, one who saw what was possible, when and how. That really sums up the virtues of a statesman. Undoubtedly he was that.

N. V. GADGIL
Minister for Works, Mines and Power
Government of India.

A man with an overpowering personality, straight in action and frank in speech, Sardar Patel had a very soft heart full of solicitude for the needy and poor. His high sense of duty, indomitable courage, unlimited capacity for work and remarkable gift of organisation were universally respected.

The staunch follower and companion of Mahatma Gandhi, the Sardar was foremost in organising and conducting all the satyagraha movements against alien rule and when India became free, it was he who had to bear the responsibility of controlling and extinguishing the fire of communal hatred and internal disorder that once seemed to engulf the entire country.

The way in which within a remarkably short time he accomplished the integration of 500 odd states and consolidated India into one invulnerable compact state would ever be gratefully appreciated as a unique achievement in history.

GOVIND VALLABH PANT,
Chief Minister, Utter Pardesh.

"Let us not forget in the joy of the hour, the stupendous responsibilities and obligations which freedom has brought within in its wake. Our primary duty is jealously to guard our freedom against dangers from without and from within. We have also to ensure that the humblest among us has the same stature as the tallest in the land, that labour gets its legitimate share of its product, that the toiling millions in villages obtain just return for the sweat of their brow, and that the State discharges adequately its elementary duty of feeding, clothing, housing and educating every son and daughter of the motherland. It has now been given to us by Providence to fashion our country's destiny according to our cherished ideals and aspirations. If we fail the Motherland, the blame will not lie at others' door. Indeed, there are enormous difficulties and almost insuperable obstacles in our way, but it is for us to overcome them"—**Sardar Patel in a message to the nation, on the eve of Independence Day, August 15, 1947.**

The Sardar had such a deep affection for his illustrious brother, Vithalbhai, that he used to unlace his shoes and look after all his comforts when the latter went to Ahmedabad. There was an understanding between the two brothers to the effect that Vithalbhai was to devote himself to the service of the nation and that the Sardar was to look after the family. Referring to this the Sardar once said : "The noble duty of service of the nation went to my brother's lot and the sinful one came to me, but I used to console myself by thinking that I have some share in his holy duty."

Though the Sardar might not have been seen praying regularly, there could be no doubt regarding his unshakable faith in God. On the death of one of his co-workers, the Sardar wrote: "The ways of God are inscrutable. Who can fathom his leela ? We have to believe that whatever He does is for our good."

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
Minister of Health, Government of India.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER

Dear Readers,

The Editor has assigned to me one of the most difficult jobs which I have had to perform during a life of heavy responsibilities of various types in different positions. Sitting in this city of weird mixture of the old and the new, it is difficult to switch one's mind back more than three scores of years and recalls one's life when one was a child. As a child it always pays to be either the eldest or the youngest. As the eldest, a child is the centre of paternal hopes; as the youngest, he is the object of paternal affection. It is the privilege of the eldest to order about all his younger brothers and sisters. As the youngest one has to wear the brunt of accumulated orders; but, at the same time, unless one is particularly unfortunate, one gets accumulated blessings as well as showers of affection. Having been born between these two extremes, I naturally had the usual independence, initiative and resources of a middling. When the time came, I could exercise a will of my own. It was seldom that I had to take into account the responsibilities which devolve upon the eldest child or the debt of affection which bends the back of the youngest.

Town Life Retards Free Growth

My own view is that town life gives little scope for the display of all that is best in the child. It places restrictions and limitations which retard his free growth, cramp his style and make his mind revolve in a narrow groove, on the other hand, in

the open spaces of a village, one can see infinity. The growth of a child is on terms of complete equality with his fellow-children. He has his share of the 'black eye' like any others. He rolls on dusty streets after a gentle or severe push as well or as badly as any of his equals or seniors or juniors in age. He is pushed in the village pond with the same vigorous and unexpected wrap on the knuckles as any other child. It was in this atmosphere of equal 'give-and-take' that I grew up with all the zest in life that only a village child can have and all that sturdiness and determination which grow out of a healthy atmosphere of dare-devilry and juvenile buoyancy and of impish pranks, mirth and laughter.

The Captaincy of Mischief

As far as I can remember, I yielded to none in the captaincy of mischief or of sly attempts to hoodwink one's elders. As far as I can recall however it was almost always in a good cause—of course, a good cause from my own point of view. I took to studies as seriously as I took to play cheerfully. I had no patience with an indifferent teacher and never spared a lazy one. As children we had our own methods of correcting our teachers and we fully exploited all the subtleties of manoeuvres which only children can. I can vividly recall one particular incident. My teacher at school got annoyed because I persuaded the class to make fun of him for being late. He prescribed a task for me as punishment. I came to school the next day without my task being done, and the punishment increased doublefold for each day that went by until it was my task to write out the sums two hundred times.

I wrote on the slate just the figure 200 and took it to my teacher with an innocent air. The teacher asked me where the padas (in Gujrati that means both sums and buffaloes) were. I told him I could write only 200 when the padas (buffaloes) ran away. The teacher was all sound and fury. I was presented before the Headmaster, who, instead of punishing me, took the teacher to task for not knowing the correct methods of prescribing tasks.

Those Blissful Days

They say, "Child is Father of the Man". I do not know how much of what I am I owe to those blissful days. I know this much, however, my constitution today is what I built up as a child and the many qualities or defects of character which I might exhibit today can probably be traced to the characteristics which I displayed when I was a child. This does not, however, mean, that I kept my development in a straight line. This can hardly be the case in a life full of varieties and of different experiences. Many are life's incidents which act as a corrective and lesson which once learnt mould a person's future in a way quite different from the past. I had my share of these incidents and experiences, but, in the main, I am what I was or tried to be seventy years ago.

Onerous Responsibilities

Even today in the midst of my onerous responsibilities and heavy preoccupations, I delight in the company of children. That brings sometimes a ray of hope in the midst of surrounding gloom, a heavy laughter after the perusal of a saddening report, and a relaxation during anxious hours.

Work is undoubtedly worship but laughter is life. Anyone who takes life too seriously must prepare himself for a miserable existence. Anyone who greets joys and sorrows with equal facility can really get the best of life. It has been my good fortune to have borne a temperament which adapts itself equally well to the most taxing and the light moments. It was only some years ago that I used to wrestle and sport with my grand son. Even now, I indulge in less v gorous pranks with children who can afford to give me the benefit of their company. It is only so long as a man can retain the child in him that life can be free from those dark shadows which leave inevitable furrows on a man's forehead. There is nothing more disgusting than perpetual pensive brows or the wry face of a curmudgeon.

Old Age Is Second Childhood

They say, "Old age is second childhood." I wish it were. The poet has said :

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be
The last of life for which the first was made."

So far as my own life is concerned, it is an open book. There are few, however, who have known me as a child are yet alive. The words of those few are concealed in the wraps of distance and isolation from the gaze of publicity ; but, in so far as I am competent to speak for myself, I would much rather be a child 70 years ago than myself in the year of grace 1949.

1, Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi
19-12-49.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

INTRODUCTORY

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the most powerful man in India. His decisions and determinations carried weight with millions of people throughout the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent. He understood the people and the people understood him. The nation admired him and obeyed him unflinchingly and ungrudgingly.

Everybody remembers how he fought for India's freedom with dogged determination and a fervent passion. His enthusiasm had not waned since India achieved her independence on August 15, 1947. He had been working hard to build up a strong united nationality in this country.

I

STATES' PROBLEM

Like a ruthless political surgeon, Sardar Patel had performed the greatest operation on the body politic of India. Through his foresight he had wiped out the Indian states, numbering over five hundred, which acted as Ulsters and Ulcers in Iia and loosened the nationality and common brorhood of the masses.

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He pulled down in less than two years the fine edifice of imperialism built up by the British eighty years ago since the days of Lord Dalhousie.

The British at the time of departure had given

full freedom to the princes and the paramountcy had lapsed. This Doctrine of Lapse had wicked significance. It could have spelt the ruin of India had Sardar Patel not been wideawake and equal to the task assigned him. Silently and sweetly he put the halter around the neck of the princes. Through his gentle diplomacy he put the people above the princes and wrought the greatest bloodless revolution in the history of India. Even superior to the expulsion of the British was expulsion of the princes who had been a permanent sore and could become a plague had there been a less intelligent man than Sardar Patel at the helm of affairs.

The Patel Doctrine of 1947 laid a stable foundation of the Indian Union. As a unique architect of India, he ranks with the greatest builders of the world, such as Bismarck, Lenin and Garibaldi.

II

A PASSION FOR DISCIPLINE

Most of his success was due to the fact that he had a rare passion for discipline. Over six feet high with drooping shoulders, a short neck, a long head large hands, wide jaws, stern face and rugg exterior, he was an awe-inspiring figure. He ha fended many people because of his cult of dis but he would rather have offence than indi On the whole he was a popular disciplinar people submited willingly to his ideals.

The Sardar was a man of action. He mind and what he wanted to do. He waver. He did not falter. He might well be

pared to "an iron casket that holds rare and hidden gems of devotion, sweetness and charm."

A steel-willed man, he was unromantic and unsentimental. He was made of the stuff of which commanders and generals are made. His advice to the Civil Servants, in an address to the probationers at the All-India Administrative Service Training School, was remarkable:

"Your foremost consideration should be how best to contribute to the well-being of India as a whole. You can trust Government to keep you contented and happy so that you may give of your best, but it would be unworthy of you if you make that a condition of your work. Above all, I would advise you to maintain to the utmost the impartiality and incorruptibility of administration. A Civil Servant cannot afford to and must not take part in politics. Nor must he involve himself in communal wrangles. To depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to debase public service and to lower its dignity."

III

WITHERING HUMOUR

While going to address a press conference in Bombay, Sardar Patel was addressed by a veteran journalist as:

"Sir, we shall all be very much thankful if you make a general statement on the burning questions of the day instead of waiting for any questions."

"I am very glad", said the Sardar in measured tones, "that the press in Bombay is represented here in such a great strength. I hope the Bombay press will increase from strength to strength."

Then the Sardar added significantly. "I hope I have given the statement that the gentleman wanted."

It created a roar of laughter, but then the Sardar created more laughter by adding:

"Is there anyone else here who wants to advise me?"

Looking at the Sardar through a reporter's eyes was like looking at a blank wall. Even the most seasoned journalists could know nothing of the man from his face. He was a man of biting, telling sarcasm. A journalist referred to an anti-Indian remark made by Winston Churchill.

"Tell Churchill", said Sardar Patel, "to save England first before saving India."

"But who will tell him that?" asked someone.

"Well, I am telling him that. It is time somebody told him that the world is changing rapidly. The Naked Faqir has got freedom now."

On the eve of Independence when the Premier Kak of Kashmir had halted and insulted Pandit Nehru en route to Srinagar, a journalist asked Sardar Patel:

"What about Kak, Sardar Sahib?"

"Well, what about him? He will soon mix with Kak (dust)", said the Sardar.

Kak, no doubt, has mixed with Kak.

IV

TOTALLY UNEMOTIONAL

Even under load of an extreme stress, Sardar could be totally unemotional and as cool as cucumber. Once there was a riot in the meeting addressed by him in the Kamghar Maidan in Bombay. These were pre-Independence Days and the white-collared fraternity of the Textile Directorate had organized a morcha. A pandemonium followed. The audience were in a panic. Ladies screamed. Children cried. The police fired a few shots. The reporters ran away. Sardar Patel stared at the sky with a serene face.

In 1946, when the Congress had joined the Interim Government, Sardar came to Bombay to break the strike of the B.E.S.T. led by the socialists leaders, particularly, Mr. G.C. Mehta. The strike was on for four weeks and Bombay was busless and tramless. At Chowpatty Sardar Patel spoke to the people:

"Look at the B.E.S.T. strike. These Socialists think that they can capture power through these means. But I do not blame them much. I blame you, the citizens, for having allowed to continue the strike. And look at the man who is leading the strike. These leaders think that they know everything about everything. Well, let me tell you,

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when I entered politics, Mr. G. C. Mehta was not born."

That finished the strike !

Sardar Patel was a man of self-dependent strength and hard-headed realism. An indefatigable energy was a marked characteristic of the Patels to whose community he belonged.

V

A PEASANT POLITICIAN

Sardar Patel came from Gujerat, the golden land of peasants and he was a peasant politician. By sheer dint of his energy he had become a source of inspiration to his countrymen. He was a tower of strength to the nation.

Right from his childhood he stood up against indiscipline and injustice. Once his teacher, Mr. Agarwala, came late to the classroom at Nadiad. So Young Patel began to sing a song and all the students joined him. When the teacher came, he was very angry, but Patel stood up and said to him:

"Sir, you have erred in your duty by chit-chatting in the office when you were supposed to be in the classroom. Now, what right have you to scold us ? What is wrong in our singing a song when there is no teacher in the class and we have nothing else to do ?"

The teacher was all the more annoyed and he told the naughty Patel to walk out of the class. Patel

obeyed but the teacher was shocked to find that the whole class also followed him. Then the teacher reported the matter to the Headmaster and asked for an apology from the boy. Patel instead demanded a counter-apology from the teacher.

If Wellington won the Battle of Waterloo on the cricket field of Eton, Sardar Patel too won a satyagrahi victory in his school-room. It so happened that once he found that a teacher was getting some blackmarket profits in the sale of text-books. Warnings having proved useless, he organised a six-day strike in the school and was successful in bringing the culprit to the book.

VI

STERN SOCIAL SERVICE

Child is the father of man and Sardar Patel imbibed the ideals of social service early in his childhood. In his Fourth Standard he had to walk several miles between Karamsad and Petlad everyday. One day his foot was injured by a big stone and blood began to flow freely. His comrades wanted to bind the wound to stop the bleeding but Patel was determined that the stone should first be removed from the path. It was a very big stone and deep in the earth and had to be dug out but Patel was determined to carry out his resolve. Not until had he removed the stone, did he bind the wound. His motto has always been :

"If there is something to be done, why wait for others ? Why not I ?"

The removing of the huge stone from the road might be ringing in his head when he declared in 1937 as President of the Congress Parliamentary Board :

"When the Congress Roller is in action all pebbles and stones will be levelled."

VII

TEACHING THE ENGLISH MAGISTRATE A LESSON

Once in Borsad, an English Magistrate, Mr. Husband, was a terror to the Indian lawyers. So Sardar Patel, a lawyer at that time, decided to teach him a lesson. When he was arguing a case, the court-room was flooded to watch the show. Mr. Husband used to frighten the witnesses by placing a big mirror before them. Sardar Patel objected to the mirror. The Magistrate refused to remove the mirror, so Patel said :

"Then make a note of the fact that a witness has to face a mirror while answering a question."

The magistrate refused to note. Then Patel said :

"I am applying for a transfer to another court just because you would not concede to a reasonable demand."

The magistrate got nervous and ordered the mirror to be removed. But Sardar was not satisfied with that. He frightened the magistrate so much that he became a terror to the English officers.

VIII

CUT ME TO PIECES

Sardar Patel became the greatest hero in Bardoli where he led the no-tax campaign against the British government. His advice to the agriculturists was :

"Tell Government that you can do what you like, but only by force you shall get us to agree to what we do not like. Cut me to pieces but I will not pay."

This was the spirit in which Sardar Patel led the fight for the independence of India. He was arrested many times but even in jail the officers were afraid of him. Once a consumptive Englishman was lodged quite close to the cell occupied by Gandhiji and others. Sardar Patel strongly objected to the authorities.

"Do you know whose life you are risking ? That man is coughing all night. Even a cat coming here after drinking milk from his pot may carry the infection. So I am going to oppose your move tooth and nail....."

The jail authorities had to yield.

IX

AN INCONSPICUOUS WORKER

Sardar Patel served the nation without pomp and show. He rendered all kinds of service under Gandhiji without grumbling and the latter had given him a good certificate :

"The speed and thoroughness of Vallabhbhai's work are no doubt amazing."

At the Calcutta Congress Session he was to be congratulated for his heroic accomplishments in Bardoli, but he was missing. No one knew the reason for this conspicuous absence. So an attempt was made to contact him on the telephone.

He said that he had come to the session but the volunteer on duty did not allow him to go in as he could not recognise him. He obeyed the volunteer's order and went back. The president then sent a special messenger to fetch him. The Sardar came and the volunteer was dumbfounded. Instead of rebuking him, the Sardar admired his sense of duty.

X

REMARKABLE SELF-CONTROL

Zaverba, the noble wife of Sardar Patel, was suffering from plague. So he brought her to Bombay and got her admitted in the Cama Hospital. Then he went back to his work. When he received the telegram of her death, he was arguing a case in a court at Godhra. He was cross-examining a witness from the opposite side. He carried on his work as if nothing had happened. It was only when the case was over that he became dejected.

When in the Yerwada Jail, he was suffering from nose trouble, Gandhiji said :

"A sea voyage would perhaps be the best

remedy". Sardar Patel turned down the suggestion and asked for an operation.

"I would definitely prefer," said he, "dying here in peace to going on a sea journey."

When Gandhiji was assassinated, Sardar Patel was deeply shocked but he did not shed a tear. Maniben, his daughter, wrote to a friend:

"I am afraid Bapu (Sardar) will suffer from a nervous breakdown if he goes on like this. He wants to weep but thinking of others, he checks his tears."

That was the nature of the Deputy Premier of India. He was a man of magnificent self-discipline. In jail he took ordinary rations of a prisoner and refused superior rations. His rations were full of stones and pebbles and the warder once offered to give him his own rations, but he turned down the request.

"I am a peasant", he said, "so there will not be any difficulty in taking this food."

XI

GANGA AND JUMNA

"Let us wish many happy returns for the Sardar and also pray for the two illustrious disciples of Gandhiji, the two makers of Free India, the Sardar and Jawahar, may live long that the complimentary personalities of the two, the realism of the one and idealism of the other, may always flow together like the streams of Ganga and Yamuna and

bring us nearer and ever nearer to our goal, the India of Bapu's dreams." These were the thoughts of many when Patel was alive.

Patel with his practical realism wrought miracles under the leadership of Gandhiji. It was Sardar Patel who often challenged the British successfully and floored them. Nobody can forget the bugle-call of Sardar Patel to the British in 1942:

"Give us our freedom; give it to the Congress or give it to the Muslim League; give it to honest men or give it to thieves and dacoits, but for God's sake give us our freedom."

Patel brought forth his best when he became the Deputy Minister, Home Minister, States Minister, etc. and brought his practicality to match with Nehru's internationalism. Before abolishing the five hundred princedoms, he tackled the matter wisely and issued the following memorable statement:

"This country with its institutions is the proud heritage of the people who inherit it. It is an accident that some live in the States and some in British India, but all alike partake of its culture and character. We are all knit together by bonds of blood and feeling, no less than self-interest. None can segregate us into segments; no impassable barriers can be set up between us. I suggest that, therefore, better for us to make laws sitting together as friends than to make treaties as aliens. I invite my friends, the rulers of the states, and their people, to councils of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendliness and co-operation in a joint

endeavour, inspired by our common allegiance to our motherland for the common good of us all."

XII

PEDESTAL OF DUTY

On March 29, 1948, Sardar Patel, escaped a narrow death in an aeroplane. He took off from New Delhi for Jaipur in an official Dakota. He boarded the R.I.A.F. Devon on account of some trouble in the Dakota. He was to inaugurate the Rajasthan Union. The engine developed trouble and the plane forcelanded on a river-bed. All the occupants were unhurt.

"It was perfect landing", said Patel, "the pilot did a marvellous feat, I am none the worse for it."

On the next day when he addressed the august assembly of the Rajasthan Union, he said:

"I should like to apologize to you for the trouble and inconvenience that was caused on account of the delay in my arrival.....For me it was a sort of variety entertainment, but for you all it was a time of anxious waiting and concern..... For two hours we were cut off from all the world but we were always with God."

The enigma of Sardar Patel's character laid in his coolness and devotion to duty. His courageous leadership had saved the country from many a serious crisis. He, by removing the yellow patches of princes, had created a strong and powerful India. From a standstill agreement, he forced the princes to accession and then to integration. Now the states have become as subservient to the centre as

the provinces. He expressed his ideas in an address to the Patiala and the East Punjab States Union.

"If you look at the history of India, you will find that for centuries India was steeped in slavery. What struggles, what sacrifices, what bitterness, and what sorrow we all had to face to rid India of that centuries-old malady that had eaten into the very vitals of its nationhood. A great change has come about, indeed a great revolution has been brought into being. The greater the change, the more comprehensive the revolution, the more are the travails through which the country has to pass. We have already had more than a due share of troubles and travails. We are lucky we have survived so many of them, but many are still to be overcome. If we falter or fail we shall consign ourselves to eternal shame and disgrace."

Sardar Patel, unlike many other Congressmen, had always maintained a strong attitude to the Muslim League, Pakistan and the stooges of Pakistan in India. This is how he thundered in Bombay on January 18, 1948, just a few days before the death of Gandhiji:—

"I am a frank man. I say bitter things to Hindus and Muslims alike. At the same time I maintain, as I have said a number of times, that I am a friend of Muslims. If Muslims do not accept me as such, they also act as mad men. They do not seem to understand the right or the wrong. But for their attitude I cannot forsake truth. I cannot descend from the pedestal of duty. Some of them went to Gandhiji and complained about my Luck-

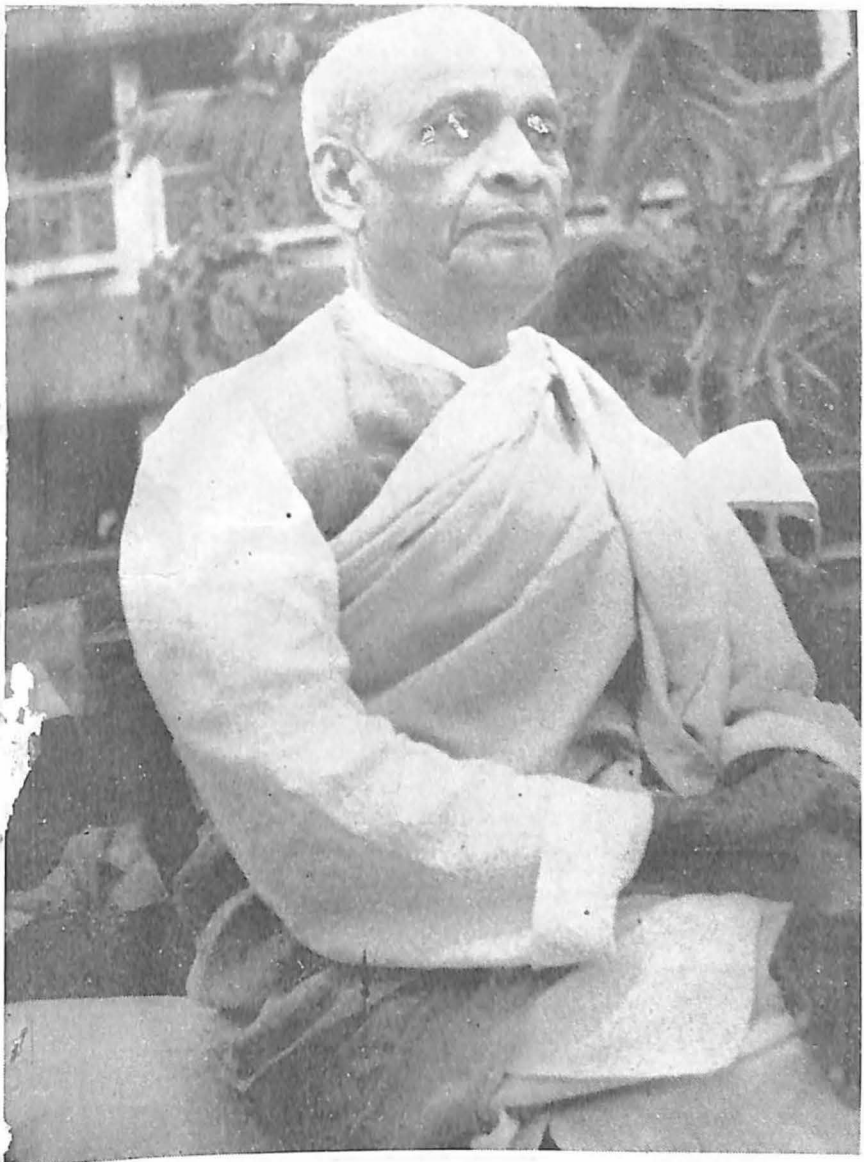
now speech in which I criticised them for not condemning Pakistan's attitude to Kashmir. They went and told Gandhiji many things and Gandhiji felt ompelled to defend me. That also pained me, for fter all I am not a weak person who should be efended by others."

Vallabhbhai was called the Sardar in spite of he Congress disavowing all titles, but that did not xclude those titles of popular origin signifying the eople's appreciation of a leader. Gandhi himself alled him always "the Sardar." He was extremely lert and extremely anxious to inform himself. He ad a genius for detail. No detail was too insignifiant for him. He was most affable and had no arisocratic bearing or reserve. He had a wit all his wn. In conversation he choked you with a laughr by play of his sharp and incisive wit, by the splay of his wisdom and by the apt citation of undreds of proverbs in Gujarati. His loyalty to Gandhi was proverbial. Of him it could be truly said :

"His is not to make reply
His is not to reason why,
His is but to do and die."

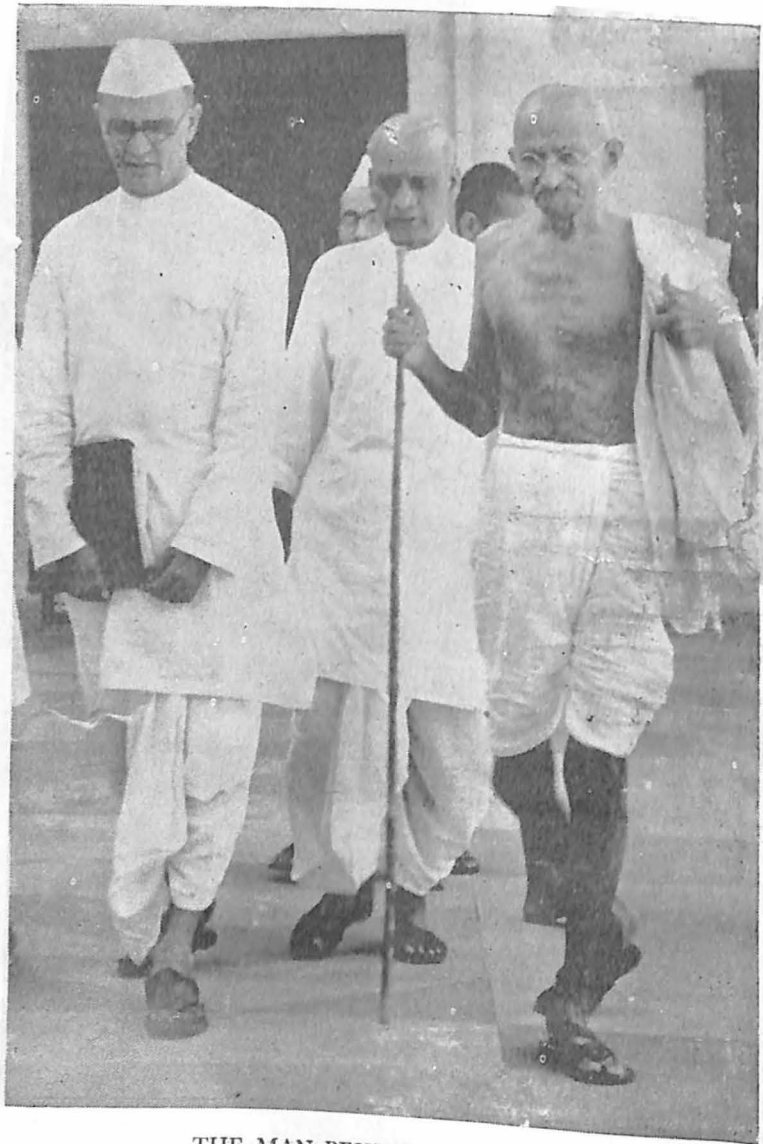
All the three parties, Labour, Capital and Government, have common interests and common outlook in many a field. We must act with mutual consultation. All of us must have courage to face facts and deal with them in a practical way. Hesitancy is out of place, boldness is clearly indicated. But at the same time you should show understanding and sympathy to those whom you utilize as the means of production. It is only then that you can win labour round. You should educate labour into correct ways of conduct. Public opinion can never be won by following the path of least resistence.

—*SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL*



SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

"The Sage called Discipline"



THE MAN BEHIND MAHATMAJI

Sardar Patel is the dynamo of action behind Gandhiji's satyagraha. Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, and late Mahadev Desai are going to attend a meeting of the Congress Working Committee.

LIFE AND SPEECHES
OF
SARDAR PATEL

CHAPTER FIRST
The Sage Called Discipline

In colleges and halls in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety and truth
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage called Discipline,

His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Played on his lips ; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart

Was to encourage goodness. Learning grew
Beneath his care a thriving, vigorous plant.
The mind was well-informed, the passions held
Subordinate and diligence was choice.

If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must
That one, among so many, overleaped
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke.

His power was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach. —COWPER.

SARDAR PATEL means discipline. Discipline means Sardar Patel. The two are interchangeable terms in the Congress organisation. Sardar Patel is the embodiment of

discipline in the Congress. And discipline is the very manifestation of Sardar's dynamic personality. John Gunther has called him, not with much justification, "the party boss par excellence", because Sardar Patel has little of the boss in him. He is rather a conscientious servant than an unscrupulous master of the Indian Nation. He imposes a rigid discipline upon himself before he enforces it rigidly upon others. Cowper's description of the ancient disciplinarian becomes him tremendously well.

Patel! Patel! The name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stands for discipline not only in the Congress but in the whole theatre of Indian politics.

Sardar Patel is a "schoolmaster" of colleges-and-halls fame of ancient days. His name is "discipline." Learning virtue, piety and truth are precious to him. He inculcates them with care among the camp-followers of the Indian National Congress. He dwells like a hermit putting self-discipline and party discipline above anything else. Self-kindness for him is self-cruelty. The individual must merge himself into the party machine. One must live for all, as all for one.

His eye is stern. A stern smile plays upon his lips. In his speech is heard paternal sweetness, national dignity and stern love. The occupation dearest to his heart is to encourage goodness. Party discipline grows beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant.

His mind is well-informed. His passions are held subordinate to the work in hand. Diligence is his choice.

If e'er it chance, as sometimes chance it must,
That one, among so many overleaps
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grows stern, and darts a severe rebuke.

His power is full of holy terror. His voice shakes the dilinquent. It shakes him with fits of awe. The penitent must win lost favour again. He must close the breach.

That is Sardar Patel !

John Gunther calls Sardar Patel the Jim Farley. That is a false accusation. Sardar Patel has nothing of the Jim Farley in him. He is rather the Jim Garfield. He is not a party-fixer but rather a devoted manager of the party.

" Once Gandhi has determined the line to take " says Gunther, " it is Patel who runs it through as happened at Tripuri in 1939."

That is not to be a boss but only to be an obedient boy, judged even by the most lenient use of words. He is certainly not the creator of the political machine. He is rather a creation thereof. And virtually he has been an efficient tool in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi rather than the hand that wielded the tool.

As the Sage of Discipline, Sardar Patel has rendered a service entirely unique to the cause of India. The children of the Congress have valued the paternal sweetness in his speech. If he is overlooked and unemployed, the abiding sense of organisation among the Congress enthusiasts may sicken and die, steadiness languish, emulation sleep, virtue fly. Mahatma Gandhi has repeatedly stated that if rigid discipline is not enforced, the Indian National Congress will become a scene of solemn farce. Ignorance of non-violence will walk on stilts. The cup of violence will be well-lined with logic not her own. And patriots with parrot's tongue will perform the satyagrahi's part. Consequently there will be dissolution of all the bonds for which Indian leadership has stood out. It will cause such a cultural expense that it will pitch Mother India blue, and mortify the liberal hand of

Eastern civilization. All the spiritual treasures of Asia will be squandered in pursuits of political sports and vicious pleasures. That is where lies the value of Sardar Patel. This remarkable gem of patriotism has kept the Congress within the rigid framework of discipline. He has lived his life intensively in the service of the Congress. Considered extensively, his life is almost uneventful.

II

PATEL'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born : 31st October, 1875, at Karamsad, Nadiad Taluka.

Father : Jhaverbhai, was an agriculturist, had six children, five sons and one daughter.

Marriage : Sardar's wife Jhaverba came from the village of Gana, some 3 miles from Karamsad. She died in 1908 in Bombay at Cama Hospital of a tumour. Sardar has two children :

(1) Miss Maniben who assists her father as his confidential secretary, born in 1903 ; and (2) Dahyabhai born in 1905.

Education : Sardar was brought up at Nadiad at his maternal uncle's place. He was educated at a village school of Karamsad and later at High School, Nadiad. He passed District Pleaders' Examination at an early age and started practice at Godhra. His brother Vithalbhai also practised. He went later to England to qualify for the Barrister's Examination. Sardar was placed in the first class at his Barrister's Examination and was awarded a prize.

Public Life : Sardar came in contact with Gandhiji in 1916. He attended Lucknow Congress in 1916 as a delegate on behalf of the Gujerat Sabha. He took a leading part in Kaira Satyagraha in 1918 and came in intimate contact with Gandhiji.

He participated in Borsad Satyagraha against Punitive Tax in 1922.

He was put into charge of Nagpur Flag Satyagraha as from 10th July, 1923.

He led the Bardoli Movement in 1928 and carried it to a successful end.

Arrested for the first time on the 8th of March, 1930 at Ras and sentenced to 3 months. Arrested thrice within 11 months. Was in jail 1932—34 under Regulation III of 1818.

He presided over the Karachi Congress in 1931 : Chairman of Parliamentary Sub-Committee, 1935—40.

Arrested for individual Civil Disobedience Movement in November, 1940 and released on medical grounds in 1941.

Again arrested on the 9th August, 1942, taken to Ahmednagar Fort and released on the 15th June, 1945.

III

LEADER BY MERIT

Judged objectively, the life of Sardar Patel is not more remarkable than that of any other leader. Yet he has lived it so intensively that he stands alone, even a bit apart from Gandhiji, whose most devoted follower he is. Gandhiji is a leader by destiny. So is Jawaharlal Nehru. But Sardar Patel is a leader by merit. He has reached where he is by the sheer force his unflinching devotion to the cause of freedom. He has sacrificed his all on the altar of democracy. Willingly he has given away the begemmed jewels of a distinguished career under the British regime.

All along he has been fired by the consuming torch of freedom. India must be free. India is going to be free. That has been his bugle-call. Freedom, for him has been

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no physical luxury. Freedom for him is an appetite of the soul. He has been itching to set a date for India's freedom from foreign domination. He speaks in vigorous Hindustani to the vigorous people of Hindustan. His slogan is a battle-cry and consequently he has no use of the weak-kneed people. He lives for a revolution in a peaceful atmosphere. And he has fought on many fronts in the battle of non-violence. Recently he welcomed the Cabinet Mission with cold reserve.

"If no satisfactory result is forthcoming", he said, "the Congress will launch the last and final struggle, asking the British Government to quit India. That battle will be real and the Congress will see to it that they quit our shores."

In the 1942 struggle, the Congress was caught in a trap by not sticking to its seats in the legislatures. The result was that undeserving people got into the Assemblies and continued to discuss problems other than the question of freedom. The Congress was deceived. But this time the Congress has decided to capture all the seats in the legislature, he said.

Sardar Patel's devotion to the cause has won for him a fervent devotion of his colleagues and co-workers. He is known to be a man of intrepid patriotism. And he has an implacable passion for India's freedom. He is proud and stubborn. He has power of resistence and sacrifice. His loyalty to Mahatma Gandhi is unquestioned. And this has made him the central strength of the national movement.

"With his stern, rugged and grave exterior", says Sarojini Naidu, "he is like an iron casket that holds rare and hidden gems of devotion, sweetness and charm."

Abul Kalam Azad has called Sardar Patel a bold and untiring general of India's struggle for independence. Even in his old age, he is keeping the banner of freedom flying with a young man's zeal. Patel has the foresight of a general and the alertness of a soldier. He is a man of discipline with a keen sense of humour. He keeps up a brilliant atmosphere about him. And it is impossible to be dull in his company. He is the best tonic for a moody person. And Bapuji can always have that tonic when he is seedy.

" His rugged exterior ", says Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, " hides a heart of gold and an affectionate and a kindly nature. "

Sardar Patel is a born leader. He is one with the poor. His transparent honesty needs no encomiums.

" We can honour him", says Rajkumari, " by trying to live up to the standards he has set before us. "

Those who have called Sardar Patel a Jim Farley, a ruthless boss, or a party-fixer or dictator, are effectively answered by C. Rajagopalachariar :

" It was on a day of unforgettable importance in my life twenty-six years ago. Gandhiji while chatting with me in Madras mentioned Vallabhbhai's name to me, as one of the men I should meet and know. Since then we have worked together these many years and I can say I know him. Those who think Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is a hard man are thoroughly mistaken. On the contrary, it would be not far from the truth if one were to say that his is the nature of a loving and jealous woman. His affection is exacting and behind a cold and cynical exterior he holds a highly emotional and responsive soul and an untiring spirit for work. Masterful he is, but as a mother and not as a

tyrant. He has had little joy in the world but he wastes not a thought on himself. He cannot tolerate being unjustly treated. Hence he may often be mistaken for any person by those who seek to be unjust. But it is not anger. It is confidence in his capacity to resist. He cannot be found to utter a single 'Mantram' or chant a hymn but he is, I know, a deeply religious man, more religious than many vocally pious people."

Sardar Patel has superb qualities of head and heart. He has an indomitable courage and an unbending will. He is endowed with a profound knowledge of human nature. And he is inspired by powerful passion for public good.

"Sardar's genius," says Govind Ballabh Pant, "for leadership and organisation is marvellous."

Sarat Chandra Bose makes an exquisitely psychological approach to this citadel of Indian nationalism :

"Almost immediately after coming out of my detention camp, I greeted the 'Sardar of Bardoli' as the 'Sardar of India.' I did not do so at the impulse of the moment. The words that came out of me were the result of deep thinking during the last four years. Often and often in my detention camp I thought of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel—the leader of the No-Tax Campaign at Bardoli in 1928, the leader of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Gujarat in 1930, the past President of the Indian National Congress, and one of the leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. I called to mind many a time the stand he took along with Babu Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kirpalani at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee which was held at Allahabad from the 27th April to the 1st May, 1942—the meeting which considered Mahatmaji's original draft calling upon the British to 'quit India.' I repeated to myself again

and again the words he used at that meeting and I shall make no apology for quoting them.

"Said the Sardar : ' We have ever since the outbreak of the war tried to pull together, but it may not be possible on this occasion. Gandhiji has taken a definite stand.....I have placed myself in the hands of Gandhiji. I feel he is instinctively right—the lead he gives in all critical situations.....It is time the door is finally closed after the repeated insults heaped upon us. I agree with the draft before us.'

"The Sardar did not feel worried about what Britishers and Americans might think about Gandhiji's draft. The apprehension that Gandhiji's draft might weaken the British Government's position in the world left him undisturbed. He stood like a rock and enabled Bombay to complete what Jalpaiguri and Tripuri had begun. What followed constitute the most glorious chapters in India's struggle for independence.

"The Sardar's attitude during the last 25 years has never been one of passive radicalism or of inactive expectancy. He has never wavered between the struggle for Indian independence and opportunism.

"The Sardar has always been a man of action. He has never been a coiner of phrases. True he coined one phrase, and that was ' Quit Asia. ' That phrase reveals the man. It is at the same time a clarion call to India and the East. The call has been sounded ; the march has begun. Jai Hind ! Jai Asia !"

Jawaharlal thinks that Sardar Patel has grown in stature with the years. He has left his mark on events which have formed the fabric of history. Wholly devoted to the cause of India's freedom, he inevitably aroused powerful reactions. He has been a tower of strength to the patriots,

and he has laid stable foundations of India's freedom. K. M. Munshi has made a correct estimate of his merits in the fewest of words :

"His complete surrender to Gandhiji which is almost spiritual in character, his great powers of managing men and things, his capacity in building up and maintaining the giant organisation which mainly upholds the national strength, his courageous leadership, unerring insight into the motives and ambitions of men and his uncompromising attitude towards the British rule make him a centre of formidable strength in India's fight for freedom."

IV

DO YOUR DUTY

Sardar Patel values nothing so much as the ancient gospel of do-your-duty. Only through duty we can serve the cause of democracy. He wants the people to behave as disciplined soldiers and give an unquestioned loyalty to their leaders, like the Charge of the Light Brigade. During elections he requested the people to do their duty by voting for the Congress and then await the next order :

"India is determined to be free and she shall be free very soon. I have no specific plan or proposals to place before you now. I can only ask everyone of you to do your duty during the forthcoming elections and see that the Congress sweeps the polls. Once we do this, there will be time enough to think of what our next step should be. The country has to get ready, not only for the elections, but also for the struggle which is ahead. What is wanted is solid work and preparation and not talk. When the time for action comes, and the time for action may come soon, we must be able to act as one man."

His bugle-call to the public is always a call to the colours. And his watchword is a battle-cry in a war where the use of weapons is strictly prohibited.

In doing his duty to the people, Sardar Patel works like a steam-roller and does not spare the Indians who carry on anti-national activities. He has warned the black-marketeers in the strongest language against their nefarious acts in robbing the poor people. He is full of venom against the Indians as well as the British who brought about the Bengal famine.

Sardar Patel made it clear to the mercantile community that it was no use their depending on alien rulers for the protection of their interests. He regretted to point out that, during the 1942 struggle, when the masses were in dire distress, some of the merchants had acted in a manner not befitting them. It was indeed deplorable, he said.

The British people had now assessed the real strength behind the Indian freedom movement and they were fully conscious of the fact that, when the next struggle comes, they would not be able to make their own stand.

"I want to warn you," said Sardar Patel, "when the next crisis comes, you should not exploit the weakness and helplessness of the masses, but stand by them and with them."

Sardar Vallabhbhai then referred to the Bengal famine and said that there could be no greater condemnation of the system of administration in the country than that millions of people should have died of starvation and hunger. If such a state of affairs had occurred in England, the Government of the day would have been hounded.

Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy did not even care to visit the famine-stricken province of Bengal. If anyone deserved to be hanged on account of the Bengal famine, it was Lord Linlithgow.

Sardar demands obedience from others as strongly as he gives himself to others, the greatest among the latter being Mahatma Gandhi. He is essentially a man of action and believes in doing and dying rather than talking about what he has done or he wants to do. K. M. Munshi, his closest colleague for many years, has made a correct estimate of his character and qualities:—

"But Sardar, to the world, is a man of few words To some, he is the silent, sinister figure who is responsible for every policy of the Congress which they disapprove. He is denied mass popularity of the kind which, for instance, Pandit Jawaharlal commands. He hasn't the flare for it. He is too impersonal. He desires to create no personal tradition apart from Gandhiji and the Congress. And where strength is needed, generally he is selected to wield the thunderbolt. He does it without apology; for he knows that a ruthless imperialism cannot be fought without forging a compact instrument of strength.

"Sardar is the executive arm of the Gandhian fabric of power. This fabric of power—this empire—is not the Congress; it is wider and yet the main support of the institution: for in the Congress there are indeed many who are not an integral part of this empire. All over the world there are Gandhians. They look to Gandhiji for inspiration and guidance. They delight in carrying out his behests; they test their conduct on the touchstone of his possible approval. They are not merely restricted to the Congress, the A. I. S. A. or Hindu Prachar or the A. I. V. I. A. or the Kasturba Trust. There are lawyers, doctors, millionaires, men in power outside these institutions who when ordered hasten to fulfil his wishes. This vast army of men and women may be in more or less restricted spheres from the hierachy which upholds the Gandhian empire.

"The creation of this vast fabric is one of Gandhiji's achievements unparalleled in history. A Caesar or an Akbar built a fabric with the aid of force. Gandhiji has built it without it : that's his glory.

"By far the greatest section of this fabric received their direction from Vallabhbhai. Gandhiji plans, inspires, guides, sets the standard and the goal ; Vallabhbhai sees to it that things are done.

"The Sardar has abjured all personal life. He has no individual ambition or attachment, apart from the success of Gandhian policies. He has no opinion except Gandhiji's. He has no other standards except those prescribed by Gandhiji. From the first day when twenty-five years ago, Vallabhbhai attached himself to Gandhiji he had had no mental reservations from his leader. He has been to Gandhiji what Shri Krishna wants Arjuna to be, 'nimittamatram', an instrument.

SURRENDER TO GANDHIJI

"This surrender on the part of so strong-tempered and astute a man as Vallabhbhai borders on the spiritual. Sardar has strong likes and dislikes ; his 'hammer-and-tong' way of dealing with men. Gandhiji's outlook on men is superior, his methods non-violent. Vallabhbhai's judgment of men and things is mostly unerring and realistic. Gandhiji's appreciation of men is generous, of things sometimes so detached as to appear idealist. Vallabhbhai can play upon the ambitions and fears of man ; Gandhiji will play mostly on his nobler instincts If Vallabhbhai's judgment on power politics is invariably sound, Gandhiji's moral outlook corrects it and gives it a point and edge which are irresistible.

"This surrender to Gandhiji is partly responsible for the general failure to appreciate the great work that the Sardar

is doing. He never claims credit for himself; he does not want to be known except as an instrument of Gandhiji.

"Few realise the sheer impossibility of merging oneself in another however great. I know it by personal experience, how difficult it is to make someone else's truth one's own and to be ready to die for it. Vallabhbhai has performed the impossible. The rock on which his life is founded is faith in Gandhiji.

Sardar is a great player on the chessboard of Indian practical politics. The chessboard extends to the whole of India, to its every sphere. His eye is on every pawn, friendly and hostile. He watches the British in India with unweary eyes. He calculates moves, large and small, in Congress groups, legislatures, in public life, in Praja Mandals, in minorities, in the Central government. He can make people talk by his silence, which is often unfathomable. Jealousies, ambitions, insinuations, complaints and scandals are laid bare before him. They are subconsciously registered, analysed, docketed. They provide the raw material for his uncanny insight into human motives to work upon and form the basis for his moves—which are mostly unerring.

"If the elections are on, all over India, each province, each leader, each important member has his attention. When ministries were functioning, every ministry, the internal relations of its members, their attitude towards the British were under his watchful care. In Congress committees, where rival ambitions often mar team work, he watches ambitious men with a 'hundred eyes' and regulates them. And through the tangled web of moves and countermoves his adept finger forms combinations with but one aim: the generation of India's strength and the end of foreign rule.

"As a leader Sardar has great qualities. He is a man of immense courage. During the Rajkot affair several attempts were made to kill him. On one occasion at Bhavnagar his accidental detention by a merchant wanting to offer a garland saved him from being hacked to pieces. Accident prevented his being man-handled at Baroda. While we were going together in a motor car during the time of the labour disturbances staged by the Communist Party after the passage of the industrial Disputes Act, an infuriated man slashed at the rear window pans of our car with an iron rod smashing the pane into a thousand bits. Luckily the glass was of the unbreakable sort and the pieces did not come out. During such moments he is imperturbable. He shuns no risks. He delights in them. He is a man of wonderful resources. He can invent endless devices to checkmate hostile plans. He can evoke loyalties. He can be loyal to those with or through whom he works. He is never afraid of taking responsibilities for the actions of his followers.

"His power to organise things is unique. In this country where centuries of slavery have made it impossible for men to adhere to each other in order to evolve a great organisation, Sardar's genius for organisation is invaluable. I first saw his powers of organisation at Bardoli in 1928. A whole taluka of 80,000 souls were converted into a compact organisation in which months of official pressure could not so much as make a crack. It is easy, as I stated, to create a great organisation by force of arms. It is very difficult to do so as in the case of Gandhiji by forging moral sanctions as represented by his approval or by the sanction of collective opinion as mobilised by the Sardar. Wholesome dread of Vallabhbhai's displeasure is often as efficacious in maintaining discipline as the greater dread of Gandhiji's passing an adverse moral judgment.

"We have a history of political slavery: we attach

more importance to the doctrines and slogans than to the art of developing effective power. If one has to struggle against the mighty British imperialism, a rival organisation which is compact and effective is essential. That, by the nature of things, can only be based on the coercive power, either of collective opinion concentrated on the issue or the fear of moral condemnation at the hands of a man who carried with him the conscience of millions. Gandhiji and Sardar together wield both.

"The strength of Sardar lies in submitting his methods to the test of Gandhian approval. Vallabhbhai knows this too well. When Shri Nariman, in 1937, complained to Gandhiji about what he characterised as Vallabhbhai's unjustifiable attempts to remove him from the leadership of the Congress party in the legislature, Gandhiji promptly appointed a committee to enquire into the matter. He told Shri Nariman that if he found that Vallabhbhai was guilty of such action as Nariman complained of, he would sever connection with him. The Committee—Mr. D. N. Bahadurji was in it—held an enquiry and decided that Vallabhbhai's action was justified. But in such matters Gandhiji's moral sense controls the stern discipline which Vallabhbhai demands and for that reason makes it much more effective."

V

A MAN OF STEEL

Sardar Patel has been rightly called a man of steel. Meek Gujrat has given birth to a mighty giant. Swami Dayanand was another strong man from Gujrat. And Patel shares the fine fire and cool courage of Dayanand. He has the stout character of a peasant. And he is pleased to lead the peasants. And he leads the Nation drastically. Sardar does not believe in foxy compromises.

"The Muslim League," Sardar Patel said, "has captured all the Muslim seats and it may celebrate a Victory Day and believe that Pakistan has been achieved. But Pakistan cannot be achieved in this manner. Pakistan is not in the hands of the British Government. If Pakistan is to be achieved Hindus and Muslims will have to fight. There will be a civil war. The Congress is no longer going to knock at the door of the League. The Congress has tried to settle with the League many times, but it has been kicked out every time. The Congress has decided not to approach the League till it changes its policy. It can take by force whatever it wants."

He does not believe in a make-believe compromise between the nationalists and the reactionaries. The patriots must stand on their own feet. He wants the soldiers of freedom to make one concerted effort for independence and not to look for co-operation from the loyalists and royalists and the title-holders.

"The ship has reached the shore," said the Sardar recently at Karachi, "and our freedom is near at hand It is for us to take it and work it to our advantage or leave the opportunity."

Sardar Patel drew an object lesson for India from the situation in Europe. He pointed out that the European countries, though free were torn to pieces by constant wars and in order to be free themselves they made others slaves. He asked if India should follow in their footsteps of internecine quarrels.

VI

HERO OF BARDOLI

Before his arrest he addressed Gujrat people in the following words during his historic struggle at Bardoli :—

"Give up your wedding festivities—a people at war with a mighty Government cannot afford to indulge in these pas-

times. From to-morrow you might have to keep your doors closed and locked and betake to the fields, only to return home in the evening. You have earned a reputation that you have yet to do much to deserve. Now the die is cast, and there is no turning back. You have to vindicate Gandhi's choice of your Taluka as the scene of his first experiment in mass Civil Disobedience. I know some of you are afraid of your lands being confiscated. What is confiscation? Will they take away the lands to England? Rest assured, when you allow your lands to be confiscated, the whole of Gujrat will be at your back.

"Organise your village and set an example to others. Every village must now be an armed camp. Discipline and organisation mean half the battle. Government have at least one Patel and one Talat to every village for us. Every adult in the village must be a volunteer.

"I see that fifteen days have taught you to cast off your fears. But two annas in the rupee are still there. Shake it off. It is the Government that has cause to fear.

"I want to inoculate you with fearlessness. I want to galvanise you into life. I miss in your eyes the flash of indignation against wrong. Non-violence excludes anger. The defection of two unfortunate brethren should serve to stiffen your resolve and to warn you for the future. You must not be angry with two friends who fell a prey to official machinations. If those who sign the pledge break it with eyes open, how long can you stop them? Let Mahalkori chuckle over his precious gains. He will soon find his occupation gone."

Apart from this stirring message there was a slogan of Patel which the people of Gujerat cherished very dear in

their hearts :—"Every home must now be a Congress office and every soul a Congress organisation." This message was given to the people when the Congress organisation had been declared illegal. When Patel had gone to prison, it became a by-word with the people.

CHAPTER SECOND

The Prince of Law

Two ladies to the summit of my mind
Have clomb to hold an argument of love.
The one has wisdom from above,
For every noblest virtue well designed :
The other, beauty's tempting power refined
And the high charm of perfect grace approve ;
And I, as my sweet master's will doth move,
At feet of both their favours am reclined.
Beauty and Duty in my soul keep strife,
At question if the heart such course can keep
And twixt the two ladies hold its love complete.
The fount of gentle speech yields answers meet,
That Beauty may be loved for gladness's sake,
And Duty is the lofty end of life.

D. G. Rosset

Master Vallabhbhai, the young prince of law, strode the rosy path of life. An ambitious career awaited him. He had all the cosy comforts of a soft vegetable existence. But his mind was not at ease. He was not going to vegetate in the

parlours of a High Court. While he grappled with the criminals and judges and fellow lawyers, another court was being held in the inner recesses of his soul where he sat judge over the scuffle between two ladies—Miss Duty and Madame Beauty. He was arguing the case vigorously in the sessions of sweet silent thought. It was Duty who won the case and carried off the heart of the Judge Advocate into the bargain.

I

GLORIOUS GUJERAT

Gujerat has given birth to some of the greatest men in India in modern history. Swami Dayanand, the great reformer, sucked his energy from Gujerat. Mahatma Gandhi also honoured Gujerat with his illustrious birth. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, though born in Karachi, is a native of Gujerat. Sardar Patel was born on October 31, 1875 of Patidar family at Karamsad near Nadiad in Gujerat. He matriculated from the Nadiad High School, passed District Pleader's Examination and started practice on the criminal side at Godhra.

Vallabhbhai was not yet a man of steel. One wonders how meek Gujerat could create such a strong man, Dayanand too was a Gujerati. But Dayanand had rock-like Yoga. To function as a free man came naturally to him. Patel embodied in himself the finest traditions of a labourer. He was shrewd and business-like.

For twenty-five years he has now held the reins of the Congress movement. His authority as Gandhiji's principal lieutenant has been established. In the quarter of a century the Congress has evolved multifarious policies. The Sardar has become its significant embodiment. Both in non-co-operation and parliamentarism he has shown himself to be a supreme tactician of the hour.

He comes from the Kheda district in Gujerat. It is perhaps the most unruly part of the province. Hot blood

courses in the veins of the people there. Family feuds are common, Sardar's elder brother was murdered in such a feud. The higher emotions have an equally strong hold on these people. Vallabhbhai's father went from Gujerat to the north to join the rebellion of 1857. Adventurous and impulsive are the people of Kheda. Sardar possesses that native impulse. Under Gandhiji he has learnt to sublimate emotions. And there lies the secret of his strength.

Vallabhbhai began life as a lawyer. Civil suits held no charm for him, he delighted to wrestle with the intricacies of Criminal Law. Soon his name became a terror to the judiciary. To escape him the Resident Magistrate's court was shifted from Borsad to Anand. And when he moved himself to Anand, the court was transferred back to Borsad.

Anxious to move into larger circle, he decided to qualify for the Bar. But the passage and other papers addressed to him fell into the hands of his elder brother—also V. J. Patel. And he decided to use them for himself! Vallabhbhai had to wait for some years to realise his ambition.

After being called to the Bar, he set up his practice in Ahmedabad. It was there that he met Mahatma Gandhi. And fell under his spell. He soon relieved the Mahatma of his responsibility in Gujerat. With amazing skill he encouraged the political awakening of the province. For the past twenty-five years Gujerat has been one with Vallabhbhai. Such identification is a source of strength. Gujerat has enjoyed the feeling of national assurance.

Gujerat, which gave us Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest apostle of non-violence, also gave us Sardar Patel, the greatest disciplinarian. Non-violence needs must wed discipline. With discipline, non-violence is the greatest instruction of the gods. Without discipline, non-violence is a mere battledore of children. Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel are the two

wheels of the great chariot of idealism. If one is the spiritual fire, the other is the moral steel. Without Sardar Patel, Gandhiji is an inner fire without steel. Without Gandhiji, Sardar Patel is the moral steel without fire. We need both fire and steel to carry fight into the heart of imperialism. This unique ammunition of moral force is supplied by this unique pair of heroes. And Gujerat has the special honour of having produced the both. Wax and iron have come out of the same soil.

When Mahatma Gandhi returned from Africa during the First Great War to take up his moral guns against the British Government in India, Vallabhbhai Patel was a young barrister of thirty years. Twenties are decisive years in the life of a man, and young Vallabhbhai was already on the top of the ladder. He had to decide and decide quickly as to what he was going to do with his life.

The year 1918 was a year of acute famine in Gujerat. The peasantry petitioned in vain for a suspension of assessment. The blind British bureaucracy was not in a mood to listen. The royal masters must have their tithe. Now was the time for Mahatmaji to try his weapon of Satyagraha. He had perfected this weapon in South Africa. Now was the time to give it a trial in his own motherland. The people of Gujerat were depressed and demoralised by famine, but they were not wedded to the doctrine of sword. The people had never taken part in political upheavals. But Satyagraha was a weapon known to them for centuries. They did not imbibe it from Mahatma Gandhi. It was Mahatma Gandhi who imbibed it from them. Satyagraha is the product of their soil as tooth-for-tooth militarism is the fruit of the Punjab.

Therefore, when Mahatma Gandhi suggested Satyagraha, the people clutched it with both hands. It was a heaven-sent

opportunity and a heaven-sent leadership behind it. Centuries of suppressed instinct were let loose. Mahatma Gandhi wanted a lieutenant, and he got it—young Patel.

Young Vallabhbhai Patel had just come back from England. He set up at Ahmedabad as a barrister. This backward school boy had learnt to take life seriously in England. His work as a lawyer interested him deeply. He burnt his leisure hours at the Ahmedabad Club in the company of lawyers. There he met Mahatma Gandhi. And there his conversion took place. Young Patel bade good-bye to the bar!

Young Patel and his Satyagraha Chief toured the villages. They educated the peasants. Political education was vital to political movement. They heartened the poor people to stand up and face the British empire. The peasants took vow not to pay taxes—no taxes even if their property was confiscated. The Satyagraha spread far and wide. It stands to the credit of the British statesmen that they agreed to suspend assessments in case of poor peasants.

"It was a defeat," says an author, "without formal admission of it, a defeat which many members of the British ruling class, apart from Mr. Chamberlain (The Munich Man), are capable of swallowing with equanimity and assuming a look of the victor rather than the vanquished."

No, it was not a defeat! It was a conquest. When armed men bow down to the gods of non-violence, they are not vanquished but victorions. Their action was nothing which the British had to swallow with equanimity. It was one of those rarest acts which the British had reason to be proud of.

II

THE BOY COMES HOME

Mr. G. V. Mavlankar, the Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly and an intimate friend of Sardar Patel,

graphically describes the early days of his friend as follows :—

"My memory goes back to 1913. The Sardar landed at Bombay on 13th February, 1913, and came to Ahmedabad the next morning. He knew very well the then Chief Justice Sir Basil Scott and, therefore, naturally called on him at Bombay. Sir Basil received him well and offered to give him all support, including a professorship at the Government Law School (the College was then known as School), if Vallabhbhai would stay at Bombay. But Vallabhbhai having no attractions and ambitions for the first place in the Bombay Legal World preferred to come over to Ahmedabad. He had his own plans for serving his people and selected Ahmedabad as the centre for his future public activities. What a coincidence that two years later Gandhiji also selected the same place ! Friends all over the country will appreciate the just pride and the local patriotism of the people of Ahmedabad when their hearts are full of exhuberance and joy at the idea that the /—their city—has contributed such a unique share in the moulding and leading of Indian Nationalism, during the last thirty years.

"A smart young man, dressed in a well-cut suit with a felt hat worn slightly at an angle, piercing and bright eyes, not given to many words, receiving visitors with just a smile but not entering into any conversation, maintaining firm and pensive looks, appearing almost to look upon the world with a sort of superiority complex, talking with an impress of confidence and superiority whenever he opened his lips and carrying on appearance of sternness and reserve. Such was the new barrister, who had come to Ahmedabad for practice. The new barrister was naturally a centre of attention for the Junior Bar. His personality, demeanour, etc., had their own attractions. Mixed feelings of attraction, respect, awe and perhaps a feeling of subdued resentment also at the way he seemed to look at others.

"He had, as a lawyer, mostly criminal practice. His cross-examination of witness was brief but pointed and he showed such a masterly judgment of men that he could make out by a piercing glance at the witness as to the type the witness was and would lead his attack by way of cross-examination accordingly. His conduct of his cases always exhibited thorough mastery of facts, a proper and correct estimate of the opponent's case and line of attack and a carefully planned defence and attack. But the one great equality which struck everybody and made him the object of admiration was his fearlessness, with which he would deal with the court, in which he was appearing. He would never allow the Judge to outstep, even in the least, the limits of courtesy, nor would he allow or tolerate any unfair, unjust or improper leaning on the part of the Court in favour of the police or the prosecution, and would call a spade a spade.

"Practice of law for the purpose of earning a fortune and living a comfortable life of ease and personal enjoyment was never his ideal. Born of poor parents and brought up literally as an agriculturist, knowing the condition and hardship of the village folk, he had always the idea of the service of the community. He had to strive hard for his education and all through he was self-reliant. This struggle in early life made him what he is. Blessed by intelligence, he combined therewith habits of self-reliance, determination and industry.

"Mr. Vallabhbhai did not enter public life immediately on arrival in India, though that was his chief aim of life. He was watching, studying and establishing contacts. Public life was then almost exclusively restricted to the lawyer class. Gandhiji who had started his satyagrah ashram in Ahmedabad in 1915 was also desirous of having contact with leaders of

public life in Ahmedabad. With that end in view, he visited the Gujerat Club once or twice just to meet people there and explain to them his ideas about his Satyagraha Ashram. Vallabhbhai kept aloof and was very sceptical and critical about Gandhiji's ideas and plans. He was brutally blunt in expressing his views. When Gandhiji came to the Club, Vallabhbhai was at his game of bridge with his friend, Mr. Thakore, and I was sitting by his side watching it. When I got up to go to the group of elders where Gandhiji came, Vallabhbhai passed very sarcastic remarks discouraging me from going to him for talks. Could any one had then even dreamt that this man would be a trusted follower and firm believer in Gandhian philosophy, technique and leadership? But this transformation has come about as the result of closer and closer association and comradeship with Gandhiji in selfless service of the country which means the cause of the poor and down-trodden.

"Thus for nearly two years after Gandhiji was in Ahmedabad Vallabhbhai had kept aloof from him. He started his public life independently by entry in the Ahmedabad Municipality in about 1916. He took no time to make his mark by the thoroughness of his work. He spared neither time nor industry to go into the details of administration and did yeoman's service to the city as Chairman of Sanitary Committee.

"Ahmedabad was singularly free from visitations of plague from 1896 onwards notwithstanding the ravages of the epidemic in other parts in the country. The situation, however, got a bit serious in about October, 1917. For the first time people went outside to live in huts and even Courts were as good as closed. The responsibility of the Chairman, Sanitary Committee, was heavy. Mr. Vallabhbhai stood at his post. He continued to live in the city and was seen

moving round with the Municipal staff for effective sanitation under his personal guidance. This was a new departure in the outlook and method of service by city fathers.

"In about July, 1917, Messrs. Vallabhbhai and Harilal Desai were elected Secretaries of the Gujerat Club and I was elected Joint Secretary. It was at the club that we received, one afternoon, the news about the heroic stand of Gandhiji in the Court of the Motihari (Behar) Magistrate who banned Gandhiji's inquiry into the conditions of labour employed by the European planters in Bihar. This was the first act in India of Gandhiji's technique of non-violent resistance. Gandhiji refused to obey the magisterial order and preferred imprisonment to the abandonment of the inquiry. This act of Gandhiji electrified all of us at the Club. The late Diwan Bahadur Harilal Desai jumped up and waving his hands exclaimed 'Mavalankar, here is a brave man and we must have him as our (Gujerat Sabha) President.' It was this occasion which attracted Vallabhbhai more to the Gujerat Sabha, and his attention, hitherto restricted to the Municipality, began to be diverted more and more into the affairs of the Sabha. Gandhiji accepted our invitation to be the President of the Sabha and that was the beginning of Vallabhbhai's being drawn nearer to and in Gandhiji's activities and methods. Brave as he was, the bravery in Gandhiji found in him a ready response. This was a small beginning of the present close identification of both in comradeship in the service of the motherland.

"The Sabha was carrying on many activities with all of which he was associated as member of the committee and sometime an office-bearer. As Secretary of the Sabha, I had thus the good luck of closer association with him as our work increased. One of the most important of the Sabha's political work was the question of redress to the Kaira agriculturists on

failure of crops in the monsoon of 1917. The Sabha made all possible representations to the Government officials—from the Collector of Kaira to the Government—with the active help and support of all the then big guns. But the bureaucracy was adamant and it became necessary to carry the matter further. All the members of the Sabha were in entire sympathy with Gandhiji's plans of action but it was considered better to organise an independent Committee for pressing the matter further on Government and Gandhiji started correspondence with Government and their officers and we also began to collect evidence in support of our case. This was the beginning of the Kaira no-rent campaign of 1917-18, the first popular struggle of its kind in the whole of India boldly challenging the case of the Government and inspiring confidence in people in the potentialities of their own strength.

" The whole story of the struggle is very fascinating. But it cannot be told here. Enough for the present purpose to state that Gandhiji decided to fix up his headquarters in the Kaira district, but as he was busy at Motihari, he could not stay continuously. Time was of essence; organization of struggle could not be postponed and Vallabhbhai had, therefore, to shoulder the burden of being Gandhiji's lieutenant to work with him in the Kaira district. It was his native district where he had passed his childhood, the people were brave and had known Vallabhbhai intimately. Gandhiji could not have secured a better lieutenant than this. Vallabhbhai also threw himself heart and soul into the struggle and our headquarters were shifted from Ahmedabad to Nadiad. Gandhiji used to come and stay off and on to supervise and direct the movement. It was an exceptional opportunity for all of us to study Gandhiji's mind and methods and to appreciate the potentialities of his philosophy of Truth and Non-Violence, of direct action (Satyagraha) applied to political field. It was

here that Vallabhbhai was first seen moving amongst the people, shorn of his hat, coat and pant. Dressed in simple dhoti and shirt, he moved round day and night. The first experiment in Satyagraha in India was successful and Vallabhbhai, as many others, became a devoted admirer and follower of Gandhiji.

"Thereafter came in 1919, a very stirring phase in the National struggle. The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh, moved the nation to its depths. The historical Hartal of 6th April, the proposed Satyagraha, the arrest of Gandhiji at Palwal, the civic commotion on 11th April, 1919, in Ahmedabad, the exhibition of the anti-government feelings in the form of destruction by infuriated mobs of Government buildings, police-chawkies, etc. Events were marching fast and so was public life. It was tending to become a whole-time job. Vallabhbhai defended some of the accused in the 1919 disturbances. Those were his last appearances as Counsel.

"After 1919 followed the momentous change in the attitude of the Indian National Congress. The Calcutta Session in September, 1920, adopted the non-violent non-co-operation programme, and the Municipality of Ahmedabad was not slow in giving a practical effect to it. Soon came the Nagpur Congress of 1920. The next Session was invited to be held at Ahmedabad in December 1921, and the whole country was thrilled and electrified by the N. C. O. Programme of that year. Sardar Vallabhbhai was the first President of the B. P. C. C. and I had the privilege of being the first Secretary along with my friend Mr. Indulal Yajnik. While Vallabhbhai was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 36th Congress at Ahmedabad, I was the general secretary thereof and our identification with Gandhiji was complete. The municipal fight in those days on the question of Education and the subsequent history of the Ahmedabad

Municipality are a fascinating subject for any student of Local Bodies who wishes to study and appraise the potentialities of these bodies for effective contributions in the advancement of the national cause, provided the city-fathers are fired with a spirit of selfless service and sacrifice."

III

THE WHEELS MOVE ON

Then there followed the great strike of the millhands in 1918. The leadership of the disjointed and illiterate workers was shouldered by Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. The latter harvested a very rich experience of organisation which stood him in very good stead in coming mass movements. He was able to knit together the labouring population of Ahmedabad and form an efficient trade union which has served as a model for workers' unions in other parts of India.

No wonder, the organising skill of young Vallabhbhai was soon recognised in national circles. No wonder, the Congress Session, preceding Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement in 1920-21, was held at Ahmedabad.

The atmosphere for the special Congress at Calcutta and the Annual Congress at Nagpur was thus prepared, and the resolution on the various items of non-co-operation boycott of councils, schools and law courts was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The rest of the story is soon told. There were meetings all over the country attended by hundreds of thousands of men and women, and addressed by Gandhiji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in one province by the Ali brothers, in another by Deshabandhu Das and Pandits Motilal and Jawaharlal. Phenomenal was the response. Gandhiji worked according to time-table. A crore of rupees (nearly a million pounds) were collected on the final date announced for the collection. Boys

and girls emptied schools and colleges, and numerous lawyers gave up their practice, many of them for life. Both the great Pandits, Deshabandhu Das, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Babu Rajendraprasad, Shri Rajagopalachari were among the distinguished lawyers who renounced their incomes of thousands of rupees per month and dedicated themselves to the service of the country. Women flocked to the meetings in their thousands and poured their wealth and precious ornaments and jewellery into Gandhiji's begging bowl.

TO THE KISANS OF BARDOLI

This is a Press report of Sardar Patel's thundering speech in the Movement of 1921 :—

" I still ask you to think twice before you take the plunge. Do not derive comfort from the feeling that you have as your leader a fighter like myself. Forget me and forget my companions, fight if you feel that you must resist oppression and injustice. Do not take the plunge lightly. If you miserably fail, you will fail not to rise again for several years ; but if you succeed you will have done much to lay the foundation of Swaraj. Now I am going to ask you to take charge of the resolution, you will move it and you will second and support it. None of us will speak on it. It will be the expression of your own free will and choice " (Feb. 12, 1921).

On return from Amritsar, however, Gandhiji began to feel the pulse of Hindus in order to find out the possibility of preparing them to throw in their weight with the Khilafat Movement. "Now that the Punjab and the Khilafat issues had been practically decided by Government, " says Indulal Yajnik, " we of the old guard of Gujerat and Bombay were compelled under the furious onslaughts of Mr. Gandhi's propaganda to face the issues fully and squarely. Mr. Gandhi,

we felt, being such an orthodox and conscientious Hindu, might feel compelled to so thoroughly identify himself with the Muslim standpoint on the Khilafat question. Most of us, however, were sceptics, if not thorough atheists. We prided ourselves on having risen superior to or defied the superstitious beliefs and hoary customs that shackled the minds and lives of the masses of the land. We had never bargained with Mr. Gandhi to join him in any semi-religious or religio-political movement. We had joined him solely with a view to following him on any path of advanced direct action to wage purely political fights with a view to securing national liberty.

"I had frequent discussions during these months with my friend and colleague, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, with whom I was then staying. He shared my anxiety and perplexity to the full. Often he told me :

'Gandhiji is writing once again with full steam, but his articles today miss the fire and lack the point of his rousing appeals issued during the Rowlatt Act campaign last year.'

"Nor was he inspired with any enthusiasm for the Khilafat cause which Mr. Gandhi was trying to infuse in us with ever-increasing passion every day. Vallabhbhai has a keen sense of humour, and we had many unholy jokes and laughs over the sacred cause of Khilafat. 'Imagine,' he said once, 'our fighting for the independence of the Arabs of Arabia and Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia when we ourselves are held as slaves under the British bayonets in our own land. Isn't it funny beyond words ?' And so we went round and round the subject, and yet our perplexities and anxieties only increased with Mr. Gandhi's. Therefore, because the Governors have not intervened, my honorable friend is satisfied."

Sardar Patel was appointed chairman of the reception committee. The session was held to consider the highhanded British policy and the spilling of innocent blood at Jallianwala

Bagh in 1919. It was a cherished drop which the British hordes needed very badly to quench their blood-thirstiness acquired in the European holocaust.

The Congress session at Ahmedabad was practically a national council of war. The reception arrangements bore the stamp of young Patel's personality. Simplicity was the keynote of everything. The tents were made of pure hand-spun khaddar. Chairs were conspicuous by their absence. The welcome address of Sardar Patel was characteristically brief.

The moral giants put their heads together to discuss the lines of attack on the British citadel. Mass civil disobedience was decided upon. Bardoli was favoured as the storm centre of moral invasion. The soldiers of peace at Bardoli girded up their loins for an attack on bureaucratic monster. Young Patel was to lead the campaign under the shadows of the Himalayas of Mahatma Gandhi. The tragic happenings at Chaura Chauri, however, cut short the career of the civil disobedience movement.

Then there followed the historic tug-of-war between changers and no-changers in the ranks of the Indian National Congress. The 'changers' favoured controlling of seats in the Councils. The 'non-changers' were stout followers of the non-co-operation programme. The first group was brilliantly headed by C. R. Dass and Pandit Motilal Nehru. The second group was magnetically led by Mahatma Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. And Gandhiji had the services of the third giant—Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar. The matters reached a crisis at Bombay meeting of A. I. C. C. on May 27, 1923. So the Gandhi-ites resigned. And their resignations were accepted. A compromise, however, between the two groups was reached at Delhi. It was decided to carry on both the programmes alongside, as these were not really contradictory.

Mahatma Gandhi launched his historic non-co-operation movement in 1921. The entire movement foundered on the rocks of Chaura Chauri after the British jails were filled with thousands of patriots. There was a wave of dejection all over the country.

Gandhiji on the eve of his arrest had left only one message, viz., that of constructive work as an antidote for the spirit of violence of which the Chauri Chaura outrage was a symptom. He had gone to jail with full faith in that programme and in the nation's capacity to carry it out. There was a group in the country which wanted loyally to carry out Gandhij's message. It was headed by Shri C. Rajagopalachariar, and included leaders like Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendraprasad and Dr. Ansari. They were keen on maintaining the four-fold boycott, and so came to be called "no-changers."

The other group, led by the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, the late Deshabandhu Das and the late Vithalbhai Patel, represented those who felt that political results called for political action. They too swore by non-co-operation as a principle in the system of dyarchy. But they did not favour the continuance of the boycott of the legislatures. These, they held, ought to be captured by Congress men and used to wreck dyarchy from within. They came to be known as "Pro-changers," as they wanted this change in Gandhiji's programme.

The controversy between these groups sometimes became highly academic and even acrimonious. The Maulana made his own position clear in the course of a much-awaited statement which he issued soon after his release from prison.

'No political programme," he contended, "could be held as sacrosanct. It had to be judged on its merits."

'He took a purely common sense and pragmatic view of the situation. The formula of non-co-operation which Gandhiji

had given to the country was dear to him, but as a man of the world he saw that neither the ideal of non-co-operation nor that of non-violence would be served if the two groups continued to wrangle among themselves and neutralize one another's efforts. He therefore set himself to the task of establishing some kind of co-ordination of activity if not unity between them without identifying himself with either. In this work he found himself in his element. He enjoyed the confidence and regard of both the groups. He threw himself heart and soul into his task, often undertaking long tours for consultations and discussions.

A special session of the Congress was held at Delhi on September 15, 1923, under the presidentship of the Maulana. In his address he presented his compromise formula, which was that those who believed in the Council-entry programme should be permitted to do so in order to capture those bodies and non-co-operate from within, while those who did not believe in that programme should devote themselves to carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress.

The formula was adopted, and the Parliamentary programme of the Congress thus came into being. Looking back upon this episode now, one cannot help being struck by the uncommon political shrewdness of which the Maulana gave proof at that juncture.

"I knew that the Council-entry programme would not carry us very far," he explained, "but I had my eye on the future. Since the Parliamentary mentality had taken hold of a considerable and influential section of Congressmen and Congress leaders, I felt that in the absence of any programme of direct action, the Parliamentary programme might serve a useful purpose."

Hindu-Muslim tension was growing every year ; there were fierce riots in Multan, Bareilly, Nagpur and other places in 1927. Unity Conferences were held ; good resolutions were adopted, only to be broken by those who cared not for these resolutions. Gandhiji worked away in silence at Sabarmati, rarely attending committee meetings, and even when he attended the Congress, he rarely addressed the delegates. At the Madras Congress the resolution altering the objective of the Congress to independence was passed in Gandhiji's absence.

It was really a success for the 'changers'. The ideology of C. R. Dass held the field. The Congressmen swept the polls. All the top positions in municipalities, corporations, and elsewhere were snatched from diehard reactionaries. For four years the national leaders swayed the local politics completely. 1924—28 may be regarded as an era of forethought and experiment. C. R. Dass became the Mayor of Calcutta with Subhas Bose as the Chief Executive Officer. Vithalji Patel became the Mayor of Bombay ; and our hero, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel adorned the presidential chair of Ahmedabad Municipality. Here he stayed and fired the British Imperialism until trouble again flared up at Bardoli in 1928, and he was called to the colours to command the front. Gandhiji continued to direct local Satyagraha campaigns like the unique campaign in Bardoli in 1928, where Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the staunchest of his followers, following his guidance and inspiration, was able to mould heroes out of clay. It was not the Council's programme but these successful struggles that were again changing the mentality of the country.

CHAPTER THIRD

The Mighty Ploughman

Fish ! that didst outswim the flood;
Tortoise ! whereon earth hath stood:
Boar ! who with thy tusk held'st high
The world, that mortals may not die;
Lion ! who hath giants torn:
Dwarf ! who laugh'dst a king to scorn;
Sole-Subduer of the Dreaded !
Slayer of the many-headed !
Mighty Ploughman ! Teacher tender !
Under all thy ten disguises
Endless praise to thee arises.

—JAYADEVA

(Translated from the Sanskrit by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

The story of Bardoli is the story of the mighty ploughman. Bardoli proved that the power of the state rests with the poor and dumb peasant and not the rich and talkative politician. And that noblest of the experiments was performed by Sardar Patel. Bardoli followed Patel and Patel followed Gandhi.

Bardoli had taken part in the Movement of 1921 also, and Sardar Patel has left his footprints on the sands of time. But the tough fight came in 1928.

The Government wanted to raise the revenue by 25 per cent. There was no justification for it, because the produce had not shown any parallel improvement in the last quarter of a century. Sardar Patel advised the peasants to stand fast and refuse.

"Tell Government," said Sardar Patel, "you can do what you like, but only by force you shall get us to agree to what we do not like. Cut me to pieces but I will not pay."

"A good advice! A strong dose of moral resistance! Had peoples of Europe learnt this lesson, the Germans would not have crushed their life and liver to pulp. It is for Europe to imitate India rather than for India to ape Europe. The leaders of India, even in their gloomiest state of mind and body, have a deal to teach the West.

The peasants of Bardoli underwent a baptism of fire. The British Government stooped so low as to perpetrate indecencies of the most indecent sort. Wretched agents swooped down to molest men and women. 17,000 men and 40,000 buffaloes were locked up in small and insanitary houses for over three months. The darkness, stench, filth and disease ate their vitals. Their beloved cattle grew miserable, ulcerated and whitish by disease. Yet they would not yield!

Sardar Patel, the seasoned warrior, directed the movement. "He knew," says Mr. K. M. Munshi, "the weakness of the officials as well as the strength of the people." No wonder, his steel passed through the fire of the alchemist and came out with a finer edge. He had the great general's discerning eye for the true and the false. He stamped out rivalries among men with a strong hand. His finger gave the command. His word was law. The people of Gujerat listened to his message with fond devotion. His eloquence

had intensely humane elements. He attacked the imperial fortifications well and effectively. He could demolish British walls by a withering phrase. He could run a dagger in the heart of a stone-boiled bureaucrat by a picturesque smile. His words went straight to the heart of the villagers. He could move them to laughter and tears. His addresses were the high water-mark of eloquence in Bardoli. Never were greater sledge-hammer blows dealt to the opponents of nationalism.

No wonder, the Governor offered terms to Sardar Patel. Sardar Patel refused the Governor's terms. Then Mahatma Gandhi proposed terms which the Governor and Sardar Patel had to accept.

The Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1929 put up a stout demand for immediate achievement of Dominion Status. If the British gods did not give consent to this within three hundred and sixty-five days, the complete independence was to be the aim.

The British Government, with its characteristic John Bullishness, always turns a deaf ear to requests with threats or without threats. Its thick skin is immune from pricks of conscience.

I

NEHRU'S REMINISCENCE

Jawaharlal Nehru writes in his Autobiography :—

"Within a few weeks of my release I was pitchforked into the headship of the Allahabad Municipality. This election was so unexpected that forty-five minutes before the event no one had mentioned my name, or perhaps even thought of me, in this connection. But at the last moment it was felt on the Congress side that I was the only person of their group who was certain of success.

"It so happened that year that leading Congressmen all over the country became presidents of municipalities. Mr. C. R. Das became the first Mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Vithalbhai Patel the President of Bombay Corporation, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel of Ahmedabad. In the United Provinces, most of the big municipalities had Congressmen for their chairmen.

"The peasantry was also astir. This was noticeable in the United Provinces and especially in Oudh, where large gatherings of protesting tenants became common. It was realised that the new Oudh tenancy law, which gave life-tenure and had promised a great deal, made little difference to the hard lot of the peasant. In Gujerat a conflict on a big scale developed between the peasantry and the Government because of the attempt of the latter to increase the revenue—Gujerat being an area of peasant-proprietors where Government deals directly with the peasants. This struggle was the Bardoli Satyagraha under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It was gallantly carried through to the admiration of the rest of India. The Bardoli peasantry met with a considerable measure of success; the real success of their campaign, however, lay in the effect it produced amongst the peasantry all over India. Bardoli became a sign and a symbol of hope and strength and victory to the Indian peasant."

II

NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Addressing the open conference Sardar Vallabhbhai said :—

"As I told you last time I addressed to H.E. the Governor a letter asking for an impartial tribunal. I have had a reply which is no reply. My letter, I am told, has been sent to the Revenue Department for consideration and disposal. When they will have finished considering the letter, we do not know; neither can we wait for their decision. If the Government had said that pending consideration of my

letter, they had resolved to suspend the collection operations and asked us also to adjourn our Conference, I should gladly have complied. But now I have simply to await your decision. Since I met you last time I have looked up the law to see if in spite of being iniquitous the orders of enhancement satisfied the letter of the day. I have failed to see that they are even within the law. They are in contravention of Section 107 of L.R. Code. The Settlement Officer had based his report on the existing system, and though I have no end of things to say about his report—the principal being that he never troubled himself to visit the villages and hold conference with the villagers, as is at present being done in Olpad taluka,—must say that he had adhered to the old system. The Settlement Commission adopted a different principle and regrouped the villages on that principle. In the event of such an alteration Government are bound to issue a fresh notification but in their hurry to put the revision settlement in force, they did no such thing. In the circumstances I would, in all humility advise you to refuse payment of the whole assessment so long as the Government do not come to terms. You must be clearly in mind that except your capacity for suffering and grim determination, you have nothing to fight Government's brute strength with. The mightiest tyrant must bend if people are determined to put up with suffering.

"The question to-day is not of a few lakhs of rupees, but it is a question of self-respect. It is a fundamental principle of Governments that there can be no taxation without representation. They should do nothing without having had your views in the matter. You have to resist the arbitrary system of fixing the revenue according to Government's own whims and fancies.

"For this you will have to be self-possessed, resourceful and patient. Government will try your strength in various

ways, offer various inducements, use insidious means to bring about a division in your ranks. But you will have to adhere to your principle of refusal to pay at all costs and hardships.

"I have suggested a clause and the resolution to the effect that the fight will go on until Government appoint an impartial tribunal or revoke the orders of enhancement. Not that we have any doubt that the enhancement is arbitrary, unjust and oppressive, but if we can make Government accept this vital principle of an independent tribunal, it is more than any material gain, temporary or permanent.

"I have nothing more to say. Do what you do with eyes open, with God as witness and fully counting the cost. It is possible that Government might pick up the leading men amongst you first to set an example, Government might first confiscate the lands of those who move the resolution to-day. If you are sure that these things will leave you unshaken, take up and fight the good fight."

III

MUNSHI'S REMINISCENCE

What exactly the condition of peasants in Bardoli was can be best judged from the following account of Mr. Munshi in his book "*I Follow the Mahatma*" :—

"There are 17,000 Khatedars concerned in this matter. They and their families go to make about 40,000 buffaloes, which are loved by their owners with an affection, the strength of which can only be appreciated by a born agriculturist. In order to save their beloved cattle 40,000 men, women and children with these cattle have locked themselves up in small and insanitary houses for over three months. As I passed through villages, silent, empty and deserted with sentinels posted at different ends, as I saw women peeping through the barrel window to see whether it was the arrival of the Japti officer, as on being reassured the doors were

opened and I was taken inside : as I saw the darkness, the stench, the filth and the men, women and children who had herded for months in the same room with their beloved cattle, miserable, ulcerated, grown whitish by disease, and as I heard their determination to remain in that condition for months rather than abandon their cattle to the tender mercies of the Japti officer, I could not help thinking that the imagination which conceived the dire Japti methods, the severity which had enforced them and the policy which had sanctioned them were difficult to be found outside the pages of a history of medieval times."

Mr. Munshi who was also a member of the Council resigned. He describes Patel in the following words :—

"The Sardar had unique experience of civic and public life of the bloody riots of Ahmedabad, of the non-violent struggle of Nagpur, of political manoeuvres and the non-co-operation of Gandhiji. A seasoned warrior, he knew the weakness of the officials as well as the strength of the people. He could make men dance to his tune, his steel had passed through the fire of the alchemist and came out with a finer edge. He had the great general's discerning eye for the true and the loyal, for the enemy, for the traitor and the obstructionist. The art of managing men he knew and knew well. But much as he loved to concentrate power in his hands, he invariably submitted to Gandhiji's wishes.

"The Sardar moved from village to village and thousands listened to his message with fond devotion. He alone spoke in Bardoli and indeed he could speak. Stern self-control characterises Gandhiji's soft speech which turns away wrath, truth and sweet reasonableness are its normal conditions. But the eloquence of his disciple has intensely human elements. He can be truculent. He can attack well and effectively when the need arises. He can demolish or denounce by a withering

phrase or a picturesque smile. He can move his audience to laughter or tears by using idioms which go straight to the hearts of villagers. The varying use of linguistic and rhetorical wealth, the ability to deal sledge-hammer blows to opponents, the skill to tough the hearts of men or inspire them to action made Sardar Vallabhbhai's addresses to the Bardoli peasants, the high water-mark of eloquence."

IV

A PEOPLE AT WAR WITH GOVERNMENT

Addressing a meeting of Congress workers of Vankaner, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said :—

For the brunt will have to be borne by them (women), they will have to see their dear cattle seized before their very eyes, they will have to put up with the repeated attachment parties, and unless they are accustomed to take these things as a matter of course, they might easily betray you. I therefore, want as many women to attend these meetings as possible.

"You must change your ways now, you will have to create an entirely different atmosphere." Have done with your wedding festivities as soon as possible. A people at war with a mighty Government cannot afford to indulge in these pastimes. From to-morrow you might have to keep your doors closed and locked and betake to the fields only to return home in the evening. Government will try to raise people from amongst you to help in the work of attachment, you will see to it that they get none. Throw off your lethargy and apathy. You have earned a reputation which you have yet to do much to deserve. Now the die is cast and there is no turning back. You have to vindicate Gandhiji's choice of your taluka as the scene of his first experiment in mass Civil Disobedience. You are about to fight freedom's battle for India. You have now to fight a smaller battle and

prove that you are capable of fighting the bigger one. I am coming to your village straight from the conference because I want to reach as many of you as early as possible. I want you now to be on the queve. The Government will leave no stone unturned, will not scruple to use any means fair or foul, to create a breach in your ranks. I beseech you to forget your personal differences and petty quarrels. I want you to put an end to your factions and disputes, and to make friends of even your bitterest enemies. Only that way you can present a united front. I know that some of you are afraid of your lands being confiscated. What is confiscation? Will they take the lands away to England? The worst that can happen is that the lands might be transferred to Government in their books, but if you are united you can defy anyone to come forward to cultivate those lands. And rest assured that when you are ready to allow all your lands to be confiscated, the whole of Gujerat will be at your back.

EVERY VILLAGE MUST NOW BE AN ARMED CAMP

"Organise your village and you will set an example to others. The campaign has begun. Every village must now be an armed camp. The news from every village must reach the taluka headquarters daily and punctually, and every instruction from the headquarters must promptly be obeyed. Discipline and organisation mean half the battle. Government have at the most one Patel and one Talati to every village. For us every adult in the village must be a volunteer."

I WANT TO INOCULATE YOU WITH FEARLESSNESS

The following speech was also delivered by the Sardar :—

I see that these 15 days have taught you to cast off fear from your hearts. You are, however, not completely free from it. Two annas in the rupee is still there. Shake it off. Why need you fear? If anything, Government has cause to fear. No civilized Government can govern without the

consent of the governed. At the present moment they govern because your eyes are blindfolded, you are deluded into the belief that they are keeping you in peace and prosperity. It is not a reign of peace but a reign of fear. You have lost the capacity of righteous indignation against wrong. The absence of it is cowardice. I go about in your villages at dead of night sometimes without even once being asked. 'Halt ! Who goes there ?' Ravishankar tells me with surprise that in these villages not a dog barks and not a buffalo flourishes its horns at a stranger. It is your quiescence that has been your undoing. I want to inoculate you with fearlessness. I want to galvanize you into life. I miss in your eyes the flash of indignation against wrong."

The effect of such a soul-stirring speech was bound to be electric.

"The shirkers and doubters" says Mahadev Bhai, "surrounded him at the end of the meeting with a request to be permitted to sign the pledge."

GOVERNMENT AND THE WILD ELEPHANT

In another speech Sardar Patel said :—

"Government has, like a wild elephant, run amok. It thinks that it can trample anything and everything under its feet. Even so thinks the mad elephant priding itself on having trampled, in the past even lions and tigers to death, and scorning the little gnat defying him. I am teaching the little gnat to-day to let the elephant go on in his mad career, and then get into his trunk at the opportune moment. The gnat need not fear the elephant. The elephant can never trample it to death, but the gnat can certainly prove formidable to the elephant.

"What is a little potshred before a big pot ? But it need not fear the pot, for a shred can break the pot to pieces, but the pot cannot break the shred."

THEY DESERVE YOUR PITY RATHER THAN YOUR ANGER

Speaking on the defection of two or three persons from the movement Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said in a speech :—

"It is not for you to give vent to wrath. Your pledge restricts you to non-violence, and non-violence excludes anger. The defection of these unfortunate brethren should serve to stiffen your resolve and to warn you for the future. You must not be angry with these two friends who fell a prey to the official machinations. They deserve your pity rather than anger. It is no use exercising yourselves on the things that you could not help. It is a dirty thing, but do not try to probe it. If you do it, you will make your hands dirty. Surely you did not imagine that there would be no seceders in the movement. You seem to fear that if you let these people go scot free, demoralisation will set in. If those who have signed the pledge break them with eyes open, how long can you stop them ? I beseech you not to take any stern measures against them. Find out if there are any more black sheep among you and persuade them to pay us sooner rather than later, if they are so inclined. Whatever happens, don't be alarmed. Let the Mahalkari chuckle over his precious gains. He will soon find his occupation gone."

ON KISANS

Remember the law of nature. You all know that you cannot have those heaps of cotton until a few cotton seeds are buried under the earth and destroyed. But they are reborn again with a larger life. And hardship and misery are not new things to you. Who puts up with heat, cold, rain and all the inclemencies of weather, as the tiller of the soil does ? Who puts up with the mosquitoes and other pests of our countryside as the agriculturist does ? I assure you, Government cannot inflict on you any greater hardship than you are already enduring. Go through it all with a will and a cheer and everything will be well in the end."

GREET THEM BRAVELY

Pointing to the brass bangles and flimsy glass and stone trinkets of the Raniparaj women, the Sardar would say :

"If they come to attach your property, greet them bravely and offer them your trinkets, offer them your bangles and let them wear them if they like. You are men, not dublas."

Turning to the men, he would say :

"You fear that you will be called upon to assist a Japti. Shake off that fear. You are men, you are not dublas. Spurn that appellation of degradation. Dubla means weak and cowardly. Weak and cowardly are they who would exact labour from you. You are strong enough to labour in the fields, strong enough to carry burdens for yourselves and for others ; how can you be called weak ? I am told that a Patel from a neighbouring village was threatened by the Mahalkari to be ordered to carry attached property, if he failed to find men to do so. The Patel should not have swallowed the insult. He should have said : 'It is none of my business. The men in charge refuse to do the dirty work. And so do I. You enjoy a high salary, Sir. Rather than ask us to do the dirty job, why not do it yourself.'

SHED THESE SIGNS OF SLAVERY

"Sisters, I do not like those signs of slavery on your hands and feet. Your heavy brass ornaments accumulate a lot of dirt, produce all sorts of skin diseases and interfere with your free movement. You must shed them. Look at those clean clad happy girls of your own community sitting opposite, singing Satyagraha songs. Would you not live to look like them ? (A voice : Why not ?) They bathe every day and wash their clothes. They spin and have their own clothes. (Another voice : They go to the ashram and learn songs there. We should love our women also to do the

same). I am glad you understand the difference. Now that you have joined this movement, you must be proper soldiers. These foreign clothes will become soldiers. You have strong hands and feet like those Khadi-clad girls. Why should you not have wheels from the Ashram and start spinning? Within a few days you can have enough for your clothes. And you may not touch drink. Up to now you have remained aloof, not heeding our advice. But now that you have joined the movement, you ought to have the necessary fitness by abstaining from drink.

WHY SO FEAR-STRICKEN? WHY SO INARTICULATE?

"If anyone is fit to walk with his head erect on this earth, it is the peasant. He is the producer, the others are parasites. But what a sorry plight he has been reduced to! The whole world depends on you two, the agriculturist and the labourer, and yet you are the worst abused people on earth. I am grieved at the woeful state of helplessness to which you have been reduced. You shudder at the sight of a worthless Government peon who can compel you to do his bidding. The Government taxes you according to its sweet will, and you have no voice in it. There is a soil rate, and a water rate, a special irrigation rate and a special sub-soil water rate, even the improvements that you make at your cost and by your labour are taxed. You toil in the fields even as your own bullocks do from morning until evening, in biting cold, in scorching heat and drenching rain. You grapple with scorpions and wade through mud and raise a crop of rice to feed yourselves and your children. But even that rice must be taxed. Why are you so fear-stricken? Why are you so inarticulate? I feel deeply ashamed and humiliated at your plight. I shall feel myself blessed and all my labours fulfilled when I see you come into your own and walk erect like men.

THIS IS INTOLERABLE

"That you who have the courage to risk your lives in climbing the toddy and the palm trees, shooting straight up to the sky without a branch or a stump to afford a foothold, that a daring people like you should be afraid of people who fight shy of that adventure is incomprehensible, is intolerable. Who ordained that the Government should be the proprietor of the soil, and the cultivator a mere tenant? But it is on that theory that a land tax is imposed on him which sucks him absolutely dry. And to complete the tragedy, Government have the support of our educated classes in that bleeding process."

Says Mahadev Bhai: "He (Sardar Patel) believes with Voltaire that the present-day politicians have discovered in their fine politics the art of causing those to die of hunger who, by cultivating the earth, give the means of life to others, and he burns with rage when he talks of the system which has made the peasant what he is and of those responsible for the system."

So said Sardar Patel:—

"Where is there another so honest as a peasant, so free from bad habits and vices, so guileless, so God-fearing, living in the sweat of his brow? Why should such a man fear any mortal man? A seeming contradiction, is it not? A man who is so pure and guileless cannot but be fearless.

PRINCIPLES OF SATYAGRAH

"It is a struggle based essentially on truth and non-violence; we must not do anything in resentment or anger. It is a sign of weakness. Our strength lies in cheerfully going through all sufferings that may be imposed on us. I can understand your refusing to assist the officers in Japti work. In fact it is your duty to do so, but do not refuse them the ordinary amenities of life. They must get whatever they want at market rates.

"I have read the Collector's interview given to a representative of the *Times of India* I have been moving about from village to village for the last two and a half months, and I have not met one man who is willing to pay this unjust tax. On the contrary, since the arrival of the Collector, I have received several reports of illegitimate and undue pressure being brought on the people, especially Parsi Khatedars, who unfortunately happen to be canteen-keepers and the Excise officials' assistance is being invoked to bring pressure on them. There is hardly a single Parsi Khatedar who has paid his dues willingly, and none of them is such as would refrain from paying for fear of violence and fine, nor have they any social relations with the people. In spite of all attempts at creating a division and therein lies Government's hope—I have no doubt that you will disappoint them, and notwithstanding provocation, do nothing that would bring discredit to the movement. Let them break open your house and your locks, let them take away all your belongings. Suffer them to do it smilingly. Do not lose your temper. Let them do what they like. If there are any people in the taluka who want to pay but who hesitate to do so, for fear of fine and violence, I ask them to come to me and I shall take them to the Mamlatdar myself for payment of their assessment, and I shall assure them of all the protection they may need. But I am sure there is none such. No movement based on coercion or terrorism can endure for such a long time against a Government with limitless means of terrorism at its disposal. It is my hope, and I am sure that you will help me to fulfil it, to render all police in this taluka perfectly useless by your peaceful behaviour. Render them idle and they will soon go back.

STOP SINGING BATTLE SONGS

"Our struggle has now reached the second stage, and I have nothing more now to teach you as regards ways and

weapons in our non-violent struggle. I am asking all my co-workers to stop speech-making, and leave it to me, if at all it is necessary at any place. I wish you to stop singing battle songs, as it is now time to sing only the praise of God even as these sisters have done this evening. Our sacrifice has commenced, let it be pure and spotless. We have now only to offer ourselves as spotless, willing victims. The Government is in a temper, and determined to carry out a policy of ruthless repression. High officials who never come in real touch with the people are exasperated, and are not able to understand why their subordinates are not succeeding in the task of persuading or terrorising people into submission and payment. They, therefore, distrust them. They have not the faintest idea of the difficulties or of the plight of these subordinates. I hear reports of a large number of Talatis expecting orders of transfer from this taluka. Reports of probable arrests and prosecutions are in the air. All these are indications of the temper of the Government at the present moment. It is therefore our duty to be absolutely calm and collected, and to give them no chance of putting us in the wrong.

BARDOLI IS HAVING A UNIQUE HONOUR

"Bradoli is having a unique honour. Armed policemen are marching, and men with rifles on horseback are parading through its streets. The Government which simply ignored you a little while ago is now running up and down your villages in these dogdays of the year. The District Suprintendent of Police also honours you with a visit in this scorching summer It is no small thing. Is it a small honour that in a taluka like yours where processes distraint have been unknown for years, three special officers should have been appointed for the purpose of attaching your property? Is it a small honour that special motor lorries should have to be requisitioned from Surat to carry property seized from your houses? It is due to

Bardoli that petty peons and Pathans whom a bullock-cart was a luxury are now having joy-rides in Government motor-cars.

GO ON STRENGTHENING YOUR CASTE ORGANISATION

"Go on strengthening your caste organisation. No one can have anything to say against it. These handful of men, who come over here from a land 6,000 miles away, rule over us because they have a caste organisation of their own. Their close corporation is devised to protect even the wrongdoers amongst them. Why then should the Collector have any objection against our organisation ? Their corporation always relying on brute force has as its object the exploitation of the people, ours has the only object of self-protection. "

REFUSE TO BE PROVOKED

"Government wants disturbance, wants to provoke us into violence. Drums and conches have nothing to do with the question of revenue. Let us not quarrel with their notifications, they do not harm us, they cannot affect the issue. Refuse to be embarrassed, if they try to provoke you. Refuse to submit if they try to crush you. The Government has lost its balance. The iron can afford to fling thousands of sparks, not so the hammer. If the hammer got hot it would burn up its own handle. A Government may wax as red hot as it likes. The people (the hammer) cannot afford to do so, and if they retain their equanimity, they are bound to cool the Government and beat it into submission and shape.

EVEN A VICTORIOUS ARMY HAS ITS CASUALITY LIST

"The Government is trying its level best to spread as much poison in the taluka as possible through our own men. These men are ours, but beware of them. Like thieves in the night they are trying to create breaches in our ranks. They are always on the lookout for our weaknesses, they flourish on

them. The drunkard tempts the drunkard amongst us with drink, the bully intimates the timid amongst us with all sorts of phantasms and fears. Beware of them and their falsehoods. Don't go within miles of them—and even if a handful from amongst you fall victim to their wiles, don't be alarmed, don't flinch from your resolve. Even a victorious army has its casuality list, and has its deserters. If blacklegs are discovered, understand that it is so much dirt and stain washed away. Challenge the Government to take up your land and carry it, if they can, to England. Challenge them to surround the taluka with machine guns and aeroplanes. We have no armed force, but we have a better and a purer force to pit against it—the force of truth, the force of our allegiance to our pledge.

THEY CANNOT CAPTURE YOUR SOULS

" Let them capture your buffaloes and other property. They cannot capture your souls. The infatuation for possession is no good. How much land does a man require ? The Musalman not more than two cubits and a half and Hindus that much only for a couple of hours. God is always with the right.

[At a certain stage in the speech the bellowing of the buffaloes impounded in the thana close by was heard, and that gave the Sardar an opportunity for his sardonic humour.] "Reporters, please note it down, the buffaloes are speaking. The Government thought that drums would subvert Government established by law. These buffaloes, I tell you, are as bad as the drums. (Still louder bellowing). They are bellowing themselves hoarse to tell you if you do not know yet that right and justice have vanished from the Empire.

HONOUR OF THE WHOLE OF INDIA IS IN YOUR HANDS

"If there are any amongst you who feel any misgivings or are afraid of the fire of repression, they had better go on a

pilgrimage or betake themselves to some hill station or breezy seaside place while there is yet time. For let there be no mistake in the matter. As agriculturists you know that the dark rain-laden clouds so welcome to your sight come only after you have passed through the parching heat of the summer months of Chaitra and Vaishakha, and descend only after we have had terrific storms and lightning and peals of thunder which rend the skies. Similarly Government is not going to do you justice until it has put you through the fire. It will try to cajole you, if you are willing to be cajoled. But if you resist its advances, it has its iron fist ready with which to descend upon you. For, understand, the issue with Government is not merely one of losing a few lakhs of rupees of land revenue. It can raise a crore of rupees to-day, if it wishes, by arbitrary taxation. But it is afraid, and rightly too, lest if we win the battle, the whole of India may do tomorrow what Bardoli is doing to-day. Similarly you have to realise on your part that it is not merely yourselves that you represent but you hold in your hand the honour of the whole of India.

ON GOVERNMENT

" What is the fear of this 'will-o-the wisp'? What is this Government? Has any one seen it? I have never seen it... Does Government mean the Mamlatdar, or the Talati, or the Patel, or is it a combination of these all? There is no individual called the sarkar. Why then should we magnify individuals and make sarkars of them? Here is the definition of an amaldar (official): He who stands by the side of the ryot in the hour of his need is an amaldar, all the rest are hawaldars (petty peons.)"

V

BRITAIN BENDS HER KNEE

The peasants were punished, their leader was lynched,

but Britain had to bend her head before the Mighty Ploughman.

Throughout the monsoon the people remained huddled together in their sheds and storehouses. It was a stay-in strike and refused to pay the taxes. All this while the Government was extremely active. This is how it realised its taxes ;

(1) A man had his land of Rs. 30,000 forfeited, because he shilly-shallied in paying a tax of Rs. 700/-.

(2) A piece of land worth Rs. 25,000/- was sold for Rs. 161/-.

(3) Cotton worth Rs. 250/- was sold for Rs. 21/-.

(4) A liquor shop worth Rs. 2,000/- was attached for refusal to pay a tax of Rs 369/-.

In spite of all these persecutions, the British Government found her administration tottering. There could be no law and order without the support of the people. The Government approached Patel and Patel approached Gandhi and Gandhi laid down terms for the Government, and the Government accepted them. A Court was established under the agreement. The Court decided that the measure of enhancement should be $6\frac{1}{2}\%$ instead of 25% and this was accepted by both the parties.

CHAPTER FOURTH

The Man of Virtue

The man of virtue commonly
Is hateful to the king,
While riches to the scamps and fools
Habitually cling :
The ancient chant " By virtue great
Is man " has run to seed ;
The world takes rare and little note
Of any plucky deed.

(Translated from Sanskrit.)

Sardar Patel is essentially the man of virtue. No wonder, he is hateful to the British imperialist. Bardoli proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that here was a man who will not cling to riches like aristocratic scamps and fools. He cast away all the jewels of his career before the unpatriotic swines and placed his services at the feet of Mother India. He is the ancient sage of India and sings the ancient song :

" By virtue great is man "

He refuses to believe that golden ideals of ancient India can ever run to seed. Sardar Patel, all these years, has stood stoutly behind Gandhiji and has turned a deaf ear to the

world which takes rare and little note of his plucky and courageous exploits. A great man to the tip of his hair, he is little known to the hero-worshippers. Yesterdays and tomorrows intermingle affectionately in the stream of his character.

I

PATEL LEADS GANDHI

The Calcutta Congress put forward a demand for Dominion Status within a year, failing which complete Independence was to be the aim.

The Lahore Congress next year translated the threat into action. India embarked upon the national struggle in April, 1930. Gandhiji made his historic march to Dandi. Patel went before Gandhiji, delivering speeches to the villagers. He awakened the people and tightened up their morals. The official vultures were quick to pounce upon him. His arrest electrified Gujerat. A monster meeting of 75,000 men and women passed a heroic resolution which was at once an honour to Sardar Patel and a shame to the British Government. "We, the citizens of Ahmedabad," they said, "determine hereby that we shall go the same path where Vallabhabhai has gone." Imagine 75,000 men ready to follow their leader to the dark cell! Could there be a greater honour?

"We will not rest in peace," they said, "nor will we give the Government peace". They solemnly declared that India's emancipation lies in truth and non-violence. An avalanche of nationalism broke forth from the Himalayas of moral force. A mighty revolution followed in its wake. Riots, arrests, lathi-charges were the order of the day. Patel was released and re-arrested. His daughter, Miss Mani Ben Patel, was also taken into custody.

II

GANDHI'S TRIBUTE TO PATEL

On his release Gandhi described the life in prison in company of Patel in the following words ;—

" It was a great privilege for me to have been with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I was well aware of his matchless bravery, but I have never lived with him as I have had the good fortune during the 16 months. The affection with which he covered me, recalls to me that of my own dear mother. I never knew him to possess motherly qualities. If the slightest thing happened to me, he would be out of his bed. He superintended every detail in connection with my comforts. He and my other associates had conspired to let me do nothing and I hope that Government will believe me when I say that he always showed a remarkable comprehension of the diffiiculties of the Government whenever we discussed any political problem. His solicitude for the farmers of Bardoli and Kaira I can never forget."

III

KARACHI COGITATIONS

Sardar Patel himself referred to executions in his Presidential address and said that although he did not agree with methods of S. Bhagat Singh, he had great praise for his courage and sacrifice. " The heartless and foreign nature of the Government was never more strikingly demonstrated than in their carrying out the executions in the teeth of all but universal demand for the commutation of the death sentence. Let us not, however, be deterred from our purpose in a fit of resentment. This insolent exhibition of their armed power, but adds to the heavy indictment against the soulless system and increases our capacity for vindica-

ting our position if we would refuse to be deflected from the straight and narrow path we have chosen. May the souls of brave patriots rest in peace and may their families find comfort in the fact that the nation is a sharer of their mourning.

" You have called a simple farmer to the highest office to which an Indian can aspire. I am conscious of that. Your choice of me as first servant is not so much for what little I might have done, but it is the recognition of the amazing sacrifice made by Gujerat. Out of your generosity, you have singled out Gujrat for the honour. But in truth every province did its utmost during the year of the greatest national awakening that we have known in modern times."

IV

LOAVES AND FISHES

" I am not interested in loaves and fishes of offices or Legislative honours. The peasantry do not understand them. I believe that Gandhi's eleven points mean the substance of Swaraj. That which does not satisfy them is no Swaraj. Whilst I would respect the rights of landlords, Rajas, Maharajas and others to the extent that they do not hurt the sweating millions, my interest lies in helping the down-trodden to rise from their state and be on level with the tallest in the land. Thank God, the gospel of truth and non-violence has given these an inkling of their dignity and the power they possess. Much still remains to be done. But let us make up our minds that we exist for them, not they for us. Let us shed our petty rivalries and jealousies, religious feuds and let every one realise that the Congress represents and exists for the toiling millions and it will become an irresistible power working not for the sake of greed or power, but for the sake of common humanity."

V

MASS NON-VIOLENCE

" Though there have been aberations, it is a fact beyond question that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer the idle dream of a visionary or a mere human longing. It is a solid fact capable of infinite possibilities for a humanity which is groaning for faith beneath the weight of violence of which it has almost made a fetish."

VI

HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

About Hindu-Muslim question too his attitude has been the same to-day as eleven years ago, speaking at Karachi he said :—" As a Hindu I would adopt my predecessor's formula and present the Muslims with a Swadeshi fountain-pen and let them write out their demands. And I should endorse them."

VII

STRONGHOLDS OF IMPERIALISM

" This endeavour, " the resolution read, " seems to be engineered to perpetuate British domination there, so as to make Burma together with Singapore, by reason of the presence of oil and their strategic position, strongholds of Imperialism in Eastern Asia. The Congress is strongly opposed to any policy which could result in Burma being kept as a British dependency and her resources exploited for British Imperialism, and would also be a menace to a free India, as well to other nations of the East.

" The defence forces, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy and to have scrutiny of the financial transactions of the British in India and to examine and

assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right of either party to end the partnership at will and to make India free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrated by necessity in its interests. "

VIII
GANDHISM ON TRIAL

" The time has come when the Congress should decide either to retain Gandhi's leadership and fully implement his programme or allow him to retire and allow another programme. This in my opinion would be a better position than the present in which the Congress intelligentsia while voting for the programme of Gandhiji failed to implement the same and ultimately blamed the leader for the failure of the programme. Gandhiji made it absolutely clear that he had no programme and therefore it would be in the best interests of all concerned to decide the matter finally."

This statement was followed by a more outspoken one in which he openly declared. "It is time for Gandhi to retire. I won't be sorry if he decides not to attend Congress." And "There is no attempt to carry Congress by storm. The Gandhi party is not going to thrust spinning franchise programme on Congress."

IX
A BLIND FOLLOWER OF GANDHI

Speaking in Gujerat, he said :—

" I am a blind follower of Gandhi. The Socialists should carry out their programme if they have any without interfering with my work. I would not tolerate their interference in Gujerat, where I have dedicated my life to bring Swaraj."

X
VILLAGE AND TOWN

Visiting Bombay in 1934, he said :—

" I feel uneasy in a city like Bombay. I am only at rest in a village. Cities like Bombay represent the Imperial Gov-

ernment that rules over us. It is full of glamour, hubbub and arrogance. A farmer would be ill at ease in the midst of palatial buildings, motors, hotels, cinemas and all that goes with such a life. It is so unlike the culture of our race. We have assimilated much from the West that is artificial."

Some time later speaking on industrialisation, he said :—

" True socialism lies in the development of the village industries. We do not reproduce in our country the chaotic conditions prevalent in the Western countries consequent on mass production." This Tolstoyan attachment to village has always been the main feature of Patel's utterances. His views about development of cottage industries have been opposed inside the Congress by Jawaharlal Nehru. Commenting on the above statement in his autobiography he says :

" Some Congress leaders are frightened of industrialisation and imagine that the present-day troubles of the industrial countries are due to mass production. That is a strange misreading of the situation. If the masses lack anything, is it bad to produce it in sufficient quantities for them ? Is it preferable for them to continue in want rather than have mass production ? The fault obviously is not in the production but in the folly and inadequacy of the distributive system."

XI

THE CONGRESS ROLLER

Sardar Patel was very much optimistic about election prospects of Congress in 1937. The old campaigner knew which way the wind was blowing. He said, " when the Congress roller is in action, all pebbles and stones will be levelled."

The Congress had gone out of its way to make the decision of office acceptance. " It has," said Patel, "placed all its cards on the table in unambiguous terms, and it is now for the Government to take the next step. Congress has no

craving for office, nor is it afraid of shouldering responsibility."

"The object of the Congress in accepting office was not to adorn the ministerial chairs or to enjoy fruits of office. It was only to help the movement for Independence of the country and strengthen the masses. Since the Congress accepted office, they have always felt that it was their primary duty to release all political prisoners." Referring to the argument of the Government that these men would create trouble if released, Patel said :—

"In such a vast country as Hindustan are not there other men holding violent views and yet out of prison ? If we cannot release 15 prisoners, what is this so-called provincial autonomy ? The interference of the Governor-General in Bihar and U. P. has exposed the farce of provincial autonomy. Supposing the prisoners misbehaved after their release, they could certainly be put back in jail. Did not the Congress Ministries promulgate section 144 at Sholapur and at Cawnpore ? Wherever there was a need of firm action, the Congress Governments had not hesitated and during the last six months they had ruled effectively." Concluding he said :—

"This is not the time to show differences, but this is the time when interests of country are pitched against Imperialism and let us demonstrate by our action to-day that we are united in action as well as in purpose. We shall show restraint to-day because we know we can successfully retaliate. We shall show patience and wait because we are ready for all emergencies and are prepared for whatever action that became necessary. That is the reason we have not asked other ministries to resign and precipitate crisis. That is why we have requested the Governor-General to reconsider his decision. Before we plunge into action, we want to give a chance to the Governor-General to redeem his action."

XII

LEADING THE LABOURERS

"I hope that if they organised and consolidated themselves still more and marched on with a firm belief in truth and non-violence and the principle of arbitration they would one day capture the T. U. C. and show to India that this way, the way of organising labour, is in their interests."

And again :—

"The condition of those workers who were guided by persons with foreign ideas and conceptions of labour had become weak and disorganised and they had frittered away their energies in useless strikes. The whole of textile trade had been ruined and the same was true of Cawnpore and other centres. Labour all over India must make their choice. Their experience of over 21 years told them that their path was good."

XIII

THE FEDERAL ISSUE

On March 20, 1938, while speaking about Congress attitude about Federation, he said :—

"Like beasts people cannot be transferred without their consent. The Congress has refused to sit with the representatives of the Princes in the Federation and will not think of it if the States' people are not properly represented, and responsible government installed in the States. The British Imperialism and the Princes are carrying on negotiations not remembering the States' people. Federation is an absurd arrangement between plutocracy and Imperialism and vested interests and the people have nothing to do with that kind of thing. We want to bid good-bye to Princedom. We cannot allow our birth-right of self-determination to be encroached upon. I appeal to you all to be awake to the realities of the situation, and be ready for action."

XIV
THE PUPPET PRINCES

"They (Princes) talk loudly of their resources with which they propose to suppress the movement for responsible government but they forget the fact that they have no resources except those of their own subjects."

Referring to Sir Patrick Cadel he said :—"In my opinion Sir Patrick Cadel is only a tool in the imperialist game of propping up the princes, who in the words of "London *Times*" 'refuse to move with times'."

XV
RUTHLESS PATEL

Yusuf Meherally has brilliantly described a trait of his character in the following words :—

" Either one agrees with him and is incorporated in his machine or one disagrees with him and is sent to the wall. He has ruthlessly but tactfully eliminated opponents out of his path."

The comment of "News Review" is revealing of the British reaction about Patel's dismissal of Khare :

"To prove the complete power he had gathered into his hands, Patel could have found no more redoubtable victim than Premier Khare, first Congress man to head an Indian Cabinet. Wealthy Surgeon Khare was an old jail-mate of the Mahatma's. Of Brahmin family, noted for its fighting stock, he won himself a reputation as a dangerous man to cross. Besides running his own practice, he found time to edit Taran Bharat (Young India) most intransigent of Indian nationalist news organs. He is an inveterate smoker of expensive English cigarettes, sacrificed an income of 20,000 rupees a year to head the Central Provinces Ministry with an income of Rs. 6,000 and an occasional scolding from Sardar Patel.

" Most ruthlessly unorthodox Member of Indian Nationalistic Congress Party is its 'Shadow' leader, hairy Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. When elected President of the Municipality of Ahmedabad, a northern cotton town, he secured a broom and ostentatiously swept the public lavatories and streets. More recently he has devoted much energy to cleaning up graft, slackness and political chicanery in the seven provinces controlled by the Congress."

XVI

PATEL'S MINISTERIAL TRIUMPH

" The International Review of Missions" while writing sometime later comments favourably upon the work of the Congress High Command. It says :—

" One thing may be said with confidence while recognising that any moment the position may change. A good start has been made after the preliminary months manoeuvring for position and the clarification of issues that resulted from it ; the conditions of continued success are present in the spirit of co-operation and of eager service that has been shown by the governors of the provinces, the members of the services and the newly appointed ministers. Speaking generally and keeping clear of the ungrateful task of criticism of details here and there, most of the ministers have approached the tasks of administration with humility and courage, and with a determination to deal thoroughly with the real problems of the country. The necessary emphasis on the purely constitutional questions that have been so much debated for many years, some of the greatest of which, notably that of the position of the autocratic Indian States in a federal system, are still unsolved, should not obscure the fact that the Indian Governments in power are using that power for the service of the people. It is at least a gesture of significance that the Congress Governments are working on a sacrificial

basis. By their own action the monthly salaries of Ministers have been limited to five hundred rupees (£450 per annum). Where there has been any kind of corruption, strong steps have been taken to correct it, the Congress High Command exercising at this stage a salutary influence on the Provincial Governments in helping them to maintain a high standard of probity against local forces that might otherwise prove too strong.

"How to reconcile the responsibility of each provincial Congress Government to the Congress High Command with the responsibility to the electorate whose votes have put it in office is one of the major problems that the Congress Party will have to slove. Meanwhile, however, the Central Congress authority is discharging a most useful and necessary function to that in spite of local difficulties and the fact that some Congressmen are apparently looking for trouble. It may be said that the responsible leaders have shown that they are eager to serve what they believe to be true interests of the country and that they recognise the magnitude of their task."

XVII

COMMUNISM AND GANDHISM

" Communism would never grow in India," said Patel " There might be few individuals enamoured of the doctrine of Communism, but the masses could never be converted to this doctrine."

And again after the A. I. C. C. had ratified the Delhi resolution, he said :—

"During the short experience of administration of 2½ years in the provinces, on several occasions we felt the need and had to requisition the military. Mahatma Gandhi did not like this and said so plainly. Our not being able to follow Mahatma Gandhi to the full extent in this respect does not imply that

we are second to any one in regard to our respect and loyalty to him, and if this house passed a resolution pledging its support to the principle of unadulterated non-violence in all circumstances, I will be the happiest person. But if we cannot go to that extent, it is better for us to be frank and say so."

XVIII

QUIT INDIA

The thunderous speech of the Sardar at Bombay meeting of the A. I. C. C. on August 8 rings forcefully :

" If America and England were thinking that they could fight their enemies from India, without the co-operation of forty million people of India, they were foolish. It must dawn on people that this war was a people's war and they should fight for their country and their freedom. As long as this feeling was non-existent, no amount of propaganda through the newspapers and the radio could rouse the people to supreme effort.

"For three years the Congress was scrupulously adhering to their policy of non-embarrassment, and did nothing, even under provocation. But this attitude was not appreciated and Britain thought that conditions would remain the same throughout. Now the enemy was at their door and they could not risk being idle any longer."

CHAPTER FIFTH

The Peasant leads the Politicians

The capitals are rocked with thunder
Of orators in wordy feuds,
But in the depths of Russia yonder
An age-old aweful silence broods.
Only the wind in wayside willows,
Coming and going does not cease;
And corn-stalks touch in curving billows
The earth that cherishes and pillows,
Through endless fields of changeless peace.

—NIKOLAI NEKRASOV
(Translated from the Russian by Babette Deutch).

When the Indian National Congress offered the presidential chair to Sardar Patel at the Karachi Session in 1931 they virtually brought a peasant to lead the politicians. The Sardar of Bardoli became the Sardar of India. Bardoli had led the Indian peasants and its leader mightily deserved to be honoured.

Gujerat, the courageous homeland of Sardar Patel, had also done well in the non-co-operation movement between the Lahore Session and the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress.

I

THE PEASANT COMES TO THE HELM

The Government had let loose a hell on Gujerat. Even the eighty-year-old mother of Sardar Patel was maltreated by the police officials. She was cooking rice when she was knocked down in the house. The kettle was kicked down and rice littered the floor.

At last the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed and civil disobedience movement was called off.

Sardar Patel was elected President of the Karachi Session of the Congress. After his brilliant leadership at Bardoli, he richly deserved that honour. Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Rajguru were executed by the Government. The British Government had turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the entire country. Even the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi had failed. Therefore, the Karachi Congress was held under gloomy shadows. "The heartless and foreign nature of the Government", said Sardar Patel, "was never more strikingly demonstrated than in their carrying out the executions in the teeth of the all but universal demand for the commutation of the death sentence." This exhibition of armed power added to the heavy indictment against the soulless system.

Sardar Patel's election was a tribute to the heroic sacrifices undergone by Gujerat. Bardoli had sky-rocketted his name. Next to Mahatma Gandhi he was the most popular and dominating pivot in political circles. He was not interested in the new constitution for India.

What the peasantry cannot understand, Sardar Patel is the last man to worry about. Indian peasantry forms 80 per cent of Indian population. Therefore, peasants are the true citizens of India. And what is not for peasants is really not

worth the candlelight. A made-in-England constitution for India is only worth the candle-fire !

Pandit Motilal Nehru, who had accompanied his son, Jawaharlal Nehru, to the Lahore Session, was now not available to galvanize the proceedings of the Congress at Karachi. He had packed for heaven with the firm conviction that the freedom of India was at hand. The loss of Motilal added to the tragedy of Bhagat Singh and his companions. The entire nation was in mourning. The tragedy of Cawnpore riots weighed heavily on the minds of the nationalists. Consequently all reception ceremonies were reduced to the minimum. And these fitted in mightily with the temperament of Sardar Patel. He was a peasant-president. And he admired simplicity. Circumstances conspired to make the whole show as simple as a peasants' gathering.

The peasant-president addressed the nation with a profound sense of humility. There was no crookedness of a politician about him. Officially the Congress was at peace with the British, but intrinsically a storm was brewing in the political horizon. The Round Table Conference was under the shadows of diplomacy. Sardar Patel had had no illusions about the British offer.

Like Gandhi, Sardar Patel has never been Marxist. He hammered landlords for their callousness to the welfare of the peasants, but he did not advocate an abolition of landlordism. One of the most prominent features of the Karachi Congress was the resolution on the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Man.

II

THE KARACHI RESOLUTION

The Karachi Congress resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme, as passed by the All-India Congress Committee in its meeting held in Karachi on August 6, 7 and 8, 1931, runs as follows :—

"This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what Swaraj as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress therefore declares that any contitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide the following :—

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DUTIES

1.—(*i*) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.

(*ii*) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

(*iii*) The culture, language, and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

(*iv*) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

(*v*) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office or power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

(*vi*). All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

(*vii*) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.

(*viii*) No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

(*ix*) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.

(*x*) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

(*xi*) The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education.

(*xii*) The State shall confer no titles.

(*xiii*) There shall be no capital punishment.

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

LABOUR

2.—(*a*) The organisation of economic life must conform to the principle of justice, to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living.

(*b*) The State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.

3.—Labour to be freed from serfdom and condition bordering on serfdom.

4.—Protection of women workers, and especially, adequate provision for leave during maternity period.

5.—Children of school-going age shall not be employed in mines and factories.

6.—Peasants and workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interest.

TAXATION AND EXPENDITURE

7.—The system of land tenure and revenue and rent shall be reformed and an equitable adjustment made of the burden on agricultural land, immediately giving relief to the smaller peasantry, by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them, and in cases of uneconomic holdings exempting them from rent, so long as necessary, with such relief as may be just and necessary to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent, and to the same end, imposing a graded tax on net income from land above a reasonable minimum.

8.—Death duties on a graduated scale shall be levied on property above a fixed minimum.

9—There shall be a drastic reduction of military expenditure so as to bring it down to at least one-half of the present scale.

10.—Expenditure and salaries in civil departments shall be largely reduced. No servant of the State, other than specially employed experts and the like, shall be paid above a certain fixed figure, which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.

11.—No duty shall be levied on salt, manufactured in India.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMME

12—The State shall protect indigenous cloth; and for this purpose pursue the policy of exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country and adopt such other measures as may be found necessary. The State shall also protect other indigenous industries, when necessary against foreign competition.

13.—Intoxicatiag drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited, except for medicinal purposes.

14.—Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest.

15.—The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.

16.—Relief of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury—direct and indirect.

17.—The state shall provide for the military training of citizens so as to organise a means of national defence apart from the regular military forces.

AGRARIAN PROGRAMME

Resolution 12, Lucknow Congress, April 1936.

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

"In view, however, of the fact that agrarian conditions and land tenure and revenue systems differ in the various provinces, it is desirable to consult the Provincial Congress Committees and such peasant organisations as the Working Committee considers fit, in the drawing up of a full All-India Agrarian Programme as well as a programme for each province. This Congress, therefore, calls upon each Provincial

Congress Committee to make recommendations in detail to the Working Committee by August 31, 1936, for being considered and placed before the All-India Congress Committee having particular regard to the following matters :—

1.—Freedom of organisation of agricultural labourers and peasants.

2.—Safeguarding of the interests of peasants where there are intermediaries between the State and themselves.

3.—Just and fair relief of agricultural indebtedness including arrears of rent and revenue.

4.—Emancipation of the peasants from feudal and semi-feudal levies.

5.—Substantial reduction in respect of rent and revenue demands.

6.—A just allotment of the State expenditure for the social, economic and cultural amenities of villages.

7.—Protection against harrassing restrictions on the utilisation of local natural facilities for their domestic and agricultural needs.

8.—Freedom from oppression and harrassment at the hands of Government officials and landlords

9.—Fostering industries for relieving rural unemployment."

III

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT KARACHI CONGRESS (1931)

Friends,—Let me commence my brief address with respectful condolence to Shrimati Sarup Rani Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, and the other members of the family on the loss they have sustained in Pandit Motilalji's death. I know that their sorrow has been greatly relieved by the knowledge that it is shared by a whole nation. Motilalji's help at this juncture

was a necessity which we all and above all Gandhiji felt whilst the delicate negotiations in Delhi were going on. This loss came upon the nation when the tears had hardly dried over the death of Maulana Mohammed Ali. Though unfortunately the late Maulana had differences with us, his services to the country as a great patriot and a brave man who never concealed what he believed, could never be forgotten. I tender my respectful condolence to the Begum Saheba, Maulana Shaukat Ali and the whole family. And in this connection I would couple those nameless heroes, who unknown to fame, and never caring for it, laid down their lives in the non-violent struggle during past 12 months. May their souls rest in peace and may their lives chasten us and spur us to greater sacrifice and greater effort for the cause for which they died !

You have called a simple farmer to the highest office to which any Indian can aspire, I am conscious that your choice of me as first servant is not so much for what little I might have done, but it is the recognition of the amazing sacrifice made by Gujerat. Out of your generosity you have singled out Gujerat for the honour. But in truth every province did its utmost during the year of the greatest national awakening that we have known in modern times. And thanks be to God that the awakening was a call to self-purification.

MASS NON-VIOLENCE NO LONGER DREAM OF A VISIONARY

Though there have been aberations, it is a fact beyond challenge that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer the idle dream of a visionary or a mere human longing. It is a solid fact capable of infinite possibilities for a humanity which is groaning, for want of faith, beneath the weight of violence of which it has

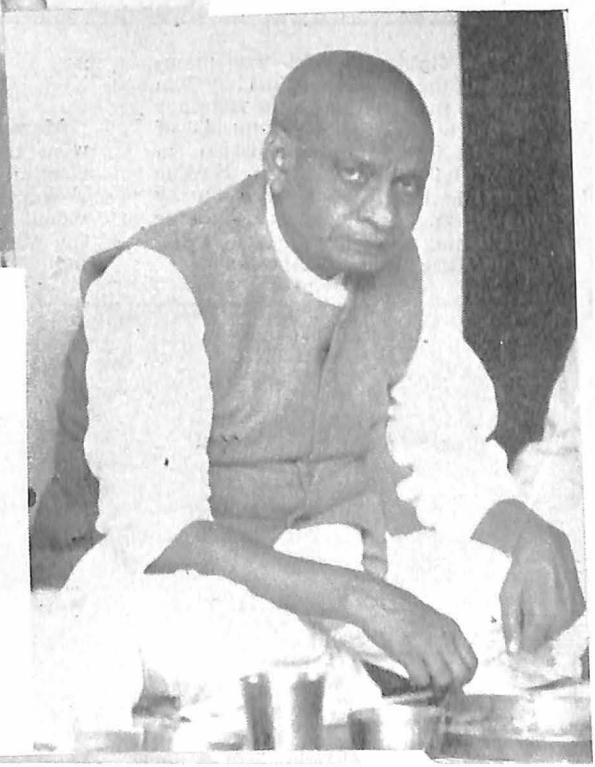
almost made a fetish. The greatest proof that our movement was non-violent lies in the fact that the peasants falsified the fears of our worst sceptics. They were described as very difficult to organise for non-violent action and it is they who stood the test with a bravery and an endurance that was beyond all expectations. Women and children too contributed their great share in the fight. They responded to the call by instinct and played a part which we are too near the event adequately to measure. And I think it would not be at all wrong to give them the bulk of the credit for preservation of non-violence and the consequent success of the movement. Looked at in the light of non-violence our struggle is a world struggle and it is a matter of great satisfaction that the nations of the earth, especially the United States of America have heartened us by their sympathy.

BRITISH ARMY, AN ARMY OF OCCUPATION

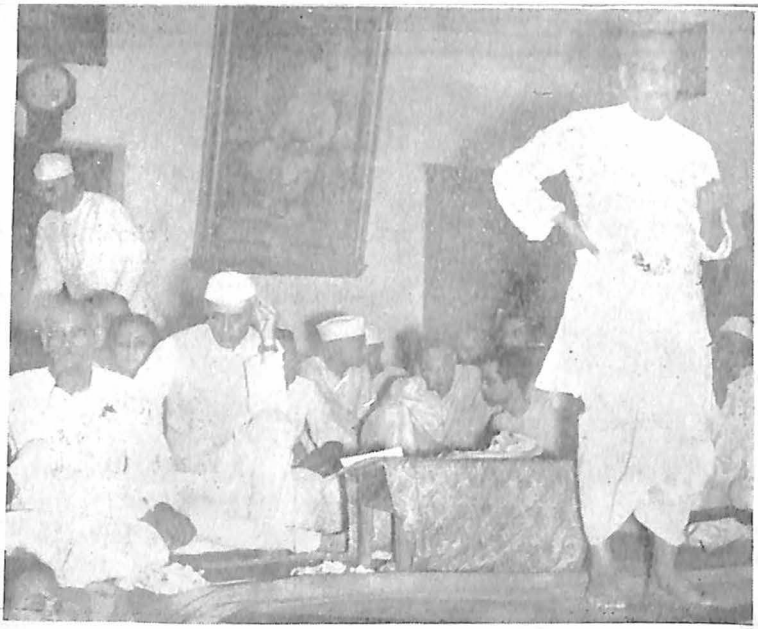
The recent settlement however renders it unnecessary to dwell at greater length upon this heroic period in the national life. Your Working Committee has entered into the settlement in anticipation of your approval. You are now invited formally to endorse it. The Committee having accepted it as your accredited representatives, it is not, take it, open to you to repudiate it, but it is open to you to pass a vote of no-confidence in the present executive and appoint better agents. But whilst it is but meet that I should draw your attention to the constitutional position, I have no doubt whatsoever that you will endorse the settlement which I hold to be perfectly honourable for both the parties. Had we not accepted the settlement we should have put ourselves in the wrong and thereby undone the effect of the suffering of the past year. Indeed we had always claimed, as Satyagrahis must claim to be ready and eager for peace. When therefore the way seemed to be open for peace, we



The School Master is Abroad—When Sardar Patel walks out of his doors his every movement becomes a chapter in political education.



Wages of Virtue—After his hard day's labour, Sardar Patel enjoys his well-earned meals, but never for a moment does he forget the problems of the day.



The Cabinet Quiz—The members of the Congress Working Committee put their heads together in order to discuss proposals of the British Cabinet Mission in New Deihi in June 1946. Sardar Patel is hammering out a knotty problem. Jawaharlal is cudgelling his brain. The speakers and listeners are all in a pretty fix.

Merry Mood—" Look at him what be says," said Mahatma Gandhi to Sardar Patel and Acharya Kriplani, while hearing one of the members speaking at the Working Committee meeting.



look it. In view of the clear demand on the part of the British Indian Delegation at the Round Table Conference for full responsibility, and in view of the British parties having accepted the position and in view of the appeal made to the Congress by the Premier, the Viceroy and many of our distinguished countrymen, the Working Committee thought that if an honourable truce could be arranged and if it was open to the Congress to press without any reservation for what is considered to be the best for the country, the Congress should, if invited, take part in the Conference and attempt to reach an agreed solution of the constitutional issue. If we failed in the attempt and there was no way open but that of suffering, then it was a privilege of which no power on earth could deprive us. Under the constitution clause of the settlement it is open to us to press for Puran Swaraj, to ask for complete control over our defence forces, foreign affairs, finance, fiscal policy and the like. There would be safeguards or reservations, or as the late Pandit Motilalji called them, adjustments, conceived in our own interest. When power passes from one to the other by agreement, there are always safeguards in the interest of the party in need of reparation or help. The continued exploitation of India for close on two centuries renders it necessary for us to seek assistance in several respects from external sources. This we would gladly take from British, if she is willing to give. Thus we would need military skill and there is no reason why we may not receive English assistance in this direction. I have taken only one telling illustration out of others that may be suggested. The defence safeguard may therefore be the retention of British officers, or as some would say, even privates, but we could never let our defence be controlled by the British. We must have the full power to make mis-

takes. We may gratefully receive British advice, never dictation. The fact is that the British army in India is an army of occupation. Defence is a misnomer. Frankly, the army is for defending British interests and British men and women against any internal uprising. I cannot recall a single instance in which the Indian army was required for the protection of India to fight a foreign power. True, there have been expeditions on the Frontier, wars with Afghanistan. British historians have taught us that these were wars more of aggression rather than of defence. We must not therefore be frightened by the bogey of foreign designs upon India. In my opinion, if we need an army, we certainly do not need the octopus we are daily bleeding to support. If the Congress has its way, the army will suffer immediate reduction to its desirable proportion.

Nor can we divide financial control with the British Government. The nation cannot grow to its full height if it has not exclusive control over its finance.

Again we have been taught to think that our civil administration will be inefficient and corrupt if we give up the able assistance of highly paid British civilians. The administrative powers that the Congress has exhibited during recent years and the fact of its having on an ever-increasing scale drawn to its assistance some of the best young men and women either without pay or on a mere pittance should sufficiently dispose of the fear of corruption or inefficiency. It would be too great a strain upon our poor purse to have to pay by way of insurance against corruption a premium out of all proportion to the highest possible estimate of corruption that may ever take place. It will, therefore, be necessary if India is to come to her own, to demand a heavy reduction in the Civil Service expenditure and thus a consequent reduction in the emoluments of the Civil Service.

CHARGES AGAINST INDIA UNJUST

We have claimed that many of the charges laid upon India are wholly unjust. We have never suggested repudiation of a single obligation, but we have asked and must continue to ask for an impartial investigation into the debts against us wherever we cannot agree.

There is no receding from the Lahore resolution of Complete Independence. This independence does not mean, was not intended to mean, a churlish refusal to associate with Britain or any other power. Independence therefore does not exclude the possibility of equal partnership for mutual benefit and dissolvable at the will of either party. If India is to reach her independence through consultatation and agreements, it is reasonable to suppose that there is a strong body of opinion in the country to the effect that before a partnership could possibly be conceived there must be a period of complete dissociation. I do not belong to that school. It is, as I think, a sign of weakness and of disbelief in human nature.

Federation is a fascinating idea. But it introduces new embarrassments. Princes will not listen to severence. But if they will come in the true spirit, it will be a great gain. Their association must not be to impede the progress of democracy. I hope therefore that they will not take up an uncompromising attitude that may be wholly inconsistent with the spirit of freedom. I wish they would without any pressure give us an earnest of their desire to march abreast of the time-spirit. Surely the fundamental rights of their subjects should be guaranteed as of the rest of the inhabitants of India. All the inhabitants of Federated India should enjoy some common elementary rights. And if there are rights there must be a common court to give relief from any encroachment upon them. Nor can it be too much to expect

that the subjects of the states should be to an extent directly represented on the federal legislature.

As regards Burma, press censorship has rendered it impossible for us to know the true situation there. Whether Burma should be separate from India or should be part of a Free India is for the Burmese alone to decide. But it is our concern, indeed, it is the world's concern, to see that all sides are heard. It is well-known that there is a unionist party in Burma. It is as much entitled to freedom of opinion as the separation. If therefore the information given to the Congress that unionist opinion is strangled be true, the injustice must be resisted. The proposition, that there should be a referendum of Burmese opinion seems to me to be eminently reasonable.

COMMUNAL UNITY

But before all else comes the question of Hindu-Muslim or rather communal unity. The position of the Congress was defined at Lahore. Let me recite the resolution here :

"In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India, communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular and Muslims and other minorities in general had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of the communal question proposed in the Nehru Report, the Congress assures the Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution can be acceptable to the Congress, that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned."

Therefore, the Congress can be no party to any constitution which does not contain a solution of the communal question, that is not designed to satisfy the respective parties.

As a Hindu, I adopt my predecessor's formula and present the minorities with a Swadeshi fountain-pen and paper and let them write out their demands. And I should endorse them. I know that it is the quickest method. But it requires courage on the part of the Hindus. What we want is a heart unity, not patched-up paper-unity that will break under the slightest strain. That unity can only come when the majority takes courage in both the hands and is prepared to change places with the minority. This would be the highest wisdom. Whether the unity is reached that way or any other, it is becoming plainer day after day that it is useless to attend any conference unless that unity is achieved. The Conference can give us an agreement between the British and us, it can perhaps help us to come nearer to the Princes but, it can never enable us to achieve unity. That must be hammered into shape by ourselves. The Congress must leave no stone unturned to realise this much-desired end.

It must be clear to all of us that the Congress can be useful for attaining Purna Swaraj only to the extent that it has gained power. The past twelve months have undoubtedly given it a power which he who runs may see. But it is not enough and can be easily frittered away by hasty action, or by pride. He is a spendthrift who lives on his capital. We must therefore add to our power. One way to do so is on our part to fulfil to the letter the conditions of the settlement. The other is to consolidate our gains. I therefore propose to devote a few lines to this part of our activity.

WEAR KHADDAR

We have made much headway in the matter of the boycott of foreign cloth. It is a right as well as a duty. Without it, the impoverished millions of India must continue to starve. For if cheap foreign cloth continues to be dumped down in the villages of India, the Charkha cannot flourish.

Foreign cloth must therefore be banished from the land. It is dear, even if it could be obtained free. The millions who starve, do so, not because they have no work during the off-season. It is therefore want of easy employment in their own villages that leads to starvation. Incessant propaganda is necessary to rid the country of chronic unemployment which has become second nature with our peasantry. The best propaganda is to do sacrificial spinning ourselves and wear Khadi. The All-India Spinners' Association has done much valuable work. But it is for the Congress to create the Spinning and the Khaddar atmosphere. This to my mind is the best and the most effective propaganda of Boycott.

It has been suggested that the argument against foreign cloth applies to indigenous mill cloth. This is true to an extent. But our mills do not produce all the cloth we need. For years to come they may continue to supply the balance that may be required over and above hand-spun cloth. But even our mills may prove a hindrance, if they compete with Khaddar or resort to questionable devices to push their wares. Fortunately many mills are patriotically working in co-operation with the Congress and are beginning to appreciate the virtue of Khaddar in the interest of the toiling millions. But I can certainly say that if our mills unpatriotically hurt Khaddar instead of complimenting it, they must face an opposition somewhat similar to that against foreign cloth.

The foreign cloth merchants will do well to bear the Congress attitude in mind in this regard. Foreign cloth boycott is a permanent thing, not conceived as a political weapon but as an economic and social measure of permanent value for the welfare of the masses. These merchants, therefore, if they will look into the future and think of their country, will do well to give up their foreign cloth trade. Everything

possible is being done to help them but some very big sacrifice on their part is essential.

English, Japanese and other foreign merchants will, I hope, not misunderstand the Congress attitude. If they will help India, they will deny themselves the Indian trade in foreign cloth. They have other markets and other enterprises.

PICKETING

This brings me to picketing. This has not been and cannot be given up. I give below the relevant clause of the Settlement.

Picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law, and if and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

Picketing is a common law right. But you will observe that within the limits prescribed, it is not only inoffensive but highly educative. Its function is gentle persuasion, never coercion or violent restraint on liberty. I use the adjective "violent" advisedly. The restraining force of public opinion there always will be. It is healthy, elevating, and conducive to the growth of liberty as distinguished from licence. Non-violent picketing is designed to create public opinion, an atmosphere which should become irresistible. This can best be carried on by women. I hope therefore that they will continue the marvellous work begun by them and earn the eternal gratitude of the nation and, what is more, the blessings of the starving millions.

In this connection let me say a few words regarding boycott of British goods. This idea is almost as old as the Congress. We know that after the advent of Gandhiji on the political platform, boycott of British goods was replaced by that of foreign—not only British cloth. He interpreted it in

terms of economic and social uplift, whereas the boycott of the British goods as such is a political and punitive measure. This was effectively employed during the recent hurricane campaign. Now that there is at least temporary peace, and we seek to reach our goal through consultation and conference, we must withdraw the political weapon. We cannot be sitting at the friendly conference table and outside making designs to hurt British interests. Whilst therefore we must for the time being withdraw British goods' boycott, we must intensify Swadeshi which is the birthright of every nation. Whatever we produce in our country we must encourage to the exclusion of foreign whether British or other. This is the condition of national growth. Thus we must encourage and carry on intensive propaganda on behalf of the indigenous insurance companies, banking, shipping and the like. We may not belittle or neglect them on the ground of their inferiority or dearness. Only by wide use and helpful criticism, may we make them cheaper and better.

There is much loose talk about equality of treatment. What is equality of treatment between giant and dwarf, between elephant and ant ? If Lord Inchcape with his fabulous wealth and resources claimed equal rights with Seth Narotam Morarji of lamented memory, it would be a travesty of equality. It will be time enough to talk of equality of treatment after Narotamdas's successors have some little approach to Lord Inchcape's resources. Equality of treatment in the case of hopeless unequals ought to mean raising the less favoured up to the level of the most favoured. Thus equality of treatment for suppressed classes on the part of the so-called superior classes means raising the former to the latter's level ; the latter sacrificing their substance and stooping to conquer. In relation to the British we have hitherto occupied a position in

some respects lower even than the suppressed classes. Protection of Indian industries and enterprise to the exclusion of British or foreign, is a condition of our national existence even under a state of partnership. Protection within even the British Commonwealth is no new-fangled notion. It is in vogue in the Dominions to the extent necessary for their growth.

BOYCOTT OF INTOXICATING DRINKS AN ECONOMIC NECESSITY

Just as boycott of foreign cloth is an economic necessity for the sake of the starving millions, boycott of intoxicating drinks and drugs is a necessity for the moral welfare of the nation. The idea of total Prohibition was born before its political effect was thought of. The Congress conceived it as a measure of self-purification. Even if the Government earmarked the revenue from this traffic for purely Prohibition purposes, our picketing of these shops would continue, no doubt subject to the same severe restrictions as in the case of foreign cloth. I invite the Government during the transition stage to anticipate the verdict of the national legislature and not merely tolerate picketing of the two things, foreign cloth, drink and drugs, but make, if they will, common cause with the nation. But whether they will or not, we cannot rest still, so long as there is a yard of foreign cloth entering the country or a single liquor shop corrupting our misguided countrymen.

One word regarding salt. The salt raids must stop. Defiance of salt laws for the sake of disobedience must stop. But the poor, living in the neighbourhood of salt areas, are free to make and sell salt within that neighbourhood. The Salt Tax is not gone, it is true. In view of the likelihood of the Congress participating in the Conference, we may not press for the immediate repeal of the tax which is

bound to come very soon. But the poorest on whose behalf the campaign was undertaken are now virtually free from the tax. I hope that no traders will seek to take an undue advantage of the relaxation.

NOT INTERESTED IN LEGISLATIVE HONOURS

The foregoing paragraph perhaps shows you how uninterested I am in many things that interest the intelligentsia. I am not interested in loaves and fishes or legislative honours. The peasantry do not understand these, they are little affected by them. I believe that Gandhiji's eleven points mean the substance of Swaraj. That which does not satisfy them is no Swaraj. Whilst I would respect the rights of landlords, Rajas, Maharajas and others to the extent that they do not hurt the sweating millions, my interest lies in helping the downtrodden to rise from their state and be on a level with the tallest in the land. Thank God, the gospel of Truth and Non-violence has given these an inkling of their dignity and the power they possess. Much still remains to be done. But let us make up our minds that we exist for them, not they for us. Let us shed our petty rivalries and jealousies, religious feuds and let everyone realise that the Congress represents and exists for the toiling millions and it will become an irresistible power working not for greed or power but for the sake of common humanity.

SELF-PURIFICATION NECESSARY

There is one part of the constructive programme which I have not dealt with already ; that is the all important work of removing untouchability. It is no use tinkering with the problem. The recent heroic struggle on the part of the nation would have been more glorious if Hindus had purged Hinduism of this evil. But heroism or glory apart, no Swaraj would be worth having without this supreme act of self-purification, and even if Swaraj is won whilst this stain

continues to blacken Hinduism, it would be as insecure as Swaraj without a complete boycott of foreign cloth.

In conclusion, I may not forget our brethren overseas. Their lot in South Africa, in East Africa and in the other parts of the world is still hanging in the balance. Deenabandhu Andrews is happily in South Africa helping our countrymen. Pandit Hirdaya Nath Kunzru has specialised in the Indian question in East Africa. The only consolation the Congress can give is to assure them of its sympathy. They know that their lot must automatically improve to the extent that we approach our goal. In your name I would appeal to the Governments concerned to treat with consideration the members of a nation which is bound at a very early date to enter upon her heritage and which means ill to no nation on earth. We ask them to extend to our nationals the same treatment they would have us, when we are free, to extend to theirs. This is surely not asking too much.

I invite you to conduct your proceedings, over which you have asked me to preside, in a manner befitting the grave occasion at which we have met. Differences of opinion are bound to exist; but I trust that every one here will co-operate to make our deliberations dignified and conducive to the attainment of our goal.

Bande Matram.

IV

JAWAHARLAL REMEMBERS KARACHI

"Karachi is far to the north-west of India, difficult of access, and partly cut off from the rest of the country by desert regions. But it, attracted a great gathering from distant parts, and truly represented the temper of the country at the moment. There was a feeling of quiet, but deep satisfaction at the growing strength of the national movement in India; pride in the Congress organisation which had so far worthily

responded to the heavy calls made on it, and fully justified itself by its disciplined sacrifice ; a confidence in our people, and a restrained enthusiasm. At the same time there was a heavy sense of responsibility at the tremendous problems and perils ahead ; our words and resolutions were now the preludes to action on a national scale, and could not be lightly uttered or passed. The Delhi Pact, though accepted by the great majority, was not popular or liked, and there was a fear that it might lead us to all manner of compromising situations. Somehow it seemed to take away from the clarity of the issues before the country. On the very eve of the Congress, a new element of resentment had crept in—the execution of Bhagat Singh. This feeling was especially marked in North India, and Karachi being itself in the north, had attracted large numbers of people from the Punjab.

"The Karachi Congress was an even greater personal triumph for Gandhiji than any previous Congress had been. The President Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, was one of the most popular and forceful men in India with the prestige of victorious leadership in Gujerat, but it was the Mahatma who dominated the scene. The Congress also had a strong contingent of 'Redshirts' from the Frontier Province under the leadership of Abdul Gaffar Khan. These Redshirts were popular and drew a cheer wherever they went, for India had been impressed by their extraordinary and peaceful courage in the face of great provocation from April 1930 onwards. The name 'Redshirts' led some people to think, quite wrongly, that they were Communists or left-wing labourites As a matter of fact their name was 'Khudai Khidmatgar', and this organisation had allied itself to the Congress (later in 1931 they were to become integral part of the Congress organisation). They were called Redshirts simply because of their rather primitive uniforms, which were red. They had

no economic policy in their programme, which was nationalistic and also dealt with social reform.

"The principal resolution at Karachi dealt with Delhi Pact and the Round Table Conference. I accepted it, of course, as it emerged from the Working Committee, but when I was asked by Gandhiji to move it in the open Congress, I hesitated. It went against the grain, and I refused at first, and then this seemed a weak and unsatisfactory position to take up. Either I was for it or against it, and it was not proper to prevaricate or leave people guessing in the matter. Almost at the last moment, a few minutes before the resolution was taken up in the open Congress, I decided to sponsor it. In my speech I tried to lay before the great gathering quite frankly what my feelings were and why I had wholeheartedly accepted that resolution and pleaded with them to accept it. That speech, made on the spur of the moment and coming from the heart, and with little o ornament or fine phrasing in it, was probably a greater success than many of my other efforts, which had followed a more careful preparation.

"I spoke on other resolutions, too, notably on the Bhagat Singh resolution and the one on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy. The latter resolution interested me especially, partly because of what it contained, and even more so because it represented a new outlook in the Congress. So far the Congress had thought along purely nationalist lines, and had avoided facing economic issues except in so far as it encouraged cottage industries and swadeshi generally. In the Karachi resolution it took a step, a very short step, in a socialist direction by advocating nationalisation of key industries and services, and various other measures to lessen the burden on the poor and increase it on the rich. This was not socialism at all, and a capitalist state could easily accept almost everything contained in that resolution.

"This very mild and prosaic resolution evidently made the big people of the Government of India furiously to think. Perhaps they even pictured, with their usual perspicacity, the red gold of the Bolsheviks stealing its way into Karachi and corrupting the Congress leaders. Living in a kind of political harem, cut off from the outer world, and surrounded by an atmosphere of secrecy, their receptive minds love to hear tales of mystery and imagination. And then these stories are given out in little bits in a mysterious manner, through favoured newspapers, with a hint that much more could be seen if only the veil were lifted. In this approved and well-practised manner, frequent references have been made to the Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights, etc. and I can only conclude that they represent the Government view of this resolution. The story goes that a certain mysterious individual with communist affiliations drew up this resolution, or the greater part of it, and thrust it down upon me at Karachi; that thereupon I issued an ultimatum to Mr. Gandhi to accept this or to face my opposition on the Delhi Pact issue, and Mr. Gandhi accepted it as a sop to me, and forced it down on a tired Subjects Committee and Congress on the concluding day.

"The name of the 'mysterious indivdual' has so far as I know, not been directly mentioned, but numerous hints make it quite clear who is meant. Not being myself used to ways of mystery and roundabout methods of expression, I might as well state that this person seems to be M. N. Roy. It would be interesting to know, and instructive to the big ones of Simla and Delhi to find out, what M. N. Roy or any other person 'communistically inclined' thinks of that very innocent Karachi resolution. It may surprise them to discover that any such person is rather contemptuous of the resolution because, according to him, it is a typical product of bourgeois reformist mentality.

"So far as Mr. Gandhi is concerned, I have the privilege of knowing him pretty intimately for the last seventeen years, and the idea of my presenting ultimatums to him or bargaining with him seems to me monstrous. We may accommodate ourselves to each other; or we may, on a particular issue, part company, but the methods of the market-place can never affect our mutual dealings.

"The idea of getting the Congress to pass a resolution of this kind was an old one. For some years the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee had been agitating in the matter, and trying to get the A. I. C. C. to accept a socialist resolution. In 1929 it succeeded to some extent in getting the A. I. C. C. to accept the principle. Then followed civil disobedience. During my early morning talks in Delhi with Gandhiji in February and March 1931, I had referred to this matter, and he had welcomed the idea of having a resolution on economic matters. He asked me to bring the matter up at Karachi, and to draft a resolution and show it to him there. I did so at Karachi, and he made various changes and suggestions. He wanted both of us to agree on the wording, before we asked the Working Committee to consider it. I had to make several drafts, and this delayed matters for a few days, and we were otherwise very much occupied with other matters. Ultimately Gandhiji and I agreed on a draft, and this was placed before the Working Committee, and later before the Subjects Committee. It is perfectly true that it was a new subject for the Subjects Committee and some members were surprised, however, it was easily passed by the Committee and the Congress, and was referred to the A. I. C. C. for further elucidation and enlargement on the lines laid down.

"While I was drafting this resolution various people, who used to come to my tent, were sometimes consulted by me about it. But M.N. Roy had absolutely nothing to do with it, and I knew well enough that he would disapprove of it and laugh at it.

"I had come across M.N. Roy in Allahabad some days before coming to Karachi. He turned up suddenly one evening at our house, and though I had no notion that he was in India, I recognised him immediately, having seen him in Mascow in 1927. He saw me at Karachi also, but that was probably for not more than five minutes. During the past few years Roy had written a great deal in condemnation of me politically, and he had often succeeded in hurting me a little. There was a great deal of difference between us, and yet I felt attracted towards him, and when later he had been arrested and was in trouble, I wanted to do what little I could (and that was little enough) to help him. I was attracted to him by his remarkable intellectual capacity ; I was also attracted to him because he seemed such a lonely figure, deserted by everybody. The British Government was naturally after him ; nationalist India was not interested in him ; and those who called themselves Communists in India condemned him as a traitor to the cause. I knew that after many years' residence in Russia and close co-operation with the Comintern, he had parted with them, or, perhaps been made to part. Why this happened I did not know, nor do I know still, except very vaguely, what his present views or his differences with the orthodox Communists are. But this desertion of a man like him by almost everybody pained me, and, against my usual habit, I joined the Defence Committee. Since that summer in 1931, over three years ago now, he has been in prison, unwell and practically in solitary confinement.

"January 4, 1932, was a notable day. It put a stop to argument and discussion. Early that morning Gandhiji and the Congress President, Vallabhbhai Patel, were arrested and confined without trial as State prisoners. Four new ordinances were promulgated giving the most far-reaching powers to magistrates and police officers. Civil liberty ceased to exist, and both person and property could be seized by the authorities. It was a declaration of a kind of state of siege for the whole of India, the extent and intensity of application being left to the discretion of the local authorities.

"Some Congress leaders are frightened of industrialisation, and imagine that the present-day troubles of the industrial countries are due to mass production. That is strange misreading of the situation. If the masses lack anything, as it has to produce it in sufficient quantities for them, is it preferable for them to continue in want rather than have mass production? The fault obviously is not in the production but in the folly and inadequacy of the distributive system."

PATEL SPEAKS

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel speaking at Ahmedabad on January 3, 1935 said : "True socialism lies in the development of village industries. We do not want to reproduce in our country the chaotic conditions prevalent in the Western countries consequent on mass-production."

In accordance with the Congress policy, following Gandhiji's advice, not a word was said in public about this unprovoked attack on the Congress in normal times by the Travancore Government. Some of the Liberals even protested against it vigorously. Indeed, Gandhiji's position in regard to the States is far more moberate and rcstrained than that of the Liberals. Perhaps among the leading public man only Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, with his close contacts

with numerous Princes, is equally restrained and solicitous of not offending the susceptibilities of the Rulers.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel laid stress on this non-intervention policy in a speech at Baroda on January 6, 1935. He is reported to have said "that workers in Indian States should do their work with all the limitations imposed by the State, and instead of criticising the administration, efforts should be made to keep up cordial relations between the ruler and the ruled."

CHAPTER SIXTH

Food And Freedom

For noble minds, the worst of miseries,
Worse than old age, or wearisome disease,
Is Poverty. From Poverty to flee,
From some tall precipice into the sea,
It were a fair escape to leap below !
In Poverty, dear Kyrnus, we forego
Freedom in word and deed, body and mind,
Action and thought are fettered and confined,
Let me then fly, dear Kyrnus, once again !
Wide as the limit of the land and main,
From these entanglements : with these in view,
Death is the lighter evil of the two.

—JOHN HOOKMAN FRERE

(Translated from Theogins of Greece.)

When the spearhead of independence is blunted, even though temporarily, it becomes essential to sharpen the defences in the rear. The Indian National Congress had this point in view when they assumed charge of the provincial ministries in 1937. Their paramount purpose was to ameliorate, as far as possible, the lot of the down-trodden masses who had been crushed and grounded by the British steam-roller in one hundred and fifty years. The entire work

was entrusted into the efficient hands of Sardar Patel. And so efficiently did he carry out the trust that it ranks as high as his Bardoli campaign. His direction of the provincial ministries has attracted international attention.

I

FROM 1931 TO 1937

Mahatma Gandhi was attending the Round Table Conference in London when the Government was conducting an enquiry into the grievances of Bardoli peasants. "Trend of enquiry", wired Sardar Patel to Gandhiji, "distinctly hostile and one-sided."

Mahatma Gandhi was exceedingly embittered. Immediately on his return to India, he launched satyagraha again. There was no other way out. And all the Congress leaders found themselves safely behind the bars. Sardar Patel was kept along with Gandhiji in Yeravada Prison. The chief was much impressed with the devotion of his lieutenant. "The affection", says Mahatma Gandhi, "with which he covered me recalls to me that of my own dear mother. I never knew him to possess motherly qualities". Wonderful ! what a magnificent tribute ! Sardar Patel is a mine of excellent qualities still to be explored.

While Mahatma Gandhi was released after eighteen months, Sardar Patel was kept in the British cell for thirty months—quite an ordinary servitude for Indian heroes !—and was released in July, 1934, and that also because he had fallen seriously ill. Congress was much disorganised. Factions were showing their ugly heads. As soon as he could work, Sardar Patel set about to organise the Congress parliamentary machine. There being no fresh elections in the meantime, he was still the president of the Congress in 1934. Inside and outside jails he shouldered leadership of the country.

Once again he set about his task with a fresh heart. The hardships of jails had failed to unnerve this tough and rough man.

When Jawaharlal was elected president in 1936 for the second time and in 1937 for the third time, the Congress was thrashing out the election issue. The nationalists decided to fight elections and fought them heroically, sweeping the polls in seven provinces at a single stroke.

It was a great triumph for the ideals of the Congress, because simple peasants in the most distant corners of India gave their verdict unconditionally in favour of the Congress. Britain was not yet prepared to deliver the goods of independence, but the luggage of popular sanctions had already arrived at the Congress headquarters.

II

CONGRESS TAKES OFFICE

After the elections, the All-India Congress Committee met and re-asserted its determination to attend the constitution. But on the question of office-acceptance, after a debate lasting for ten hours, the following clause was accepted by a majority vote of 135 to 78 :

"On the pending question of office acceptance, the A. I. C. C. authorises and permits the acceptance of office in provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislature, provided that ministerships shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to constitutional activities."

The wording of this resolution is important, for in the following four months it was a matter of constant discussion. It is clear that what its principal author, Mahatma Gandhi, meant by it was that so long as the Congress ministers

worked within the Constitution, they must be guaranteed against interference from the Governors of the Provinces. The opposition argued that to work within the Constitution at all was a virtual surrender of the Congress policy of destroying the Constitution. To this it was replied that, on the contrary, attempts to work the Constitution would quickly demonstrate the impossibility of achieving the real emancipation of the Indian people within its framework. Also, from office, it would be possible to prepare the people more rapidly for full independence.

In the Provinces where the Congress had obtained a majority of a predominant position, the Governors invited its leaders to form Ministries. Under the resolution just quoted they asked for assurances of non-interference. This the Governors said they could not give. Interim Ministries were formed, and as the Constitution allowed for a six-months' interval before the new Legislatures were called, use was made of this provision. It was known, however, that as soon as the Legislatures were called the interim Ministries would fall.

After several months of statements and counter-statements from the British Government and the Congress, on July 7th the Congress Working Committee felt satisfied that, once Congress Ministries had been formed, it would not be easy for the Governors to use their special powers. This was partly the result of the Viceroy's statement on June 22 that all Governors would be anxious not merely not to provoke conflicts with their ministers to whatever party their ministers belong, but to leave nothing undone to avoid or resolve such conflicts.

Accordingly, Congressmen were given permission to take office and, in all the Provinces where the Congress had a

clear majority, the interim Ministries resigned and Congress Ministries were immediately formed. In two other Provinces the non-Congress Ministries failed to keep a majority of the legislature and they, too, gave way to Congress Ministries. Thus, since the summer or autumn of 1937, Congress Ministries were in office in Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces, Orissa, Bihar, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier. In Bengal, the Punjab, Sind and Assam non-Congress Ministries remain in office. Of these Bengal, the Punjab and Sind had predominantly Moslem ministries ; Assam was the only predominantly Hindu province that had not a Congress Ministry ; the North-West Frontier Province, the only predominantly Moslem Province, with a Congress Ministry.

CONGRESS ORGANISATION

Before proceeding to consider the first fruits of these Congress Ministries, it is necessary to refer to certain features of the Congress organisation. The National Congress is a well-disciplined party, democratic in organisation, controlled by leaders who have gained their position by long devotion to the party's cause and in most cases by repeated imprisonments. Few of these leaders took office, and it had accordingly been alleged that the Ministries were acting on the instructions of the Congress Working Committee. The leaders of the Congress replied that this was not so, but that as the Congress was a national organisation, it is only natural that the Congress Cabinets should adopt similar policies. In fact, the policies adopted in the different circumstances of different provinces varied and evidently owed a good deal to the initiative of the respective Ministries.

MAHATMA GANDHI

The position of Mahatma Gandhi was unique. He was no longer a member of the Congress Working Committee, yet his influence in Congress Councils was probably greater than that of any other man, even the President. This was partly because of his remarkable influence among the masses of the people (especially the peasants, who far outnumber the industrial workers in India), which gave him an extraordinary moral authority. It was also partly because he cannot be identified with any "wing" of the Congress. He was not a Congress Socialist, nor was he a defender of the rights of property. Sometimes he seemed to be of the right, sometimes of the left. In many ways he remained the great unifying influence. Whenever he strongly advocated a policy it was likely to be adopted. It is of interest to note what he wrote in his weekly paper *Harijan* after the Congress had agreed to take office. He suggested that the ministries would justify themselves if, for instance, they

> "enforce immediate prohibition by making it self-supporting instead of paying for it from the liquor revenue.....The jails may be turned into reformatories and workshops. They should be self-supporting and educational instead of being spending and punitive departments...Salt should be free for the poor man, but it is not; it can now be free in Congress Provinces at least. All purchases of cloth should be in Khadi (hand spun and hand woven). The attention should now be devoted more to the villages and the peasantry than to the cities. These are but illustrations taken at random."

And a little later he wrote that he believed the Congress would become irresistible if the Ministries through the "willing exercise of non-violence by the whole mass of the people" were able to achieve

> "perfect communal co-operation and friendship, the eradication of untouchability, willing restraint of the addicts to the drink and opium habits, the social enfranchisement of women, the progressive amelioration of the toiling millions in the villages, free and compulsory primary education (and other educational reforms), a radical change in the legal machinery so as to make justice pure and inexpensive, conversion of jails into reformatories in which detention would be not a course of punishment but a complete course of the education of those miscalled convicts, but who are in fact temporarily deranged."

It would probably be fair to say that Mahatma Gandhi believes that these things can be achieved far more by a change in the spirit and methods of administration than by a large body of new legislation.

On Hindu-Moslem relations he said that he expected the Congress Ministries to show to all the world that they were not "Hindu or anti-Moslem", but "that they know no distinction between Hindu, Moslem, Christian or Sikh or Parsi, nor between high-caste and low-caste Hindu." In nearly all the Congress Ministries there was at least one non-Hindu Minister.

It is largely in response to Mr. Gandhi's whole outlook, and his constant stress on "non-violence", that many Indian women have lately come into active public life. Several were holding responsible positions in the new Ministries.

Along with acceptance of offices the Working Committee of the Congress appointed in 1937 a Parliamentary Sub-Committee consisting of three of its veterans, tried, trusted and true, all of whom had been Congress presidents, and none of whom had an axe to grind—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendraprasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Gunther, the popular American journalist, has called the first "a part of the brain and spiritual enlightenment," the second the "heart," and the third "the ruthless fist" of the Congress. It is an American way of putting things, a way which sees everything in terms of European and American politics, which, unlike Indian politics claiming to be based on non-violence, are based on anything but non-violence. It may be picturesque but by no means a correct way. The Parliamentary Sub-Committee was formed in order to help the Congress ministries and the Congressmen in Legislative Assemblies to carry out the sacred pledges they had made to the country. The task required all the organizing skill, all the capacity to maintain discipline, even at the risk of unpopularity, and all the rigid impartiality and the moral vigilence that they were capable of. Each of the the three members were possessed of these qualities in a greater or less degree, but each approached his task with a conscientiousness and a spirit of co-operation which is rarely to be found. Each had his zones of work allotted to him because of the large size of the area in which the Committee had to operate, but there was joint and several responsibility attaching to all that they did.

In 1939 the question of the Sind Ministry was a most difficult question to solve, as it has been always. Things came to such a pass that the matter was brought to Gandhiji.

The Maulana said : " My own mind points in one direction, but as in all these questions I always accept your

moral instinct; in this matter I will accept your judgment without arguing with you."

Gandhiji said : " No, but we have decided that in all such matters yours should be the final word, and I would ask Vallabhbhai and Rajendra Babu (members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee) to accept your decision."

But the Maulana said : " With me your word is going to be the final word."

There was a long affectionate tussle, at the end of which I think the Maulana lost and Gandhiji won.

III

SARDAR PATEL AT WORK

Many of the Congress Ministers have themselves served terms of imprisonment during the civil disobedience movement, or for " seditious " speeches. It was only natural, therefore, that one of their first thoughts should be for the " politicals " who were still " rotting in jail."

Such action also demonstrated the reality of the change of regime, and tested whether the new ministerial control of the police and of law and order was genuine.

Some political prisoners had already been released by the interim ministries, before Congress ministers took office. The Congress ministers almost immediately released a good many more, especially those who had Congress connections. Complaint was made in both Congress and non-Congress circles that the release of other " politicals " including Communists was delayed, especially in Bombay Presidency. However, in October the Trade Unionists and Communists who had been convicted in the notorious Meerut conspiracy case were released. But in the same month a Congress socialist was actually arrested in Madras Presidency, on a

charge of sedition. This led to a strong demand for a change in the Sedition Law. Later in the autumn the prisoners connected with the Moplah Rebellion of 1921 were released by the Madras Government, and the Garwali riflemen who mutinied by refusing to fire on a crowd during the civil disobedience of 1930 were also released.

In August 1937, just after the advent of the Congress Ministries, a resolution sent out by the All-India Congress Committee was passed at a number of big demonstrations demanding the release of all political prisoners. In November the Congress Committee drew attention to the fact that there were still a few political prisoners in Congress Provinces, and that some repressive laws had not been repealed, including even the right of the executive to detain a prisoner without trial. Early action was called for.

UNITED PROVINCES AND BIHAR

At the end of January 1938, in a general statement on its six months work, the Bihar Ministry reported that it had by that time released 18 political prisoners, whilst the cases of 24 were still under consideration. In the middle of February, having apparently concluded its examination of these cases, it suddenly demanded that all must be released within three hours. At the same time, the United Provinces Ministry demanded the immediate release of the 15 political prisoners still in jail in that Province. All these prisoners had been convicted at Chauri-Chaura in 1922 which led Mr. Gandhi to abandon the first civil disobedience campaign. The Governors demurred ; and on appeal to the Viceroy he upheld them in their refusal to release the prisoners. The Ministries of both Provinces thereupon resigned. The atmosphere became electric again.

Happily some of the responsible people on each side kept their heads. The Governors did not accept the resignations ;

the Viceroy published a statement conciliatory in tone. The issue seemed to be simply between general release and piecemeal. It is difficult to believe that the general release of some forty political prisoners, when the whole situation had completely changed from that in which they committed their crimes, and when the Congress itself was in office, would be a grave menace to the peace and tranquility of the Province. It was clear that the Viceroy was concerned, first over the summary nature of the demand, secondly for the effects a general release might have in Bengal.

BENGAL

The cult of terrorism has had a tragic attraction for some of the finest Bengal youths for many years. A number had been convicted by the courts, and many more have been arrested on suspicion of complicity with violence. At some periods the detenus (those held in detention either in their own homes or in detention camps) had numbered several thousand.

Sir John Anderson's Government in Bengal started a training scheme for these detenus; a hundred or so at a time were trained for some trade and then released and set up in business. But while this process was going on in Bengal, over three hundred, who had been convicted by the Courts, were in the penal settlement of the Andaman Islands.

A strong agitation had been going on for their repatriation. In 1936 two members of the Indian Legislature a Moslem and a Hindu, went to investigate the conditions in the Andamans and found the moral conditions as bad as in the days fifteen years before when a Government commission itself condemned the penal settlement and for a time it was abandoned. But no action followed this visit.

In the summer of 1937 most of the political prisoners in the Andamans started a hunger-strike. After some weeks of

this in August, Gandhiji intervened and tried to obtain a settlement. The hunger-strikers, with one exception, agreed to give up their strike, and the Government let it be known that they would repatriate all the prisoners as soon as the local governments (a few of the prisoners came from provinces other than Bengal) were willing to receive them. The Congress Provinces immediately asked for their men, who were repatriated. The Bengal Government was unwilling to receive all its 300 at once, but the process of repatriation was quickly begun, and at the end of January 1938, the last batch of 109 reached Bengal.

Release, however, was another matter. In December 1937 over a thousand of the detenus were released—though they must still report any change of residence to the police and and Gandhiji again assisted in the work, by interviewing one after another and getting them to promise to give up violence. Unhappily, his illness in December prevented him from continuing the work.

Twenty-one of the Andaman prisoners were from the Punjab. These men started a hunger-strike in December 1937 in protest against the refusal of the Ministry in that province to release them.

It was evidently largely because he feared that a general release in the United Provinces and Bihar would embarrass the non-Congress ministries in Bengal and the Punjab that Lord Linlithgow refused the demand of the Congress Ministers in the two former Provinces in February 1938. A compromise was soon found ; the remaining prisoners were released ; and the Ministers returned to office.

Release of prisoners had not been confined to politicals. India has had one of the highest percentages of jail population

of any country in the world. Many of the Congress leaders, such as Pandit Nehru himself, have realised from their contact with them in prison that a large proportion of these prisoners do not really belong to a criminal type. It was not surprising, therefore, to find the United Provinces Ministry releasing between three and four thousand prisoners during the autumn, before the expiry of their sentences.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Another early act of the Congress Ministries was the removal of the ban on scores of organisations which had been proscribed during the Willingdon regime. Thus, in January 1938, the Bihar Ministry notes that "there is no ban now on any association and no newspaper is working under security." In all Congress Provinces, with the exception of a stray case or two, all pending political cases were withdrawn from the Courts. All restrictions on the movements of political workers were removed. Securities taken from papers were returned. All notices of securities were cancelled. In some cases, securities previously confiscated were returned. Lists of Newspapers that were not to get government printing or advertisement work on account of their political views were cancelled. Black lists of political suspects had also been discontinued. Reporting political speeches made at public meeting had been stopped. There had been a partial revival of reporting such speeches as were likely to excite communal passions or political violence. Bans on political organisations had been removed; so also bans on political books. Political films had been allowed to be exhibited.

On the other hand, in the non-Congress Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal civil liberties were still severely restricted. In two districts of Bengal curfew orders, compulsory use of identity cards by young men (some 25,000

in Chittagong), prohibition of cycling, banning of Congress organisations and similar measures continued. There has been some controversy, however, about the extent to which penal laws could be relaxed in the Congress Provinces. Congressmen had suffered so much under certain sections of the penal code that it seemed to have been supposed that they would sweep these sections away altogether. The line actually taken seemed to be this; there must be complete freedom to criticise the Government—the new regime could not recognise disaffection, sedition or bringing the government into contempt as crimes. But violence and incitement to violence, no government can tolerate. To allow liberty to preach violence would be to allow impossible licence.

POLICE

How far had the Congress Ministries been able to reform the police? Hitherto nationalist India had regarded the police generally with suspicion and hostility. It was widely believed that they were thoroughly corrupt—partly because they were underpaid—and that they often bully, browbeat and terrorise any poor peasant against whom they had a grudge.

The comments of Sir Douglas Young, Chief Justice of the Punjab, on a recent case (the Kiroo case) tended to confirm this view of the police. "In most cases," he said,

> "Wretched suspects subjected to treatment of this illegal and despicable character are helpless and hopeless ... Cases are not unknown, and are even within our own knowledge, where persons have died under this type of investigation."

Of the Kiroo case itself he said:

> "The interrogation or, in plain language, torture of Kiroo took place without the slightest attempt to conceal it. It was to all intents and purposes in police; many persons witnessed it. The inference to be drawn is that the police thought they had nothing to conceal or that torturing was to them normal procedure."

There had been several complaints of high-handed action since the Ministries had been formed; and in Bombay, at least, when it had been the case of police against strikers, the Ministers had energetically defended the police, rather than promising to restrain them or to take disciplinary action against excesses.

It appears that some Ministers found their relations with the police—and indeed with the permanent officials as a whole—by no means easy. Thus Mr. Nehru, in February 1938, addressing the Congress said:

"The old services, even with goodwill, which is not always present, cannot be the agents of the great changes that the Congress wants to introduce. They have been brought up in a different tradition and their competence is largely confined to work in the ancient ruts of an irresponsible imperialist administration ... It is difficult to carry on effective work in this way and our over-worked Ministers lead a care-worn and exhausting life."

On a kindred subject, it may be noted that already at least one Ministry (in the Central Provinces) overhauled the machinery of local government with a view to its purification from intrigue and corruption.

PROHIBITION OF DRINK AND DRUGS

The Congress has been committed to a policy of prohibition in regard to alcohol and drugs (opium, charas, ganja,

etc.) since 1920. It is important for the westerner to realise that prohibition in America, or, indeed, in any western country is not comparable to prohibition in India. The proportion of the population who drink in India is very small. The drinking habit is almost universally regarded with the same kind of reprobation with which westerners regard drug addiction. The Hindu, Moslem and Sikh religions all strongly reprobate the drinking of alcohol. In large parts of India, especially throughout Bengal and most of North India, there is very little drinking of any kind, except among Europeans in the cities. In some provinces. Orissa and Assam for instance, far more people take opium and other drugs than liquor. Opium pills are very often taken for their semi-medicinal qualities.

EXCISE.

But the Provincial Governments get a large proportion of their revenue, from excise, that is to say, from the sale of drink and drugs through shops under government control, whose licences are annually auctioned. The Simon Commission shows that in 1929-30 excise provided 19½ crores of rupees (1 crore is £ 750,000) out of a total provincial revenue in all the provinces of 88¼ crores of rupees. Only the land revenue (35½ crores) has provided a larger proportion of provincial revenue. And this revenue has increased since 1928. Moreover, it has been customary to regard excise as the revenue that pays for education, though there seems to be no particular justification for this.

Hitherto, Indian provincial governments had not felt able to take drastic action for reducing the consumption of drink and drugs, because of the loss of revenue that would follow. Excise reports frequently revealed the paradox of satisfaction over an expanding revenue, together with accounts of propaganda against the excessive use of drink or drugs. Thus,

the Orissa report for 1935-36 shows that in Orissa, a province of very heavy opium consumption, the revenue from drink and drugs increased in four years by 23 lakhs of rupees (2,300,000) and the consumption in some districts went up very much in 1936, owing especially to "competition among vendors." Twenty new opium shops were opened "to meet genuine local demand." But at the same time, "excise officers continued to explain the evil effects of purchasing opium for children."

PROHIBITION

No sooner had they taken office than Gandhiji, in *Harijan*, began to expound his plan for prohibition within three years for all India. He proposed that it should be applied district by district, and that it should be accompanied by active temperance propaganda. Europeans were still to be allowed to import foreign liquor as long as they wished.

He pointed out, in answer to criticisms, that he was not expecting prohibition to lead to the complete disappearance of liquor addiction. No doubt there would still be illicit distilling from the toddy palm. But "Thieving will abide to Doomsday. Must it therefore be licensed?" As the community will be on the side of the law, no large preventive service will be required. The great purpose of prohibition is to disentangle that Government from a bad form of revenue, and to remove open temptation (in the form of liquor and drug shops) from the countryside.

MADRAS

The first active steps were taken in Madras, the province with the highest proportionate excise revenue (27%) where the Premier, Mr. Rajagopalachari, had for years been one of the foremost workers in the Prohibition League of India. His own district, Salem was selected as the first district for prohi-

bition ; and it came into force on October 1st, 1937. An enthusiastic witness of the Premier's triumphal tour of his district in the same month, writes :

" The magic of abstinence has spread through the countryside, there is no opposition from anywhere, not to speak of unrest. Not that such opposition is stifled and cannot find angry vent, but there is none."

Later information showed that the Co-operative Department of the Madras Government was organising thrift clubs in the district, specially intended for the former toddy-drinkers, and the unemployed toddy tappers were being employed in the manufacture of jaggery, a non-alcoholic sugar product of the toddy palm.

Under the new Madras Law, other districts were to be added rapidly, so that the whole province, would be "dry" within three years. Medical requirements and alcohol for scientific and industrial purposes were provided for. Foreign liquor might still be imported by special permit up to a maximum figure, for the use of individuals whose need of liquor was recognised by the authorities.

OTHER PROVINCES

Bombay, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Orissa and Bihar all passed similar legislation. In December it was announced that a sub-division of the Saugor District and certain other areas in the Central Provinces were to be "dry" from January 1st ; in other words, the sale of toddy and country spirit were then made illegal. In the United Provinces, or at least in its cities, it seemed that the policy of reducing the number of liquor, drug and opium shops was being pursued. The policy of taking over some of the shops and running them by the Government (disinterested management) was also proposed in the United Provinces. But there

were also to be three experimental prohibition districts. Measures had also been taken by the Congress Moslem Ministry in the North-West Frontier Provinces. Bengal, with a predominantly Moslem non-Congress Government, was also proposing to adopt prohibition. It was enforced in the Noakhali District from April 1st, 1938. In Bengal only 12% of the revenue came from excise.

SOCIAL REFORMS

For many years Mr. Gandhi has placed the problem of the "dumb, semi-starved millions" of Indian peasants in the forefront of all his political campaigning: Pandit Nehru is fully united with him in this, even though they do not entirely agree about the measures that will be most effective to end this poverty. It is only natural that the first general social legislation undertaken by the Congress Ministers should be on behalf of the peasants, who form 80-90% of the Indian population.

RENT ARREARS

In many parts of India, and especially in the United Provinces and Bihar, the immediate need was to relieve the peasants of their burdens of rent and taxes. In many parts of India the peasants had fallen into serious arrears of rent, especially since the world depression and the catastrophic fall in agricultural prices of 1932. It has been estimated that the rural indebtedness of India amounts to 14 milliards of rupees, or £1,000 million. Moratorium and the scaling down of debts have been advocated in many quarters for years past, and debt suspensions had been allowed in certain districts before the Congress Ministries took office. The arrears of the peasants were often far worse in fact even than they seemed; for again and again payments have only been made after resort to the money-lender, who habitually lends

at exorbitant rates of interest. Thus, the new Governments had been met with two urgent needs : first, to suspend or scale down existing debts, whether to landlords or money-lenders, and secondly, to introduce legislation of a more permanent nature for improving the peasants (or ryots) conditions of tenancy and for restricting the exactions of the money-lenders.

In most provinces the first step taken was to scale down the debt by methods of conciliation. Boards have been set up by law to effect a reduction of debts. In the United Provinces some attempt was made in the law to indicate the proportionate reduction that was held to be desirable. The Madras Act had gone further than this. All accumulated arrears going back before October 1st, 1932, were wiped out. For more recent debts, the unpaid interest was scaled down to 5%. But these relief were conditional on payment being made for the current year by the end of September 1938. Eor the future the maximum rate of interest chargeable on loans was to be 6¼%.

The Servant of India thinks that few of the present money-lenders are likely to continue in business under these conditions and that this measure will need to be followed up by other legislation providing new credit machinery for the peasants.

TENANCY

The landlord system exists chiefly in the Gangetic Plain and it is consequently in the United Provinces and Bihar that the problem is most urgent. So far, controversy seems to have raged chiefly round the measures introduced in Bihar. There, the Congress Ministry had been largely guided by Rajendra Prasad, President of the Provincial Congress Committee, a past president of the Congress, a man almost universally respected in the Province, one who has

done valiant work for many years for the peasants, especially perhaps, after the terrible Bihar earthquake of 1934. Rajendra Prasad is essentially a Gandhite, not a Socialist.

BIHAR

Some of the peasant bodies (Kisan Sabhas) in Bihar became very restless during the autumn of 1937, and there were threats of violent action unless their grievances were met. Congress bodies took disciplinary action against those Sabhas which were affiliated to Congress.

The Bihar Tenancy Act provides, among other things, that certain forms of produce rent are to be abolished. The rate of interest on arrears of rent has been reduced from 12 per cent. to 6¼ per cent. per annum. Certain illegal exactions of the landlords are made into penal offences. All enhancements in cash rent made between 1st January 1911 and 31st December 1936 are cancelled. In the first draft of the bill, no tenant, however, much in arrears, could forfeit his holding completely for more than seven years. The landlords objected to this, and it was argued that, if they took over the land for a restricted period of years in the last year or two they would neglect it, and the peasantry would recover it in a derelict condition. So this provision has been dropped in favour of the vaguer statement that "only so much of the holding can now be put to sale as may be deemed sufficient to satisfy the decretal amount"—that is, the amount of rent a court has declared to be due. The dwellings and immediate possessions and adjacent lands of the tenants will be exempt from sale.

The Bihar Ministry had also published the outline of a bill to regulate and restrict the activities of money-lenders. Another Bill was to impose an Agricultural Income Tax—a measure long overdue in North India, but hitherto successfully

resisted by the landlords. And it took steps to develop the sugar-cane industry in the Province. It was also making arrangements with the neighbouring Ministry of the United Provinces for the fuller use of the United Provinces Agricultural College and the Bihar Veterinary College by students of both provinces.

UNITED PROVINCES

The general situation in the United Provinces was very similar to that in Bihar. The class feeling was very deep in many districts, and the peasants were organising themselves into Unions and demanding the abolition of the landlord system. A year's moratorium of debts was decreed soon after the Congress Ministry under Govind Vallabh Pant came into office. Further definite legislation was not yet forthcoming, but some work of rural reconstruction was initiated in 10,000 villages on January 18. Rural Development associations had been constituted in every district and about 800 organisers appointed to carry out the plan.

Complaint was made that the police were acting with undue severity against the peasants in some parts of the United Provinces. Unrest was widespread.

BOMBAY

The Bombay Government had been slower to act on behalf of the peasants than some, and in January 1938, a deputation of 10,000 peasants marched to the Assembly Hall in Bombay and demanded redress of grievances. A few days later two Government Bills were published. The first provided a one-year moratorium for the peasants who were most heavily indebted; while the other provided for the registration and licensing of money-lenders; money-lenders may be compelled to produce proper accounts before a court; there was to be no compound interest on loans, and

the rate of interest was limited to 9 per cent. (as in some other Provinces) for secured loans, and 12 per cent. for unsecured loans.

ORISSA

In Orissa a series of new tenancy laws had been enacted, which should save the tenants from some of the worst harassments to which they have been liable. As the southern part of the new province of Orissa was formerly in the Madras Presidency, different laws have been needed for the different conditions prevailing in north and south.

Orissa is one of the poorest parts of India, neglected, and forgotten by those who congregate in the big cities. One of its chronic troubles is flood. Some of the rivers bring flood and devastation every few years, and considerable engineering will be needed to save Orissa from this scourge. It is not easy to see how such a poor Province can find the money needed for putting the rivers into safe channels. The Congress Premier, after severe floods in the Autumn of 1937 which threatened the city of Cuttack and rendered many village people utterly destitute, their crops and their homes destroyed, appealed for funds to relieve the distress. This appeal was supported by Gandhiji, and the need of permanent measures for flood prevention was stressed, not for the first time.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The conditions of industrial workers in India are in some ways even worse than those of the peasants. In spite of several recent measures, some of them the direct result of the proposals of the International Labour Organisation, some the result of the Whiteley Labour Commission of 1931, the legal limits of hours of labour are still 10 in the day and 54 in the week, while miners may work up to 54 hours in the

week and 10 hours in the day above ground or 9 below. The night work of women and young persons has been abolished, and the underground work of women in mines is on the way to abolition. But these are the better things that have been done. In the realm of insurance against accident, safety devices, inspection, maternity benefits, methods of recruiting labour, wage-levels and many other matters, the need of improvement is urgent. Perhaps the housing conditions of the workers are the worst scandal of all. Single-room dwellings of, say nine feet by nine feet, often house a complete family, and this must be used for living, cooking and sleeping. Or it may be, a rather larger room with a curtain across the middle houses two families. Ventilation is often appalling—or, on the other hand, in some of the four feet high huts attached to mines or plantations, it is the roofing that is wholly inadequate. Sanitation is utterly primitive, and often a number of tenements have only one water tap available—at some distance. No wonder the infant death-rate in such areas is often over 50 per cent. Such are some of the conditions the Congress Ministries were expected to change.

So far, comparatively little has been done to ease the lot of the industrial workers. Indeed, Mr. Kher and his colleagues of Bombay came in for a good deal of criticism, both for the attitude they adopted towards strikes and for the dilatoriness of their social proposals.

BOMBAY

Thus, when the Kher Ministry, a few weeks after taking office, claimed credit for ending a seven months' strike at Gohak involving 3,000 workers, the Congress Socialists pointed out that the settlement involved the forfeiture of the workers' right to strike. Compulsory arbitration was to be used for future disputes between the Company and the

Union; and the strikers did not get their main original grievance redressed. In connection with a later strike, the Ministry took still stronger action against the strikers and alleged that they had not real grievance but had been provoked to strike by agitators. They were thereupon reminded that Gandhiji had pointed out that one advantage of civil disobedience (which applies equally to strikes) was that men would not court suffering unless they were strongly convinced of the justice of their cause.

At the end of October, the Bombay Ministry issued a press note outlining the industrial policy which they were intending to pursue. Mr. R. R. Bakhale, of the Servants of India Society, a well-known moderate worker for Labour interests, pointed out that, although the plans adumbrated were in the main unexceptionable, adumbration was as far as any proposal had got. There was no suggestion even of a minor measure being actually in course of preparation. The Ministry was "exploring possibilities," "contemplating," intending, "determining to pursue." Apparently they had not yet got any further. But seven or eight months did not give much time for preparing new legislation.

UNITED PROVINCES

In the United Provinces the Congress Ministry began its career by ending a strike at Cawnpore which had involved 50,000 workers and nearly all the cotton-mills of that city. In this case, the employers were compelled to recognise the labour union, which until then they had refused to do. No victimisation was permitted, and dismissed workers were reinstated. Other matters in dispute were referred to a committee. Its report showed that, although the textile industry had been developing rapidly in Cawnpore, even through the years of depression, wages had actually decreased. Owners complained of decreasing profits, but as one of the

few examples procurable showed a decrease from 35 per cent. to 25 per cent. profit, the grievance did not seem very serious.

There had been several other strikes both in Cawnpore and in the parts of Congress Provinces since the Ministries were formed.

OTHER REFORMS

In January 1938, both in the United Provinces and in Orissa, bills were brought forward with regard to maternity. The United Provinces Bill provided maternity benefit for women employed in factories. The purpose of the Orissa measure was to control the activities of unqualified nurses, midwives and health visitors.

The Bombay Ministry was promoting a measure which made it possible for reformers to initiate action that might lead to the opening of Hindu temples to untouchables.

Though there did not appear to be other legislative measures at present under discussion for relieving the disabilities of Harijans, or untouchables, the widespread work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, most of whose active servants are Congressmen, continued; and it was presumably receiving more official encouragement than it did. Some Ministers were also providing special educational facilities (nurseries, etc.) for Harijan children.

There were, of course, many other social reforms that awaited the attention of the new Ministers. The strengthening of the co-operative movement in both town and country was one. Probably influences were already being brought to bear for reducing expenditure on marriages and other social functions, and new land laws might reduce the costs of litigation. But these are things which could not be reformed by legislative measures. The development of the health services was also one of the most urgent needs of the Indian countryside.

EDUCATION

Since the Congress assumed office, great interest had been aroused by Mr. Gandhi's proposals to make education self-supporting, thereby hoping quickly to make it universal. In a country with only 7% literates, and where at the present rate illiteracy would not disappear for many centuries, something drastic was required. The so-called Wardha Conferference, at which Gandhi's plans were elaborated, had been widely discussed and criticised. That Conference appointed a committee to propose concrete plans.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION

Mr. Gandhi's plan to base the education of every Indian child on some handicraft was presented in such a way as to suggest that the main purpose of the scheme was to make education self-supporting. Dr. Zakir Hussain and his colleagues, however, in their report, dated 2nd December 1937, expressly repudiated this idea. Although the report did involve the principle of training every child in some craft, and this was made the basis of the whole scheme, they say :

" We wish to make it quite clear that we consider the scheme of basic education outlined by the Wardha Conference and there elaborated, to be sound in itself. Even if it is not 'self-supporting' in any sense, it should be accepted as a matter of sound educational policy and as an urgent measure of national reconstruction." In other words, on educational grounds alone they hold it to be vital to change the present literacy basis of Indian education in favour of a system that will develop the whole personality. In the words of the report :

" educating children through some suitable form of productive work..... is desirable, because it relieves the child

from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretical instruction, against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest."

The present system of education in India is condemned as functioning listlessly, because

"it does not train individuals to become useful productive members of society ..... It has no conception of the new co-operative social order which education must help to bring into existence, to replace the present competitive and inhuman regime based on exploitation and violent force."

The craft is not, to be learnt mechanically, as a mere subject of instruction, but scientifically; "the child should learn the why and wherefore of every process," says Mr. Gandhi. And it is intended to relate the craft to all the other subjects of study. School is not to be divorced from life, but so closely related to it that the outlook of co-operative citizenship which it is hoped to develop in children will be carried over into their adult working life.

It is suggested that the main basic crafts, one of which should form the foundation of every child's education, are spinning and weaving of cotton cloth, carpentry, agriculture, fruit and vegetable gardening, leather work. In some parts of the country it is expected that there will be others. In every case it is suggested that some instruction in agriculture and spinning is desirable.

THE THREE R'S

Next to the special craft is placed proper teaching of the mother tongue. This should lead to the capacity to converse freely and naturally, to speak lucidly and coherently on any current topic, to read well both silently and aloud, both prose and poetry, the capacity to use an index and to consult dictionaries and reference books, ability to write

legibly and correctly, to describe every-day events in writing, to write personal letters and suitable business communications, acquaintance with and interest in the writing of standard authors.

The teaching of mathematics is to include the usual school subjects, with an emphasis on such things as the rudiments of book-keeping, measurements of quantities and values in connection with the craft and with the school and local life.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The fourth general heading is " Social Studies." This includes a large number of items. It is to be a course in history, geography, civics and current events, including a simple outline of Indian and world history (including participation in national festivals) ; and with emphasis on the brotherhood of man and the story of world liberators. Knowledge of the public utility services is specially stressed. The purposes of this study should be

> "to develop a br. ad human interest in the progress of mankind in general and of India in particular. To develop in the pupil a proper understanding of his social and geographical environment, and to awaken the urge to improve it. To inculcate the love of the motherland, reverence for its past, and a belief in its future destiny as the home of a united co-operative society based on love, truth and justice. To develop a sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. To develop the individual and social virtues which make a man a reliable associate and trusted

neighbour. To develop mutual respect for the world-religions."

SCIENCE

Another section of the new education is headed "General Science" and includes nature study, physiology, hygiene and physical culture. Drawing and music are both given prominent place. Hindustani is to be included as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum, so that all the people of India may have a common language. In Hindustani-speaking areas all the children will be expected to learn both scripts—Hindi and Urdu—the latter being the form prevalent among Moslems.

EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The report proposes that the school day should be divided in the following proportions ; 3 hours and 20 minutes for the basic craft (as a maximum limit) ; music, drawing and arithmetic, 40 minutes ; the mother tongue, 40 minutes ; social studies and general science, 30 minutes ; physical training, 10 minutes. The school age is to be from 7 to 14—though it is expected that for the present the withdrawal of girls at 12 may have to be permitted when the parent or guardian wishes it. Earlier education, to supplement parental instruction, is held to be vitally important, but at present it is thought to be impossible for financial reasons.

It is recommended that every school should have enough land for a school garden and playground.

Considering the almost universal under-nourishment of the village children, every effort should be made to remedy the defect by providing light nourishment to all children during school hours.

Classes should not contain more than 30 children.

Examinations are to be practically abolished, in favour of a system of "simple testing," and promotion from grade to grade is to be decided by the teachers on the basis of the pupil's records.

A considerable section of the report is devoted to the training of teachers, as "perhaps the most important condition for the success of the scheme." Here too, of course, the main emphasis is put on training to teach crafts, and presenting the various subjects in the curriculum so as to make them a connected whole. Not every one who offers to become a teacher should be accepted, as "teaching requires special social and moral attitudes and qualities," and those should be selected who belong to what the psychologists call "the social type."

Teacher-training schools are to be residential institutions. Outside the training curriculum, which will cover three years, the staff is expected to encourage the growth of many and varied hobbies and social activities.

To make a beginning with this scheme as soon as possible, a short emergency course of one year's training be provided for teachers specially selected from existing schools, national institutions and ashrams.

It is recommended that experienced teachers be appointed as inspectors, but they are to be called "supervisors", and it is intended that their function shall be to encourage and help and advise the teaching staff, not merely to inspect.

ORGANISATION

The last main recommendation of the report is for the establishment of a Central Institute of Indian Education, to consist not of officials but of "persons eminent in the field of education as well as in other spheres of cultural activity." This body will be expected to advise the Provincial Education-

al Departments, to discuss educational matters generally and to organise educational research, and issue monographs and a periodical. There seems to be no reference in the report to higher education, but the need for an attack on the problem of adult education is mentioned.

This report was only issued in December 1937. It had of course, received a fair amount of criticism. There were some who criticise the whole idea, and whose primary aim was to spread literacy in India as quickly as possible, by teaching the three R's and by the methods of "mass literacy" that had been adopted recently in China, Japan or Russia.

Others, while agreeing with Mr. Gandhi that literacy is not the main end of education, were disturbed about the over-emphasis, as they think, put on the basic craft. In an appendix to the report, it was calculated that children who spin and weave for over three hours per day will be able to earn, on an average, 12 annas a week ; and immediately this suggests that, after all, the ideal of a "self-supporting" education has not been dropped. The three hours twenty minutes, which has been spoken of as a maximum, seems to be taken as the norm ; and if so, surely the schools would become worse purgatories, for the younger children especially, than any purely literary school is to-day. Moreover, is there not a grave danger that the teachers will be inclined to think not so much of educational values as of money values ; are their pupils producing their twelve-annas' worth ? Under such circumstances, one can understand the fears that have been expressed lest this new educational scheme should become a new form of child labour. If it is to be adopted in its present form, it may be hoped that it will first be tried in limited areas as an experiment, so that, if these fears are justified, they may be easily corrected. the Provincialt Ministers had not got beyond studying the scheme, but it

must be regarded as an authoritative report, which is likely to influence educational policy in India for years to come, if the Congress is in charge of the administration.

In the Central Provinces an education bill was published in September. This sought to provide a school for every village where there are 40 or more boys and girls of school-going age. It also provided that every student wishing to matriculate must first give one year's free service as a teacher and social servant, supported by the village.

The Bombay Government appointed a special committee to report on physical education, and this committee reported in December. Assuming a non-handicraft curriculum it proposed a compulsory period of physical education in all schools for 45 minutes per day, largely through organised Indian games—games that do not involve the expensive apparatus of tennis, cricket or hockey. In this connection, Gandhi's paper *Harijan* commended Mr. G.S. Dutts' Bratachari movement, which has already proved its value in recent years in Bengal.

IV

RE-ELECTION OF SUBHAS BOSE

While Sardar Patel held the reins of the Congress Ministries and encouraged wholesome plans, Subhas Bose was the President of the Indian National Congress. He had succeeded Jawaharlal in 1938. Next year he was re-elected, but his election was stoutly opposed by Mahatma Gandhi and his lieutenants and it generated considerable heat in the country.

Bose said on January 27, 1939 :—

" Another argument put forward by Sardar Patel in his telegram to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose is that re-election will be harmful to the country's cause. This argument is such an

astounding one that it hardly needs any refutation. It is erroneously urged in certain quarters that an election contest is going to take place for the first time this year. It is true that during the last few years there has been no contest. It is also true that this year the contest is going to be a spectacular one. But it would be a mistake to forget that previously election contests did take place, though not in such a spectacular manner as appears inevitable this year. It is, therefore, too much for a group within the Working Committee to claim that they will dictate the selection of the President every time. If we are to have a proper election by the delegates and not nomination by a group within the Working Committee, then it is essential that the delegates should have a free unfettered choice. At the present moment not only has the mandate gone out, but moral pressure is being brought to bear on the delegates in order to make them vote in accordance with it.

" Sardar Patel has said in his statement that the procedure adopted last year is precisely the same as this year. This is far from true. If the ruling groups within the Working Committee had made a happy choice, no contest would have taken place this year either. But if their choice or suggestion does not meet with the popular approval, should not the delegates be free to exercise their vote as they think best ?"

V

MUSLIM LEAGUE

Mohammad Ali Jinnah also was not quite satisfied with his position. His exposition of the Congress game, although purely in self-defence, was not without benefit to the forces of British Imperialism who were also waiting to make use of every grain that might be available.

During his speech on the Finance Bill in March 1939 he made the position of the League clear and once for all told the

officialdom that they could not expect the Muslims to play to their tune. "Sir, in the past," said he, "we have been following the principle that if the Government brought in a measure which was really for the good of the people, then we would support it. If it is not in the interests of the people, we would oppose it. But, sir, I see now that that policy must be altered. It really means this, that we are reduced to this position. When the Congress is right, 'support the Congress'. When the Government is right, 'support the Government'. But when we are right, nobody supports us. Sir, we feel, therefore, and I want to ask the Government, what has been your policy? What has been your attitude? And what have been your actions so far as my Party is concerned? I am glad that the Finance Member in his long speech said, 'Remember Cawnpore, remember Benares, remember Budaon,' but I can tell this House that there are many other places in this country where even the elementary rights of Muslims have been trampled upon; and what have the Government done? I remember reading, Sir, not long ago, a speech made by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel in which he said: 'There cannot be any basis for all these allegations, for all these complaints of ill-treatment, injustice, tyranny and persecution. The simple reason is that if there was any such thing, surely the Governors would have intervened!' And I think Mr. Bhulabhai Desai very recently made a speech and he relied upon the same argument, namely, that if there was an iota of truth in these baseless allegations that we were making, surely, the Governors would not have been sitting tight and would have immediately intervened."

VI

STRUGGLE BETWEEN CONGRESS AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Addressing a meeting of Gujerati and Kathiawar residents of Bombay on February 4, 1939, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said

that the present struggle in Rajkot is not between the Rajkot subjects and their Ruler, but it has become a struggle between the Congress and the British Government.

He said that neither he, nor the Congress, was anxious to make it an All-India issue, but, if ultimately the struggle assumed an All-India character, the responsibility for it would fall on the Political Department of the Government of India. The Rajkot struggle had to be resumed because of the interference of the Political Agent in Rajkot.

He had been accused, he said, of trying to make Rajkot an All-India issue but he would ask his critics to remember that he had brought about an honourable settlement which would have served as a basis for a settlement between the rulers of Indian States and their subjects. The settlement clearly recognized the limitation of both rulers and their subjects and their obligations and duties. This settlement did not meet with the approval of the Political Department.

The Sardar said that in the British Parliament responsible spokesmen had declared on behalf of the Government that the Paramount Power would not interfere if any Indian Prince who cared to give responsible Government to his subjects decided to do so. Furthermore it had been authoritatively stated that such a step would be welcomed.

The happenings in Rajkot, however, he said, proved the contrary. "The Paramount Power in that State coerced the Thakore Sahib and saw to it that the agreement arrived at between the ruler and his people was set aside."

He recapitulated the events in Rajkot since the struggle started and said that he did not enter into any settlement with the Thakore Sahib secretly, but the agreement had been made with the Thakore Sahib in Council. The Thakore Sahib himself had suggested to him that he would have the names of the seven nominees of the Sardar published at a later date

since an immediate announcement might cause some disquiet among other provinces.

Generalising the struggle now going on in several Indian Sates, Sardar Patel said that it was the inevitable reaction of the progress that had been made and was being made by the British Indian Provinces.

"The Indian National Congress was pitched against the British Imperialism and the State's people against the Princes," he said. "This struggle will proceed till such time as the States' subjects achieve their liberty and their legitimate demands.

"The State people will not be satisfied with mere self-government and control over Local Boards. They demand, rightly too, that they should have a voice in the monetary and administrative affairs of their State.

"The Congress cannot keep quiet when 25 million Indians are suffering under so many disabilities. It will be a formidable task for India to march ahead to her goal of independence with so many millions tethered to the Congress as a deadweight, " the Sardar concluded.

VII

PATEL AND BOSE

Subhas Chandra Bose crossed swords with Sardar Patel and Sardar Patel crossed swords with Mahatma Gandhi. Although the lieutenant maintained the highest respect for his chief, nevertheless his vision for the future of India was not blurred by personal motives. Sardar Patel opposed the spinning franchise programme. Sardar Patel was supporting the Congress socialists. Thus if Patel opposed Bose against Gandhiji, he was equally prepared to oppose Gandhiji against Bose. It clearly shows that Sardar Patel does not follow Mahatma Gandhi blindly. The interest of the nation is

always nearest and dearest to his heart. And yet he says, "I am a blind follower of Gandhiji !" The truth is that Sardar Patel follows Mahatma Gandhi blindly because he has found him to be, by experience, the best guide to Indian politics. Gandhiji's eyes are clearer than Patel's, as Patel's hands are stronger than Gandhiji's.

Mahatma Gandhi did retire. That is what Sardar Patel had proposed. The chief obeyed the lieutenant. It was voluntary retirement. But the chief knew that his interests in the Congress were safe. Sardar Patel guarded Gandhian philosophy like a watch-dog. Therefore, Gandhiji retired, but Gandhism still held the field from the outermost to the innermost circles of the Congress. The spinning franchise programme was adjusted to reconcile the dogged opponents.

After the Bombay Session of the Congress, election campaigns were opened all over the country. "A vote for Congress," Sardar Patel had said, "is a vote for, Gandhiji." Everywhere the Congress swept the polls except in the Punjab, Sind, Bengal and Assam. The Congress Assembly Party in 1935 was the most powerful political body in India. When the campaign started for Provincial Autonomy, the previous success was repeated, and the Congress came on the top in seven out of eleven provinces. Then there was a crisis over the power of the Governors under the Constitution Act of India, 1935. The Governors refused to yield. And the Congress refused to accept offices. "I am a most relieved man now," said Sardar Patel. He did not like job-hunting ! "Congress", he said, "has no craving for office, nor is it afraid of shouldering responsibility". At last the imperialists yielded. And the nationalists took up the reins of Government. The Congress Ministers ruled more efficiently than

the British Governors could dream of until the outbreak of war in Europe.

During the tenure of the Congress Ministers, Sardar Patel was pretty busy with his broom. He devoted much energy to cleaning up graft, slackness and political chicanery in the seven provinces. Mr. Nariman in Bombay and Dr. Khare in C.P. were sacked for abuse of political power. The News Review wrote : "Most ruthlessly unorthodox member of India's nationalistic Congress Party is its 'shadow' leader hairy Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel."

The Congress Ministries resigned over the issues of war. Britain had dragged India into war without consulting the representatives of India. It was at once an injury and an insult. Public opinion could not tolerate that. So the Congress Ministers stepped out of their shoes as disinterestedly as they had stepped in—bearing nothing but the best interests of the nation at heart.

Then there started the Quit-India movement in August, 1942. Sardar Patel declared that the conflict would be sharp and swift and end in a week. The statement quite unnerved the British bureaucracy. Patel's speech in the August session of Bombay was quite warlike. "We should rather be ruled by the dacoits", he said, "than by the British." But the Congress had not yet decided anything and the Government precipitated matters by arresting all Congress leaders and active workers. Millions and millions of brave hearts filled the jails.

The members of the Congress Working Committee were locked up in Ahmednagar Fort. Dr. Syed Mahmud told that the place of confinement is "a prison within prison" and "the first room on the right as one enters at the gate is occupied by Sardar Patel !" So he was a party whip still !

No doubt Sardar Patel is the personification of organisation. He is a taskmaster of "colleges and halls" fame. His name is 'discipline'. Unless India can create more disciplinarians like Sardar Patel, nationalism will become a solemn farce and communalism will walk abroad on stilts. Imperialism will perform, in the absence of Sardar Patels, a nationalist's part with a parrot tongue. India needs self-discipline. India needs Sardar Patels ! More Sardar Patels !

CHAPTER SEVENTH

The Moving Finger Writes On

For, in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow show,
Played in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.
'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Man for Pieces plays;
Hither and thither, moves and mates and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.
The Moving Finger writes on ; and having writ,
Moves on ; nor all thy Piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

—*Omar Khayyam*

(*Translated by Edward Fitz-Gerald*)

While directing the Congress ministries Sardar Patel worked sternly as the captain of India's nationalist destiny. In the performance of his duty he spared neither friends nor foes. He worked with a strong hand on the chequer-board of Indian politics and wrote on the sands of time like the moving finger. So much has he been unjustly criticized by the imperialists, Muslim Leaguers, Hindu Mahasabhites, for his harsh treatment of Dr. Khare, the Prime Minister of C. P.,

that it is absolutely essential to acquaint the reader with all the details of the case so that he can form his own independent opinion. It will be clear from the following pages that Sardar Patel did nothing dictatorially.

I

THE STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT SUBHAS BOSE

I issued two statements on the ministerial crisis in C.P. after the last meeting of the Working Committee held on the 23rd July and I intended to observe silence thereafter but the persistent propaganda that has been carried on against Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee and the recent utterances and publications of Dr. Khare make it imperative on my part to make a further statement. I am sorry that in doing so I shall have to refer to many unpleasant facts which will not redound to Dr. Khare's credit, but the responsibility for that will rest entirely with him.

VITUPERATION AND ABUSE

It pains me to have to remark that at least a part of the propaganda that has been going on is of an objectionable and even filthy character. Whatever our differences may be, if a controversy has to be carried out publicly, we should not give the go-by to canons of decorum and decency. What is most regrettable is that vituperation and abuse have been hurled at no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi himself and if a collection is made of the adjectives so far used, it will make the soul of every Indian revolt in utter disgust.

One cannot fail to notice that in the pro-Khare propaganda which has agitated certain parts of our country, a number of individuals and agencies have joined, who have been long known for their antipathy towards the Congress. The present incident has served as a convenient stick to beat

the Congress with and I am surprised that Congressmen who have joined hands with them do not realise that they are injuring their own institution by their action.

UNANIMOUS DECISION

I should say at the outset that the Working Committee is a body which is entirely free from provincial and communal bias and that its decision regarding Dr. Khare was unanimous. The Committee consisted among others, of a Maharashtrian gentleman, Shri Shankarrao Deo, and some members who have been personal friends of Dr. Khare and have enjoyed his confidence. Even Dr. Khare will admit that they used to support him whenever any issue arose in which he was involved. Why did these friends turn against him? The answer is simple. Dr. Khare created such a situation that it was no longer possible for even a close friend to defend his behaviour and conduct and by his actions he proved himself unfit to continue as the Premier of a Province.

PARTY LEADER'S ELECTION

The administrative unit of Central Provinces and Berar is linguistically a composite area—part of it being Marathi-speaking and the remainder Hindustani-speaking. Three of the Ministers (Shrijuts Khare, Gole and Deshmukh) were drawn from the Marathi-speaking Congress Provinces of Nagpur and Vidarbha (Berar) while the other three (Shrijuts Shukla, Mishra and Mehta) were drawn from the Hindustani-speaking Congress Province of Mahakoshal. I believe that the agitation among Maharashtrians has been considerably accentuated because they see that the Maharashtrian Premier has been deposed and his Maharashtrian colleagues turned out of office while the remaining three Mahakoshal Ministers have found seats in the new Cabinet and one of them has become the Premier. But if we are to judge the whole affair

dispassionately, we must separate the issue of Dr. Khare and the treatment meted out to him from the other issue of the composition of the new Cabinet. For the treatment meted out to Dr. Khare, the Working Committee accepts the fullest responsibility.

Regarding the composition of the new Cabinet, the responsibility rests solely with the Congress Assembly, Party of C.P. and Berar for the election of the leader and then largely with the leader for the selection of his Cabinet. When the Congress Assembly Party met on the 27th July at Wardha, it had an unaffected choice in the matter of its leader. If the Mahakoshal group managed to get one of their number elected as leader, it was because of the very principle of democracy to which the protagonists of Dr. Khare now swear allegiance. When Dr. Khare's name was proposed as leader, his supporters thought that I would rule it out of order and they would be able to nurse a grievance. But when I did not do so, his name was promptly withdrawn. Who is to be blamed if the majority of the members of the Congress Assembly Party elected Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla as leader ? Dr. Khare has to thank himself for losing the support of the Mahakoshal M. L. A.'s who had voted for him in March 1937.

EX-PREMIER'S SUPREME LACK OF DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

If one considers the whole matter dispassionately he will be forced to the conclusion that no injustice has been done to Dr. Khare, nor has he been dealt with too harshly. Nevertheless, if one argues that he has been punished too severely, I may point out that a leader has to pay the price of leadership. In the event of success, he often gets more praise and credit than he probably deserves and in the event

of failure, he frequently gets all the blame or at least much of it. No leader should, therefore, grudge if on occasions he seems to be judged harshly by his followers or by his countrymen. If a battle is won, the General becomes the Hero—if things go wrong, he is punished severely. But no General or Minister true to his salt, goes about the country declaiming against his Government or his Party, if he considers himself wronged or unfairly dealt with. In no country in the world would a deposed Premier have behaved with such supreme lack of dignity and responsibility as the ex-Premier of C.P.

EX-PREMIER'S MAHAKOSHAL SUPPORT

The composition of the C. P. and Berar Congress Assembly Party is such that the Mahakoshal members outnumber the rest. When the Party first elected its Leader in March 1937, Dr. Khare was elected Leader unanimously. The Doctor's personal following in the Party was too small to give him a majority without the Mahakoshal votes. It must, therefore, be said to the credit of the Mahakoshal members that they did not think along provincial or regional lines. So Dr. Khare started his career as Leader under favourable auspices. He took office as Premier in July 1937 and continued in that office for 12 months. Why did he lose the hold over the Party which he had in March 1937 ? Why did he antagonise the Mahakoshal members whose support had accounted for his unanimous election as Leader last year ?

PREMIER'S INCOMPETENCE AND MINISTERS' RESIGNATIONS

After the Haripura Congress in February 1938, discontent against the Premier manifested itself within the party in connection with the Shareef Affairs, Umri Murder Case, Jubbulpore Riots and other matters. Discontent began to grow steadily till it culminated in a crisis early in May. On the 7th May

Shrijut Mishra wrote to Dr. Khare, expressing his deep dissatisfaction at the manner in which the latter had handled the communal situation in Jubbulpore.

On the morning of the 8th May, consultations took place between the Ministers in the course of which the Premier's administration of his own department came in for a good deal of criticism. The same day, Ministers Gole, Shukla, Mishra and Mehta addressed a long letter to Dr. Khare resigning from the Cabinet and giving their reasons for doing so. Those reasons briefly are as follows :—

(*a*) His handling of the Home Department was characterised by weakness.

(*b*) In the matter of economy and other questions he gave in to the department against the advice of his colleagues.

(*c*) After the two Jubbulpore riots he did not handle the Police Department firmly in spite of the insistence of his colleagues.

(*d*) In several other cases mentioned in the letter he has been subservient to the Secretariate.

(*e*) On the basis of a rumour against Minister Gole in the matter of the sale of Manganese ore, he ordered the District Magistrate of Nagpur to enquire into the allegations against him.

(*f*) He made enquiries of the Deputy Commissioner of Wardha against Minister Shareef and made a report to Sardar Patel about the latter which was subsequently denied by the Deputy Commissioner.

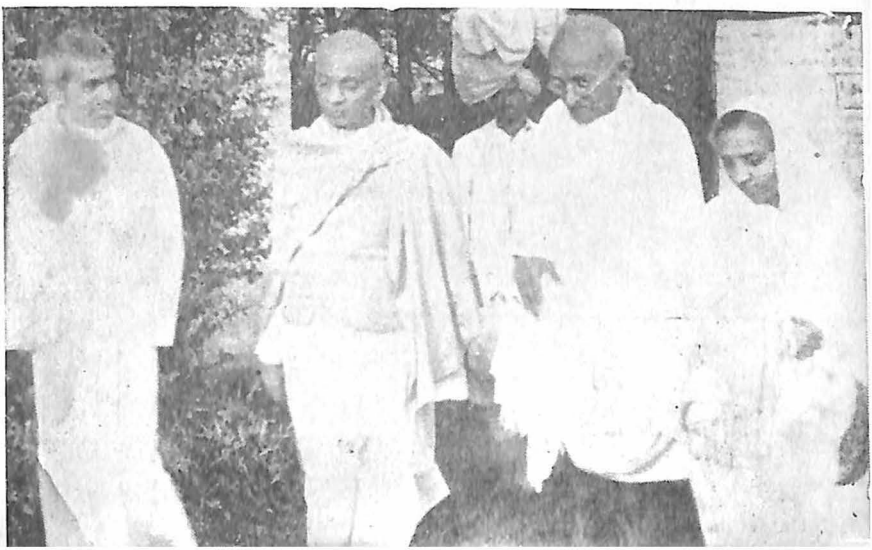
PREMIER RELIES ON BUREAUCRACY

A report of the discussions of the 8th morning was drawn up by Shrijut Deshmukh and communicated to Dr. Khare the



The Philosopher: Behind the tranquil face of Sardar Patel there is a tumultuous ocean of fathomless contemplation. Like Abraham Lincoln, he cannot rest until the Civil War of communalism comes to an end and there is "white peace" in India from Srinagar to Ceylon. This is a picture of the Simla Conference 1946.

These Rishis of India: Sardar Patel and his daughter, Miss Maniben Patel, in the company of Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Shankerrao Deo, at Panchgani. These immaculate figures are rishis of to-day. Miss Patel has sacrificed her marriage and comfortable career in order to continue working as a Secretary to her father.





CHEERIO !

Sardar Patel is seeing off Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru an[illegible] who are leaving the [illegible]

next day in the form of a letter. In this letter Shrijut Deshmukh wrote :—

"The dicussion was to find out ways and means if it was still possible to avert what might develope into a serious crisis which everybody agreed was not in the best interests of the Congress and which would do no credit to us. The discussion was quite frank, open and without prejudice or undue heat, but brought forth radical differences which disclosed that much hope of a working compromise did not exist."

* * * *

"Mr. Mishra's view was that Dr. Khare as a Premier was very weak and would not give us the lead required ; not only that but that Dr. Khare was liable to play into the hands of the bureaucracy. He mentioned that owing to this defect his own position in Jubbulpore had completely been undermined ; and the prestige of the Congress gone. His view further was that Dr. Khare took a departmental view of things and did not consult his colleagues enough and did not place confidence in them but relied on his Chief Secretary and the Head of the Department. In this latter charge, Mr. Mehta also agreed and to illustrate this he mentioned the attitude taken in the matter of the transfer of Mr. Niaz Ahmed Khan from Jubbulpore and the Economy Committee's recommendations regarding the dear district allowances of the Police as the instances of strong departmentalism. Cases about withdrawal of prosecution regarding Sheori Narayan breach of order under section 144, Cr.P.C. and giving a Counsel for defence of servants in the Bilaspur Enquiry were also mentioned as a sign of weakness."

CONFLICT NOT A CLASH OF PERSONALITIES

From the above, as also from the joint statement issued by the Ministers (including the Premier) after the Pachmarhi

Compromise to which I shall refer subsequently, it should be clear that the conflict between the Premier and the majority of his colleagues was neither personal nor provincial (or regional) in character. The conflict centered round issues which were primarily political and administrative. Dr. Khare has, no doubt, tried to explain the conflict as a clash of personalities and of provincial (or regional) feeling but his explanation is disproved by actual facts.

Dr. KHARE PERSUADES Mr. GOLE TO TAKE A PAROCHIAL VIEW

As soon as the letter of resignation was received by Dr. Khare, he realised that his position as Premier had become untenable. Perhaps, because of this, he neither submitted the resignation of his colleagues before the Governor nor called a meeting of the Party to consider it. Instead, he took two significant moves. He sent for Mr. Gole and tried to convince him that there was a conspiracy against himself on provincial (or regional) grounds. Thereupon, Mr. Gole withdrew his resignation and wrote as follows to Messrs. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta on the 8th May, explaining his withdrawal:

"This evening after I submitted my resignation along with you, I went to see Dr. Khare on his invitation. I was told by Dr. Khare that he was being opposed and going to be turned out on parochial grounds. I understand him to mean that it was a question between Hindustanis and Maharashtrians. It was also represented that it would be impossible for me to justify my position in Nagpur and Berar. I said that such a question should not be raised and if the resignation is going to have that interpretation, I should like to withdraw it, pending the decision of the Working Committee. On my mentioning that Mr. Mishra supported

him last year, he said that he had not been able to find out why Mr. Mishra was opposed to him now. Only parochial considerations have made me withdraw my resignation for the time being. Kindly excuse."……

In view of this evidence can it be urged that there was a conspiracy on the part of the Mahkoshalites to turn out a Maharashtrian Premier ? Can it not be urged on the contrary that it was the Maharashtrian Premier who first raised the provincial (or regional) issue ?

DR. KHARE'S AGREEMENT WITH HIS MINISTERS

The second move which Dr. Khare took was to write to two of the Ministers preferring certain charges against them. When they refused to be bullied and preferred counter-charges, the Doctor changed his tactics. Then there followed a peace conference and the Premier offered to agree to any compromise, "short of signing his death-warrant." An understanding was arrived at on the 9th May that Dr. Khare would continue as Premier but he would give up his portfolios and confine himself to co-ordinating the work of the Ministers. It was further agreed that this compromise would be placed before the Working Committee.

With this understanding in their pockets, the Ministers came to Bombay on the occasion of the Working Committee meeting on May 15th. In Bombay, Dr. Khare tried to back out of this understanding and sought the help of Sardar Patel for coercing his Mahakoshal colleagues to agree to his retaining his portfolios or for reshuffling his Cabinet, but the Sardar expressed his inability to help him, as on his own admission, he did not command a majority in the party. It was in Bombay that Dr. Khare informed some members of the Working Committee that he had ordered confidential enquires into the doings of some of the Ministers.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENTARY PARTY TO DECIDE

The Working Committee met at Bombay on the 15th and after careful consideration, the Committee advised the Premier to call a meeting of the C.P. Parliamentary Party and ask them to consider the situation that had arisen in regard to the Ministry and also decide the steps to be taken to meet the situation. The Committee also advised that the meeting of the Parliamentary Party to consider this question should be held under the presidentship of Shri Vallabhbhai Patel, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee.

Dr. Khare and his colleagues Shrijuts Gole and Deshmukh did not feel happy over this decision. As early as the 9th May, Dr. Deshmukh had written to the Premier as follows :—

"My definite conclusion is that no local solution of the problem is possible. If there is a solution it must come from outside."

As to Dr. Khare, he knew that in the event of a straight vote in the Party meeting, his position was precarious since he had lost the support of his Mahakoshal colleagues and he told as much to the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee at Bombay. And Shrijut Gole's feelings after the Bombay meeting of the Working Committee are clearly reflected in the letter he addressed to Sardar Patel from Pachmarhi on the 17th May, quoted hereafter.

TERMS OF PACHMARHI AGREEMENT

Pachmahi had the promise of a battle royal, but that was not fulfilled. A compromise was arrived at between the Ministers themselves. The members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee who were present at Pachmarhi had no occasion to intervene in the negotiations. Dr. Khare has stated in "My Defence" that 44 out of the 68 members present (out of a total strength of 72) decided that if there was no compromise, all the 6 including Dr. Khare must go. Assum-

ing that this statement is correct, it only shows that the majority of the members of the Party were not prepared to support him, if he decided to do away with his Mahakoshal colleagues. The atmosphere at Pachmarhi was conducive to a settlement and the following agreement was concluded:—

(1) That Dr. Khare would give up all his portfolios and a reshuffling of portfolios would take place.

(2) That Dr. Khare would confine himself to co-ordinating the work of the Ministers.

(3) That reshuffling would take place earliest before the Ministers left Pachmarhi and latest by the 1st July.

(4) That neither group would put forward anything published in the press as an excuse for backing out of the compromise.

(5) That in the event of disagreement over the reshuffling of portfolios, the matter would be referred to the Presidents of Mahakoshal, Nagpur and Vidarbha Provinces and their decision would be final, and

(6) That no enquiries by the Police into the conduct of a colleague would be made by the Prime Minister and that if there was any allegation against a Minister, it would be placed before him and his colleagues and his explanation asked for.

AGREED TO BE PREMIER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

At this late hour it is futile for Dr. Khare to say, as he has done in "My Defence", that he was coerced into this compromise. The situation at Pachmarhi, as described by the Doctor himself, was such that he had to choose between two evils, viz., to give up his Premiership or retain it at the sacrifice of his portfolios. He chose the latter course as the lesser

evil and the above compromise was the result. The compromise was easily effected because his colleagues did not desire to get rid of him as Premier but only to prevent the mishandling of the departments in his charge. This principal term of the agreement, viz., that he should give up his portfolios and be the co-ordinating Prime Minister had as a matter of fact been first mooted by him at Pachmarhi on the 9th May before he proceeded to Bombay. After the compromise, on the 25th May at Pachmarhi, the following joint statement was handed over by the Ministers to Sardar Patel :—

MINISTERS' JOINT STATEMENT TO THE SARDAR

"In response to the wishes of the Party, as expressed at its meeting on May 24, we met together and discussed all the questions of differences amongst overselves, some of them being temperamental, some due to differences of outlook and others involving question of procedure regarding the internal working of the Ministry. We are happy to report that we have been able to amicably settle all our differences and had agreed to work in a spirit of comradeship and we feel confident that we shall have your full co-operation and support."

INITIATED POLICE ENQUIRIES AGAINST COLLEAGUES

It was at Dr. Khare's request that the terms of the compromise were not published and their execution was delayed in order to avoid any appearance of his being humiliated. There is reference to the compromise in the letter written by Syt. Deshmukh to Sardar Patel, dated Pachmarhi, the 26th June, and that written by Mr. M. S. Aney to the latter, dated Yeotmal, the 8th June. In fact Dr. Khare under pressure from the Congress authority, did take some steps at first to implement the agreement, but subsequently he resiled from that position. It seems to have entered into his head that instead of giving up

his portfolios he should try to reshuffle his Cabinet and get rid of his Mahakoshal Colleagues. To this end he had tried to influence Sardar Patel in Bombay in May, but had failed. Nevertheless, his efforts continued. With a view to securing proofs of corruption against some of his colleagues, he had already initiated confidential police enquiries against them. Those members of The Working Committee who came to know of this strongly disapproved of his conduct. But their disapproval had apparently no effect on him. It may be added here that the allegations of corruption were subsequently proved to be wholly unfounded.

After the Pachmarhi compromise things improved outwardly for a while, but the trouble continued. On the one hand, the terms of the agreement were not fulfilled by the Doctor. On the other, the C.I.D. investigation, referred to above, the Premier also employed non-official agencies to carry on the investigation, as he himself told Maulana Azad and myself. The effect on the Secretariat, on the services and ultimately on the public of such unheard-of conduct on the part of a Premier can be more easily imagined than described. As a matter of fact, a high official took strong exception to such an enquiry against a serving Minister and when the Premier ordered a similar enquiry against another Minister, the authority concerned refused to issue orders himself.

ADVICE FALLEN ON DEAF EARS

If one carefully analyses the developments after Pachmarhi, one is led to the conclusion that it was Dr. Khare who tried to evade the fulfilment of the terms of the compromise. During the last week of June, when Maulana Azad and I were returning to Calcutta, we had a long talk with the Doctor in the train and tried to convince him that he should implement the compromise and drop all the underhand activity against his colleagues. We asked him point-blank as to why he did

not inform his colleagues if he heard anything against them. He replied that in that case they would be fore-warned and he would not be able to catch them. The talk which Maulana Azad and I had with him in the train had no visible effect on him and I proceeded to Calcutta with dark forebodings in our mind about the future of the Ministry. On the 8th July, Dr. Khare addressed a letter to several members of the Working Committee containing some allegations against one of the Ministers. It appeared as if the Doctor was trying to make out a case for getting rid of some of his colleagues and reshuffling the Cabinet in his own way.

Meetings of the Ministers were held, for implementing the Pachmarhi compormise, the last being on the 13th July at Nagpur, but they proved abortive. In violation of the terms of the compromise, Shriyuts Khare, Gole and Deshmukh maintained till the last that the Premier should retain the Police Portfolio. At these meetings Dr. Khare announced that he would resign and would call upon the other Ministers to do so. The Doctor wrote two letters to Sardar Patel on the 15th July, but there is no mention in either letter of his intention to resign and ask the other Ministers to do so, though in one of them he wrote :— "I shall keep you informed from time to time about the events as they occur."

MR. MEHTA'S LETTER TO DR. KHARE

Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh handed in their resignations to Dr. Khare on the 13th July. The same day Dr. Khare got into telephonic communication with Thakur Piarelal Singh of Raipur. His representative went down to Raipur on the 17th July and met the Thakur Sahib. On the 19th July the latter wrote to Dr Khare saying that he was willing to join his new Cabinet. Meanwhile, in Nagpur, the Doctor wrote to Messrs. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta asking them if they would follow the convention of resigning with the Premier in the event of

his doing so. The letter was dated the 18th July, but actually reached on the 19th afternoon. I am quoting an extract from Mr. Mehta's reply which he handed over personally to Dr. Khare on the 20th July at 11 A.M. before the latter tendered his resignation to the Governor:—

"I was surprised at receiving your confidential letter dated July 18, 1938, which was delivered to me after 12 o'clock to-day. You will remember that at my instance Mr. Gole delivered to you on Friday last (15th July) a message from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel requesting you not to take any hasty decision or step before you met him when he came to this province. After this I met you at your house on the morning of the 17th when after a discussion for over an hour, you said that you felt that you had done your colleague, Mr. Mishra, a grievous personal wrong by reporting, without any enquiry as to their truth, charges of a grave nature against him to Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Sahib without in the first instance informing him of them. You also told me that since you had asked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that you wanted the matter to be treated as dropped. Of course you denied the truth of my information that you had asked for his expulsion from the Cabinet and also that you had employed Police machinery in investigating these charges. You agreed that the gentleman in you demanded that you should apologise to Mr. Mishra for this conduct of yours. To this end you asked me to bring about a meeting which I promised to do as soon as convenient. I also told you that if the Prime Minister was prepared to make amends in this manner and bring about peace every colleague including myself was bound to give his loyal support to his Chief. In such an atmosphere of perfect understanding and cordiality I promised you my personal co-operation and said that after harmony was restored in the above manner, a helpful atmosphere might create itself in which it would

become easier to discuss the question of your being allowed to hold the Police portfolio as wanted by you. I had then told you that as two Ministers, viz. Shrijuts Shukla and Gole, would not be in the station until the 19th, things could not take a final shape till after they came in.

PREMIER VIOLATES AGREEMENT

"Firstly, I should feel obliged if you could let me know the reason which has led you to go back on our talk of Sunday morning (17th July) and to take a decision which is in direct contravention of Sardar Vallabhbhai's request which was communicated to you on Friday. Secondly, I do not understand how you hold me bound by your personal opinion, which I do not in the least share with you that 'there is no possible solution of our difficulties except the resignation of our Ministry.' Apart from your personal likes and dislikes which are your own concern, I do not see why you should be in a hurry to resign before the Working Committee, which is meeting at no distant date, hears our grievances. One of the terms of the compromise was that you would not hold the Police portfolio and now you insist on holding it. You and I had agreed upon a plan on Sunday, which you for reasons, not known to me, have now decided to discard. The other course open to all of us is that we should place the difficulty of either side before the Working Committee and take their advice. I am definitely against precipitating crisis and re-enacting the drama of Pachmarhi. What will the world say if one of us (and that too our leader) refused to honour an agreement arrived at after all the travail which Pachmarhi witnessed.

CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION

"Coming to the last portion of your letter I wish to say that the constitutional position as put by you is not an axiomatic proposition, which could be applied to the circumstances of our case. Here putting it bluntly, the remissness is not that of your

colleagues but your own. It is you who find it inconvenient to fulfil an undertaking which you gave to your colleagues. What excuse have you to break up a Ministry whose members requested you only to honour your own word? If you choose not to act up to your promise, it is for your aggrieved colleagues to make it a grievance and resign if they wish to and not for you to force them to resign for their having asked you to behave the gentleman.

"So far I have dealt with the matter independently of the great organisation under whose aegis we have chosen to accept office. Coming to our position as Ministers working under the vigilance and guidance of that organisation, we cannot act without exposing ourselves to the charge of indiscipline to anything which will prove irrevocable. The Working Committee of the Congress is meeting on the 23rd and I would once more request you to think over the matter coolly and without passion before taking any steps.

"If you still persist and place your resignation in the hands of His Excellency the Governor and call upon me to do the same, I shall be painfully compelled to resist your demand."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO CONGRESS

Sjts. Shukla and Mishra wrote to the Doctor in the same strain. Sjt. Mishra's letter was a long one, in which he also said :—

"Whatever may be your motives, let me assure you that your universally recognised convention does not frighten me nor does any provision in your Government of India Act inspire me with hope. It is odd that only in the course of a year you have managed to forget a greater convention, the All-India Congress Convention held at Delhi at which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru administered you and me and others an oath of allegiance to the great Congress organisation. The brief time of a year should not be enough to obliterate from

your memory the Congress constitution which vests the Congress Working Committee with the highest authority over Congressmen.

However, I can grant you the right to do whatever you like with yourself but you cannot call upon your colleagues to give an assurance that if you defy the Congress authority, their defiance would automatically follow. A general can make us behave like automatons in the name of discipline but a rebel should not have the audacity of expecting such a behaviour from us. Hence my refusal to resign before the matter in dispute has been decided finally by the All-India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee".

MAHAKOSHAL MINISTERS' STATEMENT.

Sjt. Shukla's and Sjt. Mehta's letters reached Dr. Khare before he handed over his resignation to the Governor on the 20th July and that of Sjt. Mishra reached him somewhat later the same day. At about noon Dr. Khare sent his resignation along with that of Sjts. Deshmukh and Gole. What followed can best be read from the statement of Messrs Shukla, Mishra and Mehta issued on the 21st July which said :—

"At 12-30 on the 20th we were informed that the Prime Minister had resigned and the Governor wanted us to meet him. At 2 P.M. we met His Excellency and told him that we could not resign until we heard from the High Command. At 10-15 one of us Mr. Mehta informed Dr. Khare that Babu Rajendra Prasad was despatching a letter for him which would arrive at midnight. Sjt. Mehta again requested him to await the letter. Thakur Chhedilal brought letters of Sjt. Rajendra Prasad to each of the Ministers and Dr. Khare at about 11-45 P.M. He immediately left for Dr. Khare's place where letters of Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh were delivered to them but everybody there refused to take Dr. Khare's letters, which in spite of all effort, nobody at his

place received during the whole night and had ultimately to be posted to-day. Though a communication from the Government House was taken in, Thakur Chhedilal's personal and insistent request to take his letter also along with it was rejected by Dr. Khare's son. Babu Rejendra Prasad had asked Dr. Khare and Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh not to press their resignation and defer all further action. He had also asked us not to submit our resignations as we were bound by discipline to take the permission of the Working Committee before taking any such step at this juncture. We accordingly informed His Excellency at 1-50 A.M. and explained our position both verbally and in writing.

As stated above we received our orders of dismissal this morning. We believe we have throughout acted in the best interests of the province and can face the Working Committee when it meets at Wardha on the 23rd with clear conscience and clean hands."

SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD'S LETTER

The letter which Sjt. Rajendra Prasad addressed separately to the Ministers on the 20th July on hearing of Dr. Khare's resignation was in substance the same.

To Dr. Khare's he wrote as follows :—

"Congressmen have accepted office under instructions from the Congress Authority, and it is obvious that such a serious step, as the resignation of the Prime Ministership should not be taken without reference to that Body. I would, therefore, advise you to await the arrival of the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the meeting of the Working Committee on the 23rd July and to withdraw your resignation. In any case you can avoid crisis by asking the Governor to stay action on it till the 23rd, if you do not feel like withdrawing it, which in my opinion would be the better course. You can realise the implications of your action and the complications it is bound to create, if you do not accede to

my request and insist on creating a crisis immediately without waiting for forty-eight hours. I hope you will not misunderstand me and take it in the friendly spirit in which it is written".

MAHAKOSHAL MINISTERS' LETTER TO GOVERNOR

On the 20th July, Sjts. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta addressed the following letter to H.H. the Governor :—

"Two of us Messrs. Shukla and Mishra have just retuned from Wardha after meeting Babu Rejendra Prasad, a Member of the All-India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee and also of the All-India Congress Working Committee. As a result of consultation with him, he has addressed a letter to Dr. Khare and Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh requesting them to take back their resignations or at least defer pressing them till the Working Committee and the A.I.C C. Parliamentary Sub-Committee meet on the 23rd in Wardha. Two of the members of the latter Committee are now on their way to Wardha and it is not possible to consult them. As we told you this afternoon our first duty is to the Congress and its organisations set up to guide the parliamentary activities of the Ministers in the different provinces where Congress Ministers are holding office. We took office at the instance of the Congress and hold it under its direction. Though we value the convention that the colleagues of the Prime Minister must resign when called upon by him to do so, we have to urge that we are not free to lay aside the responsibility which we undertook expressly under the orders of the Congress. We, therefore, request you to defer action on the resignations in your hands.

"We need not say that there have been precedents in the Congress of U.P. and Bihar when ministerial resignations were not given effect to in order to avert grave issues. In view of what we have said above, we are unable to tender our resignation."

DISMISSAL OF MINISTERS

Despite this letter, the three Mahakoshal Ministers were dismissed at about 5 A.M. on the 21st July. The same day some of the members of the new Cabinet were sworn in.

DR. KHARE'S ADMISSION OF ERROR

On the 22nd July, the members of the new Cabinet met the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and myself. After some discussion, Dr. Khare and his colleagues retired to a separate room for a consultation among themselves. When they came back Dr. Khare admitted his error and expressed his willingness to resign, in which his colleagues also joined. Thakur Piarelal Singh made a draft of the letter of resignation. This was improved upon and copied out. In the form in which it was communicated to H. E. the Governor, it read as follows:—

"Since my resignation and formation of the new Cabinet I have had an opportunity of consulting the Congress President and the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee. As a result of this consultation I have come to realise that in submitting my resignation and forming a new Cabinet I acted hastily and committed an error of judgment. I, therefore, hereby tender resignation on behalf of myself and my colleagues."

This letter was communicated by Dr. Khare himself over the telephone to the Governor's Secretary the same night.

"INACCURATE AND MISLEADING"

In "My Defence", Dr. Khare has published an account of the above meeting from the pen of Syt. Deshmukh, which is picturesque but inaccurate and misleading. To give only one instance, Syt. Deshmukh's description gives the impression that the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee had been conspiring with the Mahakoshal ex-Ministers when Dr Khare arrived. The fact is that the Mahakoshal ex-Ministers

arrived at the appointed time, while Dr. Khare and two of his colleagues were late in arriving and Syt. Deshmukh arrived about half an hour later than the Doctor. How then could Syt. Deshmukh be an eye-witness of what had happened before his arrival?

LEADER'S RESIGNATION AND PARTY MEETING

On the 23rd July, the Working Committee met at Wardha and Dr. Khare was present on invitation. The Committee indicated to him that the natural consequence of his resignation of the Premiership was that he should resign the leadership of the Assembly Party. He accepted this position but informed the Committee that after his resignation was accepted by the party, he would again put himself forward as a candidate for the same position. The Committee indicated to him that after all that had happened, it would not be proper for him to adopt such a course. Dr. Khare, however, insisted on what he called his right to contest the election for the leadership. At the instance of the Committee to consider his resignation and other cognate matters, a meeting of the Assembly party was convened by Dr. Khare and the following notice was issued by him in connection therewith :—

"A special meeting of the C.P. and Berar Congress Assembly party will be held at Wardha on Wednesday the 27th July at 9 A M. to consider :—

1. The situation created by the resignation of the Premier and his two colleagues, the dismissal of the three Mahakoshal Ministers, the reformation of the new Ministry and its subsequent resignation ;
2. Resignation of the Leader ;
3. The election of the Leader ;

"Under some misapprehension telegrams have been sent to some members of the party informing them that the above

meeting will be held at Nagpur. They will please note that the above meeting will be held at Wardha and not at Nagpur."

On the 25th July, the Doctor was again invited and once more advised to give up his intention of contesting the election but he still refused. It was then suggested to him that before making a final decision, he might consult Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Khare readily accepted the suggestion and then proceeded to Shegaon. Some members of the Committee and myself accompanied him. Mahatmaji told Dr. Khare what he thought of his action and there was a discussion at the end of which Dr. Khare remarked, "I place myself unreservedly in your hands." In this connection, I may quote in extenso the statement issued by Mahatmaji:—

MAHATMA'S STATEMENT

"I have read Dr. Khare's own defence. The only part that directly concerns me I owe it to the public to answer. It is painful for me to have to contradict Dr. Khare. He came to Shegaon voluntarily. He came to a friend. There was no protest on his part when he came. It was not without full argument that he felt convinced of the charges I brought against him. And when he realised the force of my argument he said that he placed himself unreservedly in my hands. I told him that as he had admittedly lost his balance, if he felt like consulting his friends whom I had named he should do so. There was no desperate hurry. He said that he was quite capable of deciding for himself and that there was no need to consult other friends. Then I said he had better write out himself what he had admitted. He suggested that I should draft the statement as he was no draftsman. I said nevertheless that I wanted his language. If I felt that it did not cover sufficiently what he had admitted I would revise it or add to it. After some hesitation he took pen and paper and drew up the draft. I then took it up and made the corrections and

additions. He read them twice or thrice and said that he could never admit betrayal of trust and that in any case he would not make any statement there and then but would accept my suggestion that he should consult his friends. Then 3 P. M. the following day was the time-limit fixed for receipt of his answer. I have consulted the President Mr. Subhas Bose, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who are here and they confirm my version."

DR. KHARE'S REPLY TO ADVICE

After consulting his friends at Nagpur, Dr. Khare decided not to accept the advice offered by Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee. He sent a telephonic message to that effect at about 3 P. M. on the 26th July and his letter addressed to me arrived at about 8 P. M. in which he remarked as follows:—

"I am not prepared to admit that I am guilty of any indiscipline. I am not prepared to admit that the Congress lost its prestige through my action. The draft contains some baseless insinuations about my fitness to hold positions of trust and responsibility in the Congress. I am sorry I cannot endorse them."

RESOLUTION OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

In view of his defiant attitude, there was no alternative for the Working Committee but to take the painful step of declaring its verdict on the merits of the case. The following resolution was, therefore, passed unanimously by the Working Committee:—

"After having heard the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and given anxious consideration to the circumstances that have happened since the agreement arrived at in Pachmarhi between the Ministers in the presence of the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Presidents of the three Provin-

cial Congress Committees concerned and after having had several interviews with Dr. Khare, the Working Committee have reluctantly come to the conclusion that by a series of acts committed by Dr. Khare culminating in his resignation of his charge and demanding resignation ef his colleagues of their charges. Dr. Khare was guilty of grave errors of judgment which have exposed the Congress in the C. P. to ridicule and brought down its prestige. He was also guilty of indiscipline in that he acted in spite of warnings against any precipitate action.

GUILTY OF INDISCIPLINE

"His resignation was the direct cause of the exercise for the first time since the acceptance of office by the Congress by a Governor of his special powers whereby Dr. Khare's three colleague's were dismissed. The Working Committee note with satisfaction that these three Congress Ministers showed their loyalty to the Congress by declining without instructions from the Parliamentary Sub-Committee to tender their resignations which were demanded by the Governor. Dr. Khare was further guilty of indiscipline in accepting the invitation of the Governor to form a new ministry, and contrary to practice, of which he was aware, in actually forming a new ministry and taking the oath of allegiance without reference to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee, specially when he knew that the meetings of these bodies were imminent.

UNWORTHY OF HOLDING RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS

"By all these acts of his Dr. Khare has proved himself unworthy of holding positions of responsibility in the Congress organisation. He should be so considered till by his services as a Congressman he has shown himself well balanced and capable of observing strict discipline and discharging the duties that may be undertaken by him.

"The Working Committee has also come to the conclusion that the Governor of the Central Provinces has shown by the

ugly haste with which he turned night into day and forced the crisis that has overtaken the province, that he was eager to weaken and discredit the Congress in so far as it lay in him to do so. The Working Committee hold that knowing as he must have what was going on among members of the Cabinet and the instructions of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, he ought not to have with unseemingly haste accepted the resignation of the three Ministers and demanded the resignation of the other three, dismissed them on their refusal to resign, and immediately called upon Dr. Khare to form a new Ministry and swore in the available members of the new Ministry without waiting for the meeting of the Working Committee which was imminent."

The Working Committee passed another resolution prescribing the procedure to be followed in the party meeting called for the 27th at Wardha. The resolution said: "With reference to the meeting of C. P. Congress Parliamentary Party convened at the instance of the Working Committee, the Working Committee decide that in the special circumstances that have arisen, the President do preside over the meeting, communicate to it the Resolution of the Working Committee passed on the 26th July 1938 relating to the Ministerial crisis in C. P. and conduct its proceedings. The Working Committee also decide that the meeting be held at the Navabharat Vidyalaya, Wardha."

ASSEMBLY PARTY MEETING

The Assembly party met as directed at Wardha on the 27th July at 9 A.M. with myself in the Chair without a single absentee. Those present were the members of the Assembly Party, the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, the Genera Secretary of the A. I. C. C., the President of the three Provincial Congress Committees (Mahakoshal, Nagpur and Vidarbha) who were also non-voting members of the Assembly Party and two members of the Central Assembly. In voting, however only the members of the Assembly Party participated.

Objection has been taken by some people to the presence of the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee at the meeting. Such objection is childish. They are, of course, entitled to be present at such function and apart from their right, no objection could be taken when the Chairman of the meeting had no objection to their presence. If anybody maintains that their presence influenced the voting, he certainly has a poor opinion of the M. L. A's of C. P.

REAL STORY OF THE PARTY MEETING

The proceedings began with my reading the resolution of the Working Committee. I then placed the resignation of Dr. Khare from the leadership of the Party before the meeting and it was accepted unanimously. Next I called upon the members to elect their new leader. One member proposed the name of Dr. Khare and it was seconded. A ruling was then asked for if his name could be proposed. I pointed out that the resolution of the Working Committee was before the meeting and if in the face of that Dr. Khare's name was proposed, I would not stand in the way and would allow voting thereon. On my giving this ruling, the Doctor's name was promptly withdrawn.

Other names proposed for the leadership at the Party meeting were those of Shrijuts Jajuji, Ravi Shankar Shukla, Gupta, Khandekar, Mehta and Ram Rao Deshmukh.

I must here mention that in the course of the proceedings, a motion to adjourn the meeting for four hours was moved, but it was defeated by majority. There was another resolution to the effect that the Working Committee which enjoyed the confidence of the Party, should nominate the leader. A member moved a modified proposal to the effect that the Party should elect a panel of three or four and the Working Committee should select one out of the Panel as leader. Thereupon it was announced on behalf of the Working Committee that it declined

to take upon itself the responsibility of nominating a leader or even of expressing any opinion or preference in that connection and left it entirely to the choice of the Party. Another important resolution was moved by Mr. Kallappa that in view of the differences between the two groups of Ministers, none of the six persons whose differences had led to the ministerial crisis be appointed as the leader of the Party. The resolution was defeated, 25 voting for and 42 against.

Regarding the nomination, as Jajuji's consent had not been taken, his name was withdrawn. Sjts. Gupta, Khandekar and Mehta declined to stand. Thus there remained two candidates in the field, Shrijuts Shukla and Deshmukh. Votes were taken and the former got 47, the latter 12, while 13 members remained neutral. So Sjt. Shukla was declared as the duly elected leader of the C. P. and Berar Assembly Party.

After Sjt. Ravi Shankar Shukla was elected leader, he had consultations with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the personnel of his Cabinet was then decided upon.

The new Ministers took the oath of Office on the 29th July, 1938.

I have narrated in brief the events as they occurred. I should now, deal with some of the allegations made by Dr. Khare, but before I do so, I shall dispose of a fundamental fallacy underlying the arguments put forward by, or on behalf of the Ex-Premier.

He has urged that he stood for Parliamentary convention and democracy, while the "High Command", or some members of it interfered with his legitimate rights. The fact is that Congress members of all Legislatures in India were set up by the Congress to contest the elections. Their candidature was approved by the All-India Parliamentary Sub-Committee in the last instance. Before they could be adopted as Congress candidates,

they signed the Congress pledge which contained the following among other clauses:—

(e) I further declare that I will follow the principles and policy laid down by the Congress or by any competent authority on its behalf and will conform to the rules and directions duly issued from time to time, as well as to the instructions issued by the party organisation in the Assembly for the guidance of the members thereof.

(f) I also undertake to resign my seat whenever I am called upon to do so by competent Congress authority.

In the light of this pledge to which every Congress candidate solemnly put down his signature, there can be no doubt as to whom Congress M. L. A.'s owe allegiance to. This allegiance was re-affirmed after election when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, then President of the Congress, administered the oath of allegience to the Congress M. L. A's at the All-India Convention held at Delhi in March 1937.

MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE TO CONGRESS FIRST

It should be clear that when Congress M. L. A.s become Ministers or Prime Ministers, their responsibility as Congressmen increases and for their behaviour and conduct as Ministers, they are answerable to the great organization to which they belong, and, therefore, to its highest executive, the Working Committee as also to its Sub-Committee or Sub-Committees. Neither a Minister nor a Prime Minister can escape from his allegiance to the Congress and its executive on false plea of Parliamentary convention and democracy.

Dr. Khare's protagonists have been trying to confuse the issue as to whom the Ministers and Prime Ministers are responsible to. In this connection, I cannot do better than quote the illuminating statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

"They are responsible to their electorates, to their party in the legislature, to the Provincial Congress Committee and its

executive, to the Working Committee and to the All-India Congress Committee. Even local Congress Committees think it their function to have their say in the work of the Provincial Government. All this sounds very complicated and confusing and yet in reality it is not so. What is the responsibility to the electorates ? That electorate plumped for the Congress candidates not of their individual merits, but because they represented the Congress and its programme. Nothing could be clearer than this. The vote was for the Congress. Every single Congress member of the legislature today, if he was unwise enough to backslide and seek election in opposition to the Congress would be defeated by a Congress candidate, whoever he might be. It is to the Congress as a whole that the electorate gave allegiance, and it is the Congress that is responsible to the electorate. The Ministers and the Congress Parties in the legislature are in their turn responsible to the Congress, and only through it to the electorate.

WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Congress thought, it functions through a host of Committees, is essentially one and has one basic policy. There are no conflicting allegiances for Congress Ministers or Congress Parties in the legislatures That basic policy is laid down by he annual session, and it is interpreted and implimented by the A. I. C. C. The Working Committee, as the executive of the Congress, is charged with the carrying out of this policy."

I shall now deal with the question as to relations between the Congress Assembly Parties and Congress Ministers on the one side and the Congress and its organs on the other. The All-India organs of the Congress, *viz.*, the All-India Congress Committee and its Executive, the Working Committee and its Sub-Committees are there to see that the policy and programme of Congress are carried out by the Congress Assembly Parties and Congress Ministries all over the country and that nothing is done to impair the solidarity, purity

and prestige of the Congress organization. The policy and programme of the Congress are laid down in the election manifesto of the Congress and in the resolution subsequently adopted by the Congress, the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee. As the All-India Congress Committee meets only occasionally, the responsibility of helping, guiding and controlling the Assembly parties and the Ministries devolve on the Working Committee and its appropriate Sub-Committee. There can be no doubt that the Working Committee and its appropriate Sub-Committee can intervene in the work of Assembly Parties or Ministries at any time or at any stage on any question affecting the policy and programme of the Congress or its solidarity, purity and prestige. Naturally, where there is the possibility of a conflict between the British Government or the Governor on the one side, and the Ministries on the other, it becomes more imperative for the Working Committee and its appropriate Sub-Committee to help, guide and control the latter. This happened when a conflict arose in U. P. and Bihar over the release of political prisoners and in Orissa over the Acting Governorship.

A TWOFOLD TASK

In view of the responsibility which devolves on the All-India Congress Committee, the Working Committee, and its Sub-Committee (or Sub-Committees) for executing the Congres policy and programme and for maintaining the solidarity, purity and prestige of the Congress organization, it follows that they have to perform a twofold task. They have to effect co-ordination between the Assembly Parties and Ministries in the different provinces and also to see that the Party and the Ministry function properly in each province. In the event of splits, dissensions or fissiparous tendencies appearing within a Congress Assembly Party or a Congress Ministry, the higher authority of the Congress has to step in without delay. It would be

altogether erroneous to hold that the intervention of the higher authority should be confined to questions of policy and programme. The execution of the Congress policy and programme presupposes and necessitates the existence of a well-disciplined Congress Party. It is, therefore, necessary for the higher authority of the Congress to see that in every Assembly Party and in every Ministry, the solidarity, purity and prestige of the Congress are maintained. Where personal dissentions or inter-Provincial disputes appear, only the higher authority of the Congress can bring about amity and concord. In this respect the responsibility of the Congress authority is very great in composite provinces like C. P. and Berar. It should be noted in this connection that in Bihar when the Bihari Bengali controversy was raised, the Working Committee took cognisance of it straight-away, without waiting for the Bihar Ministry or the Bihar Assembly Party to handle the matter. It is in pursuance of its object of maintaining the solidarity, purity and prestige of the Congress and of enforcing discipline or restoring amity within the Congress organization that the Working Committee has often to depute its own agent to different parts of the country as arbitrator or supervisor or even as the Chairman of a meeting in which there is a serious dissension or dispute. In the case of the meetings of the C. P. Assembly Party on the 24th May at Pachmarhi and on the 27th July at Wardha, the Working Committee had to depute a chairman because there were serious dissensions. In the case of the latter meeting, an outside Chairman was all the more necessary in view of the fact that the leader who usually presides at such party meetings had resigned and his conduct was in question.

PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF GOVERNOR

In this connection, I should like to strike a note of warning for Congressmen all over the country. There is an expectation in certain British circles that with the advent of Pro-

vincial Autonomy in India, our movement will be permanently side-tracked in the direction of constitutionalism, that inter-provincial disputes will arise and that in composite provinces like C.P. or Bombay or Madras, internal dissensions will appear. There is no doubt that in composite provinces such a risk is great and greater vilgilance will, therefore, be necessary on our part so that we may not play into the hands of our opponents, whether they be Indians or Britishers. So far as the recent C. P. crisis is concerned, it appears that Dr. Khare played into the hands of the Governor consciously or unconsciously and the Governor on his part exploited the dissensions among the members of the previous Congress Cabinet.

PREMIER'S AUTHORITY DESCRIBED

Dr. Khare has been claiming that as Prime Minister he was free to resign and reconstitute his Cabinet without any reference to the Working Committee or the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Such a claim is totally belied by his behaviour and conduct between July 1937 and July 1938, when he was referring to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, various questions, important and unimportant, which I shall refer to hereafter. In the light of this, the serious steps he took on the 20th and 21st July in resigning and in reforming his Cabinet without any reference to the Working Committee or the Parliamentary Sub-Committee appear totally inexplicable and unjustifiable.

Dr. Khare's further claim that he is entitled to a free hand in selecting his Cabinet is also unfounded. I shall show hereafter that he did not have this free choice in July 1937 when he first formed his Cabinet. As a matter of fact no Congress Premier formed his Cabinet without consultations with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. The Parliamentary Sub-

Committee and its superior body the Working Committee have the right to interfere in the selection of Congress Ministers and have made use of it in the past.

EX-PREMIER TOOK GOVERNOR'S HELP

What happened to the C.P., when differences arose within the Cabinet, was that Dr. Khare forgetting his responsibility to the Congress availed himself of the power and assistance of the Governor in order to turn out some of his colleagues and then in order to form a new Cabinet without any reference to the Congress authority. His blame consisted in the fact that he not only set at naught the authority of the Congress but took the help of the Governor in order to do so and he now seeks to justify himself on the plea of parliamentary convention and democracy.

FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Besides the above arguments, the following facts, including the conduct of Dr. Khare between March 1937 and July 1938, furnish the most telling criticism of the stand that he has now taken.

(*a*) On 3rd April 1937, Sardar Patel writes to Dr. Khare :—"You must keep me in touch with what is happening in your province so as to enable me to issue instructions to you for your guidance, if necessary."

(*b*) On the 7th April, 1937, in regard to holding of a Provincial Convention Dr. Khare wrote to Sardar Patel :—"I assure you that any further instructions which you will be pleased to issue will be faithfully followed. A line in reply will not only highly oblige, but will galvanise into activity some who may be indolent and indifferent."

(*c*) Dr. Khare has probably forgotten how the first Cabinet was formed in July 1937. In his letter No. 156, dated Bombay, the 10th July, 1937, Sardar Patel wrote to him :—

"I understand from press reports appearing in the morning papers after my arrival here that you will soon be called by the Governor and asked to form the Ministry as the intetrim Ministry has resigned. You had talked to me about the formation of the Ministry of your Province at Wardha on the 7th but our talk was inconclusive, as we had no sufficient data. Now that the time has come near, you will consult your colleagues and come down to Bombay as soon as possible for the final selection of the personnel.....as soon as you are able to form tentative proposals for final approval—please communicate to me by wire."

SARDAR PATEL'S ADVICE SOUGHT

(*d*) On the 21st July 1937, Dr. Khare, then Premier wrote to Sardar Patel from Nagpur as follows :—"Many many thanks for your letter promising me full sympathy and support from the centre. I want your advice on certain points which I mention below :—

1. House and Car allowances to Ministers.
2. Allowances for Members of the Assembly.
3. The question of appointing Parliamentary Secretaries.
4. Salary of Speaker and Deputy Speaker."

(*e*) In his letter No. 190, dated 30th July, 1937, Sardar Patel wrote to Dr. Khare as follows :—

"I am enclosing herewith a copy of the draft instructions prepared by me in consultation with Gandhiji. They are subject to the approval of our President. But they are sent to you in advance for your guidance and the final instructions will be sent to you after I receive the approval from our President."

WORKING COMMITTEE'S INTERVENTION

(*f*) When Dr. Khare wanted to take disciplinary action

against Mr. Agnibhoj, a Harijan member of the Assembly, for his anti-Congress utterances, he wrote to the Sardar on November 22, 1927 for his instructions. (The same Mr. Agnibhoj was a member of the Doctor's new and short-lived Cabinet).

(*g*) In the Shareef affair, despite the Governor's sanction to the grant of clemency to Jafar Hussain and the decision of the Cabinet of the Congress Assembly Party to condone Mr. Shareef's action, the Working Committee took a different view and Mr. Shareef had to resign ultimately. But when he did so, the ex-Premier never thought of revolting against the Working Committee.

(*h*) On the 8th May, 1938, when four of his colleagues (Sjts. Gole, Shukla, Mishra and Mehta) submitted their resignation to Dr. Khare, the latter did not take any action himself, but requested the Parliamentary Sub-Committee to consider the matter. When the matter was placed before the Working Committee at Bombay it was decided to refer the matter to the Congress Assembly Party. When the matter was thus referred to the Congress Assembly Party, Dr. Khare and Shrijuts Gole and Deshmukh were dissatisfied with the decision, as they wanted the Working Committee to deal with the matter. As a matter of fact, Shri Gole wrote to Sardar Patel from Pachmarhi on the 17th May as follows :—

"Although I did not want to take part in discussions that were going on before the Working Committee regarding the affairs of the C.P. Ministry, I must inform you that I was very much upset by the decision of the Working Committee yesterday which left the matter to be decided by the Party Meeting. The Ministers, out of their choice, had decided to submit their differences to the Working Committee and this meant that they were bound to abide by the decision of the Working Committee whatever it might be. After hearing the

views of the Ministers in this behalf, the Working Committee instead of giving an opinion, shelved the matter and entrusted it to the Party for decision as to what should be done at this stage. Personally, I do not like that the Ministers' merits and demerits should be discussed in a Party Meeting. If this is allowed, the position of any Minister before the Party will be absolutely ridiculous henceforward. For the last ten months, although the Party members brought much pressure to bear upon the Ministers and wanted them to do as the Party members pleased, the Ministers could very well point their finger to the Working Committee and say that without the permission of the Working Committee, they were unable to do anything in certain matters. The result of the decision of the Working Committee yesterday is that hereafter the Members of the Congress Party will insist upon their will being carried out by the Ministers and the position of the Ministers will be absolutely pitiable.

"I wanted to speak this out before the Working Committee yesterday, but as I did not like to take part in the discussion, I kept mum hoping that some of my colleagues would place this point of view before the Working Committee. However, as they did not do so, I thought it my duty just to place before you my views regarding the step that is contemplated, *viz.*, that of holding a meeting of the party and taking its decision upon the doing of the Ministry. It would have kept up the dignity of the Ministers if the Working Committee had given a decision, one way or the other, so that the position of the Working Committee also as a superior body would have been maintained. The result of yesterday's decision would seem to be that the Working Committee has divested itself of its superior powers and placed them in the hands of the Congress party in the Assembly. This leaves the Ministers without any protection hereafter."

DOCTOR'S SURPRISING CHANGE

(*i*) The Doctor wanted to take steps against one of his colleagues, Sjt. Mishra. But instead of doing so himself he wrote to the Sardar on the 9th July, 1938 asking for his advice and instructions. What happened in the course of the next ten days to make him alter his attitude completely, one is at a loss to understand.

(*j*) On the 15th July the ex-Premier wrote to Sardar Patel from Nagpur as follows:— "I have no alternative under the circumstances except to place the matter of redistribution of portfolios in your hands. As there are certain matters in respect of which I have definite views affecting future smooth working of the Ministry in general and its prime Minister in particular, I would most humbly and sincerely request you that I should be given an opportunity to place them before you before decision is reached." He ended his letter by saying "I shall keep you informed from time to time about the events as they occur." (Six days after this he resigned but did not care to inform the Sardar till after his resignation).

(*k*) Again on the 15th July, Dr. Khare wrote to the Sardar from Nagpur as follows:— "I am sorry that you should have construed my letter as an intention on my part to call for immediate resignation of my colleague Shri Mishra and that too without giving him an opportunity to explain the acts which went against him. I do not also intend to impeach Shri Mishra before the Working Committee unless you permitted me to do so. Since the trouble in May last, I thought it best to keep you informed about things which are now coming to my notice, leaving you to give directions as you think best."

DR. KHARE'S STATEMENT AFTER CRISIS

(*l*) After the crisis of the 20th July, Dr. Khare issued a statement on the 25th July which said *inter alia*:—

> "I also wish to make it clear that if the Congress High Command is prepared to decide that the whole of the first Congress Cabinet Ministers should go and that new six Congress M.L.As. should be selected to form a new Cabinet, I will be willing to accept that proposition." (It appeared that Dr. Khare's complaint is that three Ministers of the old Cabinet have been eliminated, but he would have no objection if all six were removed).

PREMIER'S FREEDOM TO RESIGN

In the face of all the above facts and arguments it is utterly futile for the ex-Premier to argue that the dismissal of three Ministers was a routine matter and that he could act independently of the Working Committee and the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. This excuse is evidently an afterthought which should not deceive anybody. Dr. Khare knows, as much as any other Congress Premier knows, that no Congress Premier can tender his resignation to the Governor behind the back of the Working Committee and the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. In his letter No. 351, dated the 11th July, to which the Doctor replied on the 15th July, Sardar Patel wrote to him, saying, "I was surprised to hear that you were going to ask for Shri Mishra's resignation straightaway by writing to him on three charges. You were well advised by your friends not to do so and thus saving you from committing a grave act of indiscretion. You know that the Working Committee is meeting on the 23rd July at Wardha. I am acquainting Maulana Abul Kalam Azad of the developments that have taken place since Pachmarhi settlement and you must leave the

final decision in this matter to the judgment of the Working Committee."

Thus Dr. Khare had clear instructions from the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee not to force the resignation of his colleagues.

On the 17th July, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj who was then at Sikar in Jaipur State, sent the following telegram to the Doctor:— "Dr. Khare, Premier, Nagpur:— Received yours of sixteenth. Much worried crisis report stop realise my presence essential there this juncture but compelled stay here in view critical situation Sikar strongly advise act according Maulana's Vallabhabhai's Rajendrababu's advice—Jamnalal"

SARDAR PATEL HELPED DR. KHARE

Dr. Khare has accused Sardar Patel of bias against him. Bnt this is the letter which the Sardar addressed him on the 16th July, 1937 (Letter No. 168).

"I have received your wire about the appointment of Ministers. I am glad to learn that you have made a good start and we hope your Ministry have been well received in the country, particularly in your province. I hope you will get all the co-operation that you deserve in this great experiment from all sections of the people. You have of course all the good wishes from us and you may count upon full support and sympathy from the centre....."

Further, there is documentary evidence to show that the Sardar tried his level best to save Dr. Khare by making him fulfil the terms of the Pachmarhi compromise. He secured services of the Minister Deshmukh and Sjt. Aney in this connection and both of them did their best. Moreover, from the extract of the correspondence between the Sardar and

Dr. Khare published above, it does not appear that their relations were anything but cordial.

MAULANA AZAD'S LETTER

Dr. Khare has quoted a small extract from a letter of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad addressed to him dated the 14th July. I am astonished at the inference the Doctor has drawn, therefrom, *viz.*, that there was hint that the province would be declared a non-Congress province. It is an after-thought for the Doctor to declare that this hint so frightened him that he precipitated a political crisis in the province. After all Dr. Khare was not the only man in the Congress who was interested in seeing that C.P. and Berar did not become a non-Congress province. A perusal of the entire letter of the Maulana will give an impression quite different from what Dr. Khare has given us. It should be noted that Maulana's letter was written in reply to that of the Doctor, dated the 9th July, containing some accusations against Sjt. Mishra. The following is Maulana Sahib's letter :—

"Your letter of the 9th July to hand. You have written two things about Mr. Mishra which in my opinion do not raise any serious allegations against him. They certainly need an explanation from him. It is your duty as a Premier to take notice of objectionable actions of your colleagues and to get the point cleared. If it is cleared, so much the better, otherwise you should make them understand your point of view or if need be, you may bring it to the notice of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Of course, there should be no reservation between you and your colleagues and no misunderstanding or doubt should find its way between yourselves. Nothing but a deadlock will be created if such an unfortunate state of affairs prevail.

We made our final attempt to create a spirit of union and confidence amongst yourselves at Pachmarhi. It would

be greately regretted if the old conditions do not change. The necessary result of this would be to end the C.P. Ministry for good, as I think the Congress will not undertake to continue its Ministry there, considering the general conditions of the province. I had advised you to forgive and forget the past and work in a spirit of mutual confidence according to the decision of Pachmarhi. You should not give a chance of a complaint which may be construed to mean that you do not wish to work with your colleagues with clear breast.

No misunderstanding will be possible if your colleagues also work in the same spirit. But in case of their default they will be responsible for it, and your position as a Prime Minister will be strengthened, if you do not wish to work with them and take others in their place..... ."

In "My Defence" referring to the meeting of the 22nd July, Dr. Khare has stated that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad gave him hopes that in case the former resigned voluntarily, the road would be clear for a consideration of the whole matter on its merits. He wishes us to believe that he inferred therefrom that his future as Premier would be safe. No such hope or even hint was given by the Maulana. What he had actually said in Urdu was that Dr. Khare had raised a wall in front of us. That wall would have to be demolished and the road made clear, either by the Working Committee or by the Doctor himself and he preferred the latter. The implication was that if the Doctor did not resign himself the Working Committee would have to make him do so.

PRESIDENT TRIES TO PERSUADE DR. KHARE

It appears from what has so far appeared in the Press that our anxiety to persuade Dr. Khare to fall in with our advice has been completely misunderstood. When the Working Committee met on the 23rd July, it took a very serious view of

Dr. Khare's conduct from the very beginning. It was also felt that if the Working Committee were left to consider the matter on its merits, strong measures would have to be taken against the Doctor. The only way to avoid that, was to persuade Dr. Khare to reconsider his actions and pass judgment on himself. It was apparent that he did not view his own actions in the same light in which others did and it was, therefore necessary to bring him round to a dispassionate and objective consideration of his own actions. The meeting on the 22nd July had raised hopes in our mind that he would perhaps be responsive to our suggestions. With that feeling we invited him to the Working Committee on the 23rd and 25th July and accompanied him to Shegaon for a discussion with Mahatma Gandhi. At first he seemed to fall in with Gandhiji's suggestions, but later on, he resiled from that position.and said that he wanted time to consult his Nagpur friends. When we were returning to Wardha from Shegaon, I pressed him to accept Gandhiji's advice as that would be in the best interests of not only the Congress but also of himself. Later in the night I met Dr. Khare himself and this time alone. Even then I persuaded him to accept our advice and not to be led away by the advice of his other friends. I went on so far as to assure him that if he followed our advice, the Workings Committee would respond with a resolution appreciating hii. action. After surrendering his position voluntarily if he cont nued to work loyally as a Congress-man, nothing could prevent his coming to the forefront again after some time. I assured him that the Working Committee had no intention of being vindictive. But at the present moment since he had erred grievously he had to pay for it and that he should take the entire episode in a sporting manner.

It will be realised that the easiest thing for us to do was to consider the whole matter judicially in the Working Committee and pass judgment on Dr. Khare. That unpleasant step

we were anxious to avoid and we would actually have avoided if only the Doctor had responded to our suggestions. I am pained to find that he has wilfully distorted and misrepresented my friendly gesture to him on the night of the 25th July. What would have happened if he had accepted our advice? He would still have been treated with consideration and regard by every Congressman and his advice would naturally have been sought in many matters. To say this was not to offer a bait but to point out the consequences of a particular step. To misunderstand this gesture reflects a warped condition of the mind.

NAGPUR-VIDARBHA-MAHAKOSHAL JOINT BOARD

Much is made by Dr. Khare of the activities of the Nagpur-Vidarbha-Mahakoshal Joint Board. He alleges that this Board was established with the object of removing Dr. Khare from the Premiership and he calls it a "Control Board." This allegation has no foundation at all. Dr. Khare himself admits in his statement that the idea of having a Joint Board was his own. Long before the Pachmarhi compromise, the Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee had passed a resolution for the creation of a Joint Board of the three provinces. There was a hitch between the three Provincial Congress Committees as regards the representation from every Province on the Board. Therefore the matter was delayed. At Pachmarhi the three Provincial Presidents had an opportunity of meeting personally and the question was discussed there. It was decided to form an Advisory Board consisting of three Presidents and one member elected by every Provincial Congress Committee. The object of the Board, as directed upon, was to help and advise the Ministry in its working and, if need be, to keep the Parliamentary Sub-Committee informed of the working of Ministry. The composition and object of the Board were announced in the papers and were intimated to all the three Provincial Congress Committees.

In spite of all this some friends and some papers styled it as a "Control Board" and tried to create misunderstanding. Immediately statements were issued by Maulana Azad and Sjt. Biyani, the Secretary of the Board, saying that the Board was an Advisory and not a Control Board. The Board has not taken sides at all in the Khare dispute. After Pachmarhi compromise when the question of election of one member on this Board was before the Nagpur P. C. C. Meeting Dr. Khare took keen interest in the direction.

From the Doctor's remarks in "My Defence," one would infer that he was suspicious of the Board. But on the 21st May, he sent the following wire to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, one of the members of the Board:—

"Ministerial crisis your help and presence solicited Khare."

On the 16th July, he wrote to another member, Sjt. Brijlal Biyani of Akola as follows :—

"I have to inform you that we have unfortunately not come to any agreement regarding the reshufflin: of portfolios. I am told that you were at Nagpur day before yesterday, but I regret I could not see you. I s all be glad if you could render any help in solving the tangle."

PLEA OF COERCION, A DOUBLE-EDGED WEAPON

Dr. Khare has complained that he was a victim of coercion at the hands of the members of the Working Committee. He was victim at Pachmarhi on the 24th and 25th May, at Wardha on the 24th July and at Shegaon on the 25th July At Pachmarhi he was forced to enter into a compromise. At Wardha he was coerced into resigning his Premiership. At Shegaon he was going to be coerced but he escaped. The plea of coercion is, however, a double-edged weapon. It may be useful in explaining away certain things, but it paints one as a weakling.

How can people seriously believe that the Ex-Premier of C. P. and Berar was repeatedly coerced into doing what he did not agree to? To believe that would be tantamount to convicting him of utter incompetency.

Dr. KHARE'S CONTRADICTING ACTIONS

The Doctor has said that the resignation of the Ministry was inevitable because he could not get on with three of his colleagues (*viz.* Sjts. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta). How was it then that he offered a seat in his new Cabinet to Sjt. Mehta on the 20th July? How was it that he declared in the press statement on the 25th July:

"I wish to assure the general public and members of the Congress Assembly Party that it was my intention to advise the Governor to appoint some of the dismissed ministers, if I get an opportunity to form a new Ministry."

"Dr. Khare has had the audacity to accuse the High Command of nepotism and has threatened exposure. He will be doing the greatest service to the Congress if he loses no time in publishing whatever materials he has about the nepotism of the High Command."

SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD HAD RIGHT TO INTERFERE

Objection has been taken by the ex-Premier to Dr. Rajendra Prasad's writing to him on the 20th July advising him not to take any hasty action. But he conveniently forgets that he [latter] is an ex-President of the Congress, a very prominent member of the Working Committee and member of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. In an emergency when the other two members were away, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had every right to act on behalf of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. In this particular case, what he did had the fullest support of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the

Working Committee. In this connection, I am quoting a few lines from a letter which Dr. Khare wrote to Dr. Rajendra Prasad on the 9th May:—

"I further feel that it was my bounden duty to bring these circumstances to your notice. I have already indicated what my views in the matter are and shall be highly obliged if you will kindly indicate to me whether I should take any steps in this matter and if so, what those steps should be."

If Dr. Rajendra Prasad be nobody in Dr. Khare's eyes, why did he voluntarily write to the former for his instructions.

"REBEL" PREMIER CANNOT EXPECT LOYALTY

The ex-Premier has argued that his Mahakoshal colleagues were not loyal to him inasmuch as they did not resign with him on the 20th July. It has not struck him that when he himself was not loyal to his higher authorities, he could not expect his colleagues to be loyal to him. The Ministers would certainly have put themselves in the wrong if they had blindly followed a rebel Premier. Besides, they had clear instructions from Dr. Rajendra Prasad not to submit their resignation till the Working Committee met and decided the question. To Dr. Khare and his own Maharashtrian colleagues Dr. Rajendra Prasad gave instructions to withdraw their resignations. The latter group of ministers did not obey his instructions but the former group did. Because of this the Working Committee in the resolution expressed satisfaction at the conduct of the former group.

PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE AND MINITTER

The Doctor has complained that Dr. Rajendra Prasad did not telephone to him personally on the 20th July. It was his duty to approach the members of the Parliamentay Sub-Committee and take their instructions on such an important matter, even if they did not communicate with him, the

ex-Premier has expressed resentment that any member of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee should have direct dealings with a Minister. It is clear that he has an exaggerated notion of his own importance. It is not only not objectionable, but positively desirable, that the men at the top should have direct contact with those under them. The analogy of the Governor does not apply at all in this case. The Governor is an outsider and we apprehend that he may seek to create dissensions among us. Hence in this case it would be desirable for the Ministers to avoid meeting the Governor separately as far as possible. But not so in case of the Congress leaders.

MINISTERS NOT CREATURES OF PREMIER

So far as the C. P. Ministers are concerned, ever since the unfortunate split occurred, it has been necessary for the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee to intervene often in the affairs of the Ministers. At Pachmarhi the two groups in the Cabinet came to a compromise. In the event of a breach of the compromise, it was open to either group to approach the higher authorities, *viz.*, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee. The ex-Premier arrogates too much to himself when he regards his Ministers as his creatures and regards them as untouchables to the higher authorities. The higher authorities have had to interfere in the relation between the Prime Minister and his colleagues, because those relations have not been normal and he could not manage his team properly. And Dr. Khare has conveniently forgotten that there have been occasions when he himself has sought the interference of the higher authorities in his Ministerial affairs.

WHY Dr. KHARE'S COLLEAGUES WERE NOT LOYAL

The ex-Premier has complained that his Ministerial colleagues were submissive to him in May, but rebellious in July. The reason for this is not far to seek. In May, he was still

acting in accordance with Congress discipline and his colleagues were therefore bound to follow him. In July, the moment he became a rebel, he forfeited the right to demand obedience from his colleagues and subordinates. When his colleagues refused to resign at his bidding in July, they made it perfectly clear at the time that they would do so, the moment they had orders from the parliamentary Sub-Committee or the Working Committee. The Doctor should have considered that when he could not make use of the resignations in May, he could not do so in July, without reference to his higher authorities.

He is completely mistaken in his assertion that the Bihar and U. P. Ministries resigned in February without the permission of the Working Committee. On the contrary, the Working Committee which met at Wardha in February before the Haripura Congress gave the lead which these two Ministries followed.

"UNDERHAND" ENQUIRIES AGAINST COLLEAGUES

Dr. Khare's defence consists in playing the part of injured innocence. There was an intrigue to drive him out—he says. But the question is—who could have driven him out, if he had implemented the Pachmarhi compromise and had dropped the underhand enquiries against his colleagues? He says that the Mahakoshal Ministers failed to depose him at Pachmarhi. If so, it is equally true that he also failed to turn them out. He complains in one place that the Mahakoshal leaders were regionally-minded (provincial). In the same breath he thanks the Mahakoshal M.L.As. for rising above regional and parochial considerations. Which statement are we to accept?

The ex-Premier has stated that the Mahakoshal Ministers formed a group in the Cabinet. The fact, however, is that when the revolt first manifested itself early in May, it was non-provincial (or non-regional) in character. Sjt. Gole was

one of the Ministers who resigned but it was the Premier who raised the provincial issue and won him over on that ground.

HIS OWN VERSION

The Doctor's position inside the Congress, according to his own version, was as follows:—

The Working Committee was against him, so also the Advisory Board (Central Board ?), the majority in the Party and three of the Ministers. Why and how did he reduce himself to this position ?

SOUND INTERPRETATION

Dr. Khare has given an interpretation of the Government of India Act, 1935, which even a constitutional lawyer would not dare attempt. According to him, it was he whose action ended the tenure of his three Mahakoshal colleagues and not that of the Governor. But what does Section 51 of the Act say :—

(1) The Governor's Ministers shall be chosen and summoned by him, shall be sworn as Members of the Council and shall hold office during his pleasure.

* * * * *

(5) The function of the Governor under this Section with respect to the chosing and summoning and dismissal of Ministers and with respect to the determination of their salaries shall be exercised by him in his discretion.

It is amusing to note that because the Governor used the euphemistic expression "terminate tenure" instead of "dismiss" the Doctor thought that it was in fact not the Governor who dismissed the Ministers.

Much has been made of the expression "special powers" used in the Working Committee's resolutions. The expression

was used in a popular sense, to mean something distinct from ordinary powers. The technical expression should have been "discretionary powers" for under the Act, the Governor's function of dismissal is to be exercised in his discretion. The Governor can dismiss his Ministers only by the use of his discretionary powers.

HAIR-SPLITTING ARGUMENTS

The Doctor has indulged in hair-splitting agruments when he has tried to analyse wherein he was guilty of indiscipline. He admits his error of judgment but not his indiscipline. The foregoing pages have shown that he received warnings and he knew what the procedure and practice of the Congress have been. The charge of indiscipline against him has therefore, been substantiated.

In criticising a statement of Mahatma Gandhi he has said that the Working Committee did not ask him to confess his fault and hence there can be no question of his aggravating indiscipline by his refusal to confess. This is the argument of a sophist. The Working Committee as a collective body might not have formally adopted a resolution to that effect but there is no doubt that the members of the Working Committee did ask him to do so and he refused.

JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE TO DR. KHARE

One of the most amusing portions of "My Defence," is where he tries to explain away his precipitate action. Disloyalty of his colleagues and the apprehension that C.P. would become a non-Congress province drove him to take the extreme step. But it did not strike him that in order to save himself from both and retain his own position as Premier all that he had to do was to implement the Pachmarhi Compromise and play the game with his colleagues. If he had done that, he would have stood as firm as a rock and nothing

could have dislodged him. But in trying to break the old Ministry and face the Working Committee with a new one, he merely broke himself.

It is to be greatly regretted that Dr. Khare is not yet able to view his own actions objectively. Hence his continued effort to justify his actions and to console himself with the thought that he has done nothing wrong. What a pity that one has still to argue with him that the Congress has suffered damage and loss of prestige through his conduct. Equally regrettable it is that he does not yet realise that he was exploited by the Governor, through the "indecent haste" with which the latter acted and the way in which he sat up all night are enough to open any one's eyes. He has cast aspersions right and left on his erstwhile colleagues in the Congress. Whereas he voluntarily sent in his resignation to the Governor on the 22nd July he now says that we only humiliated him before the latter. He sees everything distorted and cannot therefore realise that the drastic action taken by the Working Committee has saved the Congress in the C P. from utter disaster. By his action in resigning he must have raised himself in the estimation of the Governor at the time though he does not realise it.

Dr. Khare has indulged in a ruthless criticism of Mahatma Gandhi also. But considering the circumstances his advice was the best and the Doctor should have acted in accordance with it. And regarding Mahatmaji's draft, it should be clear to every impartial mind that everything that he added to Dr. Khare's draft is wholly justified by the bare narrative of facts.

From the foregoing narrative it should be clear to every impartially-minded man that there is no justification whatsoever for the impression that may exist in any quarter that justice has not been done to Dr. Khare.

PERSONAL NOTE : REQUEST AND ADVICE

But I desire to conclude with a personal note. Everybody knows my relations with Maharashtra and Maharashtrians. Dr. Khare is not only a Maharashtrian but also a friend of mine. He has other friends also on the Working Committee. He must know that neither Mahatma Gandhi nor we could do him injustice or be influenced by anybody into doing it. I realise that he believes that he has been wronged. Many others before have sincerely believed themselves to be wronged though they have been in the wrong. As a friend would request him to retract the wholly baseless statements he has so recklessly been making and work as disciplined Congressman and I have no doubt that he will have the sympathy, good will and support not only of friends but even of those who may appear to be against him to-day.

II

PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT

As considerable interest is being taken by the public in the incidents culminating in the resignation of Dr. Khare from the Prime Ministership and the election of Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla as the Leader of the Congress Party in the C.P. Assembly, and as inferences are being drawn from unauthenticated facts, it is necessary to explain the correct facts of the case.

Shortly before the meeting of the Working Committee in Bombay in the middle of May last, differences among the then Ministers of the C.P. and Berar became marked, and four of the Ministers tendered their resignations to the Prime Minister. One of them later withdrew his resignation. Without taking their party into confidence, all the Ministers came to Bombay and sought the assistance of the Working Committee. The matter was thus placed before the Working Committee which asked the Parliamentary Sub-Committee to have

a meeting of the Congress Party in the C. P. Assembly convened and the matter settled in consultation with it.

Accordingly, a meeting of the Party was convened at Pachmarhi which was attended by the Chairman and one of the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, as also the Presidents of the Provincial Congress Committee of Berar, Nagpur and Mahakoshal. Ultimately, the Ministers reported to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee that they had themselves composed their differences, had agreed to a compromise and were prepared to work together.

The Party and the Sub-Committee dispersed with the hope that the differences had been settled, and the parties concerned would give effect to the terms of the compromise, and there would not be any more unseemly exhibition of differences. But the hope was doomed to disappointment, and reports began to reach Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, that the terms were not being observed by Dr. Khare. The Sardar had appealed to Dr. Khare to observe the terms of the settlement honourably and had also requested him to leave the final decision to the judgment of the Working Committee, in case of disagreement.

Things were going on in this way, when differences among the ministers again became acute about the 13th of July, and reports appeared in the press that two of them, Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh, had tendered their resignations to the Premier. On the 15th July, Dr. Khare submitted his report to Sardar Patel about the steps taken to implement the Pachmarhi Agreement and of the situation as it stood up to that date. He also wrote to Sardar Patel that they had not been able to come to any agreement till then, owing to marked differences in their respective outlooks, but at the same time assured him that he would take no precipitate action and

leave the matter to him for final decision. He requested the Sardar to give him an opportunity to place his viewpoint before him before a decision was reached. He added that he would keep the Sardar informed from time to time about the events as they occurred. Dr. Khare did not say anything about the resignations of his two colleagues.

It will be remembered that a meeting of the Working Committee had been fixed to take place at Wardha on the 9th of July, but on account of the illness of the President, it had to be postponed to 23rd July. After this assurrance from Dr. Khare, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee naturally felt that nothing was going to happen until the 23rd July, when the whole matter could be considered by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and, if necessary, by the Working Committee ; so he went to Poona for a meeting of the Bombay Assembly Party and later to Ahmedabad for the inauguration of the Prohibition Campaign.

On the 19th July, Dr. Khare wrote to his colleagues that he was going to resign and, after pointing out that under Parliamentary conventions when a Premier resigned his colleagues should also resign, he asked for an assurance from them that they would observe this convention and resign with him. On the 20th July, Messrs. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta individually replied to him expressing their inability to resign in the absence of instructions from the Parliamentary Committee or the Working Committee. At noon the same day, Dr. Khare submitted his resignation to the Governor along with the resignations of his two colleagues, Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh. The Governor wanted the resignations of the other three Ministers in pursuance of the convention referred to above. This was sometime in the afternoon of the 20th of July. Mr. Shukla and others tried to get in telephonic touch with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who

was at Ahmedabad, but failed. Two of them then went to Wardha with Thakur Chhedilal, President of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee, and met Babu Rajendra Prasad and explained the situation to him. They all then saw Mahatma Gandhi at Shegaon, but he refused to give them any advice in the matter, as he had refused to give any advice to Dr. Khare on previous occasions in respect of the differences amongst the Ministers.

Babu Rejendra Prasad, however, advised the Ministers to explain to the Governor their relationship with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee and to ask for time till the 23rd July and not to tender it, if he insisted on their resignation in spite of their explanation. Babu Rejendra Prasad wrote letters to Dr. Khare, Mr. Gole and Mr. Deshmukh, as also to Mr. Shukla, Mr. Mishra and Mr. Mehta in terms of this advice. He advised Dr. Khare not to precipitate matters and to wait till the meeting of the Working Committee on the 23rd of July. He pointed out that the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee would all be at Wardha on the 22nd of July and there was no reason for any precipitate action. He suggested to him to withdraw his resignation or at any rate to ask the Governor to hold it in abeyance.

In his letter to Messrs. Deshmukh and Gole, he advised them also not to precipitate matters and to withdraw their resignations. It was ten o'clock at night when these letters were completed and made over to Thakur Chhedilal to be delivered to the addressees. A telephonic message was sent by Thakur Chhedilal from Wardha to Dr. Khare at Nagpur that an important communication was being sent to him. This message was received by Dr. Khare in the presence of Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh.

On arrival at Nagpur shortly after midnight, Thakur chhedilal went to the house of Dr. Khare where he met Messrs. Gole and Deshmukh and delivered the letters addressed to them. He could not deliver that letter to Dr. Khare as he was told that Dr. Khare was not in the house. He returned some time later and learnt from Dr. Khare's chauffeur that Dr. Khare was at home. Thakur Chhedilal waited till about 2 a.m. when a messenger from the Government House came with some communication for Dr. Khare, which was received by Dr. Khare's son. Seeing this, Thakur Chhedilal requested Dr. Khare's son to receive the letter which he had brought from Babu Rejendra Prasad, but he refused to do so. Dr. Khare's son says that he refused to take it as Thakur Chhedilal insisted upon a receipt.

Messrs. Shukla, Mishra and Mehta saw the Governor by appointment about 2 o'clock at night, and explained their reason for refusal to tender their resignations. Thereupon, their services were terminated by the Governor, and they were informed of it at 5 early in the morning on the 21st. A new Ministry was formed by Dr. Khare and the oath of office was taken by such of the Ministers as were available sometime in the forenoon of the 21st.

When the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee arrived at Wardha on the morning of the 22nd, they came to know of what had happened, and immediately wired to Nagpur requesting Dr. Khare and his new colleagues as also the dismissed Ministers to meet them in the evening at Wardha. Accordingly they came. The President of the Congress had also arrived by then. The President, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and some of the other members of the Working Committee who had also arrived met Dr. Khare, Messrs. Deshmukh, Gole and Thakur Pyarelal and ascertained from them what had happened at Nagpur. The President of the

Vidarbha and Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committees were also present.

It was disclosed at the meeting that Dr. Khare had sent a messenger to Thakur Pyarelal Singh as far back as the 17th to enquire if he was willing to join a new Cabinet. From this, it is clear that after assuring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the 15th that no precipitate action would be taken and that he would keep him informed of developments, Dr. Khare had set about looking for persons in place of Pandit Shukla and others.

Thakur Pyarelal Singh wrote to him on the 18th giving his consent to join a new Cabinet. Dr. Khare admitted to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee that he met the Governor's Secretary on the 19th and informed him of his intention to resign and his readiness to form a new Cabinet.

Dr. Khare did all this without letting his colleagues or the Parliamentary Sub-Committee or the Presidents of the Provincial Congress Committees know anything about his plans. It was only after getting the consent of Thakur Pyarelal Singh that he wrote to Messrs. Shukla, Mehta and Mishra communicating his intention to resign and asking for an assurance that they would also resign. It was also disclosed by Thakur Pyarelal Singh that on the morning of the 22nd before he agreed to take his oath of office, extracts from a letter purporting to have been written by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were read out to him by Dr. Khare in order to assure him that he was doing nothing wrong. in joining Dr. Khare's new Cabinet. The letter is said to have contained directions to the addressee to follow the party leader. As Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had no recollection of having written such a letter, Dr. Khare, on being questioned, said that in the month of May, such a letter was written to some person in connection with a Municipal Board dispute.

When all these facts were brought out in the presence of Dr. Khare and his colleagues, it was pointed out to Dr. Khare that his actions had been unworthy of a person in his position. He and his colleagues were asked if they could see the mischief and the mistake, and if they did so, what they would do to rectify it. They retired to a separate room for consultation amongst themselves. On their return, Dr. Khare admitted the error and expressed his willingness to resign his Premiership. His colleagues undertook to do likewise. Thakur Pyarelal Singh made a draft which in substance was the same as the letter of resignation sent to the Governor on the 23rd. Dr. Khare communicated his decision on the telephone to the Secretary of the Governor before he left for Nagpur at midnight. On the morning of the 23rd July, Dr. Khare sent his letter of resignation to the Governor and informed the Parliamentary Sub-Committee that he had done so.

When the Working Committee met on the 23rd it was felt that Dr. Khare should be invited again to discuss the position, and accordingly he met the Working Committee in the afternoon. It was suggested to him that a special meeting of the party should be called to discuss the situation to consider his resignation of the party leadership and to elect a Leader. He agreed to do so, and issued a notice convening a meeting of the party on the 27th to transact the above business. At the same time, Dr. Khare expressed his intention to stand as a candidate for the Leadership.

The President and the members of the Working Committee advised him to give up his intention in his own interest. Dr. Khare was, however, unbending and left no doubt in the mind of the Working Committee that he would stand as a candidate.

On the 25th July, Dr. Khare was again invited and once more advised to give up his intention to contest the election,

When he still refused, he was advised to see Gandhiji at Shegaon, which he did in company with the President and some members of the Committee. After discussion, he seemed agreeable not to stand for election, and himself wrote out a draft statement. Gandhiji made some corrections and additions. Dr. Khare then hesitated, and he was also advised not to do anything in a hurry, but to consult his friends and let the Working Committee know his final decision by 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th July.

On the 26th July at 3 P.M. Dr. Khare sent a telephonic message stating that he was not agreeable to issuing any statement in terms of the previous night's draft, but that he was sending a reply with Mr. Deshmukh who would reach Wardha about 5-45 P.M. by the Bombay Mail. The Working Committee waited till about 7 O'clock, and then finally adopted the resolutions which have been published. Dr. Khare's letter was received at about 8 O'clock.

The above narrative of events relating to the crisis explains the facts and circumstances which influenced the decision of the Working Committee. It is clear that even after the Pachmarhi compromise good relations were not maintained among the Ministers. Complaints of breaches of its terms by Dr. Khare were made to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Some of them appeared to be obvious breaches, but he urged that no precipitate action should be taken and tried to secure a due fulfilment of the compromise. Matters came to a head among the Ministers and two of them, namely Messrs. Deshmukh and Gole resigned on the 13th July. Dr. Khare did not inform the Parliamentary Sub-Committee of their resignations. On the contrary, on the 15th July, he wrote to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel assuring him that no precipitate action would be taken and that he would keep him informed of developments. After writing this letter on the

15th, he set about looking for new Ministers whom he could get appointed in place of those whom he wanted to get rid of, and sent a messenger to Thakur Pyarelal Singh on the 17th, and this without informing his colleagues or the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. When he had found such persons, he informed the Governor's Secretary of his intentions to reshuffle the Cabinet, and wrote to his colleagues on the 19th intimating his intention to resign and asking for assurances that they would do likewise. On the 20th July, he actually resigned.

Until this time he gave no information to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee or to the Working Committee and the only intimation he gave was by a telegram addressed to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Bombay on the evening of 20th after his resignation had become accomplished fact. As Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was at Ahmedabad on account of a public engagement which has been widely advertised, he got this telegram only on his return to Bombay on the 21st after the new Ministry had been appointed.

The Working Committee had no doubt in its mind that Dr. Khare was anxious to get rid of some of his old colleagues with whom he had entered into a compromise at Pachmarhi, and without giving them any intimation, found out substitutes for them and after lulling the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee into a sense of security that no precipitate action would be taken and that he would keep him informed of developments, he tried and succeeded in securing the removal of his inconvenient colleagues with the help of the Governor, keeping the Congress authorities all the time in the dark. Dr. Khare also received a requisition from some of the members of the party to convene a meeting of the party, but he took no action on it. He wanted to and did present the Working Committee and the party a Ministry of his own choice, from

which three of his erstwhile colleagues were excluded—and all this was done in less than two days before the Working Committee Meeting. The Working Committee would have failed in its duty if it had refused to take notice of such a conduct and done anything less than it did.

III

GENERAL SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

The C. P. Episode has generated great heat and passion. The opponents of the Congress are out to exploit the situation. Unwary and uncritical friends are deluded into opposition by the slogans 'Democracy in danger', 'Congress has become a fascist organisation', with these slogans and cries, dispassionate and scientific discussion has become well-nigh impossible.

DEMOCRACY IN DANGER ?

Let us see if the action taken by the Working Committee has in any way violated the broad principles of democracy. Before we come to any well-thought out and scientific conclusions, we must clearly formulate and understand the functions of democracy. The functions of democracy have always been recognised to be, briefly, to legislate, to appoint the highest executive, periodically to review the broad and important acts of the Executive and when necessary to remove the Executive by a vote of non-confidence or censure. Now let us see if any of these functions of democracy have been violated by the action of the Working Committee. It will not be denied that the action taken by the Working Committee was purely executive. It was not legislative action. It the action is unjust and arbitrary it is open to democracy to review and censure it, and, if need be, to remove the present Executive. Nobody has questioned the right of the A.I.C.C., to which primarily the Working Committee are responsible, to review the present action of the Working Committee.

HIERARCHY OF DEMOCRACIES

The present day democracies are not the city state democracies of Ancient Greece. They are national democracies. Therefore, the nation is served not by one democracy but a series of democracies in an ascending order. There are within the nation, local and sectional democracies. These regional democracies appoint their own executives. These executives while they are controlled by and are responsible to their respective democracies are also controlled by and responsible to the highest executive. It is quite possible that a local executive may form an act that may be overruled by the higher executive. Sometimes rules are made to regulate such interference. Often there are some elementary rules but mostly such control is by way of conventions. The conventions prescribe the limits of control to be exercised by the Central executive on democratically appointed regional executives. In normal times this control is more or less nominal. It is confined to very serious and major matters that are likely to adversely affect the general and larger interests of the nation. In extraordinary times, however, the control of the Central executive is wider and more general. Often interference is due to the mutual conflicts of regional units. The central executive then plays the role of the judge and the arbitrator. It is quite possible that in a conflict the regional executive may seek the protection of its own democracy against the central executive. When such crisis arise rules are laid down for the ending of the tangle. If, however, the tangle is not capable of solution by the rules and convention governing the case, the fight may be transferred to the respective democracies, the regional and the central. In such a fight the will of the central democracy must prevail if recourse to extra-constitutional methods is to be avoided.

In the Congress organisation there is a national supreme

democracy consisting of all the primary members of the Congress. Under it there are provincial, district, tehsil, town and village democracies chosen by the regional section of the primary members. All are controlled by the central organisation represented by the A.I.C.C. The supreme executive through which the A.I.C.C. works is the Working Committee. The Working Committee are responsible to the A I.C.C. and through it to the Congress. Whenever the supreme executive interferes with local executives, it is within its right according to rules made and conventions created. Such interference is not against democratic rules and procedure followed in other democratic countries. Each executive as long as it is not repudiated by its respective democracy is representative of that democracy. When there is a conflict between the regional executive, representative of its regional democracy and the central executive, representative of the central democracy, the quarrel is really between a smaller parochial, sectional and therefore less representative democracy and the larger, more comprehensive and therefore more representative democracy. The conflict is, if we are to be scientific, not between central autocracy and local democracy, but between central democracy through its executive and the local democracy through its own executive. It is a conflict between the will of the nation and the will of a section of the nation.

The Congress constitution and the conventions it has evolved, amply provide for the solution of such conflicts. In ordinary times and in ordinary matters all local affairs are left to the local executive and to the highest democratic authority in the province, the P. C. C. But in important matters or in appeal there is, whenever occasion demands, interference. This interference may extend even to the suspension of a P. C. C. or any of its subordinate democracies. The Congress constitution provides for such suspension. In

that case the Working Committee have the right to nominate the delegates of the province who may constitute the P. C. C. It has often happened that owing to governmental action it has not been possible for local Congress organisations to choose their delegates. The Working Committee then nominate delegates from such regions. This was done for several years in the case of N. W. F. P. and the district of Madnapur (Bengal). The relevant article of the constitution says :

(1) "No Provincial Congress Committee and no subordinate Committees shall be recognised by the Working Committee unless it has complied with the conditions laid down in this constitution or any rules framed thereunder by the Working Committee."

(2) On failure on the part of any Provincial Congress Committee to function in terms of the constitution, the Working Committee may form one to carry on Congress work in that Province."

WAS INTERFERENCE IN C. P. UNDEMOCRATIC?

So we hold that whatever interference was exercised in C. P. was neither extra-constitutional nor against any known prniciples of democracy. The Working Committee have full constitutional right to interfere on occasions and this right has always been recognised in practice. The A. I. C. C. office, through the President and the General Secretary, has been exercising this right day in and day out without its authority being ever questioned. The Parliamentary wing of the Congress organisation has always recognised the right of guidance and if need be of interference by central executive as representative of the all India democracy. All the candidates to the legislatures on behalf of the Congress have in the last resort to be selected b the Working Committee through its committee — the Parliamentary Sub-Committee appointed for this special purpose.

The local democracies through their executives can suggest names but the final choice remains with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, whose choice may be interfered with, at any time by the Working Committee.

The Ministries in the Congress provinces were constituted with the advice of the .Parliamentary Sub-Committee. They work under their general supervision and guidance. In important matters the Premiers consult the Parliamentary Sub-Committee or the member in charge of the particular province in question. In matters of great importance the Working Committee is consulted. The supreme question of office-acceptance was decided not by the Parliamentary parties in the provinces, but by the Working Committee. If it had been left to the provincial democracies, it was known that some provinces would have accepted office without imposing any condition. It was also known that some other provinces as U. P. were against office acceptance. But regional democracies, and Parliamentary parties were not allowed to decide the momentous issue. Nobody then raised the cry of democracy in danger. After office acceptance, all the major crises, such as in U P., Bihar and Utkal were created, either on the initiative of the Working Committee or with their full approval and consent, previously obtained.

Dr. Khare himself recognised this control of the Working Committee and worked under it. When sometime back four Ministers gave their resignations, he did not accept the resignations but put them before the Working Committee. The Working Committee advised the calling of the Party meeting at Pachmarhi. The notice of the meeting was issued from Bombay under the direction of the Working Committee. The terms of the compromise that was effected were not kept before the Party meeting. They were known only to the Ministers, the

Presidents of the 3 P. C. C.s constituting the governmental province of C. P. and the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Dr. Khare did not raise any protest, nor did he think all this was against the principles of democracy or against his authority as the leader of the Party and the head of the Cabinet. Then from time to time he was requested by Sri Vallabhbhai Patel to give effect to this compromise. He replied to the letters and promised to comply with and to take no precipitate action and to keep the Chairman posted with further developments.

After his resignation, he was summoned by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. He appeared before the Committee on the 22nd July. He admitted that he had committed a grave error of judgment in resigning and forming a new Cabinet without reference to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee. He was directed to resign along with his new Cabinet. He carried out the wishes of the superior authorities. Next day he was called by the Working Committee. He consented to resign from the leadership of the party and to call the meeting of the Party to consider his resignation and elect to the vacancy so created. It was also decided by the Working Committee, that the party meeting be presided over not by the out-going leader but by the Congress President. All throughout Dr. Khare rightly accepted the guidance and control of the Working Committee. None of these many acts, done through him, though he could not have been a happy agent, constituted in his eyes any break of democratic principles and procedure. No protest was raised. The rest of what the Working Committee did, that is, their resolution about Dr. Khare's conduct was the natural corollary of the position he had accepted and worked up to. And what did the Working Committee do? They did not disqualify him as they well might have. They merely recorded their opinion about his conduct. Permission was sought in the party meeting to propose his name. This permi-

sion was given. It was however wisely not exercised. Had the Congess been really a fascist organisation, we leave it to the leader's imagination to find out what the fate of Dr. Khare would have been.

All this was done by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the Working Committee in the undoubted exercise of their executive authority. It is, however, open to any member of the A. I. C. C. or to any primary members of the Congress, through a member of the A. I. C. C. to question any or all the actions of the Working Committee done in this connection. But till such a question is raised and decided by the A. I. C. C. the will of the Working Committee in its executive capacity, is the supreme will of the Congress democracy. But however supreme may be the Working Committee they have no power to alter the constitution. That is a legislative function. They cannot also go behind any of the resolutions of the Congress or of the A. I.C. C. That too is a kind of legislative function. The Working Committee have however the right to interpret the constitution and the resolutions. This right of interpretation belongs to all the democratically constituted executives. On this too there is an ultimate check. The question may be raised in the A. I. C. C. and even brought before the open session. The interpretation given there, then holds the field. The executive has to accept it or quit.

DID DR. KHARE OBSERVE THE RULES OF DEMOCRACY ?

Dr. Khare was elected Leader by the vote of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the C. P. Obviously, as is made out today, not only by the opponents of the Congress and the Working Committee but by Dr. Khare himself, he was responsible to the Party and not to the Working Committee. If it is so, why did he and his Cabinet allow them-

selves to be guided by the judgment of the Working Committee in the question of Mr. Shareef's resignation from the Cabinet? His Cabinet had decided in favour of Mr. Shareef. The Party passed a vote of confidence. Let the Working Committee reverse this decision. Dr. Khare and his colleagues whether in the Cabinet or in the Party did not resist this decision of the Working Committee. They did not resign along with Mr. Shareef. Where was joint responsibility then? The papers that denounce today the interference of the Working Committee applauded the same interference. Why did not Dr. Khare assert his supremacy or that of his party, representative of the regional democracy of C. P. as against the Working Committee, representative of the Central All-India democracy? Why was not the question of democracy in danger raised by Dr. Khare and that section of the press that is protesting loudly today?

Again when in May last Dr. Khare was presented with the resignation of his 4 colleagues why did he not accept them as the head of the Cabinet? Why did he not call at least a meeting of the Party to consider the resignation? Why did he refer this to Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and to the Working Committee? Why did he call the meeting of the party at Pachmarhi at the instance of the Working Committee? Why did he consent to the party meeting being presided over by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub Committee when he himself was the leader? Why again in the present instance did he ignore his party when a requisition was made to him by some members to call a meeting? He neither consulted his colleagues nor his party about either his resignation or the choice of his new colleagues. Nay even when he chose to resign a second time he did not remember the democracy of C. P. represented by his party. When he was moving the administrative machinery to get rid of his 3 Mahakoshal

colleagues he could not have been unconscious of the fact that his previous majority if not altogether destroyed must have been considerably weakened. It was well known that the majority that he commanded in the Party was due to the help of at least one of his dismissed Mahakoshal colleagues. When therefore if he chose not to consult the highest executive he should have at least fortified himself by the vote of his Party. He did this on a former occasion, when in Mr. Shareef's case, he and his colleagues wanted to present the Working Committee with an accomplished fact. If the Working Committee were cowed down by such accomplished facts as the vote of confidence in Mr Shareef by the Cabinet and the party, Dr. Khare's resignation and reconstitution of his new Cabinet, the Working Committee will not be worthy of their high position of trust. Nay they will not represent the will of the people of India which they claim to represent. They will be betraying the great trust the people of India repose in them. They will not be worthy of leadership in a life and death struggle with the most powerful, resourceful and firmly entrenched imperialism in the world. Let nobody, friend or foe, think that the Working Committee can be bullied into action or inaction save in the best interest of the people of India whose representatives and servants they are proud to be. Today if there is any one Congress organisation more than any other that is just honest, above party, sectional and regional interest, and whose members are above all suspicion of self-interests and corruption, it is the Working Committee. They by their action have often saved democracy and its principles than endangered them.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

Much has been made of the joint responsibility of the Cabinet. As if that were the supreme principle of democracy

and democracy fails or prospers by that principle alone. Principles of democracy are not arranged horizontally but even as principles of morality, they are ranged vertically. The lower principle and law yield place to the higher. The Working Committee were faced with a difficult choice. Were they to allow a province and in the present instance not even a province but an individual whose representative capacity in his own party was at least doubtful, to endanger the healthy control of the Working Committee ? In Indian affairs today, is the principle of ministerial joint responsibility of greater importance than the principle of central and unified control over the provinces ? We have already shown that the central control represents more extensive and comprehensive democracy without which India will fall into so many jarring and warring geographical units.

Then what are the facts of the case ? Could any one province with its own resources of men, money and prestige have fought the elections successfully for the Congress ? Will a single province unaided by the centre, be able to resist the authority of the Governor, Viceroy and White Hall ? The general voter in the provinces did not vote for any particular regional Congress organisation or any individual Congressman, but for the Congress and its politics. The Congress as a whole is therefore responsible to him. Now it is a fact which may be ascertained at any time, that the general voter has full confidence in the Central Congress organization and the Working Committee. When therefore most of the provincial strength for fight and resistance comes from the centre, the control of the centre democratically elected, becomes a supreme democratic principle in politics.

Let us however analyse this principle of joint responsibility of the Cabinet. It is not a fundamental conception of

democracy. It is only one of the important devices for the convenient and smooth working of democratic institutions. A convenient legal or constitutional device cannot override political existence. This is recognised the world over. But those who have learnt their lessons in democracy and government from testbooks and reports and not from actual life and through strenuous action and a prolonged fight, may not be blamed if they install a minor principle in place of honour, irrespective of the political requirements of the situation. As India is situated to-day, any loosening of the central control will not only be disastrous for the whole of India but also for the component parts. The parts, whenever they are controlled, are controlled in their own interest. Such action that saves smaller units must not be confused and confounded with ordinary interference. It is not fascism but the fulfilment of democracy.

The Congress however stands by the democratic device of joint responsibility. It will resist any invasion of it. What has been done in C.P. will never be considered the rule, but a painful exception. Hard cases make bad law. The Congress will not allow this hard case to be made as a precedent for bureaucratic action. The Congress, as is well known, has fought for joint responsibility.

IS JOINT RESPONSIBILITY THE MAJOR QUESTION OF ISSUE ?

However the question of joint responsibility forms only a minor part of the C. P. affairs. It was quite possible for Rajendra Prasad to ask the 3 Mahakoshal ministers to resign, when called upon to do so by the Governor, under protest. That he did not give such an advice only shows that constitutional considerations were not thought of at the time of a serious political crisis which if it had not been successfully met

with, would have greatly impaired Congress authority and prestige. But supposing Babu Rajendra Prasad had advised resignation under protest, will that have saved Dr. Khare ? Will in that case the Working Committee have refrained from passing the resolution that it did, characterising the conduct of Dr. Khare and declaring him unfit to hold any office of responsibility ? Those who think like that, have completely failed to understand the political significance of the whole of the C. P. crisis. Such misunderstanding of purely political issue and its confusion with constitutional clap-trap is quite understandable in the case of the Liberal or Moderate section of the press. They have always tried to measure big political issues with their legal and constitutional foot-rule. They did this when the Congress put conditions for the acceptance of office. In contrast to this the Anglo-Indian press whenever it wants to understand political issues, understands them without being observed by legal and constitutional considerations. In the present case the *Statesman* has very clearly brought out the political implication of the action taken. It says, "As a party it (the Congress) worked for its policy all over India and has won the remarkable success of having seven governments in power to carry out the policy. In those provinces, we must assume, the ministers are where they are because of Congress policy and activity and support. As a natural consequence of the situation they must look to the Congress High Command for directive ideas. The Congress inevitably regards the seven ministries and their followers as seven divisions of an army working to general plans with such modifications, decided by the commander, as local conditions make necessary." What the *Statesman* has clearly expressed here is not as clear to some Indian paper. *Is it because they are anxious to be more English than the Englishman himself* ?

THE GOVERNOR'S ACTION

The part of the Working Committee's resolution that deals with the Governor's action has also come in for considerable criticism. Nobody denies that the Government in dismissing the Mahakoshal ministers was acting within the letter of the constitution. What is blamed, is not his legal action but his political action. He was asked for time and was told that Congress authorities were to be consulted. He would not allow time to his colleagues in administration, It was constitutionally possible for him to advise Dr. Khare not to insist upon the immediate acceptance of his resignation and that of his two colleagues. He could have delayed for 48 hours. Any way he was not called upon to turn night into day. This must be considered as indecent haste. Such haste cannot be without some political motive.

The Governor could not have been unaware that by his resignation, Dr. Khare might have lost the majority that supported him in the party. He could have taken advantage of this fact. Nay, the Governor would have been entitled to delay acceptance till it was clear to him as to who in fact, commanded clear majority in the party. When Dr. Khare at the instance of the Working Committee resigned again, the Governor had to wait for the decision of the party before he called anybody to form the new Cabinet. The Governors of U. P. and Berar kept the resignations of their respective Cabinets in February last, pending for more than a fortnight. The Premiers could have insisted upon immediate acceptance. They showed due courtesy. From Governors the Congress expects the same courtesy. In the constitution the Governor's position is described as one of friend and guide. The Governor failed to give the right lead and guidance to Dr. Khare. What could be his motive ? In politics and social conduct, external action alone can be guide to motive. There is no other thermo-

meter to discover and measure human motive. The adverse remarks contained, therefore, in the Working Committee's resolution against the conduct of the Governor are fully justified.

We have tried to discuss the whole question from the point of view of general democratic principles as they apply to a dynamic political situation. We believe that the Working Committee took the minimum necessary action and violated no principles of democracy. Its action is consistent with the best traditions of democracy the world over. To charge the Working Committee with using dictatorial and fascist methods is to purposely misunderstand its action. We also believe that if a reference is made to the A.I.C.C. or a general plebiscite is taken on this question, the Working Committee's action will be overwhelmingly endorsed. We believe that any other attitude of the Working Committee would have been a betrayal of the trust democratically reposed in them.

IV

GANDHIJI'S STATEMENT

Press cuttings on the Ministerial crisis in the Central Provinces make most instructive reading. That the resolution of the Working Committee condemning the action of a veteran Leader like Dr. Khare, would come in for some severe criticism, was a foregone conclusion. But I was not prepared for the ignorance betrayed by the critics on the functions of the Working Committee.

Dr. Khare was not only guilty of gross indiscipline in flouting the warnings of the Parliamentary Board, but he betrayed incompetence as a Leader by allowing himself to be fooled by the Governor, or not knowing that by his precipitate action, he was compromising the Congress. He heightened

the measure of indiscipline by refusing the advice of the Working Committee to make a frank confession of his guilt and to withdraw from the leadership. The Working Committee would have been guilty of a gross neglect of duty if it had failed to condemn Dr. Khare's action and adjudge his incompetence.

I write these lines in sorrow. It was no pleasure to me to advise the Working Committee to pass the resolution it did. Dr. Khare is a friend. He has run to my aid as a physician when quick medical assistance was needed. He has often come to me for advice and guidance and has expressed himself to be in need of my blessings.

I banked on this friendship when, on the 25th ultimo, I appealed to him bravely to stand down and work as a camp-follower. He himself seemed to be willing but he was badly advised, and not only declined to accept the Working Committee's advice but sent a letter instead, questioning the propriety of the whole of the action of the Working Committee in connection with his ill-advised and hasty resignation of office and equally hasty formation of a new Cabinet.

I hoped that on mature reflection he would have seen the error of his conduct and taken the action of the Working Committee in a sportsmanlike spirit. There is no moral turpitude involved in his action. He is a good fighter. He is free with his purse in helping friends These are qualities of which any one may be proud. But these qualities need not make the possessor a good Prime Minister or administrator. I would urge him as a friend to work for the time being as a camp-follower and give the Congress the benefit of the admitted qualities I have recited.

If Dr. Khare was impatient of his recalcitrant colleagues, he should have rushed not to the Governor, but to the Work-

ing Committee and tendered his resignation. If he felt aggrieved by its decision, he could have gone to the A.I.C.C. But in no case could any Minister take internal quarrels to the Governor and seek relief through him without the previous consent of the Working Committee. If the Congress machinery is slow-moving, it can be made to move faster. If the men at the helm are self-seekers or worthless, the A.I.C.C., is there to remove them. Dr. Khare erred grievously in ignoring or, what is worse, not knowing this simple remedy and rushing to the Governor on the eve of the meeting of the Working Committee to end his agony.

It is suggested that the men who succeed him are self-seekers and incapable, and can make no approach to Dr. Khare in character. If they are as they have been portrayed by their critics, they are bound to fail in the discharge of the onerous responsibility they have undertaken. But here again the Working Committee has to work within the limits prescribed for it. It connot impose Ministers on a province. After all they are elected members, and if the party that has the power to elect them chooses to do so, the Working Committee has no authority to interfere so long as they remain under discipline and are not known to be persons unworthy of public confidence.

But the crisis should surely put the Ministers on their mettle. It is up to them to show by their conduct that the charges levelled against them are baseless, and that they are capable of discharging their trust ably and selflessly.

It speaks well the impartiality of the Indian press in that several journals found it necessary to condemn the action of the Working Committee in pronouncing the opinion it did on the part that H.E. the Governor of the Central Provinces played during the unfortunate crisis. I am not in the habit of

hastily judging opponents. The criticism of the resolution has left me unconvinced of any injustice done to the Governor by it. In estimating his action time is of the essence. In accepting the resignations of Dr. Khare and his two colleagues, in demanding their resignations from the other three Ministers, in expecting an immediate answer, in summarily rejecting their explanation and dismissing them, and for this purpose keeping himself, his staff and the poor Ministers awake almost the whole night, the Governor betrayed a haste which I can only call indecent Nothing would have been lost if instead of accepting Dr. Khare's resignation there and then, he had waited for the meeting of the Working Committee which was to meet two days after the strange drama. In dealing with a similar crisis, the Bengal Governor acted differently from the C.P. Governor.

Of course, the Governor's action conformed to the letter of the law, but it killed the spirit of the tacit compact between the British Government and the Congress. Let the critics of the Working Committee's action read the Viceroy's carefully prepared declaration which, among other declarations, induced the Working Commtitee to try the office experiment, and ask themselves whether the Governor was not bound to take official notice of what was going on between the Working Committee and Dr. Khare and his colleagues. These indisputable facts lead one to the irresistible conclusion that the Governor, in his eagerness to discredit the Congress, kept a vigil and brought about a situation which, he knew, was to be uncomfortable for the Congress. The unwritten compact between the British Government and the Congress is a Gentleman's Agreement, in which both are expected to play the game.

The resolution, therefore, gives English administrators more credit than evidently the critics would give. Englishmen

are sportsmen. They have an ample sense of humour. They can hit hard and take a beating also in good grace. I have no doubt that the Governor will take the Congress resolution in good part.

But whether he does so or not, the Working Committee was bound to express what it felt about the Governor's action. It wishes to avoid a fight if it can; it will take it up, if it must. If a fight is to be avoided, the Governors must recognise the Congress as the one national organisation that is bound some day or other to replace the British Government. The U.P., Bihar and Orissa Governors waited for the Congress lead when a crisis faced them. No doubt, in the three cases, it was obviously to their interests to do so. Is it to be said that in C.P., it was obviously to the British interests to precipitate the crisis in order to discomfit the Congress? The Working Committee's resolution is a friendly warning to the British Government that if they wish to avoid an open rupture with the Congress, the powers that be should not allow a repetition of what happened at Nagpur on the night of 20th July.

Let us understand the functions of the Congress. For internal growth and administration, it is as good a democratic organisation as any to be found in the world but this democratic organisation has been brought into being to fight the greatest imperialist power living. For this external work, therefore, it has to be likened to an army. As such, it ceases to be democratic. The central authority possesses plenary powers, enabling it to impose and enforce discipline on the various units working under it. Provincial Organisations and Provincial Parliamentary Boards are subject to the central authority.

It has been suggested that, whilst my thesis holds good when there is active war in the shape of *civil resistance* going

on, it cannot whilst the latter remains under suspension. But suspension of Civil Disobedience does not mean suspension of war. The latter can only end when India has a constitution of her own making. Till then, the Congress must be in the nature of an army. Democratic Britain has set up an ingenious system in India which, when you look at it in its nakedness, is nothing but a highly organised efficient military control. It is not less so under the present Government of India Act. The Ministers are mere puppets so far as the real control is concerned. The Collectors and the police who "Sir" them to-day, may at a mere command from the Governors, the real masters, unseat the Ministers, arrest them and put them in a lock up. Hence it is that I have suggested that the Congress has entered upon office not to work the Act in the manner expected by the framers but in a manner so as to hasten the day of substituting it by a genuine Act of India's own making.

Therefore, the Congress, conceived as a fighting machine, has to centralise control and guide every department and every Congressman however highly placed, and expect unquestioned obedience. The fight cannot be fought on any other terms. They say this is Fascism pure and simple, but they forget that Fascism is the naked sword. Under it, Dr. Khare should lose his head. The Congress is the very antithesis of Fascism, because it is based on non-violence pure and undefiled. Its sanctions are all moral. Its authority is not derived from the control of panoplied Black-Shirts. Under the Congress regime, Dr. Khare can remain the hero of Nagpur, and the students and citizens of Nagpur, and for that matter other places, may execrate me or—and the Working Committee without a hair of the demonstrators' heads being touched so long as they remain non-violent.

That is the glory and strength of the Congress, not its weakness. Its authority is derived from that non-violent attitude. It is the only purely non-violent political organisation of importance, to my knowledge, throughout the world. And let it continue to be the boast of the Congress that it can command the willing and hearty obedience from its followers, even veterans like Dr. Khare, so long as they choose to belong to it.

CHAPTER EIGHTH

Eating Thistles as Roses

Oft have I said, I say it once more,
I, a wanderer, do not stray from myself.
I am a kind of parrot ; the mirror is holden to me ;
What the Eternal says, I stammering say again.
Give me what you will ; I eat thistles as roses,
And according to my food I grow and give.
Scorn me not, but know I have the pearl,
And am only seeking one to receive it.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

(Translated from Hafiz the Persian Poet).

When the British imperialists refused to explain their war aims, the Congress ministries went into wilderness and decided to eat thistles as roses if that would advance the cause of India. When the "Quit India Movement" was formulated, Patel listened to Gandhi and Gandhi listened to God, each like a parrot to the Eternal. But foolish were the foreigners who believed that Mahatma Gandhi had gone off the track of non-violence. Quit India was a natural sequence of non-violence. And non-violence always have had pearls of spirituality. And the prophet of non-violence was always seeking ardent seekers to have those pearls. The individual non-violence of 1940 was a step in the right direction. The Quit India of 1942 was a step in the right direction too. But if the things went away, it was because the British did not want the pearls and rather sent away the caravan of pearls behind the bars.

I

NO ROSES OF FASCISM

"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 GHAFFAR 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.

"India can have no trust in Japanese declarations. Look at her empire building acts in Manchuria, China and elsewhere."—August 2, 1942.

Dr. PATTABHI SITARAMYA

"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, 1944.

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 naseum* mischievous inaccuracies. Nevertheless, India has no quarrel with the British people. She wishes them well and has heart-felt sympathies with the victims of aggression."—Dec. 31, 1941.

II

GANDHIJI—THE ONLY LEADER

Addressing a big meeting in connection with the Independence Day celebrations on June 16, 1940, at Ahmedabad Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that there were no discordant notes within the Congress at the time of the 1930 and 1932 campaigns. To-day there were more than one voice. If they were an index of strength, they were welcome, but if they meant mutual conflict and mutual destruction, they were sure to lead to defeat.

Sardar Patel, continuing asserted that there was only one leader in the country. If there was any other, he could come forward to show the way. But until this happened, they should implicitly follow the word of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi had told them to spin daily. The Soldiers of the Congress should spin. Their leader had been plying the spinning wheel for 20 years and had found it the most effective weapon in his armoury. Those who did not believe in the weapon of the Charkha should not obstruct those who believe in it.

Proceeding Sardar Patel said that Mahatma Gandhi wanted to feel the pulse of the country as in 1930 by the observance of the Independence day. Mahatma Gandhi had no fixed plan now, as he had none then. He would give the lead when the call came. He did not want to take the risk of leading the country into a fight at this critical juncture.

If, however, a struggle became inevitable, he would take the risk. Sardar Patel added in this connection that the British Government had not given a right reply to the Congress demand for a declaration of War aims by Britain."

Sardar Patel then read out the pledge which was repeated by the audience.

CONGRESS CANNOT COMMIT HARIKARI

Reviewing the political situation at the first meeting of the Congress Party in the Bombay legislature, since the resignation of the Congress Ministry, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee, declared that following the resignation of the Ministries, internal differences in the Congress had disappeared.

He referred to the programme enunciated by the Congress Working Committee and said : "Behind the Charkha is the whole philosophy of Satyagraha. If any one of you disapprove of that cult, you should remain silent. When the struggle is on, the voice of the critic should be hushed; it is for the general to decide with what weapon he would fight."

He concluded : "Let January 26 be a day of our trial. We must prove our fitness to achieve our goal. No general could fight until the army is ready."

Referring to Mr. Jinnah's demand that the Muslim League should be accepted as the sole representative of Muslims, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said : "To concede the claim of Mr. Jinnah is for the Congress to commit suicide in the hope of being reborn a Hindu organisation."

Sardar Patel said : " This is the first occasion when the representatives of the different constituencies have met after the Ministry resigned. It was necessary that there should be such a party meeting in Xmas, when we could discuss the situation in the country, our difficulties and our future work. We should meet, if necessary, every month in order to discuss our problems. No one should go away with the idea that in the coming months we would be doing nothing, while the British Government would be allowed to carry on the administration as it likes. In the very nature of things, British Imperialism cannot last long and the burden of administering our own country must fall on our own shoulders whether we are ready or not."



Supreme Statesmen: Behind Mahatma Gandhi, behind Indian National Congress, behind Nationalist India, are the two non-stop thinkers and indefatigable workers, Sardar Patel and Abul Kalam Azad, discussing no doubt a very serious political hurdle during the Cabinet Mission negotiations at New Delhi.

India on the March: When Sardar Patel went to see the Viceroy at Delhi in July 1946 to discuss British Cabinet proposals, it was as if India had "invaded" the Viceregal Lodge, because he carried the best feelings of his countrymen with him.





SUN OF SOCIALISM

An aureola of simple nobility crowns the members of the Congress Working Committee and in spite of his opposition to Socialists, Sardar Patel is the very sun of Socialism. This is a charming photo of the Simla Conference 1945.

"As you know the Muslim League recently celebrated what is called its 'Day of Deliverance' as if the Congress Ministries were driven out of office. It was inspired by a fear as to what would happen to it if Congress made a settlement with the British Government.

But it forgot that the Congress was not driven out of office; it retired of itself. It was open to us even on the so-called "Day of Deliverance" to return to office, had we so chosen. It is no use praying to God for the resignation of Ministries, the credit, if any, is due to the Congress itself. We had given a pledge to our own electorates not to stick to office if by so doing the interests of the country would suffer. Then a time came when the Congress felt that it could not continue in office any longer, without detriment to the cause for which it existed and you may rest assured that the Congress is not going back to office until it can wield the real power of governance in a free India.

"When the war started, Gandhiji declared his sympathy with Britain. Pledged as we were to freedom, we could not have any sympathy for Nazism, though it must be confessed that it was the humiliating treaty of Versailles, which the Britishers and their friends imposed upon Germany that was responsible for Nazism. However, Gandhiji made it clear that the Congress did not agree with him on this question. The Congress had bitter memories of the last Great War.

NATURAL AND PROPER

"Who can foretell who will win in the end ? Any way, whoever is vanquished will be finished and whoever wins will be weakened beyond repair. With this knowledge it is but natural that the Congress should ask the British Government whether it was prepared to declare that India would be free at the end of the war. The demand was natural and proper.

The reply was that we were not united, that minorities need to be protected and that the Princes had to be placated. How could we have continued in office when such was the attitude of the British Government ?

"There can be no compromise. So long as we have a third party in our midst, there cannot be a compromise between the minorities and the Congress. We have had ample experience in the past. We cannot forget how Sir Samuel Hoare set the Muslims against the Hindus when the Unity Conference was held at Allahabad. The British statesmen, in order to win the sympathy of the world, now go on repeating that they are willing to give freedom to India were Indians united. The "Day of Deliverance" was evidently calculated to make the world and particularly the British public, believe that India was not united and that the Muslims and the Hindus were against each other. But when the several sections of Muslims were found to oppose the "Day of Deliverance", the proposed anti-Hindu demonstration was converted into a Jinnah-Ambedkar-Byramji protest against the Congress Ministries and the Congress High Command. Some people frighten us with a bogey of a civil war. We cannot sacrifice our principles on such empty apprehensions. If there are any who would deem it fit to encourage violence, pledged as we are to non-violence, we will have to go through the ordeal. We cannot forsake our principles. We must strive our utmost to create an atmosphere of non-violence in the country.

III

WHAT DOES THE LEAGUE WANT ?

"It is difficult to understand the position of the League. What does it want ? The Congress has made friendly approaches repeatedly, but every time it has met with a rebuff. The Congress even overruled its revered leader, Pandit Malviyaji,

and did not reject the Communal Award. The League goes on rejecting whatever is offered, without formulating its own demands. The Anglo-Indian papers, which, for a moment, appear to represent League's point of view, urge the formation of Coalition Ministries. The League has not made it clear whether it wants them and on what terms. Congress is anxious to make friends, but with whom ? That is the question. There cannot be friendship unless there is willing mind on both sides. Mr. Jinnah charges the Congress with atrocities. He never could specify the charges. And now the Governors and the Viceroy have kept their mouths sealed lest they should displease the League by speaking the truth. The condition, precedent to any negotiations which Mr. Jinnah makes is that the Congress should accept the League as the sole representative of the Muslims in India. If the Congress accepted that position it would have thrown the Pathans out of the north over-board, jettisoned the Shias who are no less than three out of eight crores of Muslims in India, and betrayed Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other Congress Muslims, who had contributed in creating the National Congress of to-day. To concede the claim of Mr. Jinnah, which Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan has repeated to-day, is for the Congress to commit suicide in the hope of being reborn a Hindu organisation. Should we tell the Maulanas and the leaders of the Jamait-Ul-Ulema that they should leave the national organisation and submit to the communal leadership of Mr. Jinnah, because the British Government desires that Mr. Jinnah should be placated before the Congress gets a declaration of war aims as she desires ? The British Government will be disappointed. Let it continue to rule with its advisors as long as it can. Even if we are handful, we will not allow the Congress to commit political hara-kiri, a Mr. Jinnah wants it to do.

"If the resignation of Ministries has brought real deliverance, it is to the Ministers, who had their daily worries. Our internal differences have disappeared. The Congress has again accepted the leadership of Gandhiji, the only man who can lead us to victory. He is the miracle worker. Under his guidance we must now work. If there are any among Congressmen who are impatient about his methods, they are welcome to try out their own experiments. But they will fail; success will depend only upon loyallv following the lead of Gandhiji.

IV

MR. JINNAH'S ALLEGATIONS ARE WILD AND RECKLESS

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel issued the following statement repudiating the allegations made against Congress Ministries by Mr. Jinnah, President of All-India Muslim League, on December 26, 1941.

"Ordinarily I would not have concerned myself with Mr. Jinnah's appeal to the Muslims to celebrate the so-called 'Day of Deliverance.' But in this case, when he has concentrated his attack on what he terms 'The Congress High Command' and has invited his community to a course of conduct likely to stir up communal strife, as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, I would fail in my duty if I did not repudiate the unfounded allegations made by Mr. Jinnah in this appeal and the draft resolution.

"The country is by now familiar with Mr. Jinnah's vague allegations which are growing every day in their extent and vagueness. But when the Muslim League through the Pirpur Committee, first made the definite charges against the Congress, I instructed them to enquire into each allegation and submit a report. These reports, which in all cases were published by the respective Provincial Governments, showed that the charges

were entirely unfounded. When Congress asked from the British Government a declaration of their war aims and their immediate application to India, Mr. Jinnah again returned to the charges of oppression in general terms against the Ministries. Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the President of the Congress, thereupon offered to submit the charges, if specified, to an independent tribunal for enquiry but Mr. Jinnah spurned the offer, stating that he had placed the charges before the Viceroy. But before the Viceroy could speak, we have his latest outburst in which his community and the world in general are invited to accept his unsupported assertions as proved facts.

"I am constrained to characterise these allegations as wild, reckless and intended to endanger communal peace. When the Congress Ministries took office, as Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, I instructed the Ministries scrupulously to respect the right of the minorities. Grievances of a communal nature were carefully examined by the members of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Further every Premier at my instance had invited his Governor unhesitatingly to intervene in matters affecting the rights and interests of the minorities, whenever the Governor felt that the action of the Ministry was not correct.

"When Mr. Jinnah recently made the charges, I again instructed every Premier to invite his Governor's attention to them as they also affected him and I was informed that the Governor considered the charges as unwarranted. The Governors though invited to contradict, however, could not possibly do so at the time for reasons of constitutional propriety. But I have no doubt that they must have submitted their report to the Viceroy. Had the Governors taken the view that there was any substance in those charges they would have certainly drawn the attention of their Ministers, and I am absolutely confident that before no fair judge could Mr. Jinnah establish

a single charge made by him against the Congress High Command.

It is unfortunate that even now the Viceroy and the Governors, for reasons of their own, do not reply to these charges with which they are as much concerned as their Ministers. The Ministers accepted office at the request of the Governors and went out of office voluntarily for a nobler cause and their record of work has been highly spoken of by all British statesmen, the Viceroy and the Governors. I, therefore, consider it unjust that their fair name should be allowed to be exposed to such unmerited calumny.

INCONSISTENT

What motive Mr. Jinnah had in issuing this appeal when he and Pandit Jawaharlal are about to meet in order to explore the possibilities of a settlement, it is difficult to see. But what Mr. Jinnah says is his confirmed view, many will be driven to the conclusion that he has no desire to see that the negotiations are brought to a successful end. It is humanly impossible to carry on any negotiations without self-respect unless this highly offensive statement is withdrawn. It is also inconsistent with the dignity of a great national organisation like the Congress to negotiate under the threat of such a country-wide communal demonstration.

V

SARDAR PATEL ON CRIPPS' PROPOSALS

Sardar Patel declared at Allahabad on July 26, 1942 :— "Sir Stafford Cripps' visit disillusioned the Congress and drove Mahatma Gandhi to demand the withdrawal of British Power from India". He was addressing a crowded Public Meeting this evening.

Sardar Patel outlined the policy of the Congress since the beginning of the present war and said that the Congress

offered help at various stages, provided it was made possible for it to do so. The Poona offer was made at the risk of separation from Mahatma Gandhi but it was rejected by Government. The policy of non-embarrassment was misunderstood and Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to counteract the growing public opinion in America and China. There was not a single party in the country which had a good word about Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals. Mahatma Gandhi suspected the bonafides of the British Government and demanded the withdrawal of the British Power from India in order to fit India for defence against the impending foreign invasion. Only free India could make sufficient response for meeting foreign invasions.

PEOPLES' WAR

Referring to the Communists' slogan about the peoples' war, Sardar, Patel said that it was the peoples' war so far as Russia was concerned, and their hearts were full with admiration for the heroic struggle which Russia was waging. India was deliberately excluded from the Atlantic Charter and Russia had entered into a treaty with Britain for twenty years after the war, one of the main conditions of which was that Russia would keep her hands off the internal affairs of the British Empire. This meant that India's freedom was no concern of Russia. It was good that ban against the Communist Party was lifted after about three years. The British had the knack of making quick friends. The language which Sir Reginald Maxwell used when Mr. N.M. Joshi moved his resolution in the Central Assembly for giving better treatment to the Communists in prison was still fresh in public memory.

Referring to the criticism of the *Daily Herald*, Sardar Patel said that the record of the Labour Party in England was no better than that of other parties. When it was in power

it was responsible for the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and holding the Round Table Conference. Their leader Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was responsible for the Communal Award which compelled Mahatma Gandhi to undertake the hazardous fast unto death. Even now British Cabinet were no less reactionary than Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden."

VI

IF INDIA IS REALLY TO BE FREED, WHY NOT NOW?

Sardar Valabhbhai Patel, addressing an open air meeting of students in July 1942, in Bombay, said that no Indian would remain aloof from the coming struggle, which would be unique of its type. Students would leave their studies and join it. There were divisions among the student world of India but they should be bridged. Attempts were being made by the third party to divide India, but the Congress was prepared to hand over the administration of the country, if it was offered to them.

The members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he said, had started advising the Congress to desist from the struggle. The Congress had never taken power except for the brief period of two and a half years when it tried to serve the people as much as it could.

The benefit of its struggles, he said, was reaped by others who were offered high posts. They said that the Congress was supported by only a handful of people. It would be seen, said Sardar Patel, how many people were behind the Congress when Mahatma Gandhi launched the struggle after the meeting of the A. I. C. C. at Bombay. The British and American press was perturbed as it was never before perturbed. The Congress was asked to wait till the conclusion of the war when India could be free. If India was really to be freed after the

war why was she not freed before the war? The promises given during the last war were not fulfilled and India was given the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh for her unstinted help. The Congress had grown wiser by experience and wanted freedom for defending India against foreign aggression which was said to be imminent.

Freedom of India would mean the end of all wars in the world."

VII

NO MORE HOPE OF SETTLEMEMT.

Secondly the August Resolution, moved by Pt. Jawahar lal Nehru, Sardar Valabhbhai Patel pointed out that in the last few days, since they had passed the resolution in the Working Committee, the outside world had suddenly developed an enormous interest in India. They were now getting more publicity than they could ever get all these years even by spending money. They were now getting advice freely from those who had no concern and who had evinced no interest in India so long. Some were giving advice, some threatening, some who professed to be friends of India, were declaring that their action would not be in India's good. But he did not want to give any answer to any of these criticisms and advice for the simple reason that whatever answer he could give them would not reach them. The normal channels of publicity that were available were not in their control, and were not open to them. Only such things as were palatable to the Government were allowed to go out of India.

Sardar Patel declared that, if America and England were still thinking that they could fight their enemies, without the co-operation of forty millions of people, they were foolish. It must dawn on the people that this war was a peoples' war and they should fight for their country and their freedom. As long

as this feeling was non-existent, no amount of propaganda through the newspapers and the radio could rouse the people to a supreme effort.

For three years the Congress was scrupulously adhering to their policy of non-embarrassment and did nothing, even under provocation. But this attitude was not appreciated and Britain thought that conditions would remain the same throughout. Now the enemy was at their door and they could not risk being idle any longer.

NEVER SINCERE IN THEIR OFFER

Referring to the question of transference of power to Indians, Sardar Patel declared that whatever the British Government were talking about, they were never sincere in their professions. In India they point to the Muslim League and ask to whom they should transfer power. But they never asked the same question of Burma. They were calling, in their radio broadcasts and newspapers, the government established in Burma as puppet Government. But he asked what sort of a Government they had at New Delhi now. So far as India was concerned, even the so-called Friends of India in England, like Mr. Attlee, were talking the same language as Churchill. He declared that Britain was interested in defending India only for the purpose of making India safe for future generations of Britain. In Russia it was a peoples' war, in China it was a peoples' war, in both the countries the people were not fighting for their freedom, but for preserving it. But he asked, if India was not for Indians, how could they make it a peoples' war.

They were calling this a war for democracy, Sardar Patel went on. The Congress had given three years to Britain to make that principle apply in India. When Churchill declared that the future of India was a purely British question

and it had already been decided by the British Government, no American who professed sympathy now for India would raise a protest against this declaration.

NO TRUST IN JAPANESE DECLARATION

At the same time Sardar Patel warned his audience against going to the other extreme and putting any faith in the professions of Japan about their good intentions regarding India from her acts in Manchuria, China and elsewhere, it was clear that Japan was following the same ambition of Empire building as England and even outdoing them in it. India could have no trust in Japanese declarations.

Referring to the recent Commons statement of Mr. Amery regarding transfer of power to Indians, Sardar Patel declared that British need not worry to whom to transfer power. Let her transfer power to Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, to any Indians so long as they give up their control over India.

There were some people, said Sardar Patel, who still thought that there would be some compromise between the Government and the Congress. He wanted to disabuse them of any such delusion. There was no more hope of any settlement with Britain. An opportunity was now given to the people to fight for their own independence as the Russians and the Chinese and many other nations were doing now elsewhere. They should not miss that opportunity; such an opportunity might not come again.

He warned the people that the fight that was before them was going to be a tough one and as Mahatma Gandhi had emphasised should be short and swift. Without wishing to go into details, he told them that this time it would not be the jail-going type of movement. This time it would not happen that they would remain in jail for a year or two and cease to

think of what was happening outside. Their object was to free India before the Japs came here and to fight them if they did. The movement would not be confined to Congressmen only ; it would take in all men who called themselves Indians. It would also include all items of non-violent resistance already sanctioned by the Congress and probably some more."

VIII

NO THISTLE OF DICTATORSHIP

Beverley Nichols has the cheek to call Mahatma Gandhi a dictator and the Congress a fascist organisation under the iron heels of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel ! Who had ever before heard of this novel news ?

" It is a Gandhi dictatorship," says Mr. Nichols. "So many examples might be quoted in proof of this assertion that it is difficult to choose the most telling."

So many examples might be quoted in proof of this assertion that Mr. Nichols has not quoted any example at all !

The lynx-eyed self-styled Chief Justice Hon'ble Mr. Beverley Nichols of Fogland passed his verdict on India overnight and set out in the morning to hunt out evidence in support of his judgment.

" Before me is a book called "The Iron Dictator," says Mr. Nichols.

" On the dust-cover is a melodramatic drawing of a ferocious man," says Nichols, "Twisted into a sort of grimace that Mussolini used to affect when he was braying for the moon. The face is a portrait, and a very good one, of the book's subject, Sardar Patel."

The face is no doubt a portrait of Sardar Patel. But it is certainly not a good one. Has Nichols met Sardar Patel ?

If the face of the Patriot Patel is ferocious, the legless inhumanity of British imperialism is alone responsible for it. Or should we presume that all along Sardar Patel has been playing ducks and drakes with Mahatma Gandhi ? If we accept the formula—it will land us into round-the-clock complications. Instead of fixing deception on Mahatma Gandhi, it will be easier and more correct to assume that the judgment is wrong.

Gandhi and Patel have long worked together. If Patel is a dictator, Gandhiji cannot be the apostle of non-violence. And if we agree that Gandhiji is not a dictator, surely Patel is not a dictator too. Consequently, Mr. Nichols stands upon sandy foundations. India is not the land of dictators, but of sincere servants of civilisation.

" Two groups were formed at Gaya—one under C.R. Das and the Elder Nehru favouring council-entry and the other of no-changers, who wished to follow Gandhian programe. This group was led by Rajagopalachariar and Vallabhbhai Patel.....Patel, Rajaji and other Ganhdites resigned from the Working Committee. The resignations were accepted and the Working Committee was reconstituted. The President also resigned."

Does this smack of dictatorship Mr. Nichols ?

" The Government," said Sardar Patel to the peasants in a no-tax campaign, "you can do what you like, but only by force you shall get us to agree to what we do not like. Cut me to pieces but I will not pay."

The peasants of Bardoli acted on this advice. They sufferedrdships haand privations, but they did not yield. The

Government employed Pathans to harass them and force them to pay, who indulged in all sorts of indecencies against them.

Sardar Patel is certainly not the chief party boss of the Congress, John Gunther—the author of *Inside Asia*—who called Sardar Patel the "Congress is Jim Farley, the ruthless party fixer and organiser"—told a great lie.

And is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel an "Iron Dictator"? Is he the "party boss"? Is he the "Jim Farley"? Is he "the ruthless party fixer"? Is Patel "the creator of the Congress political machine"? Does he look "like a Roman Emperor"? Does Patel lack Nehru's "grace and intellectual precision"? Has he "no vision beyond the immediate task"? Has Patel no "religious impulses"? Has he never read "the Hindu scripturess till last year"? Is Sardar Patel " Gandhi's Greatest General,"?

No doubt, now and then, Sardar Patel has wielded a strong hand in the Congress. But that was to purge it of undesirable elements, and to translate the ideas of Gandhiji into action. Consequently it was for the good of the country.

CHAPTER NINTH

The Ship has Reached the Shore

Man is a slave ;
The fates decree.
On the waste of the ocean
There is my fatherland, there is my grave.

—ESAIAS TEGNER

(Translated from Scandinavian by Longfellow)

On the wastes of the political ocean, Sardar Patel has always been searching for a grave of the free in the Free Fatherland. He has consistently refused to submit to the British decree that an Indian must for ever be a slave. In such a country, were he not bound by the shackles of non-violence, Sardar Patel would rather die than live. For apple of freedom, he has been restless like mercury. Ever since his release from the Ahmednagar Fort, he has given vent to red-hot ideas.

I

CONGRESS CAN NEVER SACRIFICE ITS NATIONAL CHARACTER

The following speech was delivered by Sardar Patel at a reception given in his honour on June 30, 1945 in Bombay. Over 650 well-known city organisations—commercial, industrial and political—were identified with the reception.

Speaking in Gujrati for over an hour, Sardar Patel acknowledged the greetings and said by this reception they had honoured him, and through him, the Congress.

Answering the oft-repeated remark that Indians were not well-trained to govern their country, Sardar Patel said : " If anyone tells you that the present administration is good, you can tell him that when at one time many other countries were on par with India in culture and civilisation, Britain was in its primitive stage.

" If they entertain the feeling that theirs is the best administration, they are living in fool's paradise. The present devastating European war is proof positive of this Act. And the Western culture and civilisation are on the decline. It is not too late for them to follow India even now. "

Sardar Patel assured the gathering that whatever attitude the Congress took on the present situation, the letter and spirit embodied in the August Resolution would not be forgotten. " We shall not forget it, nor forget or betray those who played their part bravely during the last three years. "

Explaining the spirit behind the " Quit India " demand, Sardar Patel said that it did not mean that every Britisher in this country should clear off. There was no enmity with the British people.

Many things have happened, continued Sardar Patel, in these three years. But the Bengal Famine and deaths of people in lakhs were a standing shame. When people were dying of starvation, the previous Viceroy who claimed to be the best friend of Mahatma Gandhi, did not utter a word of sympathy, nor did he visit the province.

Sardar Patel referred to the negotiations now being held in Simla. " If anybody said we are frustrated, I can-

not believe it " he said. " I have no feeling of diffidence. I am not going to ask you to accept whatever is offered. That would be a beggar's mentality. I would prefer death to such an attitude of mind. I believe in realising my rights. " He assured the audience that the Congress President and Mahatma Gandhi, in consultation with the Congress Working Committee, would take no decision which would adversely affect the interests of the people.

A SURE INDICATION

" I shall give you a sure indication of the Simla talks," added Sardar Patel, " on that you can accept or reject the Viceroy's proposals. If you find Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the picture, you can rest assured that you are not in a trap. If there is a change of heart in the British rulers, we shall not pursue our quarrel. We do not want to disturb the atmosphere of cordiality. We will give them time to pack up. Independence is coming like flood tide. I am anxious how we will react to it. Therefore, we should not allow our strength to be frittered away by pointing out the failures of our men during the past three years. "

Sardar Patel referred to the correspondence that passed between the Working Committee members and the previous Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, who announced that they would be tried for organising a rebellion. The members had asked for such trial but before they came out the then Viceroy had left the shores of India, leaving behind him the tragedy of Bengal and a corrupt administration. But we have not lost anything. The Government have learnt that if they used violence, then there are also people who will resist violence with violence.

The task ahead of the people, Sardar Patel emphasised, was to root out completely the corruption and bribery rampant in the country. The people had complained of

"control raj", control of eating, housing and of every commodity; but there seemed to be no control over bribery. If the Congress took up the responsibility for administration even non-violence would be given a short-shrift in the case of people who accepted bribes. He believed in non-violence, and also in qualified violence.

VICEROY'S VETO POWER

Adverting to the veto power of the Viceroy under the new proposals, Sardar Patel said that during the period of the Congress Ministries in the provinces no occasion had arisen when any Governor had exercised his special powers. On the other hand he had found his own people creating trouble for the Ministries. It had been alleged that the Congress Ministries had done injustice to Muslims in the provinces. The Congress, said the speaker, accepted the Ministries not for few crumbs of office but to wreck the constitution. The Congress wanted all sections to join it in wrecking the constitution. But the war intervened and the Congress Ministries gave up office.

"If we are to occupy the seat of responsibility at the Centre, and if trustworthy people are placed there, there is nothing to be afraid of. The Muslim League observed the 'Deliverance Day' when the Congress Ministries resigned. I ask them when the Congress does not bear any ill-will or enmity towards the British people and wants them to do business here as friends, how can it and its members dislike their own countrymen? God save us from mutual distrust and suspicion. If real power is transferred to us, our differences will disappear.

The Sardar asserted that the Congress could never sacrifice its national character and surrender its claim to represent all India. "Let Mr. Jinnah claim all Muslim

allegiance to the League. The Congress instead of accepting that claim, will prefer to stay out. Let power be transferred to the League. If, however, the League is not prepared to accept the responsibility of administration, then give it to the Congress.",

He hoped that substantial results would result from the Simla talks.

II

TIME HAS COME TO UTTER PLAIN TRUTH

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the course of his speech at Bombay on August 9, 1945 said "Ninth of August to-day ! When I got up early this morning and opened the newspapers the first thing that crossed my eyes was the hanging of that brave young man Mahendra Choudhury of Bihar. And Wavell had asked to forgive and forget. That new Secretary of State has said that Britain wants an equal partnership with India. Does it mean that if one young man is hanged here, another young man of theirs would be hanged there ?"

"I tell you, I have now grave doubts about all this show. Our President has ordered that the 9th August should be observed with dignity and claim that should enhance the prestige of the Congress. We sat silent observing his orders, till this day, for the President was anxious that nothing should be said to disturb the atmosphere But now let the President tell what is the meaning of the hanging of that brave young man ? If there is no answer forthcoming for this stark truth, then no one can gag my mouth. Swaraj may come thereby or may not come. But Swaraj would surely not come by shirking at every stage. It was not my original intention to speak all this before you to-day. But when I read that staggering news of hanging, I thought the time had come to utter plain truth."

"During the last three years India has witnessed many changes and the entire world also has undergone some transformation." Continued Sardar Patel, "You yourself bear witness to the happenings in this very city. We were in absolute dark when we were in gaol, but now we have learnt a little of the happenings during these years. When we were put under arrest, we were not even told of our destination. Threats were uttered that a trial will be arranged for us. The Viceroy that has retired now wrote to us that we would be made to stand a trial for the disturbances of 1942. We welcomed the opportunity for a twofold reason. We thought we would have an opportunity to prove before the world the justice of the nation and simultaneously we would expose the real culprits. But that Viceroy sailed off. Many Viceroys have come and gone but their strategy has mostly remained uniform. India has witnessed many Secretaries of State coming and going. But never has the like of the last one occupied that chair. None would have wept over Amery's fall, though I do not know if he himself has been too much shocked by it."

"We were told, 'Forget and Forgive,' when we were released. It was gently said that mistakes have occurred on both sides. We believed them and felt that there was some change in their attitude, for they never owned their mistakes in the past. We thought there is nothing wrong in starting with a clean slate. But when I got up this morning, and read that a brave young man of Bihar had been hanged, then I thought that though a new slogan 'Forget and Forgive,' has been coined, British strategy remains the same. Grave doubts have arisen in my mind and I want to ask the Congress President about his message to observe 9th of August peacefully and the Government's message that I read this morning. If bygones are to be

bygones, then the curtain should be dropped on both sides. But if one side alone is to be partially covered, then we shall have to expose the other side ruthlessly."

Commenting upon the unprecedented havoc wrought by the atomic bomb in Japan, Sardar Patel said that entire cities had been obliterated—infants, adults, aged, live-stock and all. "That is the picture of the western civilization in its fullest vulgarity. It may be said that Japan was given sufficient notice. May be Japan would reap the harvest that she has sown. But if these people are to pursue that path of destruction, there will be no go for the world but to remember Gandhiji. Because the other mad course is to lead the world to destruction."

Sardar Patel did not spare the tall professions of the Big Three: "It is said that the Big Three would never abuse their might and would herald a new World Order. But let humanity remember their history, and none would be convinced of the Big Three's claims. Let the record of the Two Bigs be set aside, but we know the English. They speak one thing and do the reverse."

The hanging of Mahendra Choudhary had so much agitated Sardar Patel's mind, that he felt compelled to return to that topic soon again: "Gandhiji wrote letters to the Viceroy and besought him to avert at least the hanging, if for no other sake, at least in the name of humanity. Even if those who have been condemned are actually guilty, they may be awarded any sentence, short of hanging. Many more are still awaiting the rope.

"A young man does an action in a moment of emotion, for a purely political ideal. The Government passed the sentence of death but the execution of the boy is not a manifestation of the policy of 'Forgive and Forget.'

Sardar Patel next made a slashing attack on the victory of the British Labour Party. He observed: "This is the opening of the British Labour's rule in this country. When a representative of Reuters asked for my reaction to the Labour victory, I told him to ask that party, for it was their victory. We have had bitter experience of that party in the past.

To-day I am neither happy nor sorry for their victory. We can judge them only by their actions. Some wise man may argue that the Indian administration is conducted by Governor's Government. The Congress still did not want to go that way. It had, on the contrary, advised young men to discard that path for it wanted to oust the foreigners and would not succeed in doing so if we pursued those lines.

"Because Gandhiji has shown the path of non-violence, it does not mean that India accepted it in its entirety," he said. "I have yet to see a man who believes in non-violence as Gandhiji does. If you could not wield a sword, at least you should be able to face the sword. Gandhiji has, therefore, taught the people to say 'No' to the Government."

Referring to the gains of the August Movement, Sardar Patel declared that there had been a great awakening among women. The people in the city had no idea of the terrible privations that the women in villages had undergone during the repression. He affirmed that Congress was not defeated, but has emerged stronger. As to the Government, he said while Gandhiji enjoined the people to offer civil disobedience in a dignified manner, the Government ordered their forces to break the law in any manner they liked to put down the popular risings.

Referring to the bogey of Hindu-Muslim discord, he declared, "Who has thrust this responsibility on the head of the

British? If they are sincere, let them transfer power to the Congress or the League. Let the issue be referred to an impartial international tribunal if there is left any honest man in the world. But if Government policy is that there could be no progress until the communal question is solved, then the Congress would fight the Government all along.

Procceding, he asked why the Congress was not yet legalised, when there was no mass movement now.

Sardar Patel asked for a week's rule by Indians over Britain and promised to create dissension in Great Britain so that England, Wales, and Scotland would be wrapped into eternal quarrels.

Sardar Patel asked why the ban on the Congress Socialist Party was not removed by the "Socialist" Government of England. He termed the proposed elections to the Central Assembly as sheer waste of money, for it was no good re-electing it with such a limited franchise. He, however, declared that the Congress was ready for provincial elections.

Sardar Patel attacked the merchants for creating black markets and asked Congressmen and students to put an end to it.

He appealed for making the Congress as popular as possible and gave a call for brisk organizing work. He finally promised that excepting the inoperative portion of August 8 Resolution relating to the mass movement not a word or comma would be changed.

III

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

If the British are eager to rule over 400 million people without any responsibility, and from such a distance, then they must relieve themselves of that burden and hand over

the reins to those who are capable. If hangings are a routine in their administration, let them say so plainly."

Sardar Patel again returned to Lord Wavell's appeal to forgive and recalled how many thousands had been left behind in the jail. They were responsible for the same crimes as the leaders were. If they were not to be released, let the Government send the leaders back to jail, he said.

Sardar Patel condemned those who saw too much in the establishment of a Labour Government in Britain, especially when the Labour Party was committed to the India policy framed by the now defeated Conservatives. He criticized Sir Stafford Cripps for his latest proposal that the British Government should now strive for a permanent solution of the Indian deadlock. He recalled the reforms promised to India in 1919, and the bloody aftermath of those promises in the form of the Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh massacre.' "The British are capable of repeating the same things when they are at the crest of victory," he said.

Sardar Patel reminded the people of the solemn resolve in the August 8th resolution. "Quit India," he thundered, was a battle cry, and would remain so till patriots existed in India." "No more of proposals and plans. India has chosen the path of sacrifice."

IV

NO NATIONAL PLANNING WITHOUT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Sardar Patel delivered the following speech at Bombay on Nov. 1, 1945 :—

"We want the same independence and the same freedom as England enjoys to-day. We shall not be satisfied with anything less," declared Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to-day at a luncheon given by the Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

Mr. Patel said that economic freedom and political freedom could not be separated. There could be neither planning nor prosperity until India had her own national Government. India would not be content with any status less than the one Britain herself enjoyed to-day.

Sardar Patel wanted to make it clear to the British people that the people of India and the Congress would not keep on waiting indefinitely while the question of India's constitutional future went into a maze of committees and conferences. The country wanted a speedy and final solution. It was no use British Government telling Indians that there was no unity in the country: the Hindu-Muslim problem was the creation of the British. The Congress was quite prepared to accept arbitration by an impartial tribunal.

It was no use British people telling India that there was disunity in India; the disunity was the creation of the successive British Governments. If Britain was under foreign rule for a few years, similar disunity could be created among England, Scotland and Wales.

Promises made by the British Government were not fulfilled. The advent of the Labour Government had not made any difference. If anything the position had become worse. The Labour Government prevented Lord Wavell from implementing his own plan to create an interim Government at the centre.

BRITAIN HAS NO RIGHT TO TALK OF OBLIGATIONS

Mr. Attlee had been talking of moral responsibility of British people to the Dutch in Indonesia, where the British Government had sent Indian troops to suppress the freedom movement. A nation which had suppressed the freedom of 400 million people for nearly two centuries had no right to talk of moral obligations.

The speaker wanted to know if it was morally right for Britain to support Dutch imperialists against the Indonesians, who were fighting for their freedom.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel asked the Indian commercial community not to forget their obligations, as nationals of the country, to the freedom movement. He fully appreciated their limitations and difficulties as businessmen, in so far the national struggle for freedom was concerned, but he wished to emphasise that they as Indian businessmen, had to make their own contribution towards the achievement of Indian freedom, which was dear to everyone in India, whether he was a merchant, peasant or a prince.

DEPLORABLE

Sardar Patel made it clear to the mercantile community that it was no use their depending on alien rulers for the protection of their interests. He regretted to point out that during the 1942 struggle, when the masses were in dire distress, some of the merchants had acted in a manner not befitting them. It was indeed deplorable he said.

The British people had now assessed the real strength behind the Indian freedom movement and they were fully conscious of the fact that, when the next struggle comes, they would not be able to make their own stand.

"I want to warn you," said Sardar Patel, "when the next crisis comes, you should not exploit the weakness and helplessness of the masses, but stand by them and with them."

MILLIONS DIED OF STARVATION

Sardar Vallabhbhai then referred to the Bengal famine and said that there could be no greater condemnation of the system of administration in the country than that millions of people should have died of starvation and hunger. If such a

state of affairs had occurred in England, the Government of the day would have been hounded.

Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy, did not even care to visit the famine-stricken province of Bengal. If anyone deserved to be hanged on account of the Bengal famine, it was Lord Linlithgow.

General Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of India, the other day talked of complete Indianisation of the army, but he could not say how long it would take him to complete the process of Indianisation.

"It is a mockery to talk of Indianisation of the Army, the Air Force and Navy at an unspecified future date, when we are, at the same time, being told that very soon the entire Government of the country would be handed over to us."

INDIA PROUD OF SUBHAS BOSE'S ARMY

"General Auchinleck," said Sardar Patel, "did not know how long the process of Indianisation would take. Did not he know that Subhas Bose organised an army of 60,000 and a women's regiment in less than a year.

It was this very army the British Government were now trying to disband.

"If the British Government's professions about giving India self-Government were genuine, why do they not make the national army created by Subhas Chandra Bose the nucleus of the new national army to be raised?

Do they not know that we, Indians, are proud of the performance of this army and with its coming into being an expert like Auchinleck ought to get out, if he cannot create a completely Indianised army within a specified period.

EXPERTS THAT COME AND GO

"I must refer to the stream of foreign experts, who visit India every year to teach us new things. They come and go

but no results are seen. The misery and suffering of the people continue. It is most unfortunate that some of our own men repeat like parrots the views of such experts, without realising that their views really do not mean much to India so long as she is not free. Such men, in my opinion, do more harm than good."

Sardar Vallabhbhai, in conclusion emphasised that there could be no national planning without a national Government. There was no co-ordination in the Government of India to-day nor did the Government of the day pursue any comprehensive policy. Economic freedom and political independence were co-related and they should be treated as two theses of the same problem namely independence.

PEOPLE'S RESOLVE

The first call to the people of Bombay to extend their whole-hearted support to the Congress in the coming elections, in which it has decided to participate, was given by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, presiding over a mass meeting.

"It is in your hands to see that the forthcoming elections to the Provincial and Central Legislatures are the last in this country under the present conditions and that the next elections are held in a free India," Sardar Patel said, speaking in Hindi. A large gathering was present at the Shivaji Park where the Congress High Command had decided to hold a public meeting to be addressed by Mahatma Gandhi after the passing of the "Quit India" resolution in August 1942.

Sardar Patel assured them that the moment India became a free country the Congress organisation would cease to function and the power and control over the affairs of the nation would automatically go into the hands of the sons of the nation.

Reviewing the conditions that obtained in the country after the arrest of leaders on August, 9, 1942, Sardar Patel remarked that this was the first time when they were able to hold a public meeting and discuss their problem in a free atmosphere. After their release recently from imprisonment the leaders found, wherever they went, a new spirit and awakening in the hearts of the people. The arrest of the leaders and the violent onslaught resorted to by the Government had not crushed the spirit and courage of the people. The heroism the people showed during the trying period, Sardar Patel remarked, was marvellous and was ample demonstration to the outside world that the people were determined to make sacrifices for the cause of the country's freedom.

The August Resolution, Sardar Patel added, still remained to be implemented. The fight for freedom had not concluded. There was no question of defeat as far as India was concerned, he said, as the cause for which they were fighting was legitimate.

Sardar Patel referred to the British Government's latest proposals and the forthcoming elections and said that the sincerity of the Government's professions would be known in due course. The purpose of fighting the elections, the Sardar said, was twofold. The Congress could demonstrate to the world that the whole country was behind the national organisation, in spite of the attempt on the part of the Government to crush it, and that the people were determined to win freedom. The various problems facing them to-day had to be tackled and so people's trusted representatives were required. They had also to organise themselves and prepare for another struggle, if necessary, and for that purpose their resources and strength should be marshalled in good time.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, who addressed the meeting was cheered when he observed that "the August Resolution

still held the field," "The resolution," Pandit Nehru said, "has the sanction of the people behind it. It shows the resolve of the people to be a free nation."

There had been many mistakes on the part of some Congressmen. But there was no instance, Pandit Nehru asserted, of any Congressman having staked the honour of the Congress and the country. They had kept the name of the Congress without stain and their spirit remained bright.

Whether the Labour Government was sincere or not in its offer to India, the Congress had to assess, from time to time, the strength it derived from the people. From what he had seen in the course of his tour of the various parts of the country, he had no doubt that the strength of the Congress had enormously increased. The presence of people in such large numbers at the meeting, Pandit Nehru said, was an index to the fact that the whole country was behind the Congress.

Referring to the ensuing elections, Pandit Nehru said that the Congress had decided to contest and secure the maximum number of seats in the Legislatures, because many problems facing them to-day had to be solved. The conditions of famine, the huge accumulated sterling balances, the problem of demobilised men, the disposal of war surpluses, factories, buildings and similar other problems had to be solved. These could find a satisfactory solution only in the hands of a free people.

Mr. Shankerrao Deo, a member of the Congress Working Committee, speaking in Marathi, said that when they went to jail after passing the "quit India" resolution and when they proceeded to Simla to discuss the Wavell offer, it was only for winning the freedom of India. "We live as a free people or we die in the cause of the freedom of India. This is our resolve," he said.

VI

SNATCHING THE POWER

Addressing a crowded public meeting at Ahmedabad on January 15, 1946, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that the Congress has decided to contest the elections only to prove how far the people were behind the Congress. If the Congress remained aloof from the elections unworthy persons would enter the councils and they would be used against the Congress. The elections, to the Central Assembly were over. But that was not going to decide the problem of India. The Congress captured a larger number of seats than in the previous Assembly.

"The Muslim League", Sardar Patel said, "has captured all the Muslim seats and it may celebrate a Victory Day and believe that Pakistan has been achieved. But Pakistan cannot be achieved in this manner. Pakistan is not in the hands of the British Government. If Pakistan is to be achieved, Hindus and Muslims will have to fight. There will be a civil war. The Congress is no longer going to knock at the door of the League. The Congress has tried to settle with the League many times, but it has been kicked out every time. The Congress has decided not to approach the League till it changes its policy. Is can take by force whatever it wants."

Sardar Patel disputed the claim that Britain would hand over power if Hindus and Muslims united. The Viceroy, he said, went to England with a formula agreed upon by the two representatives of the Congress, and the League. On his return from England he put forth a new proposal and the Congress accepted it. The Viceroy admitted the sincerity of the Congress and the unreasonableness of Mr. Jinnah. Yet he refused to do anything against the wishes of Mr. Jinnah. " If this policy is to be pursued again we shall

not accept it," said Sardar Patel. "We are determined to take power into our hands. We cannot now believe in Britain's words. Britain should show us by action that she is prepared to part with power. We are not going to repeat the Simla mistake. We believed when we were called to Simla that the military Viceroy really wanted to make a settlement with us. It is said that he was ready but pressure was brought to bear from above. He should have resigned in that case. But he was not much different from a statesman Viceroy. Only he speaks less."

" Some say Pandit Nehru was making fiery speeches, " added the Sardar, " and stirring up a revolution and suggest that he should be arrested. They do not understand why there was no revolution in the country long ago, Mahatma Gandhi is responsible for it. He has done the work of the Police. Even then he has often been put in jail. A Parliamentary Delegation has now come to India for study after 200 years. If Britain is prepared to give and we are ready to accept power, there need be no dispute. But the Civilians are not prepared to part with power. Why does Britain use our men in Indonesia ? Indonesians are fighting for their freedom. Britain has enslaved us and cannot make us take part in the enslavement of our neighbours."

Sardar Patel referred to the victory celebration of the Muslim League and said it had won where there was no fight. There was restricted franchise for the Central Assembly. " But provincial elections, " he said, " will have to be fought on a wider franchise. The elections will show in how many of the 11 provinces League Ministries can be formed. There is no power in the Centre. The Congress will again form ministries in the Provinces. It is then to see where Pakistan stands. It will be time then to celebrate the victory. The Congress is not going to beg for votes. It claims votes.

There should be no race for Congress tickets. Applications for Congress tickets claim selections for their services to the country. Have Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and myself done no service to the country that we are not going to the Councils ? We sent our sentries to the Councils so as to prevent traitors doing harm to the country. Those who are not selected as Congress Candidates are not less competent. They have a field of service outside. Voters should vote for the Congress on the election day going to the polling booths in processions without waiting for our volunteers to come and pick them up. The sick should be carried to the booths to exercise their franchise. The Congress should not be put to any election expenses. The Congress is seeking election not on minor issues but to put into execution the ' Quit India ' resolution of 1942."

Sardar Patel referred to the demonetisation ordinance and said : " Before I went to jail I warned you that Government paper currencies were of no avail. To-day 500-rupee and higher denomination notes have ceased to be of value. To-morrow 100-rupee notes might be demonetised. Why were black markets allowed so long ? But this is not the time to talk of post-war schemes. Our real work will start after the elections. We shall not allow anybody to rest and we shall not rest after the elections.

" The Congress will meet the Parliamentary Delegation. We should not scorn it. India is out to fight the world but we want foreigners to remain here as servants and not as masters of the country. No one has the right to partition India. You may celebrate Pakistan Day, but we are all still slaves. Pakistan can be achieved only after India is free. The Congress will fight for freedom single-handed. "

VII

THE SHIP HAS REACHED THE SHORE

" On Feb. 2, 1946, at Karachi, said Sardar Patel :—

The ship has reached the shore, " and our freedom is near at hand. It is for us to take it and work it to our advantage or leave the opportunity. The destiny of Sind lies in your hands and has been so since its separation. It is also the programme of the Congress to allow and encourage its growth in the hands of the people of Sind. It is not only necessary to get our freedom but it is equally important that we should develop strength and capacity to maintain it. "

Sardar Patel drew an object lesson for India from the situation in Europe. He pointed out that the European countries, though free, were torn to pieces by constant wars and in order to be free themselves they made others slaves. He asked if India should follow in their foot-steps of internecine quarrels.

Referring to the situation of Sind in all-India politics, Sardar Patel said that " for the freedom of India as a whole we should have orderly development of Sind also which formed a strategic part of India. This war had benefited two provinces, Sind and the Punjab, and from a deficit province, Sind had become surplus one, and wiped out its debt and now held a position presently in which other provinces had to beg for rice and wheat from Sind. It lay primarily in the hands of the people of Sind to make her still more prosperous.

Addressing a large gathering numbering over 25,000 in the Sharda Mandir grounds, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that " the freedom of India is near and it is for Indians to take it. " He said that India could wait no longer and

Britain had realised too that she could no more keep India under bondage. Sind had a great future but the need of the hour was a stable ministry—a ministry that would maintain law and order, undertake mass uplift programme and remove corruption in the administration. The task of the economic and political development of the province lay in the hands of the people of Sind themselves.

VIII.

LAY DOWN ARMS

When the R. I. N. Ratings mutinied in February 1946, Sardar Patel advised them to lay down their arms and surrender.

An appeal to the Royal Indian naval ratings to be patient and peaceful and to the people to maintain strict discipline and to do nothing to disturb the peace in the city in the present state of high tension is made by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the course of a statement to the Associated Press of India on February 22, 1946.

" All possible efforts," he says, " are being made by the Congress to help the ratings out of their difficulty and to see that their genuine grievances are immediately redressed. The Congress has a big party in the Central Assembly and is doing its best to help them. I would, therefore, earnestly appeal to them to be patient and peaceful and also to the people to maintain strict discipline and to do nothing to disturb the peace in the city in the present state of high tension. "

Advice to the Royal Indian Naval Ratings on strike to lay down their arms and go through the formality of surrender, which has been asked for, is given by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Congress leader when his advice was sought by the representatives of the naval ratings to-day.

Mr. Patel says: In the present unfortunate circumstances that have developed, the advice of the Congress to the R. I. N. Ratings is to lay down arms and go through the formality of surrender, which has been asked for. The Congress will do its level best to see that there is no victimisation and the legitimate demands of the Naval Ratings are accepted as soon as possible. There is considerable tension all over the city and there has been heavy loss of life and property. There is also considerable strain, both on the Naval Ratings as well as on the authorities. While fully appreciating their spirit and courage and also having full sympathy in their present difficulties, the best advice that the Congress can give them, in the present circumstances, is to end the tension immediately. This advice is in the interests of all concerned."

It is understood that the gist of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's advice to the Royal Indian Naval Ratings on strike has been conveyed to the authorities and, according to private advices, the naval ratings are understood to have expressed their readiness to be guided by the Congress in this matter and that the formality of surrender will take place shortly.

The fact that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had deprecated the R. I. N. strike was disclosed at the hearing of the R. I. N. Enquiry Commission on 21-5-46.

Lt. S. M. Nanda, Divisional Officer of the "Talwar" who was examined, said that after the mutiny was called off, he with some ratings, paid a visit to Sardar Patel.

Lt. Nanda said: "Sardar Patel mentioned that the ratings had done a grave error in resorting to a strike which had not done any good to them. He felt very much humiliated to ask the ratings to surrender unconditionally in the name of the Congress—an organisation which in its long

history had never thought of unconditional surrender to the British."

IX

FIGHT OUT ANARCHY

Sardar Patel delivered an emphatic speech at Bombay on February 27, 1946.

A stern warning to the people of India not to be misled by those who direct them into wrong channels was given by Sardar Patel while presiding over a mammoth meeting held at Chaupathi.

Sardar Patel declared that such a step would lead to complete anarchy and chaos. After three days of complete anarchy in the city which was followed by the military shooting innocent people, it was time for all concerned to do a certain amount of heart-searching over the tragic happenings of the past four days in the city. "I shall, however, refrain," continued the Sardar, "from plain-speaking, as the time for such plain-speaking will soon come."

Sardar Patel said that those who had committed ghastly crimes during the disturbances would not go unpunished. Over 300 persons had lost their lives and over 1,000 had been injured. What was all this suffering and toll of human life for, I cannot understand? Why the people should think of an uprising against the Government when the Congress had not given a call for revolt, but was engaged in normal peaceful constructive activities.

WRONG LEAD GIVEN TO PEOPLE OF BOMBAY

"I ask the people of India not to listen to those who, calling themselves Congressmen, are determined to create anarchy and disorder. The people should listen to the voice of the Congress alone and carry out the lead given by the

Congress. If you think that the Congress lead is wrong, it is up to you to replace the Congress leadership. But so long as the present leadership is accepted, you should abide by the advice given by your leaders and carry out faithfully the instructions your leaders give you. Such wrong lead as was given to the people of Bombay can bring neither Swaraj nor peace to the people. Such wrong lead as was demonstrated only results in anarchy and chaos."

"DON'T LISTEN TO ADVICE OF COMMUNIST PARTY"

Sardar Patel said that Communist Party was giving a wrong lead to the people and trying to exploit their patriotism. They were doing this for the purpose of resurrecting their own party's prestige which had suffered in recent years. The Communist Party had whole-hearted co-operation with British imperialism when India had been plunged in the 'Quit India' struggle of 1942, whose battle-cry was "do or die". That party was to-day talking of an anti-imperialist struggle. Would anyone take them seriously? It was merely a feeble attempt on their part to revive their rapidly losing influence among the people of India. All their efforts to rebuild themselves were doomed to failure. The duty of the people was clear. It was not to listen to the advice of such misguided people but to follow the lead of the Congress, which know when to fight and when to negotiate.

Addressing himself to the student world, the Sardar said that he was pained to see the gross indiscipline among the ranks of the students. If they were to make any headway, they should not attempt to give a lead but follow the lead of the Congress. They should learn to discipline themselves and act according to the advice and guidance given to them by their national leaders.

R. I. N. RATINGS' STRIKE

Sardar Patel dealt at length with the strike of the ratings of the R. I. N. and described the events leading to the declaration of a hartal on Friday. He said those who, against the advice of the Congress, had called for a general hartal on Friday to express their sympathy and solidarity with the ratings on strike were living in a fool's paradise. They had not realised the gravity of the situation. Knowing the real situation, the Congress was handling the question in the most appropriate manner and it could be trusted to do its utmost to ensure that the real grievances of the naval ratings were promptly and fully redressed.

MISGUIDED DEMONSTRATIONS

The misguided demonstrations organised by the so-called sympathisers of the naval ratings not only did not help their cause, but had cost the city dearly. As the Congress had been seized of the question of the demands of the naval ratings, it would have been wise to leave the matter in the hands of the Congress, which could use its influence and position to secure relief to the ratings. Instead of doing this some misguided persons interfered in the matter and their interference definitely injured the chances of a proper settlement.

The Sardar then referred to the C.-in-C's broadcast speech last night and said he had emphasised on the need for maintaining discipline with which, said the Sardar, he readily concurred, but he would remind the C.-in-C. that the conditions under which the Indian personnel of the army and other armed services were serving in the present transitional stage were most difficult, and, therefore, such delicate situations as the Naval Ratings' strike arose. The Naval Ratings had been doing everything humanly possible to secure

redress of their legitimate grievances and when they were frustrated in their legitimate efforts and were even punished or insulted everytime for making any representation, they had no alternative but to resort to collective action. Technically such collective action might be described as an offence but there could be no punishment for such technical offences, especially when racial discrimination in regard to status, pay and condition of living were in existence.

The ratings were nursing a long standing grievance which drove them almost to desperation. Such a situation required to be handled with tact and sympathy. He did not wish to say anything more on the subject as the whole matter was the subject of an enquiry. He would, however, remind the authorities that times had changed and that not only India but the whole of Asia was asking for redress of long standing grievances.

X

INDIA WILL BE FREE IN 1946

Sardar Patel delivered the following speech at Bombay on March 3, 1946.

"India must be and was bound to be free in the course of this year," Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said this evening setting a date for India's freedom from foreign domination. "There could be no two opinions about that," he added.

Sardar Patel was speaking at a large gathering of workers, at Patel—working class locality,—in connection with the forthcoming election. In the course of his speech he also referred to the British Cabinet Mission.

Speeking in Hindustani, Sardar Patel called upon the people to maintain a peaceful atmosphere now that the

Government seemed to be earnest about settling the Indian question.

The Mission, Sardar Patel said, would be coming to India very soon. The Congress wanted to meet the Mission in a friendly atmosphere. The Congress has fought many battles in the cause of Indian freedom but at the present moment, it had decided to receive the Mission and discuss the issue of India's independence.

"If no satisfactory result is forthcoming, the Congress will launch the last and final struggle, asking the British Government to quit India. That battle will be real and the Congress will see to it that they quit our shores."

In the 1942 struggle, the Congress was caught in a trap by not sticking to its seats in the legislatures. The result was that undeserving people got into the assemblies and continued to discuss problems other than the question of freedom. The Congress was deceived. But this time the Congress had decided to capture the seats in the legislature, he said.

Sardar Patel set the date for India's freedom. He said during the current year India must be free and independent. There would be no two opinions about that.

SERIOUS PROBLEM

There were serious problems facing the country, Sardar Patel said. One of them was the threat of famine throughout the land. The Viceroy asked for the Congress co-operation and the Congress President and Mahatma Gandhi has assured him of full support in meeting the crisis. But corruption was rampart. However much the Congress co-operated with the Viceroy, the problem could not be completely solved. Only national Government enjoying full freedom and real power,

could eliminate corruption and help people to get their food and material. He hoped that not only working class of Bombay who were politically conscious, but the working class of the whole country would solidly support the Congress candidates in the coming elections and show that they refused to be misguided by other parties claiming to be national.

XI

BRITISH RULERS MUST QUIT

Sardar Patel delivered the following speech at Bombay on March 7, 1946 :—

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing an election campaign meeting here, declared that no country had a right to claim the trusteeship of another country in the world, and India had never accepted the trusteeship of Great Britain, which had only ruled over our people as an imperialist power for the last 200 years.

Sardar Patel was replying to a recent statement of Lord Halifax, who is reported to have said, "The guardian's duty ends when his ward comes of age and India has come of age. But the trustee has a final duty to see that the trust is wound up in accordance with the ward's best interests."

Criticising this statement of Lord Halifax, Sardar Patel said Lord Halifax was under a delusion to think that the people of India had accepted the rule of British imperialism as a trusteeship. The people of this country had never accepted the British rule, which they claimed to be a benevolent guardianship. The people of this country had determined since the very inception of British rule in India to establish their own rule, even if it means fighting the might of British imperialism.

"The people of this country are not in a mood to listen to such patronising terms by Britain's rulers," said Sardar Patel. "The people of India demand that the oppressive rule of the British Government be completely liquidated and replaced by their own rule, the rule of Indian workers and peasants. No country in the modern world has a right to rule another country or be a trustee or guardian of another country. Britain had annexed India 200 years ago, just as imperialist powers like Germany and Japan tried to annex some countries before the last Great War. If the British rulers do not quit gracefully, we will fight them till they are forced to quit this country."

Sardar Patel then made a reference to the impending threat of famine in India and said that the last Great War which was not of our making had brought to the people of India a trial of sufferings and misery as it had affected many other countries in the world. The spectre of a famine before which the Bengal famine of 1943 would pale into insignificance loomed large before them now. He added :

"I am in complete agreement with the Viceroy, when he says that food is above party politics and asks for co-operation from all sections and parties of India to solve the food problem. But I am not prepared to wait for the transfer of power in our hands, and at the same time to undertake the responsibility for solving food problem. We demand that power should be completely transferred to our hands, and we must have our own National Government responsible to the people of India which can successfully tackle this problem of food crisis."

Sardar Patel said that the British rulers were quite aware of the fact that the freedom movement had swept the whole country, and even children in India shout to the British "Quit

India." This new awakening had been sweeping throughout the length and breadth of India ever since the All-India Congress Committee had passed the "Quit India" resolution in August 1942. The British rulers realise now that this great awakening among the masses of the people could not be suppressed by clapping their leaders in jails. They would revolt against the foreign rule till it was liquidated.

Sardar Patel added, "The people in Britain are also not happy even though they have won the victory in the last war. They have to face many problems, the aftermath of the Great War. The British Government has, therefore, decided now to send a Cabinet Mission to India and to settle the question of our freedom peacefully. The Congress will welcome the Mission and will participate in the talks till they reach an agreement with the British Government. But the agreement will be only on the basis of 'Quit-India' resolution of the All-India Congress Committee adopted in August 1942."

Sardar Patel said that in order to negotiate with the British Cabinet Mission, it was necessary for the Congress to show to the whole world that the people of India were behind the Congress demand of 'Quit-India.' He was sure that the people of Bombay who had made so many sacrifices for the cause of our freedom would not lag behind the people of other provinces where the opponents of the Congress had been completely swept off in the elections.

XII

THIRD-RATE POWER

Sardar Patel stated in a speech at Bardoli on March 9, 1946, that the British have been reduced to a third-rate power :

"The British are saying they want to go from India. We may feel that the imperialists are not sincere, yet we should believe them and give them a chance to quit peacefully." observed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressing a public meeting.

Over 10,000 people from all over Bardoli Taluka were assembled in the Swaraj Ashram Grounds here to hear Sardar Patel.

He added: "It is our duty to help the British to do the packing for their return journey quickly. But creating disturbances or acts of violence will not help us in any way."

Sardar Patel said: "After the war the situation in the world and inside India has changed. Britain has suffered a great deal and has been reduced to the position of a third-rate power. She now owes crores of sterlings to India. She has taken a huge loan from America. After this war no peace has come. Instead, even before the victory has been celebrated, Mr. Churchill has begun shouting about another war between Russia and America and Britain." Sardar Patel believed that this war might not come just now, as everyone all over the world was tired but it might come after sometime.

FOOD SITUATION

Continuing Sardar pointed out that while India had a huge sterling balance on one side, she was facing a difficult food situation on the other. Neither her industry could be developed at present as the locking up of the sterlings and exchange money impeded the purchase of capital goods and machinery. Sardar Patel referred to the Viceroy's appeal for help from the political parties of India in solving the food situation and said he did not want any Indian of whatever community or creed to die of hunger. He agreed with Government in asking the people to reduce their consumption a little so that those who

were starving may also get a little. But people would not listen to a Government that was not their own. Without power there was no use attempting to solve the difficult food situation. The elected representatives will soon take up the administration in their hands. Then people should not behave in such a way that the imperialists should point out that the situation remained the same even under a Government of the people.

Sardar Patel offered constructive suggestions for producing more food and sharing available supplies among the countrymen. He said that every agriculturist should make use of whatever water facilities were available and should raise an inter-crop before the monsoon set in. Bajra, millets, vegetables, anything eatable should be produced. People should not waste any water. Besides those who have grounds lying fallow should immediately put them under cultivation and those who had water facilities should help those who had none.

Regarding distribution Sardar Patel said it would be a sin if one grain was damaged. People should cut down feasts on social occasions. "Every body should tighten his belt and nobody should be gluttonous."

Sardar Patel said that the food mission may not prove very successful. If the whole world suffered scarcity of food how was India going to get supplies from other countries. "Even if the food mission got something, it has to be seen whether the corrupt administration will be able to distribute it properly." He emphasised the need of power to solve the problem and said that if the British were going to transfer power it was only because they wanted to do so. Tney would not mind even millions starving.

Continuing Sardar Patel said: "Now the British say they want to quit India. They might not be sincere. But we shall believe them and give them a chance of quitting peacefully.

We should help them to pack up quickly." The Cabinet Mission was coming to talk of terms of settlement about the British assets, etc. Our duty now was to remain peaceful and gather strength so that we may be prepared in the event of another struggle. The struggle may not come, but if it came, it would be the last.

"Sardar Patel appealed to the people to remain peaceful and said, "Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent path was the best and the right one that the country should follow at present. The situation to-day was tense. But the disturbances would not help them in any way. Students should remain peaceful and should follow the leaders instead of trying to give leadership to the country.

Concluding Sardar Patel emphasised the need of preparing to "digest the fruit of the various struggles" for the freedom of India."

Bardoli, he said, gave the lead to the country "for the fight for freedom." It was at Bardoli that 'Satyagraha' was first tried. But the same Bardoli was the place where Gandhiji decided that 'Ahimsa' and 'Satya' should be the bases of the Government of free India. "Let us now prepare to take freedom when it comes."

XIII

THE CONGRESS STANDS FOR UNITY

This is the substance of an interesting letter written by Sardar Patel on April 26, 1946.

"The Congress as a whole, stands for the unity of India and it cannot agree to any division," says Vallabhbhai Patel, member of the Congress Working Committee, replying to a letter written to him on April 7, by Prof. D. N. Banerjee Head of the Department of Political Science of Dacca University.

In his letter Prof. Banerjee strongly protested against certain alleged statements made by some top-ranking Congress

leaders in regard to the question of partition of India and requested Sardar Patel to fight for the maintenance of unity and integrity of the country.

In the course of his reply Sardar Patel, writing from New Delhi, says: "I fully appreciate your feelings on the question of partition of India and I am in full sympathy with your views on the subject, as expressed in your letter of the 7th instant. I am also aware of the depth of feeling of nationalist Bengal in this respect. Individual members of our committee, while expressing their personal views, may have laid emphasis on one or the other part of the Congress resolution on this subject. But I can assure you that the Congress as a whole stands for the unity of India and it cannot agree to any division of which you have such grave apprehension. How can the Congress disregard the combined will of a province? A Curzon can do it but not a democratic organisation like the Congress. But even what Lord Curzon did was undone by Bengal and it would be easier for Bengal to assert its will against any attempt to repeat such a folly by any popular organisation. I am of course, bound to do my best to see that nothing is done to disturb the unity of India."

XIV

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS MEETS S. PATEL

Sir Stafford Cripps met Sardar Patel and discussed with him some of the crucial issues, namely the establishment of an interim Government at the Centre without delay and transfer of power to the people of India.

The position which emerged from these talks, may be indicated as follows:—(1) That the Congress stands for the settlement of the Indian constitutional issue on the basis of (a) redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis; (b) self-determination for all sections of the people in every province; (c) sub-

jects of common interests to all the provinces—not exceeding half a dozon at the most—to be administered by the Centre; (d) exercise of all residuary powers by the Provinces to be conceded with a view to securing amicable and honourable settlement between two major political parties in the country. In this connection Sardar Patel is understood to have laid stress on the fact that the Congress, Sikhs and even the Princes clearly indicated their preferences for united India with strong Central Government.

XV

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

Sardar Patel declared at New Delhi on April 22, 1946 that the Indian National Congress will be prepared to accept international arbitration.

"The condition that the Congress Party would be willing to accept international arbitration in the settlement of the great problem in India was expressed to me to-night by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in an exclusive interview" writes Fraser Wighton, Reuter's political correspondent.

He adds :

Sardar Patel declared that there could be no better solution than this but went on to warn that "if any solution is imposed or decision taken by the Mission which is not acceptable to the Indian parties there can be no withdrawal of British power, because it will have to stay in India in order to impose its weight—a situation that would not be tenable for any length of time."

I expressed to Sardar Patel the feeling of disappointment being reflected back from abroad that there was still no sign of a meeting between the Congress leaders and those of the Muslim League.

Sardar Patel answered that the Congress position had all along been clear and that there could be no settlement of the communal question until the British power was withdrawn from India. "If the delegation wants to transfer power and is preparing for a withdrawal by trying to bring about a settlement between the two parties," he asserted, "it is bound to fail in its efforts." He added that the Mission in that event would still have the goodwill and good wishes of the Congress for its honest endeavours to reach a settlement.

If a just and peaceful solution would be helped by submitting the question to international arbitration, Sardar Patel said, that the Congress would be ready to do this.

Sardar Patel said that an alternative which offered was for the British to hand over power to the elected representatives either of the Congress or of the Muslim League. "If you did that" he observed "the country would settle the question in no time."

"By constitutional means," I enquired ?

"It cannot be by constitutional means" answered the Sardar, adding that although there might be trouble for sometime if power were transferred to one party, the other party will come to terms. He repeated that there might be some trouble.

"Do you mean civil war," I asked the Sardar.

"No" he answered, adding firmly that there would be no civil war. Just a little disturbance here and there. You are bound to get that in a big country.

Sardar Patel agreed with me that the most urgent task on hand was the formation of an interim Government. The Mission should do that without consulting either the Congress or the Muslim League he stated. They should ask the Gov-

elements from the provinces to elect their representatives—one from each of the eleven provinces and the remaining four or five provided perhaps by the minorities. He pointed out that the scheduled castes alone had 200 elected representatives.

"Once the provisional Government is formed and the provinces and the Centre are working smoothly and harmoniously there will be no serious trouble in this country," he affirmed, "and a settlement of the communal issue will come automatically."

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

I asked the Sardar how he envisaged the setting up of the constituent assembly to frame the constitution of independent India.

"The Congress position," he answered, "has always been to form constituent assembly on the basis of adult franchise, but that procedure is now out of the question because it will involve enormous delay. He stated, "The constituent assembly should be formed from the present elected representatives in the provinces by fixing a percentage." He added, that if a group choose to remain out of the constituent assembly it would be the choice of that group, but, he reflected "we have no apprehension that there will be any difficulty in the working of the Constituent Assembly once the Centre is formed."

Sardar Patel deplored the recent crop of what he described as "scare-mongering and hysterical reports" suggesting the imminence of disorder in India but thought they could be dismissed as simply mischievous and without any real basis behind them. He was also critical of other report ascribing insincerity and undisclosed motives in the Cabinet Mission.

"The Congress trusts the delegation to give a fair deal to India," he declared. "It has come with that deliberate and expressed purpose," he added.

The Sardar spoke hopefully of the rate at which he expected developments to take place. "I expect that most of the major questions will be solved by the middle of May, if not by the end of April," he stated.

He pointed out that the uncertainty due to delay had already resulted in a concentration of India's mind on a very undesirable aspect of the complex question, namely, the communal one and that he added, naturally has "contributed to the creation of a bad atmosphere. From that point of view it is, therefore, essential to deal with this question speedily." "I have no doubt," he concluded, "that the Mission is fully conscious of the importance of this aspect of the matter."

CHAPTER TENTH.

The Heart of Gold

I am Yesterday, Today, and To-morrow,
The Divine Hidden Soul who created the gods,
And who feedest the blessed.

—Translated from Egyptian by Robert Hillyer.

Sardar Patel is a man whose rugged exterior hides a heart of gold. That is a unique tribute paid to him by a devoted disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. But Mahatma Gandhi has quite surpassed his own disciple.

"The Sardar is dear to me like a son. Does the father ever stand on the formalities of greetings on his son's birthday?"

This reply was given by Mahatma Gandhi to a deputation of Bombay Congressmen who waited on Gandhiji in Poona and requested him to give him a message on Sardar Patel's 71st birthday.

The 71st birthday of Sardar Patel was celebrated on October 31, 1945 all over the country. The great Sardar received the homage not of a politician but rather that of a prophet, because he has been a great source of inspiration to many men and women, young and old, devoted to the service of their country. Sardar Patel is the symbol of the sincerest and yet the obscurest service. He does his job, but not for a ribbon or a pound of gold.

I

A SHOWER OF TRIBUTES.

The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Birthday Celebration Committee received a large number of messages from Congress leaders all over India on the occasion of the 71st birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Prominent among those who have sent messages were : Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

GENERAL OF FREEDOM.

The Sardar holds an outstanding position among the important personalities who have come to fore during the past twenty-five years in our national life. He is a bold and untiring general of India's struggle for independence and s keeping the banner of India fiying at the age of seventy, with a young man's zeal and a soldier's alertness. May the joy of his birthday recur again and again to the people of India. —*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.*

INTREPID PATRIOT

To my great comrade Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel I send my tribute of deep affection. His intrepid patriotism and implacable passion for India's freedom, his proud and stubborn power of resistance and sacrifice, his complete and unquestioning loyalty to Gandhiji have made him the Central strength of our national movement. With his stern, rugged and grave exterior, he is like an iron casket that holds rare and hidden gems of devotion, sweetness and charm.

—*Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.*

GREAT ORGANISER

On the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Seventy first Birthday I should like to send my greetings and pay

my tribute to him. For more than a quarter of a century now we have been associated with each other and we have had to face all manner of crises and difficulties. These years have been years of trial for all of us in India. Some have shrunk or faded away or just remain where they were. A few, a very few, have grown in stature with the years and have left their mark on events, which formed the fabric of history. Among these latter chosen ones stands Vallabhbhai Patel. Strong of will and purpose, a great organiser, wholly devoted to the cause of India's freedom, he has inevitably roused powerful reactions. Some have disliked him because they could not fall in line with him. But far greater numbers of people have found in him the leader of their choice, and working with him and under him, have laid the stable foundations of Indian freedom. To those who have had the privilege of working with him he has always been a tower of strength on whose advice they could confidently rely and whose comradeship they valued greatly. So on this occasion I pay my affectionate tribute to him and trust that the cause of Indian freedom will long profit by his passionate devotion to it and his outstanding qualities of leadership and organization.

—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

BORN LEADER

I shall always count it a privilege to have known Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. His rugged exterior hides a heart of gold and an affectionate and kindly nature. There is no nonsense about him. You know where you are with him. His keen sense of humour is delightful and it is impossible to be dull in his company. I always feel that he is the very best tonic, bapu can have when he is seedy.

He is a born leader of men and so because he is obviously one with the poor. His courage, his industry, his transparent honesty and his untold suffering for the cause which he has espoused, need no encomium. We can honour him best by trying to live up to the standard he has set before us.

—*R. Amrit Kaur.*

MASTERFUL HE IS

It was on a day of unforgettable importance in my life twenty-six years ago. Gandhiji while chatting with me in Madras mentioned Vallabhbhai's name to me, as one of the men I should meet and know. Since then we have worked together these many years and I can say I know him. Those who think Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is a hard man are thoroughly mistaken. On the contrary, it would be not far from the truth if one were to say that his is the nature of a loving and jealous woman. His affection is exacting and behind a cold and cynical exterior he holds a highly emotional and responsive soul and an untiring spirit for work. Masterful he is, but as a mother and not as a tyrant. He has had little joy in the world but he wastes not a thought on himself. He cannot tolerate being unjustly treated. Hence he may often be mistaken for any person by those who seek to be unjust. But it is not anger. It is confidence in his capacity to resist. He cannot be found to utter a single 'Mantram' or chant a hymn but he is, I know, a deeply religious man, more religious than many vocally pious people.

—*C. Rajagopalachariar.*

THE SARDAR OF INDIA

Almost immediately after coming out of my detention camp, I greeted the 'Sardar of Bardoli' as the 'Sardar of India.' I did not do so at the impulse of the moment.

The words that came out of me were the result of deep thinking during the last four years. Often and often in my detention camp I thought of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel—the leader of the No-Tax Campaign at Bardoli in 1928, the leader of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Gujarat in 1930, the past President of the Indian National Congress, and one of the leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. I called to mind many a time the stand he took along with Babu Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee which was held at Allahabad from the 27th April to the 1st May, 1942—the meeting which considered Mahatmaji's original draft calling upon the British to 'Quit India.' I repeated to myself, again and again the words he used at that meeting and I shall make no apology for quoting them.

Said the Sardar : "We have ever since the outbreak of the war tried to pull together, but it may not be possible on this occasion. Gandhiji has taken a definite stand..... I have placed myself in the hands of Gandhiji. I feel he is instinctively right—the lead he gives in all critical situations.....It is time the door is finally closed after the repeated insults heaped upon us." I agree with the draft before us.

The Sardar did not feel worried about what Britishers and Americans might think about Gandhiji's draft. The apprehension that Gandhiji's draft might weaken the British Government's position in the world left him undisturbed. He stood like a rock and enabled Bombay to complete what Jalpaiguri and Tripuri had begun. What followed constitutes the most glorious chapters in India's struggle for independence.

The Sardar's attitude during the last 25 years has never been one of passive radicalism or of inactive expectancy. He has never wavered between the struggle for Indian independence and opportunism.

The Sardar has always been a man of action. He has never been a coiner of phrases. True he coined one phrase, and that was 'Quit Asia.' That phrase reveals the man. It is at the same time a clarion call to India and the East. The call has been sounded : the march has begun. Jai Hind ' Jai Asia ! —*Sarat Chandra Bose.*

GENIUS FOR LEADERSHIP

" I cherish unbounded respect and admiration for Sardar's unique personality and superb qualities of head and heart, including indomitable courage and unbending will. Endowed with profound knowledge of human nature, Sardar Patel is inspired by selfless devotion and powerful passion for service of masses. Sardar's genius for leadership and organisation is marvellous. —*Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant.*

THE UNERRING INSIGHT.

His complete surrender to Gandhiji which is almost spiritual in character, his great powers of managing men and things, his capacity in building up and maintaining the giant organisation which mainly upholds the national strength, his courageous leadership, unerring insight into the motives and ambitions of men and his uncompromising attitude towards the British rule make him a centre of formidable strength in India's fight for freedom. —*K. M. Munshi.*

II

SARDAR PATEL'S WARNING.

" The Congress is not going to sit quiet after the elections and wait on the convenience and pleasure of the British Government. The Congress will demand an immediate and final solution of the Indian problem. If such a solution is not forthcoming and if the British Government try to put further obstacles in the way of India's

progress, sure as day follows night, there will follow another struggle. The country is beaming with enthusiasm for speeding up its onward march to freedom. No one, not even the mighty British Government, can stop the people of India from attaining their freedom," declared Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, at the public reception given to him at Bombay in connection with his birthday celebrations at Bombay on Oct. 31, 1945. The reception was held at Gowalia Tank Maidan where the "Quit India" resolution was passed in August 1942, and re-affirmed in 1945 by the All-India Congress Committee.

The Sardar said that the Government ought to make the members of the Indian National Army the nucleus of the new Indian Army to be created with 100 per cent. Indian personnel.

Proceeding the Sardar said :

"India is determined to be free and she shall be free very soon. I have no specific plan or proposals to place before you now. I can only ask everyone of you to do your duty during the forthcoming elections and see that the Congress sweeps the polls. Once we do this, there will be time enough to think of what our next step should be. The country has to get ready, not only for the elections, but also for the struggle which is ahead. What is wanted is solid work and preparation and not talk. When the time for action comes, and the time for action may come soon, we must be able to act as one man."

I. N. A. TRIAL

The Sardar asked if the British Government could agree to the postponement of the trial of Mr. John Amery, the son of the erstwhile Secretary of State for India, and who did German propaganda against Britain, why should

not the Government of India agree to a postponement of the trial of the members of the Indian National Army, who in the opinion of all Indians, were a body of disciplined soldiers, determined to win the freedom of their motherland ? They were to lay down their lives in the cause of India's freedom. These were real heroes in the eyes of the people of India and yet Indians were told by the Viceroy and the agents of the British Government in India that the trials could not be postponed because the course of justice should not be delayed or obstructed. The Sardar wanted to know what was the sense of justice on the part of those who insisted on trying men who were regarded as great patriots by their own kith and kin. The Sardar repeated the suggestion that he made earlier at the merchants' meeting that the Government ought to make the members of the Indian National Army, the nucleus of the new Indian Army to be created with hundred per cent. Indian personnel.

Earlier Sardar Patel said ; " Quit India will be the battle-cry of the Congress during the forthcoming elections." The Sardar was emphatic that the Congress this time was not going to go begging for votes from the people for the Congress candidates. That stage in the national struggle had already passed. The people knew well who their friends and benefactors were and there was no need to tell them what the Congress stood for. British imperialism had entrenched itself in India behind the screen of the so-called communal differences. The time had gone when the people of the country could be deceived about British intentions. British intentions are well known. Everyone in the country knew that a change of Government in England in no way affected the freedom movement in India. The Labour Party coming to power had only aggravated India's long-standing grievances.

The Sardar made it quite clear that the Congress was still a revolutionary organisation, determined to fight for the freedom of the country, irrespective of the sacrifice involved. The Congress had not much faith in the parliamentary programme. The elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies came as a challenge to the Congress from the new Labour Government in England and the Congress took up the challenge. The Labour Government would soon realise, if they had not already done so, who represented the people of India and whom the people of India returned as their trusted representatives to the legislatures.

An address enclosed in a silver casket was presented to the Sardar on behalf of the citizens of Bombay. Mr. J. B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress presided on the occasion.

The address was printed on an embroidered piece of handspun silk and was enclosed in a beautiful silver casket weighing 1,600 tolas. On the top of the casket were engraved the figures of Mahatma Gandhi with Sardar Patel on his right marching.

The maidan was packed to capacity, where special arrangements had been made for women and children.

CITIZENS' ADDRESS

The citizens' address declared: "It is as a man of action that the nation honours you. Your first intimate contact with politics and Mahatma Gandhi came a quarter of a century ago when you stood in the defence of the accused during the martial law regime in Ahmedabad in 1919. Since then you have never looked back. You sacrificed a brilliant career at the bar to dedicate yourself to the service of the country. The presidentship of the Gujerat Provincial Congress Committee, the membership of the Congress Working Committee,

the leadership of the Congress Parliamentary Board, the presidentship of the Congress at Karachi — these all have been regarded by you as so many opportunities to serve the nation on its onwad march to freedom. These services have been great and invaluable and have won for you the affection and admiration of a grateful nation."

MR. KRIPALANI'S TRIBUTE

Acharya Kripalani presenting the address paid a tribute to Sardar Patel's leadership and said the secret of the Sardar's success as a national leader was due to his sense of discipline and loyalty to the organisation to which he belongs. He added : "He is intensely patriotic, devoted to the cause of Indian freedom and constant in his efforts to keep the flame ever-burning. He is not an internationalist, but he is a staunch Indian nationalist to whom India's freedom comes above everything else."

Mr. Kripalani referred to Lord Wavell's plea of forget and forgive, on both sides, and said so far as the Congress was concerned there was nothing to be forgiven and there was everything to be remembered. The score was heavy on the Government's side and they had much to apologise to the nation for what they had done during the last three years.

Praying for long life and good health for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Mr. Kripalani said that the nation was in dire need of the Sardar's leadership not only for the purpose of achieving the freedom of the country, but also to put the nation on the right path after freedom had been won.

Sardar Patel was garlanded on behalf of over 750 commercial, social and political, students and women's organisations.

III

"I HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR MY LARGER HOME"

So said Sardar Patel at Bombay on October 31, 1945. "Who does not like to be in the midst of his kith and kin

at this age? But I have almost left all those mundane affections and plunged into the ocean. As long as my country is in bondage, what pride could I feel about the small village where I was born? From the moment I understood this plain logic, I have been trying to remain ever a fighter for my larger home. My prayer to God Almighty is that he continues to guide me in my struggle and may He be pleased to permit me to see my life's mission fulfilled shortly," observed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, replying to the greetings of the residents of his own village Karmsad, who assembled at his residence to pay their homage on his 71st birthday.

The Sardar added: "Who will not yearn to meet his own kith and kin? Who will not long for visiting his birth place? But you know that my attachment to my home has grown into love for my country. I feel that the day when my country attains freedom and sovereignty, I will be again with you as a son of your village."

Proceeding Sardar Patel exhorted his co-villagers to become enterprising for restoring India's prestige.

Concluding, he remarked: "I am completing 70 years of my life to-day and hope for a handsome lease. Let us pray that till God keeps me alive he will continue to guide me all along in my efforts to fulfil my obligations to my motherland."

IV

DRAMATIC PERSONALITY

Vallabhbhai was working for a dramatic climax of action. In 1928 he electrified the whole country by leading the Bardoli Satyagraha. It was magnificiently timed and brilliantly executed. Bardoli became a symbol of militant politics. Others wrangled over Independence or Dominion Status, Vallabhbhai with his characteristic disdain hushed

all controversies. His supreme achievement in organisation and action won the heart of everybody.

"Bardoli inevitably led to the mass movements of 1930 and 1932. The Congress leadership passed from Motilal and Vithalbhai to Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai. The sudden calling of the Non-co-operation movement in 1922, thanks to the disturbances at Chauri-Chaura, had robbed Bardoli of its chance to make history. The astute Sardar bided his time and compelled history to return to his doors !"

The Congress emerged in a very confused state in 1934. Many of the veterans had gone ! Motilal, Vithalbhai, Sen Gupta were dead. Some of the old leaders like Srinivasa Iyengar and Kelkar were discredited. Others like Ansari were worn out. The Congress was rent into factions. Gandhiji decided to withdraw from the Congress. Without a great helmsman the ship of the Congress was bound to founder, It was Vallabhbhai who took charge of the vessel.

He was determined to control the Right and keep the Left at bay. His sledge-hammer attacks were turned against the infant Socialist Party. He disliked it because it disturbed the structure of the Congress. The Right did not worry him. He could always control it. If necessary, he could amputate a diseased limb But the Left caused him anxiety. It possessed explosive powers. The helmsman was worried about the breeze, not the ballast.

The Congress could not escape the impress of new ideas. Uuder Jawaharlal it talked a new language of internationalism. Vallabhbhai watched the new trends warily. He did not oppose them. He was careful to keep them outside the fabric of the Congress.

The new Constitution (1935) had come. The Congress talked of wrecking it. The Sardar was anxious to explore its

potentialities. He knew that only with an iron organisation could that experiment be essayed. As the Chairman of the Parliamentary Board, he set about building that organisation. Sardar knew his own strength and limitations as also those of the men he met. He had no illusions about human beings. His innate idealism prevented him from being cynical. His swift actions against Nariman and Khare bear witness to his cool courage and masterful will. "He showed his iron fibre in the 'sangfroid' with which he met the whirl-wind of criticism his action against Nariman provoked. Rocklike he stood against the storm — and inevitably it exhausted itself."

V

AZAD AND PATEL

In the drawing room of Abul Kalam Azad you do not find anything but books. There are no photographs even. Regarding his cigarettes, a friend asked him what happened to him when he went to jail.

He said : "I am glad you have asked this question. I had ten cigarettes in my cigarette-case when I was taken to Alipur Jail in 1921. I smoked two and handed over the balance to the jail authorities. Deshabandhu Das twitted me, saying I should need them in jail."

"I said, 'Not until I am released.'

"And I tell you within a short time I did not even miss them."

In this respect he resembles the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, who once said :

"I love the good things of life, but I am not wedded to them. I can give them up at a moment's notice".

And he differs from men like Mr. De Valera, or say Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel. Mr. Thomas once told Mr. De Valera that he was surprised that he "had no petty vices," in that he did not even smoke.

"No, Mr. Thomas," said Mr. De Valera, "you English are responsible for that. You may remember that on one occasion—memorable to me—I was arrested and taken to your Lincoln Jail. Just before we arrived at the prison I said to the policeman in charge of me that I wou'd like a cigarette. He had no objection, so I lit one. Then looking at the cigarette I mused :—

"I suppose the British intend to hang me, and this will be my last cigarette. If, however, I should get out of this jail, I will never have another cigarette, so that I can retain the memory of this one."

As you know I did get out, and have never smoked tobacco since."

An exactly similar thing happened to Sardar Vallabhbhai in 1930, when he was arrested for the first time. He was not going to be hanged, his term of imprisonment then was ludicrously brief—only three months—but he refused to accept a cigarette from the police official escorting him and has not since touched tobacco. The Maulana lived without a cigarette for over fifteen months, but had one immediately on release and did not decline to smoke in the Meerut Prison where he was allowed the liberty.

VI

THE INDOMITABLE SARDAR

(Here are some extracts from the essay of K. M. Munshi).

It is difficult for me to write about the Sardar. Of the leading men with whom I have come into close contact, he has been nearest to me. I admire his extraordinary gifts. I cherish a deep affection for this man whom most men fear. Neither difference of views nor my leaving the Congress has been permitted by us to interfere with personal relations which alone make life sweet and worth living.

I first came into close contact with Sardar Vallabhbhai in 1928. He was then leading the Bardoli Satyagraha. I was then an Independent member of the Bombay Legislative Council. Sir Leslie Wilson, then Governor, told me that there was no official high-handedness at Bardoli and that the propaganda was false. I promised to go there and see things for myself. I went, saw and was conquered. I resigned on the issue.

I there met the Sardar of Bardoli—now of India—in active service. His leadership drew me to him. He had forged a technique of mass resistance which reconciled me to Gandhiji's policies which I had so far considered impractical.

Then came 1930 and the historic Dandi March. The universal urge for seeking martyrdom which Gandhiji had evoked attracted me. I placed myself at his service, joined the Congress, offered Salt Satyagraha and went to jail. After the Gandhi-Irwin truce, I saw the Sardar presiding over the Karachi Congress.

During 1932-33 we were in different jails. In 1934, on release, we came closer to each other. During the Assembly elections, I first declined his suggestion to stand for the Assembly. But when at the last minute Shri Nariman withdrew, he again asked me to stand for the seat. The prestige of the Congress was at stake, he said. I agreed. This laid the foundation of our friendship.

Then came the elections of 1936. I then saw him arranging elections, fixing up candidates, setting up ministries, controlling them, giving to diverse centrifugal forces a harmonious direction. I saw him arranging, organising, directing men and forces all over the country : breaking through hostile combinations, aligning new forces. I was with him often, almost daily when he was in Bombay, watching with admiring awe the working of his mind.

Few know the difficulties which the Sardar had to face in setting up a homogeneous party. He selected Shri Kher, and commissioned some of us to get the latter's consent. He piloted the activities which ended in Shri Kher's choice as a leader. This choice was Sardar's stroke of generalship. But for it the Bombay Congress Ministry would have been a ghastly failure.

Congress was a seething mass of ambitions all throughout the country. Sardar's genius alone brought order and discipline. Often, at night, I saw and heard him answering long distance calls from all over India with short, decisive suggestions, which were devastating in their effectiveness.

For 27 months when I was a Home Minister in the Congress Ministry, I was in the closest contact with him. There is an erroneous impression that he meddled in ministerial affairs. But he watched their work incessantly and only stepped in when the Ministers weakened in their effort to become effective centres of power against the Governors. His was a vast campaign at creating power. We were often weak ; many a time we knew not how to act up to the task of reducing the Governors to mere constitutional heads. Then only the Sardar stepped in.

I was associated with some informal negotiations between the Viceroy and Gandhiji through Vallabhbhai. I was in touch with the negotiations with Rajkot which Sardar carried on ; with the last stages of ministerial existence in November 1939 ; with the unfructuous negotiations with the Viceroy in 1940. And in them all, I saw Sardar's penetrating insight, his profound knowledge of human strength and weakness, his unerring grasp of the essentials in the game. And behind it all I saw the Grand Rebel who under the leadership of Gandhi Ji, the Master, was fighting British rule, not merely by words,

but by a mobilisation of human efforts and ambitions on the fields of open battle and unseen diplomacy.

IN YERVADA JAIL

In 1940 we were together in Yervada Jail. I had then the occasion to see his human side. He laughed, he cracked jokes, he told droll stories. He became our house-keeper, prepared tea for us, looked after our food and other arrangements. For hours we walked by ourselves. He told me stories of his young days, of his early association with Gandhi Ji, of the missing links in many affairs to which I was only a partial witness. He came to aquire a strong attachment for me. And when in March 1941, I was laid up with serious illness, during which Dr. Gilder nursed me with unfailing care, I saw the Sardar watching me with a mother's tender solicitude. And when, on being released, I was being taken out on a stretcher in a semi-conscious condition, I remember having seen this indomitable man's eyes following me with humid tenderness.

Ordinarily Sardar is a man of very few words. He can keep silence for hours in the midst of the most exciting conversation.....never speaks for the sake of speaking. He only becomes eloquent when action is in the air. But when he does speak, he speaks with an eloquence unrivalled. He can attack, he can appeal, he can heap ridicule ; he can make an audience cry. Above all, he is a master of winged words which like shafts pierce the heart. At the time of Bardoli Satyagraha the buffaloes of the agriculturists had grown whitish by being kept inside the house. The agriculturists were anxious about their beloved cattle which were developing some skin disease. Sardar said : "Mr. Smith, the Commissioner, did not like the buffaloes' colour. He does not like dark skin. He has turned them into 'madamdies.' (a contemptuous Gujerati form for madam, referring to European

women)." The joke went from mouth to mouth and the whole of Bardoli laughed at the cost of the Commissioner.

I remember another occasion. An Indian Ruler, about the time of the Rajkot affair, was telling Sardar how if their dynastic rule was in danger they would ally themselves with anybody to preserve it. Out came the Sardar : "Yes nothing very wonderful. During the Moghul times you gave your daughters to the Muslims and preserved your thrones." It was possibly said in a low tone which is all the more fearful because it is not loaded by vicious assent. His last speech before the Quit India movement was a torrent of verbal lava. He made a pun on the word 'hath' which will long be remembered in the language 'hath' means obstinacy and also to retreat. He stated that in the world, as the proverb goes, there were three kinds of 'haths ;' the 'hath' of a woman, the 'hath' of the ruler and the 'hath' of a child. But the British had discovered a fourth 'hath,' (piche-hath' : fleeing away). One member of the A.I.C.C. stated that the Congress of the Muslim was not in the A.I.C.C. but in the Muslim League. Prompt came the retort. "If that was so, the member's place was in the Muslim League and not in the A.I.C.C."

His language varies with the occasion and the audience. He can speak in the idiom of the villager. The next minute he can turn out sentences in choice literary Gujerati. His words are weapons ; they never miss the mark.

Men have different estimates of his views and methods. But they are of no account in the final appreciation of what he is and what he stands for.

Beyond his views and his ways is the Grand Rebel, the essential Sardar, the defiant hero of the undaunted will, unbending in his fierce determination to assert Indian independence. In India where alien rule has brought inferiority complex, he creates, wherever he moves an atmosphere of

self-dependent strength. To a nation's mind which is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought he brings the elemental strength of limitless courage "Be bold, again be bold, every where be bold." To an age of sweet words and hypocritical action he brings a rugged strength which shatters the veneer which cloaks the most ambitious imperialism of all time. His fierce but dynamic will strives to represent, create a free and united India in an India afflicted with bondage and threatened with disruption.

Men of lesser strength—and I am one—often shudder at his audacity, his pugnacious refusal to compromise. The man of thought finds little that is attractive in him. The crowd bent on admiration misses the romantic look, the personal tradition, the flaming idealism which the collective mind worships. The imaginative mind turns away from him ; for his mastery of the details and organisation shuts out the creed of the spirit within. But the student of history will immediately recognise him. He has stepped out of Plutarch's gallery of indomitable men. He is made of the stuff of which were made Prithviraj and Pratap of immortal glory.

VII

PREICOUS PATEL

Sardar Patel is dauntless, defiant, determined. He is a fine and fearless fighter for freedom. He is said to be a man of iron nerves. He has been rightly called a man of few words and many triumphs by a noted author. He is at once an answerable leader and an unquestioning follower. Not only is he a man of iron determination but also a man of determined irony. His ready repartee has lightened many a gloomy heart. He is par excellence one of the greatest humourists in the Congress ranks, perhaps in India.

"When Vallabhbhai was moving in advance as Gandhi's forerunner," writes Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "Government

saw in him John the Baptist who was the forerunner of Jesus, nineteen hundred years ago, and forthwith they laid their hands on him."

Sardar Patel is hero of the people. And this has vested him with an astonishing hold on the minds of simple folk. He leads the peasants, because he himself is their kith and kin. The peasants have an unflinching faith in his leadership. That in itself speaks volumes for his rare ability.

The peasant patriot is an indefatigable fighter. He has no love for the wordy feuds of shallow politicians. He refuses to be drawn into controversies and keeps his finger on the heart of action.

"I do not know," he said to the journalists, "if the Wavell plan gives real power or not. I do not also know if it is an advance on the Cripps' offer."

But this rock-like actionist is not without humour. He rocks his very adversaries with qualms of laughter. Once Gandhiji was discussing the appointment of a principal in a certain college.

"Myself!" said Sardar Patel

"What will you teach the students" ?

"What Indian students require" said Patel, "is not learning but unlearning much that they have learnt."

Sardar Patel always reserves the bitterest of his irony for the British. Refering to the August Revolution, he said :

"A former Secretary of State for India patted his back by saying on, the eve of Gandhiji's arrest that the caravan was going, on, while not a dog even barked. But this time the dogs did not stop at barking but did a pretty bit of biting too. And the next struggle would witness the biting of rabid dogs."

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

Let Us Justify Freedom

"We worked hard to achieve our freedom. We shall have to strive harder to justify it." —SARDAR PATEL

Wading through a bloodbath India became free on August 15, 1947; and having become free, India waded through a bloodbath again. The Partition of India and the massacre of millions of Hindus in Pakistan is a very heavy price that we paid for the independence of our country. Although Pandit Nehru often seems to imagine that the freedom of India was achieved through peaceful means, it stands to the credit of Sardar Patel that he has never created that type of self-delusion. He knows that we had to work hard and die hard to achieve freedom.

The greatest gain of India after achievement of freedom has been the integration of the Indian States in the Indian Union and the elimination of the Indian princes as a political power. The successful police action in Hyderabad was a unique achievement. The greatest loss to our nation has been the death of Mahatma Gandhi. The completion of the Indian Constitution is another notable accomplishment of our Government. India became a republic on January 26, 1950 and the last link with the British crown was broken.

I

PLEDGES FULFILLED

The following is the text of the message to the nation sent by Sardar Patel on the Republic Day (January 26, 1950) :

"Exactly 20 years ago from today, the people of India took a solemn pledge of complete independence. Behind that pledge was the determination of a whole people and the strength which comes of faith in one's destiny. Although we obtained independence on the 15th of August, 1947, it was not complete in the sense of the pledge that we took. Today, by the grace of God, that pledge has been completely fulfilled.

"On this auspicious occasion, it is quite natural that our thoughts should turn to the Father of the Nation under whose inspiration and guidance we took that pledge and due to whose leadership we achieved success in our mission. Unhappily, he is not amongst us, but he is watching us from above and I have no doubt his blessings and good wishes are with us on this supreme occasion in our national history.

"The day on which India attains Republican status will be written in letters of gold in its history. With the disappearance of all traces of foreign rule, we become in law and in fact our own masters and it will be now for us to make or mar our future. It will, however, take time for us to recover from centuries of exploitation and bondage ; considerable sacrifices will yet be necessary before sufficient quantity of fresh blood can flow in India's veins."

"We worked hard to achieve our freedom. We shall have to strive harder to justify it. Let us not, therefore, celebrate this occasion with any light heart. On the other hand, let us resolve to play our true and active role of responsible citizens of

a free country which has yet to stand on its feet and to attain its full stature. May divine guidance and bounty be with us all!"

II

IF PAKISTAN WANTS WAR

In Bombay on January 4, 1950 Sardar Patel gave a stern warning to the war-mongers of Pakistan.

"We have tried to win the friendship of Pakistan through love. But they (Pakistan) talk of war. If Pakistan wants war, we are prepared for it," declared Sarder Patel, addressing a public meeting.

On the internal political situation, Sardar Patel made an indirect reference to Communist activities, appealed to the Socialists for co-operation, and lashed out at the Hindu Mahasabha.

Sardar Patel in a 60-minute speech, relayed to the nation through All-India Radio, Bombay, also dwelt on India's economic condition, and the self-sufficiency campaign with regard to food, jute and cotton.

The Deputy Prime Minister told the mammoth gathering at the Chowpatty sands that the motto of the people for the New Year should be: "Spend Less; Produce more."

Sardar Patel said that though political independence had been achieved, there was a greater task ahead, namely, the achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

"In this task, all of us—the Government, the peasant, the worker, the capitalist and the people—must unite," the Sardar said.

In the context of Indo-Pakistan relations, the Sardar referred to the constant criticism levelled at the Government for

maintaining an army twice the normal strength. He said this was necessary so long "as our relations with our neighbour are strained."

Regarding the jute deadlock, Sardar Patel said: "We do not mind if our mills remain idle, but we are not fools to pay Rs. 145 for Rs. 100 worth of Pakistan jute.

"We are determined to produce enough jute in India for our jute mills and more. Temporarily, we may be having difficulties, but in the long run, you know who will suffer."

Regarding Communist activities, Sardar Patel referred to the constant disturbances in Calcutta which, he said, was the work of people "who will not listen to reason." He said: "It is no use telling them anything. It is up to the people of the country to fight these elements who believe in building upon the ruins of destruction, pillage, plunder, arson and loot."

To the Socialists, the Sardar said he realized that there was a necessity for an opposition, "which is constructive and does not believe in mere *hartals*, strikes or demonstrations before secretariats."

GIVE US TIME

"Give your Government a few years more, say four or five years," Sardar Patel said. "Give us a little time to complete our work of consolidation and national reconstruction. We are determined to build up a strong and healthy India, where there shall be no want, no shortage and no exploitation.

"In the world today, there are two camps—the Communists and capitalists. We have to adopt a middle course, consistent with the genius of the people and the tradition of our country. Our duty, as a peace-loving nation, is to bring the two together

"This, we can do only if we set our own house in order. We must reach a stage where we can place our country in such a position that the world will respect and listen to us."

Sardar Patel said that those who everyday created new forms of slogans, little realized that the responsibility had to be shared by all. They had to appreciate the fact that those in power today had not enough experience in the administrative field. But the deficiencies could be overcome not by hostile criticism and agitation but by co-operation and understanding.

Such an attitude, Sardar Patel warned, would do no good to the country. It would provide opportunities to reactionaries and enemies of India's freedom and result in undermining the foundations of the nation.

CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION

Sardar Patel said that there were complaints about the lack of an effective opposition in the Central and provincial legislatures. He agreed that in every democratic country, there was an opposition which functioned with a realistic approach to internal and external problems. Unfortunately in this country, erstwhile colleagues who had shared the burden of struggle for freedom, had taken a different path. He asked if there was any party in the country which could effectively replace the present Government and was wedded to the ideals and objects placed before the nation. At present, whatever opposition existed was more on the destructive than on the constructive side, he said.

"You cannot unseat or replace the present Government by violent methods. That would lead you and the country to ultimate ruin. Those who carry on agitation on trifling issues and organize demonstrations are not qualified to wield power."

The Deputy Prime Minister explained that the new Consti-

tution gave every adult the right to vote. He wanted the people to realize the implications of that right and use it properly.

He added: "India is like a toddler today with unsteady feet. We should not allow the baby to take false steps. We must allow the baby to grow gradually and steadily so that it can stand on its own feet."

On the question of State trading, Sardar Patel said that the Government was not eager to play the role of a merchant or business man. "A Government which engages itself in trading activities will come to grief. The essential function of the Government today is to ensure increased production and fair distribution of the available resources. The present circumstances, however, compel the Government to have some form of control even in trading. But in both industry and trade, there was a limit to which the Government could go as for as commitments were concerned. Thereafter, it was essentially the function of private enterprise to step in."

REPLY TO CRITICS

Sardar Patel devoted considerable part of his speech in answering the criticism levelled against the Government. He said: "Those who never wished the Government well, who never participated in the country's struggle for freedom, who all along placed impediments in our way have been joined in this pastime (criticism) by others who were once our friends."

To some extent, he said, this was "a healthy sign." He asked the critics to consider whether the Government, in spite of their shortcomings, had done anything good at all during the last three years.

"If it has not done anything to deserve your confidence

and support," Sardar Patel said, "then you should consider whether there is any other party which can govern better. Our shoulders are weak and the burden is heavy, and we shall certainly be immensely relieved if others could take over that burden. But they have to prove and establish that they are fit to take over that burden."

"If, however, they feel that they can relieve us of the burden by tactics which they employ, then they are gravely mistaken. They have to learn to be responsible. Those who are habituated to criticize day in and day out are not fitted for any position of responsibility. They only find fault with others, but they do not turn the eye of criticism inwards."

Sardar Patel stressed that it was the duty of every Indian to strengthen the hands of the Government and make the country strong. He added:

"You have to ask yourselves if your task is done by having won freedom or whether it is also your duty to consolidate that freedom, to make India strong, to lend your hands in solving the problems which both war and freedom have brought in their wake. If you are not up to this call of duty, you are doing a grievous wrong to yourself, to your country and to your Government."

Dealing with some of the problems "which have made the Government unpopular," Sardar Patel referred to the sugar scarcity on the eve of the *Dewali* festival. He thought that the people would realize on mature consideration that "we have made a mountain of a molehill." He advised them not to make much of such petty things. "Of course, if you feel strongly, you have the remedy. You can remove the Government, but if you cannot do so, it is your duty to co-operate with the Government in the best that it can do."

Sardar Patel emphasized the supreme need to increase production of two essential needs of the country—food and cloth. The country had to spend crores to get all her requirements of food. What was the remedy if they had to avoid this heavy drain, he asked. The Government could not produce corn as magicians produced rabbits out of a hat. Obviously, if the deficiency in food was to be made up, agriculturists must produce more, and also cultivate more lands which were lying waste.

"The Government," Sardar Patel said, "have decided on a programme of self-sufficiency. That needs the support and co-operation of the people. If that support and co-operation is not forthcoming, surely you cannot blame your Government for the deficiency that prevails."

With regard to cloth, Sardar Patel said that if the mills worked as they should and there were no strikes and they turned out goods according to maximum capacity, they could easily satisfy all the local demands for cloth.

TO LABOUR & CAPITALISTS

Sardar Patel added: "For all that, we have also to import cotton or we have to grow more cotton. We have, therefore, to tell agriculturists to take to growing cotton where they can. We have also to tell labour, 'we shall try our best to get what is your due, but please work hard, so that production does not suffer.' We have also to tell industrialists, 'you have made profits in the past. Now the country is in difficulties. You agree to tighten your belts. Do not insist on profits, though I agree that you cannot work at a loss'."

Sardar Patel said he had no doubt that if they approached

the kisan, the labourer and the industrialist in the right way, the majority of them would agree to fall in line. His only purpose, he said, was to impress upon them the need for realizing their responsibilities in dealing with these difficulties. He said: "There can hardly be any doubt that it is our national duty to bring about maximum production."

The Deputy Prime Minister stated that he would not be a party to giving up responsibilities in order to hand them over to those who lead the country to chaos. He was satisfied that "nobody else can achieve what we have done or what we are doing."

CALCUTTA INCIDENTS

"If we were satisfied that others could do even as much, we would be prepared to make way for them. But I certainly cannot be a party to giving up our responsibilities in order to hand them over to those who will merely send the country downhill or land it into chaos. You see what is happening in Calcutta. If foreigners were to read all the reports of disturbances in Calcutta they would marvel as to what sort of country ours is. Calcutta is the nerve-centre of business activities. What is the use of disrupting that city's life in this manner? I cannot say anything to those whose profession or business it is to indulge in such subversive activities, but you should realize that, if the country goes the way they want us to, we shall lose our freedom and sink into slavery of the worst type, much worse than what we have known so far."

III

PAKISTAN'S WAYS

The following is the gist of a speech delivered by Sardar Patel in Bombay on January 5, 1950 :—

Sardar Patel referred to the attitude of Pakistan on the release of jute purchased by Indian concerns and the subsequent suspension of coal shipments by the Indian Government and said that the present trade deadlock could be traced to devaluation. He stated that when India devalued her rupee, Pakistan decided otherwise, and thought that India would pay Rs. 145 as against Rs. 100 she was paying before.

He said: "We are not such fools. We felt that if we could not pay the price which they (Pakistan) asked of us, we would rather stop our mills than suffer economic ruin. At the same time, we have planned to avoid that catastrophe. We shall not be a victim of coercion."

Sardar Patel charged Pakistan with stopping jute that had been purchased before devaluation and also jute which was in transit through that Dominion. The Indian Government tried their best to clear the jute they were entitled to, but Pakistan prevented it from coming into India, he said.

"We then had to stop their coal," Sardar Patel said. "This is not the only commodity in which we can take such action. We have other weapons in our armoury but it is not our wish to use those weapons unless they force us to. Our Prime Minister has been inviting them to settle our disputes by peaceful means but they resort to other methods. They are turning out Sindhi Hindus by robbing them of their property.

"That is not the way of peace. If we cannot have good neighbourly relations by peaceful means, then we have to leave it to fate to decide the issue. Till then we have to be vigilant and cannot reduce the expenditure on the Army. If necessary we shall even have to suffer more than we have done in the past or do now. We ourselves do not wish to fight, nor do we have any

aggressive designs, but we shall not allow India's integrity to be placed in jeopardy. We wish to be friends but there must be a realization of that fact from the other side."

DEFENCE VIGILANCE

Sardar Patel said that the people had to understand the Government's financial difficulties. A study of the budget would reveal, he said, that two-thirds of the revenue was being spent in maintaining the army. Some people advised the Government to give up expenditure on the army or reduce it, but it was only ordinary prudence to realize one's limitations.

"We have partitioned the country. Our wounds are not yet healed and we are still not on friendly terms with our neighbour. When we partitioned the country we thought we were parting as brothers and we would be able to live in peace and amity each one putting his own household in order in the best manner possible. But the events have followed a different course. Until the position which we envisaged is achieved, we must be on our guard. We would be guilty of criminal neglect if we are not vigilant and alert.

"After all, you have to remember that Pakistan has to bear a proportionately higher burden for her defence. Even then some of them indulge in loose talk of planting their flag on the Red Fort."

In this connection, Sardar Patel referred to the Hindu Mahasabha session at Calcutta and said: "Some friends have passed resolutions about reuniting the two portions of India. It is two years after achieving freedom that they have dared to open their lips on the subject. This has also been done merely to create difficulties for us. After all, if we felt that merely such

a prattle were to achieve unity, we would have entrusted this task to them without any difficulty. "I warn you that if today the two parts can reunite, you will regret it for ever. You will then realize that we were better off before the reunion."

Sardar Patel referred to the suggestion that the Government should follow Mahatma Gandhi's programme. The people who made the suggestions, he said, did not realize that a Government which had to maintain an army must have the necessary industrial installations. This called for more industrialization. Rural economy was also important and he wanted self-sufficiency in villages also. But today, the position was that villagers were forsaking their homes for the cities. Justice had to be done to both the villages and the towns, and to industries, both big and small.

In a passing reference to a suggestion to bring in foreign capital, Sardar Patel thought that that would be no remedy to the conflicts between employer and labour. It had to be realized that foreign capitalists would also ascertain if business would be worthwhile and whether they could get anything out of their investments.

NO MORE FAULT-FINDING

Making a personal appeal to the citizens of Bombay, Sardar Patel said: "I have come to you today full of affection in all humility and as one of your own and it is as such that I appeal to you to give up mutual fault-finding and bickerings. Today the time has come when every Indian must sweat for his country. If we can put India on its own feet our future is assured. If we follow the right path for three or four years, we shall have truly laid the foundations of a happy and prosperous India. We ourselves have done our best to prepare the ground for that

eventuality. Today India is one. It has achieved a unity and consolidation which it had never done before in its history. There is peace within its borders. There are no communal or other conflicts. It only needs all of us to do our part to realize that ambition of ours."

To the peasants of India, Sardar Patel made the following apeal :

"Today although I speak to you from a city I can lay claim to having served the villagers more than anybody else in India. If I had the strength and if I were younger in years I would have shaken the country to its foundations in an effort to create awakening, so that it might realize what is at stake. But at this age and in my present health I can only appeal to the peasants from here. I should like to tell them to cease thinking that they should give their corn only at a certain price and no other. It is the duty of every agriculturist to produce the maximum corn he can and to spend the least. Do not waste. Give all you can to the nation."

In a separate appeal to labour Sardar Patel called upon them to realize that "We must produce before we can divide." He added : "Maximum production must be your aim and treat your machinery with love and affection. Handle it so well that it can serve the cause of your country."

Sardar Patel had this advice to give to the capitalists : "Give up the profit idea. Be determined to work without caring for profits, though do try not to incur losses."

He appealed to the masses in general "to bear with our troubles a little longer." He said: "We admire the way you have suffered but my appeal to you is that even if you have to suffer do not weep or be a coward. I am certain that if we do

and all of us do our duty all will be well in the end. You must help and support us. If you do, I am certain we can place our country in a position where it will command the respect of all the countries of the world. We can then fulfil Mahatma Gandhi's expectations."

IV

POLICE AND PEOPLE

The Deputy Prime Minister, who was inaugurating the conference of police chiefs from all the provinces and States Unions assembled at the Home Ministry, however, emphasized that "a democratic government cannot function on the basis of a police State" and that it " can only function on the willing consent and co-operation of the people at large."

"In no other sphere is the co-operation of the general public more needed than in the field work of the police, whether it is in connection with prevention and detection of crime, or while dealing with unruly mobs or recalcitrant assemblies of men," he added.

Sardar Patel advised the police chiefs to win public confidence. "Having won it," he added, "I am sure you will retain it."

The Deputy Prime Minister spoke of "subversive movements making their appearance here and there" and pointed to "the object lesson" for India from the countries around her. He called upon the police with their great "ability, integrity and resourcefulness" not to slacken their efforts to maintain internal security "at least in the near future."

"I am sure," he said, "I can rely upon you all to infuse into the men under your command that spirit of eternal vigilance which is the hall-mark of a good police officer."

Sardar Patel directly mentioned the Communist Party in this context. "Countries adjoining or not far from India have an object lesson for us. Starting from small beginnings, these subversive agitators have burrowed big holes into the social and administrative structures and have now constituted themselves in some as established authorities, and in others as a substantial threat to security. In India fortunately, in spite of the legacy of the war in which there was a purely strategic alliance between the Government, reported to be established by law, and the subversive association known as the Communist Party, we have by our vigilance and the effective counter-measures taken from time to time, succeeded in strictly localizing these activities. "At the same time we must allow for the cleverness, tactical manoeuvrability and secretive methods adopted by the opponents."

EDUCATING PUBLIC

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed the need of educating public opinion "on both the nature and the extent of the danger that faces it" and added: "We must bring home to the public the fact that those who pretend to be their friends and well-wishers are merely exploiters and parasites who feed on the discontent of others in order to suit their own purpose—a purpose which has no root in the soil of this country but the roots of which spread out for sustenance into foreign countries and whose tactics and methods are of a foreign pattern."

V

TRAGEDY IN EASTERN PAKISTAN

Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, in a statement on the East Bengal situation appealed to the citizens of the affected

areas to help the Government maintain "peace and sober judgment."

Sardar Patel said: "The Prime Minister has separately issued a statement on the situation in East Bengal and its repercussions on our own side of the frontier. I fully endorse his appeal for calm and dispassionate thinking and for a sane and principled approach to the problem with which we are faced. It is easy to act on the spur of the moment of anger and emotion; it is much more difficult to retrace a false step once taken or to repair the damage once perpetrated.

"There can be no doubt that Bengal with the rest of India has been roused by what our own brothers and sisters have suffered in East Bengal. It is, however, in our own interests as well as those of the sufferers of those atrocities that the trouble should be localized and dealt with firmly and resolutely.

HIGH STAKES

"The stakes involved are such and the dangerous possibilities of the situation so great that we cannot afford to relax either in vigilance or in caution; nor can we display anything but active sympathy in the plight of suffering of the grief-stricken refugees that are coming to us from across the border. Let us also concentrate on ensuring that these victims of religious fanaticism return to what is their own with a sense of security and in full enjoyment of their civic rights.

"If that be our objective, it is obvious that nothing is to be gained but everything is to be lost by a resort to those very brute passions, the victims of which are in our midst. Peace and sober judgment must be maintained at all costs and in that task the citizens of immediately affected areas must extend a helping hand to their Government, both in Bengal and at the Centre. It is only thus that our hands can be strengthened in taking suitable action to deal with the difficult situation which confronts us."

CHAPTER TWELFTH

Between Two Fires

Bengal today is caught up between two fires—Communism and Communalism. The two-phases are so allied that it becomes difficult to distinguish which is which. The Prime Minister as well as the Deputy Prime Minister have visited Calcutta several times to study the problem-province from close quarters and heal the running sores of communism and communalism.

The Deputy Prime Minister told the people of Calcutta that unless they shook off their apathy and indifferent attitude towards their duties as citizens of Free India and 'tackled' the law-breakers themselves, business men "must wind up from Calcutta. Their confidence had been badly shaken," he said.

On "our relations with our neighbour"—Pakistan—Sardar Patel said that the present troubles would in course of time disappear and "our common interests are bound to bring us together eventually."

Referring to the thankless job of the policeman and his "life of tension and dread," the Deputy Prime Minister said that the mischief-makers were clever enough to place women in front and if the police killed any innocent person in their attempt to quel a disturbance, there was a cry of civil liberties being in danger. "I ask you to consider whether it is civil liberties or

whether it is the liberty to criminals to commit crimes that you want," he said.

Sardar Patel also referred to another trouble-spot of the country, "small pockets in the South, which are, in my opinion, not so dangerous as this." "I shall do my best," he continued, "to see that confidence is created, but it is primarily the concern of our Bengal friends to create this condition."

I

SIGNS OF DISINTEGRATION

The following is the gist of the speech delivered by Sardar Patel in Calcutta on January 14, 1950 :—

Sardar Patel devoted most of his 30-minute speech to the present unrest in the city in which he saw "signs of disintegration and disorganization."

Describing his present visit as "not a pleasure trip," Sardar Patel said that if Calcutta was in agony, "we cannot afford to be in peace. It is the biggest centre of industry and commerce and is the main spring from which wealth will grow and flow all over the country."

At the time of partition, he disclosed, they made a condition that Calcutta must not go out of India. Now he found Calcutta at the mercy of "young urchins, a clever people, who get their inspiration from outside with an idea of disorganizing the society."

Replying to the address of welcome, Sardar Patel said : "I have come here with the express condition that I have to make no speech because generally it is not my habit to make any speech unless there is a call for it. When that call comes from within, then it comes from the heart. I am not used to artificial speech

making. It is not natural to me. There I am at a disadvantage at the present moment, because I am not prepared as to what I should say or what I should not. These are critical days in which any word or any sentence dropping from the lips of a responsible man creates conditions which affect the well-being of the people. Therefore, I have to be very very careful, particularly in a place like Calcutta.

NO PLEASURE TRIP

"Now, you would be wondering why I have come here in spite of my failing health and in spite of many engagements that I have got. It is not a pleasure trip. I have been anxious and many of my colleagues are passing days of anxiety about Calcutta because Calcutta is a place from where we get reports every morning that some untoward incidents have happened in this place or that place, in this corner or that corner, or that a bomb was thrown, tram cars were burnt, a bus was burnt, policemen killed or injured. And all these happen in a place which is the premier city of India where we have all trade, commerce, industry and business located. If Calcutta is in agony, we cannot afford to be in peace.

"Therefore, I have come here first to see what the actual condition is and how far the reports are exaggerated or how far there is truth in them and whether I can contribute anything in creating the climate and condition wherein trade and commerce can flourish. Because as you all know, and you rightly say, after the consolidation of the country our first concern is to see that economic stability is also brought about.

A BETTER ALTERNATIVE

"All of you know better than I can what the actual position is. Our country was one. It was a joint mixed economy and

it has been broken all of a sudden. We agreed to partition, because we saw the alternative was worse. Therefore, we agreed to it. At the same time, we made a condition that we can only agree to partition if we do not lose Calcutta. If Calcutta is gone, then India is gone. We won't agree to any condition by which we have to lose Calcutta. You remember, perhaps human memory is short, Calcutta in the days of what is called the "Direct Action Day." You remember Bengal at the time of Noakhali. You saved Calcutta because Calcutta is the main spring from which wealth will grow and flow all over the country. It is the biggest centre of industry and commerce.

"But, if business men feel nervous and there is a feeling of anxiety then nothing can be done. Therefore, we must see that we create a situation in which everybody will be able to feel that he can confidently carry on his trade and industry here.

"Now the reports that we receive outside create a feeling of uneasiness. Therefore at a certain amount of risk to my health I came here to persuade all sections of the people, not one section alone but all sections, to co-operate among themselves. Unless there is co-operation we cannot work. Then the first thing to do is, whatever government we have got in this province must first be stable and it must be supported. If the government is not stable you cannot expect any spirit of confidence growing amongst the people who have got stakes.

"I hear a great deal about unemployment, which is right, among young men in Bengal; but you must first create a condition in which unemployment can be tackled. Instead, if conditions are created in which unemployment increases then it would be falling from the frying pan into the fire. This is no good.

DANGER OF PROVINCIALISM

"Two things I want particularly to bring to your notice, which you all must be knowing, are that men of stakes are not yet quite confident that they can put in their wealth for productive activity in Calcutta any more. Why is it? I do not know whether you agree with my analysis, but that is my feeling. I feel that one thing we have to see is that in a city like Calcutta, which is a cosmopolitan city, no provincialism should grow. It is a great cancer which would kill the city of Calcutta. Unless we remove that we cannot create confidence.

"It is not difficult, if all of us begin to examine as to what are our responsibilities, to create that confidence and that situation in which provincialism will die out. It is no use blaming one section or the other, one community or the other. You are all staying in Calcutta, whether you are from one province or the other. We all have interests here and we are all members of one family. We should work in that spirit and if the individual begins to realize his own responsibility he will spread that atmosphere and the collective atmosphere will remove the spirit of provincialism. Let us not be fault-finding. Let us examine our minds.

ATTITUDE OF APATHY

"Apart from this provincialism, shortsightedness and parochialism here and there, another thing that I have noticed and you also have noticed is that there is a general feeling or general attitude of apathy or indifference towards one's responsibility as a citizen of free India. How could a few people terrorize a crowd of 100 and to have their own way in creating conditions in which no good work can be done? A few young men may take it into their heads to disturb the

condition of the city. But if the citizens of Calcutta, to whatever class they belong, make up their minds that this thing has got to be stopped, then they will not look to the police alone.

"The police have their duty. They have their failings as well as good qualities. But you must also see that we all do our duty, and if we all fulfil our own responsibility and create conditions in the locality in which we live and afford cooperation to the police. this could be stopped. Even if the police are not available, tackle these law-breakers yourselves. It is not difficult. It is very easy. In no free country this thing is tolerated.

"If, therefore, a couple of young urchins come and ask the passengers of a tram car or bus to get down, and they do it, how would it be judged outside. What would they think about the people of this city where two or three young men can come and terrorize a crowd of people? We must, therefore, make our minds and this situation must be changed. Unless you change this first, ycu cannot do anything else in this city. It is daily growing. It is a danger sign and we must check it. We can do it easily.

"If the police perform their duty, then in a situation of this nature, they have to shoot down people. But these clever young men place women in their front and a crowd collects and innocent people are likely to be injured or killed. In that case you howl from Calcutta in the newspapers and outside. I have seen men with a sense of responsibility talking seriously about civil liberties being in danger. I ask you to consider whether it is civil liberties or whether it is the liberty to criminals to commit crimes that you want. It is a serious question. I feel that people had never had such liberty any time before than they have at

present and yet the Government is being continuously attacked for want of civil liberties.

THE LOT OF POLICEMEN

"So, unless you begin to see in and speak loudly and change the whole tone of public opinion, the police cannot function. I have been hearing that the police have now taken the role of, perhaps the old Congress volunteers. They are being beaten and their role is now to suffer without a word of sympathy from the public. The Congress volunteers, however, used to get a lot of sympathy from the people for merely going to jails.

"Here our own boys are now in the police. It is not sergeants from outside but they are our own young men who perform this onerous duty. They have no word of sympathy and they live a life of tension and dread as to whether they would inflict injury on innocent men, or whether the public of Calcutta will attack them. What is to be done under the circumstances? Put yourself in the position of the police and then think.

"Some people say, it is the same old bureaucratic police. It is the same regime and bureaucratic regime. There are all false notions. You can charge your Government if you want to do so.

"Today, what is most needed is to create public opinion in Calcutta, where priority should be given to creating conditions of peace and there should be no crime of this nature—terrorism. Police is meant to detect ordinary crimes like robbery and dacoity but this crime of terrorism is committed by those who are not ordinary criminals but people, clever people with a different idea. They want the society to be disorganized, they want the Government to be disorganized and they want to change the social order. If you, the people of Calcutta, desire that, then

why should others suffer? Then they must wind up Calcutta in so far as industry and business are concerned, and go elsewhere.

"That is not our object and I feel 99 per cent of the people of Calcutta do not believe in this. It is only a small crowd, which is determined to create this trouble and which gets inspiration from outside also. But all these things happen because we individually do not perform our duty. Therefore, while I am grateful to you for a recognition of the little service I have done for consolidating the integration of India, let us not disturb this integration by starting the process of disintegration in a big city like Calcutta. Let us have stability first.

NO OUTSIDE THREAT

"My business is to see that internal stability in the country is maintained. I am not afraid of outside aggression at all. In these days, in the condition of the world today, there is no danger of outside aggression from any country. Of course, our relations with out neighbour are not very smooth but yet they know very well that it would not pay to have any such aggressive designs on India. Of course, we are armed to the teeth for such an aggression. We will not relax in spite of the grave economic strain till we become friends. We like to be friends and we will be friends. We agreed to partition, willingly or unwillingly but deliberately. We wish them to prosper. Let them flourish, but they should also allow us to go our own way to build our country.

"It is to be to the advantage of both, because if we become friends then India and the other part of the country also, which is separated, will prosper because there is plenty of resources, plenty of wealth and plenty of brains. The present trouble will, in course of time, disappear so far as the relations of the two

countries are concerned. It is to our common interests and these common interests are bound to bring us together eventually. They will see that their shortsighted policy will not pay.

"But my main concern is the internal stability which we have practically established all over the country, except in one or two places. One is Calcutta and others are small pockets in the South, which are in my opinion not so dangerous as this spot. This is a danger spot from where all our prospects, are to grow. I shall do my best to see that confidence is created, but it is primarily the concern of our Bengal friends to create this condition. So you must address your appeal to him (pointing out Dr. Mookerjee, who was sitting by the side of Deputy Prime Minister). All I can say is that I am always at your service, if you want my service in that direction.

"Welcoming Sardar Patel on behalf of the commercial community of Calcutta, particularly on behalf of the three Chamber of Commerce, Dr. N. N. Law, President of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, said that by his unique services as one of the master-builders of our new India, Sardar Patel had endeared himself to the entire nation, who owed to him a great and everlasting gratitude. The smooth integration of Indian States was by itself an outstanding achievement and an act of statesmanship which would go down to posterity as a momentous event, and a turning point in the history of India. They had every confidence that under his wise guidance, a satisfactory solution of the economic difficulties would also be found.

Dr. Law expressed appreciation of the commercial community to the firm stand taken by the Government of India in the unfortunate situation created by the unilateral action of the

Pakistan Government in the matter of jute supplies to India.

II

WANTED A UNITED FRONT

On January 13, 1950 Sardar Patel requested the Bengalese Congressmen to compose their differences in order to quench the two fires of Communism and Communalism.

The Deputy Prime Minister said reports of lawlessness in the province were being received for sometime past. Some of them might be exaggerated. But in any case it gave the province a bad name in the rest of India and abroad. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that Congressmen in the province must unite. It was no good to lay the blame on each other or to find out at this stage who was responsible for these bickerings among Congressmen. They must forget the past and join together to strengthen the hands of the Government to deal with anti-social elements in the country.

Sardar Patel said that Bengal had suffered tremendously both during the country's struggle for independence and as a result of partition. There were many good workers, who could, if they so desired, do a lot to help solve many of her problems. The present activities of the communists were becoming a danger to the country. If, therefore, Congressmen went on criticizing the Government, instead of co-operating with them, how could this danger be met, he asked.

He also deprecated the unnecessary criticisms of the actions of Government officials and policemen. He said constant criticism of their activities might tell upon their morale. They were like Congress volunteers in the past and if they got the co-operation of the people, particularly of Congressmen, they could help the country steer clear of these problems.

Various suggestions for composing the differences between Congressmen were then put forward by the members present at the meeting.

One Congressman said that the differences were not among Congressmen in general but among the leaders. He suggested that the Premier, along with Mr. P. C. Sen, Food Minister, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Mr. Surendra Mohan Ghosh should sit together and find out ways to slove the differences.

Summing up the discussion, Sardar Patel said they must find out means for the solution of various problems without any outside help. He wanted the Congressmen to sink their differences and strengthen the Congress organization, which in turn must co-operate and strengthen the hands of the Ministry in solving the various problems that confronted the country at present.

Various problems of the province, particularly the Communist menace, were discussed by West Bengal Ministers with Sardar Patel shortly after his arrival.

Dr. B. C. Roy, Premier, Mr. Kalipada Mookerjee, Labour Minister, Mr. Bhupati Majumdar, Irrigation Minister, Mr. Haren Rai Choudhury, Education Minister, Mr. Shyamapada Burman, Excise Minister, and Dr S. P. Mookerjee, Industry and Supply Minister, Government of India, participated in the discussions.

The Ministers appraised the Deputy Prime Minister of the present situation in the province, particularly in Calcutta. They referred to various causes contributing to the disorders in the city, one of which was the moving away of the Congress from the masses and the consequent loss of effective co-operation between the administration and the public.

The question of refugee resettlement in the province also came up for discussion. An account of the number of houses built, of loans and lands distributed among refugees was presented to Sardar Patel. The Ministers impressed upon him the necessity of scattering the present dense population in the province to other areas.

An appeal for more financial help from the Central Government to this province for refugee resettlement is also understood to have been made.

A review of labour situation in the province was given by the Labour Minister.

APPEAL TO STUDENTS

Sardar Patel today called upon the students and teachers of West Bengal to co-operate fully with the authorities in maintaining peace and tranquillity in the province.

The Deputy Prime Minister met representatives of the West Bengal Congress Chatra Dal and some leading professors of Calcutta University and colleges. He discussed with them the present situation in the Province's educational institutions.

The teachers, it is learnt, explained to Sardar Patel how Calcutta colleges were overcrowded. This, they said, was responsible for the lack of contact between the teacher and the taught. They also told him about the economic conditions of private schools and colleges in the province as a result of which the teachers could not be substantially paid. They pleaded for increased subvention from the Government for educational institutions.

Sardar Patel noted the teachers' grievances. He asked the students to submit their grievances in the form of a memoran-

dum. He advised them to see that peace in the country was maintained and no subversive element could thrive.

JUTE PROBLEMS

The problems with which the jute mills in the province were confronted, following the holding up of jute by the Pakistan Government were represented to the Deputy Prime Minister, when he received the chairman and other office-bearers of the Indian Jute Mills Association. The chairman is reported to have explained to Sardar Patel the latest position and also represented to him their difficulties with regard to the supply of jute to the mills.

Later a deputation on behalf of the people of Barisal (East Pakistan), led by Mr Satin Sen, the East Bengal Congress leader, met Sardar Patel and described to him the conditions under which minorities were living in Pakistan. The deputationists, it is learnt, narrated certain incidents of alleged police excesses in some parts of the district recently, as also the "manner" in which houses belonging to the minority oommunities were being requisitioned by the Pakistan Government.

III

TERRORISTS PUT THE CLOCK BACK

On January 15, 1950 Sardar Patel declared in Calcutta that the terrorists were putting back the clock of progress and prosperity.

There were two ways of changing a Government—through the ballot box or by a revolution, but throwing of bombs was no revolution, said Sardar Patel.

Sardar Patel said that he could understand Communism, but he failed to understand this terrorism and what the terrorists

could gain by it. They wanted revolution, but they had had it and now it was time for reconstruction and not for revolution.

No democratic Government could thrive on police batons, he added. The people must co-operate with the police who were but volunteers bearing the burden of great responsibility. He deplored the attitude of the people who felt that it was the duty of the police to quell the peace-breakers.

Sardar Patel said that he was aware of the unemployment among the Bengali youths. He appealed to owners of industries in Calcutta and the rest to share the troubles of Bengal and to understand each other's duty.

In pin-drop silence and in what an American visitor characterized as an atmosphere of enviable and unprecedented discipline so unusual with Bengal's demonstrative audiences, a million strong crowd listened to Sardar Patel for nearly 75 minutes when he unfolded in simple but impressive language his doctrine of rights and duties of citizenship. Not an incident marred the peaceful character of the huge gathering.

ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS

Although elaborate arrangements had been made in the Maidan grounds for first aid and other medical facilities in the light of experience of last July, crowds behaved with exemplary discipline and with determination to put down any disturbance. Patel was lustily cheered when.

CALCUTTA INCIDENT

The police assisted by reinforcements from neighbouring districts combed the entire Maidan area shortly before the meeting began and recovered four "high-calibre" bombs.

Three were unearthed from a drain near the Curzon Park about 800 yards from the venue of the meeting and the fourth from the southern end of the Maidan. The police believed that these were laid there by "interested persons for use according to their plan during the meeting."

CONTROL OF INDUSTRIES

Turning to the economic situation in the country, the Sardar said that they did not have either the means or the agency for taking over control of industries, adds the *P.T.I.* They were however, controlling various channels of trade.

He urged the people to work hard and recalled that even the Russians had to work very hard to create their wealth and the Americans, the wealthiest of nations, had to do the same for many years to get their present possessions. For the smooth running of industries, labour should be given to understand that they would get their due. He deprecated the 'go slow' moves and sit-down strikes, which entailed the nation in heavy losses.

Reminding his listeners of the 30 lakh deaths during the 1943 famine he claimed that they had not allowed a single person to die of hunger, whatever might have been their failures, during the last three years.

On the now-abandoned interim elections in West Bengal, the Deputy Prime Minister said that almost all people whom they had consulted were against any such election under the present circumstances. Refugees had to be enlisted and legislation made. They had also taken into consideration that the general election under the new Constitution would be held as

early as possible. He, therefore, asked the people to create an atmosphere for a free and fair election.

Referring to "our brothers" on the other side of the border, Sardar Patel said that those friends who were with us until yesterday have now become foreigners today. Artificial boundaries cannot separate them from us. Our relationship and economic and political ties cannot be broken. "Difficulties and obstacles are there and must be removed, but for that we must set our own house in order."

Warning his countrymen that they could make or mar the future of India during the next five years, Sardar Patel said that inter-provincial rivalries or inter-communal or inter-sectional disputes would only prevent us from making any progress.

He advised the people of Bengal to face their difficulties with courage and patience. "We have to strengthen ourselves and make the foundations of our freedom strong," he said.

He said that he had come to Bengal in spite of his "failing health," with the hope and belief that he would succeed in "rejuvenating" the provincial Congress. If this could be done he had no doubt that the Congress in other provinces would also benefit and the organization would re-establish itself in the country to serve the people.

During the past few days, Sardar Patel said, he had been hearing Congressmen accusing each other. No useful purpose would be served thereby. It was no good recalling the past. What they needed was that they must be united and support the Government. If Congressmen went on criticizing the actions of a Government formed by their own nominees, then how could they stop criticisms from others? No Government could

function without the support of the people, he added.

ADVICE TO CONGRESSMEN

Sardar Patel addressed himself particularly to the Congressmen who had come from the districts and said they should not be guided by the power-politics in Calcutta. He had often seen that Congressmen, reputed for their work in the villages, lost contact with the people as soon as they came to the city and mixed themselves with party groupings.

This, he said, would destroy the very foundation of the Congress. They must keep their contact with the villagers and people in general.

If they maintained that touch, keeping themselves aloof from party politics, they could put "pressure" on their leaders in the metropolis and end this quarrel. The organization thus strengthened would make itself again very popular with the masses.

The Deputy Prime Minister referred to the dearth of leadership in West Bengal and said that this had resulted in the Congressmen "fighting each other for power and offices."

If they continued to quarrel over power and position, the organization built up by years of hard labour and sufferings would be disintegrated and if the Bengal Congress was thus disintegrated, similar things, he feared, might happen in the rest of India. In the absence of individual leaders of "outstanding personality" he suggested that they must have collective leadership to meet together to strengthen the organization and the Government.

IV

NO QUARTER TO COMMUNISTS

On January 15, 1950 Sardar Patel gave a stern warning to the Communists in Bengal.

A stern warning against any overt or covert attempt on the part of any newspaper to show sympathy for the Communists in any shape or form was given by Sardar Patel at a conference with newspapermen.

Sardar Patel said that he tried to understand the Communist ideology but there was nothing in it save to create chaos and confusion for its own sake. He appealed to the newspaper editors to condemn the Communist violence "unreservedly unqualifiedly and unequivocally." He denied the suggestion made by a Pressman that the police were indulging in excesses. He asked: "Do you, who are living in Calcutta, seriously tell me that the police here play any other role than as sufferers at the hands of these cowards who do not hesitate or scruple to put women in front of their nefarious game of violence?" He agreed with another journalist who remarked that while a person guilty of petty larceny was given 'C' class imprisonment, a panwalla hardly earning between twelve annas and one rupee a day was awarded 'A' class on the ground that he was a political prisoner, all because he aimed a bomb at West Bengal's Premier. Thus it meant, said Sardar Patel, that Communism was a paying proposition. Was there any other city in India where a regular gang supplied offenders like this with a kit of Rs. 250 to start with so that they might get a prince's treatment in jail and also secure allowances for their families?

"This must stop," he said in a voice surcharged with determination and emphasis.

While appealing to newspapermen to give no quarter to professional disturbers of peace in the interest of preservation of the hard-won freedom, he rebuked the recalcitrant sections and warned them that if they played a despicable game they would not live long.

Sardar Patel said: "I appeal to you all to help us in dealing with this menace to the progress and stability of the country. The Communists are there merely to disrupt and destroy. They have no ideology. They are cowards and put women in front to be fired upon by the police. Instead of criticizing these cowards who exploit women in this manner, there is a hue and cry that the police had been unchivalrous enough to fire upon the weaker sex. While making constructive criticism of the Government and pointing out the errors of its ways, you should remember that you have got a higher responsibility towards the maintenance of the fabric of society and of the integrity of the country and its freedom. Unless you realize this higher responsibility and share with the Government the burden of putting down these anti-social elements, you will find that the very purpose of ameliorating the lot of young men and of the general public will be defeated."

V

INDO-PAKISTAN DEADLOCK

The following are the extracts of an address delivered by Sardar Patel while inaugurating Akhil Bharatiya Udyog Pardarshini (All-India industries Exhibition) at Delhi on January 29, 1950:—

The Deputy Prime Minister told Pakistan that there could be no one-way implementation of agreements entered into by the two countries and that the only way to settle the outstanding

disputes was open-hearted co-operation between them like "two brothers."

Sardar Patel, who was inaugurating the "Akhil Bharatiya Udyog Pradarshini (All-India Industries Exhibition) organized by the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee called upon the people to co-operate with the Government to make India economically self-sufficient so that they could attain "real swarajya."

The Deputy Prime Minister said that the pledge they took in 1929 to win complete freedom had been fulfilled. As independence was achieved without much suffering there was a tendency to underrate its value. It was the sacrifices made by Mahatma Gandhi and the lead he gave them that won them their freedom. Men like him had merely followed Gandhiji's leadership. Some of them went to jails, some suffered a loss of property or wealth and some even sacrificed their lives in the cause.

They should, however, remember that to create an integrated, unified India was not an easy task. Never was India one in the sense that it was now. What they had achieved could be compared with a kisan's ploughing of his land for sowing the seed.

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

The real *swarajya* of Gandhiji's conception could only be achieved by constructive work. What had been gained was that those who were obstructing their progress had gone away. The task of alleviating the sufferings of the common people still remained. They had to be ensured an adequate supply of food, clothing and shelter. The people should remember that they had their own Government now and should not obstruct it in its work.

Sardar Patel asked the people to resolve to always "buy Indian-made goods." and not to "touch goods manufactured outside." All free countries followed that principle in the interest of their industries. In Britain it was instilled in every boy to "buy British."

Sardar Patel said foreign goods which were not manufactured in India and were necessary for increasing production would, of course, have to be imported. The ultimate aim should, however, be to increase production and make the country self-sufficient in the matter of food, cloth and housing.

The Deputy Prime Minister hoped that the industrialists would try to manufacture all those articles which were at present imported from abroad.

Referring to the Indo–Pakistan trade dispute, Sardar Patel said that while all the jute mills were in India, the peasants in Eastern Pakistan were suffering because of the trade debacle. The Government of India did their best to promote friendly relations with Pakistan and entered into a number of agreements. It was, however, found that they were not implemented. Even jute that had been paid for was not exported. Indian cloth was refused and the Pakistan Government preferred to buy it from other countries.

"If any further agreement was to be signed," Sardar Patel added, "India would insist on getting a guarantee from Pakistan that such an agreement will be implemented in full."

Pakistan's policy in the matter of jute and textiles, Sardar Patel said, had harmed both the countries. Jute-growers in East Bengal were suffering because of the ban on export of jute to India, whereas the jute mills which were located in West Bengal had to go without their raw material. Pakistan had also

"boycotted" Indian textiles. But the result was that Indian textiles, exported to Lancashire and other places, were being repacked there and shipped back to Pakistan. Similarly, wheat and cotton, the yield of which was high in West Punjab, were not exported to India. At times the surplus wheat just rotted. So both the countries suffered. Co-operation between the two which was so essential could, however, be made possible only when they recognized each other's interests.

"We believe that we should be happy and our neighbour should also be happy. But so long as our neighbour is of a type who does not sympathize in our suffering it will do well to salute him from a distance."

Referring to the exhibition, Sardar Patel said that it had been organized to assess the country's industrial potential. The industries departments of provincial Governments were participating in the exhibition. The exhibition would show what strides India had yet to make in building up her industries. Such exhibitions, he added, should be organized in towns and villages.

The whole of South-East Asia, Sardar Patel said, was passing through "troublous times." The "fire of civil war" was raging in several countries there. India had to be prevented from meeting with a similar fate. This was not an easy thing to do. A determined effort, therefore, had to be made by the people in co-operation with the Government to keep India aloof from these forces.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

The Healthy Opposition

Sardar Patel declared in the Indian Parliament on February 2, 1950 that he and his colleagues will welcome the development of healthy opposition.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, put up a vigorous defence of the Government's policies towards labour and Centrally-administered areas and called upon the Socialist Party to give up its "tactics of creating disturbances everywhere" and instead form a "healthy opposition."

Sardar Patel, who was speaking extempore at the day's debate, said: "I ask you to consider the amount of labour legislation which we have pushed forward both in the Centre and in the provinces during these two years. Can you find a parallel anywhere ?"

TALK OF 'RE-UNION'

Syed Nausher Ali (West Bengal) in his maiden speech wanted India's policy towards Pakistan to be revised. He said it should be "neither weak nor hot but just and adequate and effective." It was wrong to give Pakistan, as had been done till now, the same status as was given to other foreign powers.

Stating that the Government of India could not shirk

the responsibility for partition, Syed Nausher Ali said that he had been told by responsible leaders at that time that the division of the country would be a "a short-lived affair." But now Indian leaders said that it was meaningless to think of reunion. He had his own ideas of Pakistan and India.

As a Bengali, he could say that the masses of both East and West Bengal were still of one mind and they wanted that they should unite. Unification of the two Bengals appeared to him "the one and the only solution of the problem." If the Government of India could not do it, he would emphasize that it should immediately take steps to stop the exodus from East Bengal. Otherwise the situation might deteriorate and the peace of India might be disturbed.

Another burning problem in West Bengal, he said, related to the rehabilitation of the refugees. Although it was said that the Communists were creating disorder there, which might be right, he was sure that the discontent among the refugees was being exploited by them to their own advantage. The question of refugees, he emphasized, should not be neglected any longer.

PLEA FOR FIRM POLICY

Describing the Government of India's decisions in accepting the cease-fire proposal and taking the Kashmir question to U. N. as "blunders," Syed Ali said that India could not follow the policy they had been till now following in the case of Kashmir.

"If police action was found necessary in the case of Hydrabad it should have been found cent per cent more so in the case of Kashmir." (Cheers). Kashmir would then have been a part of India for all time. India's policy of vacillation and appeasement should give place to a firm and effective policy.

Further vacillation on the part of India would neither be good for Pakistan nor for India.

Sardar Patel replying to some of the points raised, criticized the statement by Mr. Khandubhai Desai, President of the I. N. T. U. C. that the Government for the last two years had been following a policy of appeasement towards the capitalists.

"When we make speeches on the floor of this House," said Sardar Patel, "we have to take into account the effect on the country as a whole. I ask you to consider the amount of labour legislation both in the Centre and the provinces that we have pushed forward in the course of these two years. Can you find a parallel anywhere? We have tried our best to give labour as much as possible."

"LOOSE" CHARGE

Denying the charge of appeasement of capitalists, Sardar Patel said: "The capitalists themselves are afraid to come near the Government, because we feel that they have not played their part. Whether it is right or wrong is another matter but I had not expected a seasoned member of this House like Mr. Khandubhai Desai to make a loose charge of this kind. A back-bencher may make any remarks he likes and, due to his inexperience, he can be excused, but Mr. Khandubhai is not enjoying that position and he must not use such loose expressions."

"PRODUCE MORE"

"We are passing through a critical period. Our economic condition is such that unless we increase our food and industrial production, we cannot solve our problems. You all rightly appreciate the good work that our Army has done and you want that the Army's strength should be maintained. I am also of that view but you must see that the strain on our economy is

heavy and, therefore, unless we produce more, we cannot get on. The time has come when we must adjust our policy in such a way that all sections of society will co-operate.

"Labour must have its due but we must ask labour to produce as much as possible. When Mr. Desai says that labour has played its part, I will cite only one instance. In Madhya bharat, the textile industry earned Rs. 57 lakhs out of which Rs. 40 lakhs were given as bonus to labour. If Rs. 40 lakhs are given as bonus out of Rs. 57 lakhs, out of which we have to take income-tax, is that a policy of appeasement of the capitalists or is it heading towards destruction ?"

WORKERS' RIGHT

The Madhyabharat Ministry, Sardar Patel went on, had passed an order that clerks in the mills should not work more than six hours. That was not the position in any mill in India outside Madhyabharat. Were the mills in Madhyabharat to employ another set of clerks for an extra two hours ?

Sardat Patel said that those who attacked the Government outside alleged that the Government sided with the capitalists. He would ask the House who on the benches of the House was a capitalist. Was the voice of the capitalists heard in the House? Making allegations of this sort, Sardar Patel said, would not create conditions of co-operation.

"By all means attack the capitalists wherever they are in the wrong and make them see their folly but do not create an impression that this Government will not look to the interests of labour."

Replying to criticism of the Government's policy towards Chief Commissioners' provinces, Sardar Patel said some of these

provinces had been centrally administered for a long time. Only the other day the Prime Minister had made a statement on the Government's policy towards Delhi and an appropriate Bill was being drafted in pursuance of that statement. Ajmer was also an old chief commissioner's province. As soon as the present Government came into power, they tried to set up advisory committees in these provinces. Naturally the representatives of these provinces would not be satisfied with mere advisory committees, but the stability of the country demanded that the changes should not be too rapid.

A large number of refugees had come into this small areas. There were communal troubles there on several occasions and they had to be surpressed with severity. Under these circumstances, Government could not immediately set up democratic institutions there and hand over power to people who were not experienced.

"May be" said Sardar Patel, "a few experienced individuals are there but we must wait and see that a proper constitution is drafted for that area. We have to consider whether that area should be kept intact or merged with the adjoining area. These questions give us constant anxiety. We are not sleeping over it but the solution is not easy.

COORG AND CUTCH

Another old chief commissioner's province, said Sardar Patel, was Coorg near Mysore. There was a legislature there. There were two groups in Coorg, one in favour of merger with Mysore or Madras and the other opposed to merger. The Coorgis were a peace-loving people and they had accepted the Central Government's advice that they could proceed only with the general consent of the people.

Cutch, which had a huge unprotected and unguarded area of desert, was a Centrally-administered area. "I do not know," said Sardar Patel, "whether anyone of you here, except the representative of Cutch, has seen how unfortunate that State is.

"In this State we are going to develop a big port. After having lost Karachi, the strain on the port of Bombay is too great and, therefore, on the western coast we must have another first-class port. The Government of India have taken over Cutch as a Chief Commissioner's province in order to develop this area.

RAILWAY PROJECT

"Our project is to put in a population of five lakhs more in Cutch, largely refugees from Sind and some from the Punjab also. A big township is being developed there. We have a programme of building a railway from this port to Deesa. This is also a big scheme."

All this, he said, could not be done in Cutch in a democratic set-up because the people there were inexperienced. Adventurous Cutchis would be found all over the world. They left the State because there was no trade or industry there. With Cutch a Chief Commissioner's province, it was the responsibility of the Government of India to see that the money spent on its development was well spent and that the people were kept satisfied.

"Last year there was a famine and Cutchis residing both in Bombay and Cutch had passed resolutions thanking the Government for helping them in the hour of crisis. No one died on account of the famine. Food was sent there by the Government in adequate quantities and it was distributed properly. The Government of India also protected the border of Cutch.

At the other end was the Centrally-administered area of Manipur, a State which was now exposed to the danger of infiltration. Similarly, Tripura was in the same position. It had a big border with Pakistan.

Both the Bengal people and Assam people wanted Manipur but after the partition Manipur had practically no contact with either. Supplies to Tripura had to be sent by air. In view of the difficult conditions there, the State was administered Centrally. So also, in the Punjab, many hill States had been combined into a Centrally-administered province. The population of this province was simple and innocent. The crime rate was the lowest but politically it needed nursing.

Cooch Behar had presented a difficult and tough problem but it was recently merged with Bengal without any trouble.

"Wherever we have a chief commissioner's province," said Sardar Patel, "you will see that we have very special reasons to protect and develop it. We are anxious to get rid of the burden as quickly as possible but we cannot throw on the people a burden which would crush them with disastrous consequences to the whole country."

VINDHYA PRADESH

The Government of India, Sardar Patel went on, had very bitter experience of Vindhya Pradesh. This area consisted of about 25,000 square miles with a population of 36,00,000. Formerly there were about 35 States in this small area. Of these Rewa was the only viable State. One could imagine what kind of police and administrative machinery there might have been in such small units. When the British left, the smallest of these princes thought that he was the monarch of all he surveyed

and could style himself "His Majesty." With great difficulty, the Central Government persuaded all of them to be lumped into one group.

After this was done, the Central Government found another problem. This area was divided into two parts for historical reasons. Political life was at a very low ebb but the Central Government gave the power to the representatives of the local Congress. Even this Congress organization had not held any elections for choosing the office-bearers. The leaders, however, would not agree to form a single ministry in the beginning and the Centre had to form two ministries. Ultimately they were persuaded to form a joint ministry because the area could not support the expenses on two ministries.

"We thought that this joint working will create conditions for a good democratic administration. Unfortunately, some time later, one of the Ministers was arrested in Delhi on a charge of accepting bribe of Rs. 25,000. It did not stop there. I received numerous complaints of corruption and blackmarketing, both officially and non-officially from Vindhya Pradesh. There were also charges of mal-administration. I asked the Ministers to explain the position. The Chief Minister made several charges against the Ministers and the Ministers made charges against the Chief Minister. I said the best thing for them to do was to conduct an inquiry into the charges."

ONLY ALTERNATIVE

Proceeding, Sardar Patel said, as the Ministers of Vindhya Pradesh could not work together, they resigned. As no alternative Ministry was found feasible, for the time being this area had to be placed under an official set-up. The Centre could

obviously not allow the peace of this area to be disturbed by the dacoits and murderers.

To administer Vindhya Pradesh, he had asked the U. P. to give some officers on loan. The U. P. had responded on earlier occasions and had no more officers to spare. The C. P. was able to spare some officers and it did so.

"When I put these officers from the C. P. there," said Sardar Patel, "there was an outcry from some parts of the adjoining area of the U. P. that these officers had been placed there in order to integrate Vindhya Pradesh with the C. P. I assured them that I did not want to favour either the U. P. or the C. P. It was not my intention to disintegrate this area but if there was no alternative, I could not help it."

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

When The Sardar Crashlanded

Unlike Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is the least anecdotal. Even Shanker, his Secretary, who probably spends, next to Maniben, the largest amount of time with him, will be stuck up when it comes to digging out stories about his chief. He is colourless : whether by choice or by nature, will never be known. Correspondents at the Capital will reel out stories by the dozens about every other Minister—except the Sardar. About him, there seems to descend a thin veil of mystery.

Two incidents in recent months, however, remain sharply in focus. One was in connection with the airplane accident in which he was involved, early I think, in March.

I was staying at Constitution House then along with many members of the Constituent Assembly. One night about 11-30 p. m. when I was just preparing to retire, Mr. H. V. Kamath who was my neighbour called me up and asked whether I had heard the news.

DELHI ALARMED

"What news ?" I asked, for I had not listened in to the radio, which had previously announced that the Sardar's plane,

in which he was travelling to Jaipur had not been heard of and search parties had been sent in romantic haste.

I jumped up, momentarily stunned and hastily put on my clothes. Mr. R. K. Sidhwa, who was also staying next to me, meanwhile heard our talk and he came rushing out to know what the matter was.

"Let's go to the Sardar's house straightway" suggested Mr. Kamath and Mr. Sidhwa, who was by now in a state of agitation, said that was the best thing to do.

Mr. Kamath brought out his Buick and we three drove into the night with fear gripping our hearts. Mr. Sidhwa was almost unconsolable. "Oh God, what on earth shall we do ? India is done for. We are lost", he was muttering all the way. It was a short drive and when we reached the drive's end, there was a light burning and the guards let us in.

SARDAR'S VOICE

At his desk, the Sardar's office Secretary was putting calls to Panditji's house and long-distance calls to Jaipur. In a corner Mr. Khandubhai Desai, the INTUC chief was sitting huddled, the very picture of grief. Jaipur had no news, nor had Pandit Nehru's office.

Minutes passed and phones were buzzing all the time. Mr. Kamath tried to get Pandit Nehru for the last time, when the telephone operator said that the line was engaged and that the Sardar was speaking to the Prime Minister—Mr. Kamath's exclamation was explosive. The Sardar on the phone ? He was quite well then ? Mr. Sidhwa and Mr. Khandubhai Desai now crowded round the phone, waiting breathlessly. The relief was so great that Mr. Sidhwa was laughing all the time, telling everyone that he was SURE nothing could ever happen to his chief.

After what seemed eternity, the line was clear again and the news was corroborated. It was learnt that the Sardar had a safe landing and that he would be back at the Capital the day after.

MOIST EYES

That day, in the Assembly, the galleries were crowded to capacity. The Sardar, came in almost unnoticed and the first to see him walk in measured steps were the pressmen up in the galleries. Necks were craned and in the next moment, the entire Assembly was standing and cheering lustily.

For full three minutes, the Assembly Hall rang with 'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel-ki jai'' while the Sardar himself stood with folded hands, his eyes suspiciously moist. A colleague sitting beside me nudged me and said, "the old man is crying," but though I could not see the tears, I could see the Sardar wiping his face—yes, and eyes. It was an unforgettable sight. It was the first time that I saw undisputable evidence of his popularity and the esteem in which he was held by India's chosen representatives.

SOME STAMINA

My next recollection of the Sardar's stamina was at Dehra-Dun, where he had been asked to inaugurate the Armed Services Academy. The ceremony called for great physical endurance and the Sardar had to stand for nearly two hours without support.

The ceremony took place on the Dehra Dun parade ground, believed to be the largest in the country. The cadets were lined in front of the Flag Pole and the Sardar had to face the sun, shining brightly in the morning.

Most of us were, of course, provided with comfortable

chairs. The sun very trying and among the cadets themselves three swooned and had to be carried out on stretchers. A chair was offered to the Sardar, but he declined to use it, determined, no doubt, to stick to military discipline. All the Patidar blood of his ancestors must have revolted at the idea of showing any signs of weakness.

It was a gruelling experience, for it is hard enough for any man to stand at attention for the best part of 150 minutes. For anybody past 50 years it was an achievement to be proud of. For one who was in his mid seventies and with an admittedly weak heart, it was nothing short of a miracle. Besides, the sun was shining right into one's face and there was not the least bit of protection. And yet, there stood the Sardar, smiling as if the experience was nothing to him. A Brigadier who was standing by me remarked quite audibly: "Gosh, he has some stamina."

POLITICS NOT A REFUGE

The Indian Civil Service men have a very healthy regard for him and believe he is the only man who could work miracles. A story is told of a very high civil servant who wanted to resign from the service and take to politics. The Sardar called him and had a long talk with him.

Another high official later told me that the Sardar's arguments were unassailable. It would seem that the Sardar told the official that politics called for the greatest patriotism and that just at the moment patriotism demanded that everyone stuck to his duty.

The Sardar, it would seem, further impressed upon the official that India could not afford to lose a single senior civil servant.

The Sardar has few mannerisms. In the Assembly (he is probably the only member ever to be granted the privilege of sitting down while talking) he is noted for the coolness of his speeches. Others get irritated, but not the Sardar, even in the face of studied provocation. He uses his left hand like a fan when he wants to be forceful and occasionally thumps the desk to stress a point. Otherwise, he sits impassively, without a flicker on his face.

One sometimes wonders what his elder brother the late, great Vithalbhai Patel, whose portrait looks down on the august gathering would have said, were he the Speaker of the House—M. V. K.

(*From the Free Press Journal dated October 31, 1949*).

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

Nehru And Patel

(By Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya).

We had heard of Damon and Pythias, as well as of David and Tonathan. They are always mentioned together but in Bharat we witness today much the same spectacle when we constantly see the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of India sailing on the breezy ocean of popular applause together or alternately. They command the devotion of the people and occasionally even their dread. Indeed the two make but one personality, and composite character of compensating qualities which together make up the ideal leadership of a popular ministry. Either without the other would leave the picture unfinished.

One often wonders what should have been the position of the Central Government in Delhi—if the combination of the apposites (one had almost said, the opposites) had not been so happy, so appropriate, and so well dovetailed as it actually is. Two friends do not make an ideal combination if each is the rubber stamp of the other. Two fellow workers can make no progress, can indeed reach no decision if they are punching each other. With our two public characters it is otherwise and here we must pause to understand what these respective qualities are which are dovetailed into one another to produce effective co-operation.

DYNAMIC

The Sardar is a dynamic personality, quick to receive an idea, prompt in thought and relentless in action. He believes in collective working through friends and fellow workers bound together by ties of loyalty to the leader. He is always alert, ever receptive and restless, eager to grasp information and storing it like the bee in a particular cell of the honeycomb of his capacious brain—to be drawn upon when allied matters mature and await utilization. Whether he is ill or well, whether in Bombay or Delhi, whether awake or asleep, whether thinking or dreaming, he has his mind upon the burning problems of the day, the issues of the hour and the solutions of the minute and operates his telephones inside his mind and outside in his office perhaps four at a time like the stock-brokers of the share market in the Dalal Street of Bombay, or the Civil Street of Calcutta.

To the spectator it is all buzz and boom, the sound of drum and cymbal with no articulate noises, yet crores-worth-business is done in the one; and empires are demolished in the other. The fate of five hundred and sixty-two states is decided in a minute, the destiny of nine provinces is determined in a second. It is the lot of the Zamindars and the compensation due to them? —the provincial Government are pulled up in a jiffey; is it the relations between Congress Committees and State Ministers, each is put in its place in a moment.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

In all these matters it would be somewhat of an exaggeration to say that Sardar and the Pandit see eye to eye with each other. But they furnish a remarkable example of unity in diversity. No two fingers on the same hand are alike. No two brothers of the same parents think, feel or act together. The best of friends

differ from each other. To differ and diverge is natural, but to reconcile is difficult and is achieved through effort. It is here that our two public characters furnish an example to the world of how collaborators bent upon a common purpose must distinguish essentials from non-essentials, the remote from the immediate and principle from expediency. Indeed it is not merely by temperament that the two may happen to differ, but by their very portfolios, they are bound to develop types of outlook which cannot but differ in the two cases.

SELF-EFFACEMENT

The Minister for Home Affairs is dominated by the supreme and irresistible need for internal safety and peace, while the Minister for Foreign Affairs is swayed by the external reactions of any particular measure or policy adopted. Where a certain foreigner in the country may be considered an undesirable by the Home Ministry, the attitude and approach of the Foreign Minister may be less pronounced and more conciliatory in respect of the same problem and the same person.

The art of co-operation whether it be in a married couple or a ministerial couple depends upon a measure of self-effacement and a good deal of mutual subordination. This art is found to be cultivated to its highest pitch by our revered Sardar and our beloved Pandit.

VARIATION AND VISION

It is not in respect of matters of pure politics alone that such variation of view and vision is apt to arise. The Sardar is essentially an Easterner, he is more consciously a Hindu, yet he is able to imbibe the ideals of the West and maintain the best of relations with other communities. Where convictions are

particularly strong and even uncompromising, in respect of subjects other than one's own it is just possible that harmony and fellowship are only maintained by a wise hesitation in thinking, a wise taciturnity of speech and a wise tardiness in action. It is thus that the Kashmir problem is treated as one on which initiative and development of policy are wholly left to the Prime Minister for the latter's interest and concern for Kashmir cannot be easily excelled or at all called in question.

COUNTRY ABOVE SELF

The difficulty, however, arises where one is concerned with one's own department and need not observe any checks and balances, for then it is just possible that we may lay the emphasis too strongly on our own viewpoints. If ever report has it that the Sardar does it, one can only say that between nature and artifice which are always at war with each other, victory may come to the one or to the other.

The Sardar, however, let it be noted, is working against time, against doctors and at times against the dictates of the guardian angel at home—his daughter. But to him country is higher than self and it is the hope and prayer of all that he may live to the full age of a hundred and sixteen of the Upanishads and consolidate the independence of his country for whose freedom he has laboured and suffered.

Need we say that success cannot be withheld from the labours of a statesman who works with the tenacity of the bulldog, the shrewdness of the bloodhound and the dignity of the Dane.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

Nehru On Patel

Often times, people have tried to find differences between Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru. What does the present Prime Minister think of his able Deputy ? What did he use to think of him in days gone by, when neither of them possibly ever dreamed of the day when they would be so closely associated in the governance of the country ?

We get a clue to this intriguing question in Pandit Nehru's autobiography. In that voluminous book of 622 pages, Sardar Patel is referred to seven—just seven times, while his elder brother, the great Vithalbhai Patel is referred to thrice more.

The first five references are matter of fact and give little clue to the differences between the two personalities. On the first occasion, he merely refers to him to stress a point that in the particular year, leading Congressmen all over the country were presidents of municipalities, citing the examples of C. R. Das at Calcutta, Vithalbhai Patel at Bombay and the Sardar at Ahmedabad.

The next time he is referring to the 'Bardoli Satyagraha under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, gallantly carried through to the admiration of the rest of India.'

"The Bardoli peasantry" continued Panditji, "met with considerable measure of success; the real success of their campaign, however, lay in the effect it produced amongst the peasantry all over India. Bardoli became a sign and a symbol of hope and strength and victory to the ndian peasant."

BOMBAY ARREST

The next time he refers to the Sardar, it is in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement; but we get no idea of what Panditji feels about his colleague; he merely mentions the fact of the arrest in Bombay of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Malaviyaji and Tasadduk Sherwani 'and others as permanent or acting members of the Working Committee,' and how, later in prison, 'Vallabhbhai Patel and Jairamdas Doulatram, who had both been brought to Yeravada, as well as Sarojini Naidu, who was kept in the Women's Prison opposite, were allowed to join our conference.'

The scene now shifts to the Karachi Congress, 'which was an even greater personal triumph for Gandhiji than any previous Congress had been.' And Pandit Nehru adds, by way of parenthesis. "The President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, was one of the most popular and forceful men in India with the prestige of victorious leadership in Gujerat, but it was the Mahatma who dominated the scene."

That was all. The Sardar was a forceful figure all right, but he was shunted out of the picture by the greatest figure of all times—Gandhiji!

NOTABLE DAY

We now come to January 4, 1932. Panditji records that it was 'a notable day.' It put a stop to discussion and argument. Early that morning, Nehru records, "Gandhiji and the

Congress President Vallabhbhai Patel, were arrested and confined without trial as State prisoners." Civil liberties ceased to exist in India.

That is the last direct reference to Sardar Patel in Panditji's autobiography. Tbe next two—and most revealing—references are in the shape of footnotes. It is in them however that the real differences between the two leaders are shown to us for the first time.

Panditji is here expounding his philosophy of National Economy (in a chapter entitled amusingly enough as 'Paradoxes') and is discussing Gandhiji's charkha solution and par passu, the Russian Soviet Union.

FOOT-NOTE COMMENT

"Some Congress leaders" he says, and one almost senses the men he has in mind, "are frightened of industrialisation and imagine that the presentday troubles of the industrial countries are due to mass production. That is a strange misreading of the situation."

To illustrate this statement, he adds a footnote, which quotes Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, speaking at Ahmedabad on Jan. 3, 1935 as saying: "True socialism lies in the development of village industries. We do not want to reproduce in our country the chaotic conditions prevalent in the western countries consequent on mass production."

Just that—and nothing more. The reader is left to imagine the differences in outlook between these two leaders; Panditji makes no bones of his views.

THE STATES.

The last reference, very aptly enough, as later events have

proved, is again as a footnote, this time to quote Sardar's opinion on the relationship between Congress and the States.

In support of the prevalent Congress policy of not condemning the States in public, he adds a footnote thus :

"Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel laid stress on this non-intervention policy in a speech at Baroda on January 6th 1935. He is reported to have said : "That workers in Indian States should do their work with all the limitations imposed by the State, and instead of criticising the administration, efforts should be made to keep up cordial relations between the ruler and the ruled."

COLOURLESS ACCOUNT

What a colourless account of a man, who has been Pandit Nehru's close colleague for years together ! All through the pages, Pandit Nehru seems more pre-occupied with events than personalities. He records history, some times vividly, at all times with gusto, but he almost seems to fight shy of treating his colleagues as human beings, with personal problems.

If only Pandit Nehru could tell stories, he could probably keep us spell-bound, but he does nothing of the sort. It is perhaps a trait in Panditji himself that is evident here. For all his humanism, Panditji has few friends, and we are led to the regretful conclusion that great though he is, Pandit Nehru is a lonely man, with a dislike for mixing intimately with the rest of mankind. Strange, but true.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

Master-Plan Of Pakistan

In a statement Sardar Patel described the "master plan" of Pakistan Press and leaders to attribute happenings in Calcutta to his speech at the Calcutta Maidan as a "signal triumph of untruth and fabrication unequalled in the short but sustained record of falsehood and lies which Pakistan publicity has to its discredit."

Following is the text of Sardar Patel's statement :

Mr. Nurul Amin's latest statement repeating a reference to my Calcutta speech in the cock-and-bull chain of causation of the atrocities in East Bengal which he has presented to a credulous audience inside Pakistan would have been treated by me with the contempt it deserved, but for the fact that the Pakistan Government seems to have fallen a victim to a confidence trick played with such perverted ingeniousness by their oracle the *Dawn*.

It was first in its issue of February 22 that the *Dawn's* correspondent from Dacca imagined my hand in "Bengal carnage." Subsequently in its issue of February 23 that confirmed prefabricator of truth, and fabricator of untruth, whose antics in this capital city are still familiar to us, came out with a fantastic "master plan" of loot, arson and murder in the implementation of which I am reported to have played a part somewhat similar to that of Mark Antony after the death of Julius Caesar.

COOKED UP STORY

When I first read that gruesome imaginary story, cooked up by over-wraught but diseased mental perversion, I dismissed it more in amusement than in anger. I thought that that was so palpably untrue that it could not claim any credence among any sane and reasonable persons of culture and refinement.

But to my amazement the first victim of this journalistic leger-demain was no less exalted a person than Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Pakistan Prime Minister, who almost parrot-like repeated the canard at his Press conference on February 27. I am not then surprized that the infection of the disease spread to East Bengal and Mr. Nurul Amin repeats the same story.

Pakistan would be the last country from which I would claim immunity from misrepresentation and distortion. In fact my Calcutta speech has been so ineffective from my point of view that it did not claim in Pakistan the attention of the powers that be and the Press that is not, for more than a month after it was delivered. Generally I have been more fortunate in that my speeches have evoked attention from them the next day after the speech is delivered. This time it appears they were caught napping and took all that time to put their own sinister interpretation on that speech.

The Pakistan Prime Minister was good enough to issue a statement on February 13, in which he ascribed the Calcutta outbreak to "the nefarious plans of the Mahasabhaites, the R.S.S. and the Council for the Protection of Minorities" and was generous enough to leave me out. In fact he dismissed me with the comment "if the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of India did not know of these plans and activities they must be singularly ill-informed."

A TRIUMPH OF UNTRUTH

It is obvious, therefore, that the "master plan" of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, inspired by his oracle, to attribute the happenings in Calcutta to my speech at the Calcutta Maidan was hatched some time after February 13 and its paternity can probably be traced to the *Dawn's* correspondent at Dacca and his dispatch dated February 20 which appeared in the *Dawn* of the 22nd. All that I can say is that the plan constitutes a signal triumph of untruth and fabrication unequalled in the short but sustained record of falsehood and lies which Pakistan publicity has to its discredit.

It is clear that instead of feeling ashamed of what has happened in East Bengal, the Central and provincial Governments in Pakistan are engineering excuses by tracing an imaginary origin of those atrocities.

I need not say anything in defence of my Calcutta speech. It is there for anyone to read and form his own conclusions. That unashamed fabrication has been resorted to is clear from the following supposed quotation from my speech given by *Dawn's* Calcutta correspondent: "Bombs should not fall on your own policemen. They are the guardians of the freedom you have achieved with the blood of your men, women and children in Noakhali. Do not forget Noakhali. Do not forget that important limbs of your mother India have been cut. Do not forget that your goal is not yet achieved and finally do not forget that you and your police have to fight with someone else."

REFERENCE TO NOAKHALI

Compare that with what was actually said. The only reference to Noakhali was when I traced historically the pangs and sorrows which Bengal had suffered. The reference to the

police came when I was dealing with the menace of Communists and other anti-social elements. I quote the actual words I used which are representative of the burden of that part of my speech: "We have got used to calling the police bad names in the past. We have to change that mentality. The police which we maligned was different from the police which is serving you today. They are volunteers. They are bearing the burden of a great responsibility. You should have respect and sympathy for these guardians of law and order. If you do not, you will regret it."

I need hardly comment on the manufacturing efficiency of the *Dawn* further. The Pakistan Prime Minister was clever in his own way. He took sentences out of the context and pieced them together to make a plausible story, but went on to add: "Our information is that what he actually said was even more poisonous than the quotations that I have given you, and that was kept out of the Press."

I can only reciprocate the compliment which Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan paid me earlier, and say that he must have been "singularly ill-informed." Perhaps one of the "more poisonous quotations" to which he refers is the following which both he and the source of his inspiration alike have significantly omitted: "Anger or hate will not avail you. Our brothers both Hindus and Muslims have been separated from us. All of us do wish that people on both sides of the frontier should prosper. But for that both sides must be patient, brave and prudent."

I shall make a persent of this quotation to the *Dawn*, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. Nurul Amin and their flock, whose unfortunate lot it is to listen to "their lean and fleshy songs, grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw."

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

The Stars Go Down

"There is no death; the stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in Heaven's jewelled crown,
They shine for ever more."

—JOHN L. McCREERY

The stars of India went down on December 15, 1950, because the sudden end of Sardar Patel's grand and glorious career was a great national tragedy. He passed away at 9.37 A.M. on that fatal day, never to be forgotten by the grateful people whom he delivered from foreign yoke, protected from domestic dangers and helped to rehabilitate economically, politically and culturally.

The end came suddenly six hours after Sardar Patel had a heart attack which made him unconscious. Oxygen was administered to relieve the difficulty in breathing. The Great Leader momentarily regained consciousness at about 8 a. m. Thereafter life ebbed slowly away till he breathed his last ninety minutes after.

India's multitudes demonstrated their great esteem and high veneration for the departed soul. The seething sea of mourning humanity filed past the Sardar's bed in waves upon waves. The planes swarmed over Bombay from all over the country carrying India's topmost leaders.

The last journey started from Birla House at 5. 20 p.m. along a four-mile route. Maniben and Dahyabhai, the daughter and the son of the great leader, sat on either side of the cortege. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and other nearest colleagues of the Sardar followed in a jeep. Men of the Defence Services brought up the rear. Mourning men and weeping women crammed the foot-paths all along the route. Flowers were showered from balconies and windows. Gandhiji's favourite hymn, "Raghupati Raghava Rajaram" was chanted with sad sweetness.

The procession zigzagged slowly along the narrow Vithalbhai Patel Road and it was 7-20 p.m. when it reached the Sonepur Burning Ghat (Chowpatty). The leaders took turns to carry on their shoulders their great comrade's body on the last lap of the journey.

Twenty minutes later a pyre of sandalwood went up in flames at a spot adjacent to where Sardar Patel's brother Vithalbai's ashes were mixed with the dust of Mother India. The sacred fire transformed into air, water and earth what was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the unflinching fighter, the great general, the sagacious administrator, the far-sighted statesman and the architect of a united India.

"The Sardar's body is being consumed by fire," said Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the First President of the Indian Republic in an eloquent tribute at the crematorium, "but no fire on earth can consume his fame."

Supporting himself on the shoulders of the sobbing Prime Minister, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said the earthly body of Sardar Patel had gone, but in the form of the services he had rendered his country, he would live for all time. Those left behind would have to continue the work yet left unfinished.

"Today we, his associates, are weeping," the President said. "But it is not for the Sardar's sake that we are weeping; we are weeping for ourselves. Let us not forget that Sardar Patel has left a large family—the entire nation is his family. Let us pledge ourselves today to serve the cause of the nation as he has done. May his soul rest in peace."

In a voice choked with sorrow Premier Nehru paid a moving tribute to Sardar Patel in the Indian Parliament :—

"It is a great story that all of us know and the whole country knows. History will record it in many pages and call him the boulder and consolidator of the new India and will say many other things about him. But, perhaps, to many of us here, he will be remembered as a great captain of our forces in the struggle for freedom and as one who gave us sound advice in times of trouble as well as in moments of victory, a friend and colleague and comrade on whom one could invariably rely, as a tower of strength when we were in trouble. I, who have sat here on this bench side by side with him for these several years, will feel rather forlorn and a certain emptiness will steal upon me as I look upon this empty bench."

All nations all over the globe paid warm tributes to the genius of Sardar Patel. "Sardar Patel," said Premier Attlee, "played an outstanding part in the great events of his generation and his name will have a permanent place in the annals of India." In an editorial on Sardar Patel's death, *Ceylon Daily News* described him as "India's Bismarck" and said, "His name will go down in history as the man who unified India under a single rule. That this task was achieved so smoothly and without serious conflict is a tribute to the determination and efficiency of the Sardar. Sardar Patel's death, like that of

Mahatma Gandhi, is a loss not only to India but also to the world of Asia whose people will join with India in paying tribute to one of her greatest sons."

The conservative *Glasgow Herald* in a leading article said that Sardar Patel was an old guard Congressman and his death severed one of the closest remaining links between the present Indian Government and the "traditions of Indian nationalism", represented by Mahatma Gandhi and his immediate circle. The paper said that as a Home Minister the Sardar took a strong line on both communism and communalism without surrendering democratic principles or visibly alienating moderate Hindus inside his party. "The problem that now arises is how the shoes of the elder statesman are to be filled—for Patel was one of the several in high office to survive beyond the normal oriental span."

The *Evening Star* of Washington said in an editorial that "the U.S.A. and the Western world as a whole have lost a good and powerful friend" in the death of Sardar Patel. It said that his "wise counsel and strong highly influential leadership" would be sorely missed at a time "when they are most needed". "A man of vision, a statesman exceptionally gifted in the art of politics a forceful hard driving and realistic personality, he made a contribution of incalculable value to the cause internal Indian unity and security."

"The spirit of Sardar Patel would continue in India," said Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India. He further said :—

"I had not known Sardar Patel before I went to India in March 1947 and I was warned that I would find him a man of inflexible and iron will with whom negotiations would not be

easy. I soon discovered that behind his stern and masterful exterior there beat a very warm and sympathetic heart. Once one had penetrated his armour plating one was dealing with an essentially friendly, human and lovable man. His work in charge of the Ministry of States in 1947 and 1948 will go down in history for he handled one of the most difficult problems which ever confronted any statesman with a high degree of understanding and regard for the princes."

Speaking with great emotion just before the pyre was lit, Mr. Rajagopalachari said it was his "melancholic privilege" to say a few words on the occasion as Sardar Patel's oldest living friend.

"Thirty-two years ago," Mr. Rajagopalachari began in a low and heavy voice, when Gandhiji was at Madras one morning he asked me whether I had seen Vallabhbhai, who, he said, was brave and very trustworthy. You should meet him, he had said. I did see him and since then I have been seeing him without a break.

"What was Vallabhbhai departed from us today, we have only his body. It is now going before your eyes into air, water and earth. That is where we come from and that is where we all must go back."

"But what inspiration, courage, confidence incarnate a force Vallabhbhai was? Let us not think that the Sardar is dead. The real Vallabhbhai will survive even after Vallabhbhai we know has breathed his last.

"We have assembled here now to give vent to our grief and take courage and confidence from his ashes. We will not see the like of him again. But do not think he lived in vain. He led an honest life from which we all can take something, provided we have the character and moral courage.

"Let us be brave. Let us not shed tears. We should not give way to fear and depression. I am an old man and the melancholic privilege of addressing you all on this occasion has been given to me. Further, I am the oldest friend Vallabhbhai has left behind.

"I have seen many pass away. Now Sardar has also left us, and he has left his brother (Jawaharlal Nehru) to carry on alone. It is very difficult for me to say anything more. May God bless his soul."