

A Call to Arms



in National Congress

# A Call to Arms

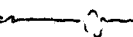
BY

SIR W. WEDDERBURN, BART.

Mr. DADABHAI NAOROJI.

Mr. W. C. CONNERJEE.

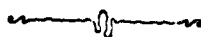
Mr. A. O. HUME



REPRINTED FROM

**THE HINDUSTAN REVIEW**

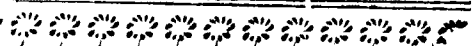
FOR DECEMBER 1903.



ALLAHABAD :

PRINTED AT THE INDIAN PRES

DECEMBER 1903.



# THE INDIAN PEOPLE

A Weekly Record and Review

Edited by Sachchidananda Sinha, Bar

Sir Henry Cotton (in the course of his visit to the Indian Majlis at Cambridge) said: The *Hindu* of Calcutta, the *Tribune* of Lahore, the *Indian People* are only a few of the representative organs of opinion, and all have a tendency towards patriotic and national aspirations.

er of  
gals of  
ention  
d illus-

**THE DAILY MAIL** (*London Daily*).—The views of the Natives of Northern India are voiced by the *Indian People* of Allahabad.

**THE MIDLAND HERALD** (*Bilston* [England] *Weekly*).—The straightforward, moderate and manly tone of the *Indian People* seems to have met with considerable approval from both Indians and Anglo-Indians.

**THE PIONEER** (*Allahabad Daily*).—We welcome a new weekly journal the *Indian People*, another venture of Mr. Sinha, the editor of the *Hindustan Review*. A moderate Native paper is sure of a certain amount of European support.

**THE ADVOCATE OF INDIA** (*Bombay Daily*).—... done promisingly well. The Indian topics of the day are well treated in bright paragraphs, excellently written and soundly thought out.

**THE CEYLON OBSERVER** (*Colombo Daily*).—The first part is modelled somewhat on the *English Spectator*; the remainder contains the latest legal, local and foreign news carefully boiled down and closes with selections.

**THE BENGALER** (*Calcutta Daily*).—The *Indian People* is conducted with ability, judgment and moderation and it supplies a great want.

**THE TRIBUNE** (*Lahore Tri-Weekly*).—The journal promises to take rank among the first-class weeklies in the country. The *Indian People* bears evidence of being edited with tact, wide-awakeness and command of literary matter. The journal promises both to supply a local want and prove a valuable accession to the Native Press.

**THE INDIAN NATION** (*Calcutta Weekly*).—... Promising in every way, being good alike in substance and form.

**THE ALIGARH INSTITUTE GAZETTE** (*Aligarh Weekly*).—One of the best organs of public opinion undoubtedly is the *Indian People* of Allahabad. It is general-reading, fair-minded and sympathetic in dealing with matters which concern the natives.

**THE MADRAS INDIA** (*Madras Weekly*).—The journal is bound to make an impressive opinion.

**MYSORE STANDARD** (*Mysore Bi-Weekly*).—The paper is bound to take the foremost place among the high-class weeklies edited by Indians.

**THE NEW INDIA** (*Bombay Weekly*).—... the first number carries with it the promise of a long and useful career.

**THE PUNJAB HERALD** (*Lahore Bi-Weekly*).—... A promising addition to weekly press.

Subscription Rs. 6.

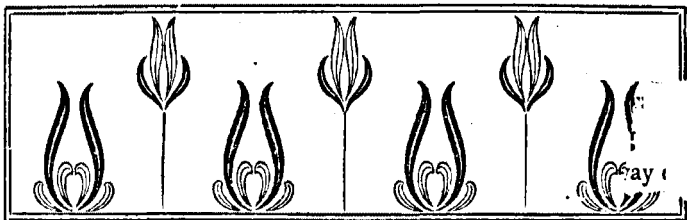
Single copy annas three.

USUAL ADVERTISEMENTS 3 ANNAS PER LINE.

Special Rates for long term Advertisements.

Apply to—THE MANAGER,

7, Eglw Road, ALLAHABAD.



## A CALL TO ARMS.

### I.

**I** am told by some friends, who ought to know, that the Indian people have grown indifferent to the national cause, and are content to bear the whips and scorns of time; that they have lost faith in constitutional agitation for the redress of grievances, and wish to give up the struggle :

“ Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?”

To use Mr. Chamberlain's phrase, they prefer to “take it lying down,” scrambling humbly for any crumbs that may fall from their official master's table.

If this be true, if the national spirit is really so broken, it is indeed sad: inexpressibly sad for India; and shameful for England. For it will show that we have failed in our mission, and that our rule in India instead of waking this great and ancient race to a higher national existence, has crushed out their life, leaving only torpor and despair.

But for my own part I do not take this despairing view. I know of good and true sons of India who are determined that she shall not sink, half unconscious, into political death. In any case

treacherously turns his friends to  
What will his friends do?  
mind his displeasure? Not a

even with friendly violence, and put hope and courage  
pointing out that the storm is abating, that help is at  
that the haven of safety is in sight. This is a true  
Parable. The people of India have been overwhelmed by misfor-  
tunes, great and manifold. They have suffered long and wearily  
from war, famine, and pestilence; and no one can wonder if the  
strain has been too great for poor humanity, if their vigour is  
now faint and their will paralysed. But this is not the time for  
her leaders and their friends to sit with folded hands. A great  
crisis is at hand. The powers of darkness are shaken; and if  
India be but true to herself, all may yet be well:

“ Say not the struggle nought availth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

“ If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;  
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

“ For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.”

then is the situation? And what is the practical work  
to do? As I have said, a crisis is impending in this country;  
an opportunity will soon offer itself to the people of  
the world to have to do is to grasp the occasion firmly by  
the reins. In the last eight years this country has been domi-  
nated by aggression abroad, and selfish class interests  
The political pendulum is about to swing strongly  
towards national righteousness abroad,  
and towards home. And as India has been the

most grievous sufferer from the reign of violence and race prejudice, so will she be the greatest gainer when this nation revives to those noble traditions of freedom, justice, and progress which have made England great. With a fresh Parliament, and an awakened national conscience, the Court of Appeal will be open. But if a verdict is to be won there must be no slackness. The case for India must be put before the constituencies effectively and persistently. And this means hard and incessant work, courage, and self-denial. Look at Ireland, which is now reaping the reward of constitutional agitation. The obstacles in the way of India are nothing like so great as those which Irish pluck and Irish persistency have overcome.

Therefore I say to the patriots of India, "Go in and win. There is very much in your favour. The British public are well affected towards India. They have been filled with sympathy for her sufferings from famine, they have been impressed by the valour and discipline of her soldiers, and they are grateful for the services rendered to the sick and wounded in South Africa. But they are oppressed with the weight of Empire; their memory is short; and they are ignorant of India's needs. It is for you, educated men of India, to dispel this ignorance. Everything is open to you here; Parliament, the Press and the Platform. Make the fullest use of them as missionaries of the truth. You are not in Russia, and can speak without fear. Above all things, close your ranks. Have no dissensions among yourselves. You have also need of all the support you can get in England. So stand by your old friends there, and get as many new ones as you can. Such an opportunity will never come again, so awake and arise, or be for ever fallen."

W. WEDDERBURN.

---

## II.

I have read Sir William Wedderburn's paper. I, as one of those to whom he has addressed himself, do earnestly hope that my fellow-countrymen will appreciate the friendly and sympathetic encouragement he gives to us and do our utmost to help ourselves. No doubt our difficulties are great. We have to struggle against an irresistible and unfortunately also an unintelligently and blindly selfish power. We have to awaken the

conscience of the British people to redress the great wrongs we have been suffering during a century and half, at the hands of the Authorities, and to understand that their own greatest good lies not in crushing or bleeding us to death, but in helping us to rise in material and moral prosperity and political British citizenship. John Bright, as a true Englishman, preferred trade to plunder. We must strenuously and unflinchingly work on without despair. We have been lately expressing our gratitude to the Lord Bishop of Bombay, and we cannot do better than to keep up our struggle for the goal which the good Bishop has pointed out to us:—"Self-Government under British Paramountcy." This must be the aim, the mission of the educated Indians. Till this is attained, there is no chance of the evil of bleeding, of the plunder of an unceasing foreign invasion, the cause of all our sufferings, ever ending. If the large mass of Indians make up unitedly their mind that they will have this "Self-Government under British Paramountcy" and nothing less, and if the British people see that the Indians are determined to rise in their material, moral and political condition, I have no doubt that the British people, in the spirit of their instincts of liberty and justice, will accord the demand. I do not expect that this demand for self-government will be accomplished in a day. But I do hope by my experience of the past fifty years of the conscience and character of the British people, that if we are true to ourselves, the educated Indians can and will accomplish this work in time, if we work on single-mindedly, spontaneously and persistently, never desisting or despairing under any difficulties or obstacles and making every sacrifice that the great work demands.

I do not know how much to thank men like Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Hume and other Englishmen who have been helping us. And I as one of those to whom Sir William now addresses his encouraging words offer my sincere thanks to him.

DADABHAI NAOROJI.

---

### III.

Sir William Wedderburn's eloquent "Call to Arms", for which, humbly associating myself with our venerable leader Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, I heartily thank him, is intended for all sons

of India ; and it seems a little incongruous that I as one of them should echo his call instead of taking it up and doing what in me lies to give effect to it as it is undoubtedly my duty to do. But unfortunately I have no choice in the matter. In the first place Sir William has laid it on me to echo his call, and, as a member of the British Committee of which he is the Chairman, I feel bound to obey him, and secondly I am far away from my country and am not in a position at present to rally myself to the call and endeavour to rouse my fellow-countrymen to do so.

I have been, as is perhaps generally known, connected with the Congress movement in my country since its inception. I have seen it rise from comparatively small beginnings to the vast proportions to which, after strenuous exertions on the part of its leaders and workers, it has at present attained. To me, therefore, it is excessively sad to think that the movement does not evoke the same enthusiasm on the part of my educated countrymen as it used to do in days not long gone by, that a feeling of despondency is creeping into the minds of those who have hitherto zealously worked to make it a success, and that some of the more easily depressed amongst us have actually considered that the movement might with advantage be stopped for a time. If there had been any real cause for this despondency I should have nothing to say. But I do not discern any such cause. On the contrary I see signs of a most hopeful nature for the future, and it seems to me that instead of being despondent we ought to redouble our efforts with the firm hope that the return to power of the Liberal Party in this country would, sooner or later, enable us to achieve the end we have in view, that is to say the redress of all our grievances and the acquisition by us of a fair, just, and legitimate share in the real government of our own country.

It must be borne in mind that so far as human experience goes workers in the political field as a rule do not reap what they sow. The movement for reform, for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, for the abolition of the corn laws, and other such movements in this country took years and years and years before they were successful, and many of the early workers in these causes fell fighting and left their successors to reap the fruit of their labours. The Congress cause, though it is now eighteen years old, may justly be said to be still in its infancy, and, politi-



cally speaking, cannot as yet expect to reap the harvest it is sowing. It is difficult to say what it would have achieved if the circumstances of this country had been different from what they have been since the Congress movement was inaugurated. In December 1835, when the Congress first met, political parties in this country were convulsed by Mr. Gladstone's policy of Home Rule for Ireland, and no thought could be given to India. In 1836 the Tories came into power and remained in power until 1892, when Mr. Gladstone again became Prime Minister. His short administration busied itself with the Irish Home Rule question, and though nothing very important was done as regards India, no reactionary policy was pursued, and in one instance at least a policy inaugurated by Sir Charles Elliott, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and endorsed by Lord Lansdowne, then Governor-General of India, namely the abolition of trial by jury in many criminal cases theretofore triable by jury was vetoed. From June 1895 when the Tories again came into power down to the present day, during which time the Tories have remained in power, the whole British Empire, including of course India, has suffered from their reactionary and retrograde policy. In this country they have passed measures particularly in relation to matters educational which have agitated the country and given rise to what is called the Passive Resistance Movement, which those who are behind the scenes know to be of a very far-reaching character. They wantonly went into war with two small republics in South Africa, without sufficient preparation, and not only wasted hundreds of millions of pounds, but sacrificed very many valuable lives. And now the more active spirits amongst them are carrying on a propaganda which is abhorrent to the nation as a whole and which, if successful, would end in the complete downfall of the commercial supremacy of Great Britain. Wherever I go in the constituency which has done me the honour of adopting me as its prospective Liberal candidate, I am assured by many of those who voted Tory at the last election that the cup of iniquity of the present Government is full to the brim, and that at the next general election they will be hurled from power. Signs all over the country seem to corroborate this view, and, if it turns out to be correct, we in India shall have every reason to hope that our just demands will be listened to and considered with sympathy, and, in the fulness of time, generously granted.

Readers of Indian history know that whenever a Tory Government has been in power in this country India has suffered more than any other of the British possessions. Most of our Frontier wars, the Abyssinian war, the annexation of Burma, took place during their regime, and as regards our internal administration they have taken a delight in curtailing the little liberty we possess, in enacting laws of draconic severity, in heaping burden upon burden on the Indian Exchequer. They have succeeded in doing so because the Government of India is practically an irresponsible government, wholly irresponsible as regards the people of India, and only nominally responsible as regards the people of this country. The Liberal Party is destined to be in power in this country within a measurable distance of time, and though it has not in the past done all that it should have done for our country it has not been reactionary, and has, certainly in one instance, reversed the policy of the Tories. I refer to the Vernacular Press Act, which was passed by Lord Lytton's Government with the sanction of the late Lord Salisbury while Secretary of State for India at a single sitting of the Viceregal Legislative Council, and which was repealed by Lord Ripon's Government under the direction of the Duke of Devonshire who, as Lord Hartington, was Secretary of State for India during the early years of Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880. It is certain to my mind that the next Liberal Government will deal generously with India. There is every indication of it in this country. Many people of influence have awakened to the fact that India is not well governed. Speakers on Indian questions, such as Mr. Romesh Dutt, C.I.E., Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and many others, placing Indian views of Indian questions before large audiences have been enthusiastically received and have obtained many spontaneous promises of support in their propaganda.

I say, therefore, that this is a time of hopefulness and not depression. It is a time for more strenuous and energetic work and not for letting things slide. It is a time for all of us with one voice to exclaim in the well-known Bengali couplet:—

যহের সাধন কিম্বা শরীর পতন। “Mantrer sadhan kimba sharir patan.”

(Achievement of the object in view or death.)

• Before concluding I may be permitted to refer to a personal matter which appeared in a recent number of the *Hindustan Review*. In his very able and interesting article on the Congress

my friend the Hon. Mr. P. Ananda Charlu says that I was not in the councils of those who commenced the movement, and that I was induced to attend the first meeting of that body while I was in Bombay on my way from England to Calcutta in December 1885. He is in error in this. In April 1885 Mr. A. O. Hume, C.B., the organiser of the Congress, was in Calcutta, staying with the late Mr. Manomohan Ghose. While there he saw many persons and had conferences with them on the subject of the Congress, placing before them his own original plan and the plan suggested to him by the late Lord Dufferin, at that time Governor-General of India. I was one of those with whom he conferred, and I gave him an assurance then that I would work with him to the best of my power on the lines of the plan suggested by Lord Dufferin, and attend any meetings that might be called. I came to this country during the Long Vacation of the High Court of Calcutta in 1885 and returned in time to be there at the re-opening of the Court about the middle of November. I came to Bombay from Calcutta in December of that year for the express purpose of attending the first meeting of the Congress and I may add that it was to a great extent on my advocacy that the Congress leaders agreed to leave out social questions from the Congress movement and make it a purely political one.

W. C. BONNERJEE.

---

#### IV.

##### *To all Supporters of the Congress Movement in India.*

My old friends and fellow-labourers in the cause of Justice for India, whose messages you will have read above, have insisted on my joining them in writing a few words of advice (and if possible encouragement) to all of you in India who are labouring, after a fashion, to secure for yourselves and your countrymen, that political enfranchisement, which we, as well as you, believe to be your inherent Right, as loyal and cultured British subjects.

Gladly would I have held my peace. I have no flattering message to convey, no optimistic views of the future to propound; nay, I cannot honestly blame the Government, for more than a portion of the grievous disabilities under which you lie; I can, I feel, say little that will please, much, if I speak, as I must, frankly, that will pain, and pain the very people I have tried so hard, for

so many years, to serve—the people that I have loved, and, despite all their faults, do *still* so dearly love.

Why should I break my long silence? Well, when my tried and faithful comrades insist on it and declare that unless I do so I shall be thought to have lost my interest in the cause, and to have become corrupted by the Philistine influences of political life here, I feel that, after all, I had perhaps better speak out, once for all, and at the risk of seriously offending those whom it has ever been my dearest wish to serve, to aid, to comfort, place before them my view of the struggle for political rights in which they are supposed to be engaged, and my forecast of its probable outcome, if they content themselves with wandering on, on the same mazy lines as heretofore.

To begin with, I cannot promise you any *great* improvement in your position, even when the Liberal and Radical Party come into power, which it is quite possible, though by no means certain, that they *may* do, within a measurable time. No doubt retrogressive legislation such as the last few years have witnessed in India, would not find favour or support from the Liberal Party here, and a measure like the amazing amendment of the Official Secrets Act now before the Viceregal Council would be impossible. Nay, should this outrageous measure actually pass into law in its present form (which no thinking man can believe *possible*) it will no doubt be quietly removed from the statute book, when the Liberal Party assume the reins of Government here—so you *will* be a *little* better off under their sway, but the Millennium will not quite follow their advent. Both great political parties resemble “The Unjust Judge”; they will do nothing for any set of men, who have no votes here, unless so persistently importuned, that for very peace’s sake, they are driven into conceding *something*—and not very much even then. So you must not build much upon the turn of the pendulum which may, possibly enough, bring the Liberals into power here, but which will not, assuredly, automatically raise you in India to that higher political platform, which we contend is your right as worthy citizens of the British Empire.

Again you must not think that your case and that of the Irish stand on the same footing. The Irish are represented by some 90 members in the House of Commons and the Irish have been fighting tooth and nail, *per fas et nefas*, putting their whole

souls into the fight, for nearly a century. You have no members unfortunately in the House, and you are, most of you, alas! it seems to me, never more than half in earnest in *your* fight! You meet in Congresses; you glow with a momentary enthusiasm; you speak much and eloquently, and the sentiments you propound are highly creditable to you; but the Congress closes, every man of you, broadly speaking, goes off straightway on his own private business, and not one per cent. of you seem to give thereafter any earnest thought or many days' real work to poor India's public business!

My friends, hide the truth from yourselves as much as you will, but it is you yourselves who are mainly to blame for all that is most to be deprecated in your present unhappy political position. Years ago I called on you to be up and doing; years ago I warned you that "Nations by themselves are made"; that every nation, proximately, gets exactly as good a Government as it deserves; that without true union there is no strength in political movements and that until you mastered the great lessons of self-sacrifice and of trusting and being true to each other, there would be no chance of your achieving that political freedom (and all that this includes) which glowed so golden then in your awakened imaginations. And have you heeded these counsels? You have indeed ever eagerly clamoured for and vainly clutched at the *Crown*, but how many of you will touch the *Cross* with even your finger-tips?

Can you suppose that a race is to be won by merely looking at the course and talking brilliantly about it? Can you fancy that any despotic Government—and benevolent though it may be, despotic your present Government is—can you for a moment imagine, I say, that any such Government *will willingly* yield to you those political privileges, which you are ten thousand times right in demanding, but which will greatly impede, nay, wholly prevent their continuing to govern the country in the *sic volo, sic jubeo* method in which alone they have faith; privileges that will automatically limit and diminish their powers and authority and equally materially diminish the number of their own race for whom they can find offices? Do you dream that the British nation here, be the Tories or the Liberals at the helm, will go out of their way to insist on justice being done to you simply because it is justice?

Do not deceive yourselves; there is only one possible and righteous way of securing what you all desire, and that is by such consistent and persistent importunity both in India and in England, and more especially in the latter, that sooner or later, wearied out by your incessant appeals, the Government here will be driven to concede what are clearly your Rights.

It is not in genuine constitutional agitation that I disbelieve, but only in the half-hearted spasmodic scraps of agitation, which are all that, so far, you seem to have been able to contribute to the struggle. Be in earnest, give your thoughts, your time, your money unstintingly to the contest. Make the entire year through in India one great continuous Congress demonstration; make the whole year through in England vibrate with unceasing demands at public meetings in every city, town and hamlet, for a just share in the Government of your own country. Be in earnest; disregard all threats—spurn all coercion—prove to the British nation that you are really determined to be fairly dealt with in this matter; that you are resolved never to give them a day's peace till you *are* so dealt with; that you will spend your time, your money, your lives, if need be, in bringing this about, and, in so doing, do all, so as to prove that you really deserve what you demand and, believe me, the tremendous barriers that seem now to bar your progress on all sides, will melt noiselessly away, like walls of snow before the summer's sun.

I am weary of the constant fault-finding that I notice in so many papers with the Government in India—this is not blameless, but it is mainly you yourselves whom you should blame, because you do not—and never have done—your duty to yourselves, your fellow-countrymen and your country, with all your strength and all your minds and all your hearts. The issue is in your own hands; be men, forget all personal differences, trust each other, be true to each other and of one mind; be up and doing, night and day; spare neither time nor money and, sooner than at this moment seems possible, the tables will have been turned and the victory won. But to attain this you must be in real earnest, and struggle forward, never wavering, never faltering till the goal be won—for no good whatsoever is likely to accrue from claiming your rights, in the intermittent, half-hearted, dilettante style into which your movement seems now to have drifted.

As for the Government, again I say, don't blame it, but blame yourselves if success fails to crown your quest. Two blacks do not make a white, and abuse of Government does not lessen your shortcomings, even when occasionally that abuse is amply merited, as it must, necessarily, sometimes be. And after all your Government is like all other such Governments; believing itself to be very wise and capable of doing everything better than the people it rules—it will never willingly entrust the people with one iota of the real authority it exercises, nay, will for ever be struggling to limit more and more closely the little freedom of speech and action that remains to them. This is the nature of all Governments which are not immediately dependent on the will of the people; a necessary infirmity against which all the peoples of the earth must ever ceaselessly watch and which it is their own fault if they do not succeed in restraining.

An old man now and a little weary of life's perpetual struggles, this may well be the last time that I shall ever write to you, I cannot now hope, as I did 18 years ago, to witness and share in your success; but if before I go hence, I could be sure that you were at last on the right path, at last in real earnest, at last determined (let the cost to each of you personally be what it may) that the just demands of India's people *shall* prevail, I could pass away contented, not only sending to all who are true to their country's cause, as I now do, my most earnest sympathy and blessing, but in the sure and certain hope that in your case, at least, the triumph of the Right could not much longer be deferred.

Once more I say, the issues are in your own hands—be united—be brave—be unselfish, and no earthly power can long withhold from earnest, single-minded and persistent efforts, the objects of your honourable ambition.

A. O. HUME.

---