

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

"THEN AND NOW."

Being an earnest plea for strengthening the Congress

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Preface.

HAVING been the Secretary of the Congress Divisional Association of Rajahmundry for upwards of fifteen years during the pre-non-co-operation days I have ventured to publish this Small brochure, with the main object of stimulating the interest of the educated Indians, towards the Indian National Congress and make it once more the centre of all Indian political activity. I have earnestly put forward a plea—a convincing one I believe—of making the Congress, a united Indian National Congress, where all the different political parties can have a common platform and work in unison for the achievement of the common goal viz. Swaraj. I do strongly believe in the mission of the Indian National Congress, which must necessarily become, the Indian National Parliament in the future Swaraj and consequently I urge that the different political groups ought to have a place in the Congress. As at present constituted, the Congress cannot speak in the name of the Indian Nation as many of its component parts stand outside the pale of Congress. In the Indian Political Evolution, the time has come when there must be a united body which is able to deliver the goods, speaking in the name of the Indian Nation and for carrying on negotiations with the British Rulers. If the Indian National Congress is composed of all the various political units which form the Indian Nation, there would have been no necessity for a round-table conference

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and the Congress itself would be in a position to dictate its terms. The statesmanship of our leaders who represent the different political groups should be directed towards this end and measures must be devised to strengthen the position of the Indian National Congress. If the leaders of various groups do not realise this fundamental position and bring about such a consummation, the chances of an Indian Swaraj are remote. To whatever School of Politics one may belong, he must necessarily have a place in the Congress which cannot exclude any particular group. Even the Independence school of political thought can be within the Congress, which should be above all parties. The efforts of our leaders of the various political groups should be directed towards this end and then only Swaraj would be within sight. The most unfortunate feature of Indian Politics is that the different political groups pull different ways in splendid isolation and consequently India was hitherto unable to take any effective joint political action. A new orientation should be given to the Indian politics and the leaders of the different schools of political thought should make the Indian National Congress, the vehicle in their attempts to obtain Swaraj. If I have succeeded in arousing the attention of my countrymen to this aspect of the mission of the Congress, I hope the purpose of this publication will be fulfilled.

Rajahmundry,) S. BHIMASANKARA RAO,
December 1929.)

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Congress Origins. I.

The Indian National Congress, which owes its inception and birth to the Western democratic political thought, was ushered into existence in the early eighties of the last century at Bombay under the guidance and inspiration of two well-known British Officials, the late Mr. Allan O'Hume and the late Sir William Wedderburn who were justly styled as the fathers of the Indian National Congress. It was a time at which the political consciousness of a Nation has not yet dawned upon the people and the ideas about Indian National Politics were absent and the process of their formation had not yet begun. Two decades have passed since the inauguration of the British University system and the English Educated Indians of that generation have freely imbibed the political ideals of western democratic thought, and the ideas of the Indian National Politics have for the first time dawned on the Indian English — Educated intelligentsia. The necessity for a national organisation arose in the early eighties of the last century when the then unsympathetic bureaucratic

Government introduced some repressive measures which were highly detrimental to the interests of the Indian nation. Prior to 1885 there had been no organised effort on the part of the educated leaders of Indian political thought to represent the grievances of the people to the Government. The idea of constitutional agitation solely for the purpose of bringing public grievances prominently to the notice of the rulers and pressing for their redress seems to have been the main object with which the national institution was ushered into existence in the beginning and as time went on and as the scattered forces of Indian Political thought gradually converged to a point, and as the movement gained strength and vitality after passing through the preliminary stages of scorn and ridicule, the original idea expanded and formed, as it were, the basis for the formation of a United Indian Nationality. The Indian National Congress has furnished a common platform for the diverse races and creeds of the Indian Continent, to meet together in common bonds of fellowship and fellow feeling and exchange political thoughts. It has created an opportunity for the ventilation of common grievances. It has infused a spirit of Political cohesion into the heterogeneous races of India. Despite differences in caste, creed, and custom, it has aroused common political aims and aspirations and has enabled the people to work together for common political advancement. It has indeed created an Indian nationality. In the early stages the great unifying influence of this National organisa-

tion to bring into existence, a united Indian nationality, is the crowning monument of its success. Every Indian must feel proud of this great national organisation and the pioneer work it did in disseminating ideas of political liberty and equality among the general Indian public and the future historian of India cannot but handsomely acknowledge the immense debt which India owes to this great National organisation. The annual sessions of the Indian National Congress when representative public men from the distant parts of the country met together and deliberated upon the political problems of the day, aroused a good deal of enthusiasm in the public mind and has evoked unbounded sympathy and brotherly love towards each other and has infused a new spirit of unity among the Indians. If the National Congress was unable to wring out any large political concessions and boons from an unwilling and unsympathetic Bureaucracy, it has done by far the most important task of cementing the Madrasite with the Bengalee, and the Bengali with the Bombayite and has laid the foundation for an Indian Nationality. Every English educated Indian felt an irresistible impulse to join the Congress ranks and the Congress movement has appealed largely to his natural instincts of patriotism and love for the country and has kindled a genuine desire to work for the uplift and the political salvation of his motherland.

Growth of Congress. II.

The reform and expansion of the Legislative

Councils, the huge military expenditure, the heavy economic drain and the pinching poverty of the masses have formed the chief items of the Congress politics, besides many other subjects of minor importance. Our Legislative councils have been characterised from the beginning as so many gilded farces and magnificent nonentities which may delude children but not adolescent men like us and the Congress in its early days always concentrated its attention upon their expansion and reform and the subject became the central plank of Congress agitation. Lord Cross's act of 1892, the Minto-Morley scheme of '09, the Montford Act of 19 cannot but be regarded as the results of Congress agitation carried on persistently during a whole generation and it is a sad irony of fate that we should have shunned and boycotted these legislative councils in 1920, having cried from house tops for their reform and expansion for upwards of thirty years. A more puerile mistake could not have been committed but for the short sightedness and lack of political vision of some of our Indian publicists and happily we have survived that mentality. The wider employment of Indians in public service is another subject, on which also, the Congress has concentrated its attention for a long time. Thanks to the devoted labours of our worthy countryman Mr. N. Subbarao who moved a resolution on the subject in the Supreme Legislative Council during the Minto-Morley regime, the country owes a deep debt of gratitude to him. The appointment of a Public Service Commission which enabled

qualified Indians to assume charge of Districts as Judges and Collectors is the direct result of persistent Congress agitation led by the older generation of congress leaders. The beginnings of any movement cannot but be of a more or less demonstrative and spectacular character so as to kindle popular feeling and enthusiasm. Indian orators declaiming against the vagaries of the officials in eloquent language, passionately pleading the cause of the country, holding forth aloft the ideal of other nations, rousing lofty feelings of patriotism and duty in the people's mind bringing the history and example of other nations and their heroes, conjuring up the audience to the greatness of the Aryan nation and its brilliant past, all these have done much for the wide propagation of the gospel of the Congress and in disseminating the aims and objects of the Congress movement. The oriental mind is always attracted towards all outward display and demonstration and is very fond more or less of emotional outbursts of enthusiasm and as has been said, Swaraj is an emotional proposition with an Indian. The fearless exposition of all official sins of omission and commission, the occasional outbursts of magnificent eloquence, the fiery denunciation against all public wrongs, the grand display of outward magnificence and splendour all these formed as it were the necessary concomitants of a congress session. As public opinion was then still in an inchoate stage it became necessary to draw together the scattered elements of the Indian nation to a focus, and a large

measure of passionate eloquence is necessary for the creation of popular feeling and it formed a centre of attraction in the Congress programme. Congress speakers trotted out their particular hobbies with facts and figures but the general run of congress-goers always preferred passionate declamations and oratorical displays and fiery enthusiasm exhibited on the Congress platform. As time went on, the glamour gradually wore away. The deliberations of the subject committees, the passing of the resolutions by giving them unanimous and enthusiastic support, the speeches of the proposers, seconders and supporters of the resolutions interspersed with loud and deafening cheers, the speeches of the President and the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the silk flowers which adorn the right front of the coats of the Congress Delegates, the profuse demonstrations of willing obedience on the part of the Congress volunteers highly solicitous of the comfort and convenience of the delegates who came from distant quarters—all these are too well known to need a detailed description and have become so stereotyped in character that they have lost all their original charm and beauty in the later years of the Congress. The same or similar speeches, the same or similar resolutions delivered and passed from the Congress platform no longer appealed to the intellect of the younger generation of Congressmen and they have set on foot an agitation for a change of the methods of Congress programme. Added to this, the Congress has not enunciated clearly and

definitely its ideal and goal and there has been much confused thinking on the subject. Even the stalwart leaders had no definite clear-cut political ideas on the matter, and there have been sharp differences. Further the Congress had no written constitution. All these, coupled with the aristocratic and highhanded behaviour of the prominent Congress leaders, has created a good deal of discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the younger generation of the Congress.

New School of Political thought. III.

Under the guidance and inspiration of the late Lokamanya Tilak, Messers Aravinda Ghose and Bepin Chandr Pal, a new school of political thought arose in the first years of this century which denounced the mendicant policy of the Congress resolutions and put forward a vigorous plea for the adoption of a programme of self help and self reliance in Congress politics. It was about that time, the late Sir Ashutosh Choudari gave expression to that catching paradox that "a subject race has no politics" in his address as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Burdwan in 1903 and pleaded for a vigorous programme of national self help and self reliance instead of asking the Government for this boon and that and to do this and that in their Congress resolutions. As a result of this new political thought, the Swadeshi and Boycott movements have been set up and adopted in the Congress resolutions. The ill-fa-

ted Partition of Bengal in 1905 gave a stimulus to the Swadeshi and boycott movements started under the auspices of the Indian National Congress and a wide-spread feeling against all foreign and especially British goods, had been generated in the country. This Swadeshi and boycott programme has led to many troubles between the elders of the Congress and those of the younger generation on the Congress platform in the Calcutta Congress of 1906 presided over by the "Grand old man of India", the late Mr. Dadabhai Nauroji.

Swaraj: The goal of the Congress. IV.

The 22nd session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta in December 1906 under the presidency of the late Dadhabai Nauroji was really an epoch making session in many respects in that it enunciated for the first time, the final goal of the Indian National Congress as Swaraj. The National Congress was unable to enunciate the ultimate goal of our political agitation till then. For a long time, the reform and expansion of the Legislative councils was considered to be the Panacea for all our political ills and grievances and was made the central plank of Congress activity. Then gradually economic drain, military expenditure, separation of judicial from executive functions, wider employment of Indians, became subjects of agitation by the Congress. For the first time it was authoritatively pronounced by the Calcutta

Congress of 1906 that the efforts of the Indian Nation should be directed towards the achievement of Swaraj or self government by all legitimate and constitutional means and the said decision was stamped with National approval. Having adopted the ideal of swaraj as the ultimate goal of the Indian nation, the Congress has also declared that boycott is a legitimate weapon to be utilised for the purpose of obtaining Swaraj, though the then moderate leaders fought shy of the position. From that time forward the arena of the Congress has become the battle field between the young and old, between moderatism and extremism. It has been really a race between conservative and progressive ideas. The Surat split came afterwards in 1907 and at that time the forces of extremism have not yet been sufficiently marshalled to give battle to the old leaders and the younger generation was unable to dethrone the older moderate leaders and capture the Congress. The late Lokamanya Tilak was an extremely astute politician and though he was in a minority he did not set up any rival organisation to the Indian National Congress as the Liberals did afterwards but bided his own time and quietly and unostentatiously did silent work by infusing into the younger generation robust political ideas and when the Congress was brought into a line with his independent views he rejoined it. In the ordinary nature of things, there would always be a conflict and an antagonism between the old and new, between conservative and progressive, between moderate and extremist views

and the history of the Congress during all these years strikingly exemplifies the truth of the above remark. Many have been the battles that were fought on the Congress platform during all these years between those who represent the conservative or moderate view and those who represent the extremist view in the Indian National politics. Such a conflict in the nature of things is necessarily inevitable but its avoidance would have been a stroke of statesmanship. Different political views cannot be said to be so irreconcilable in a country subject to foreign domination but always personal equation came in and made people unyielding and unbending and hence the generation of bad feeling. The sinking of personal differences for the cause of the country is a rare commodity not ordinarily to be met with among the ranks of our Indian publicists. Both parties stand on prestige irrespective of country's interests. If the Liberals drove the extremists out of the Congress after the Surat split in 1907, the extremists in their turn drove the Liberals from the Congress after the Amritsar session. It is only for the future historian of Indian National politics to record the mutual wranglings of both parties which at one time or other held sway and dominated the Congress as if it is their grand father's acquisition.

Function of the Congress. V.

Ultimately the question resolves itself into, namely,

what is the true character and function of the Indian National Congress? In what manner is it to subserve the National end and aim? A good deal would depend upon a proper conception of the functions of the Indian National Congress in the body politic of the nation. There is no use of any confused thinking on the matter but we must have clear-cut and specific ideas about this fundamental position with regard to the Congress. Is the Congress to be a national body consisting of the representatives of all classes and sections of Indians designed to express the views of Indian Intelligentsia, on the political problems of the day and to carry an active propaganda on questions on which public opinion is practically unanimous? Or is the congress to consist only of a body of persons holding particular political views and pledged to a particular kind of political action and propaganda. Much confusion of thought in our political views is due to a misconception upon these points. There can be no doubt that for a very long time since the inception of the Indian National Congress in 1885 until 1920 for a period of nearly 35 years, it has been regarded that the National Congress should be the meeting point of the various political views, where after a discussion and deliberation among the Indian English-educated Intelligentsia, a common course of action is to be reached with the object of the working the same in the country throughout the year. The Congress is more or less intended to be a focus of public opinion and the principal object to be attained

is to provide a common platform to Indians of all races, creeds and shades of opinion to gather and exchange views and ideas on political matters and thus to promote unity and foster nationalism. In a vast continent like India, the pioneers of the Congress movement thought that the first and most important object is to concentrate attention upon the growth of a healthy public opinion and bring it into a focus and they clearly discerned that without a strong public opinion being created, there can be no sanction behind them for any kind of political work and needless to say the old leaders who ushered the Congress into existence, thought that in the larger political interests of India situated as it is, and knowing full well its practical limitations, concentrated their energies and laboured hard for the purpose of creating a strong public opinion and to bring into a focus mature political thought. To unite the different races, the fiery Punjabee, the clever Bengalee, the mild Madrassie and the business Parsee and Guzerati and bring them together upon a common platform and infuse into them the consciousness of a National existence was really a stupendous task which stands to the credit of those old leaders of the past generation. Nothing was done to introduce disharmony in the ranks of the Congress. All shades of political thought, all kinds of views were perfectly welcome on the Congress platform, only those upon which there would be a unanimity will go forth as the resolutions of the Congress. Fortunately, there was no amateurish

schoolboy politics then but sober and staid political thinking, and also there was no bidding for cheap political clap-trap and garlanding. Slowly and steadily the old leaders who ushered the Congress movement, in the course of a quarter of century have built up a tradition and a prestige for the Indian National Congress which has become such a great asset in the hands of the present day Swarajist who captured the Congress machinery by sheer force of artificial numbers. It has been the accepted convention of the Congress that no subject which is not assented to by $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the majority should be brought forward for the consideration of the Congress. Only those subjects on which there was general unanimity of opinion were brought forward and discussed and were pressed upon the attention of the Government. Thus it was that the Congress became the centre of all political activity and all the best minds of the country outside Government service are attracted to it. It was this that led to the formation of political opinion and political thought.

Congress Constitution. VI.

For a long time it was the grievance of the younger generation of Congress men as against the elders that the Congress had no constitution and a good deal of agitation was set on foot by younger men. Year after year the question of Congress Constitution was being brought forward only to be shelved. The

late Sir P. M. Mehta who was always against a rigid constitution for the Congress, was of opinion that if the Congress constitution was fixed and made inelastic, it would be the ruin of the Congress and it ceases to be national because there would be a likelihood of many avoiding it. The British Parliament has no written constitution but has grown from precedent to precedent, from convention to convention and gradually it has become the mother of Parliaments. When once rigid rules were introduced people may not care to come within its fold. Such is the case now and the present constitution has kept many out of its pale. In one of the Madras Congresses, the subject of the Congress Constitution, was raised in the Subject's committee and there was a very animated and vehement discussion. Purposely the subject was brought forward at the Madras Congress, for, if it was in Bombay or at any other place, Sir P. Mehta would dominate and in Madras it was thought that he would have no backing or influence but Sir P. Mehta was present at the Madras Congress Session that time; though he used to say that Madras cannot afford to render adequate hospitality for his high style of living and that it had no good hotel worth the name to accommodate him. When the question of constitution was brought in the subject committee Mr. P. Mehta spoke on the subject for about half an hour and warned the Congress that a rigid constitution would be the death-knell of the Congress and his warning came to be too true as subsequent events would show.

Instead of one grand National organisation as Indian National Congress we have now four separatist political groups, more or less having the same goal, namely the National Congress, the Liberal Federation, the Muslim League, and the Non-brahmin Conference. Properly speaking the last three ought to have been merged in the first but events have transpired which forced others to form separate organisations of their own. The question is not what others should not have done, but whether the Congress, had no room for them and why should Congress become an exponent of a particular set of political thought and opinion.

The Mandate theory. VII.

It has been but forward that for efficient political action and continued political work in the country it is absolutely necessary that the Congress should be a compact homogeneous body, thinking and acting alike in all political matters and giving its resolutions a mandatory character and from this point of view it is necessary that the Congress should be composed of those only who hold identical views on Indian Political questions and all others who hold different opinions must stand out of the Congress. From one point of view no doubt there is a great advantage in this view of the Congress. But on the other hand there will be a greater disadvantage as it would frustrate the essential object of the Congress and its ideals.

It is necessary to refer here to the mandate theory of the Congress resolutions which has of late developed since the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement in 1920. Up till the Congress of 1920, its resolutions never possessed the character of mandates. But it was only after that there was a change in the Congress creed and the character of the Congress has completely altered. Then it was stated that those who do not conform to the resolutions of the majority have no place in the Congress and the Ahmedabad Congress of 1924 has put in sartorial ban which was confirmed at Gouhati in 1926 and at Cawnpore the Congress became a full pledged party organisation and it became the property of the Swaraj party. When once the Congress became the organ of particular political party, to the exclusion of others, it ceases to be National, though the old name continues and nobody mistakes it. The functions and character of the Congress have been changed entirely and it became the caucus of a single political party and hence it can no more be an all-India National Organisation. When once its character and functions are changed and when those who hold different political views had no place on the Congress platform is it a wonder that rival organisations should come into existence to give expression to their political convictions. Thus the Congress which was intended originally to create unity and concord, and foster Indian nationalism, has been the cause for the growth of rival organisations which depleted its vital strength

and which deprived it, of its national character. The mandate theory of Congress resolutions sent away people from out of its fold. There is no meaning in making hollow and empty appeals for unity saying that the doors of Congress are wide open and please kindly walk into our parlour. So the important question is whether Congress is to be a focus of all Indian National Political Thought or is it to be a caucus of a single political party or whether the Congress should afford a common platform for the discussion and deliberation of the various different political ideals which dominate the present day political thought. Since the time the Swarajists are dumping the Congress its artificial numbers, this question about the real function and character of the Congress has been coming to the forefront and public opinion will certainly veer round the principle that the Congress should afford a common platform for all the different political parties in India without being merged in one another, and keeping up their different organisations intact and joining only on those political questions on which there is an unanimity of opinion. If those who are in power in Congress circles at present had the clearness of political vision and foresight and if they had really the best interests of India in their heart of hearts, certainly they should make the Congress an all-India one as before, so that, its resolutions may go forth as the United voice of India. There is no use of piteous appeals to other parties to come and join them; the other parties are not such blatant fools to be

lured away swarajist bluff. If once the united voice of India proclaims from the Congress platform there can be no doubt that it would have tremendous effect on the Government but the present mood of Swarajism cannot tolerate any such thing and wants a monopoly of all political credit to itself. If the leaders of Swarajism do not care for self-glorification and self-aggrandisement, let them be back to Amritsar and throw open the Congress platform to all the different schools of political thought. Let the Congress have nothing to do with the Council work. Let each party struggle for itself for ascendancy and supremacy in the councils. Let not the Congress be besmirched with the mire of party dust and din. Let it stand above all party and let it once more assume its proper function of focussing all political opinion and thought and fostering Indian Nationalism. The different political parties in the country must look after their own particular organisations and they can educate the public opinion in their own individual way but so far as the Congress is concerned, let all parties combine and sink their differences as the ultimate goal of all is Swaraj. That the Congress has sailed away from its old moorings and has ceased to become the only centre of all Indian political activity cannot but be recognised, even by its most ardent protagonists. Despite the differences in political thought and action, it is easy to combine without a sacrifice of its principles for all political parties, on all questions about which there has been an unanimity of

public opinion. All parties proclaim from house tops that their ultimate goal is Swaraj or responsible Self-Government. With regard to methods of action they may differ. Open rebellion and civil disobedience are ruled out of order and all parties must perforce refrain from resorting to them. The only course of action to be pursued is therefore the creation of a strong and united public opinion by all legitimate and constitutional means so as to bring moral pressure upon the Government.

The Non-co-operation movement. VIII.

There has been much furious national awakening of late, consequent on the rapid influx of great political ideas during the period of the Great war. In the course of the last decade or two there has been a tremendous upheaval in men's minds, thoughts and aspirations. The great march of world wide events which produced the great war, has led to a rapid transformation of the old ideals of political thought and all the old world political shibboleths have been rent assunder and new ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity have dawned upon men's minds all over India cannot but be affected in this world wide upheaval and must fall in with the current. The whole political atmosphere is surcharged with a spirit of independant enquiry and a longing for higher ideals. The political consciousness of the nation has been aroused and a visible awakening of the national self-consciousness

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is discerned all over. The workings of the timespirit has wrought a marvellous change by the onrush of new political ideals consequent on the Great War.

So far as India is concerned, the ground has been well prepared for the past 2 or 3 decades owing to the political work done by the pioneers of the Congress movement in the dissemination of political ideas and political thought throughout the country and the onrush of the new political ideas set the people a thinking. The spirit of Democracy is abroad every where hovering and enveloping every thing in its onward march and it is no wonder that the younger generation, inoculated with new political ideals challenged the credentials of the old leaders to dictate their crabbed old fossilized and antiquated dogmas of political doctrine. A vigorous and robust political programme was necessary to meet the enthusiasm and consequently the ideals of non-co-operation readily found acceptance with the general mentality of English Indian educated intelligentsia; It was a time at which any new political thought was welcome and at such a time there would be no occasion for any cool, and calm deliberation when men can pick and choose and instead of men possessing the ideas, the ideas possessed the men and it is why it spread like wild fire in a comparatively short time and thanks the wild fire is gradually subsiding and we are slowly returning to our normal course. Such is the psychology of the political thought in India during this decade and natu-

rally it underwent transformation during this highly eventful period of great upheaval. The resettling process began and requires time and a gradual unhinging of all visionary political Utopias is necessary and there can be no doubt that in the course of this decade all the aberrations of recent political thought will be set right and the curve of political evolution will run straight in its course under wise and statesmen-like leadership. It is true in the hey-day of non-co-operation movement, the Liberals skulked into their tents and allowed their case to go by default in the country. They cared little to organise themselves before the booming propaganda of their opponents. They are an aristocratic lot, full of the superiority of their political wisdom and they considered it infradig to rub shoulders with common humanity and they sat up on high trees with little touch with the general current of popular opinion. Ofcourse they could not play to the gallery and did not run in for cheap claptrap nor did they bid for mass popularity. They could not indulge in wild irresponsible talk. They fell into disfavour with the public on the one hand and with the Government on the other hand, notwithstanding their record of public service behind them and were held up to contempt and ridicule as arm chair politicians, passing pious resolutions, following a mendicant policy. They are dubbed as traitors to the country, as johukumwallah's and apkawastes hanging on the coat tails of a foreign bureaucracy which is eating the vitals of the Nation.

All the choice epithets of ridicule, scorn, and derision were showered upon their devoted heads which they patiently bore in the fond hope that the country would return to its sense back again after the experience of Chamelion-like politics changing its colours of ten times and they did bide their time. The first onrush of the ideals of non-co-operation movement has carried the country by storm and has made a clean sweep of all past political ideals.

After the inauguration of the Non-co-operation movement in the Special Congress of September 1920 under the presidency of the late Lala Lajapat Rai, the whole political atmosphere became intensely national and every thing connected with the Govt. was looked down upon. Especially it was a bad time for all title-holders and lawyers who did not cease practice as they were held up to public contempt and ridicule in meetings, by medical practitioners and gentlemen at large who took up to politics at that time. It must be said in all fairness, that during the progress of the movement, all nationalistic ideas of liberty, equality, and patriotism, have been spread widely, but in their wake, we had also the generation of a spirit of non-chalance, unruliness and indiscipline. It is doubted very much whether it has touched even the outer fringe of what is known as the general mass-mind. The great complaint against the Congress allthrough is that it has not permeated the masses and that is the reason why the enthusiasm and national spirit brought about

by the movement subsided easily after a short time.

The tripple boycott was in full swing and the Indian National Congress has lost all its political character in the meantime and became a glorified social reform association. That great Indian the late Desabandhu C. R. Das perceived the plight into which the August body of the Congress had been sinking, and boldly rescued it. He set up the first standard of revolt against the ideals of boycott and carried a vigorous campaign advocating council entry, which agitated men's minds for a long time and which divided the congressmen into no-changers and pro-changers. His famous Madras speech denounced the slave mentality of the Congress and opposed the mandate theory. The mistakes of 1920 were rectified in 1923 and the Congress resolutions were modified in that year, to enable the Congressmen to enter the councils. Both parties, the no-changers and the pro-changers began to try their strength in the country by advocating their respective cults and there was much internecine conflict among Congressmen. Gradually the Swaraj party under the leadership of the late Desabandhu Das obtained ascendancy in the councils of the Congress, having first obtained a sitting room therein, then drove out the poor no-changers and captured the whole Congress machinery which is now in their hands. The abandonment by the Liberals and Moderates, of the Indian National Congress which was built up by their steady, patient, life-long labours and the

formation of a separate political organisation, the Liberal Federation apart from the Indian National Congress, has to be regarded by the future historian of the political history of India as an act of the greatest political blunder on the part of the Liberals, which should not have been done in the interests of the country and they should have remained passive spectators of the Non-Co-operation movement. What could the poor Liberals do when the odds are against them and they could not swim with the current owing to their convictions. It is no doubt true that the ideals of Liberalism are now slowly reasserting themselves after the blowing of the fierce non-co-operation storm, exhausting its initial force. If they could stick on to the Congress without forming a separatist organisation in opposition to it, the country would have been greatly benefited and the Congress would have attained greater prestige. Since then, sober councils never prevailed in the Congress, which is always in need of the restraining influence of mature political thought. The Patna decisions, the Juhu understandings and the No-changer Swarajist pacts form a conspicuous chapter in the history of the political thought during this eventful period. It is for the impartial historian of the Indian politics to chronicle the chequered career and the vicissitudes which the Great National body has undergone during these eventful days. It is enough for our purposes that notwithstanding the premier position which it occupied, it cannot but be said, to say the least, that it suffered a good deal in its pres-

tige and wrecked its reputation on the altar of cheap political clap-trap.

The Reformed Councils. IX.

The changed political conditions of India consequent on the advent of Reforms has no doubt affected to a large extent, the influence and prestige of the Indian National Congress which has hitherto been functioning as the only political institution for the ventilation of all public grievances and the expression of all political thoughts and ideals. Prior to the reforms the only platform on which public opinion on Indian National politics could assert itself was the Indian National Congress and there was no other outlet to ventilate public grievances of the Indian Nation on all political topics. Hence it was that the Indian National Congress became the rallying centre of all Indian National Politics and notwithstanding a late cleavage in the non-brahmin political world in our province, the best minds are attracted to it. But since the inauguration of reforms the centre of political gravity has been shifted to a large extent from the Congress platform to the Council room. There can be no denying the fact that the Council floor afforded a better vantage ground to carry on the attacks on the citadel of the Bureaucracy and expose the follies of Government and get redress for the grievances of the people. It was no doubt due to an imperfect understanding of the political situation of the

times that the Congress during the first 3 years of the Reforms boycotted the councils and issued a mandate to the country not to stand for the Council Elections and not to vote for any candidates. The Congress found it to its cost after 3 years experience that it was a grievous mistake and especially, we of this province found it so, else there would have been no non-brahmin ministry. The ban on council entry was lifted in 1924. This is all old history too fresh in the public mind to be recapitulated. If the council floor is the proper forum for the expression of all political thought and for the exposure of all public grievances, certainly, the Congress platform must be regarded as having been superseded to that extent and it can no longer function as heretofore. One practical test is sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the above remark. Why should council elections create such a stir and excitement in the public mind, whereas the Congress Elections are always a mere farce. Notwithstanding any assertion to the contrary, the function of the Congress so far as the ventilation of public grievances are concerned has been to a large extent, transferred to the Council room and it is idle to contend that the Congress would have the same political importance as it had before the inauguration of the reforms, unless it concentrates all its efforts on Swaraj, the goal of all parties.

Communatism. X.

Another potent cause which operates adversely

against the Congress is the great wave of communalism which has rent the people asunder and which led to the formation of separate groups isolated from each other and distrustful of one another. This spirit of communalism is running rampant at present and is preventing the people from co-operating with each other. Each community had its own conference in which its special grievances and wants are trotted out. Each community wants its own representatives in the Councils to safe guard its special interests. If we study the proceedings and the resolutions of these various communal conferences which are being held from time to time throughout the year, One can only exclaim where are we drifting in the Indian Political World?. The introduction of western political election system has thrown a veritable apple of discord amongst the otherwise placid political waters of India and every-where faction has been rampant enough, preventing corporate and united action and when the forces of communalism are let loose, it is no wonder that they would reign supreme. Communalism has come to stay and there is no chance of its early subsidence, on the other hand, there is every room for its luxuriant growth and the times also have been propitious. This communal cancer is eating away the very vitals of the nation. Standards of intellectuality and efficiency have disappeared altogether and everything is judged by communal specks whose tinted colour does not disclose any defects or short-

comings. There seems to be little chance of this communalism dying in the near future in view of its developments. Notwithstanding the piteous appeals for political unity from all mouths and from all platforms to nip it in the bud and kill it root and branch, it has become a fruitful source of dissension in our political ranks leading to separatist tendencies.

Defferent Political organesations. XI.

The year 1924 is an eventful year in the political annals of India for, in the month of December of that year, we had the separate sessions of the Indian National Congress, the Nonbrahmin Congress at Amroti, the Muslim league, the Indian Christian conference and lastly the Liberal federations. All these discussed and passed renolutions on all political questions agitating the public mind. A comparative study of the proceedings and resolutions of these bodies would disclose the same or similar ideals of political thought though differing in method and action, the objective of all being Swaraj. There has been any amount of indefinite, vague, nebulous, and hackneyed political expressions with which the resolutions are abound calling on the people and on the Government to do this and that. It is idle to expect the foreign Bureaucracy to close up their shop all at once and retire bag and baggage. When the objective of all parties is the same, what prevents them from combining for a common purpose heaven only knows?

It is said that there are fundamental differences as to the ways and means of obtaining Swaraj and there are some who advocate direct action while others confine themselves to constitutional means. The very words civil disobedience are an anathema to the Liberal ears which they regard it as political utopia and a wild thought which should be avoided altogether and they think that their prestige would suffer by coquetting with it, while the Swarajists contend that it is the only weapon of a subject race as against a dominant foreign beauracrary and insist on their inclusion in the Congress Creed as an essential element of their programme. This is what they call the only fundamental difference between the Liberal and Swarajist creeds Independants coming between. The civil disobedience committee composed of eminent Indian publicists in 1922 has ruled it out of court and still the words are dangled before the public in Congress resolutions. Everybody knows that if civil disobedience is resorted to, it would be put down by the strong arm of law and order. Therefore there could have been no breaking off between liberal and Swarajist creeds on the question of civil disobedience. Barring this it is difficult for one to find out, the actual fundamental difference in political principles between the two creeds of Liberalism on the one hand and Swarajism on the other which was formerly labelled as extremism in Congress circles. The bane of Indian politics has always been, the predominance of personal equation which has been a fruitful source of misunderstandings.

and splits. Since the Poona Congress of 1896, Congress politics, are marred by personal squables of well known leaders and it is all old history. In 1906 Calcutta Congress, the younger generation of Congressmen led by Mr. Aravinda Ghose and Bepin Chandra Pal had nearly come to battle but it was averted by the Grand old man of India, Mr. Dadabhai Nowroji who was the president of the Congress and it was he who introduced the word Swaraj into Indian politics for the first time. In 1907 we had the famous surat Congress split. The liberals who were then called moderates being in influence and power drove the extremists out of Congress for some time and latterly Dr. Anne Besant brought about a united Congress of both the moderate and extremist sections at Lucknow and it went on till Amritsar Congress in 1919 when all parties agreed to work the reforms for what they are worth. Subsequent events, the Rowlatt Act, the Punjab massacres, and the Kilafat question rendered the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement, after which the Liberals quitted the Congress camp and left the field entirely to the new generation of Congressmen. Notwithstanding the personal quarrels among the great leaders and their differences, the prestige and reputation of the National Congress had always stood high and commanded the willing allegiance of one and all English educated Indians.

Congress Since 1920. XII.

If we make a critical and dispassionate survey of

the activities of the Indian National Congress, since the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement, one cannot but be struck with the lack of a political tinge in many of its resolutions apart from their being the subject of acrimonious controversy among Congressmen themselves with regard to their interpretation and meaning. The presidential address of the veteran Congressman and patriot Mr. C. Vijaya Raghavachariar at the Nagpur Congress of 1920 is a clear pronouncement against the ideals of the non-co-operation and he doubted the success of the movement and gravely warned his countrymen about its utility. As a bold, independent and fearless man he expressed his frank convictions, which no doubt did not suit the popular tastes of the times. But the presidential address of the late Mr. C. R. Das is a passionate plea for a through-going change and modification of the Congress programme especially with regard to the Boycott of the Councils. The late Mr. C. R. Das, clearly foresaw the disparity between the ideal of non-co-operation and its practical realisation and as one imbued with political insight and wisdom courageously pleaded for a change in the Congress programme with regard to the Boycott of the Councils. Consequent on this internecine conflict among the Congressmen, the emergence of the two parties in their ranks dubbed as no-changers and pro-council-wallahs caused serious disruption and the efforts of the special Congress of Delhi in September 1923 and of the Coazada Congress of 1923 were directed to-

wards a pacification of these two wings of the Congress. The special Congress of Delhi in September 1923 lifted the Council boycott. For a time, the Indian National Congress was in the hands of the no-changers who vigorously excluded the swarajist council-wallahs from the executive offices of the Congress. The fight between the no-changers and swarajists went on for a considerable time and we have had a number of compromises and pacts in the course of two or three years. A sort of gerulla warfare went on between the two wings of the Congress and eventually the no-changer has been driven out by the swarajist from the Congress executives and he is now biding his time again, to drive out the swarajist and a serious campaign has been going on at present to capture the Congress machinery by the No-changer. Sirdar V. J. Patel has inaugurated the campaign during his recent tour in Southern India advocating boycott once again, demonstrating the utter futility of all fireworks in the councils. Till the Cawnpore Congress of December 1925 the no-changer held the Congress reins and there was much discontent and opposition from the swarajist ranks. At Belgaum in December 1924 the spinning franchise was introduced and the swarajists gave their support to it with a view to please Mahatmaji. Before the Cocanada congress of 1923, the All-India congress committee decided upon the suspension of the no-zote campaign of the nochangers. To lift the council boycott by successive by the All India Congress committee has been regar-

ded by the no changers as a breach of all Congress discipline and ultra vires. At the Belgaum Congress of 1924 under the presidency of Mahatma Gandhi the constructive programme was elaborated and the Congress executive machinery was allowed to be manned by the no-changers for a time. At the Cwampore Congress of December 1925, the tables were turned and the Swarajists gained the upper hand and from that time the Congress has been in their possession and since then, the swarajists are trading upon the past name of the Congress. Many have been the skirmishes between the two wings and at one time it was feared that there would be secession of the swarajists from the Congress and at the point of bayonet as it were, they captured the Congress machinery and its executives by sheer force of their numbers. The threatened split was averted by the far-sighted statesmanship of Mahatmaji and in his famous letter of 11th of October 1924 published in his Young India and subsequently in the nationalist press, he made an unconditional surrender of the situation, The historic letter bears reproduction here, in as much as it contains the views of Mahatmaji with regard to true functions of the Congress and is as follows:—

“The realities”
 “Plea for Congress Unity”

“What must be however apparent to every one is that our differences are increasing. Each group is

making of its programme a matter of principle. Each sincerely believes that its programme will bring us near to the common goal. So long as there is a body of people in the country—and it is a large if not a growing body—so long will there be parties prosecuting the Councils programme. Our non-co-operation therefore has taken the form of non-co-operation in practice with one another instead of the Government. Without wishing it we are weakening one another and to that extent helping the system we are all seeking to destroy. Let us recognise its chief characteristic. It is parasitical and derives nutrition from the fungi of national life.

“Our non-co-operation was meant to be a living, active, non-violent force matched against the essential violence of the system. Unfortunately the non-co-operation never became actively non-violent. We satisfied ourselves with physical non-violence of the weak and helpless. Having failed to produce the immediate effect of destroying the system, it has recoiled upon us with double strength and now bids fair to destroy us, if we do not take care betimes. I, for one, am therefore determined not to participate in the domestic wrangle but would even invite all concerned to do likewise. If we cannot actively help, we must not hinder, I am just as keen a believer as ever in the five boycotts. But I clearly see, as I did not at the time of the A. I. C. C. meeting, that whilst we maintain them in our own persons, there is no

atmosphere for working them. There is too much distrust in the air. Every action is suspected and misinterpreted. And whilst we carry on a war of explanation and counter-explanation, the enemy at the door is rejoicing and consolidating his forces. We must avoid this almost at any cost.

CONGRESS MUST REPRESENT THE MASSES.

"I have therefore suggested that we should find out the lowest common measure among all the political parties and invite them all to co-operate on the Congress platform for achieving that common measure. This is the work of internal development without which there will be no effective external political pressure. The politicians who put the external before the internal, or who think (which is the same thing) that the internal is too slow for them should have the greatest freedom to develop their strength, but in my opinion, this should be outside the Congress platform. The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by politics. They have no political consciousness of the type our politicians desire. Their politics are confined to bread and salt—I dare not say butter, for millions do not know the taste of ghee or even oil. Their politics are confined to communal adjustments. It is right however to say that we, the politicians, do represent the masses in opposition to the Government. But if we begin to use them before they are ready,

we shall cease to represent them. We must first come in loving touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants.

"I see no way of removing the Hindu Muslim tension, which is becoming daily tenser, save by all the parties coming together on the Congress platform and devising the best method of solving a problem which seems to defy solution and to dash to pieces all the fond hope we had of securing a national freedom that is broad-based upon mutual trust and mutual help. If for no other reason, let us at least for the sake of achieving unity, give up the internecine political strife.

TOWARDS UNITY IN THE CONGRESS.

"Here is my proposal to that end.

[1] The Congress should suspend all the boycotts except that of foreign cloth till the session of 1925.

[2] The Congress should subject to (1) remove the boycott of Empire goods.

[3] The Congress should confine its activity solely to the propaganda of handspinning and hand-spun khaddar, the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity, and in addition, its Hindu members' activity to the removal of untouchability.

[4] The Congress should carry on the existing

national educational institutions: and if possible, open more and keep them independent of Government control or influence.

[5] The four-anna franchise should be abolished and in its place the qualification for membership should be spinning by every member for half-an-hour per day and delivery to the Congress from month to month of at least 2000 yards of self-spun yarn, cotton being supplied where the member is too poor to afford it.

The implications of my proposals are that

[a] The Swarajists should be free to organise themselves without any opposition from the Congress or no-changers.

[b] The members of other political bodies should be invited and induced to join the Congress.

[c] The no-changers should be precluded from carrying on any propaganda either direct or indirect against Council entry.

[d] Those who do not personally believe in any of the four boycotts will be free, without any disgrace whatsoever, to act as if they did not exist. Thus non-co-operating lawyers will be free to resume practice if they chose and title holders, school masters &c., will be free to join the Congress and be eligible to the executive.

READY FOR ANY SWARAJ SCHEME.

“The scheme enables all the political parties to work unitedly for the internal development. The Congress presents a suitable opportunity for a conference of all political parties and outside the Congress to frame a Swaraj scheme acceptable to all and for presentation to the Government. Personally I am of opinion that the time has not arrived for any such presentation. I believe that it would increase our internal strength beyond expectation, if we could all simply unite to make the foregoing constructive programme a success. But a large number of those who have hitherto led the country think otherwise. In any event a Swaraj scheme for the sake of ourselves is a necessity. As the reader will remember, I am in this matter a complete convert to Babu Bhagwandas's view. I would therefore join any such conference, if my presence was required, and assist at framing the scheme. The reason for insisting on this matter being treated as an activity outside the Congress is to keep the Congress purely for internal development for full one year. When we have achieved a measure of success commensurate with the task before us, the Congress may function for outside political activity.

“What if the proposal is not accepted and it is found difficult to bring together all parties on the Congress platform and to heal the breach between the Swarajists and ourselves? My answer is simple. If

the whole fight is for 'capturing' the Congress I must refuse to enter upon it. I would advise all who think with me to do likewise. I would advise handing the Congress over to the Swarajists on their terms and leave the Councils programme unhampered by any counter propaganda. I would engage the no-changers purely on the constructive programme and advise them to seek such help from other parties as they can give.

"Those who depend for national regeneration solely on the constructive programme, may be expected to lead in the matter of self-sacrifice. Not one of the things we hold dear can be achieved by trying to retain power in the Congress in opposition to the Swarajists. We must hold it on their sufferance. Both parties will be guilty of corrupting the simple people who worship the name 'Congress,' if they are made at our bidding to engage in a suicidal tug of war. Power that comes from service faithfully rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of vote is a delusion and a snare to be avoided, especially at the present moment.

"Whether I have convinced the reader of the soundness of my proposal or not my mind is made up. It hurts me to think that those with whom I have hitherto worked hand in glove should be working in a seemingly opposite direction.

MINE IS AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

“What I have sketched above is not conditions of surrender. Mine is an unconditional surrender. I guide the Congress next year only if all parties wish me to. I am trying to see daylight out of this impenetrable darkness. I seem to see it dimly. But I may be still wrong. All I know is that there is no fight left in me. This is much for a born fighter to say. I have fought my dearest ones. But I fight out of love. I should fight the Swarajists too out of love. But I must, I see, first prove my love. I thought I had proved it. I see I was wrong. I am therefore retracing my steps. I ask everyone to help me to do so and to reunite the two wings on a common platform. The Congress must, for sometime to come at least, remain largely a homogenous body.”

The resolutions of Gauhati Congress of 1926, of the Madras Congress of 1927, and of the Calcutta Congress of 1928, with regard to council programme, have become the subject of acute controversy among the Swarajist Congressmen themselves and different interpretations have been put upon their meaning and connotation, so much so, that every year there has been interminable hair-splitting in the nationalist press and the All-India Congress committee had to intervene and restore harmony. There is no need to refer in detail at present to refer all the acrimonious controversies which rage round the Congress resolutions regarding

council programme during the past three years. Suffice it to say that these differences with regard to the council work has created another split among Congress Swarajists and amongst whom, some are for acceptance of office, while others not. So we have three distinct groups opposed to each other in the Congress camp itself. Further the no-changers are now attempting to revive the council boycott at the forthcoming sessions of the Lahore Congress. Such in short is the position of the Congress at present and the office acceptance-wallahs, non-acceptance wallahs' and the no-changers, each want to dominate the Congress to the exclusion of others.

Council Entry. Vs. Constructive Programme. XIII.

The special Congress held in September 1923 at Delhi lifted the Council boycott and the Swaraj party was formed advocating entry into the councils for the purpose of offering persistent and systematic obstruction to the Bureaucracy. Mahatma Gandhi for the benefit of those who opposed council entry, otherwise known as no-changers, has devised the constructive programme, as for more important political work to be done in the country outside the councils and that the work in the councils is only of a negative or destructive character. There is no question that this has given rise to serious difference of opinion among the Congressmen themselves regarding the relative importance of council work and construc-

tive programme, each party maintaining the superiority of their own particular programme, to advance the interests of the country. It has been asserted on the one hand that entry into the councils would demoralise people and make them slaves of the Government and that one can do precious little to advance the country's interests in the councils and that Swarajist policy in the councils is a mere camouflage. The council-entry-wallahs on the other hand urged that the constructive programme is a mere shibboleth carrying the country no where and would not bring in Swaraj even if it is worked for a century. The mutual wranglings and recriminations of these two cults as exhibited in the press is a sight for gods and men to witness. Let us examine rather a little closely the underlying principles of both these cults as expounded by their respective protagonists and advocates. The no-changers assert that when once you enter the councils under the elections held under Government of India Act there is an end of all principles of non-co-operation and you must be deemed to co-operate with the Government in the literal sense of the term, so entry into the Councils offends the basic principle of noncooperation. Complete Disassociation with Government and its activities is the fundamental idea underlying all non-cooperation and if you enter the councils you would be helping the foreign Government to carry on its functions. Apart from this, if you enter the councils, you will be metamorphosed into a weak and submissive atti-

tude and a single pat on your shoulder by the Government member or secretary will make you a tame man and your individuality would become evaporated. In order to sustain your robust independent national spirit intact, you must keep aloof as much as possible from the seductive influences of the council and the baits which may be thrown before you. Further you can do very little in the councils as they are highly official ridden and hide bound by rules and regulations and you cannot even break its outer rampart. You may fret and foam and discharge fire works in the council and it may create some popular impression but it will not have any effect on the Government which will have its own way notwithstanding your bomb-shells and torpedoes. When once you enter the councils the policy of continuous and consistent opposition cannot be followed in practice and you must support some measures which are conducive to the public. Wholesale obstruction to all measures good, bad and indifferent cannot at all be practiced in the council, and if you once adopt this attitude there is no difference between you and the moderates. As a matter of fact, the Swarajists practiced responsive cooperation though they do not confess it. Such in short is the position taken up by the no-changers and they exclaim that the Swarajists went "to scoff but remained to pray." On the other hand they contend that the constructive programme is the only feasible course to be followed in order to prepare the country for

Swaraj. The constructive programme consists of three Items of work Viz. Spinning and khaddar wearing propaganda, the untouchability and the anti drink campaign and the establishment of the Hindu muslim Unity. It is said that khaddar not only provides a subsidiary industry to the villager but also reduces the huge drain of imported foreign cloth and will open the eyes of the Britisher as his pockets would be touched thereby and will certainly relax his hold on India. The Khadi industry if given a sufficient encouragement and a push will transform the whole cloth market besides giving sustenance to thousands of villagers. Khaddar it is said is a symbol of self respect and it will bring on Swaraj. The wearing of Khaddar should be universally adopted by one and all through the length and breadth of India and then only our dependance on foreign cloth would cease and we will become self reliant. In fact, Khaddar and its propoganda has been put forward as one of the chief items in the constructive programme. With a view to put it on a sound commercial basis, the All-India spinner's association has been formed to give a great impetus to khadi work and khadi wearing and the nationalist press is booming its importance and significance in its columns from time to time publishing the results of the khadi campaign. Untouchability is a serious blot on the National Escutcheon and a hindrance to swaraj and attempts must be made to remove it from the body politic. Many Conferences have been go-

ing on in the country for the spread of the gospel of untouchability and it is said that unless it is removed there is no chance of getting Swaraj. Consequently prominence is given to the elevation of the depressed classes and propaganda must be vigorously carried on. Allied with this is the campaign against drink which must be pursued on systematic lines, with the object of making India completely dry. The third item of the constructive programme is the Hindu Muslim Unity, without which India can never attain Swaraj, and efforts should be made to bring the two communities together as closely as possible. Such in short is the constructive programme adumbrated by the no-changer, who claims that the only way for India's salvation lies in its progressive pursuit.

The Swarajist would reply on the other hand, that the Bureaucratic Lion should be bearded in its own den and by entering the councils and offering continuous and systematic obstruction, he would better fulfil the functions and principles of non-co-operation inside the councils and it is absolutely necessary to capture all seats of power in order to wrest swaraj from an unwilling foreign bureaucracy. If he does not enter, these councils, there are other undesirable persons who are ready and eager to enter and allow the foreigner to continue his domination. The councils are the seats of power and should not be allowed to be occupied by others and congressmen must strive not only to capture the councils but also

the local bodies, in order to give battle royal to the alien rulers. The Swarajist thinks that the so called constructive programme is a mere camoufluge and does not smell of politics at all. It is more of a social reform nature and with khadi it becomes a merchantile. organisation. Nobody objects to the constructive programme as such but only when it is said that alone would bring salvation, he says, he joins issue. Khadi could never bring Swaraj nor the moval of untouchability and many swarajists have absolutely no faith in khadi as bringing on swaraj though they may wear it and give it encouragement, more indeference to Mahatmaji, then on account of any real faith in it. There is not a single swarajist who thinks in his heart of hearts that the propaga-tion of the khadi cult would bring on swaraj, though as a subsidiary industry it may give relief to the poor villager. The acquisition of swaraj through khadi he thinks, is a senseless and foolish proposition nor is it possible to make all 320 millions wear khadar, as India could produce cotton sufficient only to clothe a third of its population. There is no use of making a fetish of khaddar and the sooner its limitations are recognised, the better it would be. It is openly said that Charka could never bring on swaraj and the way lies only through the capture of the councils which are the seats of real power. Among the swa-rajists themselves, there is a further cleavage, some of them are for acceptance of office while others are against it and a battle royal has been going on for

some time past with regard to the acceptance of office especially in our presidency though it would become a very live issue soon after the grant of provincial autonomy under the coming reforms. Such in fact is the conflict between the swarajist and the no-changer and it is not for us to judge the relative merits or demerits of each other's programme and pronounce any opinion upon it. Our point of attack is that the Indian National Congress should be above all these conflicts and should provide a common platform for all the different political views and it should not be the caucus of a single party. If the swarajists and the no-changers can form the separate wings of the Congress why should not other parties who are equally interested in the political progress of India be accommodated on the congress platform? Reason, Justice and fairness all demand that the Indian National Congress must give room for all the different shades of political thought without any hidebound rules preventing them from joining its ranks so that the greatest common measure may be worked out. That is the basis of the All Parties Conference which has brought out the famous Nehru report. Why should the congress be dominated by a single party is the burden of our song. The other parties may not be as vociferous and loud-tongued as the swarajists nor are the swarajists have got the monopoly of the world's political wisdom and a charter was given to them by God Almighty to dominate the congress for ever. By far the strongest criticism

that was levelled against the Swarajist programme is that it is of "a purely negative and destructive character spending its life-time in ineffective loquaciousness in the wilds of opposition, incapable of assuming real responsibility for the burden of Government and the formation of ministries" and sooner or later it must be modified and come in a line with responsive cooperation. A day will come for their dethronement and before there will be nemesis, if the Swarajists are wise enough and sincere in their professions for the country's cause, they ought to give way and make the congress once more a real Indian National Congress but not a mere Swarajist congress. Back to Amritsar is our Slogan,

It must be acknowledged in all fairness that the work of the Swarajist party both in the Legislative Assembly and in the Provincial councils has been eminently useful and advantageous to the country though it is of a negative character. To some extent at least the Govt. has been kept at bay and cannot have its own way as before. Every action of the Govt. has been subjected to closest scrutiny and criticism and if it is against the popular interest, it is exposed to the full glare of public view. The Swarajist party acted as a powerful moral restraint and a check against the arbitrary doings of the Govt. This itself is a great advantage and the Council-entry cannot be lightly abandoned.

The Psychology of the Situation. . . XIV.

To an impartial onlooker the psychology of the situation presented itself in the following light. The older generation assuming superior airs, claiming a monopoly of political wisdom, demanded the unquestioned obedience of the younger generation, which is more robust, optimistic, highly idealistic and impatient to reach the political millinieu in the minimum of time with the maximum of effort. The younger folk would never consent to any tame programme but required exciting politics to keep up the national enthusiasm at a high pitch. The older generation more wary and cautious recognising the limitations of the environment, persisted in old dame methods which the younger generation refused to subscribe, hence the rub. A little more mutual tolerance, good will and forbearance on the part of both would have saved the situation but India is always unfortunate in its schisms, factions and disharmony and it created bitter feeling of hostility between the older and the younger generations with no prospect of any coalescing in the future. There is no hope at present of any of the present political groups merging themselves in the Congress. Considering their present temperament a wide gulf separates the various political groups and none of them naturally like to merge their individuality in another. The momentous question of the hour is how to bridge this wide gulf between the several political groups and bring them into the

Congress fold. The cry for unity is raised from all house tops vociferously and it is on everybody's lips but beyond that, it would never proceed.

Demoralization in Public life. XV.

There is a certain hallowness and insincerity in the present day public life masquerading under the guise of patriotism. The easiest way for a public passport is by playing to the gallery and indulging in cheap sneer and abuse of the old leaders and of the Government and you could easily have a tumultuous outburst of claptrap. The superabundance of leaders in our midst at present has made our present day public life, a hot bed of intrigue and underhand manœuvre. The standards of public judgment have been depreciated and for a single public speech one would be acclaimed as a leader upon whom heaps of encomiums are showered for his noble self sacrifice and next morning you will find an obliging Press giving highly flattering advertisement of their achievements. The bid for popular leadership has become a craze amongst us and the credulous public are easily misled, mistaking the dross for the pure. The credentials for political leadership have fallen so low that everybody with little or no qualification could aspire for it. Ostentatious political busy-bodies are stalking the country under the garb of patriotism and are posing themselves as saviours of the country from the onslaughts of a foreign Bureaucracy. Our Congresses

and Conferences are run by a few loud-tongued individuals at present. We are suffering from a plethora of leaders whose loud voice has submerged the saner view. No words are too strong for a condemnation of our present day public life and its methods and unless we had a wholesome change we could have no salvation. We plead for a more honest, and straightforward public life with better self respect and discipline and with less ostentation. It has become a fashion to parade our politics more to show off than with a sincere desire to advance the interests of the country. We are in short living in a political pandemonium where there is a babel of voices trumpeting forth all kinds of political nostrums, leading the country nowhere. Under such a political psychology the progress of the country has been set back and consequently it lies heavily upon all sincere and patriotic men to evolve order and harmony out of the present political confusion and chaos. If we analyse the political tenets of these separate groups we find, not much of a real fundamental difference in principle standing in the way of a fusion between the various political groups, but more of personal pique and pride that prevents them from coalescing. Every man wishes to be in the time-light and airs out his importance in press interviews. It is a sad commentary on the Indian Educated intelligentsia that they are unable to present a united front to a common enemy notwithstanding their loud protestations of patriotism and love for the country. Swaraj is on the lips of everybody and is

trotted out in season and out of season. The gullible public are easily exploited by the cry of Swaraj, with no prospect of its achievement in the near future when disunity and disharmony prevail among the various leaders of different groups. Such reflections as these force themselves upon all sober minded people who take a detached and dispassionate view of the present political situation in the country and the future historian of the political history of these times would find it extremely difficult to delienate the cross curennts and somer-saults so common in the present day public life. Need we pursue the subject further in this strain and we can only console ourselves, with the hope that better times would dawn upon us and that our political progress will go on, unhampered and unimpeded by such specious methods and an era of bright vision begins.

Need for jointaction. XVI.

Well to return to our theme, from the depressing influences it is refrshing to find that the present separate political groups are slowly coming to recognise the importance and necessity of joint action in the name of United India under the .Egis of the Indian National Oougress. The ex-president of the Indian National Congress Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar in one of his speeches has emphasised the necessity o re-organising the Congress institutions and of bringing about a fusion of all the political parties, with

view to give an effective answer to the Simon Commission. He said that the time has come for us to give a new orientation to the congress activities and with the insight of a clever politician he foresaw the present plight of the "Congress organisations which are dying of inanition."

Our Congress organisations are mere paper organisations advertising themselves profusely in the Nationalist press with high-sounding titles of presidents, secretaries, treasurers and executive members having little credit for real political work. He differentiates between the council work and the functions of the congress and clearly defines the legitimate sphere in which both institutions can work harmoniously together with great advantage. "The Indian National Congress should not merge in the political parties" and it is absolutely necessary that "it should be a mass-movement, a democratic movement, must be led widely and must not be put in the hands of a few people however capable they may be." Mark the words. We cannot have a more clear distinct and definite pronouncement with regard to the future functioning of the congress which ought not to be in the hands of one single political party but it must be the meeting place and the rallying centre of all political parties, so as to be the focus voicing the aspirations of the United Indian Nation. During the early reform days there has been a wide cleavage of political opinion on the question of coun-

til work, which separated the various political groups, some are of opinion that work in councils is absolutely useless and has no political importance. But this view is fortunately exploded, and the council activities are regarded as essential for the political education of the public. The councils give the greatest amount of political education and they give knowledge and experience of the various activities of the several departments of the Government and we will get ourselves equipped to carry on the administration during the coming Swaraj regime. Political thought has thus been greatly clarified by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and one must really appreciate the breadth of view and the clearness of foresight which characterised this expression of clear political thought. Ofcourse, there would be some, who would not agree with the above. Of late there has been any amount of ill-digested crude and glib political talk from all sorts and conditions of men who pose as bad politicians even without a knowledge of the A B C of politics and it has become quite a fashion to air their political conundrums in the shape of interviews published to an expectant world by an obliging press for getting cheap popularity. Barring these few, irresponsible and impracticable die-hards, the better minds and saner public would certainly welcome the new orientation given to the Congress politics by its Ex-President. The wise statesmanship and the sagacious leadership which once characterised the Congress politics have disappeared for some time past and it now stands

berest of many of the best and foremost leaders of political thought and of public opinion in the country. The present weakness of the premier political institution lies in this essential fact that by no stretch of imagination even its ardent protoganiats, can call it representative of the Indian Nation, while a good many of its component parts stand out and the weight and authority which the All-India political organisation used to command before stands at the lowest ebb at the present moment. Councils could only reflect the political opinion of particular groups and the congress alone could voice forth the opinion of the United India. It is highly lamentable that the Indian National Congress should have lost section after section of its countrymen, till it is now run practically by a small minority of the nation's representatives. The Liberals, the Nonbrahmins, the Muslims, the Indian Christians, all one after another seceded from the Congress and have set up rival organisations. Its dominant position in the Indian political world has greatly suffered by the tyranny of its artificial majority which drove the saner, steadier, and influential elements out of its pale to seek political salvation outside. The prestige of the congress must stand high, above the prestige of the political groups. The interests of the country demand that the former prestige of the Indian National Congress should be revived and a united front should be offered to the foreign bureaucracy. The voice of a United country with the authority of a

United National Public opinion behind it, is the only effective answer that can be given to the Bureaucracy.

It has been seriously asked, whether those who have captured the congress machinery and are now running it, sincerely feel that they serving the best interests of the country, and of the congress itself by imposing limitations rightly or wrongly which serve to keep out many people from its precincts. The present day congressman realises this in his heart of hearts but false prestige prevents him to acknowledge it gracefully. "The jerry meanderings of the latter day congress politics, changing its colours very often its bellicose utterances, daring experiments, its right about turns, its hymalian blunders" have all contributed to undermine the prestige of the congress at the present day and it would be the height of wisdom if many of its excrescences and outgrowths have been pruned off, so as to give room for the participation of all people in its endeavours to reach the political goal. Any amount of airy talk about unity and the enlarging of the scope of the present congress would be futile if it is not accompanied by the removal of those conditions which prevents others from coming in. The various political groups can be easily brought in, if only a few unmeaning formulas are given up and if normal conditions of the congress are restored. Would the people at the helm of the congress affairs realise the present critical position of the country and act in a practical and responsible

manner or would they still dangle independence resolutions and flag-hoisting ceremonies which carry the country no where?. The supreme need of the hour is sinking of all petty jealousies and personal bickerings and for showing a lofty patriotism and acting for the best interests of the country. The Indian National Congress, is the only All-India organisation which affords a common platform for all the different political groups to meet and settle the future constitutional progress of India and present a united national demand before the British Govt, which cannot dare to spurn it away. The fond hope of the Bureaucracy is that the Indians are incapable of uniting and can never combine to present a United demand and in that hope lies his great strength. Would the Indian leaders of the several political groups fulfil that cherished desire of the Bureaucrat or would they act jointly? The liberals who fostered and nurtured the Indian National Congress, which owed its inception, growth and development to their indefatigable and dis-interested life-long labours for a generation, would they keep off at this critical moment, when their very presence on the congress platform would revive its former prestige and glory? Would they not exhibit their wise statesmanship by forgetting the indignities to which they were subjected to in the hey-day of non-cooperation regime and come down a little from their high pedestal and once more rub shoulders with common humanity if only the congress drops some of its modern excrecent.

ses which are now preventing them from entering into its precincts? There is no use of mincing matters and to be frank the sarratorial ban should be lifted and the civil disobedience should be abandoned. If both these obstacles are removed certainly the Liberals would be too glad to come in. It is not possible for the congress to attain its former prestige and reputation and command the same influence as before, when the stalwart Liberal leaders representing the saner and better mind of India stand out. It would certainly be a stroke of high statesmanship on the part of those who are now supreme in the councils of the congress, who have captured the congress machinery and are running it during the last few years, to facilitate the return of the old Liberal leaders to the ranks of congress by the removal of the sarratorial ban and the dropping of civil disobedience. Absolutely there is no sacrifice of any political principle on the part of the congress, if it removes the sarratorial ban and abandons civil disobedience except in the perfervid imagination of some harebrained political diehards who always revel in impracticable and visionary political shibboleths. Slowly and imperceptibly enlightened political opinion is now veering round the policy and principles of responsive cooperation, which though resorted to in actual practice by the present day swarajist congress leaders, have not yet been openly endorsed by the congress, for mere want of political honesty and a false dignity of losing its prestige, lest people may think that it is

climbing down from the dizzy heights of orthodox non-cooperation ideals. The principles and policy of responsive cooperation enunciated by the late Lokamanya Tilak are slowly and effectively asserting themselves, notwithstanding the loud protestations to the contrary, by the ardent protagonists of continuous and persistent obstruction in the Provincial councils and in the Legislative Assembly. It is only experience that make men wise and the last 3 years of our political life have taught us that the only policy which can be pursued is that of Responsive cooperation. All other policies have been tried and are found wanting. There is no use of any attempt to resuscitate them when they have been pronounced to be dismal failures. Responsive cooperation stands alone in the political field at present and is actually practised by all the parties though not recognised in theory and if the Indian National Congress, takes courage in both hands and openly professes it, there will be an end of all political wranglings and the present wordy warfare would cease and the country would have peace. The Indian National Congress the only All-India organisation, the non-official parliament of India voicing forth the political aspirations of all Indian peoples without distinction of race, creed or colour and to which all educated indians owe their allegiance is too sacred an institution to be profaned by impious hands and its present day high priests would be held answerable for its deflection into tortuous paths at the bar of public opinion and they

would certainly be dethroned when public opinion asserts itself. It is through the instrumentality of the National Congress that we have been winning all our political battles. It has been a powerful exponent of all popular aspirations and it is the political agitation which has been carried on by the Indian National Congress under the guidance of the old and respected leaders, that we owe our present political advancement. It is a sad irony of fate that some of those old leaders have no place at present in the hierarchy of Congress officialdom. Though the National Congress has sailed off its past moorings at the hands of its present day oarsmen, yet it must fall sooner or later into the right track and signs are not wanting that ere long, it would regain its former prestige and glory. The Coimbatore resolutions of the Non-brahmins to join the congress are a fitting tribute to its prestige as a time honoured institution. Whatever may be the springs of action which prompted them to come back within its fold again, whatever may be their objective, their resolution to join the congress can only mean that they cannot realise their political ambitions and win popular favour otherwise than under the Aegis of the Indian National Congress. The Liberal leaders also must resume their Congress leadership as before and rescue the National organisation which has been built up by their steadfast endeavours during the past generation from its present degrading position. It is high time that these stalwart liberal leaders should once more

assume their proper position without keeping themselves aloof and running a separate organisation. The Congress at present particularly needs their steady restraining influence. The days of hysterical politics have gone and the country is in need of sober and sensible politics leaving off high sounding resolutions of independence and civil disobedience. Of late there is little of a serious and practical study of the various complex administrative problems of Government and our modern day publicists of the Congress, barring a few exceptions, have little or no knowledge of the complicated problems of Government in the various departments of finance and economics, commerce and Industry. We delight to indulge in more kiteflying politics, which no doubt appeal to the mob and we pass off as great politicians. It is time therefore that we should turn our attention to a serious study of the Governmental problems and its administrative politics and a through knowledge of the workings of the various departments of the Government is a necessary equipment for the coming Swaraj.

"Strength and Weakness of Congress." XVII.

Mr. C. Y. Chintamani the talented editor of "The Leader" of Allahabad has written a leading article in its columns under the above caption in August last advocating the necessity for a joint action between the various political parties. Pundit Motilal

Nehru has replied to that article and both of them are quoted here in extenso as it clearly foreshadows a rapprochement between liberal and swarajist views. The leading article is as follows:

"In no field of human activity is a prophet more likely to prove false than in politics, and no one can say what the political situation will be in this country by Dec. 31. It may be that wiser counsels will give an indication of their attitude towards the Indian constitutional question and avoid a situation which will be welcome neither to the authorities nor to the Congress leaders. Or it may be that the Labour Premier will prove no less unconciliatory than the Tories and Congressmen will, in sheer desperation, launch again the non-co-operation movement. What ever turn the course of events take, the recent controversy among Congressmen on the question of boycott of legislatures should provide food for thought to those who have a voice in the affairs of the Congress. No political organisation can afford to fail to profit by past experiences.

We heard a good deal recently of a division threatening the Congress. But behind the protests from every part of India against the Working Committee's 'ukase', was visible to the observant eye a strong sense of loyalty which was being put to a hard test. Congress members would rather resign from the legislatures than disobey the mandate of the Working

Committee. It can be at once conceded that the strongest point of the Congressman is his attachment to the organization to which he belongs and the sense of discipline that results therefrom—and this is to say a great deal. For whether we are under a national government or a foreign government, whether it is a fight outside the legislatures or inside them, what matters really is organization and discipline. Inside the legislatures also the Congress parties have presented a united front to the bureaucracy in co-operation with other progressive parties, and have made their presence felt. And this has a constitutional significance. For the one requirement of the working of the parliamentary system of government is the existence of strong and united political parties (preferably two), each standing for certain principles. It cannot be always expected, however that such parties would develop in the absence of responsible and self-governing institutions. But in spite of the defective constitution, the career of the disciplined Swarajist party alone in the Assembly would furnish, to an impartial observer, a striking evidence of the capacity of Indians to work successfully the parliamentary system of Government, if and when it is conferred on India.

But while Congressmen realize the importance of Co-operating with other parties inside the legislatures, they are prone to be carried away too much by their idealism outside the legislatures. It cannot be too much emphasized that unity is the sine qua non

of success in fighting the forces of reaction. We wish Congressmen would read, mark and digest the speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad. 'You know,' said the Mahatma, 'when the Swaraj Party came into existence and I came out of the jail. 'I entered into a compromise with your President Mr. C. R. Das, and the same thing I am doing to-day.' Compromise is, indeed, the essence of politics, and it is no wonder that the greatest idealists subordinated all considerations to the supreme one of united action. We do not mean here to harp on differences. Just now all progressive political parties including an important section of Muslims, are united on the National Demand. But it is with regard to the future that there are misgivings. Will Congressmen realise the importance of joint action, if there is no response from the Labour Government before the end of the year on the part of all political parties in the country? Has it ever struck them that the tremendous moral effect which the boycott of the Simon Commission has produced has been not a little due to the participation in it of Liberals and other non-Congress parties what Mahatma Gandhi has done more than once to bring unity within the Congress is required to be done to preserve the unity prevailing in the country to day. Joint action will be more and more necessary in future for division in our ranks will make the task of the bureaucracy easier.

"The compromise resolution, further said Mahatma, Gandhi had increased their responsibility" with regard to the constructive programme placed before the country by the Calcutta Congress. We need not discuss here if that programme can achieve what Congress expect from it. But have Congressmen ever perceived the increasing divorce between their thought and action and their intentions and deeds. We are not unaware that some work here and there is being done: but are there signs anywhere of activity such as one would expect if the Congress is going to declare independence on January 1? The responsibility is all the greater of those who talk of independence. It would be interesting to know what Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, that young head on old shoulders who led the independence wallas at Calcutta and obstructed the work of the Congress, is doing. Is he preparing the masses for independence by advocating the policy of acceptance of office.

"The compromise resolution passed by the A. I. C. C. has brought forth the comment from some of our Anglo-Indian contemporaries that hence forth little would be heard of Council boycott. While we are not at all sure of this and while we think that the left wing of the Congress has been gaining strength and occupies a dominating position, we would urge both the Congress leaders and the Government to take a lesson from the recent controversies on abstention from legislatures. The Swara-

jists entered the legislatures proclaiming that they were doing so for the sake of obstruction. While their practice belied their professions in this respect the walks-out that they staged produced the impression that they were still non-cooperators at heart. But a false step taken at Bombay revealed as if by a flash the change which time and experience had brought in the attitude of many Congressmen towards the legislatures which is indeed, the right attitude. The erstwhile non-cooperator now clinging to the legislatures is not likely to come out unless the Government continues to pursue a hopelessly reactionary policy."

In reply to the above article, Pundit Motilal Nehru sent the following letter which is as follows.

"What is wanted is a scheme of effective joint action which would be possible and practicable in case the Labour Government makes no response before the end of the year. The value of compromise is obvious enough, but a compromise which leads to nothing is worse than useless. I have asked many Liberal and other non-Congress friends what they propose to do if Dominion Status was not immediately conceded to India. The reply I got, in one form or another came this: "We shall continue to agitate as we have been doing". A highly esteemed friend proposed to collect and spend 24 lakhs of rupees in the course of ten years over meetings in every village

throughout the country in favour of Dominion Status. The All-Parties Conference and Convention have sufficiently established that the whole country, including the advocates of complete independence, would accept Dominion Status if it was conceded before the end of the year but as you know, the Congress has outlived the stage of mere agitation and believes in direct action. Its programme is cut and dry. It is fully alive to the difficulties and dangers which it has to confront but it sees no other alternative and is preparing for a tremendous sacrifice without which it expects nothing from the British Government. No sane person would plunge the country in the trials and tribulations of intensive non-cooperation if he can help it, but if it cannot be helped, no price is too high to pay for freedom,

NEED FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

"While pointing out the immense advantages of joint action, which might have been taken for granted, you do not indicate the lines on which any such effective action can, in your opinion be taken. If you mean the kind of agitation I have referred to above, the Congress has no heart in it, but while working on its own lines it will not in any way hamper the other parties in carrying it out. You have relied upon the complete success of the Simon boycott jointly accomplished by the principal political parties in the country. But what was this boycott. It was nothing

more or less than a form of non-violent non-cooperation, the favourite weapon of the Congress which was decided upon at Madras and almost immediately after adopted by the Liberals and other non-Congress parties. In the actual carrying out of the boycott, the latter contented themselves with the passive attitude of keeping themselves aloof from the Commission, while the former went further and organised hostile demonstrations which provoked violence from the police, resulting in the death of one of our greatest men, and more or less severe injuries to many brave and noble sons of India. The dry as dust logician, with no vision of the future will say that precious life might well have been saved, and those injuries avoided, if they had refrained from hostile demonstrations. But those who value the rights of freemen more than life and limb think otherwise; and look upon the losses already sustained as precursors of greater losses which must inevitably come in the near future. I mention this not to cast any reflection on those boycotters who opposed or did not join in these hostile demonstrations, but merely to show that it is possible for parties holding different views on working details to combine together each contributing its own quota to the common cause in its own way, without finding fault with others,

Nationalists and the next Elections.

“What is wanted is a continuation of the Simon

boycott to be joined in by all parties if the National Demand is not conceded each party being, at the same time, left free to adopt such other measures as it thinks fit. My own mind is quite clear, i.e. to unite all Nationalists to fight the next general election as one party on the Constitutional issue and to capture all or nearly all the elective seats. This done a number of courses will be open to the elected members of the legislatures to make it impossible for the Simon scheme or for any other, which falls short of the National Demand to work for a day. A programme each step of which is strictly constitutional in the preverted sense in which the word has come to be used can easily be devised. I am afraid there is little chance of such a programme being acceptable to those who are willing under all circumstances, to take what little good there is in a thoroughly bad system or to those who do not mean what they say when they declare they will accept nothing short of full Dominion Status. But I know, there are also many who believe in what they say and will not hesitate to take any strong step within constitutional bounds to achieve freedom. If my suggestion does not appeal to the latter let them put forward their own proposals which I can assure them will be very carefully considered. But it is no use talking of joint action before you have discovered some effective form which that action can take."

We have ventured to extract the above article

and its reply in the confident hope that measures would be devised for securing joint action by all the political parties especially at this critical juncture in the history of our country. Only a little give and take policy is required on both sides. It would not be impossible for the leaders of both parties to pitch upon a common formula for joint political action. A few old fossilised liberals may not approve of it but all progressive liberals ought to come in a line and agree in some joint action which may be devised by common agreement. We therefore hope, that the day is not far distant when the Liberals and Swarajists would join together hand in hand and once more lead the Indian National Congress.

The Lesson Of Unity. XVIII.

Before the 42 Indian National Congress which held its Session at Madras in December 1927, it has been loudly proclaimed from house tops that the Madras Congress Session would tackle the question of congress unity and would devise the necessary measures to bring all parties within its fold but on the other hand some of its resolutions have shattered all hopes of an early rapprochement between the parties. Before the congress Session at Madras, the Nationalist press had been trumpeting forth that there would be United session of all the parties this time at Madras which would be an epochmaking Session and that all the old leaders had been invited

who would certainly return to the fold as erring sheep. But the old Liberal leaders of the Congress were to wary a lot to be caught in the net. Even the responsivists had made themselves scarce by their absence. Perhaps it might be said that the whole attention of the Madras Congress had been engrossed by the two outstanding questions of the boycott of the Statutory commission and the Hindu-Muslim Unity and the question of congress unity was not considered to be of such a first rate importance as to deserve even a passing reference in the subject committee proceedings, much less in the open session of the Congress. How much the Indian National Congress has lost its prestige and reputation by the old and respected leaders, who made the congress what it is, standing out, without guiding its deliberations has not been adequately realised by its present day conductors, the swarajists who are trading in the name and prestige of the Indian National Congress. The spectacular show and the great stir and enthusiasm it creates in the public mind every year are not sufficient in themselves to lend weight and prestige to this great national body. It was the bold and independent expression of opinion by the old and respected leaders of the Liberal party to boycott the Simon Commission that has lent a great weight and prestige to the present agitation against it. Had the Liberals thought otherwise and gave its help and support to the Simon Commission, the resolutions about its boycott by the Indian National Congress

would have been a cry in the wilderness attracting little or no notice. It is certainly the Liberals that lent great weight and prestige to the agitation regarding the boycott of the Simon Commission and the Indian National Congress cannot appropriate the credit of a successful boycott to itself. The present boycott agitation against the Simon Commission has risen in great significance and importance mainly owing to their efforts and it is they that first raised the storm of opposition to the Simon Commission. Even before its announcement, in a letter to the "London Times" Sir Chimanlal Setalwad protested strongly against the idea of the exclusion of the Indian Element from the commission and gravely warned the British Government of its boycott. When the liberals decided to boycott the Simon commission, herculean efforts were made by the Government to win them over but they stood adamant and did not give way, so much so, that the present labour Premier had to admit in parliament, that an influential section has kept aloof from the commission meaning thereby, the Liberal circles, without referring to the Indian National Congress at all. This itself is a sufficient testimony of the worth and weight of the opinion of the Liberal circles' not with standing the fact that they had lost what is known as mob-popularity. In all influential quarters in India their word carries weight. It is high time therefore that the country should discern, as to who is who, and to whom weight should be given but unfortunately the

mob-mentality cannot differentiate and appraise real worth and are easily swayed away by catch words and high sounding phrases. Nobody feels the absence of these old and respected leaders of the Congress from the Congress platform, more keenly than its present day conductors whose piteous appeals about the doors of the Congress wide open ought to receive a sympathetic response, While extending the right hand of fellow-ship and co-operation Indian National Congress forges impediments in the way of those who sincerely desire to come within its fold. Nor does it afford any facilities for the safe return of the old Liberal leaders to its ranks by taking a saner and practical view of things. Certainly the Liberals cannot afford to loose their prestige for sanity and political wisdom, by associating themselves with all kinds of wild and impracticable talk ending in mere impotent paper resolutions which carry the country nowhere. The saner and better mind of India cannot ally itself and be a party to such kind of hallow cant removed from all all the practical politics of the day. It shrinks from going to the land of Utopias and refrains from crying for the moon. When the liberal leaders, who are dubbed as traitors and Jöhukum-wallahs resolved to boycott the Simon Commission, they suddenly became good patriots and the once Nationalist Press which used to shower choicest epithets of abuse upon their devoted heads, holding them up to public ridicule and derision, began to sing hallelujahs after them since their boycott. No wonder these are days of democracy.

Notwithstanding the high encomiums that were showered upon the last Madras Congress Session in December 1927, it is a conspicuous failure with regard to the great problem of congress Unity and the solution of this great problem has been deliberately shirked and evaded merely because of the petty personal equations existing in Congress circles. To sink personal prejudices, and take a broad and lofty view of men and things, and to work in unison *a rara avis* in these days of personalities. Even at the Calcutta Session held in December 1928, the problem of congress Unity has not been touched owing to that strange mentality of the Congress leaders who want to preserve the congress as a close preserve for themselves. Of all the public questions of the day, the problem of the Unity of all ranks of political workers and the closing up of all conferences and federations seems to be the most important one and that has been realised by the Madras congress, which resolved to issue invitations to all political associations to join together for the purpose of bringing forward an agreed constitution for India, with a view to give an effective reply to the Simon commission. Thus the All-parties Conference was constituted. The very fact that an All-Parties Conference had to be convened and that by the Indian National congress itself is a significant commentary on its own doings. Why should there be other political parties outside the congress? If the Indian National Congress truly performs its functions of focussing Indian

Public opinion and fostering Indian Nationalism and of representing the political aims and aspirations of the Indian people, there would have been no necessity for the formation of any other political party, and because it abdicated its normal functions, other political parties came into existence. The very fact that other political parties have been allowed to come into existence is itself a stultification of the Indian National Congress. When the congress leaders recognised the necessity of collaborating with other political parties for the purpose of framing an agreed constitution, does it not stand to reason that they should also recognise the necessity of affording the other political parties a common political platform true to the name of the Indian National Congress? Alas, when will such a wisdom dawn on the present day Congress functionaries? The united wisdom and the efforts of the All Parties conference has brought about that epoch-making and historic document known as the Nehru Report, which will be a great land-mark in the political annals of India and which has sustained and enhanced the prestige and reputation of political India in the eyes of the world. It has been acclaimed as the quintessence of the collective political wisdom and forethought of the Liberal and Swarajist leaders and is spoken of as the greatest common measure of agreement between all the recognised political parties. What is the lesson from this? If our different political party leaders are able to produce a common agreed constitution, could they not be able

to reconcile themselves and come on the same common platform of the Indian National Congress and once more restore its lost prestige and reputation. This is the great lesson of unity, which is the supreme need of the hour.

The Viceregal Pronouncement. XIX.

In view of the recent Viceregal pronouncement, it is all the more absolutely essential for all the existing recognised political parties in India to close up their ranks and strengthen the position of the Indian National Congress. Now is the time to show a united front to the British Government and we can only show a United front by presenting an agreed demand. How can we present an agreed demand unless we make up our differences? Could not the leaders of all parties compose their differences and come to a settlement? The Britisher would be the last person to yield to threats of civil disobedience and impotent paper resolutions of independence. He knows full well that India is disunited and India's disunion is his strength. Now is the opportunity for India and the Indians to show their grit and mettle and extract as much as possible from the unwilling Britisher. There have been any number of varied and different interpretations with regard to the Viceregal pronouncement and of the debates in both houses of the British Parliament and the daily press contained columns after columns of matter dealing with the subject and

also many of our leading public men have given expression to their individual views which were published from time to time since the announcement. There has been a general consensus of opinion with regard to the sincerity and honesty with which the Viceroy has made the announcement reiterating the goal of India to be Dominion Status in the fulness of time and appealing to all parties to banish all mistrust and suspicion and show good will and co-operation by meeting at the Round table Conference and evolving an acceptable constitution for India. A great gesture has been made by the present Labour Government for enlisting the good will and co-operation of the Indian people and the courageous action of H. E. the Viceroy has been applauded on all sides. High encomiums and expressions of deep gratitude are showered upon him for his noble conduct in pacifying the Indian Nation. The Indian leaders of all parties met at Delhi and expressed their feelings of thankfulness and offered their co-operation. Amidst the chorus of praise and gratitude bestowed upon the Viceroy and the Labour Government, a discordant note has also been struck by some of our foremost Indian Leaders and it has been said that the Viceregal pronouncement is simply an eye-wash and is intended to take the wind out of the sails of the Indian National Congress by preventing it from launching civil disobedience on the first of January 1930 and was made for the purpose of rallying the moderates and the liberals among the Indian leaders

who boycotted the Simon commission to their side. The debates in the parliament they say, are full of political platitudes upon which no reliance could be placed by self-respecting Indians. The announcement itself, is extremely vague, indefinite and does not signify, in the least, the grant of Dominion Status, immediately but only in fulness of time which means nothing. Nor is there any indication that the proposed round-table conference would proceed on the assumption of the grant of Dominion Status, only fixing the time and the stages in which it could be reached. There has been no change of policy at all and repression has been going on as before and our political prisoners have been rotting in the jails. We cannot read into the announcement that all these things would happen to satisfy the Indian people and as has been put forward by the Times, it was made simply for the purpose of clearing the atmosphere for the reception of the Simon report. The Britisher is a very cunning and astute diplomat and knows how to tide over a difficult situation by throwing dust into the eyes of others and the Indian Public should therefore be extremely wary and careful before they walk into the Britisher's parlour and entangle themselves in its meshes. The announcement promises nothing tangible though it was struck in a highly sympathetic key and further, the debates in parliament must disillusion even the confiding liberal of his faith in the professions of the British Rulers. It is extremely difficult to renounce the innumerable

advantages which England has been enjoying by keeping India under its subjection, as if by a stroke of the pen. The civil and military services furnish lucrative careers to the British youth and India offers a valuable dumping ground for all the British goods and millions of pounds have been sunk in India which created powerful vested interests and it is idle to expect the Britisher to forego all these benefits merely for the sake of altruistic principles which have no place in the governance of a subject nation. It is therefore necessary for the Indian people to scrutinise the offer made by the rulers before it is accepted without some guarantees and an amnesty for the political prisoners. Such are the cautions addressed to the Indian public by some of our well-known leaders who advise the rejection of the Round Table Conference and prepare the country for starting an intensive campaign of civil disobedience in accordance with the resolution of the last Calcutta Congress. On the other hand, most of our Indian leaders who count in the Indian political world counsel moderation and acceptance of the Viceroy's genuine offer of a round-table conference provided there has been a real change of heart on the part of the British rulers. They unreservedly accept the genuineness and apparent sincerity of the offer, and demand the Labour Government to follow it up by certain proposals for the purpose of creating a real atmosphere of sympathy, good will and mutual trust. They point out that before they meet at the round-

table conference, it is necessary that there should be a general amnesty for all political prisoners, though they are not putting it forward as a condition precedent nor in a bargaining spirit. They think it essential for the success of any round-table conference that the present political atmosphere should be cleared of all suspicion and distrust and a spirit of confidence and faith should be restored. With regard to the details about the time and personel of the conference the Viceroy who has shown so much earnestness in the matter can be trusted and he will certainly satisfy the Indian public. The present Labour Government who made this generous gesture in accordance with its policy regarding the treatment of Egypt and Russia ought not to be embarrassed by imposing any conditions precedent and they and the other English friends of India should be strengthened only by presenting a united and agreed national demand in the evolution of the Indian constitutional progress. The debates on the Indian question in the parliament are not necessarily an index of the mind of the Labour Government and there is much behind them which cannot be openly expressed in public at this juncture. At any time it would be open to India to refuse to participate in the round-table conference if a calmer atmosphere is not created by a change of heart and of a policy proclaiming a general amnesty for the political prisoners. As has been pointed out by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in the columns of the Leader of Allahabad that "this is no occasion

for conditions precedent and that no discussions should be allowed to grow when there is room for play and exercise of moral forces and considerations of prudence and wisdom on every side and that it is the bounden duty of one and all to establish conditions most favourable to united effort and action."

Already accusations have been levelled forth in the Nationalist press that the Congress has degenerated into a moderate show and since the Delhi manifesto there has been a backsliding of the lofty independent ideals which represent the Congress and it has become a prey to British Legerdemain.

At this critical juncture we deem it necessary

for the Indian National Congress to vindicate its position and retrieve its lost prestige by occupying its predominant place in the Indian political world taking together all the parties into its confidence and into its fold and thus once more become able to dictate terms to the British Parliament on behalf of and in the name of the Great Indian Nation. The position of the Indian National Congress in the body politic of India will be put to serious test at the present juncture. Will it rise or fall to the occasion? Will it become isolated from all other political groups and lead its lonely furrow? Will it rise to the height of its statemanship and take all the parties along with it and assert once more its premier political position in the country? Of course, there are irreconcilables and diehards in India as there in Eng-

land who do not accept anything but an extreme position and who cannot conceive of any golden mean and both are harmful to the best interests of the country. The congress may be accused of developing a moderate mentality and the liberals may be accused of pining for an opportunity to join hands with the Government which the announcement has furnished them, but would it raise the prestige and influence of the Congress in the eyes of the Indian public. The Congress cannot affect to ignore the existence of other political groups in the country which are fast consolidating themselves and developing a position of political importance. The non-brahmin communities especially in our Presidency are marshalling their forces and in the recent session of the non-brahmin conference held at Nellore they have closed up their ranks and are pushing to the front. The muslim community though divided, has been making demands for the purpose of safeguarding their interests. The sikhs another minority community have also been advancing their political demands and similarly many other smaller communities have been asserting their claims for a favoured place in the coming Swaraj constitution. Will it be possible for the congress to ignore all these communities and act? Is it not the path of wisdom and prudence on the part of an All India political organisation like the Indian National Congress to take all these communities into its fold and solve the problem of minorities which is staring in its face. The

great issue before the country is the solution of this vexed question of the problem of minorities and on it only depends the future Swaraj of India.

Before India enters the round-table conference it is absolutely essential for her to solve the problem of minorities, else there would be no use of her attending the conference, with divided proposals which are sure to be rejected. If at all she goes she must go with a united demand which compels the attention of the conference, if not, she can as well stay away at home and leave the matter to the foreigner for settlement. Nobody can think of such a bitter humiliation and it only remains for India and her leaders to sit together and compose their differences before it can have an effective voice in the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. Before the round table conference in London there should be a round table conference in India to settle this communal question and a speedy and satisfactory settlement must be arrived at. The Shaffees and Moongees must be brought together and made to drink the waters of one stream at one place in bonds of fraternity and fellowship. This vexed question of the problem of minorities has been baffling the efforts of the leaders of the two great communities for some time past and the time has come when it can no longer be delayed and must be settled at once and for all time to come, if India wants to attain Swaraj. The supreme hour has come and now is the time for the

leaders of all communities to exhibit those high and noble qualities which go to make up sound statesmanship and political wisdom. In this supreme moment they do require, wisdom, forethought, patience and broad-mindedness and if they fail to rise to the occasion, good bye to all future prospects of an Indian Swaraj. All parties should realise the seriousness of the situation and act in a broad and statesmanlike manner, in a spirit of give and take and adjust their mutual differences and go to the round table conference and assert their national demand. The Indian National Congress as the premier political institution, would be failing in its duty if it does not take effective steps and devise measures to bring about the leaders of all communities so that this communal problem may be satisfactorily solved. The day of settlement of this communal problem will be the day of its attaining Swaraj no matter whether it is given by the British or not, and India will then be in a position to wrest it from England. If the Congress does not do its legitimate duty of bringing together all the communities and fritters away its energies and attentions upon questions of Independence and flag hoisting ceremonies, other political groups must take the initiative and bring out a fusion of all communities and solve the question. The All-parties conference which has been dissolved some time back must be called into existence and made to function once more. If so, the position of the Congress will be seriously affected. The other political groups would

no doubt endeavour to come to a common understanding if the Congress rejects the offer of the round-table conference, in which case the congress would become isolated. Let the congress beware?

Consequently a heavy responsibility lies over the head of the coming Session of the congress. This is the time for calm, cool and collective action if the Congress means business. This is not the time for indulging in empty platitudes of high sounding phrases divorced from all practical politics. The Congress requires sober counsels at this critical hour. Let the ideals of independence be cherished but let them not come in the way of a satisfactory settlement between all the various political groups. If the Liberal Federation, the Muslim League and the non-brahmin conference accept the offer of the round table conference, the Congress must perforce make a common cause with other political groups. We have no doubt that the Congress with all its past traditions behind, will rise equal to the occasion and act in a spirit of broad-statesmanship. All eyes are now turned towards the coming session of the Lahore Congress, the decision of which will determine the future of Indian Swaraj. If it is dumped by independence wallahs and the offer is turned down, we do not know what the future of India would be. Already the diehards of England, the enemies of Indian political progress have started a campaign to thwart the endeavours of the Labour Government to

grant Dominion status to India. Let not the congress supplement their endeavours. If India stands at this critical hour and exhibits its wise statesmanship, then only it can attain swaraj but not otherwise. Let India continue the Unity attained by the Simon boycott and realise its value. Let the Indian National Congress vindicate both its name and prestige by bringing together all parties within its fold and asserting the national demand at the round table conference, which the British Parliament can dare not reject.

Already a scramble began and an agitation has been set on foot with a view to acquire seats on the round-table conference. There must be only two parties, the British and the Indian parties sitting at the conference. The delegates of the Indian party should be strong and independent men and not irreconcilable diehards of extreme communal type. There would be absolutely no use in sending up a miscellaneous crowd, to take their seats on the round-table. Then, it is certain that would become a fiasco and the blame would be thrown on poor India. Let not such a contingency be allowed to happen. Let a few highly respected leaders of All-India fame, reputation and standing, who are all of one mind and who do not pull different ways, be selected and sent to the conference and then only some good may turn out. The accredited and well-known leaders of different communities ought to confer among themselves

before hand and agree upon a common understanding on all essential particulars. It would not be by counting of heads that decisions would be reached at the conference. It is said that the Labour Government is anxious to conciliate the Congress and the the friends of India in England are urging the acceptance of the offer. If it is so, it is all the more necessary for the Congress to meet it, at least half-way. It would be suicidal not to meet at all and there is no advantage to the country in that extreme stiff position.

We repeat, once more, that a heavy responsibility lies over the head of coming Lahore Congress. It can make or mar the political progress of India. A grand opportunity has presented itself and let it not be thrown away in a mood of sentimental chagrin? Let it take full advantage of the situation and not lose it, as in the past in 1924? Let it not stand on the high and at present unattainable pedestal of Independence and let slip this golden opportunity? Let it not be said by the coming generation that the Lahore Congress of 1929 committed a serious blunder? We therefore make an earnest and fervent appeal, with all sincerity to the Lahore Congress to join hands with other political groups in the country and take its premier position in the political evolution of India.

Whether the Lahore Congress accepts or declines the offer of the round-table conference does

not much matter, but what is more important for the Congress is to draw into its orbit, the different political groups existing in the country, so that it may function in the name of United Indian Nation. We conceive it to be the essential duty of the Congress to strive to that end and if it fails, the entire responsibility is hers and the whole blame would be thrown upon her if it takes a false step. Already a section of the Nationalist press is thundering forth against the confirmation of the Delhi manifesto of the leaders of all parties by the working committee of the Congress and is hurling its anathemas upon the poor moderates. It is said that the politics of Mahatmaji and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru are poles assunder and there could be no real and genuine combination. It is such kind of hysterical vapourings of political diehards, at a critical juncture of the political history of the Country, when its fate is hanging in the balance, that cause much public irritation and prevents the coalescing of the different political groups under the banner of the congress. No sane person should give encouragement to such kind of irresponsible writings which do more harm to the country. The only person who can keep the turbulent elements in check at the coming session of the Lahore Congress is Mahatma Gandhi and the whole country looks up to him to restrain the younger generation and the extreme section within proper bounds. Mahatmaji's reply to the cable of Mr. Fenner Brockway is dignified and highly characteristic of his greatness, to

which even a stalwart Liberal could take no exception. We hope that under his wise guidance, the Lahore Congress would take the right step which would bring Swaraj within a measureable distance in the near future.

XX. CONCLUSION.

Having been an humble camp follower of the old Indian National Congress, I have in my own humble way, in a feeble and discursive manner depicted the past and the present position of the Indian National Congress and I have earnestly put forward a strong plea for a fusion of the various political groups on the congress platform without merging their individualities and thus present a united front. But the main question is, will there be such a fusion under the existing circumstances? Would the several political units in the country sink their personal differences and party squables and coalesce in the larger interests of the country? Would they make the Indian National Congress, once more the rallying centre of all political thought? It all depends upon the individual temperment of the different political groups now functioning in the country and carrying on mutual wranglings to the delight of their opponents. We are all pastmasters in the art of abusing, decrying and ridiculing each other and indulging in hairsplitting subtleties of political dogma. To an impartial onlooker the chances of a fusion of the

different political groups appear to be small. First there is the aristocratic liberal, then the sturdy swarajist, the fiery mohemmadan and the budding non-brahmin coming next. There is no doubt the various groups contain many estimable persons possessing sound common sense and good intelligence and are not wanting in political wisdom and sagacity. But is it possible for these various characters to combine and act conjointly? Why not? There is no insuperable barrier or an insurmountable difficulty if each group comes down a little of course, without any sacrifice of principle. The Indian National Congress is the only central All-India political organisation, hallowed by the sacred memory of the departed patriots like Narajoi, Gokhale, Tilak, Bannerji and others, which affords ample room and opportunity for all parties to come in and join their political forces.

In the words [of that redoubtable champion of popular rights, Mr. Salem Vijaya Raghavachariar, Ex-president of the Congress. "The Indian National Congress is the one institution that has been endeavouring these forty years and more to create and develop a collective consciousness of the people of India and with all the misfortunes that had overtaken it recently, it is the one institution that can honestly claim to represent that collective consciousness. If for any cause this great National institution would not rise equal to this Supreme duty at this Supreme

crisis, which the merciful god forbid, then National agitation for freedom, would have no bedrock to rest on, in the future and we shall all be involved in one common doom for many a generation, Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, non-co-operators and responsive co-operators, moderates and extremists."

It only depends upon the present day political swarjist group which now dominates the Congress, whether it would allow others to come into the congress fold, by relaxing the present restrictions or whether it would keep for itself the National Congress as a close preserve for themselves and their ilk. If they had the least political wisdom and foresight they must give away in the interests of the country of which they boast too much. Let us wait and see.

If the Indian National Congress is made to function once more as in the past, if its former prestige and reputation are revived, if it is made the rallying centre of the different political groups, then the political future of the country will assume a brighter aspect and there can be no doubt, that the Goal of all parties viz. Swaraj would be reached in the near future and become an accomplished fact.

