

Indian National Congress.

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Presidential address of
Mahatma Gandhi

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Presidential Address
of
Mahatma Gandhi

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Presidential Address

Friends,

It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments both internal and external have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset, let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi Amman, Sir Asutosh Mukerji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramaniam Iyer and Mr. Dal Bahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs. Rustonjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

Retrospective

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength

from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of government. The breach of faith with the Musalmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the Government. The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism culminating in the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of the system. At the same time it was realised that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation whether conscious or unconscious, and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the view therefore of mending or ending the system it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary co-operation from the top. At the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920 the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-cooperation movement. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institution boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not non-cooperate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite, however, of this grave defect I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-cooperation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-cooperation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-cooperation has not brought us Swaraj, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-cooperation as a means of attaining political freedom has come to stay and that even its partial success has brought us nearer Swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity

for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

A Halt

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-cooperation the majority of those who are immediately concerned, have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Councils have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances these boycotts cannot be worked as part of the National programme, unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-cooperators out. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hostilely criticising the other. What is applicable to Hindu Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to

convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-cooperation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

Foreign Cloth Boycott

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word 'Boycott' has been changed in the agreement into 'refusal to use foreign cloth.' There is no doubt a bad odour about the word 'Boycott.' It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasises the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal

abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness etc. are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from good-will and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i. e. khaddar

not only saves the peasant's money but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. ✓ It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organisation of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organisation. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffi. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is today the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply for instance intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What

is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

· Britain's Duty

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth

through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

Foreign *versus* British

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about any how of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence. (23)

Objections Considered

But, say the critics, the spinning wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic

march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time. The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances, it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

Machinery

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad.

Spinning Franchise

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the Swaraj Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

No Other Message

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of Swaraj if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by Civil Disobedience. But Civil Disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No'. Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards Swaraj.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for Swaraj is almost universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Musalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Musalman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Musalman brethren and the non-cooperation that followed it, caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-cooperation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have

been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Musalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority, as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Musalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the ✓Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Musalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Musalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Musalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's

friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no Swaraj Government with any pretension to being a popular Government can possibly be organised and maintained on a war footing. A Swaraj Government means a Government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Musalmans and others. Hindus and Musalmans, if they desire Swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Musalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation.

A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

Untouchability

Untouchability is another hindrance to Swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for Swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take Swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindustan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot the better it is for us Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchable. And Hindus who are Congressmen

have to see to it that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vaikom satyagrahis are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage and faith. Any movement in which these qualities are exhibited becomes irresistible.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees now-a-days of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us 'superior' Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our downtrodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is Light, not darkness. God is Love, not hate. God is Truth, not untruth. God alone is Great. We His creatures are but dust. Let us be

humble and recognise the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of religion or sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of self or irreligion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win Swaraj or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope to revive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

Swaraj Scheme

But the spinning wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagvan Das that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of Swaraj, i. e. the scheme of Swaraj which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All Parties' Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points ?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work,

such for example as suggested for the Congress Franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish, to take part in the government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of these Panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbersome and worn out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the Civil and Military Service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy

as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in Self-governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examinations for the Civil and Military Services to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani: the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of inter-national diplomacy to be English.

Intoxicants

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would today have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketting degenerated into violence, veiled when it was not open. Picketting had, therefore, to be abandoned and the liquor-shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and self-less service in the cause of temperance. We must, however, realise that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have Swaraj. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council-entry by Congressmen if they would boldly sweep out this revenue even though education may have to be starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the military expenditure.

Bengal Repression

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments.

But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely (though it may be adversely) than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will or we may succumb to them to our disadvantage. The latest act of the rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All Parties' Conference condemned it in no uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that the blow was aimed at the Bengal Swaraj Party. But I have none. I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the Swaraj Party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is

1. That the situation they describe has not been proved to exist;

2. That assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease;

3. That the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation; and lastly

4. That even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of their Excellencies evade these issues altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements not because they are wilfully untruthful, but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated or be impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of Swaraj; for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold. In 1921 we answered repression with Civil Disobedience and invited the Government to do its worst. But to day we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We

are not ready for Civil Disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for civil disobedience means discipline, self-restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose, we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting, we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey, whether of God or man, we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Musalmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for Civil Disobedience—the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu-Muslim fights are our training for it. And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence: 'You are retarding India's progress. If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organised than you are. You may not care for

The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-cooperation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-cooperation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that Satyagraha never fails and that one perfect Satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect Satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in everyone of us. Like Swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

वन्देमातरम् ।

your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence ?'

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must therefore find the remedy and demonstrate to both the violent Government and the violent revolutionaries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence. ↗

Repression a symptom

I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as White *vs.* Black. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the 'white man's burden.' In the Malaya peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The

Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would today drive out every Indian if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers. The Government of India have not shown even the decency to publish the report of its own Commission on Fiji.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Saheb, Guruka-Bagh-and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer;—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it ?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other or in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

Need for Sanction

The Congress, therefore, to be worthy of its trust must devise a sanction to back its demands. Before we can forge the sanction, we Hindus, Musalmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis etc. must unite and so should Swarajists, No-changers, Liberals, Home-Rulers, Muslim Leaguers and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.

My Faith

Let me state my faith; as a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-cooperation for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot—will not—do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called Satyagraha. It is my *Ka'padrum* — my *Jam-i-Jam* — the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. Ahimsa or Non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of that Truth. This Satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda, or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the Contrary I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through Satyagraha.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of Swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power today to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a Swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

Independence

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became

a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

The Swaraj Party

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about

the status of equality given to the Swaraj Party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the Party is not worthy, but because I do not share its views about Council-entry. But if I must remain in the Congress and even lead it, I must recognise facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. But it was not, so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step. The Swaraj Party represents, if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress on the issue of its status, I was bound to agree to its conditions so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion, unreasonable. The Swarajists want to use the name of the Congress for their policy. A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the no-changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility both financial and executive with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehend no No-changer can, I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. | And heart can only

go where belief is. I know that the sole authority to the Swaraj Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The Swaraj Party can not be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work from within to affect the course of the country's politics. Dr. Besant has led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come in hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, for the Hindus, removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what they want ?

Purely Social Reform ?

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organisation. I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for Swaraj

is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have otherwise described it, the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentions and not absolutely essential for Swaraj as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

National Schools

(One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to khaddar the running of national educational institutions has been the most successful. These can not be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-cooperation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should be made to maintain and strengthen them. Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a

national university maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000, and having control of 3 Colleges and 70 Schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Admedabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323, in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-cooperating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a worldly stand-point they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national stand-point they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab. The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and girls studying in these national institutions. I therefore regard the upkeep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions to be truly national must be clubs for promoting real Hindu Muslim unity, they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert