

NON-COOPERATION EXPLAINED.

What it means: what it will lead to.

WILL THE PEOPLE BENEFIT?

BOMBAY

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Following speech was made by the Collector of Satara at the Inauguration of the League of Peace and Progress at Satara :—

Shrimant Chief Sahebs and Sardars, Mr. Dosabhoj and Gentlemen,—

May I commence by reading an extract from a recent article in one of the best magazines published in America—a country which is no friend of oppression and no enemy of Indian aspirations? I do not vouch for the accuracy of the statement that the population of India has doubled within living memory, but at any rate it has greatly increased under British rule. The extract is as follows :

“ The population of India is but one of many which have doubled within living memory. Without what we call Western civilization this would have been impossible; and without what we call Western civilization the support of any such rapidly increasing multitude will be equally impossible in the future. It is the merit of England that in this expansion she has played the leading part; has done so much to evolve a civilization, which, whatever its failings, has enabled two human beings to grow in the place of one. I look at what, for want of a better term, I will call Eastern civilization, but which might equally well be described as the Western civilization of the past. In the main, and apart from its alleged beauty, it is an interminable record of famine, pestilence, enslaved populations, and of perpetual warfare waged at the behest of great or little tyrants; of rapine, slaughter, and the sacking and firing of inoffensive homes. Its vaunted empires as well as its petty kingdoms were based on a servitude that left the ruling minorities defenceless in a time of crisis. Little by little emerged the free peoples who are the dominant factors of today.”

Please notice particularly the last sentence “ The free peoples who are the dominant factors of today.” Please notice also that the author condemns the Western as well as the Eastern civilization of the past. Uncontrolled

ner of one or of a mob, of a kind
 --- come to the same thing. They
 compatible with freedom, are based, however they
 may disguise it, on the rule of an autocratic man
 lead to war, famine, pestilence and slavery.

Now the recent Government of India Act which is based on the Reforms proposed by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu has definitely placed India among the free peoples. Complete self-government, though not yet fully attained, is in sight and will certainly be attained by the present generation if they will proceed on orderly and constitutional lines. Are you going to throw away this prospect by aiming at immediate self-government through revolutionary means?

For, however it is disguised, the aims of non-cooperation are revolutionary and the sympathy with, and admiration of, the Bolshevists in Russia professed by certain non-cooperationists show what they really want. Even those non-cooperationists who do not want Bolshevism will inevitably bring it about, if they are successful in their designs. Those revolutionaries who brought about the overthrow of the Russian Emperor had no intention of substituting Bolshevism; they merely wanted to obtain freedom and government by the people at one bound, just as some of the non-cooperationists want to do. But they had had no experience of the actual business of government. They destroyed the government to which the Russian people had been accustomed for centuries and could not substitute anything in its place. The Bolshevists then had their chance and in the name of the people substituted the tyranny of a few for the tyranny, if it was a tyranny, of the Emperor.

I think that there is still some ignorance in this country of what Bolshevism means and is. A Bolshevnik means in the Russian language one who demands the maximum, in fact an extremist. The Bolshevnik party is or was the extremist party in socialism and the opposite party was the Mensheviks, or moderate socialists, whom they destroyed. The Bolshevnik party held the extreme theory of socialism, namely that there should be no

anything and that the State should administer everything. This might be a principle of government in another world or among other creatures like bees or ants, but human nature being what it is, it is clearly impossible among men and as regards land has been abandoned by the Bolshevik rulers themselves.

With the down-fall of the Emperor the first thing that the peasants did was to seize and divide up among themselves the estates of the landlords. Then the Bolshevik government demanded that they should hand over all the produce of their lands to be divided equally among all persons. They refused and would not cultivate their lands because the Bolshevik government sent soldiers to seize their produce. The Bolsheviks then abandoned their first principle that there should be no private property. They are still attempting to carry out another of their ideas that there should be no private industries or commerce and they make dwellers in towns work by force in their factories and give them nothing but bad and insufficient food, but the result of this has been that practically all commerce and industry in Russia have ceased and the railways have broken down.

Another theory which the Bolsheviks held was that the working classes alone should govern. But even this they have been unable to carry out. The whole government is in the hands of less than a dozen men who almost at once closed by force the popular assembly, because they saw that it would not carry out their wishes, and they have never attempted to call another. They govern by force alone. Any one who tries to oppose them or even talks of doing so is at once put to death. They have their spies everywhere and it is dangerous to say a word against them. The whole country is ravaged by famine and disease and the population of big cities is one-tenth of what it used to be. This country which grew enough corn to feed a large part of the world in addition to its own population now suffers chronic famine. No one knows how many Russians have died by violence, starvation and disease in the last four years, but it is certain that, under the Bolshevik government, many times more

Russians have been killed than the soldi
in the whole of the war.

Let me read you a telegram which appeared
in newspapers in India on July 28—5 days ago. It follows:—

“The famine in Russia is of appalling dimensions and thirty millions (300 lakhs) of people are starving. Trotzky has been appointed food dictator. Cholera, typhus and plague are claiming thousands of victims daily and a frenzied appeal has been sent to Germany for doctors. A Berlin telegram reports complete panic to be overwhelming the Soviet government. Maxim Gorky's tragic appeal to Germany was “We cannot pay you, but, in the name of humanity, come.”

Remember that Russia is not a country subject, like India, to prolonged failure of rain. Deep snow covers the country during winter and provides ample moisture for crops when it melts in the spring. Rain is also abundant in summer. The famine and pestilences which are now destroying the country are entirely due to the theories and actions of the Bolshevist government and to their neglect of railways and sanitation. The two names mentioned in the above telegram are interesting. Trotzky is one of the handful of dictators who have caused the ruin and what is the good of appointing him food dictator? Gorky is a writer who worked for the overthrow of the previous Government and is a mere theorist who resembles the editors of the leading non-co-operation papers. He has now found that theories do not feed starving persons or cure them of disease or provide money to pay for doctors.

This, and worse than this, is the kind of government which you are asked to establish at once by revolution in place of the orderly and peaceful government which you can obtain by patience and training in a few years' time. Remember that the results will be much worse in India because the people here are, as yet, less accustomed to self-government than even the Russians and have to contend

...res of rain, when only a strong ... with ample resources and good railways and ... and a medical staff can protect you from ... and death. It is a lie to say that India suffered less severely from famines before the British Government. Before the British Government no other Government in India took any measures at all in a famine and the people just died. There are records in India of famines before the British Government which lasted ten years and lakhs and lakhs of people died. Judge for yourselves what would have happened in this district in the last three years if there had been no railways to bring wheat from the Punjab or rice from Burma. God knows prices are high enough, but they would have been three or four times as high. How would poor people have gone to Bombay and other places for labour and been able to send money to their relatives without railways and the Post Office? Did any other Government before the British lend tagai at less than Sarkari interest or start co-operative societies or construct famine works or protective canals or give quinine for fever or disinfect wells during cholera? What happened in China during the terrible famine last year? When the people were asked whether Government would help, they laughed, as if the idea were ridiculous. Those that were saved were saved only by the exertions of foreign missionaries and the funds raised by them in England and America. The Chinese Government did nothing.

Believe me, the art of good government is not an easy thing or one which can be learnt in a year. The non-co-operators think that if the British Government is overthrown they can govern the country at once without any training. In the same way they think that any person without training can teach in their national schools—an idea which any experienced master will tell you is ridiculous and which experience has already shown to be futile as the pupils have left these schools in large numbers and returned to their old institutions. If they make a great mistake over education how much greater will be their mistakes in the matter of government? They are trying to teach people to disobey and overthrow the

present Government and not to pay taxes. Will the Police and the Army, whom they are unsuccessfully trying to seduce from their loyalty, be loyal to them? Believe me, it is far, far easier to destroy than to build, and the fabric of government is not built in a day. The spirit of disorder and mutiny, when once aroused, cannot be stopped at once. If they could so arouse as to destroy the present Government it would certainly destroy them and lakhs of people with them.

Now please consider what the aim of the British Government has always been. From the time of Queen Victoria's proclamation in 1858 and before that it has always been to fit India for self-government. If you ask me how I can prove that, I say look around you and see the schools and colleges and universities which have been created under British rule. If the British Government had wished to keep India in perpetual bondage, they would never have given India any education and they would never have permitted any newspapers. Without education and newspapers no one would have learnt any idea of freedom. The schools and universities of previous rulers of India were mainly religious and theological schools and there were not many of these. When English education was introduced, eventual self-government in India was inevitable and the most intelligent Englishmen in India always foresaw this even before Queen Victoria's proclamation and long before the recent Reforms.

But has this prospect deterred England from introducing education in other Eastern countries? The first act of that great statesman, Lord Kitchener, after conquering the Sudan, was to institute an university at Khartoum, the capital of that country. I say that this act alone shows the ultimate intentions of England. There has been no other empire in the history of the world which has not regarded conquered countries as its own possession to be kept by force for ever. The Roman empire was maintained for centuries by tributes from conquered countries. The British Empire has never taxed any foreign country for itself since the time that an attempt to do so lost what is now the United States. It has never taken any tribute

from India. To say that the money India pays for pensions and leave allowances of British officials or for interest on the cost of railways, etc., built by British capital is a tribute is untrue. India has got far more in good government and has saved far more in famines and gained far more in trade than the cost of these charges and has been protected by the British Navy for nothing.

The example of Russia shows that a handful of resolute men who stick at nothing and suppress all opposition by instant death can hold down a people unaccustomed to self-government against its will. Though such an idea is abhorrent and unthinkable to the British Government another foreign Government might suppress liberty and hold India in subjection by exercising a degree of force which would be nothing to what the Bolsheviks do in Russia almost every day or to what the Turks have often done to the Armenians and Syrians or to what many rulers did in India before the British Government. Imagine Trotzky in Russia or the German or Turkish Governments punishing their officers and expressing regret as the British Government have recently done. Why, they would have blamed their officers for being too lenient and would have taken far severer action everywhere.

But the British Government is absolutely genuine in its intention to give self-government to India. It is just the same in Ireland. It would not be difficult to conquer Ireland and to destroy or render harmless all the enemies of England. Cromwell did this easily when England was far weaker than she is now. But here again England is pursuing her tolerant policy and, while refusing to allow the Irish in the South of Ireland their claim to oppress the English and Scotch in the North, is willing to give complete self-government to the South of Ireland and had not been deterred from this intention by savage and inhuman murders committed by those Irish who deny to others the liberty which they claim for themselves. The enemies of England do not understand this toleration because they are incapable of practising it themselves. In their eyes concession means weakness and when England gives concessions they think that it must be because she is weak. Many people have made this mistake and the Germans

were among them. Because England gave complete self-government to South Africa and did not suppress agitation in India and Ireland and Egypt, they thought her weak and feeble.

Twelve years ago a German merchant in business in India said to me "Why don't you take and shoot all the agitators"? This is what he would have done and he despised the British Government because it did not do so. But the Germans found out their mistake in the war and it was the British Empire which they despised which overthrew them and which would have done so had it been necessary to carry on the war for another four years. England is now more powerful than ever she was and yet is giving freedom to India, Ireland and Egypt. Don't make the mistake of thinking that this is weakness. It is a deliberate policy resulting from an ingrained idea of liberty.

What is liberty? Cromwell said 250 years ago "Every one says 'Oh, give me liberty,' but when he is given it, he uses it to oppress others." Just so the Irish say "Oh, give us liberty," but they mean to use it to oppress and drive out the English and Scotch settlers who have lived for hundreds of years in the North of Ireland. Just so too some non-co-operators in India cry out "Back to the Vedas" by which they mean the Laws of Manu and the time when the Aryans were all powerful in India and the non-Aryans were completely subject to them. Some of them in Maharashtra would be quite satisfied if this country went back to the times of the Peshwas. But no one advances by crying "Back" and India is not going back but forward to more and more complete liberty for all classes. Liberty is not leave to oppress others or to keep them in perpetual servitude or to convert them forcibly to another religion or to destroy the fabric of Government or to refuse to pay lawful taxes. It has been concisely defined by a poet as "Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the law". It is constitutional, not revolutionary liberty.

All men are not equal, but every one is to have an equal opportunity to educate himself and to take part in the Government of the country, if he wishes and can

persuade others to elect him, to follow his own religion to enjoy his own property and to increase it, if he can, by fair and honest means, to have and express his own thoughts freely and without fear, provided that he does not attempt to rouse hatred of any class of his fellow subjects and to end the Law by violent means instead of mending it by peaceful and constitutional agitation.

May I say that this idea of liberty which is penetrating to all classes in this country, even to the untouchables, was unknown in India before British Rule? It is of no use to non-co-operate with history. Every one knows that in the old days the divergent religious interest of Mahomedan and Hindu rulers led to mutual oppression and forcible conversion. When the Portuguese came to the Konkan, they commenced to convert the people by force to Christianity. The British Government has been the only Government India has ever had which has never interfered in religious matters or attempted to impose the Christian religion by force. Every one has had complete religious liberty and I hope and believe that this ideal will be followed when India obtains complete self-Government.

It is in order to secure this liberty and to prevent its being destroyed by revolution that it is proposed to constitute the Satara District League of Peace and Progress, which might better perhaps be called the League of Liberty. We are just as keen as the non-co-operators on securing complete self-Government for India but their League is one of war and retrogression. They want liberty but will not give it to others. If a man will not close his shop when they choose to declare a hartal he is to be made to do so forcibly. You must buy such cloth as they order and no other. When, in a time of high prices, cultivators bring their produce to the bazar, they are, if the non-co-operators choose, to be made to take it back, so that neither can the cultivators sell their produce nor poor people buy it at favourable rates.

These forcible hartals, which are ordered at the whim of a few people and which I, as District Magistrate, will do my best to prevent, are a small sign of the tyranny which would be practised if the non-co-operators were in

power. The police and Magistrates have been blamed for protecting people who have had their faces painted with tar and been made to ride on donkeys merely for obtaining liquor from a liquor shop. Here again the authorities have intervened only in the cause of liberty. It is not a criminal offence to drink liquor. It may be a moral offence, but are the picketers completely free from such offences themselves? It is notorious that some of them take ganja and they have not attempted to picket the ganja shops. Is liquor worse than ganja? Recently a picketer was convicted of an indecent assault on a man who had bought a bottle of liquor. His excuse was that he himself was so drunk with liquor that he did not know what he was doing and the shopkeeper proved that he had drunk several paushers himself that day. Why did not his fellow picketers prevent him? It is even said that picketers in some places buy and sell liquor at a profit. How many of them would continue the work if they were not paid?

I have every respect for a genuine temperance movement and wish it success, but it must work through persuasion and not violence or threats of violence or social boycott and with genuine volunteers and not paid pailwans and bullies. Boycott is a weapon which comes from Ireland the home of intolerance and not of liberty. It is unknown elsewhere in the British Isles but attempts have been made by the non-cooperators to introduce it here--- and with what result in this district? The Satya Shodak Samajists immediately turned it against certain Brahmins. It is a bad, suicidal weapon and it should never be encouraged and, as District Magistrate, I have done my best to discourage it and I hope this League will do so also. If picketing is persevered in, it will have the same results. Liquor shops are not the only things which can be picketed. Every weapon which the non-cooperationists have used in this district has been turned against them and it is solely due to their precepts and examples that we now have an unhappy division between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Those who deny liberty to others will have it denied to them.

I should like to say a word about my own position in respect to this League. I wished it to be a purely non-

fficial organization but I have been assured by gentlemen who have promoted it that it is essential that the Collector should be the President and that officials should be permitted to be members. Only for this reason have I consented to be the President, if this meeting so wishes, but the League affairs will be managed by an elected body which is sure to be mainly non-official. It is to the non-officials that we must look to make it a live body and to inspire interest and confidence in it throughout the district.

A few words more and I have done. Nothing is gained in this world without work. The non-cooperators are active and determined. So far owing to the good sense of the people of this district, they have made little progress here but they have not given up yet. They have a thoroughly bad cause and their banner is marked with the words, "War, hate and retrogression." We have the best cause of all, that of liberty, and our banner is marked with the words of His Majesty the King-Emperor, the truest friend of Liberty in the world, "Educate, Unite and Co-operate." Their methods are those of abuse, ours are of reasoned arguments. But we must not be content to sit still while they fight. They have the easy task of abuse and destruction. We have the harder task of building the foundations of liberty. We must set to work to build at once a foundation which will stand any flood. An agriculturist whose field is threatened by a river does not wait till the next rains to save it by making a tal.

Do not be misled or allow others to be misled by catch words. The "slave mentality" which the non-cooperators talk about is not yours but theirs. I might say that those who repeat without thinking whatever their leaders say have not even the mentality of slaves, who are human beings, but of parrots. The very idea of freedom was taught to India by the English education which according to the non-cooperators, has produced this slave-mentality. I rejoice to hear that the agriculturists, the backbone of this district in peace and war, are asking for English schools because they will teach them the mentality of free men and not of slaves or parrots. England which took the lead in abolishing slavery has led out the world.

When you are told that England has bombarded the Holy places of Islam in the Hedjaz and Iraq, think for yourselves whether this is likely and what possible motive England, which has never attempted to spread Christianity by force, could have had for so wanton and useless an act to offend and outrage the Mahomedans of India who go to these places in thousands every year and who are assisted in their pilgrimage by the British Government. Is it likely that the Sharif of Mecca, who comes from the family of the Prophet, would have allowed such an act? Aurangzeb destroyed hundreds of Hindu temples and yet the non-cooperators say that they would rather have the Mogul than the British Government. As a matter of fact you are not asked to have either but a real National Government within a definite period, with real Hindu-Muslim unity and not one based on nothing but artificially inspired hatred of a country which has been the only benefactor and protector of both religions ever known. An unity based on common hatred is not real and will split on the slightest cause. Unity must be based on common patriotism and love of real liberty for all.

I have already taken up too much of your time or I would like to deal with the Khilafat question and to show how false the allegations against England are. We entered into war with the Turks with the greatest reluctance and had saved them many times before. Even now we would save them, if they would give us the chance, but they have denied and continue to deny liberty to others and are now reaping the fruits. Let those Marathas who were captured in the siege of Kut say how far they deserve the sympathy of Indians.

Work then for education, co-operation and liberty. Let faith inspire your works and your works prove your faith. To His Majesty's stimulating words I would venture to add what underlies them and to make our sign in which we shall conquer "Educate, Unite, Co-operate and Work."