

GANDHI & AUROBINDO

A STUDY IN RESPONSIVE CO-OPERATION.

BY

B. C. CHATTERJEE

With a foreword by
THE RIGHT HON'BLE
MR. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

Points

out the defects of Non-Co-operation as a practical programme, and recommends the doctrine propounded by Aurobindo ² *partial Swaraj as a step and complete Swaraj*. The book the present confusion in nking.

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FOREWORD

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee is qualified, by experience as well as by temperament, to interpret correctly the deeper aspects of the non-co-operation movement, which makes such a powerful appeal to ardent young minds. The moral and spiritual purpose of a large political phenomenon is not always apparent even to those actively engaged in it ; and its precise bearing on contemporary affairs can only be a matter of conjecture to the wisest observer. Mr. Chatterjee brings to his task great gifts of observation and judgment, of insight and feeling, while his style, marked throughout by vigour and distinction, glows here and there with that earnest and throbbing eloquence for which the Bengalee is noted among the sons of India. What pleases me in this pamphlet even more than these high qualities is the spirit of true reverence in handling great names, which knows how to sift and weigh the essence of their teaching without familiarity or flippancy.

It is a striking parallel between 1905 and 1920 which might have struck many students of Indian politics, but which receives luminous exposition for the first time in these pages of Mr. Chatterjee. Briefly stated, his thesis is that, under the inspiration of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose a movement of passive resistance grew up in Bengal in the earlier period, that in essentials it was similar to the present non-

violent non-co-operation of Mr. Gandhi, that it gave place in a short time to a regular revolutionary movement under the auspices of the *Yugantar*, that this latter movement came to grief almost inevitably, that the failure of the present non-co-operation movement, already becoming visible, must be followed by an attempt at revolution of the familiar type, and that the only way of averting the calamity is to accept the almost prophetic doctrine of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, *viz.*, the use of partial *Swaraj* as a step and means towards complete *Swaraj*. To many, as to me, the enunciation of this doctrine by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose at that time must have been hitherto unknown. But what is equally unknown and perhaps far more significant is the fact that the youngmen who have gone through the fires of revolution recognise in the provisions of the Reform Act of last year the partial *Swaraj* which may, if we are wise, become the step and means towards complete *Swaraj*, and that they refuse to have anything to do with Mr. Gandhi's new propaganda. These youngmen, some free, others still to become free, may not be accepted in some quarters as final authority, but no one can doubt that they have dreamed and dared.

To study history in the lives of great personages is as profitable as it is interesting, and Mr. Chatterjee will catch a wide public by the form in which he has set his thoughts. Some readers, however, may be repelled by a treatment of great events as though they could lend themselves to a study in contrast

between two individuals, however eminent. To such I would say that, so far as I can judge, there is in these pages no exaggeration, no distortion, no sort of violence done to truth for the sake of effect. It is rare insight which enables the writer to frame this generalisation: "To my mind Gandhi stands as the high-priest of renunciation, Aurobindo of life". But I commend the pamphlet to all students of Indian politics not only for its trustworthy rendering of current facts but also for the wise guidance it gives for the future.

V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

The weather prophet and the political prophet have always been at a discount. In these pages however we present the reading public with a series of prophesies made by Mr. Chatterjee at the beginning of the Non-co-operation movement which have one after another turned out to be correct. The writer was, no doubt, at some advantage in dealing with the problems at issue in that as an intimate co-laborator of Aurobindo Ghose he had been through a political movement in Bengal, of which the Non-co-operation movement was more or less a repetition on an all-India scale.

India once again stands at the cross-roads and is asking herself seriously 'Responsive Co-operation or further Non-co-operation?' The thoughts contained in these pages may prove of some help to doubters on the way, containing as they do, the story of the genesis and growth of Aurobindo Ghose's great doctrine of '*Partial Swaraj as a step and means to Complete Swaraj.*'

We would add another word about the author. As Lord Ronaldshay points out in his '*Heart of Aryavarta*,' Mr. Chatterjee came into close personal touch with numbers of young men who were in the Revolutionary movement of the last decade. As counsel for the defence he became the repository of the confidences no less than of the hopes of the young insurgents whom he represented in Bengal and the United Provinces ; and he has thus been able to present to his countrymen an accurate analysis of the psychology behind that movement. Light has been thrown on several dark corners of a phase of contemporary history in which, we are persuaded our countrymen are generally interested.

December, 1925.

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