

# THE INDIAN CRISIS

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by  
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LONDON  
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD  
14 Henrietta Street Covent Garden  
1930

*Printed in Great Britain*  
**By The Camelot Press Ltd. London and Southampton**

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## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to acknowledge the valuable help given to me in the preparation of this book by Hilda Browning, who has done the considerable research required, Margaret Marsden who has done the typewriting, and Marguerite Louis, who corrected the proofs.

## CHAPTER I

# THE CONDITION OF INDIA

What are the conditions of life of the people of India? How far has the British administration improved, or failed to improve, their lot? These are the questions I shall seek to answer in this opening chapter.

Every visitor to India is impressed by the contrasts in the life of the people. Even in a city like Bombay, one sees the most primitive bullock-carts and the most luxurious automobiles side by side in the streets. This contrast, which leaps immediately to the eye, is symbolic of the deeper differences in the social and cultural standards of the people. On Malabar Hill, overlooking the bay, there are houses occupied by Indian merchants and lawyers more comfortable and pleasing than most houses in the wealthier suburbs of British cities. Within a few miles there are tenements occupied by Indian mill-workers where whole families exist in one dark room the size of a prison cell. On the sea-front at Bombay, the Taj Mahal Hotel, owned by an Indian and largely occupied by Indians, rivals in its service and entertainment the hotels of the West of London. On the pavements outside the hotel entrance every night hundreds of Indians sleep side by side on mats.

In other large cities of India there are similar contrasts. In Madras, for example, I saw two years ago a palace occupied by an Indian family which combined all the luxury of the West and the East; and yet at the very gates the Indians lived in a group of primitive huts made of bamboo and leaves. A London parallel would be primitive British huts of Roman times grouped in Hyde Park at the

gates of the mansions in Park Lane. Disraeli once said there are two nations in Britain ; in India there are two eras.

#### THE LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

It is not, however, in the large cities that we can gain a knowledge of the life of the masses of the Indian people. Eighty per cent. of the population are peasants in the villages. Most of these villages consist of mud huts, one family living in each, without furniture or equipment, except mats upon which they sleep and a few crude cooking utensils. There is practically no sanitation. The river-bank is used as a public latrine, and in many villages a stream running between the huts is used as an open sewer. In times of drought the insanitary conditions become appalling and give rise to devastating diseases ; even at other times there is grave danger owing to the pollution of the water. The huts are generally ill ventilated and dark, but the feature upon which every visitor remarks is the personal cleanliness and tidiness of the people. It is a miracle how the Indian women keep their homes so free from filth when living in the midst of such conditions.

In many of the villages there are no schools, and the only distinctive building is the temple, which is generally built of stone. The older Hindu temples are sometimes of remarkable design, with beautiful and intricate stone carvings. The Moslem temples are of more recent date, and are designed usually in the style of the mosques of Mogul.

The people are almost exclusively employed in the rice-fields or in other forms of cultivation. The men are clad only in loin-cloths, with perhaps a cloth to protect their heads from the sun. From their slight and frail figures one gets an impression of physical weakness and under-nourishment. This impression unfortunately represents a tragic reality.

Professor Gilbert Slater, who has an intimate acquaintance

with conditions in India, writes as follows about the poverty of the peasant :

“A reasonable estimate of money income per head would be, for the present day, somewhere about  $4\frac{1}{2}d.$  a day. Taking the whole population together, rich and poor, it may be said that about two-fifths of the available income (i.e., one and four-fifths of a  $1d.$  per day) must be spent merely on the grains that form the basis of the Indian dietary—rice, millet and wheat ; this (or something like this) being the average condition, that of the poorest classes can be guessed. . . . A very recent enquiry into the Godavari Delta yielded an estimate of an average income of only  $1d.$  per head per day. Of these people, and of those kindred castes, on whose labour the cultivation of the rice-fields of Southern India mainly depends, it may be said generally that their earnings in grain and coin barely suffice for the subsistence of families large enough to maintain their numbers from one generation to another, the surplus offspring dying ; that they are habitually hungry ; and that it is only because they make their own huts in their spare time, collect their own fuel, need scarcely any clothing, and enjoy abundant sunshine, that they can subsist at all.”

The poverty of the peasants is due in the first instance to the fact that agriculture is conducted on very primitive lines and does not yield enough to meet even the physical needs of the peasant, whilst other sides of his life—social, educational, recreational—are almost completely starved. The majority of the peasants are content to secure just enough rice to keep them alive and to exist in idleness when they are not employed in the fields. The report of the Commission on Agriculture in 1928 insisted on the necessity of the villagers being taught to increase the scope of their wants as well as methods to satisfy them.



In addition to the primitive methods of agriculture they employ, the mere fragments of land which the peasants own and work, the imposition of high land charges, the drain of litigation, and the terrible expense of indebtedness to moneylenders, aggravate their condition of poverty.

It is an Indian custom, on the death of the head of a family, for the property to be divided among the sons, and over a long period this has meant such a splitting up of the holdings that many of the peasants have to exist upon the products of small strips, which make economic working impossible. A further difficulty lies in the religious scruples of the peasants, which prevent the utilisation of human excrement and other forms of manure. This has meant the severe impoverishment and steady deterioration of the soil. The land does not even benefit from the manure of the cattle ; the peasants have to use the cow-dung as fuel, owing to the lack of wood and coal. The custom is for the housewife to make dung-cakes, dry them on the hearth by the fire, or on the wall by the sun, and then use them herself as fuel or take them into the nearest town to sell.

Work on the land does not occupy anything like the full time of the peasants, and there are periods when large numbers of them go into the cities to work in the mills and factories. In the olden days a great deal of craft work was done in the villages, but the competition of factory-made goods is destroying the scope for such activities. It is to provide work during periods of idleness that Mahatma Gandhi is seeking to extend the use of the hand-weaving loom and the spinning-wheel.

#### THE HARSH LAND SYSTEM

The conditions of the peasants are made very much harder by the high rents charged for the use of land. The Government of India, as representing the British Crown, is the proprietor of most land. In some parts of India, the

tenants hold their land direct from the Government, and re-assessment of the rent takes place every thirty years. This is a comparatively fair system, though sometimes, as in the case of the remarkable rent strike in Bardoli two years ago, increases in the assessments are resisted.

The system of rent collection over the greater part of India, however, is open to much graver objections. The Government rents the land to landholders, known as the Zemindars, who exploit the peasants cruelly. In many cases the Government has settled a permanent assessment that the Zemindar pays, but the Zemindar himself can vary his assessment of the peasant every twelve years. In these cases the Zemindar on the average pockets about 73 per cent. of the rent for himself. In other cases, the Government assesses the value of the land periodically, but even then the Zemindar claims 50 per cent. of the rent.

The Zemindar class is the most parasitic in India. It is lazy and luxurious, without any place in the social system of India except to grow rich out of the poverty of the peasant. It exacts high rents without any relation to the crops raised. The Zemindars generally employ poorly paid clerks as rent collectors, who habitually exploit the peasant without mercy. They spend wasteful lives without responsibility to their estate, and their sons grow up in demoralising idleness. There are over eight millions of these exploiting landholders in India. Needless to say, the large landholders are almost invariably loyal supporters of the Government.

Another cause of the impoverishment of the peasant is the craze in India for litigation. A conservative estimate places the cost annually spent in lawsuits at £70,000,000 and the peasants are the chief victims. The system under which land is split up among families gives rise to endless litigation, and the majority of the criminal cases concern disputes about land. Litigation drives the peasant to the moneylender, for the smallest case costs over £6, and he rarely has reserves. The legal profession in India has

grown 10 per cent. in the last ten years, and many of the lawyers are fabulously rich. The habit of litigation is almost equivalent to the gambling habit in Britain, and arises from the same motive. It brings excitement into monotonous lives ; when a bare existence is the permanent lot of the Indian peasants, they are tempted to stake their all on a risk.

Nearly every peasant family is heavily in debt. "It is no exaggeration to say that most cultivators are born in debt, live in debt, and die in debt," writes Mr. G. T. Garratt, in *An Indian Commentary*. He emphasises the fact that the debts, amounting to between four and five hundred million pounds, are almost entirely unproductive.

"The sum per head is not large," he says, "but less than 5 per cent. of it has been spent on permanent improvements and only a small proportion upon cattle and implements. Nearly all of it is personal debt needed to meet some financial call and not borrowed to invest in farm stock. Also it is borrowed not from banks but from professional moneylenders, who often combine their business with that of agricultural middlemen. . . . Probably 80 per cent. of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency and the Punjab are in debt."

A remarkable Co-operative Credit Movement has developed to assist the peasants in agricultural improvement and to save them from the extortions of the moneylenders. There are about four million members of these Co-operative Societies, with a capital of £50,000,000. In British India, Bombay has the highest number of Co-operators (22.7 per thousand). One of the Indian States, Travancore, has an even higher figure, 28.8 per cent. At first the Credit Movement suffered by the ignorance of the peasants regarding banking methods and the failure of many of those helped to repay their loans, but by experience

these difficulties have been overcome. Loans are now made only for approved purposes, such as land or stock improvement, and the influence of local knowledge, public opinion, and the common interests of associated groups is brought to bear to secure punctual repayment. In each of the Provinces a special Ministerial Department supervises the Co-operative Movement, but criticism is often expressed of the meagre financial contribution sanctioned by the British authorities. The economic value of the movement can hardly be over-estimated. It has been pointed out that, in addition, it has an important influence in emphasising the advantages of common endeavour on a basis that overcomes class and social distinction.

The heavy indebtedness of the peasant is also partly due to the festivals connected with marriages and deaths. It is easy to condemn such expenditure, but when the people are living the monotonous and colourless existence of the Indian peasant, it is inevitable that they should sometimes indulge in a "riot" of food, toddy (drink), flowers, processions, bright coloured materials, and cheap jewels. The provision of marriage dowries is also a frequent cause of debt.

Motor transport is beginning to revolutionise Indian village life, as it is the life of the countryside in Europe. Many of the villages are now linked up by the services of crude motor-buses, consisting of a Ford engine, a wooden chassis, forms for seats, and a tarpaulin covering stretched from four corner-posts. This service is enabling many villagers, before completely isolated, to visit the towns, and is greatly widening the horizon of their lives. A mere fraction of a penny is charged for fare.

The great occasion of the week in Indian village life is market day. The villagers will walk perhaps ten miles to a central spot, where, in an opening of the forest near to some town, mats are laid down containing an extraordinary variety of domestic goods. In most villages there is at least one family which supplements its income by making

sweetmeats to sell at these fairs. There are also other village-made goods in weaving and woodwork, but many of the articles are the cheap products of Japan, America, and Great Britain. Gaudy trinkets, pots and pans, sweetmeats, cloths, and innumerable brightly coloured odds and ends are displayed for sale.

I find it almost impossible to convey in words how limited and primitive is the general existence of the Indian peasants. Perhaps I can best sum up by saying that the nearest European parallel I know is the existence of the peasants of Russia before the introduction of new co-operative methods by the Soviet Government. According to Sir Charles Elliott, late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, one-half of the agricultural population of India go hungry from day to day, not having a single square meal in the course of a whole year.

About a million Indian workers are employed on the tea plantations. The gardens of Assam are the most important, covering about 57 per cent. of the total acreage. The wages are terribly low— $6\frac{1}{4}d.$  a day for a man,  $5d.$  for a woman, and  $3\frac{1}{4}d.$  for a child. The coolies are unorganised, but in 1927 a series of spontaneous strikes occurred, which led the Governor to urge the planters to improve conditions, lest the Trade Unions came and compelled more to be done! An elaborate organisation for the recruiting of labour is maintained by the planters, costing about £20 per head. Families are often persuaded to leave villages hundreds of miles away, on assurances that the conditions will be easier, only to find that they have contracted themselves to an existence which differs little from slavery. "The tea gardens of Assam are virtually slave plantations," wrote the authors of the Report of the British Trade Union delegation to India in 1928. "In Assam tea the sweat, hunger, and despair of a million Indians enter year by year."

## THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Only about ten per cent. of the Indian workers are employed in industry. These are mostly in the cotton and jute mills or in steel works and mines. Although their number is small, the industrial workers are an important factor in Indian life : first, because they are massed together in the large cities and can act with a unity difficult for the scattered peasants ; and, secondly, because they are constantly returning to the villages and influencing a large part of the population by ideas gained in the city.

It is calculated that between two and three Indians are required to secure the equivalent production of one British worker. This is due partly to the more leisurely conditions of the East, no doubt caused by the great humidity and heat, and partly to the low physical stamina of the undernourished Indian worker. The comparative unproductiveness of Indian workers is, however, becoming of less account as improved machinery, involving less exertion of labour, is introduced. Some of the new cotton mills of India have more up-to-date equipment than the average mill in Lancashire, and there is no reason why the Indian workers should not in time prove as efficient tenders of machines as European workers. In addition, the Indian mills have a great advantage in the proximity of the raw materials.

The housing conditions of the industrial workers are incredibly bad. Details are given in the British Trade Union Congress Report of 1928. A house consisting of one dark room used for all purposes—living, cooking, and sleeping—nine feet square, with mud walls and a loose tiled roof, costs 4s. 6d. a month. Four to eight persons, including children, crowd together in such a room. A group of houses provided by employers are very little better. The rent is about 3s. a month, although the monthly wages are only 18s. for men and 13s. for women. Either an entire family or three or four unmarried persons share one room. Outside

the houses are exposed gullies, sometimes stopped up with garbage, refuse, and other waste matter, polluting the air.

The following figures quoted in the Trade Union Report indicate the overcrowding in one of India's great cities :

*Total Population 1,071,309*

Five persons and under in one room . . .	687,217
Six to nine persons in one room . . .	236,783
Ten to nineteen persons in one room . . .	115,731
Twenty persons and over in one room . . .	31,578

In Bombay the municipality has erected large concrete blocks of tenements, but even here the rule is for one family to occupy one room, whilst the rents charged are too high for the average Indian worker. The workers also complain that the thick concrete walls mean that the rooms are cold after the heat of the mills. In Calcutta some of the jute companies have built healthy tenements for their workers, and in Cawnpore one of the leading textile firms has provided modern quarters for the families of their operatives. In Madras there is an extensive welfare scheme in connection with some of the best mills, where the housing conditions are much above the average, though even here there are complaints of unsuitability.

With these and some other exceptions, however, the workers are allowed to live under scandalous conditions. In Bombay two years ago, after inspecting some magnificently equipped mills, my Indian guides took me down a narrow lane to view a *chawl* (tenement). We entered a long, low building through a dark passage, perhaps four feet wide and ten feet high. To the left and right were the mill-workers' rooms, darker and smaller than prison cells, about eight feet by nine. No family has more than one room ; often two families live in one. The passage continued for

about two hundred feet, a narrow tunnel, broken every thirty feet or so by a small recess, in which there were goats and chickens, and about every fifty feet by courts containing water-taps and lavatories. The lavatories consist of little boxes containing a drain for urine and a hole for excrement, removed once a day in a basket. The rent of these rooms is from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a month.

As I stated earlier in this chapter, a striking feature of Indian cities is the swarm of Indians who sleep in the streets at night. One has to be careful in walking along the pavements because bodies are lying everywhere. The explanation is that in hot weather the cramped conditions in the houses and the absence of ventilation make sleeping indoors impossible. During the monsoons and rainy season, however, the Indian population is compelled to crowd into their one-roomed tenements, though many of these are so faulty that the rain pours in. I visited one *chawl* in Bombay where there were great gaps in the roof; I was told that during the monsoon a cloth is used in an attempt to keep out the deluge of rain.

These conditions, allied with poverty, make it impossible for the people to resist the attack of disease. The average length of life in India, which in 1881 was 30.75 years, is now 23.5 years. This compares very unfavourably with the 44.5 years of another Oriental race—the Japanese.

#### THE CAUSES OF HIGH INFANT MORTALITY

The statistics regarding infant mortality are even more appalling. While in Great Britain infant mortality in 1929 had decreased to 65 per thousand, in British India it is 206. In the cities, the death-rate of children before they are a year old is still greater. In Bombay the infant mortality is 572 per thousand; in Calcutta it is 386, and in Madras 282. The report of an investigation carried out in 1922 by the Health Officers of the Government of Bombay



showed that actually 828.5 of every thousand children born in one-roomed tenements died within a year of their birth. There is no doubt that this high rate of infant mortality is due largely to the wretched housing conditions.

The excessive death-rate among infants is also due, however, to some of the customs of the Indian people, child marriage and the unhygienic methods employed at childbirth. According to the 1921 census, nine million girls were married before the completion of their fifteenth year, and, although husband and wife do not always live together until later, the census report states that consummation soon after puberty is almost universal. "The maximum period which elapses after puberty rarely extends one year," says the Report. "The fitness of a girl for consummation and possible motherhood from a physiological point of view is hardly taken into consideration." Evidence given to the committee which prepared this report indicated the effects of immature marriage in the sufferings endured during confinement, the many deaths, the abnormal deliveries, and the prolonged illness after confinement.

The bad effects of child marriage are made infinitely worse by the horrible conditions which often accompany childbirth. The superstition still holds in many homes, even of the richer type, that a woman in childbirth is unclean, and consequently the oldest beddings are used, the most useless lumber-room is set apart for the delivery, and the mother is often denied light, fresh air, and even cold water. The midwives are considered to be engaged in an unclean calling and are regarded with contempt, and they are often the dirtiest and most disreputable women in the village.

There is a strong revolt among enlightened Indians against both child marriage and the unhygienic customs accompanying childbirth. Again and again the Indian representatives in the Legislative Assembly have pressed

for the raising of the marriage age, and the opposition has come from the British authorities, who have taken the view that such legislation would be in advance of popular opinion. It was only in 1929 that the Government at last consented to the adoption of a measure to raise the marriage age of girls to fourteen and of boys to eighteen. One of the difficulties is that, although such an Act may be placed on the statute book, hundreds and thousands of Indians remain in ignorance of it. An educational campaign is absolutely necessary to follow up the legislation.

Indian doctors have taken a leading part in opposing child marriage and bringing about reforms in the conditions of childbirth. At the All-India conference of medical men in 1928 a lead was given in favour of twenty years for men and sixteen years for women as the minimum marriage age. But the strongest influence in favour of these reforms has been exerted by Indian women.

Another custom which has disastrous effects in many parts of India is the use of opium. It is eaten, smoked, and used as a drug for infants. Among the people generally, and especially among the peasants, the opium habit is rare because it is condemned by their religion. But in Assam where it is grown, it is both eaten and smoked extensively. Assam is the principal area for opium growing. The entire trade is a Government monopoly; it is cultivated on Government estates and distributed through shops licensed by the Government. The Civil Surgeon of the Government of Assam has recommended the prohibition of opium smoking and eating, because of their terrible physical and mental effects. He reported five years ago that 70 per cent. of the population was suffering through opium habits; but the Government has continued to permit a legal ration to be consumed. The possibility of lessening opium habits by the influence of education was indicated by the campaign of Mahatma Gandhi in Assam a few years ago. He conducted a pilgrimage through the villages urging the people

to abstain from eating or smoking opium, with the result that within six months of his visit there was a drop of 42 per cent. of the consumption ; from 1921-24 the legal ration allowed by the Government of Assam was not absorbed. Among the industrial workers the hold of religion is not so strong as among the peasants, and the women workers particularly use opium to drug their babies while at work. It has been authoritatively stated that 98 per cent. of the mothers in the cotton mills of Bombay use opium for this purpose. At one time the municipality actually sold opium pills and advertised their soothing qualities for babies. Fortunately this action raised such a strong protest that it was stopped ; but the ruination of the children continues.

The Government makes a very considerable revenue out of the production and sale of opium. In the province of Assam actually five-sixths of the income of the State is received from this source ; indeed, the administration would be bankrupt without it. Not only Indian Nationalists, but reformers of every type oppose the exploitation of opium by the Government. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest curses from which the population in the towns suffer. There is the inevitable suspicion that motives of revenue are influencing the Government's opium policy.

#### THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

During the last few years a remarkable women's movement has developed. It is seeking not only political rights and national freedom ; it is concerning itself in all questions relating to the welfare of women and children, and is putting in the forefront of its programme the raising of the marriage age, the provision of hygienic conditions for childbirth, and the acceptance of an entirely new attitude towards women and maternity. During the struggle of the past year, Indian women in public life have concentrated

upon the issue of national freedom, but when self-government is won, there is not the least doubt that they will be a powerful influence in securing changes in the social and domestic conditions of Indian women.

In all the Provinces of India women now exercise the right to vote, and in seven out of nine they may become members of the Council. The Indian Legislative Assembly has also conferred the right to vote upon women, though the Council of State still maintains an exclusively male franchise. A woman has recently been elected Deputy-President of the Madras Legislature.

One has heard so much of the restrictions imposed upon Indian women that it is rather surprising to an English visitor to notice the freedom with which they move about and work. In Bombay, women workers are to be found sweeping the roads and pavements, carrying water and bricks for building operations, and walking freely through the streets. At large political demonstrations, attended by thousands of people of all religions and castes, it is now an accepted thing that women should speak, and a considerable number of women are always to be seen in the audience. At Bombay, for example, I addressed an audience of five thousand Indians with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poetess, as Chairman, and I noticed two or three hundred women sitting together in the audience. At another meeting held in the courtyard of some Bombay flats, women mixed freely with the men in the audience and sat openly at their windows listening to the proceedings, although when I attended a large Moslem reception I noticed that the women were restricted to a gallery and looked down upon the proceedings through a thin curtain.

It is true that in Madras many of the women, when out in the streets with their husbands, walk two or three steps behind them, but this is not the general custom, and that the common European view that Indian women are shut up in their houses and not allowed out with uncovered

faces is untrue of Indian women as a whole, is obvious to any visitor to India.

Whilst the custom of *purdah* still continues, there is a strong movement against it, particularly from the medical profession on health grounds, and it is becoming a decreasing practice. In one Moslem home in Bombay I was greeted by the wife at the door ; in another, however, there were only men present at our table for the meal, men servants waited upon us, and I did not see any sign of a woman.

It is only in recent years that education has been extended on any considerable scale to girls and that women teachers have been trained. The number of such teachers is still very small, and the conditions of their work are often extremely difficult. I attended a woman's training college at Madras, where I was delighted by the self-reliant spirit of the girls. This particular college is conducted by a joint council representing the Christian Churches, but the outlook of the teaching is broad, and many of the students retain their Indian faiths. I was impressed by their enthusiasm for Indian Nationalism and for reform movements generally. Whilst I was in the city the Simon Commission arrived, and the girls at the colleges joined in the general *hartal* by stopping their studies for the day. I found that many of the students at the college I visited came from Indian villages and returned to them to teach, though, as in other countries, marriage often interferes with their profession. A few of the girls were already married ; their husbands had come under the influence of new ideas and had consented to their going to college.

#### THE ABSENCE OF EDUCATION

The extent of education in India is shockingly low. At the time of the census in 1921 only one in seven of the males above five years of age, and only one in fifty of the females,

were literate. The test of literacy is very elementary ; any person who can write a letter to a friend and read the answer is included. Since 1921 there has been a considerable extension of education, but it has been insignificant compared with the vast population. The actual number of children attending school two years ago was  $9\frac{1}{4}$  million, an increase of nearly three millions in ten years, but unfortunately this figure does not reflect the degree of literacy, because only a small proportion of the pupils remain at school for the four years considered necessary to learn to read and write. Of the boys only one-sixth continue their education for this period, and of the girls only about one-tenth. So long as education is not compulsory and its value is not brought home to the masses of the people, it is impossible to expect that parents will take the trouble to keep their children at school, particularly when their labour is of value on the land, and even in mills and factories.

The degree of education varies greatly in the different Provinces. The census of 1921 shows that in Bengal the proportion of adult men who were literate reached 22.5 per cent. ; in Madras, 21.4 per cent. ; and in Bombay, 18.4 per cent. ; whilst in the United Provinces, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces the figures were as low as 8.9, 9.7, and 10.4 respectively. Burma is the one province in British India where the system of education is comparatively satisfactory. Here 62 per cent. of the male adults are literate.

In some of the Indian States, which we shall be considering later, literacy reaches the figure of 38 per cent. among the males, although in other States the percentage is actually less than in British India. The entire percentage for the Indian States is a fraction lower than for British India.

The standard of education among Indian women is far worse than among men. Even in Burma, much the best of the Provinces, the percentage of literate females over 5 years

of age is only 11.2. The wretched extent of the education among women in other Provinces is shown by the fact that Bombay is next with the terribly low figure of 2.7. Two of the Indian States can claim percentages of 17.3 and 11.5, but in many of the States the education of girls scarcely exists. These figures are an alarming revelation of the ignorance in which women have been allowed to remain.

Although the amount spent on education is steadily increasing—it has gone up from 1.10 crores of rupees in 1897 to 6.95 in 1927—it remains shamefully low compared with expenditure in other directions. Whilst two-thirds of the revenue is expended on maintaining the military and administrative machine of the Government, only one-fourteenth is spent on education. In the Province of Bengal the figures show  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$  per head of the population for education and  $4s. 6d.$  per head for the military and police. Another justifiable grievance is the comparative expenditure upon the education of Indians and of Europeans in India. In Bengal  $4s. 5d.$  is spent annually per Indian student, contrasted with  $£7. 4s. 11\frac{1}{2}d.$  per European student.

During recent years a wave of educational enthusiasm has swept through Indians of public conscience, and both the Hindu and Moslem communities are seeking to extend schools and are establishing Universities. In the cities, societies like the Servants of India are opening educational classes for adults; at their institutes in Bombay I found that the number of students went into hundreds. The Indian Ministers for Education in the Provincial Councils have endeavoured to develop village schools, but have been severely hampered owing to the absence of finance, which is under the control of English Ministers.

The school-teachers are often very badly paid. In the villages their salaries are sometimes less than 10s. a week, yet I found a number of educated Indians who were deliberately doing this work as a contribution to the

advancement of their country. In one village in the Madras Presidency, for instance, I met a young schoolmaster who was an enthusiastic Nationalist and reformer, and who not only taught the children, but arranged classes for the adults. The schoolroom consisted of one mud hut, without any equipment except a blackboard attached to a wall. Thirty or forty children of both sexes and all ages were grouped together, and it seemed an almost impossible task to give real education.

Many Indian families have the ambition to educate their sons well, and often parents in hard circumstances save, borrow, or mortgage their property to send at least their eldest boy to college. The tragedy is that the course of education at the Universities is directed mainly towards providing Civil Servants, and the number of vacant posts is utterly inadequate to meet the supply. A number of the students become schoolmasters, others take ill-paid posts as clerks in commercial establishments, and a large percentage remain unemployed. This educated but underpaid or unemployed class is naturally seething with discontent, and it forms a prominent and extreme section of the Nationalist Movement. The Government has been amazingly stupid in not foreseeing this result. From the point of view of India, a good effect of this education has been to provide a class of young men and women capable of leading the Nationalist and reform agitations.

#### THE RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

The racial and religious differences in India involve a permanent current of antipathy. The main division is between the Hindu and Moslem communities, who number, respectively, 163 and 59½ millions in British India. The explanation of the antipathy between them is partly historical. The Moslems are an invading race, which swept through India, overthrew its rulers, and established itself as



a dominant power. Although over a large part of India the two communities live together peaceably, they have never mixed or intermarried to any great extent, and remain distinctive races with distinct customs and religions.

The antipathy is increased by the actual clash of certain articles of faith. The Hindu regards the cow as sacred, while the Moslem sacrifices cows. Sometimes Hindu music is played at a marriage celebration when the Moslems are at solemn worship in an adjoining square. Since the Moslems and the Hindus do not use the same calendar, dates of special importance in both religions are liable to coincide, and an anniversary of Moslem mourning may synchronise with a day of Hindu rejoicing. Under such circumstances religious feelings may easily be excited to the point of violence.

I was in Madras at the time of the festival of the full moon, when the whole Hindu population, hundreds of thousands in number, poured down to the beach to witness the immersion of their gods in the sea. Entire families came, the children running by the side of their parents and infants being carried. There was a display of brilliant illuminations and fireworks. Most of the crowd seemed to be in holiday spirit, but I can imagine how the temper would change if such a procession came into contact with the procession of another community asserting a conflicting faith.

Historically, British policy has been directed at maintaining a division between the Moslems and Hindus, but in recent years care has been taken to modify this attitude. The separate religious electorates for the Provincial Councils and Legislative Assembly have undoubtedly intensified communal feeling ; when a candidate depends for his election upon the members of one religious community, he inevitably attempts to emphasise the religious issue. The Indian National Congress at first endorsed separate electorates, but in recent years it has strongly

opposed them and has urged a common electoral roll, with the reservation of seats proportionate to the strength of the various communities. Some of the large employers have exploited religious differences in order to divide their workers. In 1929 religious riots were reported in Bombay, with severe injuries to many Moslems ; the explanation was that, when the Hindu workers at the mills went on strike, Moslems were imported to take their places, and it was this action which led to the conflict.

During recent years the tendency has been for violent outbreaks between Hindus and Moslems to increase rather than diminish. In the five years, 1923-27, about 450 people were killed and 5,000 were injured ; from September 1927 to June 1928, according to a statement made to the Legislative Assembly there were nineteen serious Hindu-Mohammedan riots in which every Province had been involved, with the exception of Madras.

The explanation of the aggravation of communal feeling during the last decade is probably political. Some of the most sectarian leaders on both sides are approaching the constitutional problems which now agitate India from a sectional rather than a national point of view. Each fears the predominance of the other community, and is, therefore especially assertive in criticism and claims. Fortunately, this attitude is not uppermost in the minds of many of the most influential leaders, or among the masses of the Hindu and Moslem communities. Once a solution of the constitutional problem, acceptable to both Hindus and Moslems, is found—and this is not impossible, as I shall indicate later—religious tension is likely to drop to a minimum. That active Hindu-Moslem antagonism is not inevitable is shown by the experience of the Indian States, where the two communities live side by side with little antagonism. How far the fear of domination is removed from their minds is indicated by the fact that in Kashmir, where the majority of the population is Moslem, the ruling

house is Hindu, whilst in Hyderabad, where the vast majority are Hindus, a Moslem ruler is acknowledged without any protest.

Much is often made of the many religions in India, but with the exception of the Hindus and Moslems there is rarely serious conflict. The Buddhists come third in strength, with  $11\frac{1}{2}$  millions adherents, but they are not a divisive influence, since practically all of them live in the isolated Province of Burma. The Indian Christians number over three millions. They are widely distributed, though they are strongest in the Madras Presidency. Most of the Christian converts in British India are from the lower castes of the Hindus, and there is little doubt that the Christian ethic of human equality is a factor in their change of religion. The Christian missions have done a considerable educational work, and it is a tribute to them that one in five Indian Christians, despite their low caste birth, are literate. The tendency has been for Indian Christians to be supporters of British rule, but in recent years, a strong Nationalist sentiment has begun to develop among them. The Sikhs, who number nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions in British India, are of Hindu origin, but reject polytheism and image worship. They reside almost entirely in the Punjab Province and, whilst strongly communal, provide some of the most resolute Nationalists. The Parsees, who number less than a million, mostly reside in Bombay. They are influential in commerce, are amongst the most devoted Nationalists, and their standard of education is higher even than that of the Christians. They follow the religion of Zoroaster.

Another difficulty in the way of the unification of India is the variety of languages. The census gives 222 languages, but the difference between some of these is no greater than British dialects. Hindustani is the most generally understood language, being used both by Hindus and Moslems, though with different scripts. In the South, Telugu is the most common language, whilst in Bengal fifty million people

speak Bengali. The educated classes use English, the official language ; but only 2½ millions people speak it and within a self-governing India Hindustani would probably be adopted as the national tongue.

### THE "UNTOUCHABLES"

The rigidity of the caste system among the Hindus of India is steadily decreasing, and in the cities of the north of India has lost its power, but in the Southern villages its hold is still great. Mr. G. T. Garratt says in his book, *An Indian Commentary*, that

“ there are probably sixty million Indians . . . against whom nearly every means of livelihood and all opportunities of advance are firmly barred, and who from their earliest years are taught that they are physically repulsive to most of the community, and that their evil plight is due to wickedness in some former existence.”

Mr. Garratt's estimate of the number of those who suffer this social boycott may be exaggerated, but it is still vast. The degree of "untouchability" varies according to the Province, being most acute in Madras and the Central Provinces. The orthodox Hindu refuses to allow the "untouchables" to sit on the same seat, or touch his person, his food, or the water he drinks. Their occupations are generally those considered degrading or unclean, such as scavenging, and (because of the sacredness of cows) leather-work. Legally the "untouchable" may claim justice, but he is often afraid to enter the magistrate's court because of the resentment he may arouse.

In the towns caste is rapidly losing its worst features. In some factories and mills special sheds are reserved for the depressed classes, but as a whole the westernising influence of industry and the common use of railways and buses is

breaking down the old isolations. Most of the Indian Nationalist leaders, and especially Mahatma Gandhi, are asserting the right of the "untouchables" to human equality, and among the "untouchables" themselves a healthy movement of self-respect is growing. Two years ago I saw 600 "untouchables" in Bombay learning to march in regular formation, in preparation for a pilgrimage by thousands of their comrades throughout the Presidency to insist upon the right to bathe in a tank from which they had been excluded.

#### THE ANGLO-INDIANS AND EUROPEANS

An important factor in the Indian problem is the Anglo-Indian population. Until a few years ago those of mixed European and Indian blood were known as "Eurasians," and the term "Anglo-Indian" was applied to Englishmen who were temporarily resident in India. When, however, it was urged that the term "Eurasian" was derogatory, the Government officially agreed to substitute "Anglo-Indian."

Many of the Anglo-Indian families came, in the first instance, from temporary relationships between Englishmen and Indian women, but the Anglo-Indians have themselves intermarried and are now a recognised part of the population. The Anglo-Indians are, on the whole, more anti-Indian than the British. They regard themselves as European and seek to live upon the European standard. Very often, however, they are only paid Indian wages and the struggle to exist becomes almost impossible.

The British authorities have given special privileges to the Anglo-Indian population, partly, perhaps, out of sympathy with their difficulties, but no doubt also because their excessive loyalty has made them valuable servants. Almost all the key Government services are staffed by Anglo-Indians. The essential parts of the railway services,

for instance, are almost entirely manned by them. Indians may be porters, but practically all the engine-drivers, guards, and clerks are Anglo-Indians. In a similar way, the postal and telegraph services are practically monopolised by Anglo-Indians, and the nursing staff in the Government hospitals is 80 per cent. Anglo-Indian.

Many of the leaders of the Anglo-Indian community are now realising, however, that as their future must be in India the advantage is on the side of unity with the Indian population rather than with the alien ruling class. The Anglo-Indian population contains many men and women of a high type. If in the past their attitude has often been intolerant towards the Indians, it is equally true that Indians have been apt to be contemptuous of the Anglo-Indians.

One of the difficulties of British rule in India has been that the English residents have never been able to live under Indian conditions. The result is that they have always been regarded as an external race and have never become identified with the life of the nation. They mainly live in large houses and have retinues of servants. Within one hour of taking a room at a Bombay hotel on my arrival, an Indian came to offer his services as my man.

He only asked for a wage of 5s. a week, and explained that he would be no cost to me because he would sleep on the mat at the door of my room, would travel at the low rates of the third-class, and would attend to all my needs. As a matter of fact, the arrangement would probably have been economical ; but the relationships between an Englishman and an Indian under these conditions are so much like those of a master and slave that it was quite impossible for me to do it.

I shared a hotel room with another Englishman for an hour or two and found that his Indian servant completely dressed him. The Englishman sat on the bed smoking a cigar, whilst the Indian first put on his socks and then laced

his boots ! I do not suggest that this is common ; but the average Englishman in India has become accustomed to having a group of low paid servants, one doing his cooking, another looking after his clothes, another doing the housework, another pulling the punkah, so that he has been cut off, as a distant and superior creature, from the existence of the Indian people generally.

#### WHERE BRITISH RULE HAS SUCCEEDED

The British administration in India, has, of course, had certain substantial results of value. First and foremost, I would place the development of irrigation, which has made a great difference to the productivity of the land and has brought security to thousands and thousands who were previously the playthings of climatic conditions. Remarkable engineering skill has been applied to transferring vast water supplies from their natural courses to channels more useful from a productive standpoint. Many of these engineers undertake their work with creative enthusiasm. An area of forty-eight million acres (of which over twenty-one are under Government) has been brought under irrigation at a cost of £83,000,000. The fact should not be overlooked, however, that prior to the British schemes the Indians themselves had extensive schemes, which would undoubtedly have been developed whether the British had been in India or not.

The largest and most interesting irrigation now in course of construction is in the Punjab. Here engineering skill has created on barren plains three great "colonies" peopled from overcrowded districts elsewhere. The area developed is the size of Wales and the anticipated annual produce in a normal year is valued at £20,000,000. Irrigation has changed the Punjab from one of the poorest into one of the most prosperous of the Provinces. The colonists, mainly small peasant proprietors, are the most thriving rural

community in India, and the benefit of the vast outlay has gone in large measure to the people themselves. At the same time, the net profit to the Provincial Government alone is over £1,000,000 a year.

The second important contribution has been the linking up of India by a modern railway system. The railways are mostly owned by the State and connect up all the large cities and the intervening villages. In the past five years 2,300 miles of new lines have been added, and the electrification of the suburban lines in the Bombay and Madras areas has been completed. These valuable public assets, in spite of constant development, make an annual contribution to the State revenue of £6,000,000, which is one per cent. of the capital outlay. In addition, one-fiftieth of the net surplus profits is credited to general revenues, and the remainder transferred to the railway reserve fund. One substantial criticism of the railway system is that sometimes conceptions of military strategy rather than the convenience of the population have determined where the railways shall be laid down. This is particularly the case in the Northern Provinces.

Indians mostly travel third class, in crude wooden carriages at fares which are extraordinarily low. The first-class carriages are occupied by British officials and wealthy Indians, whilst the second-class are used by the professional people, both European and Indian. Until recently it was very rare that Europeans and Indians travelled together; when they travel separately now, it is more by desire than by rule.

Recognition should also be given to the contribution of the British administration in providing medical facilities and public health services. In most of the large cities there are vast public hospitals under Government control, but the provision is terribly inadequate, as indicated by the fact that there is only one hospital (including the smallest dispensary) to 70,000 of the population.



The hospitals are nearly always overcrowded. When all the beds are occupied, the less serious Indian cases lie on mats on the floor ; this is little hardship because the majority of Indians always sleep in this way. The medical service also extends to the villages, but is hopelessly inadequate and the doctors are terribly overworked. Considerable efforts have been made to extend sanitary arrangements, but in this respect most of the Indian villages and the areas in the towns occupied by Indians remain a scandal. The medical administration in India has been entirely developed by the Indian Medical Service, an off-shoot of the army, but much of the control of the hospitals and public health is now in Indian hands. The responsible Ministers in the various Provinces complain that they are starved of finance and are unable to develop the work as they would desire.

One difficulty in the way of the extension of medical science has been the religious convictions of many sections of the Indian population. When, for example, plague has spread through the medium of rats, the popular view against the taking of life has stood in the way of the extermination of the disease carriers. The Indian Medical Service has undoubtedly rendered a tremendous service in the treatment of tropical disease. Sir Ronald Ross's work on malaria is the best known of these achievements.

Finally, under the British rule an administration of justice has been developed which, on the whole, except in racial cases, is impressively just in its dealing between man and man, whatever his caste and religious community. It has been possible for the British official to approach his task from above the battle with an impartiality which has won recognition even from the Nationalists. In political cases, however, when the charge has been one of speech, writing, or action against the British regime, the same reputation for British impartiality has not been maintained.

The British Government has built up an extraordinarily efficient machine for the maintenance of law, the collection

of the revenue, and the defence of the country ; but this machine has contributed practically nothing to the improvement of the standard of life of the masses of the people. Of the national revenue raised from the Indian people by taxation, one-third is expended on the maintenance of the British and Indian armies in India, and one-third on the maintenance of the Civil Service, which is manned in most of its higher posts by Englishmen. Only about one-fourteenth is spent on education, one-twenty-eighth on health, and about one-twentieth upon agricultural re-organisation and other " transferred " subjects.

#### WHERE BRITISH RULE HAS FAILED

I have tried to be scrupulously fair in this account of conditions of India ; I have not glossed over the defects which arise from Indian traditions any more than I have hidden the defects of the British administration. It will be clear that India requires much more than a political revolution, changing its government from British to Indian hands. It requires a mental revolution finding expression in the repudiation of many of its customs and its castes, and a social and economic revolution, overthrowing its land system, applying co-operation to its agriculture, and controlling the development of its industrialisation so that further thousands of its people do not become half starved wage slaves.

But, in considering the effects of British rule, it is not necessary to prove that British influence has directly caused the ignorance and poverty and social injustice which abound ; the indictment rests on the fact that the British administration has failed so completely to change the conditions of the people.

The most serious effect of British rule has been the breaking of the spirit of the people. They have been kept in bondage, a subject race. The failure to provide education

has been the worst offence. That only one out of every fourteen people should be literate after this long period of British rule is itself an indictment which nothing can excuse. The miserable poverty of the masses—the fact that, according to Sir William Hunter (ex-Director of Indian statistics), forty millions of Indians pass through life with only one meal a day—is a terrible condemnation of the failure of the administration to encourage the proper organisation of agriculture and industry, or to revise the iniquitous land system and prevent Capitalism from introducing inhumanities as terrible as those which accompanied the beginning of the industrial revolution in Britain a hundred years ago.

The hold that superstitions and intolerable customs have upon the people, and the outrageous conditions of motherhood, are the measure of the failure of the administration to extend enlightenment. It is not enough to say that these evils arise from inherent conceptions. An administration with reforming zeal could, by persistent education on a mass scale, have changed the face of India ; what Russia is doing in this way is an example of what is possible. Under modern conditions the use of the cinema, in addition to the provision of schools, could revolutionise the mentality of a people within a generation. A great housing and health programme, a real determination to apply modern methods to land cultivation, model experiments in co-operative agriculture, the insistence upon minimum standards for the industrial working class, and the provision of maternity and child welfare services could have created a new India. What the Government has done in the sphere of irrigation indicates the possibilities on these lines. The difficulties admittedly would have been great, but if social improvement and mental enlightenment had been the dominant aim of the British administration, they could have been steadily overcome.

No one will deny that India is poverty stricken, superstitious, diseased, divided by caste, insanitary, illiterate ;

but those who declare India to be decadent are blind to the ferment of reform movements which are sweeping through its peoples. The Nationalist movement is only one expression of a general renaissance. An enthusiasm for education is inspiring large classes of Indians. The women's movement is asserting the equality of women and taking the lead against the degradation of child marriage and the customs and conditions which result in the appalling infant mortality rate. Social reform has become a passion among many of the best Indians of the professional classes in the large cities. There are settlements entirely conducted by Indians where extraordinary work is being done in physical and educational fields. Among the "untouchable" classes there is a growing and remarkable assertion of the equality of human status. The lower castes in many parts of India are challenging the privileges of the Brahmin class by insisting upon places in the schools for their children and by nominating their candidates against the Brahmins, who had tended to control the political parties. The movement against the liquor traffic is remarkably strong, whilst in the large cities the younger generation have a passion for sport and physical development which is in amazing evidence in the evenings on the open spaces of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras.

Everywhere one has a sense that India is surging towards life after its long sleep. The movement for political freedom is only the expression of a seeking for full experience on all sides of human development.

If any reader has a sense of superiority towards India because of the ignorance and poverty of its people, let him remember two things : first, that Britain has been responsible for the administration of India for two hundred years ; and, second, that hundreds of thousands of British people, despite the science and industrial skill of the West, are condemned to exist in disgraceful conditions of poverty and ignorance.

## CHAPTER II

### BRITISH INTERESTS IN INDIA

**W**hy does Britain desire to retain the control of India? There are two explanations. First, the material interests involved, and, second, the prestige of the British Empire.

Englishmen first went to India for trading purposes. To the selling and purchase of goods, the East India Company soon added a valuable income by subsidies from the Indian chiefs and tax-gathering from the Indian people. These were afterwards transferred to the Government, but in more recent times two further economic advantages developed—the investment of capital and the salaries paid to administrators. The present economic interests of Great Britain in India are, therefore, threefold :

- (1) A field for the investment of capital.
- (2) A market for British goods.
- (3) A source of income for administrators.

#### BRITISH INVESTMENTS IN INDIA

Although India is predominantly agricultural, it is among the first eight industrial nations of the world. Its industry, in the modern sense, was inaugurated almost exclusively by British capital, and, despite an increasing percentage of Indian participation, British capital still represents the major part of the money invested.

An accurate estimate of the amount of British capital involved is impossible, because the available statistics do not include records of private companies, and because, in

the case of joint stock companies domiciled both in India and elsewhere, the determination of stock ownership is of doubtful value. Financial experts declare, however, that the investments of British capital in India are greater than in other parts of the world.

The largest proportion of British capital in India is invested in Government and public loans and the State railway debt. The following is a summary of the known investments in 1926-27 :

Government sterling debt	.	£261,000,000
Government railway debt	.	£120,000,000
War loan	.	£17,000,000
Investments in companies registered in India	.	£75,000,000
Investments in companies registered outside India	.	£100,000,000
Total	.	<u>£573,000,000</u>

To these sums must be added capital invested in private companies and in enterprises for which statistics are not available. The total is likely to be nearer £700,000,000 than £600,000,000. If the average interest returned be placed at 5 per cent., this means an annual tribute of £35,000,000 from India to Britain.

There is a strong feeling in India that the currency policy of the Government is determined by British financial interests rather than by the interests of Indian trade and the Indian population. The fixation of the ratio of the rupee at 2s. in place of 1s. 4d. had a disastrous effect upon the post-war prosperity of India. It led to the dislocation of industry and the sale of reverse Council Bills, which dissipated India's gold to the extent of £24,000,000. The Government subsequently appointed a Currency Commission, upon which Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, one of

the ablest representatives of Indian trade, strongly urged fixing the ratio at 1s. 4d., but the Government would not listen to his advice and fixed it at 1s. 6d. The higher ratio has been one of the factors in causing the recent slump in Indian industry and agriculture, with the result (to quote Mr. J. K. Mehta, secretary of the Indian Merchants Chamber in Bombay) that "the faith of the business community has been rudely shaken and it has begun to feel that the economic and financial policy of the Government of India is largely governed by interests other than Indian." British officials in India, British importers of goods, and British investors have all benefited.

#### INDIA AS A MARKET FOR BRITISH GOODS

When we turn to consider India as a market for British goods, we find that in 1927-28 the total value of imports from the United Kingdom was £90,000,000. The value of the exports from India to Britain was, on the other hand, only £60,000,000. By far the largest imports were cotton piece goods, as the following table shows :—

Cotton goods . . . . .	£50,700,000
Metals . . . . .	12,500,000
Machinery . . . . .	9,250,000
Railway plant . . . . .	2,750,000
Cotton yarn . . . . .	2,300,000
Instruments . . . . .	2,020,000
Motors, cycles and parts . . . . .	2,000,000
Provisions . . . . .	1,735,000
Liquors . . . . .	1,565,000
Hardware . . . . .	1,530,000
Tobacco . . . . .	1,480,000
Soap . . . . .	1,090,000
Chemicals . . . . .	1,090,000

No other class of goods reached £1,000,000. The importance of India as a market for British goods is indicated by the fact that in 1927-28 the value of the British imports to India was practically the same as those from all other countries.

#### SALARIES FOR BRITISH ADMINISTRATORS

The third economic advantage of India to Britain is the contribution which India pays through her Budget to the salaries, wages, and pensions of Englishmen in the military and civil services and to profits arising from the British administration. It is estimated that one-third of the total Indian revenue is drained in this way, that is to say approximately £32,800,000 annually.

The higher officials are paid princely salaries, as these figures indicate :

Viceroy and Governor-General	. £19,000
Commander-in-Chief of the Forces	. 7,400
Members of the Governor-General's	
Council . . . . .	6,000
Ten Provincial Governors	. . 4,900 to £9,000
Chief Justice (Calcutta)	. . . 5,300

About 250 British officials connected with the central Government draw salaries of £1,850 or more, and in each of the ten provinces there are from eleven to thirty-five Civil Servants with salaries between £1,550 and £4,750. In addition to the regular salaries, there are generous allowances. The Governor-General is allowed £450 for his furlough. Other Governors are allowed £300, and members of the Executive Council are allowed from £130 to £250. Governors on taking up their posts are granted from £1,200 to £1,800 for equipment and voyage, and personal allowances and overseas pay of £160 per annum are provided for all higher officials with homes outside



India. Pensions on retirement are provided at the rate of one month's pay for each completed year of service.

The tribute paid by India to British administrators is indicated by the salary account of the Central Office, which amounts to £1,220,000 per year. This figure covers the salaries of the members of the Revenue Boards and Revenue Commissioners, the staff of the Accounts and Audits Department, the staff of the Paper Currency Office and the India Office, and a salary allowance to the banks for the management of the Indian debt, in addition to the salaries of the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors.

The annual cost of the India Office in London is £365,800, to which the British Government contributes £136,000, the Indian revenue bearing the balance. The office of the High Commissioner in London costs £272,900 per year. The Secretary of State for India and the High Commissioner are responsible for an Indian expenditure in England of about £24,000,000 annually to meet the costs of Indian establishments, the recruitment of military and civil services, pensions, the purchase of stores, material for railway construction and other public works, and interest on the sterling debt.

The contribution from the Indian revenue towards the maintenance of the Forces in India is £43,761,000 per year. One-third of the troops maintained by India are British. A British soldier costs four times as much as an Indian soldier, and as much as an Indian officer. A British officer costs six times as much as an Indian officer, and as much as twenty-four Indian soldiers.

#### THE EFFECTS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

How far would these three forms of economic interest be endangered if self-government were extended to India?

So far as British investments and British goods are concerned, the answer will largely depend upon the manner in

which self-government is attained. If it is secured as the result of a long conflict, they will undoubtedly suffer. If it is secured as the result of an early agreement, there is no reason why the mere change of government should bring any considerable loss.

Two developments are certain to take place under any circumstances. First, industrialism will grow in India and Indian capital will be increasingly employed. Second, tariffs will be imposed to protect Indian enterprises in their early stages.

We have already had one important example of the competition of Indian industry. After the war a great effort was made, mostly with Indian capital, to develop the cotton industry within India, and there was a fear that this would seriously affect British imports. For a time there was a boom and very high dividends were paid, reaching in some instances to over 200 per cent. ; but a severe depression followed. Taking thirty-five representative companies, with a total capital of £17,200,000, the declared dividends from 1922 to 1926 were as follows :

				<i>Average Percentage</i>
1922	£6,010,000	.	.	. 35
1923	2,920,000	.	.	. 17
1924	1,130,000	.	.	. 6.5
1925	69,000	.	.	. 4
1926	38,000	.	.	. .2

In actual fact, British imports have suffered much more from Japanese competition than from Indian production. The Indian mills concentrate upon the manufacture of coarse cloth, which neither Britain nor Japan import in large quantities. The advance which Japan has made over Britain is shown in the proportion of imports of grey cloth in 1921-22 and in 1925-26. In the earlier year, the United Kingdom supplied 63.4 per cent. of the total imports and the Japanese 36.2 per cent. Four years later, the Japanese

imported 42.5 per cent. and the United Kingdom only 7.3 per cent. The change in proportions of British and Japanese yarn imported are shown in the following table :

	<i>British</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
1922 . . . . .	40	14
1923 . . . . .	31	26
1924 . . . . .	21	20
1925 . . . . .	20	32
1926 . . . . .	15	33
1927 (six months) . . . . .	11	13

The Indian mills have complained of the underpaid competition of Japan, though, as we have seen, there is little direct competition in similar goods. It is difficult to believe that wage standards could be lower or working conditions worse than in India, but the Japanese wage-rate is, in fact, slightly lower, far more women are employed (Japan has 183,850 women to 48,919 men : India has 63,042 to 261,564), and the hours of working in Japan are almost unrestricted.

The growing Japanese exports are, due, however, much more to efficient marketing arrangements than to the under-cutting of lower wage standards and conditions. By an Act of 1925 an Export Guild was established for Japan, through which all exporting is done. The Guild sorts, stores, and exports goods on a co-operative basis and has a special department to investigate and open up new markets. There is also a Guild of Manufacturers, which inspects materials and articles and arranges for the export of goods through the Export Guild. Both Guilds are exempted from income-tax, and the Government assists by research and propaganda, by meeting the costs of commercial travellers to foreign countries, and by the collection and exhibition of samples of foreign goods which compete with Japanese products for overseas markets.

Apart from the effect of the Nationalist boycott of British goods (to which reference will be made later), the chaotic and costly methods of marketing British goods in India are one of the main reasons for the decline in British imports. With this the character of the Indian Government has nothing to do. If the British cotton industry and other British industries would put their own house in order by establishing Export Boards to market their goods efficiently, there would be abundant scope for British markets in India, *given the goodwill of the Indian people.*

One effect of the industrialisation of India and the modernisation of its agriculture would be greatly to increase the demand for machinery, mill stores, ship-building materials, tractors, etc. There are almost illimitable possibilities in these directions, and if the relations between Britain and India were placed on a friendly basis, a vast field for British exports to India would develop. A wise statesmanship would anticipate this situation and seek to secure that this important prospective market should be open on favourable terms to British goods.

Simultaneously with the development of Indian industrialism, there is certain to be another development in India which will expand the market to a greater degree than the extent of any limitation resulting from the competition of Indian mills and workshops. The 300 millions of people cannot remain in their present dire poverty. With the spread of education, with the encouragement of aspirations for a fuller life, and with the extension of organisation in the interests of the workers and peasants, a higher standard of existence will inevitably be progressively reached. Even the smallest improvement in the economic conditions of the vast multitudes of India will immediately be effective in an increased demand for goods, and it must be a long time before Indian industrialists can satisfy these increasing demands.

The extension of tariffs will undoubtedly tend to modify

British imports, but even under the present system of Government it has proved impossible to prevent tariffs being imposed to protect India's young industries. In its budget this year the Indian Government was compelled to increase the tariff on imported cotton goods, and the substantial preference for British goods led to such opposition that Mr. Malaviya, the influential leader of the National Party, resigned his seat in order to lead a movement in the country for the boycott of British goods. Whether these tariffs are extended still further and whether the preferences to Britain are withdrawn will largely depend upon the degree to which the sentiment of Nationalism and anti-British feeling become intensified. If the legitimate claims of India are thwarted and Nationalism continues to colour all the political life of India, we may expect that a national tariff policy will be pushed to extremes ; if Britain refuses self-government to India, India will certainly insist, as soon as an opportunity occurs, upon the abolition of all preferences to Britain. But if the claims of India are reasonably met, and goodwill towards Britain replaces the present estranged feeling, a basis of economic co-operation will still be possible.

One influence in a self-governing India should not be overlooked. India must remain predominantly agricultural for decades, perhaps for all time, and for the vast majority of her population, therefore, tariffs will be a burden rather than a benefit. Tariffs may assist the industrialists, but to the masses of the peasants they will mean an increase in the cost of living. An Indian Government representing a democratically elected parliament will consequently tend, once the phase of ultra-nationalism is over, to remove tariffs which have the effect of making still harder the existence of the millions of cultivators who form 80 per cent. of the Indian population. Even under present conditions tariffs are opposed. "Strong opposition is now forthcoming whenever protective duties are considered by the

Legislature," to quote Mr. J. K. Mehta again. "Representatives of labour and agriculture are coming to the front and are not enamoured of protective duties."

#### THE BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN

But the future of British investments and goods in India will depend most of all upon the method immediately adopted to meet the claims of the Indian Nationalist Movement. British politics in India are rapidly destroying British trade in India. As a result of the boycott agitation, during April and May of this year the imports of British cotton goods fell by  $23\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., compared with the same months last year; and by the end of June the Customs revenue had fallen in three months by £795,000. The effect of the boycott is revealed in the following cablegrams received by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on April 29th, after the campaign had lasted less than a month :

#### I

"Considering the present political situation, especially regarding the boycott of foreign piece goods, the Delhi Piece Goods Association warns all shippers and manufacturers that any goods shipped hereafter will in all probability not only be refused, but also be unsaleable. Greatest caution is, therefore, necessary for the future and no shipment should be made unless in consultation with buyers. Please circulate your concern."

#### II

"The Bombay Native Piece Goods Merchants Association beg to invite attention to the following resolution of an extraordinary general meeting, in view of the boycott of foreign goods throughout the country and the prevailing political situation : 'This meeting is of opinion that  
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a very serious and alarming crisis has arisen for the mercantile community in India, and, accordingly, the meeting desires to warn members of the critical situation ahead. The Association draws the attention of the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy, and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, to the grave political situation in India and urges them to use their power and influence to bring about the acceptance of the national demands and affect an amicable settlement. The meeting warns that, in case the situation is not eased at the earliest moment, a graver situation for manufacturers and business men is likely, in which case the members of this Association would be most reluctantly compelled to consider the advisability of cancelling all outstanding contracts."

Moreover, the failure to reach an early and amicable settlement of the present conflict may have a still graver ultimate effect upon British economic interests. If for a moment I may give a word of friendly advice to those who have capital invested in India, I would say this : The real danger to British investments in India lies not in a political revolution but in a social revolution. Every day that the satisfaction of India's political claims is postponed increases the likelihood of a cataclysmic social revolution in India, involving the repudiation of Government loans and the confiscation of property. The revolutionary psychology which the present political movement is creating cannot suddenly disappear. If it enters deeply into the life of India, it will continue to find expression in the economic struggle of the masses, which will inevitably follow the winning of political independence. Neither the movement for political freedom nor the movement for social freedom can ultimately be stayed in India, any more than in any other part of the world. Those who wish to safeguard their economic interests would be well advised therefore, to urge that reasonable

terms be made with the first as soon as possible, in order that an atmosphere of reason may be created for the subsequent settlement of the second.

#### A TRIBUTE THAT MUST GO.

When we pass on to consider the tribute which India pays to British administrators, whether military or civil, the fact must frankly be faced that a self-governed India would end it as soon as possible. It is scandalous that the under-nourished millions of India should be taxed to provide princely salaries for British Governors and generals, and comfortable competences for an army of British officers and civil servants. During the transition period, whilst the Civil Service, and, it may be, the Forces, are Indianised, Englishmen will no doubt continue to be employed at reasonable salaries ; but the families of the British ruling classes must give up the hope of India providing secure and well-paid posts for their sons in perpetuity. That two-thirds of the revenue of India should be expended on the civil and military administration and only one-fourteenth upon education is an outrage which a self-governing India could not be expected to tolerate.

#### THE QUESTION OF PRESTIGE

There remains the question of the prestige of the British Empire.

The prestige of British power in the world would undoubtedly suffer if Indian independence were won as the result of a struggle in which Britain finally had to surrender. But that is not the only alternative to British domination. If the British response to India's demands were such that the people of India felt that they could with self-respect continue to co-operate with Britain as a Dominion within the Empire, British prestige would rise rather than fall.



The effect would be to convince the world that Britain had a supreme gift for wise statesmanship. Even if India insisted upon complete independence from the British Empire, Britain would win more honour ultimately by recognising the right of India to national freedom than by attempting the hopeless task of ruling India against her will.

The Imperial instinct is still strong among the British people, and a recognition of the wisdom of a frank acceptance of India's claims would be difficult to secure. But if Britain decided upon this course, her name would live in history in golden letters as the first Imperialist Power which had willingly given up the authority to dominate another people. There have been empires from the beginning of history. They have always fallen by one of two methods : either by the revolt of the subject people themselves, or by the revolt of the subject classes at the centre of the Imperial Power. Britain would have the supreme honour of inaugurating a new era, if she consented voluntarily to withdraw her Imperial domination over India instead of compulsorily as the result of Indian resistance.

### CHAPTER III

## THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

When British traders and British soldiers went to India in the seventeenth century, they found a system of government that was predominantly communal. I do not mean that there was political democracy. There were the great ruling families, many of which lived in princely luxury. There was the caste system, distinguishing the priestly class, the military class, the commercial class, and the serfs. But so far as the masses of the people were concerned, they lived in and for their village communities alone. Kingdoms rose and fell ; one ruling family overthrew another ; but to the millions of peasants it mattered little. They contributed their grain to the village store : they took their quarrels to the village court. In the village was the real unit of life.

“ The Village Communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves,” wrote Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1830 whilst Governor-General.

“ They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, Hindu, Pathan, Moghal, Sikh, English are masters in turn, but the Village Communities remain the same. . . . The union of the Village Communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.”

## THE FIRST ENGLISH TRADERS

On first going to the East, European traders established small settlements at the points where they harboured their ships. To protect the settlements they erected forts, not merely as safeguards against the natives, but against the traders of other nationalities. "Trade competition meant war," remarks Sir Courtenay Ilbert in his *Government of India*. Whether their Governments were formally engaged in hostilities or not, the traders of Spain, France, Holland, and England did not hesitate to attack each other whenever they trespassed on one another's preserves.

"In the nineteenth century we annex territory for the sake of developing and securing trade," says Sir Courtenay Ilbert, with rare candour.

"The annexations of the sixteenth century were annexations, not of territory, but of trading grounds. The pressure was the same, the objects were the same, the methods were different. For the successful prosecution of Eastern trade it was necessary to have an association powerful enough to negotiate with native princes, to enforce discipline among its agents and servants, and to drive off European rivals with the strong hand."

Thus it came about that the East India Company, formed in 1600, was much more than a trading company. Before the end of the seventeenth century it was given power, by an Act of the British Parliament, to send out ships of war, men, and ammunition for the security of its factories and places of trade, and to make war upon "any people that are not Christians (*sic*) in any places of their trade, as shall be for the most advantage and benefit of the said Governor and Company and of their trade." Gradually during this century the Company extended its territory, so that the monies it raised by the taxation of the native populations

became a much more fruitful source of income than its trading profits. In a resolution adopted in 1688 the Company pointed out that "revenue" raised by taxation was certain, "when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade." Moreover,

" 'tis that must make us a nation in India ; without that we are but a great number of interlopers . . . fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us ; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices that we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade."

#### THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT STEPS IN

Before the end of the eighteenth century the governmental power of the East India Company had grown to such a degree that it became necessary for the Crown to step in and share the responsibility. The unscrupulous methods by which the Company's sway was extended are well known ; the manner in which Clive extracted the vast revenues of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa from Shah Alam is typical. But whilst the officials of the Company made vast fortunes the Company itself did not prosper. " Its debts were already estimated at more than 6,000,000 sterling," says Lecky in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*.

" It supported an army of about 30,000 men. It paid about 1,000,000 sterling a year in the form of tributes, pensions, and compensations to the Emperor, the Nabob of Bengal, and other great native personages. Its incessant wars, though they had hitherto always been successful, were always expensive, and a large portion of the wealth

which should have passed into the general Exchequer was still diverted to the private accounts of its servants."

The result was that in 1772 the Company had to ask the Government for a loan.

A loan of £1,400,000 was granted, but only on terms. The Government insisted on seeing all communications from the Company's officials in India regarding revenue and civil and military affairs. The administration of Bengal was placed in the hands of a Governor-General and a Council, and subordinate Presidencies were formed at Madras, Bombay, and Bencoolen. A Supreme Court of Judicature was appointed at Fort William.

Indian justice remained in the hands of the village courts. An Indian could only be tried in the English court if he had broken a contract involving more than 500 rupees and if the contract explicitly gave the court authority in the event of a dispute. The British courts were given an extended jurisdiction over Indians in 1781, and their powers were repeatedly increased until the Act of 1858 gave the Governor-General's Council the power to make laws "for all persons whether British or native" and to enforce them through British courts.

The appointments of the Governor-General and the other administrative officials were left in the hands of the Company, which was also left with the responsibility of paying the princely salaries allotted to each office. The Governor-General received £25,000; the members of the Governor-General's Council, £10,000; the Chief Justice, £8,000; and other judges, £6,000.

India at this time (so far as it was under British authority) resembled a modern Protectorate. The country had not been definitely annexed; the authority of the Emperor at Delhi was still formally recognised; but all the real power was in British hands.

In 1784 further important changes were made in the

direction of bringing the administration of India under the immediate control of the British Government. A Board of six "Commissioners for the affairs of India" was established, known as the Board of Control. The Board originally consisted of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one Secretary of State and four Privy Councillors, and was empowered "to superintend, direct, and control all acts, operations, and concerns which in any wise relate to the civil or military government or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies." The Board was given access to all the papers of the Company, whose duty it was to carry out the instructions of the Board of Control in matters relating to peace and war without the knowledge of the other directors. The restriction of membership to Privy Councillors was withdrawn in 1793.

In practice, the power of the Board of Control was exercised by the senior member, and in time he became known as the President of the Board, and occupied a place in the Government corresponding to some extent to that of the modern Secretary of State. The Company retained the right to appoint the Governor-General, the Commander-in-chief, and other Indian officials, but the Government was given the power to remove them, and the officials, when appointed, had in all important matters to carry out the policy, not of the Company, but of the Board of Control. From this moment, in fact, the responsibility for the government of India in its larger aspects was assumed by the British Government.

"The apologists of British Rule in India," said Mr. Hassan Imam, in his Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress, Bombay, 1918,

"have asserted that the presence of the British in this land has been due to humane motives ; that the British object has been to save the Indian peoples from themselves ; to raise their moral standard, to bring them

material prosperity, to confer on them the civilising influences of Europe, and so forth and so on. These are hypocrisies common to most apologists. The fact is that the East India Company was not conceived for the benefit of India, but to take away her wealth for the benefit of Britain. The greed of wealth that characterised its doings was accompanied by greed for territorial possession, and when the transference of rule from the company to the Crown took place, the greed of wealth and the lust of power abated not one jot in the inheritors, the only difference being that tyranny became systematised and plunder became scientific."

This charge cannot be brought against all the administrators under the new system—it was not true of Lord Bentinck, for instance, but it was undoubtedly true of many of them. It was true of Lord Wellesley, of Lord Auckland, of Lord Ellenborough, and of Lord Dalhousie. Indeed, frequently the Crown proved more imperialistic than the Company—perhaps because the Company always had to foot the bill.

That most disgraceful of imperialistic adventures, the first Afghan war, was enforced by the Government against the wishes of the Company, with the result that 16,000 men perished under the Afghan fire or died of cold or hunger in the Afghan snows. Sindh, a friendly State, was conquered in the most traitorous way. The Punjab was annexed in spite of the assurance that the British army entered "not as an enemy of the constituted Government, but to restore order and obedience." Lower Burma was subjected and taken within the British Empire because some British merchants complained that the Burmese had levied taxes on them. It was by such means as these that the lust for power of the Imperialists was gratified.

Perhaps even more outrageous was the annexation of Indian States "on failure of heirs." The ancient laws of

India provided that, on the failure of the natural issue, a Hindu might adopt an heir to inherit his property. Under the British the practice was introduced of requiring a Hindu to secure the sanction of the Government when he adopted a son, and soon the sanction became the exception instead of the rule. In 1841 the Government of India determined "to persevere in the one clear and direct course of abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory revenue," and, one after another, Satara, Sambalpur, Jhansi, and Nagpur, in addition to many smaller States, were annexed. Gradually the British sway extended throughout India, by the process either of annexation or of the establishment of protectorates over native States.

The extension of the British sphere meant a great extension of the personnel of the administration, but the Indian people were rigorously excluded from most public offices. In an act of 1833 the principle was laid down that

"no native of the said (Indian) territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any office, place, or employment under the Company."

"The policy of freely admitting natives of India to a share in the administration of the country has never," says Sir Courtenay Ilbert, "been more broadly or emphatically enunciated." The enunciation was excellent; the practice very different. The following questions and answers are taken from the proceedings of the House of Lords Committee on India, 1853 :

*Lord Monteagle* : As far as declaration goes, could there be any much stronger declaration of the general eligibility of natives than that which is contained in the 87th clause of the last Act [the one quoted above] ?



*Hay Cameron* (Legal Member of the Governor-General's Council, 1843-48) : No, it seems to me very strong and very clear.

*Lord Monteagle* : Taking the clause in the larger sense in which you interpret it, have the practical results been such as to realise the expectations of the framer of the clause ?

*Hay Cameron* : No, quite the reverse. Not a single native that I am aware of has been placed in a better position in consequence of that clause in the statute than he would be in if no such clause had been enacted.

The Act of 1853 took away from the Company the right to make the appointments of the British representatives in India and threw the "covenanted" Civil Service posts open to general competition. Indians were still almost entirely excluded, however, since the examinations took place in England. (It was not until 1870 that some of the lower posts in the Civil Service were thrown open to Indians without the condition of the London examination. In 1912 a Royal Commission recommended that 25 per cent. of the superior posts in the Indian Civil Service should be recruited in India. Under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of 1921 the percentage was increased to 33 per cent. with the understanding that further increases of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. should take place annually.)

#### AFTER THE INDIAN MUTINY

The British Government assumed undivided responsibility for the government of India after the Mutiny of 1857. A Secretary for India was then appointed, representing the Crown and responsible to Parliament. A "Council of India" was established in London to assist him. Originally, it consisted of fifteen members ; now there are ten. They hold office for ten years, and are mostly experienced Anglo-Indian officials. In 1909, in spite of much opposition

in high circles, including that of King Edward, Lord Morley introduced an Indian into the Council. Except in a few matters, including the expenditure of the revenues of India, the Secretary has the power to overrule the Council, and on questions of peace and war he need not submit his dispatches to it at all.

It will be seen that the Council is mainly a consultative body. It has no power of initiative, and its power of veto is limited. Even on questions of expenditure, it would, in practice, be impossible for the Council to oppose the Secretary on any issue on which he acted with the authority of the Cabinet.

The revenues of India must be applied exclusively for the purposes of the government of India, but since this includes the upkeep of the India Office in London, the payment of the debt taken over from the East India Company, and the compensation paid to the shareholders, in addition to the costs of the British civil and military administration in India, the charge that has to be met is exceedingly heavy. The Indian revenues are not supposed to be applied to defraying the expenses of any military operations outside of India, but in actual fact the expenses of expeditions to Egypt and Abyssinia, of wars in Afghanistan, and of the conquest of Burma have been charged to India. One-third of the national taxation of India goes towards the upkeep of the army.

Since 1858 the Governor-General has also been the Viceroy, the representative of the King. He usually holds office for five years. In 1909 Lord Morley and Lord Minto brought an Indian into the Governor-General's Executive Council, and under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of 1921 two more nominated Indians were introduced. The executive work is divided among nine departments. The Foreign Department is under the immediate supervision of the Viceroy; the other departments are placed under the care of different members of the Council.

Until the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of 1921, India was divided into thirteen Provinces, each with its own local government. Madras and Bombay were under a Governor and nominated Executive. The Governors were generally British politicians; they dealt directly with the Secretary of State, and had the same power as the Governor-General of overruling their Executives in cases of emergency. In 1909 there was introduced the election of a proportion of the membership of the Provincial Councils on grouped and severely restricted franchises, a small majority of nominated members being retained in each case.

Bengal, Eastern Bengal, and Assam, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the Punjab and Burma were all originally under Lieutenant-Governors, who were appointed from the Indian Civil Service by the Governor-General. From 1909 the Lieutenant-Governors were assisted by enlarged Councils similar to those in the Presidencies. In 1911 Bengal and Eastern Bengal were re-united under a Governorship in Council, Assam reverting to a Chief Commissionership. The five remaining Provinces—the Central Provinces, Ajmere-Merwara, Coorg, British Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier, and the Andaman Islands—were administered under Chief Commissioners appointed by the Governor-General's Council.

#### THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

With the exception of the changes noted, the administrative machinery in India, despite many pronouncements foreshadowing self-government, remained practically unamended from 1858 until 1921. In that year the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme, drawn up in 1918 by Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State, and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, and embodied in an Act of Parliament in 1920, was applied. It represented an important departure.

The Governor-General's Council remained as an executive authority, but legislative functions were transferred to two Chambers—a Council of State of about sixty members and a Legislative Assembly of one hundred and forty.

The Assembly has an elected majority of more than two-thirds (elected, that is, by the merest fraction of the people), but it has little real power. The Council of State is the supreme legislative authority—and half its members are nominated. It has the right to reject all the proposals of the Assembly, whether legislative or financial, and at the bidding of the Governor may even enact measures over the head of the Assembly. For instance, the Assembly is not permitted to vote upon the Budget.

An extraordinary scheme was evolved for the eight Provincial Councils, by which popular control of certain "transferred subjects" is permitted, whilst certain "reserved subjects" are kept in official hands. The Executive Government is divided into two parts, the one composed of the Governor and an Executive Council of nominated members responsible for the "reserved subjects," and the other composed of Ministers selected by the Governor from the elected members of the Legislative Council, who are responsible for the "transferred subjects."

The Legislative Councils differ in size in the different Provinces, but in each case there is a substantial elected majority. The "reserved subjects" which are excluded from popular control include the maintenance of law and order, civil justice, land revenue, and industrial matters. Education and sanitation are the most important subjects under the control of the Councils.

The financial arrangements are most unsatisfactory from the democratic standpoint. The first charge on provincial revenues is the contribution to the Central Government. After that the "reserved subjects" have priority; only the residue is available for the purpose of the "transferred

subjects." If the amount is insufficient, additional taxation may be levied within a prescribed schedule.

The electorates are complex, and vary in the different Provinces. Special representation is permitted to various religious groups—the Mohammedans, Indian Christians (at Madras), and Mahrattas (Bombay)—and also to trading and other groups, such as Europeans, landholders, the Universities, planters, European commerce, and Indian commerce.

The income basis of the suffrage means that the peasants and the town workers are almost entirely denied votes. The population of British India is approximately 247,000,000. The number of voters for the Council of State is 32,126; for the Legislative Assembly, 1,128,331; for the Provincial Legislative Councils, 5,203,723, about one-twentieth of the adult population. These figures eloquently indicate the unrepresentative character of the Indian Government after two hundred years of British domination.

Such has been the development of the government of India under British rule. The changes which have taken place have been largely due to altered economic and military conditions of a world character, but they have also responded, to some degree, at least, to the growth of democratic opinion in Britain. Far more important, however, has been the influence of the deepening and extending national spirit in India, and the organised expression which this movement has been given.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE PROBLEM OF THE INDIAN STATES

**T**he complexities of British India are aggravated by the problem of the Indian States. They cover nearly one-third of the territory of India, and almost two-fifths of the population are in their borders. There are something like 700 of these States, which vary in size from Kashmir and Hyderabad, both of which are over 80,000 square miles, an area nearly as large as Great Britain, to smaller States of a few acres. They are distributed all over the map of India, and in some cases have isolated territories, which form political islands within British India. The status of the rulers varies from that of powerful princes to that of local landlords, no more important than a British squire.

These territories have retained some form of independence, either because the East India Company in the early days thought it better to impose alliances in return for payment rather than to conquer them outright (frequently the object was to win the support of the rulers against the French), or because at later stages gifts of land and ruling privileges were granted to important Indian families in return for services rendered to the British authorities.

The States can be divided broadly into three categories. Rather more than a hundred of them enjoy full sovereign rights in their internal affairs, although their Imperial and foreign relations are under the control of the British Government; 127 of them are subject to the advisory jurisdiction of the Government of India; whilst the remainder only enjoy civil and criminal jurisdiction within

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prescribed limits, the Government of India having considerable powers of interference.

#### BRITISH ATTITUDE TO THE STATES

The attitude of the British Government towards the Indian States has varied according to the political circumstances. The first object of the East India Company was to secure the support of the Indian rulers against France. One of the dispatches from the Marquis of Wellesley to Tippo Sultan, the Chief of Mysore, reflects the British mind at this period. The following is the summing up :

“ When your discerning mind shall have duly examined this respected letter, you will no doubt draw the following conclusions from it :

“ First : That all the maxims of public law, honour, and religion are despised and profaned by the French nation ; who consider all the thrones of the world, and every system of civil order and religious faith, as the sport and prey of their boundless ambition, insatiable rapine, and indiscriminate sacrilege.

“ Secondly : That the French have insulted and assaulted the acknowledged head of the Mohammedan Church ; and that they have wantonly raised an unprovoked and cruel war in the heart of that country, which is revered by every Mussulman as the repository of the most sacred monuments of the Mohammedan faith.

“ Thirdly : That a firm, honourable, and intimate alliance and friendship now subsists between the Grand Seigneur and the British nation for the express purpose of opposing a barrier to the excesses of the French.

“ Fourthly : That the Grand Seigneur is fully apprised of the intercourse and connection unhappily established between Your Highness and the French for purposes hostile to the British nation ; that he offers to Your Highness the salutary fruit of that experience which he

has already acquired of the ruinous effects of French intrigue, treachery, and deceit ; and that he admonishes you not to flatter yourself with the vain hope of friendly aid from those who (even if they had escaped from the valour and skill of the British forces) could never have reached you until they had profaned the tomb of your prophets and overthrown the foundation of your religion.

“May the admonition of the head of your Faith dispose your mind to the pacific propositions which I have repeatedly, but in vain, submitted to your wisdom, and may you at length receive the Ambassador, who will be empowered to conclude the definite arrangement of all differences between you and the Allies and to secure the tranquillity of India against the disturbers of the world !”

The treaties with the States at this period were based upon reciprocity ; to outbid the French the British were prepared to allow the rulers to maintain armies and to make treaties independently with other Princes. But when the fear of the French had gone, the tone of the British changed. The treaties of the first half of the nineteenth century were no longer reciprocal ; they represented domination and subjection. The East India Company insisted upon the States surrendering the right of independent negotiation with other States ; it required them to bear the cost of troops provided by the Company for their help ; and a fixed tribute was demanded to defray the expenses of subsidising forces maintained for their protection.

The next stage was one of still further subordination. Whilst the separate existence and nominal sovereignty were maintained, the States were rendered powerless. The treaty signed between Lord Hastings and the Maharana of Udaipur in 1818 is typical. Article 3 reads :

“The Maharana of Udaipur will always act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government and



acknowledge its supremacy and will not have any connection with other Chiefs or States.”

Article 6 required that one-fourth of the revenue should be paid to the British Government as a tribute for five years, and, after that term, three-eighths in perpetuity. Article 8 demanded that the troops of Udaipur should be furnished, according to its means, at the requisition of the British Government. Under Lord Hastings tributes of such a heavy nature were imposed upon the Indian States that the treasuries became empty and cruel taxation had to be imposed upon the people.

The discontent in the Indian States was so great that the initial tendency at the time of the Mutiny was to participate in the revolt, but the British bought off most of the Princes, despite the intense feeling among their peoples. The rulers were rewarded by a declaration in the name of Queen Victoria assuring them that she would sanction no encroachment upon their territories. “We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native Princes as our own,” the proclamation promised.

The next development of the British policy was to capture the machinery of the States by the penetration of British agents and advisers. The vanity of the rulers was flattered by showy perogatives, but at the same time effective British control was steadily increased. A British Residency was established in each of the States, and in many cases the Resident became the real power behind the throne. Where actual tribute was not exacted, the States were required to maintain subsidiary forces under English officers. The British insisted upon the right to build railways and roads (often constructed for strategic reasons) and to control posts, telegraphs, telephones, the coinage, and the currency. The manufacture of salt and opium (Government monopolies) was prohibited. Pressure was exerted to secure contracts for mines for English companies, and to develop

English trade, at the expense of local industries. The general direction of British policy was to exalt the nominal power of the Princes over their people, whilst limiting it in relation to the British authorities. British troops were always at hand to assist the Princes in suppressing any discontent, but British influence was rarely, if ever, used to secure greater rights or instalments of justice for the people in opposition to the Princes.

#### THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PRINCES

During recent years there has been another change of policy. The Princes have been deliberately used as tools against the Nationalist Movement in British India. Their independence has been emphasised in order to destroy the unity of India and to place obstacles in the way of the establishment of a central All-India Government. When Lord Curzon was Viceroy, he did not hesitate to put the Princes in their places. He told them bluntly that they were not "a privileged body to whom God has given the *Sanad* of perpetual idleness." Their States, he said, were not their private property; the revenues were not meant to be swallowed up by their privy purse. But when Lord Hardinge became Viceroy and the new strategy became operative, he spoke in very different terms. "Irksome restrictions on the side of foreign powers are apt to chafe and irritate the proud and sensitive spirit of the Princes," he said, "with results disastrous not only to the ruler and his people, but to the Empire at large."

The independent authority of the Princes was emphasised by the report of the Committee set up by the British Government in 1927 to enquire into the political position of the Indian States. The Committee took the view that if an Indian Government responsible to an Indian Legislature were created, it would be a new Government resting on a new constitution, and that the historical relationship

between the British Government and the Princes should not be transferred to this new Government without their agreement. The Committee even refused to hear a deputation representing the peoples in the States, on the ground that the British Government had no authority over the internal affairs of the Indian States—this despite the actual control exerted (as described above) and the inclusion in nearly all the treaties of provisions for the promotion of the happiness of the people ! The Simon Commission in its report and recommendations accepted the principles laid down by this Committee.

Side by side with their fuller recognition of the independence of the Princes, the British sought to influence the creation of some semblance of representative Constitutions within the States and some judicial machinery separate from the executive. It was seen that the existence of such Constitutions would serve two useful purposes. It would weaken the democratic agitation, already making dangerous contacts with the Nationalist movement in British India, and it would assist in strengthening the separate organisation of the States, and so prevent the early unification of India under Nationalist leadership. Some thirty of the States now have Legislative Councils—all of a purely consultative character—and forty have established High Courts approximately on the European model.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATES

In most cases the legislative bodies are a farce. They are generally composed entirely of pro-Government members and they remain mere petitioning bodies, with no responsibility and with an absolute power of veto in the hands of an autocratic executive. In the State of Jamnagar, for instance, the Jam Sahib collected together a number of his friends and constituted them into a Council. The Council was inaugurated with great pomp by the

Maharajah of Alwar, but, the ceremony over, nothing more was heard of it. So far as I know, it has not met since. Or the case of the Council of Bhav may be cited. It consists entirely of nominated members, whose functions are limited to the asking of five questions, and these questions must have received the endorsement of the officials. In certain States, like Mysore (with which I shall deal later), the legislative bodies are more fully developed; but in no State is there really representative government.

I shall later differentiate between certain Indian States and others, but, speaking generally, the Indian Princes are lazy, luxurious, and reactionary, strong with the authority of British support, but sheer exploiters of their peoples. They frequently use the revenues of their States as their personal incomes; in most of the States there are still no representative institutions; the average provision for education is even lower than in British India; forced labour and actual slavery exist in some of the States; the police are frequently corrupt, and prisoners are often tortured; there is generally no freedom of speech, of the Press, or of association; and deportations and forfeiture of property can be inflicted in many States without even the semblance of judicial enquiry.

Many of the Princes are potentates of the old Oriental type, with little knowledge of modern industrial, educational, or social developments, and content to live in sensual luxury. The manner in which their harems are sometimes recruited have become a public scandal. The luxury of the palaces and gardens, the furniture and ornaments and jewels, the banquets, the elaborate personal staffs, and the stables and garages of some of the wealthier Princes are in terrible contrast with the miserable poverty of the peasants from whom they extort their incomes. Recently an attempt has been made to train their sons at special colleges established in four Indian centres, but the effect of this training has been merely to make them

aristocrats on the British model. Mr. G. T. Garratt, in his *An Indian Commentary*, says :

“ Unfortunately, the intense and deep-rooted snobbery of the British in India has converted the Chiefs’ colleges at Ajmer, Rajkot, Indore, and Lahore into institutions which faithfully reproduce the worst features of the English Public Schools, and their pupils are turned out into a world of sycophants and courtiers with enthusiasms and ideas which are physically healthier, but otherwise almost as limited as those which they would have acquired in the Zenana. They are as apt to fall as easy victims to the European parasite, with his string of third-rate race-horses, as their fathers did to the Court astrologer and the pandar. Only a few of the wealthiest Princes can send their sons out of the country to be educated in Europe, where they may have an opportunity of obtaining new ideas and adjusting their values to the modern world in which they will have to play their part.”

The manner in which the revenue of the States is expended is shown in the following analysis of the budget for 1929-30 of the Government of His Highness the Maharajah of Bikaner, who is so highly esteemed by the British Government that he has been appointed one of the Indian delegates to the League of Nations Assembly :

	<i>Rupees</i>	
✓ Civil List . . . . .	1,255,000	(£94,125)
Wedding of the Prince . . . . .	825,000	(£61,875)
Buildings and Roads . . . . .	618,384	(£46,378)
Extension of Royal Palace . . . . .	426,614	(£31,996)
Royal Family . . . . .	224,865	(£18,364)
Education . . . . .	222,979	(£16,723)
Medical Services . . . . .	188,138	(£14,110)

	<i>Rupees</i>	
Public Utility Works . . . . .	30,761	(£2,307)
Sanitation . . . . .	5,729	(£429)

Bikaner is the seventh largest of the Indian States in area and has a population of 660,000.

Sometimes an attempt is made to camouflage the expenditure upon the ruling family. In the annual report of the Limbdi State (1926-27), for example, there is an amount of one lakh fifty thousand (over £11,000) under the costs of the Education Department. The whole of this sum was spent on the education of the heir-apparent, Maharaj Kumar ! Similarly, the money spent on the construction of the roads inside the Royal Palace grounds is shown under the heading of the Public Works Department. In the budget of the State of Indore for 1926-27 an amount of six lakhs is shown under the Public Works Department, which was in reality spent on the construction of a Royal Palace in the garden of Lalbagh. Another item of one lakh (over £7,400) for the same department was spent on hunting preserves for the ruling family. If these items had been given their proper heading, the Palace costs would have amounted to 26 per cent. of the total income !

The kind of legislation enforced against any expression of ideas is indicated by the following provision of an Act promulgated by the Maharajah of Alwar :

“ A meeting of more than five persons shall be presumed to be a public meeting within the meaning of this Act, until the contrary is proved. No public meeting shall be held for the discussion of any subject likely to cause a disturbance or of any political subject, or for the exhibition and distribution of any writing or printed matter relating to any such subject. At any public meeting no such subjects shall be discussed or preached which are likely to do anything which may be contrary to the interests of Alwar State, its Government, its sovereign,

or against the interests of His Majesty the King-Emperor of India, his Government, or against the interests of any other ruling Prince of India. No person shall concern himself or conspire in governing, organising, or otherwise knowingly taking part in such public meetings. No one may write, print, or publish, or circulate, or attempt to write, print, or publish, or circulate, any article or document inside the State, or outside it, which has a tendency, indirect or direct, against the interests of His Highness the Maharajah of Alwar and his Royal Family or his Government, or His Majesty the King-Emperor of India, or any other ruling Prince of India. No person may subscribe or import or hold in his possession any such article. Such persons, whenever found, shall be punished with imprisonment for five years or fines amounting to two thousand rupees. The offenders, if necessary, may be ordered to quit the State.”

It is not only the Princes who are responsible for such repressive legislation. If a ruler dies and his eldest son is not of age, the duty of administration is placed with a Regency Council under the control of the British authorities. An Act of the Regency Council of Jodhpur, still in force, prohibits “word either spoken or written” or “sign or visible representations or otherwise” which excites or attempts to excite disloyalty; prohibits public meetings likely to cause “disturbance of public tranquillity”; prohibits literature hostile to the British or State Governments; compels all with knowledge that any other person has such literature to report within forty-eight hours; and prohibits the giving of shelter to any seditious person, as well as correspondence with any such persons! It is stated that 90 per cent. of the Indian States have despotic enactments of this character.

A few Indian States, which have had strong and enlightened rulers, enjoy administrations more advanced than

is the rule in British India. In certain States, for instance, the educational standards are much higher than in British India generally. The following table shows the comparative literacy in three of the Indian States and in British India as a whole :

	<i>Literates per 100 males of 5 and over</i>	<i>Literates per 100 females of 5 and over</i>
Travancore State . . . . .	38.0	17.3
Cochin State . . . . .	31.7	11.5
Baroda State . . . . .	24.0	4.7
British India . . . . .	14.4	2.0

The educational conditions in Mysore are also comparatively good. The figures there are 14.3 and 2.2 respectively.

ONE OF THE BETTER STATES

Mysore may be taken as typical of the best-administered of the larger Indian States. Primary education is now compulsory, and secondary and high school education has extended considerably. The standard of the high school is that of the London matriculation examination. The returns for 1928-29 showed the following roll of students :

Universities . . . . .	3,684
Secondary schools (626) . . . . .	37,998
Primary schools (6,381) . . . . .	255,001
Special schools (93) . . . . .	4,449

An interesting development is the planning of education among the peasants by means of wireless.

The economic conditions in Mysore are much the same as those in British India. The country is mainly agricultural, and the land is leased direct from the Government.



There are cotton mills at Bangalore and goldfields at Kolar under European control. Low wages, slum life, and arbitrary rules limit the existence of the industrial workers, as in British India, though the Government has recently introduced a Workmen's Compensation Act for the goldfields.

The women of Mysore generally remain in the subordinate position common in Southern India, but the establishment of educational institutions for girls is rapidly changing their status. In 1928-29, four women took the B.A. degree and one the M.A. There are two University colleges for girls, five high schools, and 788 other schools. The total number of girl students in 1928-29 was 61,308. The number of women employed in industry is growing, but is still small. A number of Brahmin women are employed as teachers, and there is a good deal of work done by women in home industries, such as sewing, embroidery, spinning, weaving, match-making, and sericulture.

The State of Mysore is distinguished for its use of electrical power. Electricity has been generated from the Kaveri Falls at Sivasamundram for nearly thirty years, supplying power for the Kolar goldfields, oil-extraction, saw-mills, rice-mills, pumping water for irrigation, etc., and for lighting about twenty important towns. Power is also generated on a small scale at Bhadravathi, where the State owns successful iron-works, and the harnessing of the Tog Falls in the Western district of Shimoga is to be undertaken, as well as a second fall at Kaveri. Mysore prides itself on recognising that this is an electrical age.

The people of Mysore are still without effective control of their government, but the Constitution is capable of development towards a democratic system and the tendency is in that direction. The Parliament consists of two Chambers. The Legislative Council has fifty members, twenty-two of whom, are directly elected. There are eight members nominated to represent special interests; the

remaining twenty are officials. The Council has recently been given power to vote the items of the Budget, with the exception of certain reserved heads.

The Representative Assembly has 250 members. The property qualification of voters has recently been considerably reduced and the sex disqualification of women has been removed. Fifteen seats have been allotted to special interests (including Labour), to be filled, as far as possible, by election through recognised associations. Important measures of legislation are placed before the Assembly, but it has no power of veto or initiative. Its function is limited to the adoption of resolutions relating to general principles.

The Constitution of Mysore is important as indicating the lines along which the problem of the representation of minority communities may be solved. There is a common electorate, but the Moslems, Indian Christians, and depressed classes are guaranteed a minimum number of seats. Other communities which number 20,000 or more persons, and which fail to obtain representation through the general electorate, may be represented through associations satisfying certain conditions, or the Government may nominate representatives. By this means it is sought to secure the rights of minorities without widening and perpetuating the cleavages between the communities.

The expenditure of Mysore State may be contrasted with that of the other States to which I have referred and that of British India. These are the principal items :

	<i>Rupees</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Administration . . .	658,800 (£48,800)	18
Education . . . . .	507,900 (£37,622)	14
Interest on Debt . . .	365,000 (£27,037)	10
Palace . . . . .	261,000 (£19,333)	7
Army . . . . .	188,600 (£13,970)	5
Police . . . . .	163,600 (£12,118)	4.5
Pensions and allowances	151,300 (£11,207)	4

	<i>Rupees</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Communications . . . . .	142,900 (£10,585)	4
Irrigation . . . . .	140,300 (£10,392)	4
Medical . . . . .	116,000 (£8,600)	3.5
Courts of Law . . . . .	103,900 (£7,696)	3

It will be remembered that in British India one-third of the national expenditure goes to the Civil Service, one-third to the Forces, one-fourteenth to education, and one twenty-eighth to health.

#### FUTURE RELATIONS WITH INDIA

The backwardness of many of the Indian States, compared with the conditions even in British India, is often used as an argument in favour of British administration. The explanation lies in two directions. First, the States are mostly so situated geographically that under any circumstances it would be expected that they would be more backward than the rest of India. The Indian States, for the most part, were not annexed by the East India Company and the British, because they were distant or because they were mountainous or desert territories, sparsely populated and out of the main stream of Indian life. Such territories would tend to remain primitive and unprogressive, just as the isolated mountainous and sparsely populated territories of Europe have remained untouched by the progressive movements of Western civilisation. In any Continent it is the populations which are near the coast and main trade routes which progress most, because they come into contact with other peoples and civilisations and ideas, and respond to the incentive to develop in order to meet industrial needs.

Secondly, the effect of British policy has been to increase the prestige and power of the Princes and to repress revolts

against their tyranny on the part of their peoples. The fact that the Maharajahs have had the might of the British Empire behind them has strengthened their hold over their subjects. Where Indian States have progressed, the advance has been largely due to enlightened rulers, who have used their autocratic power for good rather than evil.

The future relationship of the Indian States to British India is of the greatest importance to the development of India as a whole. If the States remain independent and largely autocratic bodies, the unification of India on a democratic basis will become impossible. The Indian Princes are desperately resisting all suggestions that they should become responsible in any way to a self-governing India, and the British authorities are helping them by insisting that their treaty rights are with the Crown, rather than with the Government of India.

Before the reforms of 1921, the British Government dealt separately with the various Princes, but in that year a Chamber of Princes was set up in Delhi, to which 108 Princes belong in their own right, and in which twelve Princes sit as representatives of 127 States whose independence is more limited. This Chamber is only an advisory body, and the duty of its Standing Committee is limited to advising the Viceroy upon occasions which affect the States generally and their relation to British India. It is of some significance that four of the most important States—Mysore, Travancore, Indore, and Hyderabad—have refused to participate even in the consultative proceedings of this Chamber, on the ground that participation would limit their independent sovereign rights.

#### THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

But whilst the Princes and the British Government are emphasising the independence of the States, a growing sense of unity is developing between the peoples of the

States and the popular Nationalist Movement in British India. The repressive régime in most of the Indian States has prevented the definite organisation of democratic movements ; where courageous men have attempted the task, they have had to face imprisonment and even death. But, despite persecution, a People's movement—often with headquarters outside the States—has begun to take root. I was present in Bombay in 1927 at a remarkable conference of the peoples of the Indian States, at which more than eighty of the large States were represented. In a vast tent about 3,000 Indians met under the chairmanship of Mr. M. Ramchandra Rao, to voice the demands of the voiceless millions who are ruled by the Princes.

The resolutions which were adopted were significant. Representative institutions were demanded, control over Budgets, an independent judiciary, and rights of free speech, free Press, and association. But no less emphasis was placed upon a resolution saying :

“ That for a speedy attainment of Swaraj for India as a whole, the Indian States should be brought into constitutional relations with British India, and the peoples of the Indian States should be assigned a definite place and effective voice in all matters of common concern in any new Constitution that may be devised for the whole of India.”

Ultimately there can be no doubt that the peoples of the Indian States will become united with the rest of India. The present differentiation is artificial ; it does not represent race or religion or even geographical characteristics. The frontiers have just happened by political accident, reflecting the territorial rights of chiefs rather than the common interests of the peoples. It is true that considerable personal loyalty to the rulers remains, but this is of decreasing

influence and is not stronger than the sense of kinship with Indians of the same race and religions across the frontiers.

The members of the Simon Commission point out that in the journey from Bombay to Delhi the boundary between what is and what is not British territory is crossed many times :

“ The frontiers which divide the States from British India do not, as a rule, present any prominent physical feature. The boundary has been drawn as it is either because the limit of the State jurisdiction has thus been laid down long ago, or as the result of negotiations and agreement in the days of British expansion. It rarely happens that the political outlines of an Indian State are coincident with racial or linguistic divisions. For instance, there are more Sikhs in the Punjab province than in the Sikh States ; and more Mahrattas in the Bombay Presidency than under the rule of the Mahratta Princes. On the other hand, the bulk of the Kanarese-speaking peoples are subjects of the Maharajah of Mysore, while others live in parts of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.”

An Indian who has occupied a high post in the administration of the State of Mysore recently sent me a letter in which, despite his pride in the efficiency and progress of the State, he acknowledged in clear terms the underlying kinship of the people with the rest of India :

“ The cultural heritage of Mysore is essentially Indian and not Mysorean. The instincts and intelligence of the people are the same as those of the Madrascers, the political boundary being a cross-line across a homogeneous community. The Kannada-speaking people of the Western Malabar, Coorg, Southern Bombay, and the ceded districts in Madras are all in touch with one  
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another, and are developing one literature, the Mysore University working as their nucleus and brain. Whatever is good for one, is considered as good for the other. Life is one, and artificial barriers cannot divide it. Mysore has a branch of the Indian National Congress, and almost all the educated classes are enthusiastic in its cause."

Despite the unity of sentiment between the peoples, there is little hope of an immediate solution by which the Indian States will become an integral part of a self-governing India. It may be possible to bring the largest States into some federal relationship with a responsible Indian Government ; it may be possible for a Central Government of India to absorb the smaller States, or bring about amalgamation, by the payment of monetary compensation to the ruling Princes. But Indian Nationalists who are looking forward to a united India will have to take a longer view of the question. They must rely eventually upon the growth of the popular national sentiment already penetrating the Indian States, and seek to encourage it by the example they give of good government within the territory of British India when they come to control it.

"In the States as they are at present constituted the only rule of law is the will of the Princes," Mr. Motilal Nehru has said.

"Is it conceivable," he asked, "that the people of these States, fired by the same ambitions and aspirations as the people in British India, will quietly submit to such a rule for any length of time, or that the people in British India, having the closest ties of family, race, and religion with them, will acquiesce in their brethren on the other side of an imaginary line being governed by little autocrats, while they themselves enjoy some kind of responsible government?"

When faced with the problem of the Indian States, as with many other Indian problems, one is forced to the conclusion that the only real solution will be the growth of a mass revolutionary movement overriding all political and social barriers. If once a movement of this kind begins in British India—challenging the land system and overthrowing the Zemindars—nothing can save the Princes from the same fate.



## CHAPTER V

# THE GROWTH OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

**T**owards the middle of the nineteenth century, Indian organisations began definitely to put forward demands for a share in the government of their country. The Committee of the House of Commons which reported in 1853 recorded the reception of petitions from a number of Indian associations asking in a rather timid way for representation upon Indian administrative and legislative bodies. The most emphatic came from Bombay. "The time has arrived," said the Indian association of that Presidency, "when the natives of India are entitled to a much larger share than they have hitherto had in the administration of the affairs of their country," and the "Councils of the Local Governments should, in matters of general policy and legislation, be opened, so as to admit of respectable and intelligent natives taking a part in the discussion of matters of general interest to the country."

### THE NATIONAL CONGRESS FORMED

It was not until 1885, however, that All-India organisation was given to the aspirations of the Indian people towards national liberty. In that year the Indian National Congress was formed, and from that time onwards it has exerted an ever-increasing influence upon the policy of the Government. It was in response to an agitation of the Congress that the Act of 1892 was passed, reforming and

expanding the powers of the Legislative Councils. Lord Morley's reforms of 1909 were also directly attributable to the pressure of the Congress. Still more important has been the work of the Congress in educating Indian opinion, in developing a national consciousness and self-respect, and in bringing a sense of solidarity between different sects and castes.

For many years the Congress was a very moderate assembly, but recently the growth of the demand for national freedom has been extraordinarily rapid, and, side by side with the increased strength of the movement numerically, there has developed an increased intensity of purpose and a growing impatience with compromising and, what may be termed petitioning, methods. The new spirit first found expression in the Congress of Delhi, 1918, when there was a fundamental difference of opinion on the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme which had then been recently tabled. Since that time the Indian Nationalist Movement has been divided into two broad sections, the "Moderates" meeting separately, but there can be little doubt that the Congress has continued to represent the mass of Indian political opinion.

The war accelerated the awakening of national political consciousness, as it did among all subject peoples. The phrases which were used so lightly by American and European statesmen about liberty and self-determination had a wider and deeper effect than they anticipated. The peoples of India accepted them literally, and anticipated the dawn of a new era when the war concluded.

Those anticipations were heightened by a visit to India of the Montagu mission to prepare the details of a scheme of self-government. India was told she was to become a partner with Britain and the Dominions in the Empire, and she believed that the long period of political subjection had passed.

During the war, exceptional legislation was passed in

India as it was in this country, gravely restricting the liberties of the people. The most oppressive of these measures was the Defence of India Act, similar to the British D.O.R.A. The Indian people resented these restrictions greatly, but decided to wait the coming of peace in the hope that they would then be withdrawn. When, five months after the conclusion of the Armistice, the Government introduced and carried measures known as the Rowlatt Acts, with the object of perpetuating the most tyrannical features of the Defence Act, and, indeed, of adding to them, their indignation became intense. Never before in the history of British rule, not even at the time of the Mutiny, had such manifestations of anger occurred. The Indian people saw their hopes of political liberty dashed to the ground. Had the Indian leaders at this moment done anything to encourage rebellion terrible events would undoubtedly have taken place.

#### MR. GANDHI STEPS IN

At this moment, however, Mahatma Gandhi, the pacifist idealist leapt to the front as leader. He succeeded in turning the indignation of the people into the *Satyagraha*, a great passive resistance movement. The *Satyagraha* was commenced by a day of cessation of work, of fasting, of prayer, and of public mourning. In all the great cities silent demonstrations, attended by thousands of people, were held. Perhaps the most significant feature of this impressive national protest was the unity expressed between the Hindus and the Mussulmans. Hindus attended the Mussulman mosques and Mussulmans attended the Hindu temples.

An intense religious atmosphere dominated the demonstrations, and had not the Government intervened, it is unlikely that there would have been any disorder. In Delhi, however, two passive resisters were arrested, and because a few stones were thrown the troops fired on the

crowd, with fatal results. Mr. Gandhi hurried to Delhi to calm the people but was arrested on the way and taken back to Bombay.

At Amritsar the two most popular leaders were arrested. A crowd thereupon proceeded to march to the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow to protest, but it was forced to turn back and in the process was fired upon and two men were killed and several injured. That was the beginning of the serious disturbances which occurred in the Punjab.

No one denies that deplorable outrages occurred on the part of the angered Indians. They murdered two bank managers ; they assaulted a lady missionary ; they burnt buildings. But these outrages sink into insignificance compared with those committed by the British authorities.

At Jallianwala Bagh, General Dyer fired indiscriminately and without warning upon over ten thousand unarmed Indians, men, women, and children, killing 379 and wounding 1,200 (the official estimate ; the casualties were certainly larger). The firing was prolonged even during the flight of the crowd in order " to create a wide impression," and the wounded were left lying on the ground unattended. For several days every Indian passing through the streets in which the English missionary had been assaulted was made to crawl on his stomach. Indians were publicly flogged in the streets, and at Kasur six schoolboys were flogged, not because they had been proved guilty, but because they were the biggest, to create an example. In Lahore, students had to attend roll-call four times a day, involving a sixteen miles walk in the burning sun. Indians were bombed indiscriminately from aeroplanes and fired upon from armoured trains, resulting in the loss of many lives. This is a bare summary of the worst acts of frightfulness committed.

These events naturally aroused deep indignation in India, but if the Government had dissociated itself from them and given expression to its disapproval by appropriate

action, the Indian peoples would have accepted them as crimes for which a few officials were responsible and would not have branded either the British Government or the British nation with them. But the attitude of the Government, and of a large section of influential Englishmen, towards those who committed these atrocities, convinced the most influential Indian leaders that the British administration was utterly alien in spirit, as well as race, and that further co-operation with it would be dishonouring to their nation.

This alien attitude was revealed :

(1) In the absence of any censure upon either Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, who completely failed to control the situation in the Punjab, or Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who was responsible for the policy which led to the disturbances and who endorsed the methods of the military in suppressing them ;

(2) In the mild punishment imposed upon General Dyer, who was merely withdrawn from a position of command, a degradation suffered by thousands of officers during the war and considered by even Mr. Winston Churchill as insufficient for General Dyer ; and

(3) In the failure to punish other officers concerned, many of whom retained their posts.

The Europeans in India, said Sir W. Joynson-Hicks (now Lord Brentford), endorsed General Dyer's action ; the vote carried in the House of Lords condemning even the mild punishment which General Dyer received, and the testimonial of £20,000 raised for General Dyer by English subscribers at home and in India, deepened the bad impression to which the Government's failure to dissociate itself adequately from the Punjab crimes gave rise.

Meanwhile, a development occurred which was equally

erious in its effects. There are 75,000,000 Mussulmans in India. During the war their loyalty to the British Government was seriously strained, owing to their religious association with Turkey, but they received what they considered to be satisfactory pledges, and accordingly co-operated with the allied cause. But when the war was over they found that their religious convictions had been isolated in the terms of the Turkish treaty.

#### THE NON-CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The results of the disillusionment occasioned by these events were seen in the decision of the special session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in September 1920. A programme of non-co-operation was adopted by an overwhelming majority. Its terms were as follows :

“(a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices, and resignation of nominated posts in local bodies :

“(b) Refusal to attend Government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions, held by Government officials or in their honour :

“(c) Gradual withdrawal of all children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of National schools and colleges in the various provinces :

“(d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts by them for the settlement of private disputes :

“(e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical, and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia :

“(f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reform Councils, and refusals on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress's advice, offer himself for election :

“(g) Boycott of foreign goods and stimulation of native industries (this last is summarised).”

The rapid development of opinion in India at this time may be judged by the fact that ten months previous to the Calcutta decision the Indian National Congress had decided to make the best of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. The result of the non-co-operation of the Congress was reflected in the small percentage of voters who participated in the election of the members to the Legislative Councils. The following were the figures as published by the India Office : Madras 25 per cent., Bombay 34.9 per cent., Bengal 33.4 per cent., United Provinces 33 per cent., Punjab 32.2 per cent., Bihar and Orissa 3.7 per cent., Central Provinces and Berar 22.5 per cent., and Assam 24.2 per cent.

The decision of the Indian National Congress to boycott the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils was subsequently modified by the adoption of the policy of nominating candidates with the declared object of obstructing British rule and utilising the platform provided by these public bodies to further the demand for full self-government. The “Moderates” decided to co-operate in the new form of Government, but the “Swarajist” Party (as the Congress nominees came to be known) secured both in the Legislative Assembly and most of the Provinces a majority of the elected members. In actual practice, the “Moderates” and “Swarajists” frequently acted together to press forward Indian demands, only to find them persistently vetoed by the British authorities.

## CHAPTER VI

### MAHATMA GANDHI

**M**ahatma Gandhi, the Indian Nationalist leader, is, without doubt, the most remarkable political figure in the world to-day. He is remarkable because he has more personal followers than any other leader and because his teaching and policy directly challenge all the accepted political theories and practices.

Gandhi in appearance is the last man in the world one would recognise as a leader of men. He is physically insignificant, small and frail; he has a wizened face, protruding ears, closely cropped hair, a short moustache, irregular teeth. It is only when he smiles that the beauty of his character is revealed; then there is about him the sweetness and simplicity of a child. His dark, luminous eyes are the one physical feature which make him impressive.

Gandhi dresses only in a loin-cloth and a shawl hanging loosely over his shoulders. His body is wasted and thin, though one notices the breadth of his shoulders. There is nothing of the demagogue about him. When he addresses a meeting he usually sits, often turning a spinning-wheel as he speaks, reasoning quietly, persuading gently. He has none of the gifts of the orator.

The physical insignificance of Gandhi makes the spiritual influence which he radiates more remarkable. When I met him, I was seriously ill in a Madras hospital. I was feverish and in pain. He came and sat by my bed for half an hour during each of the four days he was in Madras. He spoke little, but he had an extraordinarily soothing and



strengthening effect upon me. There was healing merely in the touch of his hand.

Gandhi's influence over the millions of India is political only incidentally. Its basis is religious. Multitudes of people regard him as a saint. This is due as much to his life as to his teaching. It is the saintliness of his character which gives power to his words. He denounces what he regards as evil in unsparing terms—whether it be the “satanic” government of Britain or the degrading customs of his own people,—but he is gentle and kind to all men and women, to the “untouchable” as certainly as to the Viceroy. His love of humanity is as deep as his hatred of inhumanity.

Gandhi is instinctively called Mahatma (“great soul”) by the people of India. It is a title given in their ancient sacred books to those rare souls who “by communion with knowledge and love unite themselves to God.”

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHI

It is difficult to convey the full significance of the philosophy of Gandhi. He has called his life a “Search for Truth,” and that has been his unceasing aim. Utter sincerity, the overcoming of all prejudices and passions and appetites which blind the clear vision of the soul—that has been his object. Though he has lived so much in the battle of life, he has tried to bring to it the calm and universality of the seer who lives above the battle. He has sought to play his part in the finite by living in tune with the infinite. Whilst disclaiming the rôle of a saint, Gandhi has only become a politician with reluctance. “The word ‘saint’ should be ruled out of present life,” he once wrote. “It is too sacred a word to be lightly applied to anybody, much less to one, like myself, who claims only to be a humble searcher after truth. . . . The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and, if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us to-day

like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how one tries."

The great truth which Gandhi has discovered is the power of love. He has such a sense of spiritual unity with all men and women that he cannot do violence against them. But this very love for mankind makes him hate the more wrongs done to mankind. If one must not do violence to man, that does not mean that one must not resist violence upon man. Having seen the Right, one must live loyally to it at all costs, one must refuse to countenance wrong at all costs. Anyone who sees wrong and does not resist it, anyone who sees right and does not assert it, is living insincerely and untruthfully.

This conviction makes Gandhi much more than a negative passive resister to evil. He is a positive active asserter of good. He would prefer physical violence to spiritual cowardice. "Non-violence," he says, "does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. . . . I would risk violence a thousand times rather than the emasculation of the race. . . . Where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I advise violence. I cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing. But to him who has not this courage, I advise killing and being killed rather than shamefully fleeing from danger. For he who runs away commits mental violence ; he runs because he has not the courage to be killed while he kills."

It is Gandhi's conviction that if, in the assertion of truth and justice, a people are prepared to meet death without causing death, the power behind them is infinitely greater than physical force. If they are motivated by love, they are unconquerable and ultimately irresistible. He calls his inner circle of followers *Satyagrahas*—*satya*, "righteous" ; *graha*, "endeavour"—the disciples of "truth-force."

So great is Gandhi's sense of unity with his fellows that he accepts their wrongdoing as his own. His action in

punishing himself when his followers have broken his creed of non-violence has perplexed many. Perhaps its significance can be expressed in this way : If in a small group of people, united in affection and purpose, one person commits a wrong, he is much more likely to feel his wrongdoing and to refrain from repetition if the rest of the group take the consequences upon themselves and accept the punishment for it. So it is with Gandhi. When an evil action is committed in the community of his *Ashram*, he assumes responsibility himself and fasts and does penance. When those who take part in his movement of non-violent resistance commit violence, he takes the shame to himself. The knowledge that their revered leader is imposing suffering upon himself influences thousands of his followers to determine that they will only act in future according to his principles.

If I have succeeded in explaining this fundamental faith of Gandhi, the description of his life which follows will be understood more fully. Gandhi will probably live in history as a saint. Has any previous saint of history lived a life so full of public activity ?

#### GANDHI'S LIFE STORY

Gandhi's father was the Prime Minister of an Indian State, and contributed the instinct of public service to his son's character. The religious strain in Gandhi was contributed by his mother. He was a shy and sensitive boy. Each day he ran home from school because he could not bear anyone to talk to him. Even then he had an extraordinary reverence for truth. " I do not remember ever having told a lie during this period, either to my teacher or to my schoolmates," he writes. He recalls this without boastfulness ; it was just his nature.

According to custom, marriage was imposed by his parents at the age of thirteen. He had no knowledge of its coming until the preparations began. " I do not think it

meant to me anything more," he wrote later, "than a prospect of good clothes to wear, drum beating, marriage processions, rich dinners, and a strange girl to play with. The carnal desire came later." Of the sexual side of this early marriage Gandhi has written with great frankness and with a shame that is pathetic. As one reads, one realises a new cruelty in the child marriage system. It is not only cruel for the girl ; it is cruel for the boy, in thrusting sexual experience upon him before judgment and self-control develop. Who can blame Gandhi for what he confesses ?

Whilst still in his 'teens Gandhi came to England to study law. He had great difficulty in securing the consent of his mother for the journey, but finally received her blessing after taking the vow not to touch "wine, women, or meat." Meat eating was regarded in his home as a deadly sin, and, though Gandhi confesses to the surreptitious eating of flesh as a schoolboy, he developed in later years very strong personal convictions on the question. The vow meant that he almost starved in London for a time, but one day he found a vegetarian restaurant, and he afterwards became an active member of the Vegetarian Society.

When he returned to India three years later, Gandhi was still timid and without self-confidence. He completely failed in his first legal case. "I stood up, but my heart sank into my boots," he stated afterwards. "My head was reeling and I felt as though the whole Court was doing likewise. I could think of no question to ask. The Judge must have laughed and the *vakils* (lawyers) no doubt enjoyed the spectacle. But I was past seeing anything. I sat down and told the agent that I could not conduct the case."

It was not until Gandhi went to South Africa, in early manhood, that, quite suddenly it seems, he developed self-reliance. He was commissioned to assist in a big compensation case. On the way to Pretoria, a railway official sought to turn him out of a first-class carriage, despite his ticket, because he was coloured. He refused to leave voluntarily, and

a constable had to push him out. He refused to enter another compartment, and the train steamed away, leaving him to spend the night in the waiting-room.

That night determined Gandhi's future. He was bitterly cold, but, still timid and sensitive, he did not dare to ask for his overcoat (the station authorities had his luggage). Should he fight for his rights, or accept the humiliation without protest and flee from further insult back to India? One can imagine the young Indian, shivering in the dark waiting-room, a lonely, friendless figure, tortured in mind, his shy nature urging him to acquiesce, yet the very sensitiveness which made him timid also making him feel keenly the insult to his race. Finally came the decision. He would strive to overcome the colour prejudice and face hardships in the process; but he would only seek to redress personal wrongs in so far as it would be necessary to remove the racial wrong.

Gandhi had to undergo further insults before he reached Pretoria, and when he got there he found that they were the daily lot of the Indians. But he would not acquiesce. He called a meeting of the Indian community. It was characteristic of him that he urged his countrymen to be worthy of liberty as well as to demand it. He denounced their untruthfulness, uncleanness, and religious antagonisms.

#### GANDHI'S SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

The Indian Association of Pretoria was followed by the more ambitious Natal Indian Congress, which Gandhi established later at Durban. For two years he remained in South Africa, to lead the agitation against the colour bar. He was quick to assert the human rights of his countrymen, but he never acted vindictively against anyone who did him personal wrong. He refused, for example, to obey the regulation prohibiting Indians from walking on the paths, but when he was kicked into the street he declined to take

proceedings. "What does the poor man know?" he asked.

But if he accepted personal affront without retaliation, Gandhi did not fail to agitate spiritedly against the wrongs from which Indians suffered—the inequalities, the disfranchisement, the poll tax on indentured labourers. He went back to India to arouse opinion against this last injustice, and so infuriated was White South Africa by his reported utterances, that it seemed unlikely that he would ever be allowed to land alive at Durban again.

This incident well reveals the deeper courage beneath Gandhi's timidity. There were two boats of Indians; they were told they would be pushed into the sea if they attempted to come on shore. Gandhi encouraged his companions to maintain their right to land, whilst influencing them against hatred or violence. In his autobiography he describes how he met the doubts of his companions:

"Supposing the whites carry out their threats, how will you stand by your principle of non-violence?" they asked. To which he replied: "I hope God will give me the courage and the sense to forgive them and to refrain from bringing them to law. I have no anger against them. I am only sorry for their ignorance and narrowness. I know that they sincerely believe that what they are doing to-day is right and proper. I have no reason, therefore, to be angry with them."

On landing, Gandhi was mobbed and assaulted, and a howling crowd surrounded the house, singing:

*We'll hang old Gandhi  
On the sour apple-tree.*

But his vindication quickly followed. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, cabled from London instructing the arrest of Gandhi's assailants. Gandhi declined to prosecute. Then the leading Natal paper printed an interview in which Gandhi was able to prove from the manuscripts of his speeches in India that he had never used the phrases attributed to him. "The interview, and my refusal

to prosecute the assailants, produced such a profound impression that the Europeans of Durban were ashamed of their conduct," he wrote afterwards. The Press declared him innocent, and the reaction enhanced the prestige both of Gandhi and the Indian community. "Thus the lynching ultimately proved to be a blessing in disguise."

Gandhi then devoted himself entirely to the struggle on behalf of his fellow-countrymen. He renounced a lucrative practice of £5,000 a year and, like Francis of Assisi, embraced poverty, living within an agricultural colony on Tolstoyan lines near Durban. From here he conducted a vigorous agitation, publishing a weekly journal, *Indian Opinion*, in English and two other languages; organising demonstrations and petitions to the Imperial Parliament; and finally setting on foot a remarkable movement of non-violent resistance. In the course of this campaign Gandhi underwent every kind of suffering, being imprisoned twice and assaulted by the mob to the point of death. But by 1914 he had won through. General Smuts, who had said in 1909 that he would never erase the anti-Indian legislation from the Statute Book "happily agreed," five years later, to remove it. Thus the capitation tax on Indians was abolished and Indians were permitted to reside in Natal as free men.

It is characteristic of Gandhi that, in the midst of his struggle with the British, he volunteered immediate help when they were in critical difficulties. During the Boer War he organised an Indian Red Cross Service, which was twice mentioned for its bravery under fire; he organised a hospital in Johannesburg in 1904, when plague was devastating the population; and in 1906 he again established an Indian ambulance corps for service in the Zulu war.

His object in South Africa achieved, Gandhi returned to India to co-operate with Gokhale and Tilak, two of the great national leaders of the last generation, in the campaign for self-government. But the outbreak of the Great

War postponed the campaign. Accepting the declared aims of the war "to make the world safe for democracy" and "self-determination for all peoples," Gandhi immediately organised an Indian ambulance corps, and later took an active part in encouraging Indians to enlist in the British cause. He was present at the War Conference at Delhi in 1918, when a message was read from the King declaring that "the need of the Empire is India's opportunity," and evidently looked forward to the recognition of India's claims when victory came.

#### THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

When, after the war, instead of increased liberty, India was given increased tyranny, Gandhi began a campaign of resistance on the same lines that had been so successful in South Africa. The campaign was opened with an All-India *hartal* (stoppage of work) and a day of fasting, prayer, and penance. Except in Delhi, the day passed with impressive order and disciplined restraint. In the capital, a dispute arose between a demonstration and a stalk-keeper, and the military shot on the crowd which gathered.

Gandhi hastened to Delhi to influence the people towards strict non-violence and to relieve the sufferings of those who had been wounded. He was arrested *en route* and sent back to Bombay. The exasperation caused by this action was intensified by the deportation from Amritsar of two influential leaders, Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal. A crowd which was proceeding in an orderly way to the house of the Deputy Commissioner to ask for their release was fired upon with fatal results, and two days later the Amritsar "massacre" occurred.

For a time Gandhi suspended his campaign on account of the violence which had taken place, but, when the Government showed no indication of changing its policy, he re-commenced organised resistance with the support of the



National Congress. Hundreds of Indians surrendered titles and rewards received from the British (Gandhi returned the medals he had received for his ambulance work); students left the British colleges and schools; magistrates resigned and disputes were taken to improvised Indian courts; foreign cloth was burned; and drink (an important source of revenue to the Government) was boycotted. At first the Government treated the "non-co-operation" movement with contempt, but within a few months it took extensive and vigorous action against it. The volunteer organisations of passive resisters were suppressed, the Seditious Meeting Act was promulgated, and thousands of Indians were imprisoned on mere suspicion.

Meanwhile, violence again occurred. Two hundred unarmed Sikhs were killed in a religious conflict in the Punjab, where the Government supported the claims of the assailants. Riots accompanied by bloodshed broke out in two or three cities, and 12,000 coolies on strike in the Assam tea gardens were attacked by the troops. A Moslem community in Malabar rebelled first against the Government and then attacked the Hindu population (Gandhi sought to intervene, but was prevented by the Government from proceeding on his mission of peace). A mob got out of hand in Bombay, on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales; tramcars were burned, liquor shops smashed, and some Parsee women were molested.

Gandhi, who was holding a meeting in another part of Bombay, rushed to the scene, censured the crowds, and ordered them to disperse. He asserted that the Parsees had the right to welcome the Prince if they desired, and declared that nothing could excuse unworthy violence. At first his appeal succeeded; then the mobs broke loose again and during the next few days many persons were killed and wounded.

"Pierced as by an arrow," Gandhi again suspended the campaign. He declared that such doings rendered mass

civil disobedience impossible, and imposed upon himself a religious fast of twenty-four hours every week as penance for the violence of his followers.

But the Government only intensified the oppression. Thousands of Indians were arrested, including many of the best known leaders. When the National Congress met at Ahmedabad in December 1921, the principle of non-co-operation was re-affirmed and complete authority to organise non-violent resistance was delegated to Gandhi. He announced that the refusal of taxes would begin in Bardoli ; but, scarcely had his letter been posted to the Viceroy than the riot of Chauri Chaura took place, changing all his plans.

An unarmed procession was attacked by the police, who in turn were overpowered and sought refuge in the police station. The mob set fire to the station, and the police were either burned to death or killed.

#### A REMARKABLE "CONFESSION"

Gandhi was overwhelmed by this tragedy, and called off the whole of the Civil Disobedience campaign. He took entirely upon himself the sins of his people. On February 16th, 1922, he published his *Confession*, surely one of the most remarkable documents ever written by a political leader.

"God has been abundantly kind to me," he wrote. "He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which, and which alone, can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil—which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

"He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred ; Amribar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps,

called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass Civil Disobedience but even my own, which I know was intended to be civil and non-violent.

“The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave me a terrific warning. He made me an eye-witness. . . . I stopped mass Civil Disobedience. . . . The humiliation was greater, but it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. . . .

“But the bitterest humiliation is that of to-day. . . . God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. . . . When India hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violence, mob violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. . . . Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India.

“The drastic reversal of the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error. The only virtue I want to claim is truth and non-violence. I lay no claim to super-human powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wear, and am, therefore, as liable to err as any. . . .

“Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt. . . . I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path. . . .

“In Civil Disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil Disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. . . . Its effect is marvellous, though unperceived and gentle. . . . The tragedy of the Chauri Chaura is really the index finger. . . . If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere

of peace, and not think of starting mass Civil Disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of Government provocation. . . .

“Let the opponent glory in our so-called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice than to sin against God. . . . I must undergo personal purification. I must become a fitter instrument, able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility. . . .

“I am imposing on myself a five days’ continuous fast, permitting myself water. . . . I urge non-co-operators not to copy my example, for they are not the originators of disobedience. . . . I have been an unskilful surgeon. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. . . . My fasting is both a penance and a punishment for myself and for those who sinned at Chauri Chaura.

“I would advise those who are guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment, and make a clean confession, for they have injured the very cause they intended to serve. . . . I would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism, and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence.”

When the National Congress met at Delhi in February 1922, a vote of censure upon the decision to drop the Civil Disobedience campaign was moved, but a majority supported Gandhi. The division in the Movement and the lowered prestige of Gandhi led the Government to believe that the moment had come when it could strike. On the evening of March 10th he was arrested.

#### AN HISTORIC TRIAL

Gandhi’s trial will prove an historical event in the annals of India. He frankly pleaded guilty to the charge of causing

disaffection. "Affection," he said, "cannot be regulated or manufactured by law."

"If one has no affection for a system, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he does not excite to violence. . . . The section under which we are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. . . . Some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I have no ill-will against any administration; much less can I have any disaffection towards the King. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under British rule than she ever was before. . . .

"I am here to submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of the citizen. The only course open to you, the judge, is either to resign your post, if you consider the law is an evil, or to inflict upon me the severest penalty, if you believe the system and the law are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the public weal."

Those who were present at this trial describe the extraordinary effect which the nobility of the character and bearing of Gandhi had upon the court. Instinctively everyone rose when he entered. It is the custom to stand when the judge enters. Is there any other case on record where all those in court have risen on the entrance of the prisoner?

The judge was reluctant to pass sentence. "It would be impossible," he said, "to ignore that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and of even saintly life. . . . You have consistently preached against violence, and have done much to prevent violence." A sentence of

six years' simple imprisonment was imposed, the judge adding, "if the Government reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

For nine months Gandhi remained in prison. Then he was seized with abdominal pain, accompanied by fever, and the civil surgeon, diagnosing acute appendicitis, immediately (and without awaiting the necessary authority) conveyed him by car to the Poona hospital and operated. January 8th was observed as a day of national prayer for Gandhi throughout India, and the Government was sought on all hands to release him. On February 4th Gandhi's discharge was signed. Slowly but steadily he recovered.

During the last seven years Gandhi has continued to be active in the Nationalist cause, but until the Calcutta Congress meeting in 1928 he worked mostly in the background. His main concern was to prepare the movement for the inevitable testing time ahead. During the Madras Congress in 1927 I found that Gandhi's one anxiety was to bring about unity between the Moslems and the Hindus. When there was a danger of a division, Gandhi retired from the Congress to seek in silence a basis of agreement and to find the spiritual power which would enable him to secure its acceptance. He succeeded; and his contribution was undoubtedly much greater than if he had been taking a prominent part in the controversies of debate.

Similarly Gandhi has concentrated upon breaking down the caste divisions among the Indians by persistently asserting the claims of the "untouchables" to human equality. He has insisted that an India which despises a class within its own community has no right to complain when it is despised by another race. All through this period Gandhi has been preparing at his *Ashram* near Ahmedabad a group of men and women imbued with his philosophy and spirit, upon whom he could rely when the time of strain came. It was sometimes thought that this semi-retirement from active political controversy meant that the day of Gandhi's

influence had passed. But when the crisis came Gandhi was ready, and he stepped unchallenged to the post of leadership. To-day Gandhi's power is bigger and his followers are greater than during any period of his life.

Before concluding this chapter it will be of interest to indicate Gandhi's attitude towards certain aspects of life—religion, industrialism, war, and sex. His views on some of these questions do not reflect the new young mind of India any more than they reflect the progressive mind of the West. This is particularly the case in his attitude towards industrialism and sex. The intelligent sections of the younger generation in India realise that industrialism cannot be withheld from their country. Their object is to master it and humanise it. Similarly, in the case of sex, there is already the beginning of an appreciation in India of both the personal and social value of birth control. But it is not necessary to accept Gandhi's teaching in all respects to recognise that he is one of the "great ones of the earth."

#### VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY

Gandhi is a Hindu, but he finds Truth in all religions. "During our earthly life there will be these labels [Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity]," he has written. "I would prefer to retain the label of my forefathers so long as it does not cramp my growth and does not debar me from assimilating all that is good anywhere else." Gandhi has such a deep reverence for Christ and accepts so completely the Sermon on the Mount that he has sometimes been charged with being a Christian in secret. "It is both a libel and a compliment," he comments. "A libel because there are men that can believe me to be capable of being secretly anything. The charge is a compliment in that it is a reluctant acknowledgment of my capacity for appreciating

the beauties of Christianity." Gandhi has defined his attitude towards Christianity in these words :

" I believe in the message of Jesus, as I understand it in the Sermon on the Mount, unadulterated. My own humble interpretation of the message is different from the orthodox interpretation. The message has suffered distortion in the West. Much of what to-day passes under the name of Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Let not the people of the East confuse the teaching of the Jesus with what passes as modern civilisation. Let them not be dazzled by the splendour that comes from the West. . . . I say to young men, by all means drink in deep the fountains that are there in the Sermon on the Mount ; but then you will have to take up sackcloth and ashes. You dare not serve God and Mammon both."

#### VIEW OF INDUSTRIALISM

Gandhi regards Western industrialism as an evil, and seeks to save India from it by developing handicrafts to meet the simple needs of the peasants. " This industrial civilisation is a disease, because it is *all* evil," he writes. " India has withstood the onslaughts of other civilisations, because she has stood firm on her own ground. Not that she has not made changes, but the changes she has made have promoted her growth. To change to industrialism is to court disaster. The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. . . . India must not lazily and helplessly say, ' I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world."

Gandhi seeks to identify himself completely with the life of the poor :

" I intend to identify myself with the cause of the poorest of the poor. . . . Unless I am rendered the



humblest of the humble, I cannot experience the direct communion with God that I whole-heartedly cherish to attain. Neither do I relish my repast, nor do I take delight to appear splendidly attired, so long as my humble countrymen remain partially fed, and are practically unattired. The crores [tens of millions] that comprise the population of India do not own even the loin-cloth that I wear. Many of them have not known what shoes would be like. They do not seem to require them. Wherefore are they to procure a shirt and a collar? Who shall furnish them these, though we are ourselves clad in splendid attire?"

#### VIEW OF WAR

One of the features of Gandhi's life and thought which it is difficult to understand is his attitude to war and armaments. His philosophy of non-violence, his opposition to the British Government, and his hatred of Imperialism would lead one to expect that he would decline to participate in war, and particularly in wars waged by Great Britain. Yet one finds that he was active in organising ambulance corps on the British side during the Imperialistic wars against the Boers and the Zulus in 1899 and 1906, and when the Great War broke out he not only took the initiative in forming an ambulance corps, but, still more surprising, threw himself into a recruiting campaign in India. When challenged by a European Pacifist to justify these actions, Gandhi replied as follows :

"Let it be understood that I am uncompromisingly against all war. . . . European war resisters must recognise a vital difference which exists between them and me. They do not represent exploited nations ; I represent the most exploited nation in the world. To use a far from flattering analogy—they represent the cat and I the mouse. Has the mouse a feeling in favour of non-violence only? Has it

not the instinctive desire to defend itself violently and successfully, before it has been possible to teach it the virtue, the grandeur, the superiority of the law of non-violence in the domain of war? Is it not perhaps necessary for me, as the representative of the 'mouse' tribe, to share in its desire for violent destruction, with the very object of teaching it the superiority of non-destruction?

"At this point the analogy of the cat and the mouse comes to an end. The mouse has no power to change its nature. Every human being, no matter how degenerate, has within himself the possibility of raising himself to the highest summits ever reached by a human being, no matter what his race or colour. That is why, while going very far with my compatriots in their need to prepare for war, I would act thus in the fervent hope of weaning them from it and of making them, one day, realise its absolute futility.

"It must be remembered that the very moment when I seem to be lending myself to the ends of war, I am carrying through the greatest experiment in history of mass non-resistance. The experiment may fail, for want of skilful handling, but the European war resister ought to strive to the uttermost to understand and appreciate the phenomenon which he is witnessing in India—that of a man who is trying to put into practice the bold experiment of non-violence, whilst working in alliance with those who wish to prepare for war.

"I must share the feelings of my compatriots if I may ever hope to lead them to non-violence; that is part of the scheme of non-violence. The astonishing thing is that, in India, everyone, including the 'open-eyed' politician, is, *nolens volens*, led to the conviction that only non-violence can free the masses from the slavery of centuries. All have not, it is true, followed non-violence to its logical consequences. Who can? Although I boast that I do know the true meaning of non-violence, and that I do my utmost to apply it, I often fail to follow to the end the logical

consequences of the doctrine. The workings of nature in man's heart are mysterious and defy all interpretation.

“ One thing I know : it is that if India obtains her liberty by means of non-violence, she will never maintain a powerful army, a great war-fleet, and an air-force greater still. If she succeeds consciously in reaching such a height as to win a non-violent victory in the struggle for freedom, the world's values will be changed and the greatest part of the arsenals of war will thereby be rendered useless. To imagine such an India is perhaps a chimera, a childish dream. But in my opinion it is such a fulfilment as that which an India freed by non-violence would achieve.

“ When her freedom comes—if it ever comes—it will be by means of a friendly agreement with Great Britain. But it will no longer be an Imperialist and haughty Great Britain, intriguing to dominate the world, but a Great Britain trying humbly to serve the common ends of humanity. India will then no longer be dragged willy-nilly, as hitherto, into wars of British exploitation, but her voice will be that of a powerful nation, seeking to hold in check the violent forces of the universe.

“ Whether these dreams are realised or not, my line of conduct is settled. I can never again take part in British wars, under any imaginable circumstances. And I have already said, if India frees herself (as I understand the term) by violent means, I shall cease to be proud of my country. If this moment arrives, it will be my death as a citizen. There can, then, be no question of participation, direct or indirect, in any war of exploitation whatever undertaken by India.

“ But I have already pointed out that my anti-militarist colleagues of the West are taking part in war, even in peace time, as long as they pay for war-preparation and support in other ways also Governments whose chief occupation is to prepare for war. I repeat that all attempts to put an end to war will be in vain, as long as the causes of war have

not been understood and subjected to a frontal attack. Is not the chief cause of modern wars the inhuman rivalry to exploit all the so-called inferior races of the earth? ”

This statement is worth reading carefully. Apparently Gandhi took the view during the war that it would be a decisive lesson to Indians in convincing them of the futility of the method of war as an instrument for securing freedom. He defends co-operation with Nationalists who do not share his non-violence philosophy, by pointing out that even they admit, in the circumstances in which India is placed, non-violence is the only practical policy of resistance to the British Government. He holds out the hope that if the method of non-violence succeeds it will make such a deep impression upon the Indian mind that the self-governing India which will result from the struggle will dispense with the armed forces upon which other nations rely for security. It is interesting to note that Gandhi says that he will never again take part in British wars, and that if India frees herself by violent means it will be his death as a citizen.

Some perplexity has been caused by Gandhi's protest against the forcible disarmament of Indians by the British Government. He would probably explain this by asserting that disarmament is of no moral value unless it is the voluntary expression of an inward conviction, and by denouncing the cowardice of a Power which rules by force and yet denies the use of force to others.

#### VIEW OF SEX

Gandhi has developed the view that sexual intercourse is harmful to spiritual life. He began to refrain from sexual intercourse in 1900 and took a vow of celibacy in 1906.

“ One aspiring to serve humanity with his whole soul could not do without *Brahamcharya* (a life of abstention from all sexual intercourse). Man is man because he is capable of, and in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. *Brahamcharya* begins with bodily restraint, but it does not end there. A

true *Brahamcharya* will not ever dream of satisfying fleshly appetite. I took the plunge . . . the vow to observe it for life. For me the observance of even bodily *Brahamcharya* has been full of difficulties. To-day I may say that I feel fairly safe, but I have got to achieve complete mastery over thought, which is so essential. Not that the will or effort is lacking, but it is yet a problem to me wherefrom the undesirable thoughts spring up and make their insidious invasions. Saints and seers have left their experiences for us, but they have given us no infallible and universal prescription."

Gandhi is opposed to birth control and regards sexual contact as always wrong "except for the one supreme purpose for which it is intended for both man and beast." He adds : "Both man and woman should know abstention from satisfaction of the sexual appetite results, not in disease, but health and vigour, provided the mind co-operates with the body."

#### LOVE FOR CHILDREN

I conclude with one feature of Gandhi's life which all readers will unite in appreciating. He has an exquisite love for children. This is a copy of a letter which he wrote to the children at his *Ashram* from his prison cell shortly after his arrest in May :

"Ordinary birds cannot fly without wings. With wings, of course, all can fly. But if you, without wings, will learn how to fly, then all your troubles will indeed be at an end. And I will teach you.

"See, I have no wings, yet I come flying to you every day in thought. Look, here is little Vimala, here is Hari and here also Dharmakumar. And you also can come flying to me in thought.

"Send me a letter signed by all, and those who do not know how to sign may make a cross."

## CHAPTER VII

# INDIAN PARTIES AND PERSONALITIES

Many sincere friends of India are perplexed by the variety of parties and by the contradictory views expressed by different leaders. It may be worth while, therefore, to try to give an analysis of the different sections of the Indian Nationalist Movement and to attempt some estimate of the influence of their leading spokesmen. Mahatma Gandhi, about whom I have already written, is, of course, the outstanding man in India. Although his religious and philosophic views are not shared by many of the leaders in the Indian National Congress, he remains its unchallenged and unchallengeable leader.

### THE CONGRESS LEADERS

The Indian National Congress is undoubtedly the most representative and the most vital of the Indian organisations. A few years ago it was dominated by lawyers of the upper classes and was financed by wealthy Indians. The leadership is still largely in the hands of professional men, though doctors are now taking an equally important part as lawyers, and the leaders are for the most part men who have proved their sincerity by sacrificing much of their careers. In recent years the rank-and-file membership of the Congress has become much more articulate. Indeed, under the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, the present Chairman, the Congress has increasingly become a proletarian movement. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru is a Socialist, and

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the growing influence of the industrial workers, combined with that of the students (largely without posts) who are spreading Socialist ideas, has made the Congress more and more an organisation demanding, not only political freedom but social and economic freedom as well.

Just before he returned to India three years ago, Jawaharlal Nehru spent a week-end in my home. He is the last man in the world one would expect to find a revolutionary. He is quiet, shy, cultured, and charming, a gentle soul, converted into an extremist by deep conviction and emotion. He looks younger than his years—he is about forty—and certainly has the carriage and enthusiasm of youth. He is a graduate of Oxford University and has travelled over a large part of Europe.

I asked Jawaharlal Nehru why he insisted upon the independence of India, when in actual fact Dominion status represents independence for all practical purposes. His answer was a revelation of his political outlook. He maintained that the Indian people require to be stirred into a revolutionary attitude ; they must be brought to a state of mind where they are ready to make a decisive break with the past. The demand for Dominion status represents a slow growth without any fundamental change of mental attitude ; the demand for independence represents a challenge to tradition. Jawaharlal wishes to create a movement which will have a completely new outlook, politically and socially, which will reject the religious and economic ideas which have kept India bound in superstition and poverty, as well as the political ideas which have kept her in national bondage. He is looking for a new mind in the masses, which will discard the customs and habits associated with the castes and communities of India, and for a new movement amongst the peasants and industrial workers, which will rise up against the exploiting land system as well as the power of capitalism.

For the moment, the social and economic movement is

overwhelmed by the movement for political freedom, but no one understands the significance of modern Nationalism in India who does not realise that beneath it there is developing, among the more proletarian elements, a bigger and wider demand. Once the claim for political freedom is achieved, this new orientation will certainly find powerful expression. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru is not only the President of the National Congress ; he is Chairman of the Youth League, feared by the British authorities as a revolutionary organisation, and is the recognised spokesman of the younger generation. He is also Chairman of the Indian Trade Union Congress. Whilst sympathetic with Russia, Jawaharlal is not a Communist.

The difference between the new and older aspects of Indian Nationalism is dramatically illustrated in the Nehru family. Jawaharlal's father, Motilal Nehru, was the leader of the Swaraj Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly before he resigned from the Assembly at the beginning of the year. He is probably the best known of the older school in India, a fine and handsome veteran, silver haired and silvern tongued, and universally respected. Motilal has identified himself whole-heartedly with the demand for independence and the movement for Civil Disobedience, and he courageously assumed the chairmanship of the Congress after the arrest of his son and Mahatma Gandhi, only to be arrested in his turn. But he does not share his son's social and economic views, and the probability is that they would find themselves in opposing parties once National freedom was obtained.

#### THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian National Congress is in many ways the most remarkable assembly in the world. I was in Madras on the eve of its meeting in 1927, and was surprised to find that a new and temporary town had been built for its accommodation. In the centre was an enormous hall, rapidly



erected of bamboo and leaves, and capable of holding seven thousand delegates. Round it were hundreds of huts to accommodate the thousands of people who came to attend the proceedings and the many associated conferences held at the same time. A new railway line and station had been constructed to receive the delegates and visitors.

The Congress had its own elaborate organisation to meet the needs of the vast population it had attracted to the city. Its volunteers controlled the crowds ; its own medical service attended to their health. On returning to Madras after an accident in a distant village, I was met by two Congress doctors and a staff of stretcher-bearers, as well as the stretcher-bearers from the Government Hospital ; and I confess I found the Congress bearers much the more considerate and careful !

The delegates to the Congress come from all parts of India and are elected by district committees. There are many villages, of course, which have no direct contact with the Congress, and in many parts of India the people are probably unaware of its proceedings. But the network of organisation through a large part of India is extraordinary, and, considering that between 80 and 90 per cent. of the people are illiterate, it is astonishing how the influence of the Congress spreads almost everywhere.

#### THE MODERATE LEADERS

Until the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1919, practically the whole Nationalist Movement was reflected in the Indian National Congress. In that year there was a split, resulting from the decision of the Congress to boycott the new Constitution. Those who left the Congress were known as Moderates or Liberals. They included some of the leading intellectual figures in India, but they have practically no organisation behind them. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, the Secretary of the

Liberal Federation, has admitted that his party has neither widespread organisation nor a large membership, but he claims that many educated Indians are in sympathy with its aspirations and methods. This is undoubtedly true, particularly among the professional classes ; but the claim of the Liberals and Moderates for notice rests upon the intellectual and social status of their leaders rather than the support which they can command.

One of the most interesting and influential figures among the Moderates is Mrs. Annie Besant. Although she is now over eighty years of age, she is still tireless in the cause of Indian Nationalism. Mrs. Besant is an impressive figure clothed in long cream robes, a noble head, a deep, rich voice, and a personality that commands authority by sheer spiritual and mental power. Mrs. Besant has made India her home and regards herself as an Indian rather than an Englishwoman. She has joined her advocacy of Theosophy with that of Indian national freedom, and her campaign, particularly the agitation she conducted through the Home Rule League, has undoubtedly been one of the big factors in extending the Nationalist Movement to the villages. She has been given the supreme Indian honour of being elected to the Presidency of the National Congress.

Whilst holding views that are regarded as moderate in India and opposing the demand for independence, Mrs. Besant has co-operated from time to time, even since the split of 1919, with the Indian National Congress. She took a prominent part in the All Parties conference and the preparation of the Nehru Report. Her particular contribution to the practical form of a Constitution is insistence upon the Village Council as the unit of self-government. She embodied this idea in a Bill some years ago, and secured the support of a considerable part of the Indian National Movement for it. In 1925 the Bill was introduced in the House of Commons with the support of the Labour Party.

Mrs. Besant has opposed the Civil Disobedience campaign and urged acceptance of the Round Table conference, though insisting that Dominion status should be made the basis of discussion. She has frequently found herself in conflict with Mr. Gandhi, to whom she seems to have a temperamental antipathy, and her criticism of the Indian leader, together with her moderation of views, has undoubtedly decreased her influence in recent years.

One of the best known leaders of the Liberal Movement in India is Srinivasa Sastri, who has a great reputation because of his successful championship of the claims of the Indians in South Africa when he was India's representative. He is a man of fine character and remarkable eloquence, although his caution has led him to be regarded sometimes as a politician prepared to compromise to a degree unacceptable to most Indian Nationalists. He has urged participation in the Round Table conference.

Another Liberal leader of great influence is Sir Tej B. Sapru. He has been a member of the Viceroy's Council, and until the appointment of the Simon Commission, was one of the Indian leaders upon whom the Government could generally rely for co-operation. He welcomed the Round Table conference, but recent developments have led him to denounce very strongly the repressive measures of the Government and its failure definitely to accept the principle of Dominion status.

#### THE MOSLEM MINORITY

The Moslems are the most powerful minority in India. Their leaders and organisations exert an influence even greater than their proportionate strength, owing to their hold upon legal, commercial, and governmental circles. Moslems are naturally of a more domineering character

than the Hindus, and often combine enterprise and efficiency with aggression. Although they have worked closely with the Hindus in the Nationalist Movement in times of crisis, there is an undercurrent of tension, partly because the Hindus cannot forget that the Moslems are a conquering race, and partly because there is a feeling that certain of the Moslem leaders sometimes work in the interests of their community rather than for the whole of India.

During the recent Nationalist agitation there has been less unity between the sectional Moslem and Hindu leaders than during the non-co-operation campaign of 1921. At that time the Moslems in India were opposed to the British Government because of the terms of the treaty with Turkey which they regarded as an insult to Islam. When the Simon Commission was appointed, the Moslems became divided. The Centre and the Left of their Movement joined in the boycott, but the Right co-operated with the Commission, foreseeing the likelihood of greater concessions to their community by so doing. The differences between the Moslems and the Hindus were accentuated by the discussions at the All Parties conference for the preparation of a Constitution. The Centre and the Left participated in this conference ; but the Centre were not prepared to accept the proposals of the Nehru Report for the settlement of the communal problem. It is probable that a solution would subsequently have been reached if the Nehru Report had not faded out of practical politics, but the subsequent decision of the Indian National Congress to press for independence completed the estrangement of the Centre.

Both the Centre and the Right of the Moslem Movement are now inclined to accept the proposal for a Round Table conference, but a large part of the rank-and-file of the Moslems are supporting the Congress. In the Northern Province the Moslem masses have taken an active part in the Civil Disobedience campaign, and in Bombay, despite the attitude of some of their leaders, they joined in large

numbers in the defiance of the Salt Tax, in the boycott of foreign cloth, and in the vast processions and demonstrations which took place.

During the year the tendency has been for the Moslem leaders of the Centre, as well as the Left, to withdraw co-operation from the British authorities. For instance, one of the most orthodox Moslem societies, the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema*, declared in favour of the Congress campaign. In July, however, an All-India Moslem conference, attended by the Right and the Centre, was held at Simla, where a majority declared, after a vigorous discussion, to recommend participation in the Round Table conference. The resolution condemned the Simon Report as "retrograde and reactionary," declared that large sections of Moslems had come to the conclusion that national freedom is impossible with the British connection, but, nevertheless, advised acceptance of the Round Table conference on the assumption that the invitation will mean "that full responsible government is possible with the British connection."

The Moslem agitation in 1921 was led by the All-Indian Khalifat Committee. Two of its prominent leaders were the Ali brothers, who were imprisoned for their extreme speeches. They are picturesque figures, and I still have a vivid memory of their visit to my hotel in Bombay two years ago. Shaukat Ali is one of the biggest men I have ever seen, whilst his brother, Mohammed, would also seem huge if he were not in the company of Shaukat. They wore flowing robes of cream and gold, and white caps beautifully embroidered with designs of the Red Crescent. They struck me as two laughing schoolboys, generous, and full of good fun. "I have been a thorough Englishman," said Shaukat Ali. "I wore a dress suit and I was a good bat at cricket; but never again. I am now all Indian." Curiously enough, however, the Ali brothers are now among the most moderate Moslem leaders and are supporting the

Round Table conference. This change in attitude has never been quite understood, and is creating a good deal of suspicion among the Nationalists in India.

Another influential Moslem leader is Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the leader of the Independent Party in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Jinnah might be described as the Sir John Simon of India ; he is successful both as a lawyer and politician. He is the most anglicised Indian politician I have ever met. His complexion is light, so that he might be taken for a swarthy European, he dresses in faultless English style, and speaks perfect English. Mr. Jinnah has always taken a wide national view of Indian politics, and is an Indian (though a moderate one) first and a Moslem afterwards. He represents the Centre of the Moslem Movement and co-operated in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. He actively associated himself, however, with the boycott of the Simon Commission, participated in the All Parties conference, and, though not satisfied with the proposals to meet the Moslem claims, would undoubtedly have exerted his influence towards a settlement if the negotiations had been continued.

When the proposal for the Round Table conference was announced, Mr. Jinnah welcomed it, but, like every Indian Nationalist, insisted upon the acceptance of the principle of Dominion status. It remains to be seen whether he will participate in it. He is a typical bourgeois politician, and the new proletarian element in the Indian Nationalist Movement do not trust his views.

On the extreme Right of the Moslem Movement is the Aga Khan, who has considerable influence over the little Khoja community, of which he is regarded as the spiritual head. Among the main body of the Moslems with sincere Nationalist convictions, however, his influence is almost negligible. The Aga Khan can always be relied upon by the British authorities to take advantage of Moslem-Hindu differences, and when difficulties arose regarding the

Nehru Report, he called a Moslem All Parties conference which declared strongly against it. The conference only represented the Right and the Right-Centre of the Moslem Movement.

The Left Moslems are absolutely identified with the Indian National Congress. A typical figure among them is Dr. Kitchlew, who has been the General Secretary of the All-India Moslem League and was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Lahore Congress. Dr. Kitchlew first became prominent in the Martial Law disturbances of 1919, following the Amritsar "massacre," and has been a fearless Nationalist leader ever since. He is now serving his third term of imprisonment. Dr. Kitchlew and his colleagues, such as Abdul Kalam Azad, are not known so prominently as distinctive Moslem leaders, because they place the claims of India as a whole before the claims of their community ; but as the Nationalist Movement develops it is becoming increasingly clear that large numbers of the Moslem masses are supporting their attitude. The general tendency is for the Centre to move towards the Left, and there is little doubt that, when the Moslem-Hindu issue becomes practical politics again, the leaders of these sections will be able to reach a settlement with the other Nationalist leaders.

#### THE HINDU LEADERS

The Hindus express themselves politically almost entirely through the Indian National Congress, but they also have a special organisation to assert their communal demands. It is known as the Hindu *Mahasabha*, and was started to balance the influence of the Moslem League upon the National Congress. It is sometimes almost as irreconcilable as the extreme Moslem organisations.

In the Indian Legislative Assembly, the sectional Hindu

attitude has been reflected through the Nationalist Party, with Mr. Malaviya as the leader. Mr. Malaviya is one of the most influential politicians in India. Indeed, apart from Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, he probably exerts a wider influence than any other leader, especially in powerful commercial circles. He is universally respected as the founder of the great Hindu University at Benares. Mr. Malaviya is an adherent of the Indian National Congress, but belongs to its Right Wing. At the Lahore meeting last December he strongly opposed the resolution in favour of independence and the Civil Disobedience agitation, but the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, and the action of the Government in resisting the demand of the majority of the Legislative Assembly for higher tariffs on British goods, led him to resign from the Assembly, and he has since led a powerful movement for the boycott of British goods. In August he was arrested for participating in a prohibited procession in Bombay and only avoided imprisonment because someone paid his fine anonymously. He then completely identified himself with Gandhi.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE COMMUNISTS

On the extreme left of Indian Nationalism is a group which is impatient with the non-violence philosophy of Mr. Gandhi and with any departure from the demand for absolute independence. Its stronghold is in Calcutta, where it is led by Mr. Subhas Bose, who was interned under the Bengal Ordinance, and who was again imprisoned this year. At the time when he was interned, he was the chief executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Another Left leader in Calcutta is Mr. Sen Gupta, who is uncompromising in his demand for independence, but who maintains the method of non-violence. He has for three years been Mayor of Calcutta, and was re-elected this year whilst in prison.



The Communists are active in the Trade Union Movement, the Youth League, and the Peasant and Workers Party. At the Indian Trades Union Congress in 1929 there was a split between the moderate section, which was in favour of participating in the Commission appointed by the British Government to investigate industrial conditions, and those who wished to boycott the Commission. The majority section of the Congress was largely influenced by Communists, but the fact that Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, who has been strongly denounced by the Communists, remains its leader indicates that it is not entirely Communist.

Similarly, the Communists exert considerable influence in the Youth League, largely manned by students, but again there are many in the organisation who are not Communists. The Peasant and Workers Party is, however, definitely Communist in initiation and control. Its influence is very slight. Even further to the Left is a secret revolutionary organisation, which apparently was responsible for the Chittagong riot. This branch of revolutionary Communism is made the excuse for the more extreme forms of repression by the British authorities.

#### THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The fact that only about ten per cent. of the Indian people are engaged in industrial employment restricts very severely the possibilities of Trade Union development in India. The difficulties are made still greater by the illiteracy of the people and the mobility of labour. The workers in the mills and factories are very frequently peasants who move into the cities for a time and then go back to their villages. The miserable wages paid also make the successful collection of subscriptions extraordinarily difficult. The result is that regular Trade Union organisation is weak ; but when disputes occur the workers generally act *en masse* whether they are members of the Union or not. For a short

period the membership rises by thousands, only to fall again when the dispute is over. Despite these difficulties there is a basis of a permanent Trade Union Movement in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, and other cities.

Indian Trade Unionism began on the initiative of earnest social reformers of the professional classes. Mr. Joshi, who was Secretary of the Trade Union Congress until 1929, is typical. He is a Brahmin and a member of the Servants of India Society, all of whom contribute their incomes to a common pool to be used for social purposes. Each member of the Society elects some field of service, which, if authorised by the Society, qualifies for the minimum salary paid to all working members. Mr. Joshi chose Trade Union organisation, and began to organise the textile workers of Bombay. A number of other Unions were established by social reformers in a similar way, and Mr. Joshi federated them in the Trade Union Congress in 1921.

Whilst Mr. Joshi was active in Bombay, Mrs. Besant was working with Mr. Shiva Rao in Madras on similar lines among the textile workers. At Ahmedabad, Mr. Gandhi and his *Ashram* colleagues took the initiative in organising the mill-workers of the neighbourhood, but the Ahmedabad Unions, although strong, have never joined the Trade Union Congress and their methods are characteristically idealistic. To a European Trade Unionist, it is strange to find that every meeting and demonstration is opened with a period of silent spiritual communion.

In recent years the Trade Union Movement has begun to develop working class officials and leaders. When I was in Bombay I attended a number of branch meetings, and found the local Chairman and secretaries were usually mill-workers or railway and docks employees. I attended one branch meeting of mill-workers where at least four hundred members were present. I had just visited the wretched tenements in which they live, and was astonished by their appearance of cleanliness and neatness. They were

nearly all dressed in snow-white clothes. None of the members of this branch could speak English, and the Chairman and Secretary were also of working class origin and without the middle-class education which provides a knowledge of English.

The Trade Union Movement has been seriously split by the recent activity of Communists. Some of these men have been to the International College at Moscow. Others are officials, both middle-class and working-class, who have come under the influence of Communist doctrines. The Communists have pursued their usual tactics, and have sometimes been responsible for ill-considered strikes. Their influence was undoubtedly a contributing factor to the division in the Trade Union Congress in 1929, when Mr. Joshi and others of the moderate section withdrew and formed the All-India Trade Union Federation.

The Trade Union Movement has also suffered because in some cases Indian Nationalists have exploited it for political purposes, associating themselves with it to obtain positions of authority without any real belief in working-class organisation. It is unlikely that Indian Trade Unionism will reach stability until the excitement of the political struggle for national freedom has subsided ; but it has now taken root among the industrial workers, and will undoubtedly become of increasing importance, despite the difficulties which face it.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

**T**he Act of 1919, giving effect to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, contained a clause authorising the appointment of a Commission after ten years to report upon the operation of the Act and to recommend any changes considered necessary. The Conservative Government decided to appoint such a Commission in 1927, but made the fatal mistake of limiting its membership to Englishmen. The Indian Nationalist Parties naturally objected to the future of India being left in the hands of Englishmen—even if they were “Seven of God’s Englishmen,” as Mr. Baldwin described them.

The British Labour Party made an equally fatal mistake in deciding to participate in the Commission. The Labour Party secured certain modifications of the procedure, by which the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils were invited to appoint co-operating committees ; but this inadequate afterthought did not wipe out the original insult and practically every representative Indian politician, from the extreme Left to the extreme Right, joined in rejecting the Commission.

Sir John Simon, the well known Liberal lawyer, was appointed Chairman of the Commission, and there were three Conservative members, two Labour members, and one additional Liberal. The two Labour members were Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, a miners’ leader, who had been Postmaster-General in the Labour Government of 1924, and

Major C. R. Attlee, a Labour "intellectual," who had occupied the post of Financial Secretary to the War Office. When the Commission reached India, it was boycotted by all the representative parties and the only Indians who co-operated either represented sectional interests, for whom they hoped to get advantages, or were "loyalists" to the British Raj, unaffected by the general sentiment.

The Indian Legislative Assembly declined to appoint a committee to co-operate with the Commission. Accordingly, the Central Indian Committee was appointed by the Council of State, half of whose members, as we have seen, are nominated by the British authorities. Most of the Provincial Councils eventually appointed co-operating committees, but in every case it was by the vote of the official and nominated members. Only one-eighth of the elected Indian representatives, either in the Legislative Assembly or the Councils, voted in favour of co-operation with the Commission. In the Legislative Assembly all three parties—the Independents (representing the Moslems), the Nationalists (representing the Hindus), and the Swaraj Party (representing the National Congress)—voted in favour of boycotting the Commission. This was an expression of national will equivalent to united action by the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Parties in the British House of Commons.

#### THE ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE

Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress took the initiative in calling an All Parties conference in India to prepare a Constitution representing Indian desires. The conference was remarkable in that it represented practically every political and religious section of the Indian people, except the most loyal Moslems. Among the non-political bodies represented was the Indian Trade Union Congress.

An overwhelming majority of the delegates declared in favour of a Constitution on the basis of Dominion status, with adult suffrage and compulsory education. Provision was made for a transitional period during which the Civil Service and the Forces would be Indianised and the control of foreign policy transferred from British to Indian hands. Difficulties arose regarding the representation of the Moslem and Sikh religious communities in the new National and Provincial Parliaments. An effort was made to settle this problem by reconstructing the boundaries of some of the Provinces and by reserving a proportion of seats to the different communities, although the electorate was made general.

The Constitution was endorsed by the Indian National Congress and most of the political parties, although Moslem and Sikh differences remained. There is little doubt that if this Constitution had become practical politics, a basis of agreement with the Moslems and Sikhs could have been found. On the extreme Left of the Labour Movement there was a section which demanded a Constitution on the Russian model ; but this did not have any considerable support.

It may be that events will develop so that the All Parties Conference Constitution will be resurrected. At the present time, however, the tendencies are to sweep it aside in favour of the demand for the complete independence of India.

The Indian National Congress, which met at Madras at Christmas 1927, declared in favour of the independence of India, but the Congress representatives at the All Parties conference accepted Dominion status in order to secure agreement. When the Congress met at Calcutta in 1928, however, the strength of the movement for complete independence had gained immensely, and it was only as a result of a compromise suggested by Mr. Gandhi that the Constitution proposed by the All Parties conference was

temporarily accepted. The Congress decided that it would accept Dominion status if a definite offer were extended by the British Government within one year, but if this were not done it was agreed that a campaign for full independence by the method of non-violent Civil Disobedience would be initiated. Even this compromise resolution was opposed by one-third of the delegates in favour of an immediate demand for complete independence.

#### THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Five months later the Labour Government assumed office in Great Britain. Some of us who appreciated the seriousness of the position in India urged upon Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the newly appointed Secretary of State for India, immediate action along three lines :

(1) The declaration of the intention of the Government to introduce a measure of Dominion status for India.

(2) The extending of an invitation to the Indian political parties and organisations to send representatives to a Round Table conference to agree upon the details of the measure and the arrangements for the transition period.

(3) The granting of an amnesty to all political offenders in Indian prisons and the cessation of further prosecution for the expression of political opinion.

The Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, visited London in the autumn of 1929, and, after a consultation, it was agreed to go some way to meet the first and second of these proposals. On his return to India the Viceroy invited the Indian parties and organisations to send representatives to a Round Table conference to be called after the publication of the

Simon Report. This invitation was made with the consent of the members of the Simon Commission, it being understood that the recommendations of the Commission should be discussed along with any other proposals the conference desired to consider. In reply to questions in the House of Commons, Mr. Wedgwood Benn agreed that the Constitution prepared by the All Parties conference should be open to discussion. This was so far satisfactory.

The Government did not feel able, however, to give a definite pledge that Dominion status would be the basis of the discussions. This was partly due to the fact that the Labour Party had participated in the Simon Commission and consequently could not anticipate its report. It was also due to a well-based fear that an announcement of Dominion status would lead to defeat in the House of Commons by the united opposition of the Conservative and Liberal Parties. For these reasons the Government did not go further than declare that the *ultimate* objective of British policy was the granting of Dominion status to India.

Unfortunately, acting upon the advice of the Viceroy and the Governors of the various Provinces in India, the proposal for an amnesty for political offenders was entirely rejected by Mr. Wedgwood Benn and the British Government. There had been a considerable agitation in Great Britain regarding the trial of thirty-three political offenders at Meerut on a charge of waging war against His Majesty. All except one of these had been arrested before the Labour Government assumed office. They had been deliberately transferred to Meerut (from Bombay, Calcutta, and other cities) because trial at Meerut would not necessitate a jury. Many of the Meerut prisoners had been active in the Trade Union Movement; whilst probably the majority were Communists, they were not all associated with the Communist Party.

Even after the return of the Labour Government, the prosecution of political opinion was maintained, and



speakers and writers were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for expressions of opinion which would have been regarded as legitimate criticism in any democratic country. Considerable criticism of the political persecution in India was expressed from the Labour benches in the House of Commons, but the furthest we could get the Government to go was the adoption of the following resolution in December 1929 :

“That this House welcomes the evidence of the co-operation of Indian representatives in the settlement of the Constitutional question, and relies upon the Government of India to encourage good-will by the sympathetic conduct of its administrative and executive functions, particularly in relation to the expression of political opinion.”

#### EFFECT OF THE VICEROY'S OFFER

Despite the timidity of the Government's policy, the first effects of the Viceroy's declaration suggested that there was hope of a basis of agreement and co-operation. The Moderate Indian politicians warmly welcomed the offer of a Round Table conference, and the Congress leaders, including Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, the “extremist” chairman, expressed appreciation of the offer and indicated acceptance if certain conditions were fulfilled. The most important of these conditions were the acceptance of Dominion status as a basis of discussion, a political amnesty, and a properly representative Indian delegation at the conference.

The good effect of the offer, however, soon began to disappear. It met with influential opposition in Great Britain, and Government spokesmen began to modify their language in order to meet the criticism. Although Mr.

Baldwin, the Conservative leader, had given provisional approval, his colleagues insisted on its withdrawal. Mr. Lloyd George was mischievously critical, and an ex-Viceroy and two ex-Secretaries of State for India—Lord Reading, Lord Peel, and Lord Birkenhead—also made known their opposition. Lord Birkenhead particularly denounced the offer in severe terms.

Although Mr. Wedgwood Benn upheld the new policy challengingly in the House of Commons by declaring that it represented a new spirit and attitude, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald informed Mr. Baldwin in a letter that it made no change in the manner or period of the establishment of self-government in India, and Lord Russell, the Under-Secretary for India, stated that full Dominion status was a long way off. Under the influence of these utterances and a violent anti-Indian campaign in the British Press, faith and enthusiasm in India were destroyed.

Immediately prior to the holding of the Indian National Congress at Lahore, at Christmas 1929, Mr. Gandhi and a deputation of representative Indian leaders met Lord Irwin. He could not promise that Dominion status would be accepted by the Government as a basis for discussion at the Round Table conference, nor could he give any assurance regarding the representative character of the delegation which would be invited to voice India's claims. The result was that Mr. Gandhi went to the Congress feeling that there was no alternative except to press for full independence and to initiate a Civil Disobedience campaign. Mr. Gandhi only decided as a last resort to give a lead for this policy. I know that about this time Mr. Gandhi indicated to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald that if it were impossible for him to make a declaration before the publication of the report of the Simon Commission, a personal assurance that the Government would stand by the pledge of the Labour Party for Dominion status would be satisfactory.

## DECISION FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

At the Lahore Congress an overwhelming majority was given for Mr. Gandhi's policy. There was a small minority for the acceptance of the British offer, led by Mr. Malaviya. On the other extreme, there was a large majority against the non-violent basis of the campaign insisted upon by Mr. Gandhi. Immediately following the Congress, the executive authorised Mr. Gandhi to take immediate steps to plan the commencement of Civil Disobedience.

Even after the decision of the Lahore Congress, Mr. Gandhi made several efforts to secure a basis of negotiation with the British Government. He issued a statement recognising that there is little difference in practical effect between Dominion status and independence, and indicated that if the Government would immediately take action to remove some of the heavy burdens upon the poverty stricken people of India, he would regard this as a proof of a new spirit, which would make negotiation possible. Among his proposals was the abolition of the Salt Tax, which falls with great severity upon the Indian people and which is an especially hated tax because it was first imposed as a punitive indemnity after the Mutiny to compensate for the loss of English life and property.

Unfortunately, these olive branches were not accepted, and in March 1930, Mr. Gandhi sent a young English Quaker, Mr. Reginald Reynolds, to the Viceroy with a letter announcing the commencement of the Civil Disobedience campaign. This letter is likely to prove historic, and, as it has not previously been published in full in England, and reflects, as no other document does, the spirit of the Civil Disobedience campaign and of its leader, I reproduce it here :

## MR. GANDHI'S "ULTIMATUM"

*"Satyagraha Ashram*

"Sabarmati, March 2nd, 1930.

"DEAR FRIEND,—Before embarking on Civil Disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

"My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.

"I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed, much that I have learnt of the evil of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

"And why do I regard the British rule as a curse ?

"It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

"It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

"In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table conference might furnish a solution. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support

a scheme of full Dominion status, the Round Table conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say, there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy.

"The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me but to take steps to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its session in 1928.

"But the resolution of Independence should cause no alarm, if the word Dominion status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by responsible British statesmen that Dominion status is virtual Independence? What, however, I fear is that there never has been any intention of granting such Dominion status to India in the immediate future.

"But this is all past history. Since the announcement many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

"It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India or require an impartial and close scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever-increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1s. 6d. ratio which by a stroke of the pen drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made, through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes to help you to crush the attempt in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

“ Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand, and keep before all concerned, the motive that lies behind the craving for Independence, there is every danger of Independence itself coming to us so changed as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions for whom it is sought and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that reason that I have been recently telling the public what Independence should really mean.

“ Let me put before you some of the salient points.

“ The terrific pressure of land revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo considerable modification in the Independent India. Even the much vaunted permanent settlement benefits the few rich Zemindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only, then, has the land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised as to make the ryot's good its primary concern.

“ But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man, when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich man both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue, too, is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but, in reality, is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so-called responsible part of Dyarchy, so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus, from the very beginning, rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy Minister wipes out this revenue, he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed

the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, i.e. hand-spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth.

“The tale of India’s ruination is not complete without reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public Press. It must be the duty of a free India to subject all the liabilities to the strictest investigation, and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair.

“The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 (£1,500) per month, besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £5,000 per year, i.e. over Rs. 5,400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 (£51 17s.) per day against India’s average income of less than 2 annas per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day against Great Britain’s average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India’s average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain’s average income.

“On bended knees I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary that you get. Probably the whole of your salary goes for charity. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

“A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible

without Independence. Hence, in my opinion, the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them Independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

“Not one of the great British political parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

“Nevertheless, if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

“It is common cause that, however disorganised and, for the time being insignificant, it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organised violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force, as well against the organised violent force of the British rule as the unorganised violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give reign to both the forces above mentioned. Having an unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

“This non-violence will be expressed through Civil



Disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the *Satyagraha Ashram*, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the Movement with its obvious limitations.

“ I know that in embarking on non-violence I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risk, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another far more numerous, far more ancient, and no less cultured than itself is worth any amount of risk.

“ I have deliberately used the word conversion. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done in India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them. I served them up to 1919 blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I conceived non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have, in all humility, successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them, even as the members of my family acknowledged it after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me, as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

“ The plan through Civil Disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection, it is because of such evils. When they are removed the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purely private greed, you will have no difficulty in recognising our Independence.

“ I respectfully invite you, then, to pave the way for an

immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon the communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of government, they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above community and which affect them all equally.

“ But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the *Ashram* as I can take to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man’s standpoint. As the Independence Movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act, to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the Statute Book.

“ I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will, however, do me the favour not to deflect me from my course unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

“ This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a Civil Resister.

Therefore I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence, and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.

“ I remain,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ M. K. GANDHI.”

## CHAPTER IX

# THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGN

**T**he Civil Disobedience campaign began on March 12th, in a way that was characteristically Indian. If one can imagine a similar movement in the West, it would follow elaborate preparations and organisation. At a given hour and on a given date simultaneous action would be taken in as many places as possible, with the object of creating the deepest and widest impression at once. The leaders would realise that success or failure would largely depend upon the initial effect, and everything would be concentrated upon making it as dramatic and powerful as possible.

Gandhi initiated the Civil Disobedience campaign on the exactly opposite principle. He decided to give an example by his own personal action, and to rely for support only upon a small band of his own intimate disciples living at his *Ashram* near Ahmedabad. His great concern was that the movement should begin in the right spirit and by right action. He placed all his faith in non-violence, and wished only to have with him men who could be depended upon to refrain from violence even under the severest provocation. He desired the movement to be free from personal enmity towards Englishmen, and chose companions who had been taught by him to hate injustice without hating those who administered it.

At the same time he wanted unbending courage and resolution, and therefore selected men whose faith and determination had been tested. So it was that he set out from his *Ashram* with less than a hundred followers, carrying

only staves and clothed only in loin-cloths, capes, and caps. Their destination was the coast, three hundred miles distant. Their object was to defy the Salt Laws by distilling salt from mud flats by the sea.

Gandhi's own district of Ahmedabad is naturally more under his influence than any other part of India, and hundreds of people slept on the roadside so that they might greet him on the start of his march at dawn. It is estimated that along the three miles of road from the *Ashram* to Ahmedabad at least 100,000 people were gathered to wish him well. They knew that he had taken the vow not to return into their midst until India's national freedom had been won. "This will be the last religious pilgrimage of my life," he said, "and I have undertaken it on foot, according to tradition." As Gandhi and his followers passed from village to village, they urged the people to join the movement, to give up liquor, to burn all foreign cloth, to establish their own courts and to prepare for the non-payment of taxes. They appealed especially to the Indians holding positions as village headmen under the British administration to resign their posts. Before Gandhi reached the coast the Government officers in 170 villages had resigned.

When Gandhi arrived at length at Dandi, a small, desolate village surrounded by mud flats (on which nothing will grow because they are completely covered by the sea at the spring tides), he found that the police had been busy for a month destroying all the salt deposits. He, therefore, decided to break the law by distilling water from the sea.

It was only by the stern prohibition of their leader that a vast population was deterred from gathering at Dandi. The police had commandeered the only available water supply and there was no food for the multitude. But, even so, three thousand people gathered from the neighbouring villages to witness the initial act of the Civil Disobedience campaign.

At 5.30 a.m. Gandhi left his bungalow with Mrs. Gandhi, accompanied by the eighty-two companions of his march, and walked down to the sea-shore. Clad only in his loin-cloth, he stepped into the sea and took his morning dip. Then he picked up a piece of salt from the sea-shore, held it aloft, and returned to his villa. This simple act symbolised the breaking of the Salt Law.

Meanwhile, a contingent of Gandhi's followers found a salt deposit and carted 2,000 pounds of it to their camp. The police raided the camp and confiscated the salt, the villagers only offering passive resistance. Later in the day, they returned to the deposit, collected a further supply, and distributed it from house to house. At the same time, others took water from the sea, and distilled salt from it. The police did not intervene, and Gandhi proceeded to another district, leaving thousands of Indians behind him openly defying the law.

The unspectacular beginning of the Civil Disobedience campaign led the Press and the authorities in India and in London to regard it as a fiasco. The British newspapers ridiculed it, and in Government circles there were signs of relief. But soon the movement began to spread like prairie fire, and the Press and European circles in India began to change their tone. Complaint was increasingly made that Gandhi was left free. *The Times* correspondent at Bombay telegraphed on April 14th that "the laws of the country have not only been broken, but have been contemptuously flouted from one end of India to the other." He described how in the villages of Gujerat the police and other Government officials were being boycotted so strictly that the authorities had had to set up stores to provide food and other commodities. The movement was also reaching such formidable dimensions in Bombay and many of the large cities that Mr. Gandhi's influence could no longer be minimised. Accordingly, it was decided to arrest him. At first the authorities had taken the view that if Gandhi

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were left free his influence would be destroyed by failure. Before two months had passed, faced by the mass-support he was receiving, they came to the conclusion that unless he were imprisoned it would be British prestige that would be destroyed by the impression that they were afraid to arrest him.

The actual occasion of the arrest was the decision by Gandhi to lead a march on the salt depot at Dharasana. Characteristically he insisted that those who came with him should be unarmed, be wearing *khaddar* (handspun cloths), and have given up drink. He even announced that he would not take food or drink from others.

Before leaving for Dharasana and in anticipation of his arrest, Gandhi drafted a second letter to the Viceroy :

“ I know the danger attendant on the method adopted by me,” he wrote, “ but the country is not likely to mistake my meaning. . . . The only way to conquer violence is through non-violence, pure and undefiled. . . . You may condemn Civil Disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer a violent revolt? History will pronounce the verdict that the British Government, not fearing because not understanding non-violence, goaded human nature to violence, which it *could* understand.”

#### GANDHI'S ARREST

Gandhi was arrested under an Ordinance of 1827, which gives the Government of Bombay the right to intern almost anyone for any period on any charge which can possibly be construed as a menace to public order. The arrest was carried out at dead of night at Gandhi's camp at Karadi, near Surat, and extraordinary precautions were taken to avoid public knowledge and demonstrations.

Gandhi was fast asleep when, about 1 a.m., the District

Police Superintendent, with the District Magistrate, and a score of armed police, entered his room. They turned a flash-lamp on him and he awoke at once. Gandhi was quite cool, and merely asked that the warrant be read to him and that he be allowed to clean his teeth. Then he was taken by motor-lorry to the railway station, and placed on the Bombay express en route for Yeravda prison.

No pressmen were present at the arrest, but Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, was successful in anticipating that Gandhi would be transferred from the train to a motor at Borvili, and from his pen I quote this vivid account of what followed :

“ We passed slowly moving minutes over hot coffee from a thermos-flask. There was something intensely dramatic in the atmosphere while we were waiting for the train, for we all felt we were sole eye-witnesses of a scene which may become historical—this arrest of a prophet, false or true. For, false or true, Gandhi is now regarded as a holy man and a saint by millions of Indians. Who knows whether, one hundred years from now, he may be worshipped as a supreme being by 300,000,000 people? We could not shake off these thoughts, and it seemed incongruous to be at a level crossing at dawn to take the prophet into custody.

“ The sun was now rising above the horizon, and the countryside burst into life and song. Villagers came strolling by, exchanging friendly greetings with us and wondering why we were there ; but, fortunately, never suspecting the nature of our mission. Inspector Cordon took out his watch, remarking : ‘ The train is late.’ ‘ Supposing they have not got him, after all,’ said Superintendent Farrant. ‘ The station-master will get the shock of his life when he sees the express,’ I murmured.



“ Then we heard a low rumbling in the distance, and smoke appeared, and then round the bend came the train. ‘ Will she stop ? ’ we kept asking one another. No doubt now ; she slowed down and came to a stand-still, with the restaurant car opposite to the level crossing.

“ Without a moment’s delay the door opened, an attendant placed a stool on the ground, Mr. Cordon and Mr. Farrant stepped forward, and that figure now familiar to the world appeared in the doorway, naked, except for his famous loin-cloth, and carrying his shawl over his arm.

“ But what a change ! Exactly a month has passed since I saw Mahatma Gandhi break the Salt Laws at Dandi, surrounded by his faithful disciples and followed by an enormous mob of enthusiastic *Satyagrahis* (passive resisters). Since that time he has dictated to 300,000,000 people ; his writings and sayings have become world-famous ; and his campaign of ‘ Civil Disobedience ’ has caused a revolution throughout a continent, resulting in violence and bloodshed the consequences of which no one can yet gauge.

“ This morning he looked indescribably deserted and lonely, without a single friend or follower, a melancholy picture, as he stepped forward to descend to earth.

“ Yet the old man departed himself with remarkable dignity. Andrew Marvell’s lines on the execution of Charles I came back to me :

*He nothing common did nor mean,  
Upon that memorable scene.*

“ The police officers raised their hats ; the Mahatma replied with a pleasing smile and shook them both warmly by the hand as they helped him from the train.

“ Gandhi seemed surprised when he saw my companion (an American reporter) and myself, for both of us were

known to him. He greeted us in the most friendly manner.

“ ‘Have you a farewell message you would like to give, Mr. Gandhi?’ I asked.

“ ‘He paused, seeming to be at a loss for words and somewhat dazed by events. Then he answered : ‘Tell the people of America to study the issues closely and to judge them on their merits.’

“ ‘Have you any bitterness or ill-will towards anyone?’ I asked.

“ ‘None whatsoever : I have long expected to be arrested,’ he replied.

“ ‘Do you think your arrest will lead to great disturbances throughout India?’

“ ‘No, I do not : in any case, I can honestly say that I have taken every possible precaution to avert disturbance.’

“ ‘Then you anticipate no troubles?’

“ ‘The Mahatma hesitated for a moment, and then replied : ‘I hope not ; I have done my best to prevent them.’

“ ‘At this point the law intervened. Inspector Cordon stepped forward, saying : ‘Now, Mr. Gandhi, if you are ready, please?’

“ ‘Only one person accompanied Gandhi from the train, a doctor of the Indian Medical Service, who remained silent in the background. He now took his seat alongside the prophet, with Inspector Cordon sitting by the chauffeur.

“ ‘The glorious pink curtains were drawn closely round the party, the prophet disappeared from view, and the gay bridal car (in which he was to travel) set forth on its journey of 130 miles. But what an incongruous marriage, now no longer a wedding but a divorce, this blending of the mystical East with the practical and material West. I looked back to see a blaze of brilliant pink whirling through the budding green of the spring. The prophet is

now silent ; what will the future hold in store for him and for unhappy India ? ”

Mr. Gandhi's arrest was the signal for *hartals* (a general stoppage of work) in every large city of India. This was the clearest indication yet given of the strength of the Nationalist Movement, but an attempt was still made to dismiss the disturbances as sporadic.

#### THE GENERAL UNREST

It was pointed out that although India is as large as Europe (without Russia), serious conflicts with the authorities had occurred only in about ten cities. The reply was obvious : if serious conflict occurred simultaneously in London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Rome, Madrid, Vienna, Prague, and Constantinople, it would be clear evidence of a deep and general unrest throughout Europe. As the movement developed, this comfortable view of the strength of Mr. Gandhi's campaign was rudely destroyed. It became evident that the agitation had its roots in the sentiment of the Indian people in every Province.

The Bombay and North-West Provinces proved the most difficult areas for the Government. In the Gujerat district of Bombay practically the whole population openly defied the British, making salt, closing the liquor-shops, declining to buy British goods, boycotting the Government officials, and refusing to pay the land charges. In the statement issued by the Government of Bombay justifying the arrest of Mr. Gandhi it was acknowledged that in this district the social boycott had “ induced a very considerable number of *patels* (village headmen) to resign, thus causing serious inconvenience to the administration.”

The strength of this boycott was illustrated by an incident

reported in *The Times* of June 17th. When a Parsee named Shapurji Dorabji accepted a contract to fence the salt depots at Dharasana and let out three motor coaches to Government servants, the feeling against him was so strong that he and his family were totally isolated and he was compelled to apply to the local Congress Committee for help. The Committee appointed a tribunal of five to consider his action. The tribunal imposed a fine of 500 rupees (£37 10s.) for the Congress Hospital funds, insisted upon a surety for his future good behaviour, and only when a full apology had been made did they recommend the withdrawal of the boycott. Any alien administration must become impossible under conditions like this. In the long run the social boycott will probably prove the most formidable weapon used by the Nationalists, because, if the local Indian officials withdraw from Government service, there are not enough Englishmen with a knowledge of the language to carry on the administration.

In Bombay itself, the Civil Disobedience Movement rapidly reached amazing proportions. The British Press reported that one million persons went to the beach to defy the Salt Law *en masse*. Day after day "raids" were made on the salt works at Dharasana and Wadala, and the arrested numbered hundreds. Processions of a quarter of a million people marched repeatedly through the streets. When *hartals* were declared, on the arrest of well-known leaders or to protest against some act of repression, the mill-hands stopped work to a man, almost all the Indian shops were shut down, the students left their colleges and the children their schools, and even the Indian commercial offices, financial houses, and exchanges were closed. The entire Indian population seemed to be animated by one impulse.

Similar events occurred in practically all the cities of British India, though nowhere else was there quite the same evidence of Nationalist strength. In Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Lahore, Allahabad, Peshawar, thousands of

Indians openly defied British rule. The Press reported that 80,000 persons in Calcutta, 50,000 in Madras, 20,000 in Lahore, and almost the entire population of the city of Peshawar had broken the Salt Laws. It soon became clear that the Government was faced by a national uprising far more extensive and determined than had ever before been seen in India.

#### THE PESHAWAR DISTURBANCE

One of the centres of greatest disturbance was Peshawar. It is very difficult to obtain the facts as to what happened there. For a time there was a strict censorship upon all telegrams, and the divergence between the Indian and British accounts is serious. I have attempted to unravel the complexities, but do not pretend to have reached the full truth. There were three factors. First, the antagonistic tribes across the Frontier ; second, a remarkable organisation, known as the " Red Shirts " ; and third, the Congress organisation. The three agitations inevitably became interwoven to some extent ; indeed, the British authorities regarded them as one anti-British campaign. But the Indian Nationalists strongly denied deliberate collaboration.

Some of the tribes across the North-West Frontier are in a constant state of antagonism to the British authorities. This is largely due to historical reasons ; the British have extended their territory at the expense of the tribes and have intervened on frequent occasions by military force. One of the recalcitrant chiefs has been the Haji of Turangzai. He is described by *The Times* correspondent as " a thoroughly bad lot." As long ago as 1908 he was imprisoned for activities against the British, and during the third Afghan war is stated to have worked assiduously to undermine British rule. His son, Badshah Gul, has also been a thorn in the side of the British. These tribes naturally took the

opportunity of the unrest in India to harass the British Raj.

The chiefs across the frontier are linked with the Red Shirts in the North-West Province through the marriage of the Haji's sister to their leader, Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Red Shirts are an extraordinary body of men. The movement apparently originated with vague social reform purposes, and the members were known then as the "Servants of God." Their recruits had to swear on the Koran that they would lead a pure and righteous life, obey all orders from their leaders, and, if persecuted, refrain from violent resistance. In recent months they have become more political and revolutionary and have made close contacts with the Youth League, which in this part of India has come under the influence of Communism. The badge of the league is a hammer and sickle on a red background, and the members dye their white Gandhi caps red. It is stated that their leader, Mian Jaafr Shah, was trained at the Soviet school at Tashkent in Russian Turkestan.

The Red Shirts have been very active in enrolling members in the villages this year. Their methods are picturesque and stirring. A long column marches in fours, headed by a drum and fife band. The men wear the shirts and baggy trousers typical of the Pathans, all dyed a vivid red. As they enter each village they shout in unison "Long live the revolution!" and when the whole population has gathered round them their leader delivers an oration. By these means they have established branches through a large district round Peshawar.

In the city of Peshawar there is a strong Congress movement, despite the fact that the population is almost entirely Moslem. The movement is on ordinary Congress lines, and its leaders have strongly emphasised the principle of non-violence. There is no reason to disbelieve the statement of Congress officials that they have not approached the tribes across the frontier or the Red Shirts for co-operation ; but

under the conditions which I have described it is inevitable that individuals should seek the maximum agitation against the British authorities.

The most sensational development occurred within Peshawar itself. The uprising of the people was so formidable that the British authorities had entirely to withdraw, and for a week the city was left to the control of the Congress. The incidents which led to this remarkable situation are not clear, but the Indian and British accounts agree that, following the arrest of the Congress leaders in the city, there was a clash between the troops and the crowds, in which a British dispatch-rider was killed and a large number of Indians shot. The British estimate of the killed was 30 and the injured 33. The Indian estimate was 125 killed and many hundreds injured.

The British authorities and the Congress Committee both issued reports of the events, and subsequently both held enquiries. It is impossible to accept either account without further investigation, for the simple reason that the Indians boycotted the British enquiry and the British boycotted the Indian. (I was strongly criticised for reading the Indian report in the House of Commons. I did so, not because I accepted it as accurate, but because I considered it fair that Parliament should hear both sides.)

The main divergence between the two accounts relates to the attitude of the Indian crowd. The original British *communiqué* stated that the dispatch-rider was knocked off his motor-cycle by a blow and that subsequently an armoured car ran over him and, in the confusion, over one or two persons in the crowd. The Indian report alleged that two armoured cars broke into a procession without warning, killing three persons and injuring many, and that the dispatch-rider was assaulted after he had fired into the crowd. The truth must remain a matter of doubt, but it should be noted that the two judges who conducted the British enquiry, whilst endorsing the subsequent action of

the troops in firing upon the Indian crowds, strongly condemned the use of armoured cars. They reported :

“ We think that armoured cars were unsuitable for dealing with the conditions prevailing in Peshawar City on April 23rd. Although we think that the employment of force to disperse the city mob would have been inevitable in any circumstances, yet we have no doubt that the moment an armoured car ran over or knocked down a member of the mob, the difficulties of the situation were aggravated to a considerable extent. . . . There can be no doubt, in our opinion, as far as the events of April 23rd are concerned, that the effect of the armoured cars was this (exasperation). By running over members of the crowd they provoked a spirit of vindictiveness at the first stage.”

One of the two judges held that “ some men were run over by an armoured car before the dispatch-rider was attacked. The situation would never have assumed such a serious aspect but for this unfortunate circumstance.”

The British account of what followed indicated that the troops had to fire in self-defence and to prevent serious rioting. The Indian account suggested that the troops fired upon a crowd which was unprovocative. It is probable that Indians threw stones and brickbats, set light to one of the armoured cars, and attempted to snatch away the rifles of the soldiers ; but, on reading the conflicting reports, one gets the impression that the attitude of the Indians was, on the whole, one of defiance against the display of force rather than of using force aggressively themselves.

When the firing took place, the Indian account states that members of the crowd competed with each other to defy the British :

“ When those in front fell down wounded by the shots, those behind came forward with their breasts bared and



exposed themselves to the fire, so much so that some people got as many as twenty-one bullet wounds in their body, and all the people stood their ground without getting into a panic. A young Sikh came and stood in front of a soldier and asked him to fire at him, which the soldier unhesitatingly did, killing him. Similarly an old woman, seeing her relatives and friends being wounded, came forward, was shot and fell down wounded. An old man with a four-year-old child on his shoulder, unable to brook this brutal slaughter, advanced asking a soldier to fire at him. He was taken at his word, and he also fell down wounded."

It is not necessary to accept the Indian account of the general passivity of the crowd to recognise that the spirit here described may have animated many of the Indians when facing the British guns. The Congress claim that the Anglo-Indian paper at Lahore reported that Indians came forward one after another to face the fire, and when they fell wounded were dragged back and others came forward. I have not been able to verify this, but there is no doubt that the attitude described in the Indian statement has entered deeply into Indian psychology. That a similar spirit was repeatedly displayed by the crowds in Bombay when attacked by the police is not to be doubted. The defiant non-resistance of the Indians was described in the reports sent to British newspapers by many correspondents who had no sympathy with the Nationalist cause.

A significant feature of the disturbances at Peshawar was the refusal of a platoon of the Garhwal Rifles, an Indian regiment, which had always been distinguished for its loyalty, to proceed against the Indian crowds. This incident caused a great sensation in both British and Indian circles. At the court martial proceedings, it was stated in evidence that the men said, "We will not shoot our unarmed brethren, because India's army is to fight India's enemies

without. We will not go into the city. You may blow us from the guns if you like." Seventeen men were sentenced, one to transportation for life, another to fifteen years' imprisonment, and the rest to terms of rigorous imprisonment, varying from three to ten years. These severe sentences were no doubt imposed in order to deter other Indian soldiers ; but even those who have no sympathy with Indian aspirations will find it difficult to withhold admiration from men who were prepared to risk their liberty and life rather than shoo down countrymen engaged in the national struggle.

After leaving the city of Peshawar under the control of the Congress Committee for a week, the British re-occupied it in the dead of night by troops, infantry, and cavalry, with the support of aeroplanes. The entrances to the city were locked and guarded, and no one was permitted to leave or enter until thirty of the Congress leaders had been arrested. But despite this show of force, the spirit of the people remained undaunted. After the military occupation they demonstrated their Nationalist sympathies by vast processions. On one occasion a British soldier (afterwards sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment) shot two children accidentally. Immediately the streets were filled with indignant demonstrators, who attempted to seize the rifles of the troops. The soldiers had to fire to disperse the crowd, killing seven and wounding nine.

#### BOMBING THE RED SHIRTS

In the villages around Peshawar the Congress Committees were declared unlawful associations, and the authorities vigorously pursued the rebellious tribes and the Red Shirts. The Haji of Turangzai, his son, and their followers were repeatedly bombed, and on at least one occasion artillery was taken out to fire into the mouths of the caves which they occupied in the mountain passes. The following reports illustrate the methods adopted :

“ The Haji of Turangzai is still occupying his position, which was bombed at intervals during the week, and casualties are believed to have been inflicted. As the presence of hostile tribes on the district borders and the attempt to gather *lashkars* (fighting bands) have a disturbing effect on the district, an ultimatum has been delivered to Halinzai Mohmands, that, if the Haji himself does not withdraw within twenty-four hours, action from the air will be taken against the villages where he has been establishing himself.” (Government of India statement, May 27th, 1930.)

“ To-day’s bombardment had been kept a strict secret and the first shells must have been an unpleasant surprise. In spite of a strong wind, which blew clouds of grit and sand across the plain, the firing was extraordinarily accurate, and the gunners, picking up the range from the beginning, dropped their shells right into the mouth of the dark cleft which marks the western end of the caves. From behind our sand-bags on the top of the fort we could see the sudden flash from the battery position, and then, while the Mohmand mountains were still echoing to the sound of the guns, thin columns of smoke and dust rising from the caves. The Royal Air Force now joined the party. Aeroplanes appeared in the distant sky and the sharper crack of bombs mingled with the dull explosion of shells.” (*Times* correspondent, June 4th, 1930.)

A determined offensive was also taken against the Red Shirts. The leaders were arrested, the organisation declared illegal, and the Seditious Meetings Act put into force. The murder of a British official in one of the villages led to the use of troops and extensive imprisonments. These methods failed, however, to crush the movement. The Red Shirts claim that their membership increased from 700 to 25,000 within a few weeks of the arrest of their leaders.

After comparative quietude, the situation at Peshawar became more serious than ever in August owing to the advance of the Afridis across the frontier. A considerable British force was employed against them, 6,000 bombs being dropped in one day. The position was made more critical by the assistance given to the Afridis by the villagers and the continued unrest in the city. The developments became so grave that the Viceroy proclaimed martial law.

Military power may temporarily maintain "order" in the Peshawar area ; but obviously the situation remains dangerous, and the warning is clear that new policies must be followed.

#### THE PROGRAMME OF RESISTANCE

The conditions in the neighbourhood of Peshawar were, of course, exceptional owing to the complication of the frontier tribes. In other parts of India the Nationalist Movement proceeded for the most part on the lines laid down by the Working Committee of the Congress. The programme of non-violent resistance was embodied in the following seven points :

1. All-India *Satyagraha* at Dharasana Salt Works and technical breaches of Salt Law elsewhere.
2. Appeals to Government servants, students, lawyers, workers, peasants, and others to make sacrifices for the movement.
3. Intensive boycott of foreign cloth, not only in regard to future purchases, but also existing stock.
4. Initiation of campaign for non-payment of land revenue and taxes in certain Provinces and areas.
5. Breaches of Forest Laws.
6. Boycott of British goods and of British banking, insurance, shipping, and other institutions.
7. Boycott of liquor-shops.

The Government of India declared in May that "the hollowness of claiming that the movement is non-violent is becoming increasingly apparent"; but the remarkable thing is that in a struggle of this kind, where masses of the people were defying the administration, and where force was extensively used to suppress them, the attitude of disciplined non-resistance was maintained so fully. In some cities at times of high tension the control of the trained Congress volunteers broke down. Stones were thrown, buildings were burned down, the police were attacked. But, considering the forces that were in opposition, it is little short of a miracle that the vast Indian crowds who responded to the lead of the Congress resorted to violence so rarely.

From an English friend who was in Ahmedabad on the day following Mr. Gandhi's arrest, when feelings were naturally high, I received an account of the situation which indicates the psychology on both sides.

"At about 9 a.m. to-day," he wrote, "I drove into the city with some of the local Indian leaders. We found a complete *hartal* and absolute order until we came to one street, where people were in a state of frenzied excitement. Here we stopped and enquired—two armoured cars had just gone by, we were told, with machine-guns. We drove on and met a messenger from the District Magistrate requesting the immediate attendance of two of the Congress leaders. They found the Magistrate distinctly agitated, and he told them that he had no alternative but to patrol the town with armoured cars. They assured him that, if he did, trouble was inevitable, and undertook to be responsible for the peace of the city on two conditions: firstly, that the armoured cars and the military should be kept out of sight and out of mind, and secondly, that all liquor-shops, Indian and foreign, should be shut for the day. The Magistrate agreed, and peace and order were

maintained. Whenever the same plan was adopted, the same success was obtained. The fact was patent that people recognised and respected the Congress control. On the other hand, in every place where the 'strong man' tried to control the situation with police and military, there was trouble and often bloodshed."

Bombay provided the most remarkable demonstrations of the extent to which the principle of non-violence was accepted by the people. On more than one occasion when processions were prohibited people gathered thousands strong and quietly sat on the ground until the police and troops withdrew. Then they got up and carried through their programme. On one occasion a procession, reported in the British Press as 250,000 strong, was prohibited from marching through certain streets. The people sat down, and remained seated for two hours, holding up a large part of the traffic of the city, until the ban was removed. On another occasion the police announced the prohibition of a procession and demonstration planned for the evening. Congress volunteers went round the city announcing that nevertheless they would take place. Thirty thousand people gathered together. Faced by the police, the greater part of the crowd squatted on the ground ; sections of it proceeded to the meeting-place by side streets. Shortly after midnight, when the demonstrators had been squatting for over three hours, the police were withdrawn. The people immediately rose and began their march. The reports tell of the remarkable spectacle of a crowd of 25,000 passing through the silent streets at midnight, and of the vast demonstration held in the early hours of the morning under the stars. It was this astonishing combination of resignation and determination which made the task of the authorities almost impossible. A riot they could quell ; but how could this quiet strength be overcome ?

The method usually employed by the authorities to  
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prevent raids upon the salt depots, or to enforce prohibitions of meetings, was the use of police armed with *lathis* (staves about five feet in length, with a knob of brass at one end and a cylinder of brass or iron at the other). Day after day, until the monsoon intervened, volunteers marched to the salt depots at Dharasana or Wadala, to be beaten back by the police, until they were arrested or injured. The Congress organised their own medical corps of ambulances and motor-cars to accompany these expeditions, and opened their own hospital. There were reports of gross brutality by the police, but these, revolting though the acts committed appear to have been, need not be emphasised ; they are inevitable under such circumstances, and blame should be attached, not so much to the police, as to the policy which they were called upon to administer. The prisoners, running into many hundreds, were interned at Worli. Here an incident occurred which is typical of much that happened.

#### THE COURAGE OF THE WOMEN

On the King's birthday the prisoners took part in a demonstration, and, fearing an organised attempt to escape, the authorities employed a party of sappers and miners to strengthen the wire-netting round the detention area. They proceeded without molestation until they came to the boundary adjoining some mill-workers' tenements. Then the women objected to the barbed wire being brought in front of their doors, and they squatted in the path of the sappers and miners, amid the encouraging cheers of the Indian prisoners on the other side of the wire fencing. The sappers withdrew and police arrived, but the women refused to move, despite threats and persuasions. The police at length ordered the bodily removal of the women, one or two of whom screamed as they were carried away. Immediately the angered prisoners attempted to pull down the fencing, and order was only restored by the free use of the

*lathis* by the police, resulting in injuries to eighty of the prisoners.

The action of these mill-workers' wives—their spontaneous initiative and courage—are indicative of one of the most remarkable features of the movement. Despite all tradition and custom, women have thrown themselves into the struggle—marching through the streets, picketing the liquor-shops, accompanying the salt raids—in a manner that has astonished everyone who knows Indian conditions. Even women who have lived in strict *purdah* have come openly into the streets and taken part in the campaigns with almost reckless abandon. "This is the first time since the days of Rani Lakshmi Bai, our great woman warrior-ancestor," said Srimati Satyavati, one of the women leaders at her trial at Delhi, "that we have abandoned our homes and children to redeem our Motherland from foreign bondage, and neither the threat of the dungeons nor of bullets and the merciless beatings can deter us from the duty which we owe to ourselves and the coming generations. I and thousands of my sisters are ready to suffer, but we must win India's freedom." Miss Satyavati was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing to give a security of good behaviour, and she is only one of many women in prison. After Mr. Gandhi and a second leader of the salt raids at Dharasana had been arrested, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the famous poetess, assumed the leadership, only to be imprisoned in her turn. Day after day in Bombay 500 women picketed the shops which were selling foreign cloth. In all parts of India women took part in campaigns with similar spirit.

There was one event in Bombay which will live in Indian history as an epic of the courage of her women. I base my account largely upon the vivid telegram which appeared from Mr. George Slocombe in the *Daily Herald*. If a Labour newspaper be regarded as weak evidence, let it be remembered that the *Herald* is the organ of the Labour Party and



the chief Press support of the Government. Moreover, other newspapers corroborated what Mr. Slocombe wrote.

The authorities in Bombay prohibited the daily parade of the Congress volunteers on the open green space—the Esplanade Maidan—where they drilled each morning. These volunteers are the disciplined backbone of the Congress movement. They are dressed in uniform, but carry neither sticks nor weapons of any kind. They serve as stewards on all great occasions, such as processions and demonstrations ; I was greatly impressed by their efficiency at the meeting of the Congress in 1927. More than once the volunteers have taken over the duties of the police in maintaining peace when British control has broken down, and they have repeatedly shown remarkable order and restraint in the face of the police attacks.

The Congress Committee decided to defy the ban. Five hundred volunteers, accompanied by a number of women dressed in brilliant *saris*, and by a large crowd, marched on the Maidan, to find themselves faced by a large force of police, including 500 constables armed with *lathis*, 75 officers and sergeants, and 50 mounted police.

When the volunteers attempted to enter the Maidan, they were charged by the mounted police, and many were knocked down and trampled upon. At the same time the foot police made a *lathi* charge on the crowd of spectators. The crowd fled, but the volunteers stood firm, re-forming their ranks again and again after the charges of the police and sergeants, who rained blows upon them.

Then occurred the incident which will be described for generations in India. Among the volunteers were twenty young Sikhs, who showed extraordinary discipline and courage, despite a storm of *lathi* blows. When a first police attack had failed, thirty women advanced, and, forming a cordon around the Sikhs, invited the sergeants to beat them instead of the youths they guarded.

The police officers asked the women to leave, but they

refused. "Time after time the Police Commissioner (Mr. Healey) issued warnings and personally appealed to the Indian woman councillor, who was the leader of the women volunteers, to remove her followers before stronger action was taken," wrote the Bombay correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. "But the reply was that the women would not mind *lathi* charges or even being ridden down by the mounted police."

"Some messages may describe yesterday's affair as a 'battle,'" the *Telegraph* correspondent proceeded. "But it can in no way be thus named. Rather it was a terrible test of strength between this indomitable spirit of non-violence, determined to defy the law, and 500 *lathi*-armed police, some of them mounted, charged with the painful task of clearing from the Maidan these would-be martyrs."

The injured numbered 500, and more than 100 were injured so seriously that they had to be detained in the Congress hospital. There were no injuries on the side of the police.

The effect of this event, and particularly of the part which the women took, was profound. "Public feeling, even amongst the Moderates and Europeans, is deeply stirred," wrote the *Telegraph* correspondent, "and to-day hourly reports are coming in that this or that organisation of students, business people, exchanges, etc., are closing as a protest." A meeting of wives and daughters of Indians with knight-hoods and other titles cabled a protest to Queen Mary. A silent procession of women carrying black flags marched through the streets. But the main feeling among the Nationalists was one of pride and rejoicing. At a large demonstration held on the Maidan the same evening, one woman speaker acclaimed the heroism of the women volunteers as marking a new stage in the struggle for freedom, and, says the *Telegraph*, "the whole tone of the meeting was one of congratulation at the spirit of non-violence shown."

The clearest evidence of the non-violent character of the

campaign was the restricted use of martial law. If the hundreds of thousands of Indians who took part in the movement in the large cities had really been regarded as dangerous to life and property, it is certain that the military authorities would have been placed in command.

One of the areas where martial law was enforced was Sholapur, in the Bombay Presidency. National volunteers began to cut down palm-trees used for extracting toddy, the intoxicating liquor mostly drunk. They were stopped by the police, and the crowd was ordered to disperse. When the people stood their ground, the order to fire was given. Then the crowd got out of hand. Six police stations, the magistrate's court, and all the liquor-shops except one were burned down. In the shooting, 25 Indians were killed and 100 injured.

The most alarming reports were distributed of Indian brutality. One British news agency telegraphed that "two policemen were beaten to death, and their bodies were soaked in kerosene and burnt in the public square." This report appeared in practically every daily newspaper in England. *The Times* Simla correspondent went still further. He referred to the "magnificent loyal police, fighting against odds, who were tied together and burned alive." A week later the Government of Bombay issued an official *communiqué* as follows: "Nearly all the rumours of hideous brutalities by the mob which have been freely circulated are without foundation. It is not true that policemen were tied together and burned alive, nor that one had his eyes gouged out, nor is there any suspicion whatever that two were thrown into a well. It is hoped that all missing policemen will yet be found."

The following day there was a complete *hartal* in Sholapur. The mill-workers stopped work in a body and all the shops were closed. Meetings of more than five persons were prohibited, but processions of 50,000 people were nevertheless held. When lorries of police and soldiers arrived, the

people crowded for a few minutes into the nearest buildings, and then poured into the streets again as soon as the lorries had passed. The police were so unnerved that they declined to continue on duty, and for a time the Congress had to detail their own volunteers to act as policemen. Then the military took charge, martial law was proclaimed, the wearing of Congress emblems was prohibited, and a curfew order issued preventing people from leaving their houses between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. The Congress Committee declined to recognise the authority of these orders ; the Congress office was raided, papers seized, and the Chairman and Secretary arrested. On the first curfew evening a large number of Indians went openly into the streets. Two hundred were arrested and detained for the night, the ring-leaders being kept for trial.

#### GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

The military sought to enforce their authority by the severity of the sentences they imposed. A court martial sentenced the President of the Municipality to six months' rigorous imprisonment and fined him 10,000 rupees (£750) for refusing to haul down the Indian Nationalist flag from the municipal buildings. The Congress Secretary was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined 3,000 rupees (£225), the President to five years' imprisonment and fined 2,000 rupees (£150). Seven Indians were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined 1,000 rupees (£75), and several others to one year's imprisonment and fined 500 rupees (£37 10s.). Four boys were sentenced to corporal punishment—two to fifteen strokes with the rattan cane, one to ten strokes, and one to fifteen strokes with the birch. All the imprisonments were "rigorous," that is of the most severe character.

The prohibitions included the wearing of the Gandhi cap, which is rapidly becoming the national head-dress of

India. Reuter's correspondent at Sholapur reported on May 15th that "lorry-loads of men of the 2nd Ulster Rifles are parading the streets armed with thin sticks with a hooked end, with which they lift off the white linen Gandhi caps worn by passing followers of Gandhi, these caps being considered provocative." The Secretary of State for India denied this report, but afterwards admitted that the wearing of the cap had been prohibited. An Indian recited this experience in the *Bombay Chronicle* of June 20th :

"I was travelling by the Bombay-Madras express on the 15th of May, which arrived at Sholapur at about 10.10 p.m. I was standing on the platform with two or three of my friends. We saw first two railway police looking into all the compartments very watchfully, and we were wondering what they would be for. Presently a soldier came in front of us and stared at me, as I was wearing a Gandhi cap. He asked me to remove the Gandhi cap, but on my being indifferent to his request he forcibly snatched the cap from my head. Not satisfied with that, he removed the Gandhi locket I had pinned on to my shirt, and walked off. I saw he had removed several Gandhi caps from passengers who were just standing on the platform."

It needs no gift of sympathetic imagination to appreciate how embittering this petty tyranny must be to self-respecting and devoted followers of Mr. Gandhi.

During July, Mr. Wedgwood Benn informed me in the House of Commons that he had no knowledge of the cap having been prohibited in other parts of India. I was able to show him an original notice issued by the District Magistrate of Guntur, in the Madras Presidency, which read as follows :

*Order under Section 144 C.P.C.*

Whereas the public tranquility has been disturbed by

the Civil Disobedience Movement and the wearing of the Gandhi cap is a symbol of sympathy with the movement, and whereas information has been laid before me that a notice is about to be issued to the public in general which will be to the effect of inciting them to wear Gandhi caps and disturb the public tranquility, I, F. W. Stewart, Esq., I.C.S. District Magistrate, consider that immediate prevention is desirable and direct every member of the public in general to abstain from wearing a Gandhi cap when in any place frequented by the public within the limits of Guntur Municipality and a radius of five miles therefrom for a period of two months from this date.

Guntur District Magistrate's Office. F. W. STEWART,  
Dated the 20th June, 1930. Dt. Magistrate  
(signature above the official stamp).

It is significant that this Order was issued in the Madras Presidency, where the British authorities claim Mr. Gandhi's influence is weak. The reliable correspondent who sent me this document informed me also that the District Magistrate at Kristna had prohibited the hoisting of the Indian flag and that at Bangalore the Magistrate had ordered motor-bus owners and drivers not to allow Congress volunteers to board their vehicles. Early in August a superior magistrate in the Madras Presidency cancelled Mr. Stewart's Order. Its effect has therefore been only to advertise the symbol which it sought to ban.

When the British Press, and even the British Government, ridiculed the non-violence of the Gandhi campaign, one wondered sometimes whether they had considered the effect of their words. The refusal to recognise the significance of the remarkable demonstrations of non-violence was a direct incitement to violence. If the Nationalist Movement had not been restrained by Mr. Gandhi's teaching, the small European minority in India, particularly the isolated

European families in the villages, would have been open to attack in a way one does not dare to contemplate. British military force might have suppressed the revolt, but it would only have been at the cost of terrible loss of life on both sides.

#### THE CHITTAGONG RIOT

Some indication of what would have happened had the Indian Nationalists deliberately resorted to the method of violence was given by the Chittagong revolt. In Bengal there is a small group of physical-force revolutionists, who carefully organised an attack upon the British armoury at Chittagong. One night a stream of cars drove up and a man, dressed as a British sergeant, alighted. The two sentries mistook him for a British officer and saluted. They were shot dead. A sergeant, on hearing the firing, rushed out from his bungalow. He, too, was shot dead. The door of the armoury was then forced open and the armoury raided by forty men, who, having seized rifles and revolvers, set fire to the building. Another British sergeant drove up in a taxi-cab. He and the driver were shot dead. Meanwhile, a second armoury was seized. A band of men in khaki jumped out of motor-cars, shot the sentry, seized the rifles and revolvers, and also set fire to the building.

The detailed planning of the attack was shown by the simultaneous raid upon the telephone exchange and the telegraph office by another party of khaki-clad men. The telephone operator was drugged, the telephone switchboard was set alight, and the building only saved by the appearance of a force of guards. The raiders were finally driven off by the arrival of a strong contingent of troops with a Lewis gun. This incident stands out almost alone, but it is significant of what might have occurred throughout India if the Irish model of Mr. De Valera, rather than the philosophy of Mr. Gandhi, had been followed.

A feature of the movement which requires emphasis, in view of the misleading impression given in the Press, is the unity which it created among Indians of all religions and castes. The British Press, has sought to convey the idea that the Indian National Congress is only representative of high-caste Hindus, and that the Moslems and other religious communities, as well as the depressed classes, are opposed to Mr. Gandhi. The truth is that in all the religious communities there are individuals who think of their denominations rather than of India, and who, because of their insistence upon communal claims, are regarded as spokesmen for their fellow religionists. But the general membership of every community has been increasingly swept into the mass Nationalist Movement, submerging their religious distinctions in the common bond of loyalty to India, whilst in Northern India especially, the depressed classes have thrown themselves enthusiastically into service of the popular cause.

#### MOSLEM ACTIVITY

I have already pointed out that there are within the Congress organisation men who command as much support among Moslems as those who are designated Moslem "leaders." Men like Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Mohammed Alam, Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Abbas Tayabji, Abdul Qadir Kasuri are honoured among the masses of Moslems equally with the Ali brothers, the Aga Khan, Sir Mohammed Shafi, and Mr. Jinnah. One of the most important of the All-Indian Moslem organisations, the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema*, enthusiastically declared in favour of the Congress attitude. There are three Indian Provinces in which the Moslem population is strong : Bengal, the Punjab, and the North-West Frontier Province. There is also a considerable Moslem population in the city of Bombay. If we take these areas in turn, we find a stronger



resistance to the Government in the North-West Frontier Province than in any other part of India, with the possible exception of Bombay ; in Bengal, the Moslem Political Conference endorsed the National Congress proposals ; in the Punjab, the Congress Movement and its leaders are largely Moslems.

The Moslems of Bombay took their full part in the general resistance to British rule in the City. One of the largest processions in support of Mr. Gandhi was specially composed of Moslems, and, if certain Moslem leaders held aloof, others, like Mr. Brelvi, completely identified themselves with the Congress Movement. The feeling of unity was cemented by a conflict between the Moslems and the police on May 26th. It was the Congress volunteers who restored peace and who cared for the injured Moslems in the Congress Hospital. The spirit of fraternity which is being engendered in the Nationalist Movement is illustrated in the letter of an English friend who visited the hospital on this occasion. " I found wounded Moslems being cared for by high-caste Hindus," he wrote.

At first, the support of the Sikhs was limited to the Akalis in the Punjab and one or two smaller bodies, but the decision of the Central Sikh League to participate in the campaign meant that virtually the whole Sikh community had joined the Nationalist ranks. The authorities made the stupid mistake of arousing Sikh antagonism by sending troops to search the Gurdwara, a Sikh sacred building in Delhi, and firing with resulting casualties.

The Parsees are almost to a man behind Mahatma Gandhi. A procession of 50,000 Parsees, including 2,000 women, marched through the streets of Bombay behind banners, declaring " No compromise without Gandhi." *The Times* correspondent telegraphed that " the procession is remarkable, in that it is the first time that Parsees as a community have demonstrated their sympathy with Mr. Gandhi." An interesting figure among the marchers was

Sir Pherozeshah Mehtá, the "Grand Old Man of Bombay," who, as head of the municipality, read the address of welcome when King George landed in Bombay in 1911.

The depressed classes have in the past been exploited, not only socially, but for political ends. Both the Government and the Congress have directed organisations which have claimed to speak for these social outcasts, and probably both have sometimes used them for political purposes rather than for the welfare of the depressed classes. But in recent years the higher caste control of the Congress has been undermined by the growth of the mass movement below, and the undoubted fact is this : no man has done more for the "untouchables," or is more loved by them, than Gandhi. Thanks to Gandhi and the Congress, "untouchability" is rapidly ceasing to be a problem in the North of India. In Gujerat, Bombay City, and other parts of Northern India, the depressed classes have associated themselves *en masse* with the Nationalist cause, and they have been welcomed without reservation. One report in the British Press was significant of the enthusiastic participation of the depressed classes. When news reached Karachi of the arrest of the Congress leaders, the street-sweepers—all "untouchables"—spontaneously went on strike.

#### THE PEASANTS' ENTHUSIASM

A similar enthusiasm is to be found among the peasants, again particularly of Northern India. The tax strike of the 80,000 peasants of Bardoli in 1928 was a symptom of their new self-reliance and resolution ; the larger part of the Bombay Presidency is now a vast Bardoli. "At one place that I visited during the early stages of the salt collection," an English correspondent wrote me, "the Congress volunteers had considerable difficulty in keeping back the peasants from participating before the signal was given for

mass *Satyagraha*. As soon as the ban was lifted, about 30,000 peasants broke the law in that one place alone."

Indeed, it is near the truth to say that the entire Indian population that is vocal, except the landlord and the official classes and certain capitalist interests frightened by the developing proletarian character of the Congress, are behind Gandhi. The Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have insisted that Mr. Gandhi must be invited to the Round Table conference and that Dominion status must be the minimum concession. The Indian Exchanges and business houses of Bombay are the first to close when a *hartal* is declared. The Indian medical profession has been driven into Nationalism by the stupid decision of the British Medical Association not to recognise Indian degrees. The legal profession is overwhelmingly Nationalist. Indeed, the British authorities have only been able to claim the support of one representative deputation, and that has been from the Moslem Zemindars (landlords) of the Punjab. To the loyal expressions of this deputation the Government can add memorials from the landowning classes of Bombay and Calcutta and from the Marwar merchants of Calcutta. It has been a case of the British authorities and the Indian landlords against the rest of the Indian people.

#### WHOLESALE ARRESTS

The Civil Disobedience Movement was met by large scale arrests. According to an official statement in the Legislative Assembly, in the two months from April 16th to June 15th a total of 4,377 persons were convicted in connection with the campaign. Of these, 1,229 were in Madras, 1,157 in Bengal, 761 in Bombay, and 483 in Bihar and Orissa. The large number of convictions in the Madras and Bengal Presidencies was noteworthy, because it was alleged that the movement was weak there. The sentences varied from one month to two years, and, in a

few cases, to longer periods. Rigorous imprisonment (the severest form) was often imposed.

During the first three months of the campaign most of the well-known leaders were arrested. They include (in addition to Mr. Gandhi) Mr. Motilal Nehru, Mr. Jawaharlal Nahru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, three of Mr. Gandhi's sons, Mr. Abbas Tayabji, and Mr. Vallabhai Patel. When the Working Committee of the National Congress was declared an "unlawful assembly," its members were arrested one after the other.

It was thought that the arrest of the leaders would lead to the disorganisation of the movement ; but, as soon as one leader was taken, another of equal courage took his place ; as soon as one committee was destroyed, another of equal resolution sprang into being.

The authorities were not content to rely upon even the great powers which they ordinarily enjoy. First, the Bengal Ordinance was re-imposed (giving power to imprison or deport for an indefinite period without charge or trial) and then a series of new Ordinances was promulgated. The Press Act gave powers to demand substantial monetary deposits from newspapers as surety for good behaviour, and three special Ordinances prohibited :

- (1) Any instigation not to pay land revenue or taxes.
- (2) The picketing of liquor-shops or shops selling foreign cloth.
- (3) The picketing of public servants.

The Congress challenged these Ordinances by intensifying its campaign. When the picketing order was applied to Bombay, 500 women immediately volunteered for duty, and day after day dozens of arrests were made. The prohibition of liquor picketing applied not only to new efforts arising from the campaign, but to normal temperance

activities. The following account, for instance, reached me from an English woman at Ahmedabad :

“ There is one thing I particularly want to tell you about, and that is the determined attack made by the authorities on the Social Betterment work of the Ahmedabad Labour Union. The Union was founded by Bapu (an intimate name for Mr. Gandhi) eleven years ago. It now numbers some thirty to thirty-five thousand labourers from the mills of Ahmedabad.

“ Education (40,000 rupees per year), Medical health (12,000 rupees per year), and Social Uplift have been a feature of the Union from the beginning. In 1924 the Social Uplift work became developed into a regular department, and its chief interest was the spread of temperance (this work had begun even in 1921). The department organised regular visiting of families with conversation, readings, music, education for the children, and other social contacts.

“ After men had kept away from drink for three months, pledges were taken from them. Much good work was done in this way. Then in March, meetings were held in the different mills and localities, and afterwards pledges were taken on a large scale by house to house visits, with music and other social attractions. Within a month this resulted in a reduction of 50 per cent. in the consumption of liquor in the city shops.

“ After this, men were posted near the shops (some two or three doors away) to judge how far the campaign had been successful and to reveal in which quarters the strongest propaganda was still necessary. Names were not taken, but simply the numbers from the different communities tabled. This reduced the consumption to 20 per cent.

“ The effect of this campaign upon the liquor traffic was so serious that the drink shopkeepers arranged

assaults upon the social workers at the observation posts, and set up sales at unlicensed places and the hawking of liquor at all hours of the day and night, regardless of the law. The Government openly connived at this, and refused to take any steps to check these illegal sales, let alone the assaults.

“And now the Government is arresting two ‘observers’ every day. The ‘observers’ are mill labourers from the ‘untouchable’ class. They have perfectly understood the spirit of the struggle and fresh volunteers are ever coming forward for arrest. They are supposed to be taken for ‘intimidation and molestation,’ neither of which they can be fairly taken for. The magistrate shows reluctance to convict ; but the Government insists.”

The Magistrates have power to place political prisoners into three classes, “A,” “B” and “C.” The power was used without any discrimination as to offence or family, with the result that one son of Mr. Gandhi found himself in class “A,” another in class “C.” The difference is illustrated by the varying costs of the rations allowed. “A” diet is worth 5 annas (about 5*d.*) a day ; “C” diet, 5 pice (about 1½*d.*) a day. It is characteristic of the spirit of the Indian Movement that the “A” and “B” class prisoners in Sabarmati gaol refused to accept a better diet than their “C” class comrades. When they declined to eat the “A” and “B” meals, they were left without any food at all, but after sixty hours all were given “C” diet. An English correspondent wrote me that “the food in ‘C’ class contains no milk, no *ghee*, and not even oil, so there is no lubrication for the internal organs and constipation is the great trouble. The gaol authorities are continually trying to persuade the prisoners to take ‘sick’ diet, but they strongly refuse, saying that it must be an honest readjustment of the rules or nothing at all. Only a few who are too aged or delicate are taking special food.”

## SUPPRESSION OF THE PRESS

The Press Ordinance meant the practical closing down of the Nationalist press. When the Ordinance was first promulgated, Gandhi opposed the payment of the deposits demanded.

“ ‘ If we have decided to hand over our bodies without a murmur to the authorities,’ he said, ‘ let us all be equally ready to hand over our property to them ; but do not let us sell our souls. I would therefore urge pressmen and publishers to refuse to furnish the security and, if called upon to do so, either to cease publication or to challenge the authorities to confiscate whatever they like. They may confiscate type and machinery but what they can never confiscate, and what, after all, is the thing that matters, is the thought of the nation.’ ”

The Working Committee of the National Congress also urged refusal of security, and most of the papers supporting the Congress followed this advice and closed down.

The Newspapers Association, however, advised the payment of the security and the continuance of publication until the Government interfered and some of the Indian papers, not directly connected with the Congress, pursued this policy. At the end of July the *Hindu* (Madras), the *Liberty* and *Advance* (Calcutta), after temporary suspensions, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), the *Chronicle* (Bombay), and the *Tribune* (Lahore) were still being published, but the greater part of India had no newspapers supporting the Nationalist cause. For example, at Delhi (the capital of India) the Government demanded securities of 5,000 rupees (£375) from the three Nationalist dailies and 4,000 rupees and 2,000 rupees from the two Nationalist weeklies.

They all closed down. At the end of June 5,000 rupees were demanded from the press which printed Gandhi's organ, *Young India*, and a vernacular weekly, *Navajivan*. The security was refused, and the papers were cyclostyled.

In many cities the Congress Committees replaced their newspapers by typescript bulletins, and persisted in duplicating them daily, despite prohibitions. In Bombay one editor after another was arrested, the Congress House repeatedly raided and the duplicators confiscated ; still the Bulletin appeared. Every Indian mail brought me copies regularly. Sometimes the circulation of the Bulletin reached 100,000. In many parts of the country, vernacular bulletins were duplicated and distributed widely.

The Secretary of State for India complained, on May 13th, that "organised attempts are now being made to spread malicious and alarmist rumours and, until the public have learned by experience that they are totally unworthy of credence, their currency tends to maintain a state of excitement in the towns." The closing down of the press inevitably gave scope for the spreading of extravagant reports. In a country where so large a part of the population is illiterate, news habitually travels from mouth to mouth, but ordinarily the newspapers serve as a check to rumour. Under present conditions it is possible for those who desire to excite enmity to distribute malicious stories without any printed test of their accuracy.

A censorship was also imposed upon many Press telegrams dispatched from India. This had a bad effect abroad, particularly in America. A sensation was caused at a luncheon of the English Speaking Union in London on May 22nd by an outspoken criticism of the Press censorship by Mr. R. Paine Scripps, President of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers of America. "The censorship has led Americans to suspect," he said, "that, when two persons are reported as killed, the truth is that twenty are killed and the hospitals full." He told how the United Press of



America had received an enquiry from its Lahore correspondent: "Are you receiving my *daily* dispatches?" The last message had been received four days before, and in sixteen days only five had been received. The Director of the U.P.A. had gone to India in order to assure the agency's European and American clients that its Indian news was accurate. He had sent a 400-word cable about the Dharasana salt disturbances, but only 132 words had been received, the Bombay Government having cancelled the rest. "The natural assumption is that things are much worse than the journalists are permitted to report," commented Mr. Scripps.

#### BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

As the campaign proceeded, the boycott of British goods proved one of the most formidable weapons used by the Nationalist Movement. Mr. Malaviya, the influential leader of the Nationalists, the Right Wing of the Congress, concentrated upon this aspect of the campaign, and he was afterwards strongly supported by Mr. V. J. Patel, the ex-Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Patel's resignation of the speakership was one of the sensations of the early stages of the movement. In a letter to the Viceroy he stated that he was inclined at first to accept the Round Table conference, given a satisfactory personnel and a general amnesty for political prisoners, but the subsequent utterances of Government spokesmen and the repressive actions of the authorities had made him decide to throw in his lot with the Congress.

The effectiveness of the Congress boycott was shown by the fact that the total of cotton goods imported from England in April and May, compared with the corresponding total of the previous year, showed a decrease of 23½ per cent. "This decline," stated Reuter's correspondent,

“ is attributable chiefly to the attitude of the supporters of the Nationalist Movement, who have, since the beginning of Mr. Gandhi’s campaign, pressed for a boycott of British goods, whilst advocating the wearing of native-spun cloth. Foreign cloth shops in most of the large towns have been continuously picketed, and it has been difficult for importers even to honour contracts made with Lancashire before the outbreak of the movement.”

A decrease of imports by nearly a quarter was sufficiently serious, but the campaign had only begun to gather momentum in May. Reporting that there had been a loss of £795,000 in the Customs revenue for the three months ending in June, Sir George Schuster, the Finance Minister, pointed out, in the Legislative Assembly, that the full effect of the Civil Disobedience Movement had not even been felt by the end of June. This boycott campaign is likely to be one of the decisive factors in securing a modification of the British attitude towards India, because its effect on unemployment and loss of trade is certain to create a strong demand for a settlement in industrial circles.

#### FURTHER EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE

In the height of the campaign, Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Motilal Nehru both made statements—the former from within prison, the latter on the eve of prison—re-affirming their readiness to confer with British representatives, if India’s right to full self-government were recognised. Mr. Gandhi’s statement was particularly important for its recognition that the British Dominions “ are in all essential respects independent ” and its re-affirmed indication that his concern is not formal independence, but the “ substance of independence.” Both these noteworthy interviews were given to Mr. Slocombe of the *Daily Herald*.

“ I have always heard,” said Mr. Gandhi, “ that in

England Dominion status is understood to mean independence, but by Indian authorities it is not so understood. Therefore, when independence is resisted, we naturally ask for independence in contradistinction to Dominion status." He acknowledged that Canada and South Africa are in all essential respects independent, but added that India was not offered status like that. He did not refuse to negotiate—"my life has been nothing but a record of settlements"—and put forward the following terms :

1. The terms of reference to the Round Table conference to include the framing of a Constitution giving India the substance of independence.
2. Satisfaction to be granted to the demand for the repeal of the Salt Tax, for the prohibition of liquor, and for a ban on foreign cloths.
3. An amnesty to prisoners convicted of political offences, to coincide with the end of the Civil Disobedience campaign.

Mr. Gandhi stated that, if these three conditions were accepted, he would be prepared to leave over the remaining points in his letter to the Viceroy for future discussion.

This interview appeared in the *Daily Herald* on May 21st. A month later (June 23rd) Mr. Motilal Nehru again made an offer of negotiation.

"If it were made clear," he said, "that the Round Table conference would meet to frame a Constitution for a free India (subject to such adjustments of our mutual relations as are required by the special needs and conditions in India, and by our past association), I would be disposed to recommend the National Congress to accept an invitation to participate in a conference."

"We must be masters in our own household," he proceeded, "but we are ready to agree to reasonable terms for

a period in which to transfer power from the British administration in India to a responsible Indian Government. We must meet the British people in order to discuss these terms as nation to nation on an equal footing." If these terms were conceded, and a widely framed amnesty for political prisoners were granted, Mr. Nehru expressed belief that a political settlement would be possible.

There was no response on the British side to this impressively reasonable offer until July 16th when the Viceroy accepted a proposal from two Moderate leaders, Sir Tej B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, that they should be permitted to interview Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Motilal Nehru, and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru in prison, with a view to reaching the basis of a settlement. In authorising these interviews the Viceroy went further in language to meet the Indian position than he had previously done.

"It remains my earnest desire," he wrote, "as it is that of my Government, and I have no doubt also that of his Majesty's Government, to do everything that we can in our respective spheres to assist the people of India to obtain as large a degree of management of their own affairs as can be shown to be consistent with making provision for those matters in regard to which they are not at present in a position to assume responsibility."

The language was vague, but it was interpreted by the Moderates as approximating to their formula : "Dominion status with the necessary safeguards."

The Viceroy responded to a suggestion which I made to Mr. Wedgwood Benn, and which Sir Tej B. Sapru subsequently made in India, that Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi should be given an opportunity to consult together after hearing the views of the Moderate leaders. The Nehrus were transferred to Yeravda prison so that they might confer with Gandhi, and Mrs.

Sarojini Naidu, Mr. V. Patel, and other imprisoned members of the Working Committee of the National Congress were allowed to join the discussion. At the moment of writing the result of these Peace talks is unknown, but it is announced that Sir Tej B. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar are conveying a letter to the Viceroy containing the reply of the Nationalist leaders. This suggests that Gandhi and his colleagues are not satisfied that the assurances which they have been given are sufficiently concrete and that they are seeking definite terms on the lines of the *Daily Herald* interviews which I have quoted.

Meanwhile, the Government has maintained its repression. Whilst the Peace talks were proceeding, a new regulation was issued prohibiting inscriptions upon postal communications, urging the boycott of British goods. During August I received from India a detailed return of the Civil Disobedience prisoners, according to the Congress records, up to the middle of June. It will be remembered that the official figure was 4,337 to June 16th. The Indian returns give the huge total of 15,989, including 159 members or substitute members of the All-India Congress Committee, and fifteen members of its Working Committee and ex-Presidents. Bengal claims 5,011 prisoners ; the Punjab over 2,000 ; Andhra, 1,827 ; Bihar, 1,797 ; Bombay over 1,000 ; the United Provinces, 928 ; Tamil-Nad, 820 ; Maharashtra, 855 ; and Gujarat, 606. If these figures are even approximately accurate, one is not surprised to hear that convicts are being released from Indian prisons to make room for political prisoners.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE VICEROY

One of the tragedies of the conflict in India has been that both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State have undoubtedly been animated by a spirit of goodwill towards

India and have wished to satisfy Indian aspirations as far as seemed to them practicable.

Lord Irwin is universally respected in India. Mr. Gandhi and the other Congress leaders have more than once expressed their appreciation of his sincerity and goodwill, and, if Mr. Wedgwood Benn has not been admired to the same degree, it is only because the intensity of his Radical convictions have been less known to the Indian leaders.

Even in the crisis of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Viceroy was able to say, "I have learnt to love India too well to relax my efforts to assist what I hold to be the natural and true development of her political life." The conflict occurred because Lord Irwin, and those for whom he spoke, did not realise that Indian national consciousness had so grown that no compromise with self-government would satisfy it.

## CHAPTER X

# THE SIMON REPORT

However much one may criticise the appointment of the Simon Commission, its procedure and its recommendations, one cannot withhold praise for the thoroughness and the care with which the members of the Commission did their work. There is something peculiarly British—something heroic and yet blind—in the way the Commission went about its task, quite unmoved by the momentous events which were making its work obsolete and fundamentally changing the relationship of Britain and India. Despite the upheaval in India, the Commission dispassionately carried on its work of investigation and recommendation as from a lofty retreat above the battle. Unperturbed by the boycott and enmity which its journeys in India aroused, courageous and calm in the face of threats and considerable personal danger, Sir John Simon and his six colleagues not only proceeded to a detailed study of the problems involved, but made a conscientious effort to view them impartially and to report upon them constructively.

### THE FIRST VOLUME

The first volume of their Report, which surveyed with extraordinary comprehensiveness the conditions of India under the present system of administration, formed one of the most remarkable Blue Books ever published. Without passion or rhetoric, and yet with considerable literary skill, it passed from subject to subject, not only recording the facts, but seeking to weigh their significance.

Emphasis was placed, as was inevitable, upon the size of India, the illiteracy of the people, their religious differences, the contrast in social status and caste, the restricted life of Indian women, the slow development of agriculture, the wretched conditions of the industrial workers, the insecurity of the North-West Province, the independence of the Indian States, the isolation of Burma, the English personnel of the Civil Service and the English domination of the Forces. But, at the same time, the Commission expressed appreciation of the unifying influence of the Nationalist Movement and of its strength. "It appears to be the one force in Indian society to-day," the Commissioners state, "that may perhaps contain within itself the power to overcome the deep and dangerous cleavages that threaten its peace."

In the concluding paragraphs of the first volume the Commissioners declare without hesitation that the political sentiment most widespread among all educated Indians is the expression of the demand for an equality with Europeans and their resentment against any suspicion of differential treatment. "While the member of a minority community, putting the safety of his community first, will stipulate for safeguards," they write, "and while the moderate may look askance at extremist methods which he will not openly denounce, all alike are in sympathy with the demand for equal status with the European and proclaim their belief in self-determination for India." It is in the light of this supreme fact in the Indian situation that the recommendations of the Report must be judged.

The Commissioners say that their principal recommendations were unanimously agreed upon before the events of the last few months, and that they have not altered a line of their Report on that account. This statement makes the recommendations of little value in relation to the present situation, because during these months the psychological revolution which has taken place in India renders proposals made before its occurrence hopelessly out of date. I am quite sure



that not only the British Government, but the Viceroy of India and the Governors of the various Provinces, appreciate this, and that, faced by the actual problems of the present time, they recognise that a solution of the constitutional problem must be found on lines which more boldly meet the demand for self-government. The future of British-Indian relations depends upon the degree of this realisation and the courage with which it is expressed.

The main body of the Indian Nationalist Movement, having boycotted the Commission from the start, did not expect much from it. Consequently, they have not been disappointed by the caution of its proposals ; indeed, they have only paid attention to the Report as a means of intensifying antagonism to British rule and criticism of Britain's ability to decide India's future.

But the significance of the Report should not be overlooked either by India or Britain. Here we have seven typical British politicians, representing all three parties and every point of view in Parliament, except that of the Left of the Labour Movement and the extreme Diehards among the Tories. They undertook their task conscientiously and arrived at agreed decisions, and yet their conclusions are unacceptable to the most moderate of the Indian Nationalists. For India, this is clear evidence that British mentality is incapable of appreciating the inward significance of the Indian situation, and that the Indian people must rely upon themselves to work out their political and social salvation. For Britain, this is clear evidence that it is impossible, even for the best representatives of general political opinion here, and even after two visits to India and detailed investigation, to settle a problem which is 6,000 miles distant and which involves the understanding of the psychology of a different race.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The main indictment of the recommendations is that they are ten years too late. It is possible, if the Montagu-Chelmsford Report had made the same recommendations in 1919, that they would have been accepted by the Indian National Congress, though even then they would have had to go somewhat further to encourage wholehearted co-operation. The central demand of Indian Nationalism at that time was for self-government in the Provinces. The Montagu-Chelmsford proposals set up a system of dyarchy, by which the British authorities maintained control of the main departments of government, theoretically transferring to Indian hands the "safe" departments, such as education and sanitation, but even controlling them in fact by determining the distribution of the amount of revenue available.

The recommendations of the Simon Commission abolish dyarchy, but they make the British Governor the effective Prime Minister, instead of an Indian Minister representing a majority in the Parliament. The Governor will choose the Cabinet, and he is given power to include an official and unelected element. He is to have power to override the decisions both of the Cabinet and of Parliament in relation to law and order, communal differences, financial obligations, Civil Service questions, backward tracts, and instructions from the Central Government or the Secretary of State. While dyarchy is abolished, autocracy is thus maintained.

The franchise for the provincial elections is to be trebled, but it still represents only 20 per cent of the population. More disappointing, communal electorates are to be retained, thus continuing the segregation of the people according to their religious beliefs, and the temptation of candidates to appeal especially to religious prejudices. The alternative, advocated by the Nationalists, of a common electoral roll with the reservation of a proportion of seats to the

different communities, would have gone far towards overcoming religious distinctions by encouraging candidates to appeal to all the voters on common issues and to feel responsibility towards all of them.

When we turn to the Central Legislature, the proposals of the Report are still more inadequate. They have been brushed aside by every section of the Nationalist Movement ; it is clear that they will not be considered by India for a moment.

#### THE "FEDERAL" PROPOSAL

The basis for the Central Legislature is to be federal. The assembly is to consist of representatives appointed by the Provincial Councils in proportion to membership, together with representatives of areas outside the Council areas, twelve nominated officials, and members of the Governor-General's Council. The retention of nominated official members is universally condemned by Indian Nationalists ; and there is also strong opposition to a Federal, rather than a directly elected, Parliament, on the ground that it will not sufficiently express the idea of the unity of India, which is behind all Nationalist agitation, and which Nationalists regard as the hope of bringing order out of the present chaos.

I confess I have always looked favourably upon the Federal solution, because the huge electorates, which direct election would require, seem to be impracticable, and because Federation seems to be the only basis upon which the Indian States can be incorporated. But whatever the practical difficulties in the way of an elected Central Legislature, the strength of the Nationalist opposition must be recognised.

It might have been possible to have combined a Lower House directly elected with an Upper House on a Federal basis, though most democrats would like to see India

dispensing with a Second Chamber altogether. But there would be no hope of a compromise being accepted unless the Central Legislature were made a fully responsible Government.

The Legislature proposed by the Simon Commission is neither democratic nor responsible. We have already seen the deficiencies of the Lower House in these respects. The Upper House (the Senate) is to be far worse. It is to remain an utterly non-representative body, with a majority of members either officially nominated or representing special interests.

The Simon Commission, whilst re-constituting the Council on a Federal basis, definitely recommends that the proportion between the elected and non-elected members should remain unchanged. Twenty-seven of the sixty members are to be appointed by the Viceroy, and of these, twenty may be officials. The Provinces are to have three representatives each, appointed by Provincial Second Chambers, where such are created, or by the Councils. Special interests are to have the right to appoint representatives. The commercial classes of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta are to have six representatives, three appointed by the Indian business community and three by the British. Organised Labour is to have no direct representation, but the Commission "consider that the Governor-General, while quite unfettered, should have regard to the desirability of including (among the nominated members) representatives of organised workers in industry."

The Commission actually propose that the class from whom the members of the Senate are drawn should be more restricted than at present. They should, for example, consist of "distinguished members of the Services, ex-Judges, and ex-Ministers, besides those who have gained honour in other walks of life." The one progressive proposal is that there should be no sex disqualification. A Senate of this character would entirely fail to reflect the living forces in

present-day India. Retired civil servants, Judges, and Ministers, would perpetuate the spirit of the old régime, and "honour" has so far been practically limited to those who have pleased the British authorities. It is difficult to regard this proposal as other than an insult to Nationalist India.

But even if it were proposed to make the Central Legislature democratically representative, the supreme objection remains—that it is to have no responsible power. The Viceroy will appoint his own executive, irrespective of the character of the Legislature, and his powers of overriding its will are increased. The Commission says, categorically, that any weakening of British supremacy, at the centre of India, and any division of its authority by making Indian Ministers responsible for the administration of certain departments, would be inadmissible.

They are undoubtedly right in rejecting the method of dyarchy, but instead of introducing democracy, they propose to increase the power of British autocracy. The Viceroy and his executive will absolutely control the central administration and will have the right to certify legislation, whether it has been passed by the Legislature or not.

An important development is the creation of a Council for Greater India, containing representatives of both the Indian States and India. One-third of the members would be from the Indian States, and whilst they would not be democratically elected, they would, for the first time, bring the Indian States into direct relationship with the Central Indian Government. This Council would only have consultative and deliberative functions on "matters of common interest," but it would be a beginning in the establishment of a Constitution for the unification of the whole of India.

## THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE FORCES

The most disappointing features of the recommendations are those relating to the Indian Civil Service and the Forces. There is to be no acceleration of the Indianisation of the Civil Service, despite the thousands of unplaced Indians with university degrees, based upon educational courses which have service in the administration as their objective. In a vast country like India, the actual personnel of the administration counts for even more than the character of its legislative bodies, and, even if India secured a democratic Constitution, British administration would, in effect, remain, if its power over the Civil Service and its domination of the higher posts persisted. The vast majority of Indian people only come into contact with the Government through the Civil Servants responsible for the administration of the districts, and they naturally tend to judge its British or Indian character by the nationality of these officials, whose power over the immediate life of the people is inevitably great. Unless the Civil Service is Indianised more rapidly, British administration will, in fact, continue for all practical purposes for another generation.

Worse still are the proposals regarding the Forces. One might regard as almost cynical the statement that

“the obstacle which the composition and functions of the Army in India presents to the more rapid development of responsible government might be removed through treating the defence of India as a matter which should fall within the responsibilities of the Governor-General, advised by the Commander-in-Chief, as representing the Imperial authorities, instead of being part of the responsibilities of the Government of India in relation to the Central Legislature.”

In plain words, this means that the Army will be taken out of the control of India altogether and placed under British control !

No

Under modern conditions the control of the Forces unfortunately determines the ultimate control of the life of the nation. I am one of those who would like to see the Indian principle of non-violence applied to national policy by the disbanding of forces whose power lies in the practice of violence ; but if an army is to continue, it is impossible to suggest that any step forward can be made towards self-government if absolute control is to be placed in the hands of the alien government against whom India is in revolt.

#### THE SIMON REPORT IS DEAD

The public must face the fact that the proposals of the Simon Report are already dead. It is impossible to believe that a British Government or the British authorities in India can stand by them. It has already been made clear that if the proposed Round Table conference meets, it will be at liberty to consider other proposals and make quite different recommendations. Even if the British authorities at Whitehall and Delhi, even if a non-representative Round Table conference, declared for a Constitution embodying the recommendations of the Simon Report, it would never operate. The Constitution set up by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report lingered on for an unsatisfactory decade, with failure in the Provincial Councils and futility in the Central Legislature. That Constitution had the support of the Liberals and Moderates, and afterwards the co-operation of even the Right of the Indian Nationalist Congress. But a Constitution, based upon the Simon Report recommendations, would be resisted from the first by the entire Nationalist Movement, including the Liberals and Moderates.

The supreme fact which we must face, if we are to be realists, is that all those who can speak for India and who can influence India are determined to accept nothing less than Dominion status ; and it is a matter of doubt whether a Constitution based upon Dominion status would secure

the co-operation of the Congress, which is now looking towards independence. In other words, Dominion status is the least concession that is practicable. It is absolutely certain that if Dominion status is not now applied, the new Constitution will be met from the first with a resistance so formidable that it will be wrecked before it has any opportunity to work. Under such conditions, a movement for full independence would gather such strength that the demand would become irresistible.



## CHAPTER XI

# THE SOLUTION

No one with any knowledge of India will suggest that the solution of its political, social, and economic problems is easy. Indeed, India provides probably the most difficult world issue facing constructive minds at the present time.

These difficulties must not be made the excuse for delay, timidity, or inaction. The very fact that the forces are so complex and conflicting makes the postponement of a bold effort at solution more dangerous. Unless it is planned and carried out on big, imaginative, and courageous lines, the result will be chaos.

### THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The British Government has announced its intention of calling a Round Table conference in the autumn. This conference is the critical point in immediate Indian policy. If it can secure the support of representative Indians, it may lead to a real era of co-operation and understanding. If it fails, subsequent co-operation and understanding will be made infinitely more difficult.

It must be stated frankly that the present indications point to failure. Two things are absolutely essential. If those Indians who can speak for politically alert India and who represent the main body of the Nationalist Movement are to attend, they must be convinced that the conference

is a sincere effort towards self-government. Up to the moment the only indication of the attitude of the British Government is a vague declaration that Dominion status is its ultimate object. A similar statement has been made by British Governments many times previously, and the Indian people naturally fear that present intentions are not more immediate than previous intentions.

The only action which will remove this impression is a quite definite declaration that full self-government will be accepted as the basis of the conference, and that the British representatives will be instructed to seek, in conjunction with the Indians, the most rapid steps, consistent with progress and peace, by which this goal can be attained.

Starting from this basis, the terms of reference of the conference should be to settle the details of a Constitution embodying full responsible government, and to work out the period and procedure of the necessary transition for the Indianisation of the Civil Service and the Forces. The principle of self-determination should be recognised by a clear declaration that, when the period of transition has passed, the National Parliament shall have the full right to decide whether India shall remain in the British Empire or become an independent State. This is not a very revolutionary suggestion. It is now recognised by all Parties in Great Britain that the Dominions possess a similar right.

#### “DOMINION STATUS” OR INDEPENDENCE?

The difference between Dominion status and Independence is, in fact, small, and of decreasing importance. The Dominions already claim the right to decide for themselves whether they shall participate in any war in which Great Britain is involved, and they are separately represented at international conferences, such as the Assembly of the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, and Disarmament conferences. The delegates of Ireland and

South Africa have voted more than once against the policy supported by the British Government.

It should be recognised, however, that there is a case for the view that Independence is the natural outcome of India's claim for freedom. Whilst there is an obvious relationship between the Dominions and Britain, because the populations (except the Dutch and Negro populations of South Africa) belong to one race, there is no such tie of blood between the British and Indian peoples. There is a powerful economic link, owing to the vast investment of British capital in India, and the degree to which Englishmen have manned the Indian Civil Service and controlled the administrative machine might be urged as a reason for the continued association of Britain and India. But the unfortunate resistance which the British authorities have offered to the Indian claim for self-government has destroyed the strength of these two links, and has, indeed, made them into fetters to be broken rather than bonds of alliance to be maintained. British capital in India is regarded as an instrument of exploitation and British trade as an evil thing to be boycotted ; whilst the English personnel in the Civil Service has become the embodiment of alien rule.

If the Indian movement for national freedom continues to be resisted the Indian people will naturally be inclined to reject even the loose association of Dominion status within the British Empire. On the other hand, if the British Government would prove that it welcomes the demand of the Indian people for political freedom, if even at this late hour, it would co-operate with them in attaining it, a psychology would be created in India likely to welcome continued association within a Commonwealth of Nations.

Mr. Gandhi is demanding complete independence for India, but he has made more than one statement, even since the commencement of the Civil Disobedience campaign, which proves that he is concerned with the substance of national freedom rather than the form. He is critical of the

use of the phrase "Dominion status," because he is not convinced that it is meant in the sense that Canada, South Africa, or Australia enjoy it. If it were made clear that it was meant in that full sense, it is unlikely that he would insist on formal independence.

But it will be very difficult to get the main body of the Indian Nationalist Movement to accept Mr. Gandhi's view if repression is maintained and if a new British attitude is not unmistakably expressed. If India insists upon independence, the British Government would be wise to recognise that no power on earth can prevent her from obtaining it.

#### AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL OFFENDERS

The second essential condition for the success of the Round Table conference is an amnesty for political prisoners. India wants something more than words, and nothing could prove so well the sincerity of the British Government's aim as a willingness to open the prison doors which now confine thousands of political prisoners. The effect of this would be an immediate change in the spirit of India. If the fear exists of violence by some of the more extreme prisoners or of encouragement to violence by Nationalist extremists not in prison, the danger of releasing a few devotees of violence would be nothing compared with the danger of inviting a continued and increasing revolt in India. This step would be one of those supreme and courageous acts that alone can now change the relationship of Britain and India.

Moreover, there is a very simple reason for releasing the political prisoners if the Round Table conference is to be a success. The leaders who have the greatest following in India are now in prison and no conference can be representative without them. A conference from which Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, and Jawaharlal Nehru were absent would be worse than useless.

These are the two most essential steps, but the Government should also take immediate action to meet the demands of the Indian Nationalist Movement for a revision of the Salt Tax, the prohibition of the liquor traffic, the reform of the currency, and the development of home-spun cloth. The careful reading of Mr. Gandhi's views suggest that he would be quite prepared to negotiate on the wider political issues, if a definite indication were given of a new spirit and of sincere intention in these matters.

The Government might also immediately announce plans for assisting the development of home-spinning and weaving as a means of providing additional employment to the peasants of India in their periods of enforced idleness. It would be easy to provide facilities for teachers of home-spinning and weaving to travel throughout India, visiting the villages and teaching the peasants how to make cloth. A big campaign on these lines, supplemented by the provision of credit for raw materials and equipment, would capture the imagination of the people and would undoubtedly have a great influence on Mr. Gandhi.

#### THE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVES

Much must depend upon the representative character of the Round Table conference. It would not be enough for the Viceroy to nominate the Indian representatives. If the declaration and amnesty which I have suggested were made, there would be every reason to hope that in this new political atmosphere all Indian parties and organisations of any representative strength would agree to attend an All Parties conference, which might be given the responsibility of electing representatives to negotiate with the British representatives. The actual delegates might be accompanied by substitute delegates, representing communities and minorities, for the purpose of serving on committees dealing

with their own particular problems. The difficulties of agreement would be great, but faced by practical realities there would be reason to hope that a Constitution could be framed commanding the support of representative political opinion in India. Steps should be taken to see that the working classes and "untouchables" and such minorities as the Anglo-Indians and the Indian Christians should be adequately represented.

#### THE INDIAN STATES

There remains the problem of the Indian States, about which I have already written. During the transition period the relationship of the Indian States to the Indian Government would probably have to remain through the British Crown, but a definite effort should be made to secure some form of immediate co-operation between the States and the Central Indian Legislature, with a view to the treaties being transferred to the Indian Government when the transition period had concluded. The Indian Princes would probably object in most cases to representation of their people at the Round Table conference on the grounds that there are no democratic organisations in their States that could claim to be representative. Even if this view had immediately to be accepted, the advocates of democracy within the States would probably realise that, in actual practice, it would prove impossible for the Indian Princes to resist demands for democratic Constitutions, if they were developed in British India. Already, it has been pointed out, a people's movement is agitating on behalf of the populations in the Indian States, and the beginnings of representative Assemblies already in being in Mysore and Travancore would be a powerful influence towards similar movements in the other States.

The difficulties are formidable, but farseeing Nationalists in British India could be counted upon to realise that the

best course would be to proceed with their own forms of self-government and depend upon the inevitable growth of democratic sentiments in the Indian States, rather than postpone their own political freedom until every one of the Indian States had been brought to recognise the supreme authority of the Indian Government and to establish democratic Constitutions within its borders.

#### THE MODEL CONSTITUTIONS

I will not attempt to state the kind of Constitution which a representative Round Table conference might prepare. There have been three model Constitutions outlined. The first was the work of a conference called in India by Mrs. Annie Besant, which embodied the principle of Dominion status (leaving a transitional period for the Indianisation of the Civil Service and the Forces and for the transference of the control of foreign affairs), establishing fully responsible Provincial and National Parliaments and placing great emphasis upon the restoration of Village Councils. This Constitution limited the basis of franchise seriously and was criticised both in England and India because of this.

A Constitution was also prepared by the Indian Committee of the British Independent Labour Party, but it was never published, since the I.L.P. held that it was the duty of Indians rather than Englishmen to work out a Constitution. The purpose was to encourage the Indian parties themselves to undertake this task by outlining a draft which might form a basis of discussion. This Constitution was based on adult suffrage and Provincial and National Parliaments, again accepting a transitional period for the Indianisation of the Civil Service and Forces. It abolished the separate communal electorate, but left an agreement regarding communal representation to a conference between Moslem and Hindu representatives.

The third Constitution was prepared by the All Parties

conference which had before it both these drafts. This Constitution followed the I.L.P. draft in its main lines, and is notable for its effort to solve the difficulty of the representation of religious communities and minorities by reserving a proportion of seats for their representatives, although providing for a common electorate. It also sought to ease communal differences by revising some of the Provincial frontiers, so that they should reflect more accurately the distribution of races and religions. The Constitution was based on adult suffrage and compulsory education.

The Moslem and the Sikh communities did not accept the final draft, but a definite contribution was made towards a settlement of this problem, and, had not political developments thrown the All Parties Constitution into the background, it is likely that agreement would ultimately have been reached. Certainly there is hope that when the time comes for a re-consideration of this matter in a realistic way, the proposals of the All Parties conference will, with modifications, form the basis of agreement.

It is difficult for an Englishman to be dogmatic about India's future Constitution. When one appreciates the size of India and its vast population, one has some doubt as to whether it will be possible entirely to apply the methods of Western democracy to the Indian position. Any National Parliament elected by adult suffrage would require an electorate for each representative, running into hundreds of thousands. A very considerable autonomy would have to be allowed to the Provincial Parliaments, and it may be that a Federal solution, by which the National Assembly will be appointed by Provincial Parliaments, will prove to be the best method, despite its present unpopularity.

If, however, democracy is to be really effective, a great deal of control over ordinary social relationships must be devolved upon districts and Village Councils. India already has a skeleton of district administration, and in many parts of India the Village Councils remain. These local bodies



with all their defects, are in close contact with the life of the people, whilst the Provincial Councils and the Central Legislature are distant authorities almost entirely unrelated to day by day experiences. General principles regarding education, the land system, public health, and industrial conditions may be laid down by the Provincial or National Parliaments, but their application, or modification to local circumstances, must be within the control of the authorities closer to the life of the masses of the people.

#### THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The chapter in which the conditions of India are described will have convinced readers, I think, that the extension of self-government for India can only be the first step towards the solution of its problems. Self-government is sometimes opposed by certain British Socialists on the ground that the illiterate people of India would be left at the mercy of the educated upper classes, and that their conditions would become worse. The argument is urged that it would be better for the British Government to retain control and to use this control for the establishment of education and the improvement of the social and economic standards of the people. It is suggested that only after education has become compulsory, and the people are lifted above their conditions of semi-starvation, will it be safe to leave India to work out its own salvation without fear of further exploitation by the wealthier classes.

There are two decisive replies to this argument. The Radicals of the nineteenth century used to declare that bad self-government is better than good alien government. Without accepting this principle entirely, it must be pointed out that the demand for self-government in India is now so strong that, if it is not met, we must face a future of Nationalist agitation on the one side, and Imperial repression on the other, which will so dominate the situation that constructive

measures of education and social reform will become impossible.

Secondly, whilst the argument that a self-governed India would be under the absolute control of the upper classes might have been true ten or even five years ago, it is not true now. If anything like a democratic franchise is established, there is certain to be a powerful movement representing the claims of the peasants and industrial workers in the Indian Parliament. The living forces in Indian politics are now arising from the students and the industrial workers, who are definitely Socialist in outlook. The younger leaders of the Nationalist Movement have been strongly influenced by the Socialism of Europe and the Communism of Russia, and, while the Indian Proletarian Movement is not likely to follow exactly the lines of either, it will have the same broad objective in view. Until the Nationalist issue is settled, the Socialist issue will be kept in the background ; but once national freedom is won there will be a great bound forward in the demand for economic freedom.

The more one considers the position of India, the more one realises that its only hope lies in a revolutionary movement awakening the people to a demand for a really full human life, lifted above their sordid struggle for existence and challenging the religious superstitions, the customs, and the castes, as well as the economic system which have combined to keep India poverty-stricken, both physically and mentally. It is only such a revolutionary movement which could shake and shock India out of the traditional mental outlook of centuries.

The Indian Proletarian Movement will probably not take the same form as the Russian revolution, owing to the hold which the principle of non-violence has upon the people. In the struggle for national freedom, a new technique has been developed in the application of this principle, and it may be that, in the Indian social revolution, a technique of non-violence will also be developed. It is worth

noting, incidentally, that prior to the Civil Disobedience Movement this year the philosophy of non-violence was losing its power over the more advanced elements in the Nationalist Movement, but the remarkable effects of the non-violent attitude in Bombay, Peshawar, Gujerat, and other places, and the amazing fortitude and discipline with which it was maintained by thousands of Indian men and women, have again revealed its tremendous possibilities, so that new faith has been placed in it as an instrument for freedom.

#### WHAT A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT COULD DO

If the administration of India fell into the hands of a body of men and women with the kind of revolutionary attitude I have described, there is no doubt that they could transform India within a generation. Russia is proving the immense possibilities of mass education. By films, "talkies" and wireless, millions of Indian peasants might be reached and their whole mental horizon broadened. By wireless, daily instruction could be given, and the films could be used, not merely to teach new ideas in the abstract, but to give practical demonstrations of their effectiveness. Vivid pictures could be thrown on the screen of co-operative farming with modern equipment; the women in the villages could be taught the value and the methods of hygiene, the fuller lives of boys and girls who have enjoyed education could be shown, and all the social, recreational, and cultural possibilities of human existence, now so completely beyond the conception of the peasants, could be revealed.

Side by side with this film propaganda would proceed the rapid development of schools, fortunately of easy and light construction, in which, in the first place, the thousands of University men and women now out of work, or working

in wretchedly paid clerical posts, could be employed as teachers. Meanwhile, training colleges for teachers would be steadily extended, and, year by year, by conscious and devoted effort, the shame of illiteracy would be wiped out. Special commissioners would be attached to groups of villages to develop both the technique and the spirit of co-operation, to teach the principles of sanitation, to give medical aid, and to establish dramatic societies and Women's Institutes.

It would be a magnificent thing if the enthusiasm of the young men and women, now devoting their lives to the cause of Indian Nationalism, could be expressed in practical and constructive service for the re-birth of their country on these lines.

Such a Government would sweep aside the present land system and the Zemindars who have grown rich in idleness upon it. It would no doubt re-establish the Village Councils throughout India, and make them the instrument for the re-awakening of the villages and their industries. It would determine to end the slavery which industrialism is thrusting upon the workers of the cities. Capitalism has already brought in its train in India all the horrors of the early years of the nineteenth century in Europe, but fortunately its power has not become so strong as to make impossible the construction of a new economic system on a co-operative basis.

The revolutionary Government would be fortunate in having the experience and revenue of the State railways and irrigation schemes, and it could employ the most efficient engineers to develop a vast State scheme of electrification. The mines and the tea plantations could be converted into public enterprises with comparative ease, and the cotton, jute, and steel industries could be developed on behalf of the nation by the employment of the most efficient management, utilising all the advantages of the proximity of the raw materials and of the enormous market which

the improved standards of the masses of the Indian people would create.

One does not imagine that vast changes on these lines could be made immediately, but there are forces in India capable of leading the movement which would begin the great task of social emancipation. The first necessity would be the creation of a mass psychology for revolution, upon which the sustained effort of building the new India would have to depend. India has one advantage over Europe in this respect. Its people are in the habit of acting in masses. When a religious festival takes place, the whole population of a city participates. If a *hartal* is called, not a shop opens, no workers continue their employment, no students attend their classes. If there is a dispute in a mill, thousands of workers from every mill in the neighbourhood will come out on strike, even though only a few hundred may belong to the Trade Union. In the village, if one man acts, the whole village acts. Mass education in India may lead to a mass movement for revolution much earlier than now seems possible.

India's salvation must come from herself. The first step is political freedom : then, the much greater step of social freedom.