

(10)

ONE YEAR OF NON-COOPERATION

FROM AHMEDABAD TO GAYA

BY
MANABENDRA NATH ROY
AND
EVELYN ROY

PUBLISHED BY
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA
CALCUTTA, 1923

10

ONE YEAR OF NON-COOPERATION

FROM AHMEDABAD TO GAYA

By
MANABENDRA NATH ROY
and
EVELYN ROY

Published by
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA
Calcutta, 1923

6175
BOOKS BY M. N. ROY:

DS INDIA IN TRANSITION Rs. 2

480.6 INDIA'S PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION As. 4

R28 WHAT DO WE WANT? As. 4

*Order through THE VANGUARD BOOKSHOP,
Post Box 4336, Zurich, Switzerland.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
I. MANIFESTO TO THE 36TH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	11
II. THE CRISIS AT AHMEDABAD	24
III. THE DEBACLE OF GANDHISM	33
IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHISM	45
V. THE FALLACIES OF GANDHISM	51
VI. MANIFESTO TO THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE	60
VII. THE LULL	72
VIII. ON THE EVE OF GAYA	76
IX. THE NEW LEADER	91
X. THE PROGRAMME	103
XI. THE EXPLOSION	112
XII. THE SRADH AT GAYA	129
XIII. OPEN LETTER TO C. R. DAS	146
XIV. THE METAMORPHOSIS OF MR. DAS	157
XV. PERSPECTIVES	171

INTRODUCTION

Now that the Non-cooperation Movement based upon the doctrine of *Satyagraha* is a thing of the past, it will not be without a wholesome lesson to look at it with a historical retrospect. We are certainly not ignorant of the fact that there are not a few in India even now, who will vehemently protest against the assertion that the Non-cooperation Movement is dead. We also know of those who still cling to the illusion of "spiritualizing politics" and believe that the "special genius" of India will carve out a path of progress for her people, a path which will be distinct from that followed by the other nations of the world. Nevertheless, the reality cannot be made non-existent by utopian desires, nor by the explicable anxiety of those chary in admitting a defeat.

Non-cooperation as a political force is dead. We make this assertion, not today, when there are few serious minded people who do not subscribe to the same view. To us, the collapse of Non-cooperation was a foregone conclusion. Ever since its inauguration, we have been telling that it would succumb to its own contradictions. We have said so, even in those days when its success appeared to be imminent. When it was at the height of its glory, we exposed its fallacies and criticized the doctrines on which it was based. In spite of the highest esteem for the personality of its prophet, we never hesitated to point out the true significance of his philosophy. In short, we committed the sacrilege of questioning the wisdom of the Mahatma while the multitude was worshipping him. The object of the following pages is to remind our countrymen that, while drunk with the over-exaggerated estimate of their own wisdom, they have been but chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, there was a voice which endeavoured to call them back to reality. For more than a year, ours was a voice crying in the wilderness. But history has justified our standpoint. The Non-cooperation Movement has fallen victim to its own contradictions. Gandhism has proved to

be of no avail in politics. Its socio-economic philosophy stands with failure writ across it.

What is desired to be shown in the following pages is not individual wisdom. On the contrary; they contain a trenchant criticism of subjectivism, which has been the greatest weakness of the Non-cooperation Movement,—a phenomenon brought about, as any other historical event, by objective causes. The philosophy of Non-cooperation was fed with the cult of Inspiration. It was hero-worship. It sunk so deeply in the morass of this deplorable subjectivism, that the vision of the forces impelling it was altogether lost. The leaders of Non-cooperation believed that they could lead the movement, not according to the dictates of the objective forces that gave it birth, but to suit their own desires. In short, the leaders conspired against the very forces that had created them. The object of the following pages is to show that those who knew how to subordinate personality, however great it might be, to the objective conditions, were correct. They alone could have a right perspective on the situation, even in those days when events were succeeding each other with bewildering rapidity.

We point out the collapse of Non-cooperation, neither with the relief of the Government nor with the satisfaction of the Liberals. Our object is entirely different. In the past, we indicated its mistakes and criticized its wrong philosophy only with the intention that the movement might grow stronger by rescuing itself from these causes of weakness. Today we hold up a picture of the past year, in order to show that our criticism was right. We do so, only with the object of demonstrating the potentiality of a certain method of socio-political reasoning which we have always sought to introduce into the Indian movement. According to this, the political movement in India is neither the expression of a spiritual awakening, nor the creation of some superman, nor a gigantic wave destined to sweep the world clean of material civilization. *The Indian movement is the outcome of a great social upheaval brought about by changed economic conditions.* It is the result of a popular unrest, created not by the insults and indignities of foreign rule, but by a dynamic process of social readjustment. It is a movement, not backward towards a mythical Golden Age which never existed, but forward, to conquer more comfort, more enjoyment, more freedom for the human

animal. This being the essence of the movement, its direction should be inspired with the same vision. Leaders who consciously focus these objective forces are alone capable of leading this great movement of social regeneration, which militates with the immediate object of national liberation. Unmindful of these dynamic causes, and pretending to create history by their own personality and wisdom, even the greatest of leaders are mercilessly discarded by the inexorable operation of the same agencies that brought them into being.

This imperious law of Economic Determinism is equally applicable everywhere. India is not immune from it. The Non-cooperation Movement was subject to it, but the leaders of the Non-cooperation Movement were utterly oblivious of it. They acted contrary to it,—hence their defeat. Their followers accepted their doctrine as gospel truth. Every voice of reason was condemned as blasphemy or heresy. The great movement was cramped within the narrow limits of subjectivism. Therefore the present deplorable situation. As soon as the clay feet of the god were discovered, the worshippers were totally discomfited; but they were not in a position to mark out a new way. So they settled down to a period of degeneration, deceiving themselves all the while with high-sounding phrases and with the picture of an imaginary victory which would be theirs before long.

The contradictions inherent in the Non-cooperation campaign and the inevitable collapse resulting therefrom, were palpable to those able to read events in the light of Historic Materialism. Such a reading of the Non-cooperation Movement is contained in the following pages. They include the unmasking of reactionary philosophy masquerading in the bewitching garb of Spirituality; a criticism of fallacious economic theories; an indication of grave tactical blunders; and above all, repeated warnings of the inevitable defeat which was sure to follow such a philosophy and such methods.

The contents of the present book are of historical value, in that they vindicate the correctness of the social outlook, economic theories and political principles held by our party. They are written over the period of more than a year, and deal with almost all the critical stages of the Non-cooperation campaign. In spite of their publication at various times, in

various forms and through various means, a uniform line of reasoning, a uniform method of interpreting events runs through them, thus giving them the character of a comprehensive picture of a given historical epoch. The warning given to the Congress in the Manifesto issued on the eve of the Ahmedabad session was not heeded. The present plight of Non-cooperation will convince all honest revolutionaries of the correctness of that warning, which in the meantime, opened the eyes of not a few who have infused vigour into the movement in some way or other. The collapse of Non-cooperation to us does not mean a defeat of the Indian National struggle, not even a weakening of it. On the contrary, it signifies the development of the revolutionary forces whose first confused expression was the Non-cooperation Movement. We only intend to show in the light of historical experience that it was possible only for Marxian materialists to see through this confusion, and point out to sincere revolutionaries the solid bed-rock on which the movement was reared.

The Marxian analysis of the socio-economic character of the Non-cooperation Movement and our repeated assertion that Non-cooperation was a reactionary movement were clearly vindicated by the hostility with which the Programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction, prepared by the Indian Communist Party for the consideration of the Gaya Congress, was looked upon by the entire Non-cooperation press. The reaction to this programme clarified the situation so much, that the Congress was forced to throw down the mask of its super-class character, a mask which, with the help of the hypocritical cant of "spiritual culture", befogged the vision of many a revolutionary objectively free from all class affiliation. Our social philosophy teaches us to look for class antagonism behind all political movements. It holds,—not dogmatically but by virtue of the positive knowledge of social sciences,—that material necessities give origin everywhere to variegated social customs and institutions; that human development all over the globe follows a uniform line, modified but secondarily by local conditions; that social evolution and political awakening are determined by the stage of economic development of a particular people, and that the essence of the life of the human animal is an eternal struggle with the forces of nature, which overwhelm him in the primitive stages, but are conquered

by him as he goes on evolving higher and higher means of production. Every political movement is fundamentally a socio-economic struggle; therefore, it is determined consciously or unconsciously by the above law. The urge behind our national struggle is essentially material; therefore, the only way by which it can be rescued from the degenerating consequences of Non-cooperation is to invigorate it with a revolutionary ideology commensurate with its genesis.

The history of the great failure of Non-cooperation, as recorded from the point of view of historic materialism, will help the revolutionary elements in the Indian society to crystallize this much-needed revolutionary ideology. A Marxian reading of our struggle will reveal to these revolutionaries many things that are not to be held within the compass of the philosophy maintained by them hitherto. It will help them to be more of realists and less of Utopians. It will give them an impetus to look at our movement from a new angle of vision. It is with this confidence that the following collection of the most important manifestoes, articles, programmes etc. written from the Marxian standpoint, is presented to the Indian public. Those chapters previously published are supplemented by new ones written in order to make the book a complete history of a given period.

One year of Non-cooperation,—from Ahmedabad to Gaya. What has been the achievement? Let the history recorded in the following pages answer this question. Why is the movement, that drove fear into the heart of the Government on the eve of Ahmedabad, prostrate, disheartened and impotent today? What has happened during these twelve months to make such a difference in the spirit, enthusiasm and determination of the Indian people? One must read history to answer these pertinent questions, a frank and courageous reply to which will enable us to find a new way, to rally our forces again and to give battle to the enemy with renewed vigour, which will be evoked by a less ephemeral stimulus.

The answers to these questions will be found in the following pages. To summarize; at Ahmedabad, we found the Congress terrified at the mighty hosts rallied under its banner. The leadership was proven too conservative, too non-revolutionary, too timid to guide the army at its

command. All it could do was to temporize, hoping that the acuteness of the situation would subside, thus relieving it of the unwelcome revolutionary burden. Under the pressure of class interests, the leaders condemned the action of the masses, and thus the Congress in reality was divorced from the dynamic forces of revolution. The Government was not slow in seizing upon the weakness, which had been always innate, but not revealed. It came down with the heavy hand of repression. As if to give encouragement to the policy of repression, the Bardoli Resolutions were passed under the personal supervision of the High Priest of Non-cooperation. What followed was simple. It was a prolonged funeral to the spirit of Non-cooperation killed at Bardoli.

This partly romantic, partly tragic drama was staged on the background of the conflict of class interests. The class conflict was so fierce that even the Mahatma himself was not spared. But he had done his work. Perhaps unconsciously, he had sacrificed the Non-cooperation Movement on the twin altars of Landlordism and Industrialism, the latter of which he so heartily hated. This is the lesson of the last year of Non-cooperation. To learn this lesson, not to ignore a disagreeable reality on the pretext of a fictitious "spiritual civilization", and to apply the experience gained from the failure of this year, will be of great value for the future of our movement.

April, 1923.

Manabendra Nath Roy.

CHAPTER I.

MANIFESTO TO THE 36TH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, AHMEDABAD, 1921

Fellow Countrymen!

You have met in a very critical moment of the history of our country to decide various questions affecting gravely the future of the national life and progress. The Indian nation today stands on the eve of a great revolution, not only political, but economic and social as well. The vast mass of humanity, which inhabits the great peninsula, has begun to move towards a certain goal; it is awakening after centuries of social stagnation resulting from economic and political oppression. The National Congress has placed itself at the head of this movement. Yours is a very difficult task, and the way before you is beset with obstacles almost insuperable and pitfalls treacherous and troublesome. The mission of leading the people of India onward to the goal of national liberation is great, and you have made this great mission your own. The National Congress is no longer a holiday gathering engaged in idle debates and futile resolution-making; it has become a political body—the leader of the movement for national liberation.

This newly acquired political importance obliges the Congress to change its philosophical background; it must cease to be a subjective body; its deliberations and decisions should be determined by the objective conditions prevailing, and not according to the notions, desires and prejudices of its leaders. It was so when the Congress, national in name only, was the political organ which expressed the opinions and aspirations of a small group of men who ruled over it. If the old Congress dominated by the Mehta-Gokhale-Bose-Banerji combination is dead, and discarded from the field of pragmatic politics, it is because those men wanted to build a nation after their own image; they did not and could not take into consideration the material they had to work with;

they failed to feel the pulse of the people; they knew what *they* thought and wanted, but they did not know, neither did they care to know, what the *people*,—the people which constituted that nation which their Congress also pretended to represent,—needed for its welfare, for its progress. *The old Congress landed in political bankruptcy because it could not make the necessities of the common people its own*; it took for granted that its demands for administrative and fiscal reforms reflected the interests of the man in the street; the "grand old men" of the Moderate Party believed that intellect and learning were their inviolable mandates for the leadership of the nation. This lamentable subjectivism, originating from defective or total absence of understanding of the social forces that underlie and give strength to all movements, made the venerable fathers of Indian Nationalism betray their own child; and it led them to their own ruin, disgrace and political death. You leaders of the new Congress, should be careful not to make the same mistake; because the same mistake will lead to the same disaster.

The programme of the Congress under the leadership of the Non-cooperation Party, is to attain Swaraj within the shortest possible time. It has discarded the old impotent tactics of securing petty reforms by means of constitutional agitation. Proudly and determinedly, the Congress has raised the standard with "Swaraj within a Year" written on it. Under this banner, the people of India are invited to unite; holding this banner high you exhort them to march forward till the goal is reached. This is indeed a noble cause. It is but natural that the people of India should fight for the right of ruling itself. But the function of the Congress, as leader of the nation, is not only to point out the goal, but to lead the people step by step towards the goal. From its activities of the last year, it is apparent that the Congress understands its task and is trying to find the best way of executing it. The people must be infused with enthusiasm to fight for Swaraj; they must be united in this struggle, because without union the goal will not be attained.

Why was the old Congress discredited? *Because it could not make the national question a vital problem for the people.* Under the old leaders, the Congress was caught in the cesspool of political pedantry and petty reformism. Not much greater results can be expected if these are to be replaced by abstract idealism and political confusion. In order to

deserve the name and to be able to execute the difficult task set before it, the National Congress must not permit itself to be carried away by the sentiment and idealism of a handful of individuals however great and patriotic they may be; it must take into consideration the cold material facts; it must survey with keenness the everyday life of the people,—their wants and sufferings. Ours is not a mere political game; it is a great social struggle.

The greatest problem before the 36th. Congress is how to enlist the full-hearted support of the people in the national cause,—how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve this problem, the first thing necessary is to know what is it that ails the masses? What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because *only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people.*

Several thousand noisy, irresponsible students and a number of middle-class intellectuals followed by an ignorant mob momentarily incited by fanaticism, cannot be the social basis of the political organ of a nation. The toiling masses in the cities, the dumb millions in the villages must be brought into the ranks of the movement if it is to be potential. How to realize this mass organization is the vital problem before the Congress. How can the man working in the factories or labouring on the fields be convinced that national independence will put an end to his sufferings? Is it not a fact that hundreds of thousands of workers employed in the mills and factories owned by rich Indians, not a few of whom are leaders of the national movement, live in a condition unbearable and are treated in a manner revolting? Of course by prudent people such discomfoting questions would be hushed in the name of the national cause. The argument of these politicians is "let us get rid of the foreign domination first". Such cautious political acumen may be flattering to the upper classes; but *the poor workers and peasants are hungry. If they are to be led on to fight, it must be for the betterment of their material condition.* The slogan which will correspond to the interest of the majority of the population and consequently will electrify them with enthusiasm to fight consciously, is "*land to the peasant and bread to the worker.*" The abstract doctrine of national

self-determination leaves them passive; personal charms create enthusiasm loose and passing.

How can the Congress expect to arouse lasting popular enthusiasm in the name of the Khilafat and by demanding the revision of the treaty of Sèvres? The high politics behind such slogans may be easy for the learned intellectuals to understand; but it is beyond the comprehension of the masses of Indian people, who have been steeped in ignorance not only by the foreign ruler, but by our own religious and social institutions. Such propaganda based on the questionable doctrine of utilizing the ignorance of the masses in order to make them do the bidding of the Congress, cannot be expected to produce the desired result. If the masses of the Indian people are to be drawn into the struggle for national freedom, it will not be done by exploiting their ignorance. *Their consciousness must be aroused first of all. They must know what they are fighting for. And the cause for which they fight must include their immediate needs.* What does the man in the street need? The only aspiration of his life is to get two meals a day, which he hardly achieves. And such are the people who constitute 90 per cent of the nation. Therefore, it is evident that any movement not based on the interests of these masses cannot be of any lasting importance or of formidable power.

The programme of the Congress has to be denuded of all sentimental trimmings; it should be dragged down from the heights of abstract idealism; it must talk of the things indispensable for the mortal life of the common human being; it must echo the modest aspirations of the toiling masses; the object for which the Indian people will fight should not be looked for somewhere in the unknown regions of Mesopotamia or Arabia or Constantinople; it should be found in their immediate surroundings,—in their huts, on the land, in the factory. Hungry mortals cannot be expected to fight indefinitely for an abstract ideal. The Congress must not always urge the people, which can be called the classical example of suffering and sacrifice personified, to suffer and sacrifice only. *The first signs of the end of their age-long suffering should be brought within their vision. They should be helped in their economic fight. The Congress can no longer defer the formulation of a definite programme of economic and social reconstruction. The formulation of such a constructive programme advocating the redress of*

the immediate grievances of the suffering masses, demanding the improvement of their present miserable condition, is the principal task of the 36th. Congress.

Mr. Gandhi was right in declaring that "the Congress must cease to be a debating society of talented lawyers", but if it is to be, as he prescribes in the same breath, an organ of the "merchants and manufacturers" no change will have been made in its character, in so far as the interests of the majority of the people are concerned. It will not be any more national than its predecessor. It will not meet any more dignified end. If it is to represent and defend the interest of one class viz. the merchants and manufacturers, it cannot but fail to take care of that of the common people. *The inevitable consequence of this failure will be the divorce of the Congress from the majority of the nation.* The merchants and manufacturers alone cannot lead the national struggle to a successful end; neither will the intellectuals and petty shop-keepers add any appreciable strength to the movement. What is indispensable is the mass energy: *the country can be free, Swaraj can be realized, only with the conscious action of the masses of the people.* In order to be able to execute its task, *the Congress must know how to awaken the mass energy, how to lead the masses to the field of resolute action.* But the tactics of the Congress betray its lamentable indifference to and lack of understanding of the popular interest. The Congress proposes to exploit the ignorance of the people and expects them to follow its lead blindly. This cannot happen. If the leader remains indifferent to the interests of the follower, the two will soon fall asunder. The masses are awakening; they are showing signs of vigour; they are signifying their readiness to fight for their own interest; the programme of using them as mere instruments, which are to be kept in their proper place, will soon prove ineffective. *If the Congress makes the mistake of becoming the political apparatus of the propertied class, it must forfeit the title to the leadership of the nation.* Unfailing social forces are constantly at work; they will make the workers and peasants conscious of their economic and social interests, and ere long the latter will develop their own political party, which will refuse to be led astray by the upper-class politicians.

Non-cooperation cannot unify the nation. If we dare to look the facts in the face, it has failed. It is bound to fail

because it does not take the economic laws into consideration. The only social class in whose hand Non-cooperation can prove to be a powerful weapon, that is the working-class, has not only been left out of the programme, but the prophet of Non-cooperation himself declared "it is dangerous to make political use of the factory workers." So the only element, which on account of its socio-economic position, could make Non-cooperation a success is left out. The reason is not hard to find; the defenders of the interests of the merchants and manufacturers betray unconsciously their apprehension lest wage-earners should be encouraged to question the right of exploitation conceded to the propertied class by all respectable society. The other classes which are called upon to non-cooperate, being dependent economically on the present system, cannot separate themselves from it, even if it is damned as "satanic" by the highest authorities.

Non-cooperation may prove to be a suitable weapon to fight, or better said, to embarrass the foreign bureaucracy, but at best, it is merely destructive. The possible end of foreign domination, in itself, is not a sufficient inducement for the people at large. They should be told in clear terms what benefit would accrue to them from the establishment of Swaraj. They should be convinced that national autonomy will help them solve the problem of physical existence. Neither will empty phrases and vague promises serve the purpose; *it has to be demonstrated by the acts of the Congress that it proposes to achieve the amelioration of the people's suffering, and that it will not neglect the immediate needs of the workers in quest of abstract freedom to be realized at some future date.*

For the defence and furtherance of the interests of the native manufacturers, the programme of Swadeshi and boycott is plausible. It may succeed in harming the British capitalist class and thus bring an indirect pressure on the British Government, *though, being based on wrong economics, the chances of its ultimate success are very problematical. But as a slogan for uniting the people under the banner of the Congress, the boycott is doomed to failure; because it does not correspond, nay it is positively contrary, to the economic condition of the vast majority of the population.* If the Congress chooses to base itself on the frantic enthusiasm for burning foreign cloth, it will be building castles on a bed of quick sand. Such enthusiasm cannot last; the time

will soon come when people will feel the scarcity of cloth, and as long as there will be cheap foreign cloth in the market there can be no possibility of inducing the poor to go naked rather than to buy it. The *Charka* has been relegated to its well-deserved place in the museum; to expect that in these days of machinery it can be revived and made to supply the need of 320 millions of human beings, is purely visionary. The boycott will enlist the support of the manufacturers, *but it will never receive a dependable response from the consumers*. Then, all the doctrines of purifying the soul may be good for the opulent intellectuals, but their charm for the starving millions cannot be permanent. Physical needs know no bounds, and a political movement cannot be sublimated beyond material reasons and necessities. They are mistaken who say that Indian civilization is purely spiritual, and that the Indian people are not subject to the same material laws that determine the destinies of the rest of humanity.

While for any serious or lasting purposes, the Non-cooperation programme cannot be said to have achieved a small part of what was expected, the 36th Congress intends to go a step further on the road of Non-cooperation. To their great discomfiture the leaders of the Congress observe the popular enthusiasm evoked by Khilafat agitation, and Non-cooperation subsiding day by day. The enlisting of several lakhs of members and the raising of the Tilak Swaraj Fund cannot be accepted as a clear reflection of the popular support behind the Congress. Pessimism about the solidity of ranks and tenacity of purpose of the Non-cooperation demonstrations has of late been repeatedly expressed by responsible Congress leaders, both from the press and platform. To enlist his name in the Congress register and to contribute a rupee to the Swaraj Fund does not necessarily imply that a member will be ready to take active part in the struggle. In order to keep the artificially fomented popular enthusiasm alive, the leaders of the Congress have been looking for new diversions of an exciting character. But, either consciously or unconsciously, they would not lay their hand on the real cause of popular discontent and develop this discontent by helping the masses acquire consciousness. Instead, another irresponsible step has been taken. Without waiting for the annual Congress, the All-India Committee has sanctioned Civil Disobedience. But the very

language of the resolution shows that *its authors themselves are in doubt as to whether it can be carried into practice any better than the other aspects of Non-cooperation*. The resolution asks "those who could support themselves to leave the government services." Considering the fact that the proportion of the government employees unable to make both ends meet one day without their miserable salary is almost 90 per cent, it cannot be expected that the response to this ukase will be very imposing.

Civil Disobedience when carried into practice will be some sort of a national strike. If everybody stops working, the Government will be paralysed. But is the Congress certain that everybody will readily respond to its call? If it is, then it betrays lamentable ignorance of the material condition of the people, as well as of the economic laws that determine all social forces and political actions. On leaving their civil and military occupation, thousands and thousands of people will be without any means of livelihood; is the Congress in a position to find work for them? And it should not be forgotten that the lower middle-class element employed in the government departments, will never stoop to manual work. The Congress leaders seem to appreciate the complexity of the situation; because, in the words of Mr. Gandhi, "they are not prepared to provide employment for those soldiers who would leave the army." With the disastrous effects of the exodus of the Assam plantation-workers still fresh in memory, how can it be expected that the same tactics would not be followed by the same result in the future? The political organ of a nation cannot execute its task only with popular demonstrations. Our object is not confined to bothering the Government; we are struggling for freedom. It cannot be realized unless the activities of the Congress are determined by a constructive programme: unless the leadership of the Congress becomes more responsible and less demagogic.

Taken light-heartedly, the resolution of Civil Disobedience will end in making the Congress ridiculous. Because, in spite of all optimism, all enthusiasm, the Congress does not represent the interests of all the sections and classes of which the nation is composed. Much less does it advocate the material welfare of the workers and peasants who form the overwhelming majority of the nation. What is the use of speaking in high-sounding language when the speeches are

not backed up by action, determined and permanent? The spirit of the people cannot be raised by such impotent tactics; nor is the Government terrorized. They only discredit the speaker, sooner or later. The threat of declaring *Jehad* unless the Khilafat is redeemed has become too hackneyed; the deferring of the establishment of Swaraj month by month fails to inspire confidence in thinking people. Why do these bombastic resolutions of the Congress never come out of the airy realm of words? Because the Congress does not determine its tactics in accordance with the play of social forces.

It is simply deluding oneself to think that the great ferment of popular energy expressed by the strikes in the cities and agrarian riots in the country, is the result of the Congress or, better-said, of the Non-cooperation agitation. No, it is neither the philippics against the "satanic western civilization", nor the constant reiteration of the Punjab wrongs, nor the abstract formula of Khilafat that have awakened the discontent of the wretched masses, who appear to have once and for all shaken off the spirit of passive resignation. The cause of this awakening, which is the only factor that has added real vigour and a show of majesty to the national struggle, is to be looked for in their age-long economic exploitation and social slavery. The mass revolt is directed against the propertied class, irrespective of nationality. This exploitation had become intense long since, but the economic crisis during the war-period accentuated it. The seething discontent among the masses, which broke out in open revolt on the morrow of the war, was not, as the Congress would have it, because the Government betrayed all its promises,—but because the abnormal trade boom in the after-math of the war intensified the economic exploitation to such an extent that the people were desperate, and all bonds of patience were broken.

Newly developed industries brought hundreds and thousands of workers to the crowded cities where they were thrown into a condition altogether revolting. Sudden prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers brought in its train increased poverty and suffering for the workers. City life opened new visions to the workers, hitherto resigned to their miserable lot as ordained by Providence. The inequality of wealth and comfort became too glaring; the worker got over the lethargic resignation typical of the

Indian peasantry, and rebelled. His revolt, under such circumstances could not have been against this or that government; *it was against the brutal system that wanted to crush him to the dust.* Mass revolt is alarmingly contagious. The spirit was soon carried to the villages by various channels, and resulted in the agrarian riots, which today are spreading like wild-fire all over the country. These are the development of the social forces generated by objective conditions. *The political movement must give up the pretension of having created these forces, but must bend its head before their majestic strides and adapt itself to their action and reaction.* It is these social forces which lend potentiality and real strength to the political movement. In fact, every political movement is the outcome of the development of certain social forces.

What has the Congress done to lead the workers and peasants in their economic struggle? It has tried so far only to exploit the mass movement for its political ends. In every strike or peasant revolt the non-cooperators have sacrificed the economic interest of the strikers for a political demonstration. The Congress from its intellectual, ideological and material aloofness, demands Swaraj and expects the masses of the population to follow it through thick and thin. It does not hesitate to call upon the poverty-stricken workers and peasants to make all kinds of sacrifices,—sacrifices which are to be made in the name of national welfare, but which contribute more to benefit the native wealthy than to harm the foreign ruler. The Congress claims the political leadership of the nation, but every act betrays its ignorance of or indifference to the material interests of the majority of the people. *So long as the Congress does not show its capability and desire to make the every-day struggle of the masses its own, it will not be able to secure their steady and conscious support.* Of course it should not be forgotten that with or without the leadership of the Congress, the workers and peasants will continue their own economic and social struggle and eventually conquer what they need. They don't need so much the leadership of the Congress but the latter's political success depends entirely on the conscious support of the masses. Let not the Congress believe that it has won the unconditional leadership of the masses without having done anything to defend their material interests.

His personal character may lead the masses to worship the Mahatmaji; strikers engaged in a struggle for securing a few pice increase of wages may shout "Mahatmaji-ki jai"; the first fury of rebellion may lead them to do many things without any conceivable connection with what they are really fighting for; their newly aroused enthusiasm, choked for ages by starvation, may make them burn their last piece of loin-cloth; but in their sober moments what do they ask for? It is not political autonomy, nor is it the redemption of the Khilafat. It is the petty, but imperative necessities of every-day life that egg them on to the fight. The workers in the cities demand higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions; and the poor peasantry fight for the possession of land, freedom from excessive rents and taxes, redress from the exorbitant exploitation by the landlord. They rebel against exploitation, social and economic; it does not make any difference to them to which nationality the exploiter belongs. *Such is the nature of the forces that are really and objectively revolutionary; and any change in the political administration of the country will be effected by these forces. The sooner the Congress understands this, the better.*

If the Congress aspires to assume the leadership of the masses without founding itself upon the awakening mass energy, it will soon be relegated to the dead past in order to share the ignominy of its predecessor. To enlist the conscious support of the masses, it should approach them not with high politics and towering idealism, but with the readiness to help them secure their immediate wants, then gradually to lead them further ahead. It is neither the Khilafat cry, nor the Boycott resolution, nor the absurd doctrine of "back to the Vedas with Charka in hand", nor the scheme of making the middle-class intellectuals and petty shop-keepers declare a national strike that will unite the majority of the nation behind the Congress. Words cannot make people fight; they have to be impelled by irresistible objective forces. The oppressed, pauperized, miserable workers and peasants are bound to fight, because there is no hope left for them. *The Congress must have the workers and peasants behind it; and it can win their lasting confidence only when it ceases to sacrifice them ostensibly for a higher cause, namely the so-called national interest, but really for the material prosperity of the merchants and*

manufacturers. If the Congress would lead the revolution which is shocking India to the very foundations, let it not put its faith in mere demonstrations and temporary wild enthusiasm. Let it make the immediate demands of the Trade Unions, as summarized by the Cownpur workers, its own demands; let it make the programme of the Kisan Sabhas its own programme, and the time will soon come when the Congress will not stop before any obstacle; it will not have to lament that Swaraj cannot be declared on a fixed date because the people have not made enough sacrifice. It will be backed by the irresistible strength of the entire people consciously fighting for their material interest. Failing to do so, with all its zeal for Non-cooperation, for all its determination to have the Sèvres treaty revised, despite its doctrine of Soul Force, the Congress will have to give in to another organization which will grow out of the ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests. If the Congress wants to have the nation behind it, let it not be blinded by the interest of a small class; let it not be guided by the unseen hand of the "merchants and manufacturers" who have replaced the "talented lawyers" in the Congress, and whom the present tactics seek to install in the place of the Satanic British.

While the Congress, under the banner of Non-cooperation, has been dissipating the revolutionary forces, a counter-revolutionary element has appeared in the field to mislead the latter. Look out! The revolutionary zeal of the workers is subsiding, as shown by the slackening of the strike movement; the Trade Unions are falling in the hands of reformists, adventurers and government agents; the Aman Sabhas are captivating the attention of the poor peasants by administering to their immediate grievances. The Government knows where lies the strength of the movement; it is trying to divorce the masses from the Congress. This clever policy directed by master hands, cannot be counteracted by windy phrases and sentimental appeals. Equally clever steps should be taken. *The consciousness of the masses must be awakened; that is the only way of keeping them steady in the fight.*

Fellow Countrymen, a few words about Hindu-Moslem unity, which has been given such a prominent place in the Congress programme. The people of India are divided by

vertical lines, into innumerable sects, religions, creeds and castes. To seek to cement these cleavages by artificial and sentimental propaganda is a hopeless task. But fortunately, and perhaps to the great discomfiture of the orthodox patriots, who believe that India is a special creation of Providence, there is one mighty force that spontaneously divides all these innumerable sections horizontally into two homogeneous parts. This is the economic force; the exploitation of the disinherited by the propertied class. This force is in operation in India, and is effacing the innumerable vertical lines of social cleavage, while divorcing the two great classes further apart. The inexorable working of this force is drawing the Hindu workers and peasants closer and closer to their Moslem comrades. *This is the only agency of Hindu-Moslem unity.* Whoever will be bold enough to depend on the ruthless march of this force of social-economics, will not have to search frantically for pleas by which the Mussulman can be induced to respect the cow, nor to make the ignorant Hindu peasant believe that the salvation of his soul and the end of his earthly misery lies in the redemption of the Khilafat or the subjugation of the Armenians by the Turks. Hindu-Moslem unity is not to be cemented by sentimentality; it is being realized practically by the development of economic forces.

Fellow Countrymen, let the Congress reflect the needs of the nation and not the ambition of a small class. Let the Congress cease to engage in political gambling and vibrate in response to the social forces developing in the country. Let it prove by deeds that it wants to end foreign exploitation not to secure the monopoly to the native propertied class, but to liberate the Indian people from all exploitation—political, economic and social. Let it show that it really represents the people and can lead them in their struggle in every stage of it. Then the Congress will secure the leadership of the nation, and Swaraj will be won, not on a particular day selected according to the caprice of some individuals, but by the conscious and concerted action of the masses.

December 1st, 1921.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRISIS AT AHMEDABAD

The 36th Indian National Congress was confronted with a dilemma on whose solution its future existence as a fighting body depended. Violence or Non-violence; continued leadership of the masses or surrender to the bureaucracy,—these were the two horns on which the delegates to the Congress found themselves impaled.

This crisis, which was the outcome of the Non-cooperation campaign of the extremist nationalists and the policy of repression adopted by the Government, was brought to a head by the visit of the Prince of Wales to India and the startling demonstration of power afforded by the boycott of the royal visitor and the more or less complete *Hartal*, or general strike, of the Indian people, which greeted his arrival in every large city.

The new Viceroy, Lord Reading, who was sent out to India to control the most difficult and delicate situation in the history of that country, announced his advent as the coming of a rule of "justice, law and order". The non-violent Non-cooperation campaign, headed by Mr. Gandhi and the Congress, for the attainment of Swaraj, or Self-Government, was in full swing, and the Viceroy adopted a policy of watchful waiting for the first six months, in order to study the situation thoroughly before venturing upon a positive line of action. It was the opinion of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy that the movement would run itself into the ground and die of its own contradictions, and the many mistakes and failures of the tactics adopted seemed to justify this expectation. The boycott of the army, the schools and of government offices* and titles had, on the whole, proved abortive, despite some distinguished exceptions; while the boycott of foreign cloth and the revival of hand-spinning and weaving was, on the face of it, an economic impossibility bound to end in failure. The concrete achievements of the Non-coopera-

tion Movement were few, but important, and ignored by the bureaucracy until too late to prevent them. They consisted in the successful collection of a National Fund of one crore rupees, the registration of ten million members of the Congress Party, and the building-up of a nation-wide organization for propaganda purposes, which the Nationalist Movement had never before had, and whose all-embracing activities swept the great mass of the people,—intellectuals, petty bourgeoisie, peasants and city-proletariat alike,—within its scope.

The greatest unifying force for all these heterogeneous elements of discontent was, in the early days of the movement, the personality of Mr. Gandhi, whose Tolstoyan philosophy of non-resistance, together with his stainless personal life and long record of public service, endeared him to all classes of the population alike. It was to the Mahatma that the astute Lord Reading addressed himself in his first effort to sound the depth of the movement and to check its rampant career. Mr. Gandhi's ready consent to travel to Simla for an interview with the head of the Government, which he and his followers had so uncompromisingly boycotted, proved him to be more of a saint than a politician. Lord Reading obtained from the Mahatma a promise that the two Ali brothers would make a public apology for certain alleged speeches inciting the Indian people to violence,—and the Mahatma received the assurance that, for the time being, the Government would drop its intended prosecution of the two brothers for seditious utterances. The apology was duly delivered and heralded to India and to the world as the capitulation to legal authority of the two hottest defenders of Indian Nationalism. It is hard to say who suffered more in prestige by this unfortunate bargain with the "satanic" Government—Mr. Gandhi or the Ali brothers, who were accused by their opponents and followers alike of compromise and cowardice. It was the first triumph of the Government, and Lord Reading saw his way clear ahead of him.

Mr. Gandhi frankly admitted he had made another "Himalayan" mistake in his zeal for peace, and the Ali brothers, loyal to their leader, but resentful of the charge of cowardice, started a campaign of invectives against the Government and invited their own arrest. The public mind having been prepared for this eventuality to two of their

dearest idols, and Mr. Gandhi having abjured everyone to abstain from all public manifestations or show of resistance, the Government proceeded to arrest the Ali brothers and five other prominent Non-cooperators, and then stayed its hand to see the effect of this move. What would be the response of the Mussulman population to this blow aimed at their leaders? The baffling quiet which prevailed all over India gave satisfaction alike to the Government and the Non-cooperators. Aside from a few protest meetings, an occasional strike and several street demonstrations, there was nothing to show that two of India's most forceful and popular heroes had been arrested and convicted on ordinary criminal charges to two years' imprisonment. The Government argued that if it was so easy to cut off the heads of the movement, the body could be easily crippled. Mr. Gandhi, on the other hand, proclaimed the national calm as the triumph of Soul Force over violence, and the Working Committee of the National Congress announced the programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes and a national boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, scheduled for November.

More arrests followed as a matter of course, together with the prosecution and penalizing of nationalist journals for alleged seditious utterances. Non-cooperators went to prison unresisting and rejoicing, and new ones sprang to supplant them. Civil Disobedience, Boycott of foreign cloth, and a National *Hartal*, on the landing of the Prince of Wales, became the popular slogans of the hour. The whole country became a seething volcano of unrest and incipient trouble. Officialdom, at first nonplussed, advised the postponement of the Prince's visit, and it was rumoured that ill-health would prevent his projected trip to India. The open jubilation of the Non-cooperators, and the increased intensity of their campaign, changed the official mind. It was declared that the royal visit would take place.

It is not by chance that the Prince of Wales, the darling of the royal family and symbol of Britain's majesty, was thrown to the angry tigers of Indian Nationalism. The nature of his reception would be a good gauge of the real strength of the movement and of the hold enjoyed by the Congress leaders over the masses. The infinitesimal chance that the Prince would be assassinated by some terrorist, though minimized to almost zero by the elaborate pre-

cautions taken, would be run,—the British bourgeoisie is implacable when its interests are at stake. This feeling was well reflected by the Bombay correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who wrote:

The Prince's visit is not without risks. The days are gone when a royal visit to India was merely a delightful ceremony. In every municipality, the exact measure of hospitality to be shown has been hotly debated. Every act of homage is a real bending of the political will. The warmth of the welcome extended to the Prince will be the gauge of Indian desire for the British connection.

The arrival of the Prince of Wales in Bombay on November 17th was heralded to the world through the medium of the Press as the failure of Non-cooperation and the triumph of India's loyalty to the British Crown. First accounts conveyed glittering descriptions of the magnificent displays and entertainments given at public expense for the Prince's reception. But gradually the news leaked out that beyond the area where soldiers and machine-guns ensured the peaceful progress of the Heir to the Throne, there was serious trouble with the population of Bombay. Riots broke out in every part of the city, strikes were declared in all big industries, and the excited and angry populace fell to looting and incendiarism, unmindful of Mr. Gandhi's prayerful injunction for perfect peace. The Governor issued a Proclamation on the 16th and 17th that "the Government would use all its powers for the maintenance of law and order." According to the *Manchester Guardian*, life in the city was dislocated for four days. The list of casualties on the day the Prince landed include 83 police wounded, 53 rioters killed and 298 wounded, together with 341 arrests; 160 tramcars were damaged or destroyed; 135 shops were looted and 4 burned down. On the same day, Calcutta celebrated the arrival of the Prince on Indian soil by declaring a complete *Hartal* for twenty-four hours, and similar action was taken in cities all over India. The spectacular nature of the Calcutta strike was testified to by the *Times* correspondent, who writes:

From early morning, Congress and Khilafat volunteers appeared on the streets, and, it is no exaggeration to say, took possession of the whole city. The bazaars were closed. Tramcars were stopped. Taxis were frightened off the streets and horse vehicles were nowhere to be seen. There was little open violence, not even a brickbat was thrown at the armoured cars that patrolled the streets. The police looked on and did nothing. The control of the city passed for the whole day into the hands of the Volunteers. At nightfall, electric

lights were cut off, and the streets were silent, dark, and deserted. It was like a city of the dead.

Here was a startling manifestation of national solidarity that gave the Government pause for thought. It was an imposing demonstration of the popular will obeying the behests of its leaders. In Ireland people are used to such spectacles, but in India! In the temporary lull that preceded the bursting of the storm, the still, small voice of Mahatma Gandhi was raised, crying piteously to heaven for pardon for the blood that had been shed in Bombay, and calling upon those who had sinned to repent, as he did, by fasting for twenty-four hours out of every week. Poor, misguided, deluded Mahatma Gandhi! In his hesitations and vacillations and hurried flights from the displays of mass energy to the retreat of his own conscience was summed up the peculiar predicament of the Indian National Congress as a whole, ground beneath the upper and the nether millstones of government repression and seething popular unrest, which must find an outlet in violence, unless its economic distress which lies at the bottom of its discontent finds some relief.

The iron heel of authority came down upon the country instantaneously. The Government had had sufficient insight into the depth and strength of the national movement, and it decided to cut at the roots as well as to strike off the heads. Not only was it desired to check the progress of the Non-cooperation Movement and to insure a welcome to the Prince,—it was intended also to paralyse the holding of the Indian National Congress, scheduled to meet at Ahmedabad on December 24th, at which time Mr. Gandhi had definitely promised to announce the advent of his long-heralded but slightly chimerical Swaraj. More than 500 arrests were made in Calcutta alone. The recruiting and organizing of Congress and Khilafat volunteers was declared to be illegal. The principal districts of India were placed under Section 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which prohibits "unlawful associations" to such an extent that three persons meeting together in one place are liable to arrest. Naturally, the various Provincial Congress Committees meeting throughout India became "unlawful associations," and their members were arrested wholesale. All the principal leaders of the Congress (including its President, C. R. Das; its Secretary, Motilal Nehru; and Lajpat Rai, the fiery leader of the

Punjab) were arrested. The arrests of students and working men acting as pickets, volunteers or strikers, were legion. The Viceroy stated impressively that "the Government of India are very conscious of their power and their strength. Recent events have made it imperative that the full strength of the Government should be exerted for vindicating the law and preserving order."

Amid this impressive display of force, the Prince continued on his flowery path northward through the various Indian provinces, receiving everywhere the same official welcome which sought to veil the popular disaffection beneath. In the protected Native States he received the warmest reception, thereby demonstrating the British wisdom in perpetuating these feudal puppets as props to their own rule. But his emergence into British India once more was like a cold douche. Allahabad, the capital of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, greeted him, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, "with what truth compels the admission of as the most effective *Hartal* yet experienced. The streets were liberally festooned and garlanded, but entirely deserted." "The silence of Allahabad," declares the *Times*, "represents the first occasion on which the fomenters of passive hostility were really successful." It was an effective answer to the government repressions that were rapidly flooding the gaols of every Indian city. The arrival of the Prince in Calcutta was to be the acid test, for Bengal has always been the hotbed of rebellion. Four armoured cruisers were anchored outside the harbour, and special battalions of troops were posted in every part of the city, which assumed the appearance of an armed camp. The Prince was to arrive on December 24th, the same day on which the Congress would open in Ahmedabad, and in anticipation of his coming, the majority of the workers and the students went on strike, while the lawyers suspended their practice. Arrests reached such a degree that the general public began to protest. Lawyers of the High Court passed a resolution demanding the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act; business men of the United Provinces issued a statement to the Government that the present policy only added fresh recruits to the movement; members of the provincial legislative councils began to resign, and four members of the Imperial Legislative Assembly addressed the Government, urging it to call a halt to futile

repression, to formulate some constructive policy which would recognize the amazingly rapid changes occurring in India, and to call a round table conference of all shades of political thought to find a way out of the present deadlock.

Mr. Gandhi, despite repeated pleas to be arrested, continued in freedom, and on the eve of the opening of the Congress, which he declared must be held at any cost and despite the arrest of all its leaders unless the Government dissolve it by force, he issued a Manifesto which, among other things, stated:

Lord Reading must understand that the Non-cooperators are at war with the Government. We want to overthrow the Government and compel its submission to the people's will. We shall have to stagger humanity, even as South Africa and Ireland, with this exception—we will rather spill our own blood, not that of our opponents. This is a fight to a finish.

This, then, was the situation in India on the eve of the assembling of the National Congress—the gravest situation in living memory. What was the Congress to do? Its tactics of non-violence had come to an end, the mass-energy on which the strength of the Congress movement had rested could no longer be controlled in a crisis, as events in Bombay and elsewhere testified. At the same time, the masses were completely unarmed; they were hopelessly unready for an armed contest for supremacy. Should the Congress persist in its doctrine of Soul Force, it risked losing the support of the militant workers and peasants, who had got out of bounds and whose desperate economic condition rendered some immediate and practical solution imperative. The Indian working-class had lent itself already long enough to Mr. Gandhi's quixotic chasing of windmills. Non-violence, Non-resistance, Soul Force, boycotts and strikes in the National Cause for a Swaraj that was indefinitely postponed, weakened their faith in the Prophet, and they found themselves in no way better off. In all their circumlocutions and invectives against foreign rule, the Congress leaders had forgotten or neglected utterly to mention the economic betterment of the Indian workers and peasants, whose energetic support of the Congress Programme of Boycott and Civil Disobedience by riots, strikes, imprisonment and loss of life constituted the backbone and real strength of the movement. Such systematic repression as the Government of India launched upon could kill any movement that did not spring from the vital economic needs.

and desires of the people. Should the Congress persist in its present tactics, it should find itself divested of the popular support that gave it such powerful impetus and power, and it would be reduced once more to its former status of a debating society on constitutional progress, by India's discontented lawyers, doctors and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. The masses, forced asunder from the political movement by Government persecution and their own waning interest, would take up the economic struggle in good earnest on the purely economic field, leaving politics alone, like the burned child which dreads the fire.

The great question at issue then was: Would the centre of gravity of the Indian struggle be shifted from the political to the purely economic field, from the Indian National Congress to Constitutional Liberalism and Reformist Trade Unionism, or would the political leaders rise to the occasion and adopt such a programme in the National Congress as would keep the Indian masses behind it its political fight, by including their economic grievances?

*

The resolutions adopted in the sessions of the National Congress did not touch upon the vital question of the workers' economic needs. The 12,000 delegates and visitors, clad in homespun Khaddar and white "Gandhi caps," eschewed chairs and squatted upon the floor of the huge Pandal, while their leader, the saintly Mahatma, simply dressed in a homespun loin-cloth, issued his appeals for peace from the top of a table upon which he sat cross-legged. His resolution, calling for "aggressive Civil Disobedience to all government laws and institutions; for Non-violence; for the continuance of public meetings throughout India despite the government prohibition, and for all Indians to offer themselves peacefully for arrest by joining the Volunteer Corps," was carried with but ten dissentient votes. The Congress appointed Gandhi as its executive authority, with power to name his own successor in case he was arrested, but declared that peace with the Government could not be concluded without the previous consent of the Congress. A motion introduced by Hazrat Mohani, for complete independence outside the British Empire, to be attained by all "possible and proper," instead of by all "legitimate and peaceful" means, was opposed by Mr. Gandhi on the ground that it would alienate the sympathy of the Moderates, and

the resolution was lost, although a strong minority voted in its favour. *"The unity of all classes depends on non-violence,"* said Mr. Gandhi, *who sought to combine Moderates and Extremists, the Indian bourgeoisie and exploited proletariat, on a common but vague programme of political Swaraj.*

Mr. Gandhi, who was made the Dictator of the Indian Nationalist Movement, ended by falling between two stools, since he could not for ever sit on both. The Indian masses demanded economic betterment, and their rebellious spirit could not be contained much longer within the limits of a peaceful political programme which avoided all mention of their economic needs. Already the energies of the more class-conscious were being deflected towards the growing Trade Unions and Peasants Organizations. The Congress lost in this element its only revolutionary basis, because the handful of discontented intellectuals, who compose the Extremist Party, represent neither the interests of the moderate bourgeoisie nor of the conservative landholding class. The governmental repressions temporarily rallied all classes on the basis of national feeling, and led even the Moderates to protest and to demand a round table conference of all shades of opinion, where some agreement by compromise might be reached. Certain Trade Union leaders also urged such a conference on the plea that Labour was getting out of hand. The Viceroy agreed, on condition that the Extremists cease their boycott and other activities and that both sides call a truce pending negotiations. Pundit Malaviya, who represented the Right Wing of the Congress Party, proposed a resolution in the Congress to participate in a round table conference for the settlement of grievances. Gandhi opposed making the first overtures, and the motion was defeated, but "the door to negotiations was still left open." "We will talk with the Viceroy only as equals, not as suppliants," Gandhi declared, and added: "I am a man of peace, but not of peace at any price—only of that peace which will enable us to stand up to the world as free men."

A definite refusal to compromise, on the part of the Extremists, meant continued repression by the Government and the alienation of Moderate sympathy; consent to a conference, meant compromise with the Government and alienation of the masses. Which did Mr. Gandhi, Dictator of the Indian National Congress, decide to do?

CHAPTER III.

THE DÉBACLE OF GANDHISM

Gandhism as a political force reached its climax in the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress, December 1921. The six thousand delegates, representatives of India's outraged nationalism,—outraged by the policy of deliberate repression launched upon by the Government of India,—conferred upon the Working Committee and upon Mr. Gandhi as its head, supreme dictatorial powers to guide the national destinies during the ensuing year. Non-violence, Non-cooperation and Mass Civil Disobedience, including Non-payment of taxes, were adopted as the means to attain the goal of a still undefined *Swaraj*.

Few leaders can ask for more than this,—the sense of power that emanates from a nation's mandate, backed up by the popular will. The field was clear for Mr. Gandhi to exercise his qualities of leadership and to match steel with his powerful opponent,—British Imperialism. If at first blush, the contest looked unequal between the slender David and the giant Goliath, it must be remembered that the odds were not all in favour of the latter. Three hundred and twenty million people, united under the single command of an adored and trusted leader, who has cleverly put his bristling opponent at a disadvantage from the outset, by proclaiming non-violence as his chief weapon,—such a force if properly manœuvred, could be made to wring more than one concession from the irritated and nonplussed adversary, whose moral position in the eyes of the world is a bad one, and whose cowardly hypocrisy smarts under the knowledge of this fact. And concessions were all that Mr. Gandhi asked for. He was not, and has never been an avowed revolutionary, who puts the issue squarely to the enemy,—“either you or I must go.” His unsubstantial *Swaraj*, when pieced together from reluctant definitions, means only “Home Rule within the British Empire,” as the defeat of Hazrat Mohani's resolution for “complete in-

dependence outside the British Empire" proved at the Ahmedabad Congress.

If, instead of winning concessions for at least a section of the Indian people, Mr. Gandhi won for himself a six-year jail sentence and a martyr's crown at the hands of the British Government, he has only himself to blame. Great positions carry with them great responsibilities, and Gandhi the Dictator, who played a lone hand against his powerful adversary, must acknowledge that his tactics brought him to a catastrophic defeat. The situation at the close of the Ahmedabad Congress was a delicate one, and success for either side hung in the balance. It is in such moments, that leadership turns the scale and judging by the denouement, the palm must go to Lord Reading and not to Mr. Gandhi.

A moment's retrospect will make clear the position as it stood. The visit of the Prince of Wales to India served its purpose, by showing the Government that there was real force behind the Non-cooperators—the force of the striking masses. Stung by this demonstration of power, the bureaucracy adopted a policy of such wide repression, that in addition to all the prominent leaders, twenty-five thousand Indian patriots lay in jail upon very vague and unproven charges of "sedition," "disaffection," and of "waging war against the King."

But in its eagerness to stamp the movement out, the Government overshot the mark. The Moderates, that tiny section of upper-class Indians whose "loyalty" gave a show of legality to the wholesale arrests and prosecutions of their fellow countrymen, these same Moderates rebelled against their leading strings, and demanded a change of policy. Members of the Councils resigned, others protested. The suggestion of Pundit Malaviya to hold a *Round Table Conference* of all shades of opinion, for the solution of the crisis, was responded to by all the political parties. This was the crucial moment, and the wary tactics of the Viceroy in this crisis proved that he was fumbling in the dark.

In a speech made in Calcutta on December 21st, 1921, just before the Ahmedabad Congress opened, the Viceroy himself stated that he was in favour of a genuine attempt to solve the problems of unrest by means of discussion and consideration at a conference, and that meanwhile, there should be a cessation of activities on both sides, both Non-cooperators and Government. He further declared that

such a truce would involve no advantage or triumph to be claimed on either side. The reason for this offer to mediate was clear. It was desired to save the face of British prestige during the Prince's visit, and for this reason, Lord Reading was ready to negotiate. No definite response was given immediately to his offer, and his real object,—that of making the Prince's visit a success, was thereby lost.

But his words had not fallen on deaf ears, and we find the idea of a conference being toyed with by Mr. Gandhi in the Ahmedabad Congress, who "left the door to negotiations open," and again in the Conference held in Bombay on January 15th, in which definite terms were laid down for the calling of a Round Table Conference, in conformity with the Viceroy's speech that the Government cease its arrests and release all prisoners, and that the Non-cooperators cease all activities pending the negotiations. Mr. Gandhi, meanwhile, as Congress Dictator, had suspended Civil Disobedience until the end of January, in order to assist the arbitration.

In this desire of Mr. Gandhi to arbitrate, lay the secret of his defeat. Lord Reading discovered that Mr. Gandhi was no less unwilling than himself, to call into action the sanguinary forces of the Indian masses. This was amply demonstrated by his ever-growing insistence upon the creed of Non-violence at the expense of its concomitant Non-cooperation; by his sharp rebuke to every manifestation of force on the part of the masses, such as his "Manifesto to the Hooligans of Bombay" after the events of November 17th to 20th, in which he declared "it is better to have no hartal and no hooliganism"—above all, by his shrinking from embarking upon the final step that he himself declared must lead to Swaraj, namely, Mass Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. This latter step was thrice postponed after its formal adoption in the Ahmedabad Congress; postponed for no reason whatever, except Mr. Gandhi's own timid horror of the inevitable conflicts between police and people that must follow its inauguration, and of the violation of property rights.

It did not need much acumen for Lord Reading to discover this weakness of Mr. Gandhi, who proclaimed it from the housetops, for the benefit alike of Government and Non-cooperators. On January 25th, he wrote in *Young India*, at the very moment when the Round Table nego-

tiations were under way, and he was supposed to declare Mass Civil Disobedience in operation within five days if the overtures for peace fell through:

I don't know what is the best course. At this moment I am positively shaking with fear. If a settlement were to be made, then where are we to go? After coming to know the strength of India, I am afraid of a settlement. If a settlement is to be made before we have been thoroughly tested, our condition will be like that of a child prematurely born, which will perish in a short time.

In the face of this naive avowal of indecision, helplessness, and terror, is it any wonder that the Viceroy, afflicted by no such qualms and very conscious of his end in view, should bring the negotiations for a Round Table Conference to an abrupt end and pursue his serene course of lawless repression, undeterred by the voice of his own or Mr. Gandhi's conscience. Lord Reading's decision was communicated to Pundit Malaviya and the 200 delegates from all political parties, in a telegram sent by his secretary towards the end of January, which stated that His Excellency was unable to discover in the proposals put forward by the Conference the basis for a profitable discussion on a Round Table Conference, and no useful purpose would therefore be served by entering into any detailed examination of their terms.

The Viceroy had begun to advance from the very first step of retreat taken by Mr. Gandhi in postponing the application of Mass Civil Disobedience until the outcome of the Round Table Arbitrations. If instead of this amiable postponement, Mr. Gandhi had issued an edict to the waiting peasantry to cease payment of taxes immediately at the close of the Congress, the whole outcome might have been different. The response of the peasants cannot be doubted. Wherever tried, its effect was instantaneous and overwhelming. Lord Reading, confronted by a show of force and firmness, backed by mass-action on a large scale, might have wavered and accepted negotiations with the Non-cooperators. But Mr. Gandhi merely threatened and then postponed for two weeks that which constituted his only weapon. On February 4th, when the Viceroy had already declared the road to negotiations closed, Mr. Ganuni addressed a letter to him, once more offering to delay the inauguration of Mass Civil Disobedience pending the Conference, if the Viceroy would revise his policy of lawless repression.

The reply, of February 6th, was a Government Communique which declared that "Mass Civil Disobedience is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with sternness and severity," while Mr. Gandhi's overtures for peace were completely ignored. Matters had now come to a showdown. The Government had called Mr. Gandhi's bluff, and all cards were laid on the table.

Mass Civil Disobedience, already declared at Bardoli on January 29th, but suspended pending the Gandhi-Reading negotiations, was formally launched through the medium of a mass-meeting held at Bardoli, and a Manifesto issued on February 7th by Mr. Gandhi, in which he declared:

The choice before the people then, is Mass Civil Disobedience with all its undoubted dangers, and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people.

Although Mass Civil Disobedience was not formally sanctioned by Mr. Gandhi until all hope of a compromise with the Government had been given up, that is, until the first week in February, in reality it had begun spontaneously in various districts, in the form of non-payment of taxes, and was approved by the various local Congress Committees. The rumour spread from village to village that the Gandhi-Raj had come, and that it was no longer necessary to pay taxes. That the movement was spreading rapidly is proved by the fact that local officials began to resign in large numbers because of their inability to collect the revenue, as well as by the official reports, which show large sums outstanding which the officials were unable to collect from the peasantry. District magistrates complained of incitement among the people not to pay taxes, of popular resistance to rent-warrants, of insults heaped by prisoners under trial upon their judges, and a general subversion of jail discipline.

The prompt and energetic measures taken by the Government to arrest the non-payment of taxes movement, prove how seriously it was regarded. Already on January 10th, a Communique from the Punjab warned the people against the consequences of Civil Disobedience, which the Government threatened would be dealt with by more rigorous and systematic measures than any yet adopted. On January 20th, the Madras Government issued a similar notice, stating that the resignation of village officials would not be accepted, and that officers refusing to carry out their duties would be dismissed and deprived of their hereditary rights,

and that the land of persons refusing to pay taxes would be seized and put up for sale. Extra police were recruited at the expense of the population, but those paying taxes before the prescribed date would be exempt from this liability. Military police were called out in Assam to assist collections, but were met with resistance by the people.

Conflicts between the police and the people became a daily occurrence, but a strict censorship was maintained to conceal the extent of the unrest. Only the reports of the revenue-officers form a gauge of the strength of the movement. In Guntur District, collections amounted to one hundredth part of the money due.

Non-payment of taxes was not the only disturbing feature of Indian unrest during the months of January and February. Widespread disturbances throughout India, from the Punjab to Madras, from Bombay to Burma, arose from the attempts to enforce the various measures of the Non-cooperation programme, such as boycott of cloth and liquor-shops, resulting in encounters between police and people, and mob-risings, with loss of life and many arrests which tended to increase the general disquiet. The correspondent of the *Morning Post* writing from India at the end of January, says:

In large areas, particularly Upper Assam, conditions border on anarchy. Rent and revenue payments are refused, and where resort is had to loyalist volunteers and Gurkhas, the Gandhites have openly ridiculed such military procedure. In a police affray arising from picketing in Serajgunge (Bengal), the police fired, killing five and wounding 200. The present tension, unless eased by stronger Government action, will have a most serious outcome.

In Bombay, the movement was more peaceful, consisting mainly of boycott of schools and enlistment of volunteers, so that in a mass-meeting held in Bardoli in January, under the auspices of the Non-cooperators, Mr. Gandhi was able to declare the district self-disciplined and fit enough for the adoption of Civil Disobedience. But even this model atmosphere was ruffled when the Bombay Government announced on February 9th, that the Municipalities of Ahmedabad and Surat would be superseded for two and three years respectively, for having resolved to conduct their schools independently of Government control and for refusing the Government education grant.

At this critical moment, an unexpected pin-prick exploded Mr. Gandhi's faltering resolution, and sent him

scurrying back to the protection of law and order. On February 4th, a riot occurred at Chauri Chaura, a village of the United Provinces, in which a procession of volunteers was fired on by the police and the infuriated mob charged the police station, captured the building, killed 23 policemen, and then set fire to the police-station, cut the telegraph wires and tore up the railway. The news of this untoward but by no means unusual event, whose counterparts were being enacted all over India in every province, leaked through the official censorship on February 6th, just in the moment when Mr. Gandhi and the Viceroy were exchanging their famous notes, and full details reached the Mahatma on the very day on which he announced the formal inauguration of Mass Civil Disobedience.

The gruesome details of burned policemen and dismantled telegraph-wires were more than Mr. Gandhi's sensitive conscience could bear. By some extraordinary mental process, he held himself and his declaration of Civil Disobedience to be responsible for the whole occurrence, and with a loud wail of dismay and despair, announced a five-day's fast (reduced to two days on the supplication of his followers) as penance and punishment for the tragedy of Chauri-Chaura. In an article published on February 10th in *Young India*, Mr. Gandhi declares:

I regard the Chauri Chaura tragedy as a third warning from God against the hasty embarkation on Mass Civil Disobedience, and it is my bitterest cup of humiliation, but I deem such humiliation, ostracism, or even death preferable to any countenancing of untruth or violence.

Without loss of time, on February 11th, a Conference was hastily convened at Bardoli, wherein the Working Committee of the Congress revoked not only Mass Civil Disobedience, but all picketing, processions and public meetings as well. The peasants were ordered to pay land-revenue and all other taxes due to the Government, and to suspend every activity of an offensive nature. The landlords were reassured that the Congress had no design against their sacred rights.

Mr. Gandhi's harkening to his conscience did him the good service of delaying the order for his own arrest, a fact of which he was unaware at the time. The Government at Simla, a little amazed at this temperamental outburst and sudden change of heart, stayed its hand temporarily to permit Mr. Gandhi to lead the movement into confusion

worse confounded. The national uprising which they had feared and prepared against during the last three months, was checked and thrown into rout by the good offices of Mr. Gandhi himself, whose incorrigible pacifism and dread of the popular energy could be counted upon to prevent the explosion. What governmental repression in all its varied forms had failed to accomplish, the agonized appeal of the Mahatma was able to effectuate. Truly, as a Pacifist Reformer, Mr. Gandhi may well congratulate himself on his success in soothing the just anger of the populace, even though he may have to admit his utter failure to melt the heart of the Government. That which arrests, tortures, floggings, imprisonments, massacres, fines and police-zoolums could not quell,—the blind struggles of a starving nation to save itself from utter annihilation,—Mr. Gandhi by the simple magic of love and non-violence, reduced to impotence and inactivity, which insured its temporary defeat.

The Bardoli Resolutions were received throughout the country with mingled feelings of triumph, relief and alarm,—triumph on the part of the Government and its supporters, relief to the feelings of those Moderates and secret sympathizers with the victims of Government repression, and alarm on the part of those Non-cooperators whose ideas of strategy and tactics differed widely from those of Mr. Gandhi.

While the Nationalist press on the whole supported Mr. Gandhi in his *volte-face*, and local Congress Committees immediately began to put the Bardoli Resolutions into practice, a section of Extremist opinion found itself outraged by the sudden retreat from the Ahmedabad decisions. Some Mahratta newspapers criticized Mr. Gandhi for stressing isolated incidents like Chauri Chaura and Bombay to the detriment of the movement as a whole. Mr. S. R. Bomanji, in a lecture delivered in Bombay on "The Lessons of Bardoli" declared that the people were asked to sacrifice everything and were prepared to do it, because they thought Mr. Gandhi was leading a fight for freedom. Mr. Gandhi was the most greatly admired man in India, but that did not preclude them from the right of thinking, and in the hero-worship of Mr. Gandhi, they were losing their individuality.

The regular session of the All-India Congress Committee was held in Delhi on February 24th, and the Bardoli

Resolutions were presented for endorsement. Pundit Malaviya, Mr. Gandhi's *alter ego* of Pacifism and Moderation, urged the ratification of Bardoli, and the complete abandonment of Non-cooperation in all its forms. Mr. Gandhi, still horror-stricken at the bloodshed of Chauri Chaura that presaged Revolution, hugged the Bardoli decisions without going to the length of Pundit Malaviya's surrender. But an angry section of earnest Extremists, realizing the disastrous effect upon the movement of the abandonment of all aggressive tactics, and smarting under the Government's ill-concealed triumph, urged the repudiation of Bardoli and the renewal of Non-cooperation, including Civil Disobedience. Mr. Gandhi himself, caught in the unpleasant predicament of being "let off" by the Government for good behaviour, felt himself stung to self-defence by a return to his abandoned position. Accordingly, a compromise was struck, and the Delhi session of the Congress Committee sanctioned all forms of Non-cooperation, including individual civil disobedience, both defensive and aggressive, and picketing. The Resolution affirmed that "Civil Disobedience is the right and duty of a people, whenever a state opposes the declared will of the people."

The Mahatma, however, succeeded in holding his own against the Extremist opposition. His bankrupt leadership still won the day. The Bardoli Resolution was ratified in all its essentials by the All-India Congress Committee in Delhi. This was the last victory of Gandhism, which victory meant a calamity to the movement and martyrdom for the Mahatma.

The Government had very little left to be afraid of. The political atmosphere was clear. The Congress had committed suicide by repudiating the revolutionary action of its own followers. A powerful revolutionary movement had been sacrificed on the altar of Gandhism. The dramatic moralizings of the Mahatma threw the rebellious masses into a state of bewilderment which was soon followed by a terrible loss of enthusiasm. His hesitating tactics created a consternation within the Congress ranks, where murmurings were to be heard against the idol raised to the pedestal of a dictator. The Government could not find any better opportunity to wreak its vengeance. The time came when Mr. Gandhi could be calmly clapped into jail without running the risk of facing the resolute opposition of an angry people.

Gandhi had deprived Gandhism of revolutionary leadership. It could only end in martyrdom. Having helped the Government unwittingly to control the acute revolutionary situation, Gandhi fell victim to the vengeance of the Pro-Consul, who was still smarting under the sense of an outraged prestige.

Scarce twelve days after the Delhi decisions, and simultaneously with the dismissal of Mr. Montagu, Mr. Gandhi was arrested on the charge of "tending to promote disaffection against the existing system of Government" by certain speeches and articles, and a few days later was brought to trial. True to his gospel of Non-cooperation, Mr. Gandhi pleaded guilty and offered no defence, urged the judge to find him guilty and to give him the maximum sentence, and in the course of a long written statement which he read out before the court, he reaffirmed his doctrine of non-violent Non-cooperation with the existing system of government in straightforward, eloquent words.

The judge who sat personifying British justice and honesty must have felt some inward qualms of conscience in the face of this ringing indictment, which fell upon the court-room like the voice of suffering India itself. In a few words, half-explanatory and almost apologetic, he pronounced sentence,—*six years simple imprisonment*,—and the farce was over. *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, apostle of Non-resistance, leader of Non-cooperation and beloved Mahatma of India's struggling millions, was led off to jail, while the fervent followers of yesterday passively looked on and prayed.

Let neither Lloyd George, nor Lord Reading, nor the thinking public be deceived by the calm that fell upon India's millions at the news of Mr. Gandhi's incarceration. The Non-cooperators, those who intoxicate themselves with the opiate of Non-violence, might attribute it to Soul Force; the Government might deem it the justification of its policy of repression; but for those who know India of today, this unearthly calm presages a storm more violent than any which has yet shaken the political horizon. That which is lacking is leadership in the Indian movement. But without disrespect let us say frankly, that no leadership for a time was preferable to Mr. Gandhi's misleadership. He performed gallant service in the last three years, in leading the Indian people out of their age-long hopelessness and

stagnation onto the path of agitation and organization which attained a nation-wide response and scope. His own mental confusion was but a reflection of the confused and chaotic state of the movement itself, just staggering upon its weak legs and learning to walk.

All honour to Mr. Gandhi, who found a way for his people out of the entanglements of Government censorship and repression; who by his slogans of non-violent Non-cooperation, Boycott and Civil Disobedience, was able to draw the wide masses into the folds of the Congress Party and make the Indian movement for the first time truly national. But the movement had outgrown its leader; the time had come when the masses were ready to surge ahead in the struggle, and Mr. Gandhi vainly sought to hold them back; they strained and struggled in the leading-strings of Soul Force, Transcendental Love and Non-violence, torn between their crying earthly needs and their real love for this saintly man whose purity gripped their imagination and claimed their loyalty.

Mr. Gandhi had become an unconscious agent of reaction in the face of a growing revolutionary situation. The few leaders of the Congress Party who realized this and sought a way out, were rendered desperate, almost despairing at the dilemma. Mr. Gandhi had become a problem to his own movement, and lo! the British Government, in its infinite wisdom, relieved them of the problem. Mr. Gandhi out of jail was an acknowledged force for peace, a sure enemy of violence in all its forms. Mr. Gandhi in jail is a powerful factor of unrest, a symbol of national martyrdom, a constant stimulation to the national cause to fight its way to freedom.

After his arrest, two wings of the Congress Party developed into clear-cut prominence. One veering towards the right, seeks reunion with the Moderates, the abandonment of Non-cooperation and a bourgeois programme of constitutional reform within the Empire. The other struggles vainly after the vanishing slogans of Gandhism,—*Satyagraha*, Non-violence, and the reconquest of India by the *Charka*. In this camp which is all that remains of Extremism, reigns consternation and confusion, but a few voices are rising clear and strong above the din. The voice of Mrs. C. R. Das, President of the last Bengal Provincial Conference, recommending the capture of the Reform

Councils and the formation of peasants' and workers' unions; the voice of Dr. Munji in the Maharashtra Conference, which proclaimed that "the aim of the Congress is thoroughly worldly and for worldly happiness and has to be attained by worldly means which should be easily understandable and practicable"; the voice of nationalist journals which cry that the nation must be organized for the struggle, and that the real work lies among the masses.

New leaders are surging to the front, ready to learn by past mistakes and to build a new programme for the future. Upon their understanding of the present Indian situation depends their present success or failure. The mass-movement among the workers and peasants is still strong and powerful; the Aika peasant movement in the United Provinces, the outbreak of unrest among the Bhils in Central India, the three months strike of the workers on the East India Railway, prove where the real strength of the Indian movement lies. Reformist trade union and cooperative workers are already in the field to capture the allegiance of the Indian masses. *It remains for the Congress leaders to anticipate them by formulating such a programme as will bring the workers and peasants of India to their side. In the dynamics of mass-action under wise political leadership lies the true and only solution of the Indian struggle for freedom.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHISM

And so, Mahatma Gandhi, variously described as "the greatest apostle of non-violence since the days of Buddha and Jesus"; "the prophet of spiritualized Democracy"; and "the greatest man in the world," lies in jail, condemned to six years' incarceration by the very judge who in passing sentence, paid tribute to him as "a great patriot and a great leader, and even those who differ from you in politics look up to you as a man of high ideals and as leading a noble and even saintly life." It is not our purpose to add or detract from the praise that has been heaped upon the head of this unique leader of Indian Nationalism. Rather it is aimed to estimate as carefully and impartially as may be the essential qualities of Gandhi the Saint, Philosopher, Politician and Patriot as applied to present-day Indian conditions and to derive what valuable lessons we may from his failures as well as successes of the past three years.

No one can know of the life and personality of Mr. Gandhi and fail to render tribute to him as "a saintly man who purifies us at sight." In an age of intense individualism, of uncompromising struggle for existence, in which national, racial and class conflicts are hardening for the final battle that will usher in a new era of social relationship and civilization, the golden legend of this idealist and ascetic who has cheerfully given his whole life to the service of his fellows, upon whose personal character no faintest blemish rests, whose fearless courage and love of truth stand proven before the whole world and who combines the naive purity and innocence of a child with the iron will and unbending principles of a man, such a character will go down to history with the same moral force upon posterity as his saintly prototypes of the past, Thomas Aquinas, Savonarola, and Saint Francis of Assisi. Gandhi the individual has impressed, individually, thousands of lives who are uplifted

and inspired to better things for having known him. His personal example gives force to his moral precepts, for no man can say of him that he does not practice all that he preaches. And it is this moral force of his, dimly radiating beyond the confines of vast India to the indifferent world beyond, which brought him into prominence as a figure of international interest. Gandhi the Philosopher, the Politician and Patriot, is but one of many on the storm-tossed sea of Indian Nationalism, unknown and uncared for by the heedless nations, who have long since learned not to tread on the tail of British Imperialism. But Gandhi the Saint,—here is a spectacle unique in every age, and as one of the great men cast up by the waters of time, he belongs to every country.

There is in this half-naked, slender brown body, so completely dominated by the mind within, a strength that dreadnoughts cannot conquer nor machine-guns subdue though they shatter it to bits, and out of the respect bred of this certain knowledge, the British Empire leaves him unharmed. Six years simple imprisonment, "with everything possible to make him comfortable," is the utmost they dare attempt, and this merely to remove him from the arena of active politics. When the storm dies down a little, they will let him free. For they will soon learn, if they do not already know, that Gandhi the Saint in prison becomes to India's adoring millions, Gandhi the Martyr, and from the days of the Roman Empire onward, the spectacle of martyrdom has exercised a potent and irresistible effect upon the mass-mind. It is well and truly said that "Mahatma in jail is more powerful than Mahatma free," not alone for the constant impetus it gives to Indian Nationalism by working upon the sympathetic indignation of the masses, but because in jail, his qualities of sainthood can radiate at their fullest and best, uncongested by the exercise of those more worldly faculties of political leadership in which Mr. Gandhi is not so conspicuously successful.

As a philosopher, Mr. Gandhi is neither original nor unique. He merely reiterates, in an age peculiarly out of tune with his teachings, the ancient doctrines of Hinduism whose ramifications are spread throughout the world and which have served at various times to inspire the prophets and saints of other lands. To say that he is a disciple of Buddha and Christ is merely to confirm this statement, for

the best teachings of Buddha and Christ were drawn from a common fountainhead which made India and the Orient the mother of all religions. Nor does Mr. Gandhi claim originality in any sense. He frankly professes the teachings of pure Hinduism as interpreted through the Baghavad Gita and the Bible, and seeks to lead not only India, but all humanity back to the golden age of the Vedic cult, when the heresy of Materialism and the social corruptions of caste and class did not exist. Like Tolstoy, who was himself fed upon Hindu philosophy and whose place in the revolutionary movement of Russia is peculiarly similar to the rôle of Mr. Gandhi, Non-violence is the first article of faith, "it is my faith." In an article on Non-violence published in *Young India*, the tenets of this faith are very clearly outlined, and it is necessary to quote the gist of it in order to appreciate its bearings upon his political creed, which is merely the application of philosophy to contemporary Indian politics:

Non-violence is complete innocence. Complete non-violence is complete absence of ill-will against all that lives,—and in its active form, good will towards all life. It is pure love, as I read it in the Hindu Scriptures, in the Bible, in the Koran. Non-violence is a perfect state. It is a goal towards which mankind moves naturally, though unconsciously. Man does not become divine when he personifies innocence in himself. Only then does he become truly man.

Restraint is the law of our being. Highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint. Suffering is thus the badge of the human tribe.—Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment.—

Again, in *Young India* of February 16th, 1922, commenting upon the remarks of Sir William Vincent in the Bengal Legislative Council, Mr. Gandhi enunciates the purest Hindu gospel of self-renunciation, beloved by Schopenhauer:

Willing death is deliverance. According to Hindu belief, the highest known form of freedom, i. e., salvation, is possible only when a man voluntarily surrenders his body and becomes totally indifferent to bodily wants. Political freedom of a disciplined character is a prelude to a higher type. It is therefore in the fitness of things that we should voluntarily surrender our possessions, including our bodies, for the attainment of national freedom.—We must therefore develop an equally infinite capacity for suffering, if we are to replace Government by force with Government based upon popular will.

Thus then, Non-violence is pure Love, Perfection, towards which Man is naturally progressing as a goal, through the highest restraint and suffering. Satisfaction lies not in the attainment of the goal, but in the effort. Salvation, the beatification of Freedom, is attainable through willing death and surrender of all earthly possessions, and political

freedom, the prelude to a higher type, is attainable by developing an infinite capacity for suffering. Non-violence or Love, in its negative state, is complete absence of ill-will towards all that lives, and in its positive aspect, it is good-will towards all life. What does this doctrine mean applied to the realm of practical politics? It means, to call a spade a spade, that India will be free when two things are accomplished,—first, when three hundred millions of Indians living under the most refined and perfected system of imperial exploitation ever devised; starved, maltreated, ignorant and brutalized by the armed oppression of a tiny fraction of overlords; reduced to grovelling impotence and hopelessness by the constant threat of every engine of destruction which modern civilization has invented, directed against their disarmed helplessness,—that these three hundred million slaves will be free when they have learned to the last man, not only to bear no ill-will and to practice non-violence against their oppressors, but to love them completely, perfectly. But not yet free, only half free, for there remains another equally important thing to be accomplished. The realization of such a perfect atmosphere of complete non-violence, of infinite Love means that three hundred million Indians will cheerfully endure all kicks and insults, all hunger and nakedness, all poverty and wretchedness at the hands of their exploiters, until these, touched and overcome by such a demonstration of man's innate divinity, will respond to it by throwing away their machine-guns and flesh-pots, their treasure hoards and princely power, and will welcome their three hundred million brethren to a new Fraternity of Man, where Liberty and Equality will rule the human race under the ægis of Perfect Love.

Such was the dream of Gautama and of Christ, and such is the Millenium of Gandhi. Do you doubt it? Listen to his words of applied philosophy:

The political non-violence of the Non-cooperator does not stand the test in the vast majority of cases. Hence the prolongation of the struggle. Let no one blame the unbending English nature. The hardest fibre must melt in the fire of Love. When the British or other nature does not respond, the fire is not strong enough.

If non-violence is to remain the policy of the nation, we are bound to carry it out to the letter and in the spirit. We must then quickly make up with the English and the Cooperators. We must get their certificate that they feel absolutely safe in our midst, that they regard us as friends, although we belong to a radically different school of thought and politics. We must welcome them to our political plat-

form as honoured guests; we must receive them on neutral platforms as comrades. Our non-violence must not breed violence, hatred or ill-will.

If we approach our programme with the mental reservation that, after all, we shall wrest power from the British by force of arms, then we are untrue to our profession of non-violence.—If we believe in our programme, we are bound to believe that the British people are not unamenable to the force of affection, as they undoubtedly are amenable to the force of arms.

Swaraj is a condition of mind, and the mental condition of India has been challenged.—India will win independence and Swaraj only when the people have acquired strength to die of their own free will. Then there will be Swaraj.

Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy is more difficult to define than his moral one. One could place him in the slender category of "anarchist-mystics." He is an anarchist because he appeals essentially to the individual man, and the only possible response to his cult is an individual one; to expect to move masses of men by moral predications that rest ultimately with the individual for fulfillment is utopianism. The gigantic failure of Christianity is the best proof of this. He is a mystic because he appeals to that intangible something which he terms "Soul Force" as the dynamics of his movement towards emancipation. He is above all a subjectivist who looks to psychology to explain that which the objective working of material laws is alone responsible for. "Swaraj is a condition of mind!" It is the subjectivism of the man who sees Man everywhere controlling the material forces of his existence, and who does not stop to reckon that Man is himself the product of his material environment, which has predetermined the working of his mentality. If mere voluntary self-immolation upon the altar of National Freedom be the price of Swaraj, the Indian people ought long ago to have attained this blessing, for nowhere else has the cult of self-annihilation been so practically fulfilled, be it by the philosophers and sannyasis of the past, or by the millions of deaths through poverty and plague and famine of the Indian masses, or by the vicarious sacrifice of thousands of lives by the young patriots of India re-born.

Mr. Gandhi himself sometimes doubts the possibility of the attainment of perfect Non-violence, that first prerequisite to Swaraj, but smothering his doubts, he bids the people struggle towards its realization. "Each time I fail, my effort will be all the more determined for my failure." It is a splendid but impractical idealism, conceived in much the same spirit with which Christ bade the rich man give away his all to the poor, and comforted those who had

nothing, telling them "blessed are the humble, for they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven." Was it because Mr. Gandhi saw his people disarmed and bleeding, helpless and hopeless before the superior might of the conqueror, that he counseled this philosophy of Non-violence, which is after all but a philosophy of despair when by analysis it is patent that no one believes in its ultimate fulfillment? For thousands of years the Indian people have listened to such counsels; for thousands of years they have heeded them, bowing their broken lives before the inscrutable working of Providence, accepting their earthly lot without complaint and looking to death willingly for their deliverance. Non-violence, resignation, perfect love and release from the pain of living,—this is the substance of Indian philosophy handed down through the ages by a powerful caste of kings, priests, and philosophers who found it good to keep the people in subjection. Mr. Gandhi is nothing but the heir of this long line of ghostly ancestors,—he is the perfect product of heredity and environment. His philosophy of Satyagraha is the inevitable fruit of its spiritual forebears. What is unfortunate is that Mr. Gandhi's revived philosophy of otherworldliness coincides with a most unprecedented growth in Indian national life,—the growth of a spirit of revolt against material privation, on the part of the Indian masses. His time-honoured doctrines of orthodox Hinduism have conflicted with this new spirit of rebellion, have temporarily controlled and arrested its development, thanks to his saintly personality, which has more hold on the imagination of the Indian people than his outworn doctrines of self-annihilation. For this involuntary service, the British Government has every reason to be grateful to him, and it was a dim realization of his pacific influence upon the unruly masses as well as a very wholesome fear of rousing the fury of the people to the breaking-point, that made the Government stay its hand so long before arresting him. It was only when Mr. Gandhi had himself prepared the way to his own arrest by schooling the masses to calmness, and had stemmed the flood-tide of the spontaneous upheaval for social and economic emancipation by rebuking every outbreak of mass-energy, every manifestation of force on the part of the people, and by throwing the entire weight of his beloved personality on the side of peace, non-violence and non-resistance, that the Bureaucracy dared to arrest him.

CHAPTER V.

THE FALLACIES OF GANDHISM

Mr. Gandhi went into jail, but Gandhism in Indian politics lived on, influencing the course of the movement for good or ill. It is the purpose here to point out the mistakes of Gandhism in the past, as well as its triumphs, so that those who guide the present struggle for Swaraj may apply these lessons of the past to future action. Until his arrest, Mr. Gandhi was the head and forefront of the Indian Nationalist Movement,—his ideas, his judgment and his final decision on questions of programme and tactics were what counted most, influenced though he may have been by other leaders less powerful, because lacking his command of the wide masses of the Indian people. It is, therefore, necessary to study Mr. Gandhi as an individual to fully understand what Gandhism is. In a preceding chapter, we have already analysed him as Saint and Philosopher; it is essential for our thorough understanding, to study him as Politician and Patriot. A careful survey of his speeches and writings, as well as of his programme and tactics, is enough to convince anyone that his personal and political life are merely an application of his philosophical doctrines of Soul Force, Self-Abnegation and Non-violence,—of the ultimate triumph of Spirit over Matter. The result has been to create as the dominating force in Indian Nationalism for the past three years, what has aptly been dubbed "transcendental politics." The effect of this transcendentalism, not only upon British Imperialism but upon the Indian people, can best be seen by a brief review of Mr. Gandhi's leadership of the Nationalist Movement.

*

Swaraj by non-violent means can therefore, never mean an interval of chaos and anarchy. Swaraj by non-violence must be a progressively peaceful revolution such that the transference of power from a close corporation to the peoples' representatives will be as natural as the dropping of a fully-ripe fruit from a well-nurtured tree. I say again,

that such a thing may be quite impossible of attainment, but I know that nothing less is the implication of Non-violence. (*M. K. Gandhi.*)

Here is Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy in a nut-shell. On reading it one is tempted to inquire, in what way does this differ from the conception of the sincere British Imperialist, who openly declares his civilizing mission to be to fit the Indian people for self-government by an evolutionary process of gradual, progressive stages. He too, desires peace, non-violence and "law and order," if not perfect love. There is no contrast between his and Mr. Gandhi's professed goal and the means to attain it. To find a contrast, one must turn to the histories of past revolutions, which were made, not by love and peace, but by blood and iron—the English Revolution of 1640; the French Revolutions of 1789, 1848 and 1871; the German, Italian and Hungarian Revolutions of 1848; the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, to cite only a few of the great liberation movements of modern times. Was there ever a revolution in the history of the world which was not ushered in by force? Gandhism could learn something by a study of the past. But no, it declares, "India is a special creation of Providence; she has a spiritual heritage to transmit to the world; she has evolved a spiritual civilization like to none ever witnessed before in the evolution of the human race, and India can do that which no race, no nation in bondage has heretofore been able to accomplish. She can melt the stony heart of her conqueror and win freedom by non-violence."

The subject of India's "spiritual civilization" is too long to enter into here. Suffice it to say that while India's starving millions are rioting, striking, looting and killing,—in a word, behaving exactly like every other normal people under the stress of hunger, overwork and privation,—the burden of proof as to India's spiritual heritage rests upon the Indians themselves. A few ascetics practicing Ahimsa, an abnormally large number of monks and begging friars infested Europe in the Middle Ages as well as India today, but Europe nevertheless, despite the Christian Church and the Holy Roman Empire, underwent her bloody baptism of countless wars and revolutions before emerging into the nations of modern times. We venture to suggest that India's spirituality is merely the remnant of mediævalism clinging to the new organism about to be ushered into being

as Indian Nationhood. And in this connection we can but quote the profound saying of Marx that „Force is the midwife of Revolution.”

So much for the philosophy,—now for the programme and tactics of Gandhism. The programme can be dismissed in one short word,—“Swaraj,” with the accompanying addenda, “righting the Punjab wrongs” and “restoring the Khilafat.” What Swaraj is, what kind of Government it implies, what definite benefits it will confer upon the various classes of the Indian people, remains a vague and undefined uncertainty. We know what Swaraj is *not*, only since the Ahmedabad Congress of December, 1921, full two years after the movement was under way. Swaraj is not “outside the British Empire,” as the rejection of Hazrat Mohani’s resolution definitely shows. Swaraj therefore, is some form of Dominion Home Rule, as Mr. Gandhi himself reluctantly defined it, based upon the “four-anna franchise,” that is, the right to vote being limited to those who had attained to membership in the Congress Party by paying the regular dues. The Moderates themselves are aiming at Home Rule. Wherein then, lies the difference between them and Gandhism?

The difference, and there is a real even though imperfectly defined one, lies in orientation and tactics. The Moderates look to the attainment of Swaraj through “constitutional” means; their hope is in voluntary concessions from the British Government. The Extremists base their Swaraj upon the dynamic action of the Indian people, which will force concessions from the foreign ruler by “legitimate and peaceful” means. These means, under the inspiration and leadership of Mr. Gandhi, took the form of Non-cooperation with the present government; Boycott of schools, law-courts, liquor and foreign cloth; the manufacture and use of Khaddar or homespun, by the Charka (spinning-wheel); and Civil Disobedience, chiefly in the form of Non-payment of taxes,—all to be practiced with absolute Non-violence.

Since the tactics of the Non-cooperators are based upon and depend for ultimate success upon the active cooperation of the vast majority of the nation, the Indian workers and peasants, at every step of the way, it is but logical to assume that this indispensable support of the masses would be won by adopting a programme suitable to their

immediate needs and desires. The Indian peasantry, who awoke from their age-long resignation during and after the war to demand improvement in their earthly lot by remission of taxes, lowering of rents and access to land, began a spectacular career of looting and burning, rioting and killing in various parts of the country, which presaged a peasant revolt of serious dimensions, and which gave the Government grave concern. Similarly, the Indian proletariat, that comparatively new creation of Indian industrialism, who had been herded into the great manufacturing centres and mercilessly exploited, began to rebel and to enforce their demands for fewer hours, higher wages and better living conditions by means of strikes which spread with lightning rapidity and threatened to paralyse the industrial life of the country. The awakening of both peasants and proletariat was independent of the nationalist movement for Swaraj; one was economic, the other political. But the nationalist movement, which needed the support of the masses, immediately stepped into the leadership of this economic revolt; it sought to guide and control the activities of the people to enforce its own demands; it called Hartals and suspended them at pleasure; announced Boycott of foreign cloth and liquor-shops, the universal use of the Charka, and commanded the masses to obey. In return for this usurpation of a popular upheaval for economic betterment, what did the Congress give the masses? Did it hold out the promise of a Swaraj with better wages, lower taxes, enough to eat and to wear and a decent place to live in for the millions of Indian workers on the land and in the factories? Did it hold up the banner of a material Swaraj within the comprehension and necessities of the rebellious Indian people?

No, on the contrary, it held before the eyes of the famished workers a fabulous "spiritual" Swaraj, to be attained not by the brief, energetic and wholesome birth-pangs of revolution, but by the old, familiar method of suffering, sacrifice, non-resistance, repentance and prayer. The Indian masses, who had come to the end of their capacity to suffer and endure, must "purify" themselves and become perfectly non-violent in thought, word and deed before the Swaraj of the Rishis, the Swaraj of a hand-spinning, hand-weaving, beast-of-burden-India would descend upon them like a boon from Heaven. Swaraj would

come, next week, next month, next year, when the hungry, naked Indian toilers had transcendentalized themselves. Mahatma Gandhi said so; Mahatma Gandhi was a great saint, a great sage, an incarnation of God Himself, whom the white rulers could not harm, did not dare to touch; therefore simple, ignorant men must trust, believe and blindly obey. The mass-movement of riotous peasants, of striking city-workers, fell into line with the nationalist movement, danced to the tune of its leaders, obeyed, insofar as lay within its power, the gentle behests of the Mahatma, and waited three years for a Swaraj that like a will-o'-the-wisp, fled farther and farther away. Tremendous, nation-wide Hartals paralysed for a day, two days, the national life and displayed the majestic strength of the Indian masses; burning of foreign cloth, boycott of cloth and liquor, non-payment of taxes, drained the national exchequer. The British Government felt, for the first time of its rule in India, a challenge to its authority. Occasional bloody conflicts between the armed legionaries of the State and the rebellious Indian masses, testified to the grimness of the struggle. Twenty-five thousand people were led off to jail unresisting. The Indian masses were fighting under discipline for Swaraj.

But Swaraj never came. One by one, then in dozens and hundreds, the national leaders went to jail. Every attempt at self-defence, at aggressive action by the masses, met with sharp reproof from Mr. Gandhi—with worse than reproof, with public lamentations, fasting and prayer. The golden promise of Swaraj was growing dimmer; the daily misery of the people grew ever worse; governmental repression, machine-guns and jails killed all the spontaneity and enthusiasm of the early struggle. Every chance for direct action was curbed by the mandate of the Mahatma; after Bardoli, the very non-payment of taxes that had swept the peasants with a thrill of hope, as well as all forms of aggressive mass-action, were called off. The bewildered people were told to spin and pray for Swaraj. Then came the final blow. The Mahatma, divine Incarnation, All-wise, All-powerful, was arrested by the white infidels, tried and sentenced to six years in jail. The heavens did not fall, neither did the earth yawn open at this blasphemy. The doors of the jail remained locked upon the Saviour of the Indian people, who remained peaceful, mute and unresisting, as he had bidden them, in expectation that a miracle would justify their

obedience. There came no miracle to reward their faith. The British Raj remained securely enthroned. Swaraj was locked in the cell of the Mahatma. The waiting masses were told from behind the bars to "spin and pray."

Mr. Gandhi, as political leader, cannot escape responsibility for the lamentable state of chaos that beset the Indian movement. Gandhism must be held accountable for its mistakes, as well as honoured for its achievements. The constructive contributions of Gandhism to the nationalist movement as a whole are, 1. the use of mass-action for the enforcement of political demands; 2. the building up of a nation-wide organization such as the Congress Party; 3. the liberation of the national forces from governmental repression by the slogan of Non-violence; 4. the adoption of Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience, especially Non-payment of taxes, as tactics in the struggle against foreign rule. Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience, if properly wielded, are powerful weapons in the hands of a disarmed people against machine-guns and bombing planes. But Mr. Gandhi always shrunk from putting his brilliantly-conceived tactics to proper use. The Boycott was not an original contribution of Gandhism; it had been used in the Partition of Bengal crisis in 1906 and Gandhism spoiled the possibility of its successful application by stressing homespun Khaddar at the expense of mill-made Swadeshi, instead of encouraging Indian industrialism by every means.

The shortcomings and failures of Gandhism may be summarized succinctly. The most glaring defect was lack of an economic programme to win the interest and allegiance of the masses, and to make Swaraj intelligible to them. Next, and closely related to this omission, was the obstinate and futile desire to unite *all* the Indian people, landlords and peasants, capitalists and proletariat, Moderates and Extremists, in a common struggle for an undefined goal. Oil and water cannot remain mixed; the lion and the lamb do not lie side by side; each man follows his own material interest, even in the fight for a spiritual Swaraj. At the slightest danger to their property and profits, the Zemindars and mill-owners rallied to the side of the Government of "law and order." If it was desired to change the government for the benefit of the majority of the people, it was necessary to sacrifice the interests of the handful of landlords and capitalists to the

needs of the hungry stomachs and naked bodies of the Indian workers and peasants. This the Congress never had the courage to do, and we cannot see that it had even the desire. Resolutions 6 and 7 of the Bardoli Conference, ordering the ryots to pay rent to the Zemindars, prove it. The nationalism of the Moderate does not extend beyond his pocket-book; the nationalism of the masses lies in their stomachs. In seeking to combine both, Mr. Gandhi met his own defeat.

The third great defect of Gandhism was the intrusion of metaphysics into the realm of politics; the confusing of spiritual with temporal aims; the obstruction of the dynamic play of mass-action by religious scruples and moral cowardice; the insistence upon soul-purification as a means to win the political franchise. Revolution is not a religion, neither is Swaraj a "mental state." To undermine or overthrow British Imperialism is a material problem, and to build up a national state in which the condition of the people will be improved, is a question of economics, not metaphysics. The freedom of India depends upon the ability of her sons and daughters to face these problems squarely and to find their solution.

The fourth great defect of Gandhism is its reactionary economics. To run from the Machine-age back to the Stone-age may appeal to romantic poets and religious visionaries, but the mighty process of natural evolution cannot be checked by sentimental imagination. Mankind has progressed by painful stages from being the slave of Nature to be the slave of the Machine, which his own intelligence has invented to conquer natural forces. We must go forward with this intelligence that has carried us so far, to the day when Mankind will use the Machine and Nature for his own welfare and enjoyment, instead of, as now, for the selfish profit of the few and the enslavement of man by man. To go "back to the Vedas," back to the Charka, is to put away the progress of two thousand years and all the bright hopes of a future age when all men will be free to cultivate their spiritual side, because they have conquered, not run away from, the tyranny of material laws. Mr. Gandhi and his disciples may set all India spinning, but they cannot prevent the industrialization of the country, which has already begun. "Not back, but forward," should be their cry.

The fifth grave error of Gandhism was its vacillations

and inconsistencies, its lack of steady driving-power towards a given goal. To declare Non-cooperation with a satanic government, and then to seek compromise with its Viceroy; to pronounce modern civilization to be rotten to the core and "Parliaments the emblems of Slavery," and at the same time to define Swaraj as "Home Rule within the Empire"; to promise Swaraj on a given date and then postpone it; to declare Mass Civil Disobedience and then renounce it,—these are a few of the innumerable and bewildering contradictions of Gandhism, which lost for it the confidence of the masses and the respect of all thinking people. Not of such stuff are leaders made who can bring a people to victory; cool judgment and unflinching purpose must radiate confidence to the hundreds of thousands who follow. Gandhism is not revolutionism, but a weak and watery reformism, which shrinks at every turn from the realities of the struggle for freedom.

In criticizing thus frankly the political leadership of the Non-cooperation Movement, its concrete achievements are not overlooked. Mr. Gandhi and his followers led the Indian people out of inactivity and despondence onto the path of agitation and organization which embraced the entire nation. The contradictions and confusion of the leaders were but a reflection of the chaotic state of the movement itself, just emerging into consciousness. Mr. Gandhi found a way for the people out of the barbed-wire entanglements of government vigilance; by his slogans of Non-violent Non-cooperation, Boycott and Civil Disobedience, he was able to draw the wide masses into the folds of the Congress Party and to make the Indian movement for the first time truly nation-wide. But the movement had outgrown its leader. The masses sought to forge ahead in the struggle, and their leaders vainly tried to hold them back. The arrest of Mr. Gandhi meant the disintegration of Gandhism, which was on its last legs, and the development of new ideas, new tendencies, new leaders. Mr. Gandhi and his metaphysical politics had become an unconscious agent of reaction; the Government could do the Indian movement no greater service than by removing him from its active guidance and making of him a martyr, to spur the people on to greater activity.

*

In closing what has been a dispassionate analysis of

Mr. Gandhi's influence upon the Indian movement, a heart-felt tribute must be paid to Gandhi the Patriot. We believe that Mr. Gandhi's political career is inspired by a deep love for his suffering countrymen, a love none the less noble for having made great tactical mistakes. His every utterance breathes a deep desire to free the Motherland from thrall-dom, and to help her children find a happier life. Few scenes are destined to greater immortality in history than the court-room in which Mr. Gandhi read out his scathing indictment of British rule in India, and pleading guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection to the Government, asked the judge to give him the maximum sentence:

From a staunch localist and cooperator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-cooperator.—To preach disaffection towards the existing system of government has become almost a passion with me.—If I were set free, I would still do the same. I would be failing in my duty if I did not do so.—I had either to submit to a system which has done irreparable harm to my country, or to incur the mad fury of my people, bursting forth when they heard the truth from my lips.—I do not ask for mercy. I am here to invite and to submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a crime, but which is the first duty of every citizen.—Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a government which, in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system.—It is the physical and brutal ill-treatment of humanity which has made many of my co-workers and myself impatient of life itself.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi will live in the annals of his country as one of its greatest saints and patriots, long after his political failures are forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

MANIFESTO TO THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Fellow Countrymen,

Since its inauguration by the Special Session of the Congress in Calcutta, the Non-cooperation Movement has passed through various stages marked by the resolutions adopted at Nagpur, Bezwada, Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi. An analysis of its course shows that the movement has not been kept steady and straight on the line marked out by the revolutionary principles formulated in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur. The tactics of militant Non-cooperation,—that brilliantly conceived weapon available for the Indian people under the present circumstances,—has not been wielded with the required courage and determination. Nagpur and Bezwada marked the period of a march forward; but the revolutionary upheavals in the last months of 1921 forced the Congress to show its true colour, and the Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi resolutions were the signs of decline, degeneration and betrayal. They were not a strategic retreat as we are asked to believe, because the movement had acquired the utmost strength and was in the highest of spirits in the months preceding the débacle at Ahmedabad. Consequently there was no need of any retreat. If a retreat it was, it was not one before the onslaught of the Government, but a retreat caused by terror struck in our leadership by the rising tide of mass-energy. This being the case, Ahmedabad, and particularly the suspension of Civil Disobedience ordered from Bardoli, was a veritable betrayal of the revolutionary rank and file by the non-revolutionary and reactionary leadership.

A study of the movement during the last two years, beginning with the Special Session in Calcutta, brings into evidence two facts, viz. 1. that those who were instrumental in formulating the idea of Non-cooperation, did not under-

stand the full significance of what they were advocating, and 2. that ignorance of the socio-economic forces which made the conception of such a revolutionary idea possible, made the leaders count more upon artificially fomented sentimental enthusiasm than upon the dynamic revolutionary outburst of mass-energy. Revolution must develop along revolutionary channels, and the movement whose leadership you desire to assume, is essentially revolutionary. To dissipate and denounce mass-action for the sake of the interests of the respectable middle-class is the worst crime that can be committed against the freedom of the Indian people. It is tantamount to welcoming the permanence of British rule, or to use the more respectable term, "equal partnership in the Commonwealth," rather than brook a radical change in the socio-economic condition to which the Indian masses have been subordinated for centuries, not only by the British conquerors, but also before they came. Can you say, honourable Gentlemen, that the actions of the Congress during the last half a year do not bring upon its head this serious charge of having betrayed the nation for the interests of a small class of landlords and capitalists? Today you are reaping the fruit of this act of yours and of your colleagues.

The Congress not only failed to appreciate the true character of the movement, but was terrified as soon as its revolutionary aspects began to unfold spontaneously, despite all efforts of the Government to suppress them, together with the desire of our own leaders to dissipate and thwart them. The inevitable result has been the present situation, which is marked by confusion, impotency, indecision and despondency. In order to understand clearly how the Congress neglected and then betrayed the revolutionary forces, and thus disgracefully failed to discharge its mighty and honourable task, it is necessary to review the past briefly, and to make this retrospective analysis dispassionately, objectively.

First of all, it is necessary to trace the genesis of the Non-cooperation Movement, to be able to appreciate the significance of the social forces whose development created a situation suitable for the Non-cooperation Movement. This understanding will dissipate the subjective philosophy dominating our movement and at the same time will reveal the cross-currents of the economic interests, caught in which

the Congress is drifting further and further from the stream of revolutionary sentiment. In short, it will help us go beyond the realm of frothy sentimentalism and transcendental politics, in order to discover a solid material foundation of the movement. In this way we will discover that all the pacifism and metaphysical ideas of the Congress were consciously or unconsciously meant to prevent a revolutionary upheaval, which could not be trusted to subside after having helped the native propertied and intellectual classes come to power,—a revolutionary upheaval which would not stop short eventually of a radical readjustment in the socio-economic relations of the people.

The idea of "making the government impossible" by withdrawing all popular support could not have been conceived much earlier than it was done. Mahatma Gandhi with his imagination and personality, as well as those enthusiastic and idealistic people who are following him existed before 1919; causes of discontent against the British rule were also present; agitation for national autonomy or freedom had been going on for a quarter of a century. But a movement of such dimensions, of such a revolutionary character was not inaugurated before. There must have been, then, something lacking; otherwise it was not necessary to wait till 1919 to formulate and adopt the tactics of militant Passive Resistance. What was lacking, evidently, was the development of some dynamic force without which such a militant measure could not be made effective. So, contrary to your belief, it was not the Non-cooperation slogan that brought about a gigantic popular awakening, but it was the popular awakening that made possible the idea to organize a sweeping onslaught against the Government. The spontaneous mass-upheaval, as expressed through food riots, strikes, agrarian disturbances etc., which was felt throughout the length and breadth of the country since 1916, spoke for the awakening of revolutionary mass-energy. It demonstrated that the hitherto passive and inarticulate masses had begun to develop a fighting mood. Or in other words, the forces which could make a general offensive against the Government possible, had come into existence. The passing of various legislations, gagging the press, prohibiting public meetings, restraining the right of assemblage, the atrocious Conspiracy Act, Explosive Substanc Act, the Defence of India Act, by which

thousands and thousands were locked up in jail without even a pretence of trial,—all these repressive measures, to mention but a few, did not provoke such an outburst of protest as followed the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills. In fact, the Rowlatt Bills were formulated only to continue the state of affairs obtaining under the Defence of India Act. But the latter, enforced with an iron hand in the years immediately preceding, did not provoke any serious popular opposition. This goes to show that a new force had come into being around 1919. It was the awakening of mass-energy, brought about by economic exploitation intensified during and immediately after the war. This mass-awakening is the objective factor which contributed to the inauguration of Passive Resistance and subsequently, of the Non-cooperation Movement.

Such was the genesis of the Non-cooperation Movement; but the resolution adopted in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur,—not to mention the shameful denunciation by the Congress of the revolutionary outbreaks in Bombay, Gorukhpur, Chauri Chaura etc. and the Bardoli Resolution,—betrays on the part of our leaders a deplorable ignorance of the social forces which had brought about the movement they pretend to guide. This ignorance, which in many instances was wilful, started the movement on a wrong track. Instead of conforming it to the understanding and immediate necessities of the rebellious masses, it was based upon metaphysical abstractions and the shifting sands of lower middle-class sentimentality. Instead of recognizing the fact that the movement was the result of a spontaneous social upheaval and, therefore, should be directed in consonance with the dictates of imperious economic laws, the leaders pretended to have created the situation and imagined personalities to be greater than objective forces. Essentially and predominantly a revolt of the exploited and expropriated majority, the movement was utilized by the leaders to further the interests of the propertied and intellectual classes. One can pronounce even a stronger indictment: the leaders sought to utilize a revolutionary social upheaval for strengthening the hand of reaction. While the revolutionary situation in the post-war years was the result of a mass-awakening, and the Non-cooperation Movement was made possible by the development of this revolutionary situation, the Congress failed to appreciate

it, although it wanted to and did exploit the situation for the purposes of upper- and middle-class politics. The only social element,—the working-class including the pauperized peasantry,—which is in a position to enforce the tactics of Non-cooperation, was but casually mentioned in a minor clause of the Resolution. Non-payment of taxes was also mentioned, but later development proved that the Congress did not consider the matter seriously. It is well-known how the whole Non-cooperation Movement has been wrecked upon this rock.

Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated by actual experience that neither the lawyers, nor the students, nor the petty employees, but only the workers and peasants can make Non-cooperation effective. The toiling masses are the body and soul of the movement. The boycott of the courts by a few lawyers did not and could not paralyse the Government. Law-courts are an indispensable apparatus of the State; they are necessary to maintain property right. So long as society remains divided into antagonistic classes, law-courts cannot be abolished. Courts under a national government controlled by the native upper- and middle-class will have the same function, viz. to coerce and suppress the expropriated. Several thousand non-cooperating students could not harm in any way the educational system which creates "slave mentality." Titled persons have not given up their titles, nor have the high officials resigned. It is not possible, not because these people's patriotism is any less sincere, but because the very sentiment of patriotism is based on some material interest or other. The class to which these people belong believes that the welfare of the Motherland lies not in their resignation, but in the complete Indianization of the Public Services. So this particular clause of the Resolution proposed to realize something contrary to the interests of the people on whom its realization depends. For all the noisiness of lower middle-class extremism, the government offices are as full as ever and the state machinery is not affected in any way. Soldiers have not abandoned their services because they were told it was "sinful" to enlist in the British army. The Charka has not crippled the Lancashire textile industry; the Khaddar Movement is declining on account of the economic fallacy involved in it. The workers and peasants revolted, not to purify their souls, but to have something more to eat. To

use Khaddar at the injunction of the Congress is contrary to this natural desire of theirs, because Khaddar being more expensive leaves them less for food. Merchants and manufacturers have not shown any inclination to make less profit for the sake of the nation. They became patriots and stopped importing foreign cloth when it was not profitable, owing to the unfavourable exchange of the rupee; but lately the importation is increasing rapidly in spite of picketing and all. Patriotic Indian merchants are having Khaddar manufactured in England and Japan and will surreptitiously pass them on as the "sacred" commodity and make 50 per cent more profit by this act of patriotism. Such are the accomplishments of the Non-cooperation Movement based on the spirit of self-sacrifice and patriotism of the middle-class.

While the Congress was frittering away its energy on the above mentioned activities, whose inevitable collapse was a foregone conclusion to all thinking people, the movement remained based upon mass-action, which was misled and dissipated by the leaders of the Congress. When we consider the part played by the working-class, including the peasantry, in strikes, demonstrations, riots and other mass outbreaks, it becomes clear that the life-force of the movement is contained in the minor clause referring half-heartedly to the labouring-class. It can be said that whatever has been accomplished by the Non-cooperation Movement has been due to the rebellion of the toiling masses. And when every act of the Congress leaders shows their indifference, terror and in many cases hostility to this driving force behind the movement, is it any wonder that you, divorced from the support of the masses, are packing up for the journey to the camp of the Moderates? There are many among you who even cannot do this, because the very Moderates are too progressive for them; therefore they want to vegetate and drag a revolutionary movement into the rut of a peurile "Constructive Programme" based upon reactionary pacifism.

The Congress has failed to enforce the Non-cooperation programme. You must confess it, if you sincerely want to lead the movement ahead. The cause of this failure was that the revolutionary forces capable of carrying through a National Strike were not mobilized and were not given place in the first rank, a place they deserve, because none else

can hold the post but a revolutionary vanguard, which is the rôle of the working-class in the movement of the national liberation of the Indian people. Experience during the last half-year proves, that while in the first stages of the movement it was lack of understanding which prevented the Congress from including the demands of the working-class in its programme, the time came when the indifference and even hostility to the working-class was provoked by the consciousness of class-interests inside the Congress ranks. In proportion as the revolutionary significance of the mass-movement became manifest, the reactionary nature of the leadership could no longer be kept hidden. It was on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress, at the very moment when the revolutionary spirit of the toiling masses was raging so high that the political movement could be pushed ahead by means of militant mass-strikes, that the cross-currents in the nationalist movement were to be noticed very clearly. It became evident that there was no community of interest between the leadership representing the propertied and intellectual middle-class, and the following embodying the rebellious masses of the exploited. The latter's revolutionary actions were repudiated and condemned by the former, because the material interests driving both to action happened to be conflicting. The process of inevitable divorce of the one from the other, therefore, began. This process has gone on widening the cleavage every day, while the Congress has not lifted a finger to stay it. Attempts were made to maintain the superficial unity of all classes by emotional appeals, all of which have proved unsuccessful. The task you are confronted with today is to find a way to bridge over this cleavage, in order to prevent the struggle for national liberation being sacrificed on the altar of the interests of a small section of the society. The tendency of the Congress since the fateful days at Bardoli, and as expressed in the recent Provincial Conferences, is dominated by this narrow class-interest, which cannot be embellished by all the talk about idealism and spiritual culture.

The solution of the problem that confronts you, your ability to tide over the present crisis, depend upon a realistic orientation of the situation. In the words of the Nagpur Sub-committee, "Swaraj is a material thing and has to be attained by material means." All the classes taking part in the national movement are doing so, actuated not by any

spiritual call or abstract ideal. They are driven by their respective material interests, which in relation to one another are conflicting. The merchants and manufacturers want wider scope for the investment of their capital. National freedom to them means the freedom to exploit the labour power and natural resources of the country. Their cry is Industrial Development, Fiscal Autonomy. The intellectuals demand political rights, since these will put them on the road to power and progress. They militate with the slogan of Provincial Autonomy and Complete Indianization of the Public Services. The semi-intellectual lower middle-class struggles to save itself from dire starvation and steady degeneration. It does not find any hope in the programme of the upper-class political parties; therefore it advocates a more radical change in the present system. But its radicalism stops short of revolution and we find it talking of a vague Swaraj. The toiling masses,—the workers and peasants,—stand in need of an all-round improvement of their economic as well as social condition. This need cannot be satisfied by any concession, nor any reform, since it is the outcome of the present property relations, which will subsist even under a national government. As the lot of the workers and peasants can only be changed by a radical transformation of society, so they are the only relentless and uncompromising revolutionary force. They may be still ignorant of their interests, they may not as yet be conscious of their wants, but they have begun to feel the impulse, as expressed by the wave of strikes and agrarian disturbances.

All these material causes are the motive force of the movement. In proportion as these causes accumulate, collectively or severally, the movement becomes strong. In determining the tactics suitable for the fight, it is necessary to take these fundamental material factors into consideration. The Congress Programme appears to advocate the interests of all classes except the workers and peasants—the most revolutionary element, the only element capable of wielding the weapon of Non-cooperation. It must be said that until recently, the Congress Party did not have any definite programme, except the cry for some sort of Swaraj. No official political programme has yet been formulated, but many authoritative leaders have on various occasions explained what they mean by Swaraj. It is nothing more than the Moderates aspire for; only the latter say, "don't make

so much noise, don't bother our imperial peers; let us proceed slowly." The goal of the Liberal League is Dominion Status, and that of the Congress Party is complete Self-Government within the British Commonwealth. The former proposes to reach the goal by progressive constitutional means, whereas the latter demands a "change of heart" on the part of the British. Well, divested of the phraseological trimmings, there is no difference between the political programme of the two parties. Both stand for the interests of the upper- and middle-classes. But they do differ in the methods by which the objective is to be attained. The tactics of the Congress Party is more militant; but the militancy is rather of words than of deeds. Here lies the secret of all the indecision, hesitancy and confusion that marks the action of the Congress.

In spite of the fact that British domination hinders the progress of all classes, it is the working masses which have proved and are bound to be the most revolutionary. The experience of the last several years has demonstrated this fact. The upper- and middle-class can gain something by compromising with the imperial overlord. Their material interests are not altogether incompatible with one another. The capitalist imperialism of Britain is based on the exploitation of the toiling masses, the upper- and middle-classes being put to some handicap incidentally. The prosperity of the native upper- and middle-classes will not be built so much at the expense of the imperialist monopoly as by the extended right to exploit the masses. Consequently, it is not impossible for the foreign and native exploiting classes to come to an agreement as to the proportionate share in the exploitation of the labour power and natural resources of the country. This being the case, it is clear why a deep-seated revolutionary spirit can be found only in one social class, viz. the exploited and expropriated masses, including the pauperized, semi-intellectual, lower middle-class. This is the foundation of the revolutionary nationalist movement, whose leadership the Congress ought to assume, should it desire to be anything else than the Liberal League, and not to be annexed to it in course of time.

The time has arrived when it is essential for the Congress to clarify its social affiliation and political orientation. It needs a thorough weeding of its ranks in order that these can be consolidated as the rallying ground of only those inspired

by a sincere revolutionary will. In short the Congress stands in need of a clearly defined Political Programme, first of all. Then there must be formulated a New Programme of Action in accordance with the character of the social forces available for carrying this programme through. Lastly, all impossible or impractical methods should be discarded.

The cardinal principle of our Political Programme is a National Democratic Government free from any foreign protection or supervision.

In the Action Programme are to be formulated the methods by which all the revolutionary forces will be mobilized in the struggle for realizing the establishment of an Indian Republic. This mobilization cannot be effected unless the immediate needs of the most revolutionary element, that is the working-class, are taken into consideration. As demonstrated above, the complete National Independence of India can be realized only by the efforts of the workers and peasants. Therefore, to develop their revolutionary consciousness is the burden of our Programme of Action.

The ignorant workers and peasants do not understand political theories any more than they care for spiritual abstractions. They want to satisfy their hunger, to have the intensity and brutality of exploitation modified. Their economic condition has become unbearable, so they are driven to revolt. Therefore the best means of leading them on in the revolutionary path is to help them in the struggle for their immediate needs; to help them organize; to make them understand their class-interests; to encourage them in every revolutionary way, and to warn them against the conspiracy of the "labour leaders" who are the henchmen of the employing-class or the agents of the Government. The enemy knows where lies the great danger; he is busy in the field in order to deflect the working-class from the political movement for national liberation; because divorced from this objective revolutionary force, the nationalist movement will be impotent and it will be easy to liquidate it for the time being by throwing a few bones of concession to the capitalists and the office-hunting intellectuals. The working-class has been abused, exploited, denounced and betrayed by the Congress, which never paid any attention to the removal of its immediate grievances. Now, at this psychological moment, have stepped in the Government as well as

the most advanced section of the employers and landlords. Reformist labour legislations are being proposed and passed, plans are made for improving the living condition of the city workers, Trade Unions are being organized under the leadership of officially inspired men; peasant co-operatives are being formed under the patronage of the district officers; village reform associations are being started with the help of benevolent Zemindars. These are ominous signs and should be duly noticed. All these are done with the purpose of checking the rising tide of mass-revolt. A little improvement in their present miserable condition will put the working-class to sleep, will pacify the acuteness of their fury, and increase their faith in reformism and the benevolence of the Government and the employer. Thus the forces of revolution will be temporarily controlled, and the movement for national liberation consequently crushed.

Our immediate task is to prevent this eventuality; to frustrate this sinister design of the Government, leagued with the employing and landowning class. We must assume the leadership of the working-class, and we will not be able to drive the kept labour leaders out of the field unless we are actuated by revolutionary ideals,—unless we stand for the interests of the toiling masses. The Congress should at once launch a programme advocating the fight for higher wages for the workers, an eight-hour day, better housing, recognition of Unions, right of strike, equal pay for equal work, abolition of landlordism, reduction of rents and taxes, strong measures for the abolition of usury and such other measures as will correspond to the immediate necessities of the masses. Vigorous agitation should be carried on among the workers and peasants to show that their condition cannot be changed by palliatives, to expose the sinister motive of the reformist labour leader, liberal employer and benevolent landlord. These demands should be enforced by mass-action,—strikes, demonstrations, peasant revolts. Leaving the cloth-shop and liquor-stall alone, every Congress volunteer should take active part in these mass-demonstrations.

This is the only means of creating a situation fit for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience. Not by denouncing them, betraying them, but by making their cause its own, will the Congress assume the leadership of the masses. By realizing this organic relation with the only revolutionary

MANIFESTO TO THE CONGRESS COMMITTEE 71

social class, the Congress will be on the right path and will march from one victory to another till the ultimate goal is attained.

Hoist the banner of Swaraj and rally the people under it with the slogan of Living Wages to the Worker and Land to the Toiler.

July 15th, 1922.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LULL

Ever since the Bardoli Resolutions, passed as the result of an outbreak of mob-violence on the part of some non-cooperating peasants of the United Provinces, the slogans of *Mass Civil Disobedience* and *Non-payment of Rent and Taxes*, were dropped from the Congress Programme, and instead, the so-called Constructive Programme was put forth, whose main clauses were the spinning, weaving and wearing of *Khaddar* by the Indian people, the organization of national schools, the removal of untouchability of the lower castes, and of the drink evil. This purely reformist and non-revolutionary programme, urged upon the Congress Committee by Mr. Gandhi just before his arrest, constituted a decided retreat in the face of Government repression and the rising tide of mass-energy, expressed in the form of bloody riots, strikes and peasant risings throughout the country. The Congress leaders were no less terrified than the Government by the threat to life and property which the growing revolutionary consciousness of the peasants and workers implied. Two clauses of the Bardoli Resolution urged the necessity of preserving law and order and of safeguarding the right of private property:

Clause 6. The Working Committee advises the Congress workers and organizations to inform the ryots that withholding of rent payment to the Zemindars is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.

Clause 7. The Working Committee assures the Zemindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even where the ryots have grievances the Committee advises that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration.

This "strategic retreat" and complete disavowal of mass-action by the nationalist leaders completed the break between the popular unrest based on economic causes, and the purely political agitation of the Congress. The arrest and conviction of Mr. Gandhi severed the last thread which held

the masses and the nationalists together. In the ensuing months, this complete divorce of mass-energy from the Congress became more and more noticeable, while at the same time, the Congress itself was thrown into confusion by the growth and development of internal factions, of right and left tendencies, which only the dominant personality of Mr. Gandhi had held in check for so long.

The incarceration of the latter gave free play to these tendencies, whose leaders were conducting guerilla warfare behind the closed doors of the Congress Committees. At first chaotic, the opposition at last resolved itself into several distinguishable elements. The right wing leaders, who represent the left wing of the cooperating Moderates, began preparing to rejoin the latter within the new Reform Councils, and to abandon the National Congress altogether, unless it revised its programme in keeping with their own ideas. There were two opposition tendencies. One, centred in Maharashtra, constituted a strong and compact group which agitated for repeal of the Boycott of Councils clause, and participation in the coming elections on the slogan of "Responsive Cooperation." This meant abandonment of the Non-cooperation idea of the Extremists and the consent to work hand in hand with the Government, to the extent that the latter concedes reforms, and the refusal to cooperate when the Government denies concessions. In principle, this opposition differs very little from the platform of the Moderates, who accepted the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme of 1919 with the idea of attaining Home Rule within the British Empire by gradual stages. Another element, composed of the younger and more revolutionary spirits in every province, cried for the repeal of the Bardoli Programme and a return to the aggressive tactics of Non-violent Non-cooperation, including Civil Disobedience, non-payment of rent and taxes, picketing of foreign cloth-shops, etc. This group also put forward the demand to organize Indian labour both in the factories and on the fields, to support the Congress Programme.

The Congress Centre represented the orthodox adherents of Mr. Gandhi. They stood for fulfillment of the Constructive Programme until the Indian people proved, by self-discipline, that they were fit to inaugurate further steps of the Non-cooperation campaign, in a strictly peaceful manner. Any revision of the Constructive Programme would be, they argued,

an act of treason to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, and of disloyalty to the Congress. The Centre is the party of stagnation which is being buffeted between right and left.

The increasing repudiation by former non-cooperating lawyers of their practice, the continued existence of government services and schools, and the undeniable importation of foreign cloth by Indian merchants as shown by the trade-returns, demonstrated more clearly than words the abject failure of the so-called "Constructive Programme" to achieve results, and would point to the dire necessity, to leaders less obstinate and more realistic, of adopting some change of tactics, which would at one and the same time, hold the majority of the Congress together, and bring back the masses within the folds of the National Party. But the Constructive Programme is still flourished over the heads of the Indian people as the Word of God, and threatens to remain, what it has been since its adoption, the rock upon which the *Non-cooperation Movement will split to its own destruction.*

Meantime, the powerful current of mass-energy which was halted and puzzled for a time by the right-about-face of Bardoli began gathering a momentum which will break down all obstruction when the tide rises highest. Both peasants and city-proletariat, after a temporary lull in their activities, commenced a new campaign of strikes, riots and incendiarism which necessitated the strictest government supervision to control. But there is a difference between these renewed activities and the former countrywide movement of the masses under the banner of Non-cooperation. Formerly, while the underlying motive-force was economic, the avowed goal was political, namely, the attainment of *Swaraj* or Self-Government, which Mr. Gandhi promised within one year. Later, the political motive was dropped, and the struggle became purely economic,—a struggle for the reduction of hours, the increase of wages, the right to organize on the part of labour, and the incorporation of workmen's benefits and social reform legislation in the immediate economic programme of the class-struggle.

With the peasants, the impelling motive-force is now as formerly, access to land free of rent and taxes, and release from the grip of the usurer. The accentuation of the class-conflict in Indian society, as distinguished from the nationalist campaign, was marked by prolonged strikes on the part

of the city-proletariat, and by sporadic revolts of the landless peasantry. Since the beginning of 1922, aside from innumerable lesser strikes, there were several conducted on a wide scale, such as the East India Railway strike, which lasted three months; the Calcutta Seamen's strike involving 35,000 men, and the Jute Mill Workers' strike. Among the peasantry, leaving aside the Moplah Rebellion, which required nine months for the Government to suppress, were the intermittent revolts among the Akali Sikhs of the Punjab for the possession of temple lands, usurped by the corrupt priestcraft and protected by the Government; the Aika or Unity movement among the peasants of the United Provinces and Central India for resistance to rent and tax-collectors; the revolt of the Bhils; and continuous unrest which called for the presence of special soldiery, among the peasants of Bengal and Madras.

The Government began meeting this widespread economic unrest in two ways,—by merciless repression where the movement seemed weak and likely to be crushed by armed strength, and by remedial legislation where the economic grievances were so manifest and deep-rooted as to drive the people on to resistance in the face of all opposition. The Factory Act of 1921 and the Oudh Rent Act are two examples of remedial legislation, the one applied to industrial workers, the other to agricultural. At the same time, bands of special police and soldiery patrolled the countryside, and a determined onslaught was made upon the right of city-labour to organize itself into unions. Kept labour-leaders, employed by the Government, did their best to steer the movement into safe channels of reformism.

Powerful political parties, representing the industrial magnates and the rich landlords, began crystallizing under the pressure of events, which are rapidly uprooting the old divisions of Indian society based upon religion and caste. Such political parties, formed on manifest class-lines, can but hasten the day of the formation of a political party of the workers and peasants of India, whose truly revolutionary spirit and urgent economic needs are driving them relentlessly onward towards class-consciousness. Despite their ignorance and helplessness born of centuries of exploitation, the strength of the nation lies in these millions of workers, who will gradually put forth new leaders to replace those who betrayed them in the past, and still seek to betray them.

CHAPTER VIII. ON THE EVE OF GAYA

The six months following the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and the assumption of a determined policy of repression on the part of the Government towards every phase of the Indian movement, was a period of confusion, rout and a gradual reassembling of forces whose economic and social demands began to be put forward for the first time in the shape of distinct political programmes. The National Congress, which arrogated to itself the right to speak for all the dissatisfied elements in the country, (with the exception of the Constitutional Moderates, who accepted the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme of 1919), was a heterogeneous, loosely-knit body which in reality stood for the interests of the petty bourgeoisie.

Of these interests, Mr. Gandhi was the transcendentalized, but none the less conscious spokesman, together with the other leaders thrown up from the movement in its heyday,—notably, the Ali Brothers, Lala Lajpat Rai, C. R. Das, Pundit Malaviya, Mr. Rajagopalacharia, Hakim Ajmal Khan and the rest. Not one of these men voiced the aspirations of the truly revolutionary elements of Indian society, the city-proletariat, the landless peasantry and the rapidly-growing class of pauperized intelligentsia, who had been working for the overthrow of British rule through a network of secret terroristic societies since the beginning of this century.

The spirit of revolt, which stringent economic conditions fostered by the war, augmented and caused to burst forth in violent manifestations on the part of the agricultural and industrial proletariat, was seized upon by the National Congress and exploited for its own political purposes. The personality of Mr. Gandhi greatly assisted in prolonging this artificial hold of the Congress over these rebellious social elements. It was not until repeated betrayals of the interests of the workers and peasants by the Congress

leaders, culminated in the Bardoli Resolutions of the Congress Working Committee, which denounced all revolutionary mass-action on the part of the people and clearly repudiated their most urgent economic demands, that the true social affiliation and class-aims of the National Congress became clear.

The arrest of Mr. Gandhi, shortly after the confirmation of the Bardoli Resolutions by the Congress Committee at Delhi, severed the last tie which held the great masses of the Indian people within the folds of the National Congress. The heavy hand of repression exercised by the Government at this juncture prevented the immediate realization of the actual situation. Twenty-five thousand people cast into jail, and the quartering of armed soldiery and police upon all those districts where the discontent of the masses was most acute, prevented the rapid readjustment to new conditions and the crystallization of new forces under different leadership.

This period of intense confusion and groping in the dark lasted throughout the summer months; the National Congress, devoid of adequate leadership, awaited the release of Mr. C. R. Das in August, while the striking city-workers and riotous peasantry were too bewildered by the Congress injunctions to refrain from all manifestations of discontent, and too oppressed by the watchful forces of the Government, to take up their economic struggle independently of Congress leading strings. This period of confusion and marking time was punctuated by the futile invocations of the Congress leaders to spin, weave and wear *Khaddar* as the Alpha and Omega of the struggle for Swaraj,—and by the solemn tour of the Khilafat and Congress Civil Disobedience Committees, which went in procession throughout the length and breadth of India, to investigate and report if the state of mind of the people in each province would warrant the declaration of Civil Disobedience and Non-payment of taxes. This tour was a hollow farce, the Committees having made up their mind beforehand that the people were unfit and that Mass Civil Disobedience would not be declared; but for obvious political reasons, they deferred publishing their findings, which were held strictly *in camera*, until the eve of the annual session of the National Congress at Gaya.

While the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee represented the quintessence of orthodoxy to

the Gandhi ideals and tactics, castigating the slightest deviation from the Bardoli Programme as treason to the lost and martyred leader, the Congress Committees of several provinces which had always chafed under the "dictatorship" of the central body, began to evolve new and contrary ideas as to the policy and tactics to be pursued. This opposition found a chance for expression in the various provincial conferences which were held immediately after the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and others, during the months of April, May and June. While, with the exception of Maharashtra, the resolutions finally passed in these provincial conferences endorsed the triple boycott of foreign cloth, government schools and law-courts, together with the founding of national schools, arbitration courts and the use of *Khaddar*, there was a noticeable spirit of opposition displayed by a minority in nearly all the discussions.

Maharashtra was the only province to break definitely with the Bardoli decisions and to put forward a new opposition programme, whose principal feature was the entrance of Non-cooperators in the Reform Councils, there to constitute themselves as an opposition to the Government by practising „Responsive Cooperation.“ It also pronounced the boycott of law-courts and schools to have failed; advocated the resumption of practice by lawyers and re-entry into government schools by non-cooperating students; and instead of the use of *Khaddar*, advocated *Swadheshi*, or mill-made cloth produced in the country. It also pronounced itself in favour of systematic propaganda abroad to put the case of India before the world, a measure resolutely opposed by Mr. Gandhi and his followers. Thus, the Maharashtra opposition, whose members felt so strongly on the points of difference enumerated above as to resign from the All-India Congress and Working Committees as well as from the provincial Congress Committee offices, constitutes a very definite political tendency at variance with the orthodox Congress creed. It is modern, rationalistic, aggressive, as opposed to the outworn, religious and reactionary ideology of the Congress leaders still in power, but its opposition tends more towards the right than towards the left,—its ultimate destination is reunion with the Constitutional Moderates. It is the opposition of the nationalist lawyers, merchants and manufacturers, not fully satisfied with the amount of reforms granted by the Government, but too practical and realistic to follow the

Congress leading-strings any longer through the morass of *Charka*, *Khaddar* and a boycott which never succeeded and is already a dead letter so far as observance is concerned.

The opposition in other provincial conferences was less clear and expressed, but along similar lines. Bengal pronounced for the Bardoli Programme, but the President, Mrs. C. R. Das, advocated entry into the councils and spoke at length on the necessity of organizing peasant and labour unions for strengthening the national cause. Dictatorship exercised by one man was repudiated in principle, and the right and duty of picketing was emphasized as a means to enforce the boycott. A cry for revision of the Congress Programme as laid down at Bardoli and Delhi was heard from many provinces. Berar advocated Civil Disobedience and the formation of voters', taxpayers', agriculturists' and labour unions, and the United Provinces pronounced in favour of participation in elections to Municipal and District Boards by Non-cooperators. The Punjab Conference confirmed the Bardoli Programme as a temporary measure, but called for Civil Disobedience and Non-payment of Taxes at the earliest possible moment. Gujerat, the homeland of Mr. Gandhi, upheld the Bardoli Programme in all its details. Southern India, especially Madras, terrorized by the Moplah Rebellion, emphasized the need for peaceful, constructive measures and the propagation of *Khaddar*. The Provincial Conference of the Central Provinces, held in Nagpur in April, stressed the necessity of practical measures to force the Government's hand, and advocated participation, through obstructionist tactics, in the Reform Councils, the establishment of technical schools for training efficient workers; the giving up of the boycott of law-courts as impractical; and the basing of the Congress programme and tactics on considerations of expediency and practicality rather than morality or spirituality. It declared: "The aims of the Congress are thoroughly worldly and for worldly happiness and have to be attained by worldly means which should be easily understandable and practicable." Civil Disobedience was advocated.

Thus, the opposition to the Congress Programme, though in the first months vague, confused and groping in the dark, reduced itself to a right and a left wing,—the right wing advocating realistic measures such as entry into the Reform Councils; the left wing urging resumption of militant tactics

based on Mass Civil Disobedience, conditional upon Non-violence, yet advocating the use of self-defence in the face of provocation. The Right Wing opposition signalized its earnestness by resuming practice in the law-courts, preaching the participation in elections through the columns of its press, and resigning from Congress Committees where the views of its members constituted a minority. Maharashtra is the seat of this opposition.

It was the Left Opposition working through the provincial Congress Committees and expressing its voice in the minority reports of some of the provincial conferences, that made itself felt in the June session of the All-India Congress and Working Committees held in Lucknow. The All-India Congress Committee, reinforced by the Central Khilafat Committee, sat *in camera* and discussed the measures to be taken to meet this growing spirit of opposition from right and left. To the Right it dealt short shrift,—entry into the councils, the removal of the Triple Boycott, were declared disloyal to the memory of Mr. Gandhi and those who had gone to jail to defend Non-violent Non-cooperation. The Maharashtra delegates did not attend this session.

To deal with the Left was more difficult, because its voice was more powerful. Demands came strongest from the Punjab, Bengal and the United Provinces, where government repression was the most severe, for the use of retaliatory measures of self-defence and the declaration of Mass Civil Disobedience. The Congress Committee discussed behind closed doors the justification of self-defence, and to postpone making a final decision, appointed the Civil Disobedience Committee whose members would tour the country for two and a half months and after a detailed investigation of the wishes and fitness of the inhabitants, issue its report on September 15th, for the Congress Committee to act upon. A long questionnaire was drawn up, containing minute questions as to the Congress Programme in the past and the desirability of altering it in the immediate future, and the Committee of seven members started on tour, receiving tremendous ovations at every stopping place. On September 15th, it announced its labours not yet completed, and promised a report of its findings in time for the Gaya Congress in December. Most of its sittings and interviews with prominent Non-cooperators in each province were held in

secret, and little publicity was given except by a few of those interviewed, who published their replies to questions.

The Committee consisted of orthodox Gandhites who would undoubtedly pronounce against the inauguration of Mass Civil Disobedience. It timed over the most critical period of repression and resentment, and trusted to the annual session of the Congress to enforce its findings over the heads of the right and left extremists.

Some kind of a split in the Congress ranks in December seemed inevitable. The right wing was heading towards reunion with the Moderates, aided by a slight reciprocal movement towards the left on the part of the latter, as a result of Lloyd George's speech in Parliament on the Civil Service, of which more later. The left wing, standing closer to the revolutionary nationalists behind the scene, who advocate the use of violence for the overthrow of foreign rule, saw the failure of the present tactics to achieve results and watched the growing alienation of the masses, whose willingness to resist the Government constituted the real strength of the Congress Movement, with alarm. The left-wing extremists have a limited political outlook and are full of petty-bourgeois ideas; they are frankly against the class struggle and hesitate to put forward a revolutionary programme to capture the allegiance of the masses. But they advocate the use of mass-action to win their own demands, and the organization of the Indian workers and peasants to make this mass-action more effective. If the orthodox Congress Centre sticks to its present programme and tactics, this left-wing extremist element will probably break away and a part of them will try for the organization of a new political party of the masses.

THE REVIVAL OF THE MODERATES

The Constitutional Moderates who participated in the elections to the new Reform Councils, represented the extreme right of the nationalist movement, which broke away from the Congress in 1919 when the latter declared for rejection of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the adoption of Non-violent Non-cooperation for the attainment of Swaraj. At first frowned down upon by the country which was overwhelmingly extremist, for their cooperation with the Government, they exercised little hold upon the public mind and were entirely lost sight of during the wave

of extremist enthusiasm had swept India between 1919—1922. But representing as they did the most class-conscious and politically minded section of the Indian bourgeoisie, the great landholders, big financial magnates and powerful industrialists, they pursued their course of cooperation with the Government to the extent that reforms were conceded, and soon became a factor to be reckoned with in the political field.

The first decisive acts of opposition to the Government on the part of the Moderates in the Reform Councils were the reduction of the annual budget by an all-round five per cent on the majority of items listed for taxation, in order to force reduction on military expenditure, and a refusal to accept the proposed enhancement of the cotton excise duties. This show of independence created an enormous sensation both in India and England, where Lancashire interests and Morning Post Imperialists united their voices in crying out against such a working of the Reforms. The huge budget deficit of £100,000,000 which the new scheme of taxation was aimed to relieve, stared the Government in the face and called, either for a reversal of the Legislative Assembly's action by the Viceroy's veto, or a drastic reduction in military expenditure, which consumes nearly half of the annual budget. In view of the excited condition of the country, then in the throes of the Non-cooperation campaign, the Government deemed it expedient to accept the action of the Assembly, and appointed a Committee on Retrenchment under Lord Inchcape, to investigate possible avenues of economy. It was the first triumph of the Moderates under the Reform Scheme, and they made much of their victory.

The next act of defiance of a really sensational character (we leave aside the non-official participation of certain moderate elements in the "Round Table Conference" called during the Non-cooperation campaign to find a way out of the existing deadlock between Government and people, and the half-hearted resolutions of censure on government repression and for the release of the political prisoners, voted down in the Reform Councils early 1922) was the spirited debate in the Legislative Assembly and Council of State on Lloyd George's famous speech in Parliament during the latter part of July, on the Indian Civil Service.

The gradual Indianization of the Civil Service, now manned in the higher posts almost exclusively by Englishmen, has been one of the oldest planks in the Moderate platform, and was incorporated as a part of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme. But the slightest attempt at the execution of this clause met with loud howls from the Die-Hards and a determined opposition from the European members of the Indian Civil Service, both active and retired. Bitterness of feeling on this score assumed a racial character, so much so that openly defiant speeches were exchanged between various prominent individuals and groups of the two communities in India, accompanied by dire predictions in the Anglo-Indian and British press as to the future of the Civil Service and British rule in India when control would pass out of the hands of the white race into the keeping of the Indians.

Matters were brought to a head by a circular letter from the Indian Government issued to the Governors of all the Indian provinces, on May 30th, 1922, (as the result of a promise made in the Legislative Assembly in February during the debate on the Indianization of the Services) asking the opinion of the local government on the necessity and speed with which increase of the number of Indians in the Civil Service should be carried out. The news of this circular letter added fuel to the flame of controversy, and Mr. Lloyd George felt it incumbent upon himself to allay the fears of the British members of the Indian Civil Service by a very rhetorical speech in their defence delivered in Parliament in July. His references to the new reforms as an "experiment," and to the I.C.S. as the "steel frame" of British rule in India which could never be eliminated, brought down upon his head the wrath of the entire body of Constitutional Moderates, and enabled the Non-cooperators to point the moral of official insincerity and dishonesty in its promise of self-government. So serious was the crisis, that the Viceroy received a representative deputation of Moderates on the day following the telegraphic reports of the Prime Minister's speech, and tried to explain away in soothing language the rash eloquence of Lloyd George. This explanation, repeated in the Viceregal address to the Legislative Councils on September 5th, did not prevent the moving of two resolutions of censure, one in the Assembly, the other in the Council of State, upon the Prime

Minister's speech in Parliament. The originally strongly worded resolutions were passed in a slightly modified form, over the heads of the government ministers, who in vain warned the members of the deleterious effect of such resolutions upon the minds of the members of the British Parliament. This storm in a tea-cup over, a still more decisive and significant act of the moderate members of the Legislative Assembly demonstrated their awakened sense of political power. This was the repeal of the Press Act and the voting down of the Viceroy's injunction to except the native states and ruling princes from the scope of this repeal. The Assembly negated the government measure for the protection of the ruling princes against attacks in the press by a vote of 45 to 41. Amid the prevailing excitement that followed this bold assumption of power, the Viceroy used his prerogative of certification and the measure was presented to the British Parliament for approval, and so became a law.

All these straws show which way the wind blows. The Constitutional Moderates, blossomed into full political consciousness, and encouraged by the chaotic débacle of the Non-cooperators, have arrogated to themselves the political leadership of the constitutional nationalists. Their minor triumphs in the new Councils have given them the taste of future power, and being composed of the most class-conscious and powerful of the native bourgeoisie, they will carry on the fight until their full programme, Home Rule or full Dominion Status within the British Empire, is attained.

At this juncture, when the Moderates, flushed with their first successes, inclined towards pressing for the early fulfillment of the Reform Scheme, and the right-wing Non-cooperators looked with yearning eyes towards entry into the Councils, a scheme for the reunion of Moderates and Non-cooperators within a common political party was launched under the auspices of Mrs. Annie Besant and a few of her followers of the Liberal League. A Manifesto was issued in the name of the "1921 Club," appealing for unity of all shades of opinion to carry on the fight within constitutional limits for the attainment of Home Rule. The response to this political manoeuvre was not great. But the split in the Congress camp makes the prospects of a union of all right elements seem favourable. In such a case, the Congress will be left impotent and insignificant as a factor in

national politics unless, as seems extremely improbable, it adopts an economic programme in conformity with the immediate desires and necessities of the masses.

RESURGENT MASS-ACTION
THE CITY-PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY

Meanwhile, following the temporary lull that visited the country after the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and in spite of the Government reign of terror during the ensuing months, a more vigorous movement was discernible among the city-proletariat and the rebellious peasantry. Strikes ceased to wear a political complexion, and became purely economic struggles for better wages, improved living conditions and shorter working hours. They were prolonged and obstinate in nature, the men holding out to the last, until their demands were partially won or starvation drove them back to work. The East India Railway strike of three months duration, the Calcutta Seamen's strike, the strike of ten thousand stevedore coolies in May and June, and the strike in six of the largest Calcutta Jute Mills at the same time,—all fights for wage-increase,—are a few typical examples of the new energy and determination that inspired the Indian workers in their economic struggle. In Bombay, the Tramway Strike and the great strike in the Tata Iron and Steel Works, testify to the same fact. The cases cited are but a few of the more conspicuous in the industrial unrest that overspread the country,—of lesser strikes involving a few thousand men and lasting from a few days to several weeks, there were more than can be enumerated.

Most of the fights ended in compromise,—bad organization, traitorous leadership and lack of funds being the main causes. The spirit of the men was high and they would hold out to the end, were their leaders more revolutionary, and did they have a little financial backing. Most of the strikes which ended in struggles for wage-increase, began because of the unjustified dismissal or ill-treatment of some fellow-workmen, and demands for the reinstatement and compensation of those so ill-used were made. With such good spirit and instinctive solidarity, much can be expected. The growing talk of calling a general strike for the release of Mr. Miller, the Irish railway guard and organizer of the North Western Railway Union, who was imprisoned for his activities, led to his early release, and 30,000 workers

marched in procession to meet him. In addition to the strike movement, a general growth and consolidation in the ranks of labour became noticeable. The unions were becoming more definitely class instead of amorphous political bodies. Federation of unions belonging to the same industry, but in different provinces, took place, notably, among the miners, the textile workers and the railwaymen.

Together with this growth in organization has come a development of the idea of using labour as a parliamentary political force, much as the British Labour Party is used, by semi-liberal reformists and ambitious place-seekers. Labour leaders are already in the field, who declare the necessity of "guiding" the Indian labour movement into safe channels and giving it an outlet in some form of parliamentary action. These men are exercising a great control on the young labour movement, and are called in to mediate with the employers and Government in times of prolonged strikes, their decisions being almost invariably obeyed by the Indian workers. By their dominant position and reformist ideology, they do much harm, sabotaging strikes, preventing their declaration, and dampening the enthusiasm of the men. In addition to these well-meaning meddlers, there is a great number of spies and provocators, so much so that the unsatisfactory termination of the East India Railway strike was attributed to the distrust aroused in the men by discovering that some of their leaders were Government agents, and they thereupon repudiated all leadership.

A new feature of Indian legislation is the number of bills introduced for the amelioration of the workers' conditions. A Factory Amendment Act was passed in the 1922 session of the Legislative Assembly, and several social reform measures including a bill on Workmen's Compensation were introduced in the 1923 session. Add to this the appointment of Committees on Industrial Unrest in every province, and the creation of Government Arbitration Boards for the settlement of industrial disputes, and one has a fair idea of the growing importance which Indian labour is playing in the national life. The attention paid to the allaying of industrial unrest by the Government at the present time is far more earnest than that dedicated to suppressing the activities of the Non-cooperators, who are no longer regarded seriously. In the speech of Lloyd

George in Parliament and that of the Viceroy on opening the 1923 session of the Legislative Councils, the crisis in the nationalist movement created by the Non-cooperators, was announced to have been safely passed; and the Viceroy elaborated at length on the labour legislation which it was projected to lay before the house, and the prospects of industrial peace for the coming year.

The temporary confusion induced in the ranks of the riotous peasantry by the withdrawal at Bardoli of the item of Civil Disobedience and Non-Payment of Taxes from the Congress Programme and the injunction to respect the rights of the landlords and of private property, produced a noticeable lull in what had become a country-wide movement against both Government and landlords, by the peasants' refusal to pay taxes and rents. In the Government Communique on the Non-cooperation Movement, issued at the time of Mr. Gandhi's arrest, stress was laid upon the menace to life and property involved in the ever-growing responsiveness of the peasants to the slogan of Non-payment of rent and taxes. The reports of the Commissioners of the various provinces account for the deficit in revenue by the refusal of the rural population to give the tax-collectors their due. Repression was swiftest and most severe in the Punjab, United Provinces, Bengal and Madras, where the peasant movement was strongest and had broken out into violent manifestations. The land of peasants refusing to pay taxes was seized and auctioned off by the Government to the highest bidder. Punitive police were stationed in those districts where unrest prevailed. Conflicts with the armed forces of the state, ending in many casualties, and wholesale arrests for the slightest breach of peace, with a declaration of martial law in the disturbed areas, brought temporary quiet.

But late in the summer, towards the end of July and the beginning of August, agrarian unrest again manifested itself in Madras, Bengal, Central India and the Punjab. Armed forces had to be hurried to the disturbed areas. The most determined efforts at revolt were made by the Bhils, who fought for several weeks before succumbing to superior forces. In Bombay, the passive resistance movement of the Malvas of Mulshi Petha, the Mahratta peasants who were being forced off their land by the great industrial concern of Tata & Co., reached a climax, most of the leaders being

sent to jail, and the Government was forced to intervene and effect a compromise.

But the most violent agitation occurred in the Punjab, where the struggle of the Akali Sikhs for control of the Gurdwaras and adjacent lands, broke out with fresh vigour after a temporary lull of some months. The struggle of the Akalis dates back several years, and while heralded as a religious movement for reform of the temples, it is in reality, as the Government recognized in its Communique issued in September, an attack on the property rights of the corrupt Mahants or guardians of the shrines. While the Akalis practiced passive resistance, they used direct action in seizing the temples and turning out the Mahants, until the latter implored government protection,—and got it.

An open rupture between the Government and the Akalis took place in August of 1922 at Guru ka Bagh, where the attempt of the Akalis to assert their rights to the land by cutting down trees was met by their arrest, imprisonment and fine on the charge of trespassing and theft. Thousands of Akalis rushed to the spot on the call of their leaders, to continue the fight. Police and soldiers were sent to guard the properties of the temple and turn back the Akalis, who marched in orderly bands from adjoining villages, the railroads having refused them transportation. At first open force was used,—the Akalis were beaten back by blows and fired upon if obstinate. So tremendous became the excitement, and so great was the response of the volunteers to replace those fallen, that the Government changed its tactics, ordered the arrest of those leading the movement, and threw barbed wire defences around the property, to keep out the Sikhs, who were arrested if they approached. The affair at Guru ka Bagh was repeated all over the Punjab, 100,000 Akalis having declared their willingness to die in the cause. Official secrecy veiled the progress of the movement, which at first received much publicity. The Indian press was full of accounts of the struggle between the Sikhs and the Government, and a national issue was made out of it. In all, over 5000 Akalis were arrested and sent to jail. •

The undoubted awakening among the peasantry has affected both the nationalist movement and the policy of the Government. Signs are not wanting that an agrarian party will spring up ere long, just as the growing activity of the peasants has given rise to a strong and class-conscious

organization of the landlords. A great movement is noticeable among the nationalists to go "back to the village," the popular cry of the hour, to found schools, hospitals, organize the peasants and head their struggle for a better life. In Bengal, a strong section of the middle-class intellectuals are voicing a cry for the repeal of the Permanent Settlement, which confers great privileges on the landlords and brings much harm to the peasantry. The Sikh League is the acknowledged political party of the agrarian Sikh community, and though allied with the Congress movement, has an independent programme of economic reform. The Government tried to meet the situation in its own way, partly by repression and partly by compromise and concession. Land legislation is pending in several provinces, and has been passed in others, to meet immediate crying grievances of the peasants, while Commissions of Investigation have been set up where unrest is most acute, to investigate the causes and suggest ways and means of meeting the demands of the peasants without outraging the sensibilities of the landlords.

Such is the general situation which confronts those seeking to preserve the *status quo* and those looking for means to upset it. In the peasant and industrial proletariat lies the seed of revolution, if their economic struggle be properly guided and they can be welded into a party with a clear-cut programme backed up by direct action. A vague feeling urges the nationalists to keep contact with these elements, and "organize the masses" has become the nationwide slogan, but nobody knows how or to what end they should be organized, and those who know, shrink from the consequences involved to life and property. A new revolutionary leadership must be evolved which can seize upon the existing unrest and direct it in proper channels.

The movement is ripe for a new orientation. The revolutionary elements can no longer permit themselves to be driven from pillar to post by the Congress. They must be crystallized in the form of a mass party whose standard has been raised by the Communist Party of India. Today everybody talks about the "masses," the necessity of organizing them in the struggle. Few, however, have any definite idea as to how this will be done. The imminent fusion of the right-wing Non-cooperators with the Moderates (if not in organization, surely in ideology), and the political bank-

ruptcy of the orthodox Centrists, leaves the field clear for the de-classed Intellectuals in the revolutionary nationalist movement. The time has come for the latter to act; but they must fully appreciate the magnitude of the task confronting them, and should go at it not with the missionary spirit of "uplifting" the masses, but with a revolutionary vision clarified by an understanding of the class conflict that underlies the great social upheaval rocking the very foundation of the country, and which is today expressed in the struggle for National Liberation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW LEADER

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, released from jail in the middle of August of 1922, was hailed by the unanimous voice of India as the only possible successor to national leadership left vacant since the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in March and his conviction to six years' imprisonment. This unanimity of choice was the more emphatic, in that for five months, the interval between the arrest of one leader and the release of the other, the supreme command of the Non-cooperation Movement lay vacant, and all thoughts turned by common consent towards the one figure in Extremist political life who could be called truly national, and who was great enough to assume the banner of leadership for the entire country.

Who is this man who has won a recognition second only to that of the revered Mahatmaji? What is his nature, and what are his past achievements? These questions inevitably arise, in the attempt to analyse his place in the present movement, and to forecast whither his leadership may tend.

A few significant facts gleaned from the life of Mr. Das will be relevant to our purpose. Educated in England for the Civil Service which he was debarred from entering on account of his youthful patriotic activities, Mr. Das took up law as an alternative profession, and won nation-wide recognition some years after his return to India, as a brilliant and successful barrister. But law was always for him a secondary calling, forced upon him by material exigencies. Left to follow the dictates of his own nature, Chittaranjan Das would have become a *litterateur* and a poet, as numerous writings and several books of poems well-known in his own province of Bengal, testify. The first and deepest interest of his life is the regeneration and welfare of his native land, and it is because he has been among the

foremost figures in every political agitation since the days of 1905, that he has won from his compatriots the honoured title of *Deshbandhu*, Friend of the Country.

If we think of Mr. Das as a highly-talented member of India's liberal intelligentsia, educated abroad, but deeply Indian and patriotic to the core; intelligent, generous, warm-hearted and impulsive; frank and courageous in his dealings with his fellow-men; sincere in thought, word and deed, and very emotional, we have a fairly accurate picture of the man. In reckoning the effect of all those qualities upon his leadership, it is important to remember that the two natures,—that of the lawyer and that of the poet; the one acquired, the other instinctive,—are eternally struggling within him, now one being predominant, now the other. It must not be omitted that Mr. Das is a follower of the *Vaishnava* school of religious thought, mystic and emotional, and of the *Vedanta* cult propagated towards the close of the last century by Swami Vivekananda and a band of vigorous disciples, which predicates the renaissance of Indian nationhood through her innate spirituality, and the spiritual conquest of Western materialism which holds the world enthralled. Sri Arabinda Ghose, the principle living exponent of this school of nationalism masquerading in the garb of religion (the school of "Spiritual Imperialists"), is a close friend of Mr. C. R. Das, and this friendship has left its traces upon the religious and political philosophy of the latter.

Thus, the spiritual nationalism of Mahatma Gandhi is more or less perpetuated in Mr. Das, but with this important difference, that whereas the Mahatmaji had the genius of fanaticism, which communicated itself like the fiery asceticism of Savonarola to his millions of ignorant followers, Mr. Das is too intensely human to be fanatic, and his appeal is less to the multitudes than to the warm-hearted, patriotic liberal intellectuals of his own class. Mr. Gandhi went to the masses, preaching destruction of the British Raj and the coming of Swaraj by Soul Force, and there was that intense strength in his own conviction that communicated itself to the unlettered populace, and spread from province to province, from city to town, and from town to village, like a contagion of faith. There were bonfires of foreign cloth to add fuel to the flame; here was a Mahatma, not of words alone but of spectacular and picturesque deeds. Processions of Khaddar-

clad volunteers; the collection of a holy Fund; the sacred symbol of the Charka; speeches, meetings, songs and legends made Gandhism to the Indian masses of those pristine days of Non-violent Non-cooperation what Savonarola was to the revival of Christian culture against the onslaughts of the Renaissance. Mahatma Gandhi, like his Italian prototype, was a name to conjure with, a Holy Magician endowed with supernatural powers; in the popular imagination, he fought Black Magic with White. There is no such appeal of the visionary in the plain straightforward humanity of the Deshbandhu. He goes, not to the masses, but to the students to find his followers, and they rally to him with all the passionate enthusiasm of youth aspiring to the high ideals he sets before them. If Mahatma Gandhi is the Savonarola of the Indian movement, Deshbandhu Das is its Brutus; the one a fanatic seer, the other a simple, self-sacrificing patriot, albeit tinged with the mysticism of thought peculiar to his environment. Both however, are the expression of the same economic force which is pushing the Indian middle-class towards revolution, and which is throwing forth new leaders to voice the desires and aspirations of that class, each a little more clearly and consciously than his predecessor. Neither Mahatma Gandhi, for all his popular following, nor the Deshbandhu, despite his idealism, represent or give expression to the economic needs of the Indian workers and peasants, whose growing discontent constitutes the real strength of the Indian national movement.

There was a moment, after his release from jail, when Mr. Das appeared to be groping in the dark, seeking new counsel, new inspiration before determining upon the future direction of the Non-cooperation Movement. His six months' confinement did for him what it has done in the past for so many political prisoners,—turned his mind inward upon itself, in excessive contemplation, so that the normal balance between the poet and the lawyer was destroyed, much to the detriment of the latter. All contact with actuality was cut off in this time, accentuating the dreamy mysticism which turns away from the things of this earth, seeking a solution for vexing human ills in the intangible realm of metaphysics. It was in such a juncture that Arabinda Ghose, at one time hailed as the future national saviour of India, forsook politics for religion and from his Pondichery retreat, began to send forth the fruits of his contemplations in the shape of

mystic treatises on Transcendental Love and Politics. Fortunately, the exigencies of the movement forced Mr. Das back to earth, and compelled him slowly to readjust himself to reality, in order to grapple with the crying problems awaiting solution. He had the wisdom to utter little during the interim between his release from prison and the period of intense political activity on the eve of the Gaya National Congress, over which he was unanimously elected to preside. But the little that he did utter gives a clue to his state of mind, soaring far beyond this earthly tangle. In reply to an address presented to him by a group of friends and admirers in a public meeting soon after his release, Mr. Das observed: "Swaraj is founded upon Truth,"—but in what this Truth consisted, he neglected to define. He further declared that: "Today I am told that India is poor. She cannot rise except through economic salvation. It is necessary to undergo economic development. This moves me to laughter."

In an address to the students of Calcutta, Mr. Das expressed himself further in this vein:

Acharya Roy has said that he does not believe in anything but Patriotism. I say that I do not believe in patriotism even.—I believe in nothing which does not lead us to love of God. One's country is but the manifested glory of Providence. When we invoke Bengal, when we invoke India, our heart overflows with the beauties of the Almighty.

I do not understand patriotism. I am not a patriot. I do not care for that type of patriotism under the influence of which one people kills, ruins and destroys another. That is a type of patriotism to which India is a stranger. I want the people of India to be alive to the "lila" (play) of God. I do not want your parliamentary institutions. I do not want economic salvation.

I want to be myself. I want my countrymen to be of their own country. Some ask me explicitly what I want. I do not presume to dictate the lines along which the nation shall progress: no one can. God alone knows. To all who want a scheme, I say I do not know. Call it patriotism, call it Swaraj,—the path that leads to Freedom—we want you to recognize the right to search for that path. Swaraj is coming, is coming positively.

The clamour for schemes is a weakness, like the shouts of one groping in the dark. When the beacon of Swaraj flames up in your breast, it will lead you along the right path.—I emphatically say that violence has never brought Swaraj to any country. One tyranny has been replaced by another. Italy, France, America and other lands bear witness to it. They have not Swaraj anywhere. It is my firm belief that *through India, the world will taste Swaraj.*

Such was the ecstatic frame of mind of the Deshbandhu in the first weeks after his release from prison. His countrymen, who had wallowed sufficiently in metaphysics under

the guidance of the Mahatmaji, did not hesitate to express their disappointment, and in some cases strong disapproval, of such abstract revellings. In the sharp commentary of one nationalist journal:

Surely India cannot be expected at this time of day to remain content by chewing the cud of philosophical or poetic fancies. That way certainly will not come our economic salvation.—What then is Mr. Das' idea of a "Raj founded on Truth." We should have been glad to have had an elucidation of this point from Mr. Das, and not a vague and inconsequential denunciation of modern politics, economics and sociology. Mr. Das' exalted sentiments will not offer any helpful guidance to practically-minded people—at any rate, to the ten thousand people who will meet at Gaya in December next to take their cue of life and conduct from his inspiring advice.

But this exaggerated mood of otherworldliness, so manifest in the first two months after his release from prison, gave way to another, in the period immediately preceding the 37th annual session of the Indian National Congress. In the first two weeks of November, Mr. Das broke silence, and during a tour through the northern provinces, gave vent to certain ideas and sentiments which electrified the entire country and set all tongues buzzing in hot controversy. The speeches of Mr. Das at Dehra Dun on November 1st, and his statement to the press issued from Amraoti on the 14th, contain the gist of his ideas at this epoch. One cannot say that he has forgotten any of his earlier convictions, but that he has acquired, or perhaps become conscious of certain newer ones, which he suddenly begins to emphasize. One hears less of abstractions, and more of concrete suggestions as to the actual path to follow which will lead to Swaraj. A change in the present Congress Programme is insisted upon, this change to take the shape of certain radical departures from orthodox Ghandism, such as entering the Councils "with the object of ending or mending them," the boycott of British goods instead of merely foreign cloth in general, and the starting of foreign propaganda, "to bring the case of India before the world." Above all, there is an insistence upon the *kind* of Swaraj that the country must strive for,—it must be, as Mr. Das observed at Dehra Dun "a Swaraj for the masses, and Swaraj must be won by the masses."

Non-violent Non-cooperation wants to put an end to the disgraceful chapter of European history, namely, the tyranny of the bourgeoisie, of the monied classes, of the Capitalists, over the masses, the poor labourers. To establish Swaraj of that type in India would

only mean rule by bureaucracy.—The significance of, our struggle is that Swaraj will be India's gift to other nations.

In the same speech, he castigated the governments of Europe and America for their selfishness and class-character, and declared that India did not wish to repeat their history, but to point out a new way.

At this present hour, there is a bitter struggle going on in England, in France, in America, in almost every country where they say they have Swaraj, between the classes and the masses. Call it Independence, call it Liberty, call it Democracy, call it whatever you like, it is confined only to the middle-classes, not to the masses.

This speech, reported all over India, caused enormous sensation and aroused endless discussion. What did the Deshbandhu mean by his „Swaraj for the masses?" Was it Nationalism? Or was it Bolshevism? Many inclined to the latter view. The use of the words "bourgeoisie" and "capitalism," and their wholesale condemnation by the speaker, confirmed this viewpoint. The bold castigation of European sacrosanct Democracy and of English Parliamentarism took away the breath of many who had been educated to regard these as the highest goal towards which India could progress. Here was surely a leader of advanced, not to say revolutionary ideas. At the same time, he rendered himself intelligible to his people by perpetuating the tradition of India's spiritual aloofness, of her spiritual mission to evangelize and save the rest of the doomed, materialistic world. While there were many who disapproved, among the orthodox Gandhists, of the hinted changes in the Constructive Programme, the majority of Young India rejoiced and hailed the new leader with renewed acclaim.

Thus far, Mr. Das had confined himself to generalities, pleading ill-health and the need for rest and time to acquaint himself with the situation before enunciating any definite course of action. It was known that he had always disapproved of certain features of the Non-cooperation campaign, and had differed sharply with Mr. Gandhi on the fundamental issues of Council Boycott and Boycott of British goods at the Calcutta and Nagpur Congresses of 1920. Mr. Das was not in favour from the very outset, of accepting the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, which Mr. Gandhi reconciled himself to as a step forward, and only repudiated after the Amritsar massacre of 1919. At the same time, once he had recognized the sway which Mr. Gandhi exercised

over the popular mind, and visioned the effect of a nation-wide campaign along nationalistic lines upon the Indian masses, Mr. Das submitted himself loyally to the decisions and judgment of the Mahatma, and was the first to renounce his law-practice and otherwise to conform with the provisions of the Non-cooperation Programme at great personal sacrifice and material loss. The removal of the All-India leader left the field clear for new ones to take his place, and the acknowledged failure of the Non-cooperation activities revised at Bardoli in February of 1922 and known as the Constructive Programme called for the application of new tactics.

Mr. Das, weakened and exhausted by his prison-sentence and ill-health, and out of touch with the developments in the political situation during his six months' incarceration, announced his intention of waiting before pronouncing upon any line of policy, for the publication of the Report of the Civil Disobedience Committee, which was just completing its nation-wide tour of investigation and was on the eve of publishing its findings. The long-delayed Report was given to the public in the beginning of November. While all of the members of the Civil Disobedience Committee unanimously agreed on the impracticability of declaring Mass Civil Disobedience as a means to attain Swaraj, there was sharp disagreement on the question of prosecuting the Constructive Programme and of introducing some radical change of tactics into the Non-cooperation Movement as laid down by Mr. Gandhi and confirmed at Ahmedabad in 1921. The failure of the boycott of schools and law-courts was admitted, while on the question of boycott of British goods as opposed to foreign cloth in general, and the removal of the boycott of the Reform Councils, there was an even split in the Committee, three being for and three against.

While the country was debating the recommendations of the Civil Disobedience Committee, whose disagreement on tactics merely reflected the several tendencies long since manifest in the ranks of the Non-cooperation Movement, and which threatened to bring about a split during the coming Congress session at Gaya unless a *via media* could be found, Mr. Das suddenly broke silence and precipitated further controversy by a declaration of policy. Gone were his earlier metaphysics, product of prison-life and his own poetic temperament; the analytic mind of the lawyer

reasserted itself, though greatly handicapped by a too sentimental and warmly human outlook on life, and Mr. Das pronounced judgment. The Constructive Programme must be changed, in order to attain the desired goal of Swaraj; the policy of boycott of councils from without having proved ineffectual to bring them to an end, the Non-cooperators must adopt the policy of "boycott of councils from within," that is, "to enter the Reform Councils with the object of wrecking them."

Thus Mr. Das, President-elect of the forthcoming annual session of the Indian National Congress, and universally-acclaimed leader of the Nationalist Movement, at one blow aligned himself on the side of the party of "Pro-Change," as distinguished from the "No-Changers" who persistently clung to the Constructive Programme of orthodox Gandhism, and concentrated the whole difference at issue upon the one question of Council-entry,—a question which by no means constituted the fundamental cause of the decline of the Non-cooperation Movement, but which in reality occupied a very subordinate place. To have taken his stand by the side of the "Pro-Changers" on the necessity of a new programme to correct the mistakes of the past would have been sufficient; but his stressing the question of Council-entry to the exclusion of all other issues constituted a great mistake on the part of Mr. Das at this initial stage of his leadership. It focussed the attention of the whole country upon a relatively minor point, raised it to undue and exaggerated importance in the public estimation, and confused the revolutionary elements in both the camps of the Pro-Changers and the No-Changers, who desired to find a way out of the morass of inactivity and degeneration into which the Non-cooperation Movement had sunk since the Bardoli Resolutions and the arrest of Mr. Gandhi. It is true that the question of Council-entry had become prominent before Mr. Das became its champion; the party of Mahratta politicians who constituted the Congress-opposition from the very outset, and who favoured the policy of "Responsive Cooperation" within the Reform Councils, advocated by Lokmanya Tilak, had agitated ever since the arrest of Mr. Gandhi for such a change in the Congress Programme. The newly-published Report of the Civil Disobedience Committee likewise recommended, by an evenly-split vote, the contesting of the coming elections to the

Reform Councils. But the advocacy of Mr. Das lent the question its character of *the* national issue at stake to be decided by the Congress-session at Gaya, before which all other questions, whether of greater or less revolutionary significance were submerged.

The nation-wide controversy became bitter and protracted; by his declaration in favour of the removal of the Council Boycott, Mr. Das divided the camp of his own followers who had been waiting for his lead, and alienated many a good element closer to his leadership than to any other, who were puzzled and bewildered by his apparent policy of compromise. There can be no doubt that in so reading his decision, they misread their leader. Mr. Das was wholly sincere in his desire to enter the councils simply and solely to wreck them by opposition from within, and there admits of no possibility of doubt that he never intended to cooperate in any way with the existing system of government against which he and his fellow-extremists had declared uncompromising warfare, though of a peaceful and non-violent nature. But by selecting this issue above all others to concentrate the national energies upon at this critical stage of the movement, and above all, by identifying himself, as he did and continues to do, with the school of Mahratta politicians notorious for their spiritual affinity to the cooperating Moderates, Mr. Das committed a grave mistake in tactics which hindered his leadership and confused his followers from the very outset.

In his formal statement to the Press, issued from Amraoti on November 7th of 1922, Mr. Das enunciated very clearly the general outlines of the new tactics he desired the Congress to adopt, and his reasons therefore. After reiterating his complete faith in the non-violent Non-cooperation Movement as heretofore pursued, and paying tribute to its accomplishments, he proceeded to advocate the adoption of a National Pact to protect the various national and religious minorities comprising the Indian nation, and spoke strongly in favour of establishing Congress Agencies abroad to disseminate knowledge of the Indian struggle and to enlist the sympathies and support of lovers of freedom outside. He especially advocated the formation of a Pan-Asiatic Federation, which he visualized as the logical and broader development of the present Pan-Islamic movement, which

plays such a rôle in the Indian national struggle. This Pan-Asiatic Federation was to become "a union of all the oppressed nationalities of Asia," and the establishing of such a bond of love, sympathy and cooperation between India and the rest of Asia, nay between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world is destined to bring about world peace."

Entering then, into the question of "Change or No-Change", he elucidated his position as advocating "not so much a change in the *programme* of work—as a change in the *direction* of our activities in certain respects for the success of the very movement which we hold so dear." This change in the direction of activity he visualizes as a "boycott from *within* the Councils," hitherto boycotted from outside. His reasons:

The Reform Councils are really a mask which the bureaucracy has put on. I conceive it to be our clear duty to tear this mask from off their face. To end these Councils is the only effective boycott.

He then analyses the possibility of capturing the Councils by a majority of Non-cooperators, and dismisses the suggestion that the Government may devise new rules to prevent their entry in these words:

If any such rule is framed, I would welcome it and again change the direction of our activities. The infant nationality of India requires this constant struggle for its growth and development.

In these strong words he upheld the right of change of tactics to suit the need of the times, and so put himself in uncompromising opposition to the orthodox No-changers, who sought to convince the country that they must continue the working of the Constructive Programme as laid down by Mr. Gandhi until the latter's release, some five years hence, to again lead them in the struggle for Swaraj. Mr. Das also advocated, in his statement from Amraoti, the framing of a "clear scheme of that system of government which would be the foundation of Swaraj."

The nation today is burning with a desire to attain Swaraj. It is the duty of the Congress, therefore, to place before the country a clear statement of the system of Government which we demand.—The formulation of such a demand is necessary today.

How different this declaration from that of two months earlier: "The clamour for schemes is a weakness, like the shouts of one groping in the dark."

The speech at Dehra Dun and the statement to the Press a week later, constituted a great step forward in Mr. Das'

development, and showed a radical change in the direction of his ideas from the first confused utterances of the mystic poet just released from his prison cell. But to those who were electrified by his utterances on the subject of labour, one would say that the leopard has not yet changed his spots; the dreamer, the sentimentalist and poet are still lurking beneath the straightforward and matter-of-fact programme of Swaraj as laid down by the lawyer. To prove this fact, let us quote a few of the concluding sentiments from his statement at Amraoti:

The ideal is to make the people of this country self-reliant and self-contained.—I would much rather that a few families became self-contained than that factories were started on a large scale. Such factories represent a short-sighted policy, and though no doubt they would satisfy the present need they must inevitably create an evil which it would be difficult to eradicate.

These words, re-quoted and confirmed, from his statement two months previously to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, betray a fatal flaw in the lawyer's logic,—an inclination towards Utopianism, and a harking back to India's mythical Golden Age for a solution of her present-day social, economic and political ills, not at all in keeping with the intense rationalism of the Mahratta politicians, and more in consonance with the reactionary political philosophy of the orthodox No-Changers. Mr. Das still sees his country as a creation apart from the rest of the nations of the world,—with an ideal past somewhere in the misty Vedic Age, which it is simply necessary to revivify and bring the country back to, for the salvation of the Indian people and through them, the regeneration of the whole world. The poet and the mystic have not died in the heart of the Deshbandhu; the lawyer temporarily gained the upper hand of his nature, but who can say it will be forever? Only a close study of the later utterances and activities of India's new leader can teach us whether any one of his mixed emotions and ideas will permanently win predominance over the rest.

One thing is certain,—the advent of the Deshbandhu marks a definite step forward in the Indian national movement,—a step towards rationalism and clear-cut national issues, as distinguished from the chaotic confusion of the Gandhian epoch. The crystallization of ideas and of parties was going on continuously throughout the period immediately following the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and

preceding the release of Mr. Das. Social forces, economic classes, had begun to throw off their diffused and unconscious character that lent to the national movement a deceptive appearance of unity, and to group themselves according to their interests and needs, into definite class-organizations. Within the Reform Councils and the ranks of the Cooperating Moderates this process had begun much earlier and had produced more quickly a number of political bodies whose very names connoted their economic and class-affiliation,—the Landholders' Association, the Liberal League etc. Now it was the turn of the Congress to resolve itself into its several component parts, and this process was immensely hastened by the split in the movement which began early in 1922 on the question of tactics, and which reached its climax at the annual session at Gaya. Mr. Das was in no way responsible for this split; rather, he himself and his leadership at this juncture were merely a symptom and manifestation of the social forces at work within the Extremist movement. He was thrown up during a period of confusion, to clarify that confusion and to head a new tendency. Whether he himself will develop in accordance with that tendency, or will head a new revolt remains to be seen.

CHAPTER X. THE PROGRAMME

Our movement has reached a stage when the adoption of a definite Programme of *National Liberation* as well as of Action can no longer be deferred. A programme of National Liberation must be formulated in order to state the position of those who do not believe in half-way and the so-called "evolutionary" methods advocated by the compromising Liberals. The ambiguous term *Swaraj* is open to many definitions, and in fact it has been defined in various ways according to the interests and desires of the different elements participating in our movement. Such a vague objective is certainly not conducive to the strengthening of a movement: on the contrary, it makes for weakness. Then, a militant Programme of Action has become indispensable in order to mobilize under the banner of the National Congress all the available revolutionary forces. The nation is not a homogeneous whole: it is divided into classes with diverse and often conflicting interests. All these various social classes struggle for their respective interests. They all believe that National Liberation will remove their grievances. Therefore the Programme of the National Congress, which is not a cohesive political party, but the traditional organ of our National Struggle, cannot be according to the interests of one certain class. The National Congress is a Coalition of all the forces oppressed by foreign domination; therefore its programme must be a Coalition Programme.

First of all, we must define *what form of National Self-Government* is needed for the welfare of the majority of the nation: then is to be formulated the *methods* of the struggle which will lead to the realization of this National Self-Government.

PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

It is a well-known fact that the domination of foreign imperialism has led to the economic ruin, industrial stagna-

tion, social degeneration and intellectual backwardness of the people of India. The woeful tale of the unlimited exploitation and heartless suppression suffered by the Indian people at the hand of the British rulers has soiled the pages of history. The basis of our national movement is the necessity of the Indian people to free itself from this slavery. So long as the political state-power is controlled by the foreign imperialist, no substantial economic and social progress will be permitted to the masses of the population. Therefore, *the first and foremost objective of the national struggle is to secure the control of the National Government by the elected representatives of the people.* But this cannot be achieved with the sanction and benevolent protection of the imperialist overlords, as the renegade patriots of the Liberal League think, because any measure of Self-Government or Home Rule or Swaraj under the imperial hegemony of Britain will not amount to anything. Such steps are calculated only to deceive the people. They are camouflage. As the leader of the struggle for National Liberation, the Congress must boldly challenge such measures and declare in unmistakable terms that its goal is nothing short of a *completely independent National Government* based on the democratic principle of Universal Suffrage.

THEORY OF EQUAL PARTNERSHIP A MYTH

The theory of "equal partnership in the British Commonwealth" is but a gilded version of Imperialism. Only the upper classes of our society can find any consolation in it, because the motive behind this theory is to secure the support of the native landowning and capitalist classes by means of economic and political concessions, allowing them a junior partnership in the exploitation of the country. Such concessions will promote the interests, though in a limited way, of the upper-classes, *leaving the vast majority of the people in political subjugation and economic servitude.* The apostles of "peaceful and constitutional" means are nothing but accomplices of the British in keeping the Indian nation in perpetual enslavement. It is needless to point out that England did not conquer India in order to "civilize" us; so to believe that the Indian people will attain the state of complete political autonomy under the guidance of benign British rule is simply to entertain an illusion. But

those believing in cooperation with the British government, are too hardheaded business men to be under any illusion. If they advocate the policy of "peaceful and constitutional" means, it is because *such a policy is more conducive to the interests of their class* than a sudden radical change in the political administration of the country.

OUR LANDLORD AND CAPITALIST CLASS

The landowners are interested in the security of their estates and preservation of their right to suck the blood of the peasantry by rack-renting and innumerable other forms of exploitation. Any government offering them this security will win their loyal support. The nationality of the rulers will make little difference. The moneyed upper-classes seek expansion in the industrial and commercial field. *Any government providing facilities for this expansion will have their support and cooperation.* If the British government will insist on the old policy of obstructing the industrial development of the country, our capitalist classes will militate in the nationalist ranks. But convenience of exploitation, as well as exigencies resulting from the disastrous effects of the World War today demand a change in the *method* of Imperialist economics. Ever-increasing popular discontent forces the British ruler to seek an alliance with some powerful native element, which will find it profitable to help maintain a government preserving "law and order." It offers economic concessions and political privileges in consideration for such help. Thus the landowning and capitalist classes find it possible to have their interests protected and aspirations satisfied within the frame-work of Imperialist suzerainty.

Their property rights protected, and the avenues of their economic development open under the British rule, the landowning and capitalist classes have no reason to quarrel with the former. In fact, their economic interests demand peaceful conditions, which are enforced under Imperial coercion. They are afraid that a sudden change in the political status of the country will disturb the "peace and order" so indispensable for the security of property, and prosperity of commerce and industry. A clear Programme of National Liberation cannot be carried through without risking a revolutionary action of the masses, who may not be so willing to go back to their socio-economic slavery after

conquering the political power for the native upper-classes. In order to avoid these unwelcome possibilities, the land-owning and capitalist classes prefer a peaceful and gradual progress. They find it wise *to take as much as can be got with the least danger to themselves.*

This policy of caution and compromise, however, leaves the interests of the Indian people out of consideration. It is calculated to secure and promote the interests of the thin upper strata of the people. Therefore, it goes without saying that the National Congress must declare that the realization of the Programme of the Liberal League, or any other Programme fundamentally of a similar nature, does not bring the Indian Nation as a whole any nearer to freedom. Because under "Equal partnership in the Commonwealth" or "Dominion Self-Government" or "Home Rule within the British Empire," the Indian people will still continue to be under British domination, which will function *with the aid and connivance of the native capitalist class.*

NO CHANGE OF HEART

Those preaching the doctrine of "change of heart" on the part of the British rulers fail to disassociate themselves clearly from such halfway measures. Such a doctrine admits the possibility of reconciling the interests of the Indian people with those of Imperialism, consequently *it is a dangerous doctrine, and the Congress must be freed from it.* This ambiguity of its position and the vagueness of its objective have contributed to the vacillation and weakness that characterized the activities of the Congress during the last twelve months. A determined fight, which is required to conquer National Independence for the Indian people, is conditional upon a clearly defined programme; and only *such a programme will draw the masses of the people into the national struggle as takes into consideration the vital factors affecting the lives of the people.*

Therefore, the Indian National Congress declares the following to be its

PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

1. Complete National Independence, separated from all Imperial connection and free from all foreign supervision.

2. *Election of the National Assembly by Universal Suffrage. The sovereignty of the people will be vested in the National Assembly, which will be the supreme authority.*

3. *Establishment of the Federated Republic of India.*

The principles which will guide the economic and social life of the liberated nation are as follows:

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

1. *Abolition of Landlordism.* All large estates will be confiscated without any compensation. Ultimate proprietorship of the land will be vested in the National State. Only those actually engaged in agricultural industry will be allowed to hold land. No tax-farming will be allowed.

2. *Land rent will be reduced to a fixed minimum with the object of improving the economic condition of the cultivator.* State Agricultural Cooperative Banks will be established to provide credit to the peasant and to free him from the clutches of the money-lender and speculating trader.

3. *State aid* will be given to introduce modern methods in agriculture. Through the State Cooperative Banks agricultural machineries will be sold or lent to the cultivator on easy terms.

4. *All indirect taxes will be abolished*, and a progressive income tax will be imposed upon incomes exceeding 500 rupees a month.

5. *Nationalization of Public Utilities.* Mines, Railways, Telegraphs and inland Waterways will be owned and operated by the State under the control of Workers' Committees, not for profit, but for the use and benefit of the nation.

6. *Modern industries* will be developed with the aid and under the supervision of the State.

7. *Minimum wages* in all the industries will be fixed by legislation.

8. *Eight-Hour Day.* Eight hours a day for five and a half days a week will be fixed by law as the maximum duration of work for male adults. Special conditions will be laid down for woman and child labour.

9. Employers will be obliged by law to provide for a certain *standard of comfort* as regards housing, working conditions, medical aid, etc., for the workers.

10. *Protective Legislation* will be passed about Old Age, Sickness, and Unemployment Insurance in all the industries.

11. *Labour Organizations* will be given a legal status and the workers' right to strike to enforce their demands will be recognized.

12. *Workers' Councils* will be formed in all the big industries to defend the rights of labour. These Councils will have the protection of the State in exercising their functions.

13. *Profit-sharing* will be introduced in all big industries.

14. *Free and compulsory education.* Education for both boys and girls will be free and compulsory in the Primary Grades and free as far as the Secondary. Technical and vocational schools will be established with State aid.

15. The State will be *separated from all religious creeds*, and the freedom of belief and worship will be guaranteed.

16. *Full social, economic and political rights will be enjoyed by the women.*

17. *No Standing Army* will be maintained, but the entire people will be armed to defend the National Freedom. A National Militia will be organized and every citizen will be obliged to undergo a certain period of military training.

HOW TO REACH OUR GOAL

The aims and aspirations of the great majority of the Indian people are embodied in this programme, the realization of which will bring progress and prosperity resulting from national freedom within the reach of all the classes. Now the object before us is clear. Everybody knows what he is fighting for. Swaraj is no longer a vague abstraction open to any interpretation, nor is it "a mental state." Swaraj—National Independence—which still continues to be the summary of our programme, represents a clear picture of the national life breathing in the healthy atmosphere of freedom.

The goal fixed, we must now find the ways and means for reaching it. It goes without saying that a bitter and protracted struggle separates us from the goal we are striving for. The "civilizing" character of British Imperialism will be tested by the brutal resistance it will put up against the Indian people in its attempt to realize a programme which proposes to raise India to the status of any free,

civilized nation. The patriotism of the Liberals will be measured by the adhesion they give to this programme of ours—a programme which does not injure them, but requires of every sincere Indian nationalist the courage and determination to struggle against the foreign ruler, and which aims, not at the economic development of and comfortable position for a few, but for freedom, progress, and prosperity for all. We know, however, what to expect from both quarters; British Imperialism will never "change its heart," and our upper-classes will never risk a comfortable present and promising future assured to them, for real freedom to the nation. *Our immediate task, therefore, is to involve in the struggle all those elements whose welfare demands the realization of our programme.*

ANALYSIS OF OUR FORCES

Now, in a fight it is indispensable to make a correct estimate of the available and reliable forces and to mobilize them so as to have their fullest might brought to bear upon the situation. Great masses of our National Army are just on the point of awakening. Their understanding is still limited and their vision not far-reaching. The abstract conception of national liberation leaves them indifferent, nor does the picture of a happy and prosperous life far ahead appeal strongly to their imagination. They are wrapped up in more immediate affairs—those affecting their every-day life. *In order to lead them step by step in the greater struggle, we must take up their immediate problems.* These, however, cannot be solved unless there is a radical politico-economic change; but by standing shoulder to shoulder with them in their struggle against immediate grievances, we will help them develop their revolutionary consciousness. *We will convince them in actual struggle how their every-day life is bound up with the destiny of the entire nation.*

It is a known fact that intensified economic exploitation has at last exhausted the patience of the Indian masses and shaken their traditional resignation. During the last years they have repeatedly demonstrated their will and readiness to fight. *This rebelliousness of the masses is the solid foundation on which the activities of the National Congress should be based.* To develop this spontaneous revolt against unbearable conditions, therefore, will be to

strengthen the national struggle. With the purpose of developing all the forces oppressed and exploited under the present order and to lead them in the struggle for national liberation, the Indian National Congress adopts the following

ACTION PROGRAMME

1. To lead the rebellious poor peasantry in their struggle against the excesses of landlordism and high rents. This task will be accomplished by organizing militant *Peasants' Unions* which will demand a) *Abolition of feudal rights and dues*,—repeal of the Permanent Settlement and Talukdary System; b) *Confiscation of large estates*; c) Management of the confiscated estates by Councils of the Cultivators; d) *Reduction of land rent*, Irrigation Tax, Road Cess, etc.; e) *Fixed tenures*; f) *No ejection*; g) Abolition of indirect taxation; h) Low prices; i) Annulment of all the mortgages held by money-lenders; etc.

2. To back the demands of the peasantry by organizing country-wide mass demonstrations with the slogan of "*Non-payment of rent and taxes*."

3. To organize mass resistance against high prices, increase of railway fare, postage, Salt Tax, and other indirect taxation.

4. To struggle for the recognition of Labour Unions and the workers' right to strike in order to enforce their demands.

5. To secure an eight-hour day, minimum wage and better housing for the industrial workers.

6. To back up these demands by mass strikes to be developed into a General Strike at every available opportunity.

7. To support all strikes politically and financially out of the Congress Fund.

8. To agitate for the freedom of press, platform and assembly.

9. To organize Tenants' Strikes against high house-rents in the cities.

10. To build up a country-wide organization of National Volunteers.

11. To organize strikes of the clerks and employees in the government and commercial offices for higher salaries.

12. To enter the Councils with the object of wrecking them.

13. To organize mass demonstrations for the release of political prisoners.

THE FINAL STEP

The realization of this Programme of Action, every clause of which corresponds to the immediate interests of one or another section of the people, will increase the fighting capacity of the nation as a whole. The National Army will be drilled, so to say, ready for action. Every class will find the Congress striving for its welfare. In face of a gigantic mass movement thus organized and involving larger and larger sections of the population, the authority of the Government will break down. Non-cooperation of the productive elements of society will paralyse the life of the country, thus dealing a death blow to the Government. Inauguration of the campaign of nation-wide *Civil Disobedience* will precipitate the final stage of our struggle to be crowned inevitably by the conquest of an *Independent National Existence*, in which the people of India will have the opportunity of progressing in social, economic, and intellectual realms, in accordance with the principles contained in our Programme of National Reconstruction.

December, 1922.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPLOSION

While India was in the throes of the excitement of the 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress, which was celebrated in the last week of December and upon whose deliberations was concentrated the attention of the entire nation, from the alien bureaucratic Government down to the primitive denizens of the hills and jungles,—in the midst of this political powwow, a bomb exploded whose effects are apt to be wide and far-reaching upon the future course of the nationalist movement.

The main task of the 37th Congress was to define a programme and to lay down a line of tactics for the ensuing year which would rescue the movement from its slow degeneration. Three main tendencies were manifest on the eve of the Congress convention. One, the right wing nationalists mainly represented by the Maharashtra group of Bombay Province, openly advocated "Responsive Co-operation" with the Indian Government, which meant in plain language, the abandonment of the Non-cooperation tactics and participation in the new Legislative Councils granted by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme of 1919. This position closely approximated to that of the left-wing Moderates, who had accepted the Reforms since their inception, and had repudiated the Gandhi doctrine of Non-cooperation. The second tendency, a left-wing movement headed by Mr. C. R. Das supported by a considerable minority from the Punjab United Provinces and Central Provinces, advocated a more aggressive policy of Non-Cooperation, based upon entry into the Reform Councils with the object of wrecking them, and the organization of workers' and peasants' unions throughout the country upon a programme of economic and social reform, with the object of eventually declaring a nation-wide strike. The Centrists, representing the ultra-Gandhist doctrines of non-violent Non-cooperation, put forward tenaciously the threadbare

"Constructive Programme" adopted in March, 1922 in the "Bardoli Retreat," and which advocated the triple boycott of schools, law-courts and foreign cloth, while repudiating the use of mass-action or the adoption of Civil Disobedience. This programme, already in force for one year, dismally failed to achieve results, and combined with government repression which, in the course of the eight months, clapped over 20,000 people into jail, effectually lulled the movement to sleep. To break this fatal lethargy and put a stop to the gradual alienation of mass-energy, constituted the crux of the problem to be solved by the 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress.

It was at this psychological moment, on the very eve of the Congress session, that the *Vanguard* Party, whose centre of activities, due to government repression, is in Europe, and which for the past two years, by means of manifestoes, leaflets, books and through its bi-monthly organ *The Vanguard* (later *Advance-Guard*), has been setting forth the viewpoint, principles and tactics of Socialism as applied to the Indian movement; it was at this crucial moment that the Vanguard Party issued a Social Democratic Programme nicely adjusted to meet the present requirements of the Indian situation, and caused it to be circulated in India and among the nationalists and students abroad, by means of a brochure entitled "What Do We Want," and a leaflet issued from Switzerland called "A Programme for the Indian National Congress." The brochure, a popularized version of the Programme, was circulated in India, by the middle of November and was promptly prohibited by the Government. The Programme itself was published in the December 1st number of *The Advance-Guard*, and sent out, together with the leaflet, in time to reach India on the very eve of the Congress session,—it did in fact arrive by December 19th, and was prohibited by an order of the Bengal Government on December 20th.

Then a strange thing happened. The London *Times* and the *Morning Post* of December 21st, published a column each of vituperative comment upon the summarized version of the "Programme," which they termed a "Bolshevik Plot" for India, together with the most filthy mud-slinging at the personal character and career of Manabendra Nath Roy, to whose sole authorship they gratuitously attributed the unsigned Programme. The *Times*, somewhat more restrained

than that organ of rank reaction and tool of Scotland Yard, the Morning Post, contented itself with a rather neat summary of the Programme in all its essential details, which it described as "adapting Bolshevism to Indian conditions." But the wrath of the Morning Post knew no bounds. In its blind rage, it attributed the hidden hand, not alone of Bolshevism, but of German Republicanism behind the political document, and acidly inquired why the British Foreign Office should permit Germany, a "conquered country," to harbour these "active conspirators." It declared that Republican Germany and Soviet Russia are one, and in this affair work to the same end and by the same instruments. At the same time, it seized the opportunity thus presented to point out the hostility of the Programme to Indian capitalism and landlordism as well as to British Imperialism, and declared that Indian capitalists and landlords should henceforth cease to tolerate a movement which holds for them such dire possibilities. It also published what purported to be a life-sketch of M. N. Roy, the alleged author of the document, supposedly living in Berlin under the "protection" of combined Republican German and Bolshevik Russian patronage,—and for sheer Billingsgate, we would refer readers to this respectable organ of the British aristocracy, apparently inspired by the inexhaustible fountains of mythical facts conjured up by its hidden genius, Scotland Yard.

But this was not all. British Imperialism, rendered blind with rage at the lightest threat to its secure existence, permitted, (one would rather say commanded) its lightening messenger, Reuter, to cable out to India the complete contents of the Programme together with the choice comments and reflections of the "Morning Post,"—the cabled matter covering some three and a half closely-printed newspaper columns, and costing a sum which only mad Imperialism would consent to pay in these halcyon days of unemployment doles and retrenchment committees.

What was the object of such apparent spendthrift extravagance? There were three. First, to circumvent the possible effect of such a Programme upon the left-wing Congress leaders, whose own ideas in some respects closely corresponded to its principal points, by terrorizing them against its adoption. In the language of Reuter,—"*It will be interesting to see whether the Congress adopts the plan or any part o the plan suggested. At any rate, it will not*

be difficult for Indian politicians,—whether of the Congress camp or not,—with the help of this programme, to be satisfied as to the source from which the proposals that may be put before the Congress, have sprung." A veiled threat lies in these words of which it is easy to grasp the significance. A National Congress, convicted by Reuter of adopting a "Bolshevik Programme," could more easily be declared an illegal assemblage and driven to an underground existence,—a consummation devoutly longed for by the Government, and deeply dreaded by the lawyers, small capitalists and middle peasantry who form the majority of this non-revolutionary organization, which represents the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, driven temporarily into extremism by their pressing economic disabilities, but never willing to stake their all to bring about a change of fortune.

The second cunning motive of Imperialism in countenancing such sensational expenditure, was to stampede the upper bourgeoisie, the rich landlords and capitalists already deeply "loyal" to their beneficent protector, out of the mood of demanding further concessions as a boon for their "loyalty." Too much talk about "Indianization of the Services" and "complete fiscal autonomy" had driven thorns into the Imperial flesh during the past year, and caused many an uneasy moment to British capitalists and members of that "steel frame" of British Imperialism, the Indian Civil Service. By holding up the bogey of Bolshevism, of "nationalization of land and industries" before the eyes of the rich and cooperating Indian Moderates, it was hoped, and justifiably, to bind them with even tighter strings, to the Juggernaut of Empire.

The third motive was sheer fright, and a clumsy intention to render all past and future propaganda of the Vanguard Party null, first, by branding it in the eyes of Indians as reprehensible and "paid" Bolshevism, to echo which in the lightest degree would be to incur the heaviest penalties of government repression, and secondly, to herald it abroad among the "conquered" nations of Europe, that British Imperialism expected them to suppress all such propaganda, directed against her imperial interests.

So far, so good. The British Foreign Office and its servants of Scotland Yard are no fools, and they succeeded for the moment in their main designs. The Programme, thanks to the services of Reuter, received a publicity through-

out the length and breadth of India which the Vanguard Party, placed from the outset under the Imperial ban, could never have dreamed of achieving. Every Anglo-Indian, Moderate and Nationalist paper in India, in the English language and in the vernaculars, printed the Programme in part or in full, and commented thereon for the edification of its readers, according to its own peculiar light. In the words of one nationalist journal: "Manabendra Nath Roy has suddenly leaped into fame; his Programme is the talk of the country just now." The Viceroy gave it official notice in his speech to the Bengal Landlords on December 24th, and they reciprocated in their speech to him. The Bengal Landholders' Association represents the richest and most influential, as well as reactionary loyalists of India, whose position of special privilege is guaranteed to them by the "Permanent Settlement" Land Act, which works great hardship on their tenants, and which a certain school of nationalists are agitating to have repealed. The anxiety of the landholders at this agitation, coupled with that of the Programme declaring for the abolition of big landlordism, is expressed in their Address to the Viceroy on December 24th:

Your Excellency can rely on the ungrudging support and sincere assistance of the landholders in the maintenance and preservation of law and order. We trust that Your Excellency's Government will not lend countenance to the agitation which may be engineered by interested parties against the rights and privileges of the Zemindars which have been long enjoyed by them, and which have been recognized by the sovereign powers for centuries.

The reply of the Viceroy contained the following significant words:

You rightly dwell on the important place you occupy among the subjects of His Majesty in British India. This position you derive from two factors. In the first place, in the past, the realization by you of your responsibilities as members of the cultured and wealthy classes has placed you at the forefront of those on whose consistent loyalty and help the British Government has been accustomed to rely. You may rest assured that I realize the great services rendered by your class in the past, and that I look to the maintenance of close and cordial relations. You may feel confident that your rights will not be disregarded and that your aims and aspirations will receive sympathetic consideration at all times. In offering you encouragement, I am not unmindful that from one quarter an attack has been made on your rights and position. There have been threats, not only to destroy by means of illegal conspiracies, all vested interests and titles in the land, but to overthrow by revolutionary methods the law and order, the established Government and the whole fabric of the present civilization in India. I give you the clearest assurance that if a mischievous

campaign of this kind takes definite shape, you may rely on the Government to afford you the fullest support of the law in combatting it.

This thinly veiled allusion to the Programme published just two days previously, on the part of both landholders and the Government, in the person of the Viceroy, is deeply significant. Their mutual assurances of support and cooperation in the "maintenance of law and order" spell the even closer drawing together in the future of these twin pillars of reaction than has been the case in the past. It is this feature of the clarification of the social tendencies in Indian society that alarms the Extremist Press, which clamours vainly for "unity" of the whole people against the Government, long after this fictitious unity has been shattered by the development of economic forces.

The 37th Session of the National Congress met, deliberated and adjourned without committing itself to any of the heinous doctrines of moderate Social Democracy as set forth in the *Vanguard* Programme, and as actually incorporated in most of the modern republican governments of post-war Europe. The official and semi-official Anglo-Indian press vented its purple indignation at the heresies contained in the Programme; the rich and compromising Moderates, from the landlords to the liberal industrialists, rallied satisfactorily to the side of authority and of "Government by Law and Order." Mr. Joseph Baptista, officially-blessed President of the "All-India Trade Union Congress," received the British benediction for his reiterated desire to "maintain the Imperial connection and the inspiration of British rule," for the benefit of Indian labour. So far, so good. But every victory has its price, often so heavy as to become a Pyrrhic victory. What has it cost the astute Government of the proverbial Nation of Shopkeepers, to win this seeming triumph over the ingress of new ideas, new principles, new tactics, into the Indian movement?

In order to answer this query correctly, a birds-eye view of the Indian press of all shades of opinion becomes necessary, as it reacted to the sensational message of Reuter, flashed out from Whitehall to Simla on December 21st, 1922. We give a few of the comments of the characteristic organs of Indian public opinion.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN PRESS

The Times of India, Bombay (December 23rd, 1922):

There is no need to be alarmed at the attempt of M. N. Roy to convert the National Congress to the idea of turning India into a kind of Soviet Republic. He is not the first, and certainly will not be the last silly man to prescribe a badly-mixed dose of republican theory as a remedy for the ills from which he supposes India to be suffering. But we cannot believe that any body of men is prepared seriously to consider the ravings of this adventurer. Until we find we are wrong, we do not propose to examine the absurdities of his panacea. Reuter's Agency has given to Roy a publicity which is seldom accorded even to a Prime Minister's most serious utterance. Why should it have been thought worth while to cable three columns of Bolshevist delirium to this country?

The same journal, on December 25th writes editorially:

Mr. Joseph Baptista now writes to inform us that all of Roy's nonsense is contained in a pamphlet which reached him, unsolicited it seems, through the Post Office. We now learn that Roy's pamphlet has been proscribed. Roy in effect answers the question, "What do we want?" with the one word "Bolshevism."

(Mr. Baptista in the same kind letter to the most reactionary paper in India, goes on to suggest that not the German or Russian Government, but the British Government is responsible for the propagation of Bolshevist ideas through the medium of *The Vanguard* apparently on the theory that the best antidote to poison is poison skilfully administered. *The Times of India*, however, dismisses the suggestion as "rather too subtle and ingenious.")

Reuters' cable, published in full, is headed by the caption: "*The New India, A Bolshevist Scheme, What Will the Congress Do?*"

The Englishman, Calcutta, December 22nd publishes the full cable with the heading: "*Bolshevism for India; Programme for Gaya Congress; No Landlordism.*" Its full column of editorial remarks the next day were confined to scurrilous abuse of the supposed author of the Programme, and to insinuations that Mr. C. R. Das, President of the forthcoming National Congress, drew up his programme in collusion with Mr. Roy.

The Statesman, Calcutta, December 22nd, heads the cable: "*Bolshevik Aims in India; Separation Plan; Open Revolution Advocated; Amazing Programme.*" Editorially it is extremely abusive, using the political records of the Indian Criminal Investigation Department with as much freedom as the Morning Post uses those of Scotland Yard. The alleged author of the Programme is termed a

"blackguardly ruffian" in close touch with the leaders of the National Congress, thus connected through him with Moscow and Berlin.

If it be rightly inferred that the Congress derives some measure of its inspiration from Manabendra Nath and his Communist friends in Moscow and Berlin, the fact should receive wide publicity, in order that everyone in India may understand the goal towards which the Congress agitation is heading. Roy's patriotism, such as it is, is nothing but the crude international Communism of Moscow. Landlordism is to be destroyed, rents are to be reduced to a minimum, all indirect taxes are to be abolished, in favour of a progressive income tax, State aided industries are to become the order of the day, and there are to be minimum wages, an eight-hour day, workers' councils, universal profit-sharing etc. Best of all, India is to have no standing army, but the entire people will be armed to defend their freedom. These aims are to be achieved by organizing militant peasant unions throughout the country, pledged to non-payment of taxes, resistance to high-prices, mass-strikes, demonstrations and of course, the formidable conversion to your own way of thinking of anyone who disagrees with you. If our opinion of the intellects shortly to be massed at Gaya is not quite so high as might be wished, we do not rate their owners so poorly as to suppose that they will find trash of this kind acceptable.

The Pioneer, Allahabad, U. P., (semi-official organ) December 23rd, writes, after the usual column of personal abuse and vilification:

Roy's Programme for the Indian National Congress, which was published in our issue of yesterday, includes not merely the overthrow of the present Government, but the confiscation of land, the fomenting of strikes, and the establishment of Communism. The project involves a peasant revolt against rent and taxes, to be accomplished by organizing militant peasant unions; the organization of tenants' strikes against rent in the cities; the destruction of the (Reform) Councils and various other "reforms" familiar to the Russian people. The danger involved in Bolshevik propaganda cannot be ignored, either by the Government or by those members of the community who possess a stake in the country. The Non-cooperation agitation has created an atmosphere favourable to the development of militant lawlessness, and there are obvious and cogent reasons why the sinister proceedings of the leaders of that agitation should be actively opposed by all who are concerned in the preservation of property and the public peace.

THE NATIONALIST PRESS

Even more interesting than the official and semi-official viewpoint, are the reactions of the various shades of opinion of Indian nationalism to the publication of the Programme. It is impossible to quote from all the bewildering medley of comments, but we select a few from the leading nationalist organs which can be called representative and which have most weight upon public opinion.

The Independent, Allahabad, organ of the National Congress, published a full page on December 23rd, of Reuter's sensational message, which it re-interlined according to its own interpretation. The headline across the page bore the following words: "*Indian National Liberation; Programme of Reconstruction; 'Advance-Guard's' Activities; Fighting Non-violent Non-cooperation.*" Its column of editorial comment on December 24th, showed great penetration of the Government's object in causing such a cable to be sent, at this critical juncture. Under the title, "A Deep Game" it comments:

The object of the game (pursued by Reuter) is to damn the Indian National Congress as a body depending for its inspiration on Bolsheviks, and to alienate from it the sympathy of the landlords, employers, traders and professional classes. The opinions and plans of Mr. Roy are quite well known to all who have read his little tract, "India's Problem and Its Solution." Evidently, Mr. Roy has put his thoughts in the shape of a Programme. Like any other programme, it has to be judged on its merits, and we shall do so presently. But before taking up an examination of the programme, it is necessary to say a few words of the news agency which professes to be neutral in politics, but in practice takes care to see that the proletariat never has the best of it. Reuter wants the public to trace Mr. Das' scheme of political work, some of which bear a surface resemblance to Mr. Roy's scheme, to Bolshevik inspiration. He also invites the public to be ready to find that the Congress is influenced by the Soviet Government of Russia, and attempts to alienate the sympathies of landlords, traders and employers from the Congress.

The *Independent*, which itself had often been damned by the Government and its lackey press as a "Bolshevik" organ, but which in reality represented the viewpoint of left-wing nationalist Extremism (led by Mr. Das), then proceeded to analyse the Programme and came to the conclusion that it stands condemned on its own merits, because in its plan of mass-action and a country-wide general strike, "there is no room whatever for Love Force; our faith is in non-violent Non-Cooperation based on love force."

The Bombay Chronicle, a windy sheet of Congress Extremism, was the only newspaper in the country receiving Reuter's Service, that failed to publish the cable, and which attempted to account for its omission in a very lame editorial published three days later, when further silence on the subject on which the whole country was buzzing became a journalistic impossibility. In its issue of December 25th, the *Chronicle* plunged into a laboured

explanation of its *faux pas*, under the caption, "Et Tu, Brute."

Reuter's Agency provided us with matter which was undoubtedly seditious, as that adjective is interpreted in Indian legislation. Whether someone in Reuter's Agency is in love with Mr. Roy's ideas, or whether Bolshevik gold played a part in the transaction, or whether those in charge of the Agency considered Mr. Roy's painstaking efforts epoch-making, is beyond our knowledge. All we can state with certainty is, that Reuter's people, for some unknown reason, lost their heads and poured undoubtedly seditious matter into India. And the *Times of India* published it, and we did not. Our readers may perhaps be disappointed at our suffering the *Times of India* to show greater boldness, thus forfeiting our reputation as Extremists. Wherefore this rabid propaganda? Then the awful truth occurred to us; that a benevolent Government was "trying" us, to prove our loyalty. We bowed our heads and thrust the guilty papers in a certain drawer, which is as silent as the grave. The *Times of India* published all their contents.

The Chronicle is the organ of that section of Indian nationalism, represented by the mill-owners and other capitalists of Bombay, whose stake in the country is sufficiently large to set them against such a programme, however loudly they may clamour for further political concessions.

Turning to Bengal, the home of Mr. Das and Indian Extremism, we find very interesting reactions in the nationalist press, as represented by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, independent organ of Extremist Nationalism; in *The Servant*, the die-hard organ of Gandhi orthodoxy; and in *Bangalar Katha*, the vernacular daily of Mr. Das' party. To quote from the bewildering medley of comment from other less characteristic journals would cover too much space.

The Amrita Bazar Patrika, the most powerful organ of Indian extremism in Bengal, ran a series of three editorials on three different days, reflecting three successive moods in regard to the Programme and its startling appearance on the stage of Congress politics. In its issue of December 23rd, after publishing the Programme in full under the caption "*Separation of India from British Empire; Programme for Indian National Congress Drawn up by an Indian Communist*," it remarked editorially:

The Manifesto published by Mr. Manabendra Nath Roy and cabled to India by Reuter has set the Anglo-Indian Press dancing with rage, and given them an excuse which they were seeking to hit the Congress.

—The Anglo-Indian papers have vied with one another to exhaust the language of Billingsgate. The real object of the Anglo-Indian papers is transparent. They would by hook or crook, damn the Congress. They do not discuss the merits or demerits of the Manifesto itself. But nevertheless, they are utilizing it to serve their own ends. We fail to understand why, if it is the silly outburst it is represented to be, Reuter should care to cable it across the seas, or Anglo-Indian journals should devote columns after columns of the choicest abuse to counteract its effects. For ourselves, there are many things in Mr. Roy's Programme with which we do not agree, but we have no doubt that unbiassed people can have no objection to some of his proposals, as for instance, the reduction of land rent to a fixed minimum, the starting of State cooperative banks, the fixing of minimum wages, protective legislation about old age, sickness and unemployment insurance, recognition of labour-unions, free and compulsory education. We believe these will be heartily supported by many. Every one is free to put forward his suggestions before the Indian National Congress and the Congress is fully at liberty to accept or reject them. But whatever may be the opinion of the Congress leaders with regard to this Manifesto, we are sure they are not going to be brow-beaten by the professed enemies of our country.

Four days later, the same journal had another reaction, and published a long editorial, under the title, "What Does It Mean?" Declaring that the publication of this programme at such a time, had a "very sinister meaning" which it could not but recognize as part of a propaganda against Indian Swarajists it went on:

If there was any reason to proscribe the Vanguard, that reason must have led the Government to censor this cable. Why was not this done? That is a very ugly question. Will the Government kindly explain? The evident object of allowing this document to be published at this time is to frighten the landowning and capitalist classes in India into coalition with the present foreign political authority in the country. There can conceivably be no other explanation of the publication of a document like this here. And our first duty is to avoid by every possible means antagonizing any section or class of our population at this juncture. For India to accept what may at best be described as political and economic experiments as the solution of our problem will be far from safe. What lines the National state will take in India to work out a reasonable reconciliation between the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant, of capital and labour, must be searched, discovered and adopted by us after we have secured control of our own State life. In the meantime, every section of the Indian community and every class or interest in the country must combine to work together for the elimination of the control and authority of the present foreign Bureaucracy from the life and administration of our State affairs.

On December 27th, the Patrika published another editorial called "India and Bolshevism," which, without mentioning the Programme, is evidently a new light on the

same problem. In a two-column exposition of the principles and programme of Communism, the Patrika declares boldly:

The two main planks of the Bolshevik propaganda, namely, the elimination of the wage-system in economics and the annihilation of the present centralized class-ruled states in politics, represent therefore, the highest and most advanced ideals of modern economics and politics. So far as these ideals are concerned, Bolshevism is not a thing that can be either dismissed as criminal or even damned with faint praise. It has a soul-stirring compulsion in it. And if in India there is any danger to the established order from Bolshevism, as to which we say nothing just now, but shall discuss it later on, that danger will come, not from the imitation of the Soviet methods but from the fascination of the Bolshevik ideal.

The Servant, Congress organ of the "Spiritual Swarajists" and of Die-hard Gandhism, published the full programme in its December 23rd issue under the captions: "*Proletariat Swaraj for India; Complete Separation from Britain; a Communist Programme for the Congress; Notable Opinions of Two Indians Abroad.*"

It then proceeded to publish, side by side, the Programme of the Vanguard Party and the interview given by Mr. Saklatwala, Indian Communist M. P. to the "Hindu" of Madras, in which he recommends the Congress to adopt labour and communist ideals. There were three editorial comments published by the Servant on December 23rd, 26th and 27th. The first declared:

Any man, be he an Indian or a foreigner, may harbour, in places far remote India, any sort of revolutionary ideas with regard to her and it surpasses our comprehension to envisage the useful purpose of giving wide publicity to them here. Is it raking up the old Bolshevik bogey to make a case for fattening the Military Budget? Or is this so-called "Programme for the Indian National Congress" sent out here to demonstrate the complicity of the Congress with Bolshevik agencies and to discredit it in the eyes of loyal Indians and the world outside? We shall not suggest that it is directed to proving Deshbandhu (Das) as a co-adjutor of Mr. Roy. The most plausible aim may be to scare away the landlordism and capitalists from the Congress. It is said coming events cast their shadow before them. Is this news the harbinger proclaiming the coming *coup de grace*, declaring the Congress illegal as a Bolshevik Corporation, and suppressing it with a strong hand? The country should be prepared for any development.

In its issue of December 26th, the Servant commented on the order of the Government of Bengal in Council, declaring forfeit to His Majesty all copies, wherever found, of vol. I, No. 5 of the *Advance-Guard*, and of a leaflet called "A Programme for the Indian National Congress":

Inscrutable are the ways of the Bureaucracy. It proscribes the Advance-Guard and checks the propaganda of Mr. M. N. Roy. It allows Reuter to cable out his programme to India. Today, by a notice, it proscribes the programme and confiscates any reproduction of it. Now, every newspaper office preserves the copies that remain after the days' sale. Is it to throw them into the fire? Will every reader be required to find his copy out and destroy it? The mystery is that the programme was allowed to be published just before the Congress session commenced, and it is proscribed just after the Presidential address has become known to the public.

Later, the Servant declared:

The publication of the message of Mr. Roy, the Communist, just on the eve of the Congress, is deliberately made to bring into discredit Deshbandhu Das, President of the Congress, and consequently the Congress and the movement it has espoused for the present (the labour movement). Already the fire-eating Die-hard press here and in England has emptied its vocabulary of abuse and invectives upon the devoted head of Mr. Roy. It is not necessary for them to consider the programme on its own merits. It is enough that it has been called Bolshevik, drawn up by a Communist. It is a sorry subterfuge to pit the capitalists and the landlords against the Congress, a stupid camouflage to suppress it.

In view of the fact that the general consensus of opinion was that the Government aimed the programme of the Vanguard Party at the head of Mr. C. R. Das, whose own programme published several weeks previously, contained many clauses of a socialist nature, a special interest attaches to the comments of his daily Bengali organ, the *Bangalar Katha* (Voice of Bengal). On December 23rd, it wrote:

The Indian revolutionary, M. N. Roy, who had to leave India for political charges, joined the Bolshevik Party, and has submitted a number of propositions for the consideration of the Gaya Congress. His object is to sever all imperial connection immediately, and to win complete independence for India. He also approves of the policy of entering the Councils in order to wreck them.

The leading article in the December 24th number of *Bangalar Katha* summarized the Programme, stressing the social clauses, without mentioning the political side. Concluding the summary, it remarked:

According to Manabendra Nath Roy, the real task of the Congress is to organize the people in order that the ideal held out in the Programme can be realized. He thinks that to paralyse the Government by means of a country-wide general strike can be possible only in this way. He has no faith in the principle of Non-violence advocated by the Congress. We do not agree entirely with this programme. The class which will be victorious in a conflict between classes will lord it over the rest. That state of affairs cannot be called the freedom of

the whole country. We want freedom for the entire Indian people,— we are not content with the liberation of a particular class.

The amusing thing is that the Anglo-Indian press is delighted to find a partial similarity of the programme published by us with that of Manabendra. They want to prove that we have connection with Moscow through some underground channel. Otherwise, how can the two programmes coincide!

Further on, it declared:

The Anglo-Indian press has detected a great coincidence in the similarity of our programme with that of the exiled Manabendra Nath. Taking it for granted that our programme is a creation of Deshbandhu Das, our contemporaries say in great glee, "Now Mr. Das is caught. It is clear from where he copied his programme. The Soviet Government is Mr. Das' adviser!" We marvel at such logic. The Programme published in the Bangalar Katha was outlined in the statement of Deshbandhu Das made at Amraoti more than a month ago. Already in the Bengal Provincial Conference of 1917, Deshbandhu suggested the necessity of organizing labour unions and peasant councils. These are the points on which our programme agrees with Mr. Roy's and about which our contemporaries are so hilarious.

The Hindu, of Madras, one of the largest and most powerful nationalist dailies, remarked editorially in its December 22nd issue, under the caption "A Futile Effort":

It may be news to Reuter to know that the Manifesto he has taken so much pains to cable to us, is but one of a series of propagandist efforts of the Indian revolutionaries, who are as actively opposed to the basic doctrines of Non-cooperation as are that Moderates; that some of these documents have been prohibited from time to time by the Government, and that finally, the actual manifesto, the forwarding of which by Reuter has cost him or somebody else a pretty penny, has been in our hands for some time and treated by us with the importance it deserves. We know it suits the ulterior purposes of the enemy of our movement to say that it has behind it Russian gold. That lie was sedulously propagated some time ago and was promptly nailed to the mast. The Congress has not the slightest intention of going Bolshevik.

We will conclude these citations from the Indian Nationalist Press with one from *The Mussulman*, an influential Calcutta weekly, organ of Mohammedan extremist opinion. In its December 29th issue, it wrote:

The Programme advocates the abolition of landlordism and confiscation of all large estates, *without any compensation*. It is a silly proposal. It advocates nationalization of all public utilities. The acceptance of the proposal means the destruction of all charitable and religious endowments. Neither Muslims nor Hindus will tolerate such interference. The proposal of universal suffrage, if adopted, would mean chaos. Countries which have been enjoying parliamentary institutions for centuries have not yet been able to extend the franchise to every man and woman. The fixing of an eight-hour day for five and a half

days a week as the maximum duration of work for all labourers, including agricultural labourers, would instead of furthering their interests, be prejudicial to them and would not, we think, be in the best interests of the country.

THE MODERATE PRESS

For lack of space, we will quote from but two characteristic organs of the cooperating Moderates, whose programme is "Self-Government within the British Empire, to be attained by constitutional and gradual means." *The Leader*, Allahabad, U. P., the leading organ of the Liberal League, comments in its issue of December 24th, under the heading "Revolution and Reaction":

The programme is drawn up in accordance with the modified principles of Bolshevism, and is intended to appeal to the cupidity and self-interests of the masses.—Self-government within the British Empire does not mean anything to this Indian revolutionary, who wants to strike at the roots of capitalism in India. The Liberals are described as "renegade patriots." The familiar tactics of revolutionaries are to draw up a very attractive picture of an Utopia, and then to prescribe methods of direct action to establish it. We neither believe in Utopias nor in the efficacy of direct action for attaining them. In the existing conditions of India, attempts at revolution would lead to a terrible reaction.

* *Justice*, Madras organ of the ultra-Moderates, which has modestly arrogated to itself the distinction of becoming a future Social Democratic Party in India "to combat Bolshevism," receives the democratic suggestions contained in the programme in the following vein:

'So far as we can see, Mr. Roy's programme is diametrically opposed to Mahatma Gandhi's scheme, over which the Congress went mad some time ago. Where Mr. Gandhi wants everybody to adopt the Charka and handloom and live a life of primitive simplicity, Mr. Roy advises his countrymen to encourage modern industries by every means within their power, but with the proviso that the profits should go to the workingmen only. Mr. Gandhi wants India to boycott education, but Mr. Roy's plan is to make education free and compulsory. Mr. Gandhi is for ahimsa and non-violence, while Mr. Roy is for bloodshed and anarchy. In fact, the ideal of Swaraj aimed at by the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, and the communistic ideal expounded by Mr. Roy are as poles asunder. Neither Mr. Roy nor any others need have any hope or apprehension that the Congress will jump at this easy way of attaining Swaraj through revolution. Many followers of Mr. Gandhi have come to realize that his programme has been a futile one, and they are now gravitating, not towards a communistic revolution, but towards the constitution established by law in the country.

Such in short, is a summary of the immense volume of comment and speculation that filled the Indian press of all shades of opinion upon the publication of the Vanguard programme through Reuter acting under manifest Government provocation. "Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself." Though the immediate objects of the Government were achieved; though the Congress abstained from any discussion of the programme, and distinguished itself by the endorsement of the socially reactionary doctrines of orthodox Gandhism; though the Landlords' Association rallied satisfactorily to the side of the Government, and the Conference of the Liberal League strongly disavowed any sympathies with the "revolutionary" Non-cooperators; though the Extremist Press, in its fright and concern to whitewash itself from any and every sign of approval or collaboration with the nefarious document, stooped to swell the Government chorus of personal abuse and vilification,—despite all these temporary phenomena of an immediate triumph, the publication of the Vanguard Programme will in the end destroy this seeming victory. The Government, driven mad with rage and fear, saw fit to force the issue, and to hurl upon the country in the most spectacular possible manner, the full programme of national liberation and reconstruction which the Vanguard Party so sedulously desired to propagate, labouring at an immense distance and under insuperable difficulties, to reach the listening ears of India's insurgent millions. The repudiation of the programme by the compromising Moderates and Tory landlords was a foregone conclusion. It was not at this social element that the programme was aimed. Its disownment by the Congress was likewise inevitable, constituted as that body is, of the petty bourgeoisie, crushed between the upper and nether millstones of government oppression and capitalist monopoly on one hand, and the rising tide of mass energy on the other. What has happened is just this. Throughout the length and breadth of India has been heralded, for the first time in the history of the Nationalist struggle, a clarion call to emancipation, towards a definite goal, with the plain and logical steps towards the achievement of that goal indicated in a clear and unmistakable manner. It is for those truly revolutionary elements scattered throughout the country to pay heed and respond to that call, and to press the propaganda, so

spectacularly inaugurated, among the only elements of the society capable of responding to it with enthusiasm and of carrying the programme to completion,—the workers and peasants of India. Such a propaganda, prosecuted with vigour among these discontented and truly revolutionary masses, will meet, not with repudiation and timid disclaimers, but with instant and wholehearted enthusiasm and response. Young India, take up the challenge so insolently thrown in your face by a cunning Bureaucracy. Meet the issue squarely, and press with vigour the programme indicated, and so prove the truth of the maxim, "Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SRADH AT GAYA

The 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress met in the last week of December, 1922, in the picturesque pilgrimage-place of Gaya, in the province of Behar. No more appropriate place could have been selected, for Gaya is the traditionally sacred spot in which to offer up *Pinda* to the lingering ghosts of the departed dead, and so release them from the last earthly bond, that they may journey towards *Nirvana* or seek re-birth. The fifteen thousand or more political pilgrims that wended their way on foot, bullock-cart or steam-car to the holy spot to attend the Congress-session were perhaps unconscious of the fact that their eager pilgrimage to Gaya was to offer involuntary *Pinda* to the dear departed but lingering ghost of Gandhism, famous to the world as non-violent Non-Cooperation based upon Soul Force,—but such was nevertheless the fact. The much-exploited cult of *Satyagraha* which aimed to translate politics into religion and the rising flood-tide of revolution into a pacific love-feast, inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi in 1920, confirmed at Ahmedabad in 1921 and consecrated at Bardoli a few months later, gradually wasted itself away in the sharp struggle between Government and people during the last year and was peacefully buried about the time that the Civil Disobedience Committee, after touring the country for nine months, published its report. According to Hindu custom, after a definite period of mourning for the dear departed is over, the *Sradh* ceremony is performed, consisting of a feast given to all the friends and relatives of the deceased. The *Sradh* at Gaya marks the close of a definite period in the Indian Nationalist movement,—the preparatory period inevitably characterized by confusion of ideas and mistakes in tactics, but valuable for the political lessons to be deduced therefrom. The new period that lies ahead was inaugurated upon the funeral ashes of the old.

Viewed in this light, the *Sradh* at Gaya becomes no longer what it is heralded by the orthodox Gandhists to

be,—an unqualified victory and triumphant vindication of the principles of "pure Gandhism,"—but a half-melancholy, half-pleasing ceremony of respect and relinquishment of the ties that bound the venerated dead to earthly affairs. As such, we profess our love and loyalty to their sacred memory, but we feel that they belong to us no longer, that they have passed beyond our ken forever. Such was the meaning of the six thousand Congress-delegates assembled in the vast Khaddar *Pandal* (homespun tent); such was the significance of the thousands of spectators who journeyed to Gaya for the sacred week; such was the nature of the resolutions passed by the sovereign assembly of the Indian people. Respect and veneration for the dead departed; the final separation of the ghostly wraith of non-violent Non-cooperation based upon Love Force from the pulsating life of the vital body politic,—this was the actual significance of the funeral ceremony celebrated by the 37th National Congress at Gaya in December of the year 1922.

*

The social and economic background of the 37th National Congress was wide as the poles asunder from that which marked its predecessor at Ahmedabad the year before. Then, revolution was at its flood-tide; repression had only just begun to lift its ugly head in the arrest, a few weeks previously, of the popular Ali Brothers and the President-elect of the National Assembly, Mr. C. R. Das. The adored Mahatma Gandhi was still free to lead his trusting followers whithersoever he willed, and the great masses of the Indian people stood ready, at his lightest command, to declare a National Strike, to refuse payment of taxes, and to launch the entire country upon a campaign of Civil Disobedience which might have ended anywhere, even in the attainment of that mythical *Swaraj* which the Mahatma promised within one year.

This year, how different the situation and general spirit of the people! A full twelve months had rolled away without the slightest approach of the promised *Swaraj*. Mahatma Gandhi and twenty-five thousand faithful followers filled the Government "hotels" as a reward for having followed the injunctions of non-violent Non-cooperation based upon Soul Force. The middle-classes, once the vanguard of the national movement, were divided among themselves and weak in their counsels as to the

future course to follow. Boycott of schools and law-courts, depending on them for fulfillment, had been an acknowledged failure; boycott of foreign cloth and liquor-shops, and the propagation of *Khaddar* and *Charka* (homespun and weaving), which depended on the masses for fulfillment, had equally failed, not for lack of good-will or loyalty to the imprisoned Mahatma, but from sheer economic disability of the starving workers and peasants to pay higher prices and work longer hours in the sacred but abstract name of Patriotism. The chief clauses of the "Constructive Programme," adopted at Bardoli in February 1922, just after the riot of Chauri Chaura, and which urged the prosecution of the Triple Boycott while suspending indefinitely the declaration of Civil Disobedience and Non-payment of Taxes as well as the use of all aggressive tactics, had the ultimate effect of dampening the enthusiasm of the masses for the national cause and of withdrawing from it the backbone of mass-energy, while at the same time giving free play to the forces of government repression, let loose in all their vigour since the departure of the Prince of Wales from Indian soil. The Report of the Civil Disobedience Committee, published ten months after its appointment by the Congress, confirmed the indefinite suspension of the declaration of Mass Civil Disobedience, but let loose a new issue upon the country,—that of entry into the Government Reform Councils. Public opinion, misled by this red herring drawn across the trail, raged in controversy upon the vexed question; the Report of the Civil Disobedience Committee disclosed its six members to be equally divided for and against; the speeches of Mr. C. R. Das at Dehra Dun and Amraoti a few weeks before the annual session of the Congress, declared that he and his followers would make the question of contesting the next elections to the Reform Councils an issue in the coming Convention.

Meanwhile, what of the masses, of whom everyone in India, politically minded or otherwise, has learned to speak? From the Government and the landlords to the Congress politicians and the social reformers, an abnormal interest is displayed in the question of "the masses,"—a vague term meant to include within its scope without being too explicit, the rebellious city-proletariat and landless peasantry, as well as those innocuous millions of "lumpen"-proletariat,

the Untouchables and Pariahs whom Mr. Gandhi and the Salvation Army alike reach out to reclaim from the cruel ostracism of Hindu orthodoxy. "Back to the masses," "Back to the villages," has become the slogan of every shade of political opinion, and one hesitates to think whether this sudden enthusiasm for the "masses" should be entirely attributed to selfless patriotism, or whether that new and potent force in Indian National life, the hitherto dumb and inarticulate workers and peasants, has become a pawn in the political game, waged heretofore between the Government and the middle-classes. How otherwise to explain this eagerness to reach the "masses"; the sudden zeal for organization and propaganda on the part of Congress-wallahs; the equally sudden desire to rush remedial legislation through unwilling legislatures, on the part of the Government, to somewhat better the condition of rack-rented peasantry and sweated factory hands? With what tender solicitude the Government of India notices, whether it be in the speeches of Viceroy or Provincial Governors, or in the Official Annual Reports, the effect of improving economic conditions, of better harvests and a favourable rainfall, upon the uncertain temper of the rural population and the belligerent spirit of the striking city-workers. The 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress met this year upon a background of comparative industrial calm, broken by sporadic strikes of a purely isolated and economic nature, in no way comparable with the country-wide fever of industrial unrest which displayed itself in political strikes and national *Hartals* during the corresponding period of last year. But it met, at the same time, in a period of intense organizing activity on the part of the working-masses, of the slow but persistent growth of trade-unionism and cooperative effort, of industrial and economic conferences and efforts at federating the loosely-scattered labour-organizations whose number and influence had immensely multiplied within the preceding twelvemonth.

It met, at the same time, in the aftermath of several sharp agrarian revolts; in the south the Moplas of Malabar, crushed after nine months' guerilla warfare, had suffered unnumbered casualties and seven thousand victims condemned to penal servitude. In the north, the Akalis, struggling in the name of religion for possession of rich temple-lands, had vindicated the dynamic possibilities inherent in organized

mass-action by taking possession of the disputed lands by the use of direct action, and when impeded by the armed forces of the State, by offering themselves up in unlimited numbers for arrest. In the tug of war between Government and Akalis, the former found itself worsted, with public opinion steadily growing more alienated and strained. What began as a local quarrel developed into a national issue, and the Government withdrew, discomfited, but the price paid for this unrecognized victory of direct action was six thousand Akalis lying in jail, beaten, abused and maltreated, some to the point of death. Again, in Bengal, Behar, and the Central Provinces, acute agrarian unrest was repeatedly put down in the course of the year; in Bombay, the passive resistance campaign of the *Mulshi Pethas* to resist eviction from their land was compromised by the Government by the payment of compensation. The serious agrarian upheavals of 1920-1922 in the United Provinces were stilled by the passage of a Land Act and by the "exemplary" punishment of the openly rebellious, such as the wholesale condemnation of 172 villagers implicated in the riot of Chauri Chaura to death by hanging!

In such an atmosphere then, of subdued aspirations and fallen hopes, of disillusionment and sense of failure, did the 37th National Congress meet in the holy city of Gaya in the province of Behar, the stronghold of reactionary landlordism and remote from the industrial unrest of modern India. And the Congress met, not to give a new lead to the waiting people, nor to draw ripe lessons from the mistakes and failures of the past year, but to pay honour to the departed ghost of Gandhism; to hold a *Sradh* ceremony and offer *Pinda* to the defunct doctrine of non-violent Non-cooperation based upon Soul Force, as embodied in the corpse of the Constructive Programme.

*

Three events bode fair to disturb the harmony of the prospective solemnities, and a fourth actually obtruded itself upon the Congress meditations, forcing some recognition from the mourners there assembled of present-day actualities in the land of the living. We refer first to the publication, in November, of the report of the Civil Disobedience Committee, which declared the country to be unfit for the inauguration of Mass Civil Disobedience including Non-

payment of Taxes, but recommended, by an evenly split vote, the re-consideration of the Boycott of the Reform Councils, with the object of contesting the elections to be held in the spring of 1924. The second discordant note was struck by no less a person than the President-elect of the Congress, Mr. C. R. Das, newly-released from six months' confinement in jail, who after the report of the Civil Disobedience Committee saw fit to deliver himself of two speeches which set the whole country by the ears. In addition to echoing the heresy of Council-entry, qualified with the object of "ending or mending them," the Deshbandhu startled his compatriots and the Bureaucracy alike by enunciating such heresies as the following:

I do not want that sort of Swaraj which will be for the middle-classes alone. I want Swaraj for the masses, not for the classes. I don't care for the bourgeoisie. How few are they. Swaraj must be for the masses, and must be won by the masses. (Speech at Dehra Dun, November 1st, 1922.)

A few weeks later, he published a "Mass" programme, in his daily vernacular organ, the *Bangalar Katha*, which declared for the Constructive Programme and election to the Reform Councils, and stressed the necessity of organizing labour and peasant-societies as a means to declare a National Strike and enforce Non-payment of Taxes for the final winning of Swaraj, which vague term he recommended should be defined by a National Committee.

Excitement and speculation were still bubbling over the Deshbandhu's heresies to orthodox Gandhism, when a third event on the very eve of the Congress plunged the entire nation into a fever of fright and bewilderment. This was the cabling out to India by Reuter, evidently under Government orders, of the complete Programme of Social Democracy drawn up for the consideration of the National Congress by the exiled Vanguard Party in Europe. The printed copies sent with the December 1st number of the *Vanguard* (now the official organ of the Communist Party of India), reached that country on December 19th and were promptly proscribed by the Bengal Government on December 20th. The cabled document was published in the entire Indian press, Official, Moderate and Nationalist, on December 21st, 22nd and 23rd, the comments thereon extending over the entire week that preceded the opening of the National Congress at Gaya. The object of the Government in making this spectacular move, was to alienate the Moderates by the

spectre of Bolshevism, and to frighten the Congress, and especially Mr. Das' party, out of any discussion that might remotely resemble the Vanguard Programme. Both these designs were successful. The landlords and Moderates rallied most satisfactorily to the side of "law and order," and the Nationalists busily tried to whitewash themselves of any suspicion that they might faintly approve of such rash republican ideas. Needless to say, the Vanguard Programme, though it might have been in the hearts of some, found no one to sponsor it in the national conclave, but thanks to the crude advertisement given by the Government, its text was known to the entire country. That its clauses of social and economic reform such as the eight-hour day, the confiscation of large estates for redistribution among the landless peasantry, and the nationalization of public utilities, remained undiscussed, proves the crime of the Congress to have been one of deliberate commission rather than of omission. But when even Mr. Das' mild programme proved too much for the Congress patriots to swallow, what hope was there for a programme branded as Bolshevik, which concerned itself chiefly with the amelioration of the lot of the Indian workers and peasants? The Sradh ceremony at Gaya was not to be disturbed by such discordant notes, the High Priests' oft-repeated protestations of love for the "masses" notwithstanding.

But a gleam from the outer world did find its way into the Congress Pandal towards the close of its deliberations. This was the reported news of the breakdown of the Lausanne Conference and the threatening possibility of war between England and Turkey. This fact, of immense importance to the Indian Mussulmans assembled simultaneously in the annual session of the All-India Khilafat Conference at Gaya, agitated the overwhelmingly Hindu Congress to a ludicrously disproportionate extent. A clue to this otherwise inexplicable concern of the representatives of 250,000,000 Hindus for the success at arms of the Moslem Turks and the preservation of the Holy Places of Islam under Turkish control, is to be found in the fanatic zeal of the 70,000,000 Indian Moslems, determined to assist their brothers in the Faith, and in the vague assumption that the peoples of Asia are united in a solid bond of brotherhood to resist the encroachments of European "civilization." Hindu-Moslem unity is among the first essentials to a

successful national struggle, but so far, this unity has been made to hang upon the perilous thread of a purely religious and artificial issue,—the championing by the Hindus of the cause of the Khilafat, in return for the support of the Indian Mussulmans to the national cause.

*

Certain outstanding figures in the Congress may be taken as symbolic of the tendencies that direct the current of national life in India today. The voice of Mr. C. R. Das, expressing the ideals and aspirations of the liberal Indian intelligentsia struggling to free itself from the social and economic interests of the bourgeoisie; opposed to him, the colourless figure of Mr. C. Rajagopalacharya, the "deputy-Mahatma," expounding the principles and dogmas of "pure Gandhism," and personifying the reactionary spirit of lower middle-class Extremism, sounding the death-knell to progress and scurrying to cover at the slightest hint of revolution. The voice of bourgeois radicalism, speaking in the person of N. C. Kelker, the leader of the Maharashtra school of political rationalism, opposed to the metaphysical reactionaries of orthodox Nationalism and temporarily allied with the liberal intellectuals of the left wing in their common fight against the stand-patters of the Centre who still commanded an overwhelming majority.

These were the voices of definite organized groups, representing the needs and more or less conscious aspirations of an entire class. There were other voices, less distinct and not so clearly heard, but nevertheless symbolic of rising social forces destined to dominate the sittings of future Congresses,—the voice of P. K. Mazumdar, echoing that of Hazrat Mohani at Ahmedabad, demanding that Swaraj be defined as "complete independence without foreign connection by the people of India to be attained by all legitimate and proper means." Here spoke the new school of radical Republicanism, new as yet to India, but corresponding to the unexpressed desires and needs of a vast section of the people. Fainter still, and heard for the first time within the Indian National Congress, spoke the voice of the workers and landless peasants, through the lips of the venerable Mr. Singaravelu Chettiar of Madras, who introduced himself, amid the cheers and laughter of the assembled delegates, as "an Indian

Communist," and who urged upon the Congress the necessity of making common cause with labour to bring about a National Strike, so as to get rid of the domination both of the Government and of the bourgeoisie. Communists throughout the world, he assured his brother delegates, were with India in her battle for freedom. In a Manifesto issued just before the Congress, Mr. Singaravelu stressed the necessity of adopting an economic programme which would include the immediate grievances of the Indian workers and peasants within its scope.

The great struggle between the two contending parties within the Congress, the Right and Left Wings combined against the Centre, apparently hung upon the burning issue of Council-entry, whether or not the Congress Party should change its tactics and contest the coming elections to the Government Reform Councils. But the real issue lay deeper, and was tersely expressed in the popular names given to the respective factions, viz. the parties of "Pro-Change" and of "No-Change." Whether or not the Congress should exercise the right of private judgment upon the mistakes and failures of the past year, and reverse the programme and tactics sanctified by the benediction of Mahatma Gandhi, proven wrong by time and trial,—or whether it should follow blindly the dictates of the Mahatmaji throughout the time of his incarceration, regardless of opinions to the contrary,—this was the real issue of the struggle at Gaya. Every resolution brought before the house was presented in this spirit by loyal followers of orthodox Gandhism, and was voted upon in this form. "Change or No-Change"; "Love and Loyalty to the martyred Mahatma or Treason to his sacred Memory,"—thus was every question formulated and thus was it decided, in the Sradh ceremony at Gaya, where every vote cast was a Pinda offered to the beloved memory of the revered Mahatmaji. Orthodox Gandhism scored a complete and overwhelming victory in the 37th session of the Indian National Congress, but for all that, orthodox Gandhism is dead, and what transpired at Gaya was merely the respectful offering of friends and relatives to the lingering ghost of the deceased, to release it finally and forever of the last earthly tie that still bound it to the life of the body politic.

A study of the resolutions accepted and rejected during the five days' Congress deliberations reveals the nature of the struggle that had raged within the ranks of the Non-cooperators throughout the preceding eight months. It was the struggle between the past and the present, between the dead and the living, between reaction and progress, which resulted in the temporary and illusive triumph of the former over the latter. The orthodox No-Changers, in their zeal to paralyse the movement by laying upon it the skinny death-hand of inaction and futility, rejected all the recommendations which their own Civil Disobedience Committee had recommended,—the withdrawal of the boycott of law-courts and schools,—and re-affirmed their faith in these confessedly moribund tactics. The recommendation of the same Committee to boycott British, as opposed to merely "foreign" cloth, brought forward as a resolution before the Congress, was likewise rejected on the grounds that the specific boycott of British goods implied a hatred foreign to the doctrine of Non-violence and Love. The main bone of contention,—that of Council-entry,—was debated exclusively from the point of view, on the part of the orthodox No-Changers, as to whether Mahatma Gandhi would sanction such a departure from the policy laid down by him at Ahmedabad and confirmed at Calcutta. In the words of Mr. Rajagopalacharya, known to the Congress as the "Deputy Mahatma":

The Congress should remember that no great change from the present programme could be recommended by any but the wisest and greatest of leaders. It is not possible for small men to ask the Congress to take a line different from what this house, sitting at Calcutta, decided, after careful consideration.

All of the speeches of Mr. Rajagopalacharya, in upholding or opposing the various resolutions put forward, were tuned to the same key, and made use of the same arguments, *ad nauseum*. There were eight counter-resolutions on the subject of Council-entry, representing every shade of compromise, leading to the extreme of Council-boycott on one hand, and of Council-entry on the other, but to them all, Mr. Rajagopalacharya opposed the same argument, which was less of an argument than a *credo*: "We must not change the policy of the Mahatma; we must complete the Constructive Programme." And confronted with this uncompromising issue of "loyalty" to the imprisoned Mahatma, the pilgrims to the Sradh at Gaya

rendered their tribute to the dead, and the resolution on Council-entry was lost by a two-thirds majority.

There were other resolutions lost, of equal if not more importance to that of Council-entry, which was stressed far beyond its due. The resolution presented the year before by Hazrat Mohani, now in jail, demanding a change in the Congress programme by declaring the goal of the Indian people to be the attainment of independence *outside* the British Empire, "by all possible and proper means," was presented again at Gaya by the spokesman of his party, which appeared to have grown considerably in the past twelve months. Needless to say, the resolution was lost by an overwhelming majority, but the number of votes cast for it was larger than before, and the speeches made in favour were more outspoken. The annual appearance of such a resolution denotes the growth of that hitherto *rara avis* in the constitutional Congress movement,—a party of radical republicanism, which has since formed under the name of "The Independence Party."

Manifestly in order to show that the No-Change Party still asserted its right to give a lead to the people, and as a counter-irritant to the contagious cry of Council-entry, the Congress majority adopted two last-minute resolutions which would be laughable, were they not so pathetic in their inadequacy. One was on Civil Disobedience,—ambiguously worded and vague in portent, but launched as a possible objective so soon as the faithful followers should complete the preliminary requirements, viz. the collection of twenty-five lakhs of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj fund, and the enrollment of 50,000 volunteers, pledged to Non-violent Non-cooperation and the fulfillment of the Constructive Programme. The Resolution on Civil Disobedience, passed against the unanimous recommendation of the Civil Disobedience Committee appointed by the Congress, is one of those anomalies which can only be explained by a study of the psychology of the No-Changers. The very men who had most loudly cried down the use of this weapon as "dangerous," now proposed its adoption and carried the resolution successfully through the hypnotized Congress: It was meant less as a threat to the Government than as a bribe to the sensation-seeker. But the Congress has cried "Wolf! Wolf!" too often for either the Government or people to pay heed. The resolutions affirming the

boycott of schools and law-courts, and providing for a conditional declaration of Civil Disobedience (which is to be individual and not mass), were best described by the Pro-Change press as "whipping a dead horse."

The other last-minute resolution thrown as a sop to the sensation-monger bordered less on the Bolshevik, as described by the Anglo-Indian press, than on the lunatic, taking into consideration the nature of the element which proposed it. It declared:

The Congress hereby repudiates the authority of the legislatures . . . in future to raise any loan or incur any liabilities on behalf of the nation, and notifies to the world that, on the attainment of Swarajya, the people of India, though holding themselves liable for all debts and liabilities rightly or wrongly incurred hitherto by the Government, will not hold themselves bound to repay any loans or discharge any liabilities incurred on and after this date on the authority of the so-called legislatures brought into existence in spite of the National Boycott.

This heroic gesture of defiance before the Government, the Councils and the world was presented on the last day of the Congress, without having been fully discussed in the Subjects Committee, where it was proposed for the first time late on the previous night, and in the absence of some of the leaders. Mr. Rajagopalacharya himself, who proposed the resolution, seemed a little amazed at his own temerity in departing so far from the footsteps of the Mahatmaji, and made little effort to support his point in the face of opposing speeches, which stigmatized the resolution as "non-moral, to say the least." But his faithful followers, trained to obedience, voted blindly in favour, and to the great surprise of everybody present, the resolution was overwhelmingly adopted. By this dictum, the petty-bourgeoisie, represented by the Congress-patriots, have driven another nail into their own coffin, since who among the financiers whether foreign or native, now investing their capital in India, will be interested in having come to power a class which has beforehand, repudiated the principle and interest on those investments?

The only other noteworthy resolution adopted by the Congress was that approving the organization of Indian labour "with a view to improve and promote their well-being and secure them their just rights, and also to prevent the exploitation of Indian labour and Indian resources." This resolution was passed unanimously, it being the fashion

in Congress as well as other circles to talk about the "masses," and a Committee on Labour Organization was appointed "to assist the Executive Council of the All-India Trade Union Congress, for the organization of Indian labour, both agricultural and industrial." A similar resolution was passed by the Congress two years ago at Nagpur, but nothing came of it. It remains to be seen whether the present resolution will be taken more literally.

*

A curious feature of all Indian National Congress Sessions, and in fact, of the whole nationalist movement, is its relationship to the politico-religious agitation over the Islamic Khilafat, to which the 70,000,000 Indian Mussulmans are pledged. The Near Eastern question, involving the struggle of Turkish nationalism against Franco-British Imperialism, is thus a not unimportant factor in Indian politics as well, for a common faith and a fierce religious fanaticism sways the martial followers of the Prophet in India to sentimental and to a certain extent practical sympathy for their Mussulman brothers in Turkey. The extent of this sympathy is largely regulated by the priestly hierarchy known as the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema*, which pulls the strings behind the All-India Khilafat Committee, with its country-wide organization. The older and sister organization, the All-India Muslim League, which constituted the Musselman counterpart to the largely Hindu National Congress, and whose aims were more political and more Indian than the religious ones of the Khilafat, has gradually waned in influence, and to such an extent, that this year's annual session of the All-India Muslim League did not take place at all. Its former constituents have been fairly well merged within the ranks of the National Congress and of the Khilafat Committee. Between these two more vigorous bodies, its own significance has become *nil*.

It was formerly held to be a stroke of Mr. Gandhi's inspired statesmanship that united the Hindus and Mussulmans of India in a common struggle with the slogan of "Swaraj and the righting of the Khilafat wrongs." What was at best a mere superficial unity, brought about by the mingling of the waters of two streams, each having a separate source and contrary destination, has been rendered nugatory by the external events of the past year, reacting

upon Indian political life. The military triumph of Mustapha Kemal Pasha, and the dethronement of the traitor Sultan, who was at the same time the Caliph of the world of Islam, was bound to have a repercussion upon Mohammedan sentiment outside of Turkey, to which the religious aspect of this bold step meant more than the political. The real meaning of the appointment of a new Caliph divested of temporal power has been well and aptly characterized as the separation of the Church from the State, of religion from politics by the new Turkish government. Great Britain tried to make capital out of this courageous and necessary step by offering shelter to the ex-Sultan and seeking to foist him upon the Mussulman world as their spiritual head. But the Indian Mussulmans saw through this move and supported the action of Mustapha Kemal. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema did not however, give its sanction unconditionally. The influence of a reactionary body of ecclesiastics always has a baneful effect when brought to bear upon political issues. During the simultaneous session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the All-India Khilafat Conference and the National Congress at Gaya, identical questions of policy and tactics were discussed and decided, and the curious fact is, that the decisions of the Congress did not influence those of the Ulema and Khilafat but *vice versa*. The whole question of Council-entry was postponed by the National Congress until after the decisions of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Khilafat Conference were announced, and even Mr. Das, leader of the liberal intellectuals, declared in his presidential address:

It is needless to point out that, should the Khilafat Conference come to the conclusion that under the present circumstances it would be an offence against their religion to enter the Councils, the Congress would unhesitatingly accept their decision, because no work in this country towards the attainment of Swaraj is possible without the hearty cooperation of both Hindus and Mussulmans.

The debate on the Council-entry resolution was postponed till the fourth day's session of the Congress, in order to await the decision of the Ulema and Khilafat Conference. When given, it was unfavourable, the Ulemas declaring roundly that "even an attempt to stand for election to the Councils, though without the intention of entering them or of taking the oath of allegiance, is forbidden by religion."

The Khilafat Conference was so busy passing resolutions supporting Mustapha Kemal Pasha and upholding his

claims at Lausanne; that the Council-entry resolution was postponed and finally dropped altogether. The Lausanne deadlock reacted in a notable way upon the deliberations of Indian nationalism, and the news of its possible breakdown which came in the midst of them, caused the Khilafat Conference to pass a resolution calling upon all Indian Moslems in the event of war between Turkey and the Allied Powers, to unite "to oppose the hostile forces arrayed against the Turks" and to adopt Civil Disobedience as "the best weapon in their hands to attain the Khilafat demands and to force the hands of the Government."

A similar resolution, urged upon the National Congress in the very midst of the debate on Council-entry, was postponed, and passed at the close of the Congress session in a very diluted form, whereby:

This Congress resolves that the Working Committee do take steps in consultation with the Khilafat Working Committee to secure united action by Hindus and Mussulmans and others to prevent the exploitation of India for any such unjust cause, and to deal with the situation.

Thus, the Khilafat stands committed to declare Civil Disobedience in the event of a new Turkish war, while the Congress has refrained from fully committing itself on this point. The Khilafat Conference also declared for the Boycott of British goods, as well as of schools and law-courts; approved in rather lukewarm fashion of the organization of labour "to propagate among them religious and political affairs," and declared for the collection of ten lakhs of rupees and the enrollment of 50,000 volunteers within three months time.

Both Congress and Khilafat voted to form a Committee to inquire into the causes of Hindu-Moslem friction, and to devise ways and means of drawing the two great religious communities closer in the national struggle. But the deepening of religious issues is indicated by the very significant resolution of the All-India Hindu *Mahasabha*, which also held its annual conference at Gaya, "to organize in all villages and towns Hindu Sabhas (societies) and bands of Hindu volunteers with the object of protecting the Hindu community from attacks regarded to be aggressive and unjust." This means the formation of a Hindu religious organization on aggressive and orthodox lines, similar in spirit to the purely religious Mussulman organization of the Khilafat, and destined perhaps, to clash with it on the

political field, as all such religious bodies inevitably must when permitted to react upon political issues. The growth of political consciousness and of political parties in India has not yet broken up the old religious divisions, where the reactionary and orthodox members of each community are re-assembling their forces for future struggle. This tendency will be aided, unseen, by the Imperialist ruler.

*

The Congress ended, as was to be expected, in a split between the forces of the living from those which clung to the dead past. Mr. C. R. Das and his followers, on the termination of the Congress session, issued a Manifesto, announcing the formation, within the Congress ranks, of the "Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party," based upon "the attainment of Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means, working on the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation." Mr. Das resigned his presidency of the Congress, on the ground that his views did not coincide with those of the majority, but declared his party would continue to work within the Congress until the majority were converted to their viewpoint, meanwhile reserving the right to follow those tactics which seemed best to them. The Executive of the new party numbers among it such men as Mr. C. R. Das, President, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru, V. J. Patel, N. C. Kelker, M. R. Jayakar, C. S. Ranga Iyer, V. Abhayankar etc. etc.,—names which speak volumes to those even slightly acquainted with the Indian nationalist movement. It means that the Left, represented by C. R. Das and the liberal intellectuals, has temporarily joined forces with the Right,—that school of rationalist politicians who have long since headed a revolt away from Congress leading-strings back into the ranks of the cooperating Moderates, and whose philosophy of nationalism is summed up in the phrase "Responsive Cooperation."

The Sradh at Gaya is over, and the door on the past two years of Non-violent Non-cooperation based upon Soul Force is closed and sealed forever. The ghost of Gandhism is released from its earthly moorings, and Indian politics is freed from its spiritual bondage to pursue its temporal course, for better or for worse, towards some kind of Swaraj within or without the British Empire. New forces have been released in the struggle, temporarily confused

and merged, but destined each day to grow more distinct, more conscious of the mission each is to fulfill. The sentimental liberalism of Mr. Das and his disciples has been drowned beneath the advancing wave of bourgeois rationalism, intent upon winning for itself a place in the sun. But the revolutionary energy of the masses is yet to be reckoned with. In the words of the "Open Letter to C. R. Das and His Followers":

There are but two ways ahead: reversion to the Constitutional Democracy of the Liberals, or adoption of more revolutionary methods. . . . Either Mr. Das will soon have to abandon his original position in favour of the "Responsive Cooperation" of the Mahratta Rationalists, or he will have to part company with them in order to organize the third party inside the National Congress,—the party of workers and peasants, which will infuse vigour into the national struggle by means of revolutionary mass-action.

Only the organization of such a mass party can save the Congress from sinking into permanent imbecility and decay, rendered useless on the one hand by the growing importance of the cooperating Moderates, representing the interests of the powerful Indian bourgeoisie, and on the other, by the organization of the Indian workers and peasants to struggle for the improvement of their economic position, abandoning the political arena for a decade to the Home Rulers and adherents of the Liberal League.

CHAPTER XIII.

OPEN LETTER TO C. R. DAS

The 37th Annual Session of the National Congress at Gaya marked the close of an historic period in our struggle for liberation. The social tendencies that constituted the innate weakness of our movement during the last two years, still reign supreme in the Congress. The consequences are easily to be anticipated: Non-cooperation as a political force is dead, that is, that orthodox brand of Non-cooperation which makes religion out of politics and has turned the traditional organ of National Struggle (the Congress) into a prayer-hall and conclave of theologians. This brand of Non-cooperation is dead, notwithstanding the fact that the Die-hards of this school won the day at Gaya. It sounds paradoxical; but it is true none the less.

Although Gaya failed to be as dramatic as Surat, the result has hardly been otherwise. The reactionary elements have gained an apparent ascendancy, not by dint of their own merits, but because the opposition failed to marshal its forces in the proper way, and took its stand on an insecure ground. This is, however, a transition period.

After 1907, the impotency of the Moderates became palpable and the stalwarts of the old Congress fell willing victims to the "rallying" order of Morley. Of course, it is evident that no such glorious fate awaits the orthodox Non-cooperators of the "No-change" party. They may shout at the top of their voices that they do not want such glory; but the truth is that the Government wants their cooperation much less than they want government's favour. So the bankruptcy of die-hard Gandhism will be exposed in a different way, if it is still to be exposed. If in the near future there does not appear in the political field a new party with a clearly formulated programme inspired, not by sloppy sentimentalism, but by a revolutionary social outlook and firm grasp of the situation, the Congress under the leadership of the "victorious" No-change party will sink

into oblivion and imbecility no less despicable than that overtaking the Moderates shortly after the split at Surat. And if such a party does take the field, as is historically inevitable, the apparent triumph of religious quietism in our political movement will be very short lived, and the Congress will be ere long rescued from its rut.

A great crisis has been pressing upon our movement ever since the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress. It would have come to a head probably at Ahmedabad, had not the attention of the country been diverted by the policy of relentless repression, which clapped all the forward looking leaders, including the President-elect of the Congress, into jail. At last the crisis is over. The Congress has succumbed. The crisis lasted too long and therefore, the depression and disintegration have been too great. But the very process of disintegration has at the same time clarified the situation, giving impetus to the energies which will eventually dissipate the depression. New attempts have already been made to resuscitate the Congress. But most of the elements making these attempts are still groping in the dark.

TWO WAYS AHEAD

There are but two ways ahead: reversion to the Constitutional Democracy of the Liberals, or adoption of more revolutionary methods. To choose one of the two ways has been the fundamental issue that gave birth to the controversy that rent the Congress during the last half a year; and it was precisely this problem that had to be solved at Gaya. The victory of the Die-hard quietists signifies that the problem still remains unsolved, at least in part. The intellectually bankrupt lower middle-class is, on the one hand, debarred from the Heavens of Constitutional Democracy, owing to its economic disability, and on the other hand its reactionary social and religious prejudices give it a counter-revolutionary ideology. It is this social element that still holds the balance of power in the Congress ranks. The eventual overthrow of this pernicious influence is conditional upon a clear grouping of elements in the Pro-change Party, which today embraces two centripetal forces, one heading towards Constitutional Democracy in the garb of Rationalism, the other inclined towards a revolutionary outlook, but this inclination is still largely sentimental. This confusion in the Pro-change camp gave a temporary victory

to the tendencies objectively dead, but which nevertheless can still appeal to the imagination of purely sentimental revolutionaries.

There are two tendencies demanding a change of the Congress programme. There is nothing in common between them except that both demand a change. But the character of the change sought for by one is diametrically opposite to that demanded by the other. This was not made clear at Gaya; hence the defeat of the Left Wing led by Chittaranjan Das, which failed to attract under its banner the sentimental revolutionaries in the ranks of the "No-change" party. These elements looked upon the Left Wing with suspicion, because the latter failed to stand out separately from the "Pro-change" party of the Right,—the Mahratta radicals who advocated "Responsive Co-operation." So, it is clear that the orthodox "No-changers" secured not a victory, but a walk-over. This state of affairs will not last. The Left must part company with the Right, and in proportion as it asserts its revolutionary potentiality upon the situation, the Centre will collapse. If the social forces destined to lead our movement in the new historical period are not soon mobilized, Moderatism in the garb of the wordy Extremism of the Mahratta Radicals will reconquer the political field. This will mean a great set-back to the movement. Should this be permitted?

THE THREE SOCIAL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONGRESS

There are three distinct social elements operating in the national movement as represented by the Congress, namely,—the upper middle-class including the intellectuals, the lower middle-class (small traders, petty intellectual workers etc.) and the masses of workers and peasants. The first stands very close to the cooperating Liberals. In fact most of them blundered into the Non-cooperation Movement, and have always lent a rather half-hearted adhesion to it. Their quarrel consists in that the Reforms Act did not make sufficient provision for the interests of their class. Hence their opposition to the Reforms. Today they oppose the Non-cooperation programme, not because it is not revolutionary enough to meet the situation, but because it is not "rational." But there is no such curious thing as a rational revolution, and Swaraj can be won only through a Revolution. An extension of the Reforms, or at the most, something

on the model of the Irish Free State or Egyptian Independence, will satisfy the ambition of this section of our people. They are firm believers in the theories of Democracy, Social Contract, Free Competition, Parliamentarism and all the rest of the paraphernalia of Capitalism, which is breaking down under the pressure of its own contradictions all over the world.

The lower middle-class, apparently led by the petty intellectuals, but in reality dominated by a reactionary religious and theological ideal, is in an unenviable position. Economically it is totally ruined. It has no hope from the present system. No amount of reforms will affect its position. Therefore it talks about a radical change. But a progressive change will not be beneficial for it either, because it will only drag this class down to the level of proletarians. Hence its frantic antipathy towards modern developments. It would like to see the society hark back to those primitive conditions to which it ascribes the glories of the Golden Age. The bankrupt lower middle-class must have a radical change, but its members are against disturbing the social *status quo*. Their position is very equivocal.

Neither of these two middle-class elements represents the interests of the third social factor, which constitutes such a vital part of the nation and which in the last two years has played such an important rôle in the movement. This third factor is the masses of workers and peasants. Everybody of late talks about the "masses." But no middle-class party can be expected to fight under the slogan: "Not the Masses for Revolution, but Revolution for the Masses." Middle-class libertarians will never attain such a revolutionary outlook as to look on the working-class, not as the pawns in the game, but as the very life of our struggle. Therefore, it is inevitable, that the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, who constitute the vast majority of the nation and without whose conscious action Swaraj cannot be won, will be focussed through an independent political party. To raise the standard of this party, the future leader of our struggle for national liberation, is the task objectively undertaken by the Left Wing of the Pro-change Party. It is necessary to face the facts, however unpleasant they may be; we cannot make them non-existent by overlooking them.

THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES WITHIN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

We must recognize the fact that it is the conflict of class interests that simultaneously strengthens and weakens our movement. This lesson ought to have been learnt by all forward looking people by this time. In other words, it must have become evident that India is not free from those inexorable laws of history which give rise to great revolutions in particular epochs. The confusion of the last year, as well as the present decomposition and process of regrouping of forces within the Congress, are brought about by the operation of these laws. Several social elements with discordant interests went into the composition of the Non-cooperation Movement. There were certain things superficially in common; therefore, they could work in apparent harmony for a certain length of time. But the development of the impelling forces is followed by the clarification of the ideology of the movement. The objective of the respective classes becomes clearer; consequently it becomes impossible for them to remain as integral parts of one and the same cohesive political apparatus. It becomes necessary for each of them to formulate its particular aims and aspirations in the shape of a programme. The Congress has never been a compact political organ reflecting an identical social interest. It has become less so in the last years, when the nationalist movement transcended the limits of the so-called "politically-minded" classes.—The movement however, cannot be carried further without cohesive political parties as the vanguards of the several social classes which are objectively antagonistic to the imperialist exploitation. The Congress will serve only as the rallying ground for these nationalist forces, the most revolutionary of which will eventually assume its leadership and bring the struggle for national liberation to the final victory. The present decomposition of the Congress will be followed by the rise of these political parties.

THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLES' PARTY

During the last twelve months, that is ever since the initial enthusiasm began to subside in the movement, the struggle for power has been going on inside the Congress ranks. The three principal social elements that enter into the composition of the Congress, have been struggling to

capture the supremacy. This struggle at last culminated in the split at Gaya. But the present schism in the Congress ranks bases itself upon the conflict between the upper middle-class rationalists and the lower middle-class revivalists. The third element, that is, the toiling masses, which is destined to decide ultimately the fate of the nation, is still practically left out of the struggle. Nevertheless, the fundamental issue involved in the transition through which the Congress is passing, is not the conflict between the upper and lower strata of the middle-class. Neither of these two elements is able or willing to rise up to that height of revolutionary outlook which is required, to drag the Congress out of the miserable rut into which it has sunk under the leadership of the lower middle-class spiritualists, and to save it from the sure reversion to the programme of Constitutional Democracy, which will follow the triumph of upper middle-class rationalism. The problem we are called upon to solve was tersely enunciated by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, when he questioned the ability of the middle-classes to make Non-cooperation effective, and boldly declared that the masses wanted Swaraj more than the bourgeoisie. In short, the historic question put to the revolutionary nationalists today is: *Is purely bourgeois politics capable of developing our struggle for liberation?* The experience of the last two years has amply proved that the answer can be safely given in the negative. Hence it follows that the social basis of the movement must be radically changed. In other words, the change in the Non-cooperation programme must transcend the limits of substituting lower middle-class confusion by upper middle-class radicalism. The change should be so formulated as *actively to involve into the movement those social forces that are bound to be uncompromisingly revolutionary, namely, the workers and peasants*,—those who have nothing to lose, but a world to gain. The future belongs to this element. The time has come for the organization of these objectively revolutionary elements in a political party of its own, which will be the great Peoples' Party of India. The organization of this party, the future leader of the struggle for national independence,—is the task of those who stand for a change, but for a forward looking change in the Congress Programme.

THE PROPRTIED CLASSES ARE THE BASIS
OF THE PRESENT ORDER

You have undertaken this historic mission of liberating our movement from the fetters of middle-class reaction, compromise, hesitation and timidity, in order to transplant it onto the healthy soil of revolutionary mass-action. But you will fail to accomplish this mission if the objective forces asserting themselves on the social background of our movement are not taken into proper and proportionate consideration. There is room for only three parties in the Congress. Two are already in the field. You have to be either the third, that is, the political expression of the working masses, or nothing. Your reluctance to recognize the existence of class-conflict and to admit the inevitability of class-struggle betray the haziness of your social outlook. It behooves a party of those social elements that benefit by class domination, to denounce class-struggle as dangerous to the society, and piously to preach class-collaboration,—but those inspired by the revolutionary ideal of socio-economic liberation for all, cannot subscribe to this ruling-class philosophy without betraying their ideal. Has not Desh-bandhu Das himself declared against substituting the foreign bureaucracy by its native prototype? If he will look a bit deeper into things he will discover who stands behind the bureaucratic governments. It is the *propertied classes*, owning all the means of production and distribution and consequently exploiting the expropriated majority. Therefore by declaring war upon the present governmental system, Mr. Das admits the necessity of destroying the authority of the class that stands behind it; as otherwise the character of the modern bourgeois State cannot be changed, and Mr. Das' socio-political ideal will never come out of the realm of Utopia. We are not manufacturing the spectre of class-war. It is raging in the civilized society, based on private property. We Communists stand for the abolition of classes and consequently of class-struggle; but *classes cannot disappear unless private property is abolished*. And can any reasonable person believe that the class benefiting by the system of private property, will ever consent to its abolition without a struggle, however sanguinary it may be? No amount of humanitarian sermons will induce its members to forego the smallest part of the profits and privileges that accrue from ownership. Hence, to organize the expropriated

and exploited workers and peasants, but not on the principles of class-interests and class-struggle, is to deceive them: to preach to the victims of class tyranny virtuous doctrines of the "Ideal of Human Unity," "class collaboration for the common benefit of the community" etc. etc. only perpetuates class domination.

We dwell somewhat at length on the question of classes and class-struggle, not that we give precedence to the Civil War over the National War, but because your party entertains a very subjective and prejudiced attitude on the matter. This constitutes a serious weakness for the young party, which thus fails to strike an anchor in the depths of the society. If you propose to lead a certain class of our society in the National War, you cannot do so without defining clearly how the *interests* of the particular class will be advanced by the successful prosecution of the National War. The Non-cooperation Movement so far failed to do so: hence its failure to secure permanently the active support of the masses. Your party should not commit the same mistake if it is to carry the struggle further on.

THE ISSUE OF COUNCIL-ENTRY IS A SECONDARY ONE

Now, lamentable aversion to class conflict led the pioneers of your party somewhat astray. Lack of realistic vision prevented you from grasping the true significance of the breach in the Congress ranks. Consequently, you greatly prejudiced your otherwise strong position by an equivocal attitude towards the radicals of the extreme Right. It is deplorable that you forced the issue at Gaya on the secondary question of Council-entry. You surely do not believe that the future of our movement depends on whether we contest the coming elections or not! Your attitude towards the question of Council-entry has its tactical value, but this tactical value also becomes problematical, if there does not exist a revolutionary party which will send its members to the polls with a concerted programme, and will back their actions in the Councils by means of mass action outside. Then, the tactics of "wrecking the Councils" presupposes the chances of returning a majority, which are not very bright. So long as there does not exist a well organized party, it is premature for revolutionaries to make the question of Council-entry the point of issue. None but the party with a revolutionary outlook and a large following

among the masses can carry on successfully the tactics of "wrecking and obstruction." Otherwise the consequence is likely to be reprehensible, namely, the "responsive co-operation" of the Mahratta Party, which is hardly distinguishable from the Liberals. The difference between the "responsive cooperators" and the Liberals is as fictitious as that between the Tories and Liberals in the British Parliament concerning Colonial affairs. But do we need the luxury of such party politics when the playground is but an empty show?

Your leaders failed to disassociate themselves from the "Pro-change" elements of the Right Wing because they did not recognize the significance of the diversity of social interests behind the two wings of the "Pro-change" party. Had your programme not revolved on the pivot of Council-entry, its other clauses would have attracted all the available revolutionary elements within and without the Congress, and the Congress today would have stood clear of the stifling atmosphere of lower middle-class reaction and inanity. Given a clear understanding of the cross-currents of the social forces actuating our movement, you are the vanguard of the Revolutionary Mass Party, which is the crying need of the day, and which alone will save the Congress from the disgraceful fate of sinking into the neo-liberalism of the Mahratta politicians on the one hand, and on the other, from the equally disgraceful fate of surrendering itself to the imbecile leadership of ultra-Gandhism, which unconsciously plays the rôle of the handmaid of social reaction.

You should have made your position at Gaya unequivocal. You should have repudiated openly any possible relation based upon identity of interests with those advocates of "change" who, in the name of rationalism and practical politics, would turn the Congress into a respectable party of the upper middle-class in tussle with the big bourgeoisie. Then the reactionary religious nationalists would not have had the chance of rallying a large section of the sentimentally revolutionary element by artfully harping on the tune of "the masses." But the shallowness of their affection for the masses was exposed by their failure to respond to the revolutionary note struck by Mr. Das in his statement: "we do not want a bourgeois republic." And they become the standard bearers of rank reaction when, through the

mouth of Rajagopalacharya, on the authority of the Mahatma, they denounce "any scheme to make political use of the workers." What a preposterous theory! But everyone pretending to advocate the cause of the masses, while blinking at the ugly features of class interests, eventually lands in this reprehensible position.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SPLIT AT GAYA

The net result at Gaya however, was that in the din of the clash between upper- and middle-class interests, the revolutionary voice of the workers and peasants raised through the de-classed Chittaranjan, was drowned. Unfortunately the fight did not take place on the issue of *bourgeois politics* versus *mass politics* but of upper middle-class politics as against lower middle-class confusion as well as rowdysm. Apparently the latter has won, but it is the contrary as a matter of fact. The upper middle-class rationalists of the Mahratta school will pursue their own line of action, in spite of the Congress decision, and the latter will be left without any intellectual leadership on the one hand, and bereft of revolutionary dynamics on the other. Meanwhile, no clear avenue has been cut out for the only truly revolutionary forces to assert themselves upon the movement. If the next twelve months are allowed to pass by without seeing the growth of a Left Wing Party with a clear consciousness of its own social nature, we can be sure that in its next annual session, the Congress will be hardly distinguishable from the Liberal League or the Home Rule show of Mrs. Besant.

The voice that spoke through Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and his associates is presumably embodied in the Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party, which has been inaugurated by issuing the manifesto, signed by a number of the leaders of the "Pro-change" faction. But in reality, the Deshbandhu with his revolutionary following again finds himself in the minority, because the majority of the new party, which appears to be formed under his leadership, subscribes much less to the socio-political views of Mr. Das than do the die-hards of the "No-change" cult, who remain in the control of the Congress machinery. The result of such a combination can and will be,—either that Mr. Das will soon have to abandon his original position in favour of the "Responsive Cooperation" of the Mahratta rationalists,—or that he will

have to part company with them in order to organize the third party inside the National Congress,—the party which will reflect clearly the uncompromisingly revolutionary elements of our society, and which will infuse vigour into the national struggle by means of revolutionary mass action.

THE NECESSITY FOR A SECOND SPLIT

This equivocal position will be cleared by a second split in the Congress camp. To force this inevitable separation of the revolutionary forces from the embrace of the Right Wing, which will bring the Congress back practically under the influence of Liberalism, is the task before you. Only by breaking away from the Right Wing, which in the name of rationalism has repudiated the tactics of militant Non-cooperation, your party will stand out as the vanguard of the National Army, the leader of the National Struggle, and in this rôle will liberate the Congress from the control of the religious die-hards, by attracting to its ranks all the sincere elements left in the folds of the "No-change" party.

February 3rd, 1923.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF MR. DAS

On the eve of the Gaya Congress, Mr. Das published his sensational programme calling for the destruction of the Reform Councils, the Boycott of British goods, and the organization of labour and peasant societies with the object of preparing the country for what was termed "the final blow," namely, a complete and protracted National Strike, accompanied by the simultaneous and wholesale resignation of services under Government all over the country (especially in the ranks of the Police and Army), and a general declaration of Civil Disobedience in the form of Non-payment of Taxes. By this series of steps, as outlined in his short-lived organ, *The Bangalar Katha*, did Desh-bandhu Das and his coterie of personal followers propose to restore life to the fast-ebbing national movement and to attain the rapid consummation of Swaraj. This skeleton programme called further for the formation of an Asiatic Federation, the organization of foreign centres of Congress Propaganda to enlist "the support of all lovers of freedom in all free countries," and for the drafting of a Swaraj Constitution which would fully define the goal towards which Indian Nationalism was striving.

The country had little time to discuss the project in full, launched as it was within a few weeks of the annual session of the National Congress, whose function it was to adopt a programme of action for the ensuing year. What comment there was time for, concerned itself more with that other programme, published about the same time, and precipitated upon the country in the third week of December through the dubious connivance of Reuter,—we refer to the Programme of Social Democracy, drawn up for consideration of the 37th Congress by the Communist Party of India. If the bureaucracy had hoped to kill two birds with one stone,—to convict Mr. Das of being in collusion with Indian Bolshevism and thereby damn his programme in

advance as it sought to damn that of the *Vanguard*, it was doomed to disappointment. The Deshbandhu was acquitted by the unanimous voice of his own countrymen of being in collusion with anybody but himself,—but it was nevertheless considered by those who differed from him, that his ideas bordered dangerously near to Socialism, if not dipped in the deeper dye of Bolshevism. His repeated protestations that he stood for the Constructive Programme, subject to the alterations mentioned above, and his declarations of faith in the revival of cottage industries, as exemplified in the sacred Charka, could not save him from the taint of dangerous heterodoxy. His frequent references to a need for change in tactics made him an object of suspicion to the High Priests of orthodox Gandhism, while his apocryphal utterances anent the "masses" alarmed the propertied classes and brought him into the limelight of official displeasure.

Thus, on the eve of Gaya, Mr. Das stood practically alone with his own conscience,—no party had yet rallied to his banner, though the air was thick with speculation,—and what he said and did may be regarded for all practical purposes as the utterances and acts of an individual mind, undeterred and uninfluenced by party responsibilities and allegiances. All factions awaited his Presidential Address at Gaya,—here was the key which would unlock the mystery of his intentions and reveal the full purpose of the new leader. Negotiations behind the scenes there must have been and were, on the part of those discontented elements seeking a new standard to rally round, but as to which of those elements, exclusive of the rest, would relieve the isolation of the Deshbandhu and elect him their chief, Gaya alone would determine.

The Presidential Speech at Gaya is a monumental record of Mr. Das' legal mind at war with his poet's soul. It is the *Götterdämmerung*, where the Gods of the Earth and Heavens wrestle in titanic conflict for supremacy. Beginning with an eloquent exposition of historical precedents, a host of facts is marshalled before his thousands of auditors (and for the benefit of the listening Bureaucratic Ear), to prove the legality of Revolution,—the Deshbandhu proceeds to prove, by another set of historical facts, the utter futility of exercising this indubitably legal right to rebel, and ends in a grandiose and self-contradictory climax,

which seeks to demonstrate that India will succeed in doing that which history has failed to furnish any precedent for,—the conquest of Swaraj by Non-violence, such as will start a new chapter of human relationships and usher in a new historical era of peaceful revolutions.

The inaugural address may be taken as the complete expression of the Deshbandhu's individual philosophy and political ideology, worked over for many weeks, with meticulous and loving care. It is likewise the last expression of pure Deshbandhuism, since events following rapidly on the conclusion of the Congress session swept Mr. Das and his personal devotees into the strong current of party politics, where his dominant personality no longer reigned supreme. A study of the Gaya Presidential Address is, therefore, a revelation of the full mind and heart of Chittaranjan Das, an authentic document of his own making, at what may be regarded as the turning-point in his career.

There is little that is new there. His speech at Dehra Dun, the statement to the press at Amraoti and statement of policy in Calcutta appear to have been incorporated bodily in this wider and all-comprehensive document, wherein its author conscientiously attempts to indicate a new path for the national movement to follow. Of greater interest than its objective statements are the subjective forces of his own mind that struggle for supremacy,—now the cool, reasoning brain of the lawyer,—now the passionate warmth of the rebellious man,—again the imaginative idealism of the romantic poet. In the beginning, the lawyer reigns supreme, and Deshbandhu the Barrister treats his hearers to a masterly exposition of "Law and Order" as the basis of all tyranny, and the legal right of the subject, as furnished by good historical precedents, to rebel against the tyrannical dictates of this doctrine. His arguments are irrefutable, and one imagines they are intended, less for his Khaddar-clad auditors, the majority of whom perhaps could not understand the language he addressed them in, than for that august tribunal of Bourgeois Justice and Morality, as represented by the very Western Civilization and History that he proceeded later to hold up to such scorn. Here spoke the product of bourgeois English education, quoting English historical precedents to substantiate his country's claims to freedom, and hoisting the British rulers of India on their own petard, so to speak, by proving from the

Revolutions of 1640—1688 the legal right of a people to rebel. He concludes this part of his theses as follows:

This then, is the history of the freedom movement in England. The conclusion is irresistible, that it is not by acquiescence in the doctrines of law and order that the English people have obtained the recognition of their fundamental rights. It follows, firstly, that no regulation is law unless it is based on the consent of the people; secondly, where such consent is wanting, the people are under no obligation to obey; thirdly, where such laws profess to attack their fundamental rights, the subjects are entitled to compel their withdrawal by force or insurrection; fourthly, that law and order is and always has been, a plea for absolutism, and lastly, there can be neither law nor order before the real reign of law begins.

To all of which arguments, there is and can be no answer, and were British rule in India a mere question of legal quibbling, the representatives of that haughty Empire must withdraw in confusion, and leave India bag and baggage for sheer lack of any adequate defence. But unfortunately, British rule in India is based, not upon the justification of law-courts, but upon the strength of armies, and Mr. Das would have done better to have based his arguments upon the latter supposition, or to have saved his breath.

However, having concluded this phase of his pleading, Mr. Das takes his stand on another ground to prove the right of the Indian people to freedom,—this time, not by historical precedent, but by "sacred and inalienable right." And once more, to the confusion of his Christian preceptors, he quotes the Bible for authority, and the words of Christ. Here he warms to his task, and plunges into a dissertation on the sacred and inalienable right, not alone of individuals, but of whole peoples, to resist unjust oppression and "to take their stand upon Truth":

For myself, I oppose the pretensions of "law and order," not on historical precedent, but on the ground that it is the inalienable right of every individual and of every nation to stand on truth and to offer a stubborn resistance to ruthless laws. The development of nationality is a sacred task—if therefore, you interpose a doctrine to impede that task, why the doctrine must go.

By this narrow bridge, Mr. Das the lawyer passes over into the precincts of Deshbandhu Das, the Patriot and Friend of the Country. The realms of dry historical facts are forsaken for that richer field of political speculation and philosophy already enriched by the minds of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and his successors. But the tools of the lawyer

are not abandoned,—the appearance of proving his point by logical deduction, the falling back upon authority and precedent, this time, not mundane, but divine. The next part of the Address is devoted to an exposition of Mr. Das' theory of Nationality, wherein western ideas and education are forgotten, and the Vedanta school of Spiritual Imperialism is given full play. The patriot, the poet and the mystic are happily combined and Mr. Das becomes once more intelligible to his own people as he soars into the realms of Metaphysics:

What is the ideal which we must set before us? The first and foremost is the ideal of Nationalism. Now what is Nationalism? It is, I conceive, a process through which a nation expresses itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition, but as part of a Great Scheme by which, in seeking its own expression and identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realization of other nations as well. Diversity is as real as unity. And in order that the unity of the world may be established, it is essential that each nationality should proceed on its own line and find fulfillment in self-realization.

Mr. Das then goes on to declare that his ideal of Nationality must not be confused with that conception which exists in Europe today:

Nationalism in Europe is an aggressive nationalism, a selfish nationalism, a commercial nationalism of gain and loss,—that is European Nationalism.

And in contradistinction to this horrid spectre, he conjures up a vision more pleasing and familiar to his auditors, fed with the same spoon from other hands,—that of the Nationality of spiritual India which is to be realized through Soul Force, Non-violence and Love, and which will save the world.

Throughout the pages of Indian history I find a great Purpose unfolding itself. The great Indian Nationality is in sight. It already stretches its hands across the Himalayas not only to Asia, but to the whole world, not aggressively, but to demand its recognition, and to offer its contribution. True development of the Indian nation must necessarily lie in the path of Swaraj. A question has often been asked, as to what is Swaraj. Swaraj is indefinable, and is not to be confused with any particular system of government. Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind, and must necessarily cover the whole life history of a nation. Nationalism is the same question as that of Swaraj.

Here surely, is the transcendentalism of Mahatma Gandhi, highly flattering to a people accustomed to think of itself as a special creation of Providence, charged with

a spiritual mission to save mankind from the materialistic abyss towards which it is speeding. The Mahatma was wont to declare "First realize yourself, then Swaraj will come of itself"; the Deshbandhu affirms: "Let each nation realize itself, then Swaraj will come,—the Swaraj of entire Humanity." The soul of the poet had not purged itself of the mysticism bred of solitary confinement, nor of the tendency to make politics a metaphysical adjunct of speculative philosophy. Mr. Das belongs to the school of Transcendentalists who have picturesquely adorned the pages of Indian history in her transition from mediævalism to modernism and are now rapidly becoming extinct in the march of events.

We cannot leave the subject of the Presidential Address without reference to a few more pronouncements which provide a key to the ideology of India's new leader. Mr. Das reaffirmed in strong words his faith in the doctrine and tactics of Non-violent Non-cooperation, and gave as his reasons therefore, "apart from any question of principle," the "utter futility of revolutions brought about in the past by force and violence." Taking the French, American, English, Italian and Russian Revolutions as historical precedents (the ghost of the lawyer still lingers), he proceeds to demonstrate to his own satisfaction and presumably to that of his auditors, that it is impossible to attain Swaraj by violent means. (Swaraj here taken in its mystical sense as described above.) Says Mr. Das:

I maintain that no people has yet succeeded in winning Freedom by force and violence. The use of violence degenerates those who use it, and it is not easy for them, having seized power, to surrender it. Non-violence does not carry with it that degeneration which is inherent in the use of violence.

He seeks to prove this assertion by a hasty and dogmatic analysis of those great historical convulsions described as "national" revolutions, which in the past have ushered in new political institutions to correspond with fundamental changes in the economic and social orders. The vast upheaval in France from 1789 to 1812 means nothing more to Mr. Das than a struggle "as to which of the various sections shall rule France." He fails to glimpse beneath the apparent clash of individual hatreds and ambitions, the grim struggle between two opposing and mutually-exclusive classes,—the corrupt monarchy and decayed feudal order on the one hand, and on the other, the rising bourgeoisie whose

allies were drawn from the ranks of the exploited peasantry and city-proletariat. Against this struggle, the whole of Absolutist Europe ranged itself, for the challenge of the French bourgeoisie was a challenge against feudal absolutism and corruption wherever it existed, and so we find Civil War and Terror within, accompanied by invasion, starvation and blockade from without. Napoleonism was the answer of the new social order, determined to maintain itself; and the overthrow of Napoleon, followed by the reaction that overswept Europe could not delay forever the inevitable triumph of the French bourgeoisie, and of the bourgeoisie in every country. The Great French Revolution, the English Revolutions of 1640—88, the American and the Italian Revolutions were successful, in that a new class came to power, shaping its own political institutions in accordance with the dictates of its economic needs and interests. Modern bourgeois democracy is not the Utopia dreamed of by Jean Jacques Rousseau, nor the abstract Reign of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Reason proclaimed by the Jacobins,—but it remains nevertheless, the logical heir and successor of mediæval Feudal Autocracy which reigned in Europe before its advent, and it represents one step forward on the road of progress that will lead mankind to its ultimate goal. The victory of the bourgeoisie over feudalism is but the prelude to another and fiercer class-struggle now being waged between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and which must end in the victory of the latter and the abolition of all classes with the institution of private property which gave them birth. The present-day politics of Europe bears this contention out.

Such is History as viewed in the light of the Marxian dialectics, which reads success or failure, not in the approximation to an abstract Ideal, but in the development of new productive forces and the corresponding rise of new social classes, ideas and institutions. The faulty and shallow analysis which Mr. Das and all bourgeois libertarians bring to bear upon the great revolutions of the past is the result of their lack of understanding of the underlying social and economic forces involved. We can expect nothing better when we read, further on in the Presidential Address, that Mr. Das "looks upon History as the Revelation of God to Man." With such an attitude towards History, where every event is a Special Dispensation of

Providence and not the result of material economic laws, no wonder that Mr. Das fails to draw useful analogies from the great revolutionary movements of the past to apply to the Indian struggle, and no wonder he declares that India will not repeat the history of other nations, but will offer the world something unique.

And yet Deshbandhu Das and his associates are playing out their unconscious rôle as the leaders of India's bourgeois revolution against the decayed feudal autocracy of the native princes, and the Absolutism of the Imperial overlord. The Congress and its leaders are but the tools and instruments of those powerful social forces that have been silently developing themselves within the past century,—a native bourgeoisie, reinforced by a rebellious peasantry deprived of its land, and by an exploited industrial proletariat, the product of machine-industry and a ruined system of handicrafts. The struggle of these social classes for supremacy is masked beneath vague phrases and idealistic abstractions about "Swaraj," "Self-Realization" and "Truth," even as the struggle of the French bourgeoisie, exploited peasantry and city-proletariat was concealed beneath the eloquent perorations on "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and his followers, despite their sentimental Utopianism, are the Dantons, the Patrick Henrys and the Garibaldis of the Indian Revolution, whose unexpressed and as yet half-conscious purpose it is to usher into power the Indian bourgeoisie.

But is not Mr. Das something more, one is tempted to inquire, in the light of his eloquent pronouncements on the subject of "the masses" whose cause he champions so valiently against the "classes." Is his rôle to be not that of 18th century Republicanism of America and France, but of a 20th century Messiah of the masses? How nobly he champions their cause in his Speech at Gaya, and on innumerable occasions before and after. Does he not say:

Many of us believe that the Middle-Class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If today the British Parliament grants provincial autonomy in the Provinces with responsibility in the Central Government, I for one will protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle-classes. I do not believe that the middle-classes will then part with their power. How will it profit India if, in place

of the white bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian bureaucracy of the middle-classes? I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world,—Swaraj by Non-violence and Swaraj by the People.

And how does Mr. Das propose to realize this "Swaraj of, by, and for the people?" By the revival of the ancient Indian *Panchayet*, or Village Community, which he terms "real democracy." According to his idea, "the most advanced thought of Europe is turning from the false individualism on which European culture and institutions are based to what I know to be the ideal of the ancient village organization of India." We do not know if Mr. Das confuses, in his ignorance of the facts, the idea of the Soviet system with that of the Panchayet. If he does, we would point out to him that the analogy lies, not between the Soviet and the Panchayet, but between the Panchayet and the ancient Russian village *Mir*, which like the old Teutonic *Mark*, constituted the basis of primitive village self-government. Such "ideal" democracies are to be found in the early history of every country, not alone in India, during the stage when primitive agriculture was the prevailing mode of production and collective ownership prevailed, in that remote past before Feudalism with its complicated social and political institutions, superseded this very primitive stage of decentralized government. It is useless to discuss the kind of democracy enjoyed by these village communities, except to observe that the system of private property which was to succeed collective property, grew out of them, through the intervening stages of Feudalism. Useless to discuss it, we say, since even were it desirable, how were it possible to revive this archaic institution, which may have corresponded to the economic development of our remote ancestors, but which cannot possibly meet the manifold requirements of this twentieth century world in which we live, with its internationalized system of production, distribution and exchange? If de-centralization is desired, why seek to revive the Panchayet? Its own natural extinction in the process of evolving society is the best proof of its unfitness to survive. The very desire to hark back to an imagined Golden Age is but an indication of Utopianism on the part of Mr. Das and his fellow-worshippers of India's mythical past, which savours

strongly of reaction. Did not Jean Jacques Rousseau paint in glowing colours, the "ideal democracy" of the primitive American Indians whom those other seekers after Democracy, the Fathers of the American Revolution, were busily engaged in killing off to make room for themselves and their more advanced institutions?

But Mr. Das goes further in his advocacy of the cause of the "masses." In his Presidential Speech, as well as on other occasions, he specifically urged the organization of labour and peasant societies "to further the cause of Swaraj," and earned thereby the appellation of "Bolshevik." We reproduce his words on this subject from the Gaya Address, in order to discover if such an adjective is justified:

I am further of the opinion that the Congress should take up the work of Labour and Peasant organization. Is the service of this special interest in any way antagonistic to the service of Nationalism? To find bread for the poor, to secure justice to a class of people who are engaged in a particular class or avocation,—how is that work any different from the work of attaining Swaraj? We have delayed the matter already too long. If the Congress fails to do its duty, we may expect to find organizations set up in the country by Labourers and Peasants detached from you, disassociated from the cause of Swaraj, which will inevitably bring within the arena of the peaceful revolution class struggles and the war of special interests. If the object of the Congress be to avoid this disgraceful issue, let us take Labour and the Peasantry in hand, and let us organize them from the point of view of their own interest and also from the point of view of the higher ideal which demands the satisfaction of their special interests and the devotion of such interests to the cause of Swaraj.

We think Mr. Das should be absolved from all allegation of Bolshevism, and even of a pink shade of Socialism. What he advocates here is pure Hedonism,—“pig-philosophy,”—let us help Labour in order to secure their help and to prevent their being used against us. No doubt this is put in such a utilitarian form in order to convince the more bourgeois among his audience,—but it is the special pleading of what is at best, a bourgeois Utopian Liberal directed towards a bourgeoisie more hardheaded, less romantic and sentimental than himself. That is the essential quandary of Mr. Das,—to be a humanitarian liberal intellectual, fallen among orthodox Gandhians and “Responsive Cooperators,”—each faction listening critically to all he has to say, ready to follow him if he voiced their particular aspirations and unexpressed interests, but equally ready to pounce upon him and rend him to

pieces, should he violate any one of their cherished traditions or prove himself the standard bearer of a new economic class, until present writing unrepresented in those chaste deliberations. We allude to the turbulent class of the industrial workers and landless agricultural proletariat, whose incipient spirit of revolt against unbearable economic conditions constitutes the only real menace to the established order of things in India, and upon whose dynamic power of mass-action the Congress seeks to base its tactics of Civil Disobedience, without committing itself to a Programme of Economic Reform, which might antagonize the vested interests behind the bourgeois national movement.

*

The Inaugural Address at Gaya closed with Deshbandhu Das, the Poet and Sentimentalist, riding in the saddle of Pegasus, with the discomfited Barrister lost amid the cloud-pictures of an India re-born, waging "spiritual warfare" against the unnamed Foe,—a warfare waged by "spiritual soldiers" free from all anger, hatred, pettiness, meanness and falsehood. A quotation from the "Prometheus Unbound" of that other poet-mystic and Knight-errant of Liberty, Percy Bysshe Shelley, constituted the climax and close of an undeniably eloquent oration, which, equally undeniably, is a masterpiece of contradictions and sentimental confusion.

The dye was cast. It remained for those who had heard, to choose sides and elect their leader; either from among the doughty champions of No-Change or the Don Quixote of Pro-Change *cum grano salo*. The week of discussion and resolution-making came to an end, and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Friend of the Country and Champion of the Masses, found himself the head of a new party called the "Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party," pledged to work within the Congress for the achievement of Swaraj by non-violent means, but along the lines of its own Programme, which it was announced, would be drawn up and submitted to the public for approval in the early months of the ensuing year of 1923. Mr. Das, finding himself and his party in the minority, honourably resigned his post of Congress President, and betook himself to a tour of the country, for the rallying of his forces and the prosecution of the programme he espoused, whose principle clauses, as announced before the Congress-session, included the

Capture of the Reform Councils, to mend or end them, the Boycott of British Goods, and the Organization of Peasant and Labour Unions, with the object of declaring a National Strike for the speedy attainment of Swaraj.

The names of those who rallied to Mr. Das' side and swelled the ranks of the New Party included as a preponderating majority, that group of "Responsive Cooperators" who, in various provinces, had been long and vainly chafing against the leading-strings of orthodox Gandhism, and who beheld in this eloquent exponent of "Pro-Change" a Captain who would lead them on to storm the citadel of the Reform Councils. While the question of Council-entry may have been a secondary consideration in Mr. Das' Programme, the whole issue of the Gaya Congress turned upon this disputed point, and to the new faction which unexpectedly swelled the ranks of the "Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party," this question was all-important and supreme. Wherefore we find that by sheer force of numbers, they overwhelm Mr. Das, and make this point supreme for him as well. It begins to figure in every speech and declaration of policy as the decisive point at issue, on the part of the leaders of the new party. On the other point,—that of the organization of the Indian Workers and Peasants,—the statement of Mr. N. C. Kelker, one of the Chiefs-of-Staff of the New Party and veteran leader of the Tilak School of "Responsive Cooperation," is exceedingly interesting. In an article called "The New Party," published in the *Mahratta* of January 14th, 1923, the first comprehensive statement of the purpose and intentions of this organization is given, from the viewpoint of that rationalist faction which constitutes its chief strength. Mr. Kelker's views about Labour, as compared with those of Mr. Das, are significant:

The new party will, I think, whole-heartedly favour the formation of labour unions and peasant unions. And while the formation of cooperative societies may represent its constructive activity, its destructive activity may, if occasion demands it, be represented by the advocacy of labour strikes for a just cause, and the non-payment of unjust taxes or cesses by the peasants, not necessarily in the big name of Swarajya, but as a legitimate measure of resistance to unlawful acts of authority.

This measured statement of the case comes like a cold douche after the warm-hearted advocacy of the Deshbandhu, and should have somewhat prepared the unwary for a further shock that came towards the end of January in the

form of a Statement by the first Convention of the Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party on the Rights of Private Property. This statement takes the form of a special clause in the first draft of the Party Programme that "*private and individual property will be recognized, maintained, and protected, and the growth of individual wealth, both movable and immovable, will be permitted and encouraged.*" This clause, it is remarked by contemporary journals, "seems to have been particularly included in order to counteract the statements made in some quarters that the Non-cooperation Movement represented a form of Bolshevism." But the fact that such a statement was published, far in advance of any other clause of the Party's programme, is an important indication of the true nature of the men who lead it. It is a frank declaration of class-affiliation and class-consciousness on the part of the rising Indian bourgeoisie, whose special interests the Swaraj Party is dedicated to defend. Under the influence and pressure of this class, the school of liberal intellectuals to which Mr. Das belongs, is being willy-nilly converted from the erstwhile Champion of the exploited masses, into the Protector of bourgeois property rights. This is indeed a metamorphosis little expected on the part of those who are carried away by the eloquent speeches of the Deshbandhu in the cause of Labour and the Indian masses, but not very surprising to those who have learned to draw a hard, clear line between sentimentality on one hand, and class-interest on the other. The presence of a class-conscious bourgeois party within the ranks of the National Congress is rapidly beginning to crystallize the political ideology of the Non-cooperation Movement as a whole. The leaders of the new party are determined to protect their class-interest from the very outset against the rising flood-tide of mass-energy that may some day find an outlet in revolution. The day is fast approaching when Mr. Das must either abandon his own party and the social class to which he belongs, to throw in his lot with a purely proletarian movement conducted on the lines of class-struggle against capitalist exploitation, both foreign and native, or to give up altogether his sentimental effusions about the masses, and take his stand unequivocally by the side of the propertied classes.

The New Party has been captured by a very clear-headed set of individuals who have long been the standard-

bearers of political rationalism inside the Congress ranks, and who will do their best to guide the movement back into the folds of Parliamentary and Constitutional Agitation, where they will eventually become His Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition. The difference between "Responsive Cooperation" and the Cooperating Moderates is slight indeed. Mr. Das now finds himself in the anomalous position of being the nominal head of a Party which will end by negating the very principles of Non-cooperation upon which it was originally founded. As he was isolated on the eve of Gaya,—a solitary figure of dreams and illusions, so is he isolated now,—pushed into a minority within the ranks of his own party, whose guidance has passed into other hands. Deshbandhu Das may be no less the Friend of the Country, no less the Champion of the oppressed masses than he was before his spiritual kidnapping by the Responsive Cooperators. But he is caught upon the horns of a dilemma which corresponds to the poles of his own temperament,—the lawyer in him struggled to escape from the metaphysical toils of orthodox Gandhism and so fell into the meshes of bourgeois Rationalism, against which his poet's soul rebels. He still talks about "the masses," still dreams of the coming of an Indian Millenium wherein peace and prosperity shall descend upon the people through the medium of the village Panchayet. Even in his most recent utterances before the third session of the All-India Trade Union Congress, celebrated in Lahore towards the end of March and over which he presided, he declared:

If the middle-classes ever win Swaraj, and I live to see that day, it will be my lot to stand by the workers and peasants and to lead them on to wrest power from the hands of the selfish classes.

But ere this day dawns, the metamorphosis of Mr. Das from bourgeois liberal intellectual and Don Quixote of the Masses into a true leader of the Indian working-class must be complete.

CHAPTER XV. PERSPECTIVES

The decline of Non-cooperation promises to deliver the leadership of the national movement to Liberalism. This has been the outstanding feature of the movement during the last several months, and today it is a *fait accompli*. The petty bourgeoisie no longer occupies the centre of the political stage as was the case till Non-cooperation committed suicide at Bardoli. The opponent that the government has to contend with today, is the big bourgeoisie. The stiffening of the attitude of the Liberals in the Councils is remarkable. Out of the ruins of Non-cooperation is rising a new political party which differs from the Co-operating Liberals only in words. The transcendental politics of Non-cooperation is being replaced by the doctrines of bourgeois democracy. The confusion has been cleared, and the movement is entering a new stage of development.

The process of historic development does not always follow a straight line. It is often zigzag. It must be more so in India where the growth of economic forces has been seriously hampered during the last century and a half. The development of the Indian national struggle must be marked by great ups and downs, because of the fact that its social background is very mixed. The collapse of Non-cooperation, however, indicates the clarification of the ideology of the movement. That which looks like a defeat today is in reality a step forward, because the national movement is at last feeling ground under its feet. It no longer floats in the air. Imperialism will find a more powerful foe in bourgeois radicalism than in petty bourgeois revivalism. It should not be imagined that we for a moment forget the immense revolutionary possibility with which the Non-cooperation Movement was fraught in its earlier days. But there is no use basing our calculations upon

something which does not exist today. On the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress, Non-cooperation was a powerful movement. But its power was not in its petty-bourgeois leadership, nor in its reactionary social philosophy. It was powerful on account of its following among the rebellious masses. This could not be said of the Non-Cooperation Movement at Gaya, nay even several months earlier. In the test of actual fight it had proved itself incapable of leading its powerful following. Devoid of its revolutionary mass character, it stood without any potentiality. The apparent victory at Gaya was won by dint of the momentum of past glories. But in the absence of a conscious leadership of the working-class, bourgeois radicalism is sure to assert its revolutionary significance, however slim it may be. This is precisely what has happened in the Indian National Movement. The next stage of the movement will be determined by this fact. Bourgeois democracy will be the guiding principle of Indian nationalism, till the rise of a great revolutionary party of the workers and peasants. And the curious part of the thing is that the party which is going to assume the lead during this intervening period, still entertains prejudices against the task it is historically called upon to perform. The reason for this contradiction is again to be found in the confused social background. The radicals, who are going to revolutionize bourgeois nationalism, are not yet completely free from the heritage of social reaction. They will play their historic rôle effectively, only when they are drawn entirely within the political orbit of the big bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the fullest assertion of the latter's revolutionary significance will be aided by the ideological services of the former. The new stage of the movement will be marked by the process of fusion of the two elements of the bourgeoisie proper, namely the capitalists and their ideological counter-part, the radicals.

The growing non-official opposition inside the Legislatures, and the rise of the Swaraj Party are the unmistakable indications of the new trend in Indian politics. The fact that the bourgeois politics of "fighting negotiation" or "responsive cooperation" promises to be the dominating feature of the national movement does not however, mean that petty bourgeois Extremism will be altogether eliminated from the field. On the contrary, the collapse of

orthodox Non-cooperation, and the passing of the leadership into the hands of the bourgeoisie, will bring the lower middle-class, the social factor behind unadulterated Non-cooperation, face to face with two alternatives, namely degeneration or revolution. The process of degeneration will be expressed through such futile attempts as retirement into the shell of Spiritualism, opposition to modern industrialism by means of the *Charka*, the pathetic theory of "back to the villages" and general apathy. The revolutionary spirit will be vented through the desperate means of terrorism; but the process of proletarianization can be expected to widen the psychological horizon of the de-classed intellectuals, who will swell the ranks of a really revolutionary party with the workers and peasants as its social foundation. Therefore, the decomposition of Non-cooperation delivers the leadership of the movement immediately to the bourgeois Liberals reinforced by the radical intellectuals, but at the same time releases a considerable revolutionary element from the spell of a confused ideology. In other words, the decomposition of the Centre may result in the shifting of the pendulum for the time being towards the Right, but also gives birth to a Left Wing which will soon assert itself on the situation. Then, when the economic dependence of the Right Wing on British capital is taken into consideration, the transitoriness of its leadership becomes apparent. Therefore, the decline of Non-cooperation and the temporary triumph of bourgeois Liberalism both make for one and the same end, namely, the crystallization of a revolutionary leadership in the struggle for national freedom. The reactionary social outlook and doctrines of Non-cooperation prevented the rise of this much-needed leadership. The triumph of Liberalism will divest the national movement of all the imaginary halo of idealism. It will soon be clear that "Freedom" means the freedom of the national bourgeoisie to occupy the position of the imperialist rulers. The Indian bourgeoisie craves for this freedom, not to revive the one-time "Golden Age," which corresponds to the mythical Swaraj preached by the orthodox Non-cooperators, but to avail themselves of the benefits of the modern means of capitalist production. This realistic programme of nationalism will wake up the de-classed visionaries, and help them have a proper perspective on the situation. On the other hand, the development of

capitalism will be inevitably followed by the proletariat assuming an independent part in politics. These two revolutionary elements, namely the de-classed intellectuals freed from sentimentality, and the conscious vanguard of the working-class, will soon learn the necessity of establishing close alliance with the peasant masses, with the object of forming the great revolutionary army which alone can defeat Imperialism and conquer real freedom for the people of India.

This theoretical estimation of the immediate future is borne out by the developments in the months following the Gaya Congress. The outstanding event of this period is the formation of the Swaraj Party, which grew out of the opposition to the programme of orthodox Non-cooperation, as codified in the Bardoli Resolution. The opposition which resulted in the split at Gaya was however, more deep-seated. It voiced the sentiment of Intellectual Radicalism, which had blundered into the Non-cooperation camp from the very beginning. The social background of Intellectual Radicalism is the Bourgeoisie; therefore, the sponsors of the Swaraj Party could never reconcile themselves with the theories and tactics of Non-cooperation, even in those days when they were counted among its foremost leaders. They looked askance at both the aspects of the Non-cooperation Movement. Its reactionary social philosophy on the one hand, could never win the approbation of the apostles of bourgeois democracy, and on the other hand, its mass character shocked the sense of proportion of the Indian Girondins. But so long as the Non-cooperation Movement did not show signs of decline, the radical intellectuals could do nothing but mark time. Its divorce from the rebellious masses robbed the Non-cooperation Movement of all political potentiality. The time came for the radical intellectuals to assert themselves. The banner of revolt was openly raised and was carried into the heart of the Congress at Gaya. Such was the genesis of the Swaraj Party, which occupies today the centre of the stage. The organization of this party means the victory of the bourgeois spirit and element contained in the folds of Non-cooperation.

Now comes the question, how is it possible to take the victory of the Swaraj Party for granted, when it still represents the minority? The answer to this question will be found by a search into the following of the orthodox party. What is

the composition of the party which claims to control the majority? The social elements which comprised the ranks of the Non-cooperation Movement may be recapitulated in order to give a correct answer to this question. Those elements were,—the upper middle-class intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the Reforms not on qualitative but on quantitative grounds; the totally bankrupt and desperate lower middle-class; and the workers and peasant masses driven to a spontaneous revolt under the pressure of intensified economic exploitation. The contributions of these three component elements were respectively, intellectual direction, sentimental superstructure and dynamic power and will to fight. It was the third factor that supplied the masses of the Non-cooperation army. So the orthodox faction, which represents the second element, can be said to control the majority of the Non-cooperation army, only when it is taken for granted that the army still exists, and that the peasant and working-masses still follow the lead of the lower middle-class. In the previous chapters, it has been shown that this has long since ceased to be the case. The national movement as represented by the Congress today, stands divorced from the masses. It has become a bourgeois affair. Its leadership is contested by the petty bourgeoisie on the one hand, and by the upper middle-class intellectuals on the other. Being a bourgeois movement, its following can be counted only in the ranks of the middle-classes, and the middle-classes will follow that party which will clearly and consciously defend their class interests.

A look at the programmes of the two Congress factions shows which of them can answer this purpose. The absence of any programme is the programme of the orthodox faction; while the programme of the new party is a programme of bourgeois nationalism, still a bit tinged here and there with old prejudices which however, will soon disappear in the field of action. The orthodox faction cannot formulate any programme, because its social position does not permit it to have an independent political outlook. As soon as it will come down to earth from the airy heights of Spirituality and sentimental hypocrisy, it will land on the back benches of the bourgeois Constituent Assembly, into which the Congress will be turned under the new leadership. Therefore it prefers to talk vague generalities, hoping still to carry the masses with them. But it will

never dare go to the extent of formulating, or even of indirectly subscribing to a programme which will correspond to the aspirations of the exploited workers and peasants. Therefore, the following of the orthodox faction exists only in fiction, and the majority it claims to control is imaginary. The forces, with whose backing it pretends to resist the advent of bourgeois radicalism, have left it long ago. In fact, so long as it had any control over those forces, the pioneers of the New Party did not raise their head. Thus, there is not even a real dispute, because the disputant is eliminated, for all practical purposes. The petty bourgeois reactionaries have had their turn. All they did was to make a mess of the whole situation. They were terrified at the mighty strides of the revolutionary hosts they pretended to lead, and whose formidable picture they still hold up in order to prove that they are in the majority. With the defeat of the petty bourgeoisie, the national movement has been swept clean of the ideas this class stood for. There is no longer any question of "majority" and "minority." The Radicalism of the upper middle-class intellectuals is today the real force behind the movement. It will reign supreme in the Congress. The compromise at Allahabad signifies the capitulation of the orthodox faction to the inevitable.

The victory of the Swaraj Party heralds a new chapter in the history of the national struggle. It indicates the shifting of the movement on a purely and consciously bourgeois basis. Consequently, the theory of nationalism will also undergo a change. It will no more outlaw the "Satanic" government, but will enter into negotiation with it. The programme of the Swaraj Party does not leave any doubt on this score. The object expressly is, not to end the British rule but to mend it; and mend it how? So as to give adequate rights and privileges to the propertied classes and their spiritual representatives, the radical intellectuals. The electoral system promulgated by the Swaraj Party delivers the legislative power into the hands of these classes. The term *panchayet*, so freely used and with such a flourish of originality, is a mere camouflage. What is demanded in essence is such simple things as local self-government, electoral reforms, free development of native capitalism and other traditional claims of the Moderates. The difference consists in the threat of substituting

"prayers and petitions" by such fighting tactics as are permissible within the limits of constitutionalism. The inevitable result of this new orientation will be the closer contact between the two wings of the bourgeoisie proper. There is nothing serious standing in the way of this contact. So, it is evident that the hectic days of Non-cooperation are over, to be followed by an orderly and respectable movement to realize the "legitimate" aspirations of the upper- and middle-classes.

The prospective union of the two wings of the bourgeoisie proper will strengthen them both, thereby infusing greater vigour into the theory of progressive nationalism. The rich capitalist class which, terrified by the first signs of revolution, sought protection in unswerving loyalty to the forces of "law and order," is already found inclined partially to abandon that attitude. Lured on by the Reforms, they entered so far within the orbit of officialdom, that they were almost completely isolated from the national life. The collapse of Non-cooperation, and the temporary depression in the wave of mass revolts, have encouraged the Liberals to reappear on the political arena. In their new life of activity, they will surely be influenced by the ideology of the radical intellectuals, who have turned their backs upon revolutionary Non-cooperation. So long as the Councils were left entirely at their mercy, it was not necessary for the Liberals to do anything to maintain their pseudo-parliamentary position. The appearance of a new party with a programme of entering the Councils has, however, changed the situation. It is no longer possible for the Liberals to keep quiet. They must fight to maintain their parliamentary position, which is threatened. In fact, they have already begun the fight. But if they want to win at the coming elections, they must put forward a programme which will at least be on a par with that of the New Party. That is, the necessity of meeting an opponent who advocates slightly advanced political views, forces the Liberals to show their willingness to put greater resistance against the Government. For instance, spurred on by the programme of the ex-non-cooperating radical intellectuals, the co-operating Liberals have successfully demonstrated in the last session of the Legislature that if necessary, they can also adopt the tactics of constitutional opposition, and force the Government to come out in its true colour, that of an

absolute autocracy. They are already preparing for the coming elections, which will eventually transform them from a mere group of government henchmen into a powerful political party, believing firmly in the necessity of maintaining law and order, but not without a determination to fight for more power and more privileges. This will happen, unless the Liberals forfeit their claim altogether to the leadership of Constitutional Democracy. In the New Party a formidable disputant is appearing on the scene. The Non-cooperation Movement did not invade the political sphere of influence of the Liberals. But it is not so with the Swaraj Party, which threatens to carry the fight within the narrow parliamentary confines, so far a monopoly of the big bourgeoisie represented by the loyalist Liberals. The programme of the Swaraj Party proposes nothing less than to capture the leadership of bourgeois nationalism. The Liberals therefore, must readjust their activities to the new situation, if they are not to be totally absorbed in the Bureaucracy.

But the economic interests of the big bourgeoisie, that is the rich merchants, industrial magnates and financiers, do not permit the Liberal Party to sink into such political impotency. These interests can be reconciled with the Imperialist monopoly to a certain extent and up to a certain point; but their full development leads eventually to a conflict with Imperialism. The growth of Indian capitalism challenges the position of Imperialism; therefore antagonism between the two is inevitable. This antagonism is the basis of bourgeois nationalism. Any mass movement of a revolutionary character may drive the big bourgeoisie into the protecting arms of Imperialism. But this loving embrace is merely a temporary expedient; it cannot be lasting. In proportion as the revolutionary wave subsides, the aspiring national bourgeoisie shows signs of recalcitrance and seeks to assert its independence of action. The Non-cooperation Movement contained a large element of revolution; therefore as against it, the national bourgeoisie rallied itself almost unconditionally to the side of Imperialism. But the collapse of Non-cooperation, and the passing of the leadership of the national movement, as represented by the Congress, into the hands of the radical intellectuals, have removed the necessity of the Liberals' standing firmly by the government. Their first impulse was to welcome the prodigal home. The Liberal press con-

gratulated the radical intellectuals upon their success in repudiating the reactionary and subversive doctrines of Non-cooperation, and gladly welcomed them back into the folds of respectable bourgeois nationalism, only with the proviso that the Swaraj Party's original programme of wrecking the Councils be somewhat modified. But the new party, which proposes to introduce more vigour into bourgeois nationalism, could not accept this invitation. It does not want to go back to the fold as a repentant prodigal, but as a conquering hero. In other words, it proposes to win the Congress for bourgeois nationalism, not to deliver it back into the hands of the Liberal League. Therefore, the latter must meet the new standard-bearer of bourgeois nationalism half way. This meeting, however, cannot be expected to be amicable in the beginning. It will be characterized by a race for power. The issue will be: Who can advocate the cause of the bourgeoisie more clearly and more energetically? This rivalry will infuse vigour into both, the Liberals adding clarity and the radical intellectuals contributing energy to the movement as a whole.

The ambition to capture the leadership of bourgeois nationalism, on the other hand, will force the radical intellectuals to shake off the bondage of social prejudice and religious ideology. This act will drive the lower middle-class away from them, and will gradually make it impossible for them to deceive the amorphous masses by means of high-sounding humanitarian phrases. The programme of building up an orderly movement out of the chaotic ruins of Non-cooperation can be realized only by the organization of a respectable bourgeois party. The other way,—the revolutionary way,—has been shunned by the Swaraj Party. Therefore the new party appeals and must appeal to the so-called "politically-minded" classes. But the latter cannot be fooled with the vague semi-political, semi-religious formulas which are still indulged in by the Swaraj Party. If the latter does not purge its programme of the elements of confusion inherited from the Non-cooperation Movement, it will fail to enlist the following of the classes it proposes to rally under its banner. The Liberals are already in the field, exposing the contradictions and haziness of their rival's programme. Thus, the Swaraj Party must either develop a clear bourgeois democratic character, or be wiped out before it is born. If it crystallizes

into a full-fledged bourgeois democratic party, and it is certain that it is tending towards that, its eventual union, or at least readjustment of relations with the Liberal League, is inevitable; while its disappearance before the rise of a stronger and more conscious rival will leave the Liberals the masters of the situation. So, in one way or another, the collapse of Non-cooperation is sure to be followed by the growth of a purely bourgeois democratic movement. And it will be a step forward, because it will mean the rescuing of Indian nationalism from the reactionary outlook, ideological degeneration and political bankruptcy of petty bourgeois Extremism as expressed in the orthodox Non-cooperation Movement.

No amount of sophistry and vague formulas can diffuse the spiritual affinity that exists between the Liberals and the Swarajists. The identity of class interest underlies this affinity. In the words of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, "the Liberals are not out to destroy any interests, nor are they the enemies of any class. All that they wish to achieve is justice to all interests." This is also what the Swaraj Party strives for. In spite of its pious desire to "uplift" the masses, the programme of the Swaraj Party completely subscribes to the above sentiments of Liberalism. The programme of the Swaraj Party can be divided into three main groups. In the social sphere, it stands for humanitarian reform; Dominion Status within the British Empire is its political aspiration; and its economic theories call for free development of capitalism. These three principles of bourgeois nationalism are equally accepted by the Liberal League. They are the cardinal principles of evolutionary nationalism as against revolutionary nationalism.

The petty bourgeois leadership of the Non-cooperation Movement also did not advocate revolutionary nationalism. It repudiated on the one hand the progressive doctrines of bourgeois nationalism, and, on the other hand, frantically denounced all revolutionary action. Therefore it was foredoomed to perish under its own contradictions. Its collapse today releases the two revolutionary forces which were submerged in hopeless confusion under its reactionary and hesitating leadership. These revolutionary forces are the radical bourgeoisie and the rebellious workers and peasants. The suppressed energies of the radical bourgeoisie have at last found expression through the Swaraj Party. These

energies will strengthen bourgeois nationalism. They will devise more vigorous tactics by which the rights and privileges of the native upper- and middle-classes can be wrested from the reluctant Imperialist overlord. Every inch of ground conceded by Imperialism is a victory for the national cause. Every little victory will encourage the national bourgeoisie to press for more. Thus even within the narrow limits of constitutionalism will develop an ever-growing encroachment upon imperialist monopoly. It is true that this constitutional fight will never develop into a revolutionary struggle; but it will weaken the position of Imperialism, thus indirectly helping the cause of national liberation, which will have to be conquered in the open field of revolutionary action.

The crystallization of a purely bourgeois political ideology and the subordination of the national movement to it will on the other hand, release the second revolutionary force namely, the workers and peasants, for independent political action. The first revolutionary fervour of the toiling masses was abused and then betrayed by the reactionary leaders of Non-cooperation. The collapse of Non-cooperation finds the mass-movement in a period of depression. The Liberals have assumed the leadership of the agrarian movement. They are leading the struggle against feudalism. It is their historic task. But Indian capitalism is still closely connected with landlordism, which is not feudalism in the true sense. Therefore in India, the liberation of the peasantry from feudal bondage cannot be realized under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. It will have to wait until there appears on the political arena a revolutionary party with the proletariat as its vanguard. But the proletariat itself still lacks its own independent class leadership. The decided swing of the entire national movement towards the right,—its survival from the great crisis created by the long expected collapse of Non-cooperation, (not through the revolutionary channel, but by reversion to the tactics of constitutionalism),—creates the possibility for the proletariat to come forward. The petty-bourgeois ideology of Non-cooperation greatly succeeded in diffusing the class differentiation. It prevented the great social upheaval from following its logical direction towards class-consciousness. Today, the leadership of the labour movement is in the hands of those who lack the grandeur

of a Mahatma, and whose reformist hypocrisy cannot be concealed beneath the cloak of a saintly character and towering personality. While the nationalist movement is developing a clear class character, it is no longer possible to prevent the growth of class consciousness among the proletariat. No amount of hypocritical reformism, provided for in the embryonic programme of the Swaraj Party, will conceal the fact that the economic theory of this programme is that of capitalism. The nationalism of a class-conscious capitalist party will no more countenance revolutionary action of the masses than the Liberals countenanced the Non-cooperation Movement. The result inevitably will be the sharpening of class differentiation. The programme of bourgeois nationalism, which endeavours to adjust the interests of the native capitalist class with Imperial suzerainty, will open the eyes of the workers, deluded till now by the humanitarian hypocrisies of the upper-class liberals. If the Nagpur Labour Resolution remained a dead letter in the hands of the lower middle-class Non-cooperators thrown involuntarily into the throes of a spontaneous revolution, a worse fate awaits the same resolution adopted at Gaya, in view of the fact that the Congress tends to become the political organ of the bourgeoisie, whose class consciousness is well developed, despite the protestations of the leaders to the contrary. It does not require much analytical study to discover the real meaning of the Gaya resolution to organize the workers and peasants, as well as the declarations of the various Congress leaders to the same effect. When a party or an individual, whose socio-political philosophy admits of class-rule, and whose programme provides clearly for the aggrandizement of one class at the expense of another, talks piously against "class-interests" and "class-struggle," the motive behind such talk is evident. It is to perpetuate class domination by blunting the sharpness of the class line, with the help of humanitarian reformism or pacifist philosophy. How a party can pretend to secure "Swaraj for the masses," and at the same time undertake to promote and guarantee the accumulation of private wealth, is a problem which can be resolved, neither by petty bourgeois sentiment nor by bourgeois economics. Yet the Swaraj party has set itself this task. There might be the possibility that, on finding the incompatibility of the two principles included within

its programme, the Swaraj Party would reject the latter in favour of the former. This possibility can be admitted only when the pious intentions of the leaders are taken for granted. But it is not necessary to go upon any supposition. The situation has been made quite clear in the pronouncement of the leaders. Labour should be organized, not according to class interests, but for the "welfare of the community." Such methods of labour organization, as are calculated to make the workers conscious of their class interests, are expressly excluded from the scheme. So, in course of action the "welfare of the whole community" will demand the necessity of forgetting the Labour resolution. History is full of instances when the rising bourgeoisie used the still unconscious proletariat to bear the brunt of revolutionary onslaughts. Mr. Das himself freely indulges in a superficial reading of history to cite such instances, while he is leading a party which is destined to enact the same drama on the Indian stage. The motive behind the philosophy of a "classless" labour movement is to use this movement in the interest of another class. The Indian radicals are mistaken who think that they are making a great innovation when they expound the theory of "national interests," in which all class interests should be submerged. It is a very familiar doctrine, preached by the bourgeoisie in all countries. It is preached in Europe even today, when the class war is raging fiercely and the bourgeoisie is using all means, fair and foul, to maintain the dictatorship of their class.

Therefore, the historic rôle that the masses of India are destined to assume in the struggle for national liberation, cannot be played with the bourgeoisie pulling the strings from behind the scenes. There will be two aspects in the coming stage of the national movement. The first is the clarification of the real nature of nationalism, a clarification which will be expressed through the development of a powerful bourgeois party at the head of the national struggle. The second will be the birth of an independent labour movement, under the leadership of the conscious proletarian vanguard, which will try to draw the masses of the landless peasantry into the orbit of active revolutionary struggle. The more the bourgeois character of the Congress becomes evident, the more independent will be the politics of the labour movement. The com-

promising nature of bourgeois nationalism will gradually demand the appearance of a revolutionary party, which must be the standard-bearer of those classes that have nothing in common with Imperialism, and whose freedom and progress can never be realized within the limits of Dominion Status.

The collapse of Non-cooperation is an historic necessity. In its womb were contained the two revolutionary factors of our society. Its collapse was necessary, to release these two revolutionary elements. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie must be freed from the lingering bonds of mediævalism and appear on the scene to play out what little revolutionary significance is still left to it; on the other hand, the masses, or to use a more classical term "the industrious classes of India" must realize the necessity of cutting loose from the misleading petty bourgeoisie and the treacherous radical reformists. The next phase of the movement will be marked by the simultaneous development of these two potential social factors. The development of the former will objectively weaken the basis of Imperialism, although subjectively, it will pursue a compromising policy. Its development, however, will remove the possibility of misleading the labour movement by its humanitarian cant, because the power and prosperity of the national bourgeoisie can only be won at the cost of the workers and peasants. In consequence, the toiling masses will cease to be a mere appendage of the bourgeoisie in the national struggle, to be sacrificed, or deluded, or betrayed as may be needed. They will become an independent political factor, and will prepare for the day when they will capture the leadership of the movement from the faltering hands of the bourgeoisie, and carry it to the final victory.