

PART VI
IS THE CONGRESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOVEMENT ?

CHAPTER I

GANDHIJI'S "BIGGEST FIGHT"

Gandhiji, right upto his arrest was declaring "Non-violence" as the basis of his coming movement and he emphatically declared that he would make all endeavours to avoid a clash with the Government. He publicly stated that he fully contemplated sending the Viceroy a letter before taking concrete action. Even the decision of the Congress demanding an immediate ending of the British rule in India was under such circumstances that no other choice was left. Still the people were asked to wait for a programme of action till Gandhiji issued instructions after the decision of the Bombay A.I.C.C.

Gandhiji, in his first speech in the Bombay A.I.C.C., on 7th August, 1942, very emphatically said :

"We must remove hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was".

On the other hand the British Government of India was preparing elaborately and tenaciously. The machinery was set up to nip "the open revolt" or "Gandhiji's biggest fight of his life" in the bud.

Dr. K. Shridharani has graphically given this in the following words:—

"This time the British went further than ever before in vilifying and black-mailing India's unimpeachable idols and India's freedom movement. It was natural enough. For if they did not tell the biggest lies of their life, the people of America, who were deeply sympathetic toward Indian aspirations, would question the wisdom of the plan being hatched. The best thing they could do under the circumstances was to create the impression, however false that Gandhi was an appeaser, a pro-Japanese, fifth columnist. Since these descriptions would arouse the greatest emotional reaction among Americans, why not use them to blacken Gandhi's otherwise good name? And that is exactly what they did, these British bureaucrats acting upon the advice of Whitehall. On August 4, 1942, three days before the Bombay meeting of the Congress Committee, and four days before the reign of terror that began with Gandhi's arrest, they released what they called a seized secret document of Gandhiji's original

"quit India" resolution. Those who know India and Gandhi and the Congress party realized that this was a well-timed comic-opera plot for the benefit of Americans, many of whom took it on faith, for a while at least. Now, in the first place, there has never been any need of raiding a Congress office, since one of the basic policies of the Gandhi movement is to have no secrets; an official could pick up a telephone and call the Congress Secretariate itself to provide the desired copy. In the second place, the Government had "seized" to be precise, but had withheld it until it could be used to impress America. England has been fighting the Battle of India in the United States against Gandhi, not in India against the Japanese.

The allegedly incriminating part of the resolution, later completely changed, was: "If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan." But what the British failed to mention was more important. For the same resolution stated: "The Congress is of the opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of the Japanese, or any aggressor, attacking India." Thus there could never be the slightest doubt about the resolve of the Congress party to resist a Japanese invasion or any other invasion. Gandhi is a man of God: to him no human being is beyond repair. So long as a man is endowed with human nature, he is subject to improvement, which improvement could come either through persuasion or through force. Now this is in direct contrast to the theories of Marxism, which regards the bourgeois as beyond saving. It is also drastically unlike the philosophy of fascism, which bases its belief entirely on force and which regards many races and many nations as sub-human. But it is one of Gandhi's main rules of public conduct that all avenues of negotiation and persuasion should be tried before a break is made. Gandhi has done that with the British, and the very people who were now blackmailing Gandhi had appreciated that in times past. Even this time Gandhi wanted to see the Viceroy and talk things over with him with a view to arriving at a friendly settlement; it was the Viceroy who refused to negotiate. Gandhi wished to follow the same course with the Japanese, in the hope that he might be able to dissuade them from attacking India and persuade them to get out of China. And he was going to promise them "stubborn resistance," in case the Japanese ignored his humane appeal. May be he was hoping against hope; but then he was also hoping against hope when he contemplated conference with the British. There was never a question in his mind of appeasing of Japan. That charge

was based on a deliberate falsification of facts by the Tories headed by Churchill.

Here is Nehru's commentary: "Gandhi always sends notice to his adversary before coming into conflict. He would thus have called on Japan not only to keep away from India but to withdraw from China. It is absurd to say that any of us envisaged any arrangement with Japan giving her right of passage". Gandhi is no less emphatic: "I have never, even in a most unguarded moment, expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war. Not only that, I have often expressed the opinion that they cannot win the war, if only Britain will, once and for all, shed her imperialism."

At the very moment that he was calling on one-fifth of the human race to use direct action to end British Imperialism in India for ever, on August 7, 1942, this greatest statesman and saint of our time had the equanimity to announce: "We must remove the hatred for the British from our hearts. At least, in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was.....This is my claim, at which many people may laugh, but all the same, I say this is true." If ever a man has proved himself fit to sit at the head of the coming peace conference, it is Gandhi. No other man, president or prime minister or leader of however powerful a nation, has a greater claim to that honour and responsibility if the coming peace is not going to be another Versailles, and if the new world order is to be founded on justice, equality, freedom, and love which, at its least affirmative, is the absence of hatred and rancour.

This man was made a prisoner within twenty-four hours of his Christ-like utterance. There ensued a wave of violence, but that was not his plan, not that of the Congress Party. But the nation was deliberately left leaderless by the British. The British have always known how to deal with violence, but they have ever been confounded by non-violence. Look at the history of India of the past quarter-century. The real threat to the British authority in India is not of violence—which many times, for that matter, the British themselves have inspired—but the non-violent non-cooperation of the people, the effects of which are increasingly clear as the days go by.

In order to appreciate fully the stand of the Congress Party, it should be brought home in mind that the British Government struck at the Party and its Leaders before civil disobedience started. In fact, Gandhi was hopefully planning further negotiations with the Viceroy, and seeking

mediation from the President of the United States, as the great representative of the greatest western power, from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek as the head of a great eastern nation, and from Ivan Maisky as the representative of an East-West country. The Moslem President of the Congress, Maulana Azad, was authorized by a formal resolution to make appeal to these three. But the British did not want mediation from outside. They struck before Azad could write the letters or Gandhi could see the Viceroy.

The British propaganda machine cleverly manoeuvred the facts so that Americans would miss this all-important point; the willingness, nay, the insistence of Indian leaders upon reopening the negotiations and mediation from an acceptable but impartial third party. Many of the professional American mouth-pieces of the British have been busy misrepresenting the true state of affairs in India and there has followed an unsurpassed campaign of abuse of India's freedom movement in the very country from which India, and the world, have taken their dreams of liberty and democracy. Some went even so far as to interpret Secretary Hull's speech of July 23, 1942, as a rebuke to India. "It has been our purpose," runs Hull's passage in question, "in the past and will remain our purpose in the future—to use the full measure of our influence to support attainment of freedom by all peoples who, by their acts, show themselves worthy of it and ready for it". The whole tone of the speech was that of an exhortation to fight for freedom. Well, India is fighting for her freedom. You cannot blame her for following Secretary Hull's advice!

Gandhiji, in his letter to the Viceroy dated August 12, 1942, said:

"The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying this step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you have the approval of your Indian 'colleagues' can have no significance, except this, that in India you can always command such services. That co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say.

"The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So could I have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the

opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them, and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand."

Again in his letter to the Secretary to Government of India, dated September 23, 1942, Gandhiji wrote:—

"In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, were responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely, the Government have ample resources to deal with any over act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness."

Lastly on the question of the alleged violence by Congressmen, Gandhiji wrote in his letter to the Viceroy dated January 29, 1943 as below:—

"But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, that is, of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all powerful Government of India."

Again in the above-quoted letter Gandhiji throw a challenge to the Viceroy which stands till to today unaccepted and unreplyed. It runs as below:—

"I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last

breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of opinion you hold that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on August, 9 last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrest of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence ? ”

CHAPTER II

THE ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER CONGRESS LEADERS BEFORE THEIR ARREST

The attitude of the Congress and the Congress leaders on the question of Indian independence was quite clear. Further it can be very definitely and clearly made out from their press-statements and public speeches which were published from time to time in the papers. The relevant extracts of some of the important Congress leaders' public-statements or speeches are given below :—

PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : In a press statement from Delhi, on 9th April, 1942, Panditji said, “In this world situation fraught with peril it is right that we should consult each other and find a way out to the common advantage of a common cause. But I want to make it clear that we have issued no appeals to anybody or asked for anyone's intervention.

“For my part, I admire President Roosevelt and consider that he has been shouldering a very great burden worthily. I think he will inevitably play a great part in the future. But we have not asked for his intervention in our problems for we realise that the burden is ours and we must shoulder it. We have shouldered it against the might of a great Empire during these last 22 years and we have not bowed down to superior might in spite of pains and penalties.

“We propose to stand erect in future also whatever happens. We realise that the achievement of freedom for India, which we have desired so passionately and worked for during these long years, is our business.

“If we are strong enough to achieve it we shall do so. If not, we shall fall.

“We rely ultimately on ourselves only and on no others, though the co-operation of other in a worthy task is always welcome.

“Col. Louis Johnson has taken a friendly interest in our problem of today and we are grateful to him for it. But it

will be unfair to him and unfair to us to imagine that the burden of any decision or of intervention is cast upon him.

"We have had sufficient experience of British statesmanship in India and elsewhere. Whatever the war may have done there has been little difference in the tone or voice of the most eminent of the British leaders.

"Lord Halifax whom we know well in India still continues to surmise us of old and tell us how insignificant we are in this great land of India. Perhaps so. Then why trouble about us or come to us with proposals? Lord Halifax is pleased with what his people have done here. Let him live in his complacent world and leave us to our resources and sorrows.

"But whatever happens we will not give up our objective of independence and complete freedom for India. Our allegiance is to the Indian people and to no one else and in their service and for India's freedom we shall labour and if necessary die."

Again on 10th April, 1942, Panditji in a statement said:—

"In this hour of peril for India many Indians in distant and foreign countries have cabled to me expressing their earnest desire to come back to their homeland in order to share in these perils and dangers in the defence of the motherland from all aggression and invasion.

"I entirely share these sentiments and I am convinced that it is the duty of every Indian who can do so to return to India and face the dangers that threaten us. I trust that those in authority will facilitate this return.

"Whatever the result of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, the duty of every Indian to serve and defend India utter most remains. We cannot run away from this and seek safety. What safety is there for us if India is in danger?

"Who lives if India perishes? India calls and every Indian man and woman must listen to that call. Let each one of us stick to his post of duty whatever befalls.

"Let the old and the infirm and weak of heart think in terms of evacuations and of running away from duty. There is going to be no evacuation for us from this dear country of ours or from one place to another.

"We hold to it till death sever the connection. May we prove worthy of her and of the glorious heritage she has handed down to us."

In Dibrugarh (Assam) on April 20, 1942:

Addressing the crowd that assembled near the Indian evacuee camp, Pandit Nehru said that "grave" situation in Burma had brought the war nearer to Assam.

He added, "Whatever may await us, we shall not bow

to any aggression. As we have not yielded to the British so long, we shall not surrender to the Japanese or the Germans. It is quite natural for the Indians in Burma to return to their homeland under the circumstances created by the war in that country. But where can we go even if those things come to pass in this country".

He advised the people to stay where they were and fight aggression. Indians in Burma complained of atrocities by traitors, but they should have collectively resisted these atrocities rather than yielded to these atrocities individually.

Pandit Nehru did not rule out the possibility of aerial attacks on Indian towns, but observed that sufficient precautions could be taken to minimize their adverse effects.

Concluding, he foreshadowed a time when it would be necessary for every Indian to sacrifice everything for his motherland, and expressed the hope that when that opportunity came, Indians would not be lacking in the spirit to fight for victory.

Another message from Aligarh (U. P.), dated June 30, 1942, runs :—

"We do not want to be slaves of Japan or Germany. We would fight again any nation which wants to enslave us" declared Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, presiding over the second sitting of the District Political Conference.

"The German and Japanese radio", said Pandit Nehru, "announce daily that they are fighting to liberate nations and also that they want to give independence to India. We should never be misled by these announcements. We are ready to defend our county".

Again a Press-Report from Meerut July 18, 1942, says :—

"The only course open to the country is to fight British imperialism in order to increase India's resisting power to fight Fascist aggression," declared Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a largely attended public meeting at the Town Hall here tonight. He said, "it was better to plunge in the tempestuous wave of fight and get drowned than be inactive."

Pandit Nehru emphasised that Congress had always stood for freedom and democracy and, in consonance with that policy, it had its sympathy with democratic Spain, China and other wronged countries and people.

Pandit Nehru accused England of giving a long rope to Germany and Japan by yielding to the German and Japanese dictators, hoping that the Germans might work against the possibility of Russia being too strong and Japan would work against American's becoming too predominant. The British were only reaping the fruit of their own sowing.

The Pandit went on to say that the country was in a difficult situation. They did not want the Japanese and would fight and defeat them. But they were helpless under the present bureaucratic government. Without a truly national government it was impossible to create the right sort of enthusiasm necessary for the war.

In reply to a question as to what would happen if the English withdrew, the Pandit said that a national government on the basis of agreement between different parties would be established which would carry on the war in alliance, if they so wished, with the English and the Americans.

Pandit Nehru asserted that if India was made independent there would arise tremendous forces which would change the whole face of the war in favour of the Allies.

A Press-Message from Allahabad, August 1st, 1942, says :—

“Struggle—eternal struggle! That is my reply to Amery and Cripps”, said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spiritedly criticising the latest statements of Mr. Amery and Sir Stafford Cripps on the Indian situation while addressing a public meeting here in observance of Tilak Day.

“India’s national self-respect can not be a matter for bargaining,” he added.

“I am galled with sorrow and anger to note that I for years wanted some settlement because I felt that Britain was in trouble. They had their suffering and sorrow. I wanted my country to move forward step in step with them as a free country. But what is one to make of such statements?”

“As far as the British Government were concerned there was no doubt that they had made it impossible for us to settle anything. If there was any doubt in any mind, look at the statements made by Cripps and Amery of late. At this rate our opposition will continue for thousands of years. Our concern was and remains not to hurt our friends—Russia and China.”

Towards the close, referring to the flag controversy of the Allahabad University, Pandit Nehru said that it was a big issue. “We have pledged ourselves to the honour of our flag and we will not brook insult to it. But you have your problems and controversies. These differences and controversies should not be magnified at this time because bigger problems are ahead of us and these smaller questions should not be allowed to deviate our attention.”

Again a Press-report from Allahabad August 3rd, 1942, runs :—

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing Congress volunteers at Daraganj said : There was no sense in getting frightened when difficulties surrounded them. It was a man’s duty to

make use even of adversities and twist them to his advantage. The only way, added Pandit Nehru, to win the war was to inspire the people of India and make them feel that it was their war. He was convinced that the present Government was absolutely useless, incompetent and worthless, and it was not for it to save India. In opposing Britain it was not our purpose to help Japan or Germany. We could not change masters. We would not tolerate any foreign domination and were out to win freedom.

Pandit Nehru told the audience that big things were soon to happen in this country. But the Mahatma's way of fight was non-violent and peaceful. It was not to be forgotten that in opposing a mighty imperialism we would certainly invite brutal repression, but that would never cow us down and we would continue our work effectively. If all the people in their departments of work did their little bit then they were bound to succeed. It was true, said the speaker, that there might be some disturbance and even they might be shot down, but the country would pay the price of freedom and would march ahead with a determination worthy of them.

A press message from Bombay August 5th, 1942, says :—

"The reason that impelled the Congress to take its present stand were explained by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a largely attended meeting at Patel this evening.

"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that looking into the march of events in the world the Congress had come to the definite conclusion that no guarantee in regard to the freedom of India at a future date was acceptable. The freedom for which the Congress was fighting was not the freedom for which the country yearned and strove for all these years. Now it was fighting for freedom to survive, to exist and live through the great crisis that had enveloped the world.

"Pandit Nehru referred to the forthcoming meeting of the A. I. C. C. and said that truly it was the most momentous and important session that had been held during the last 25 years. The Working Committee had taken a decision that this country should not live under slavery any longer and that a struggle for freedom should be launched. It was a case of life and death not only for the Congress but for the entire country and would deeply affect the fortunes of the Allies as well as the Axis. He asserted that the step the Congress would take, or had decided to take, would change the whole course of the history of India. It was, indeed, a very grave responsibility that the Congress had taken and he had no doubts about the response of the people of India to the call of the Congress."

He asserted that it was not mere patriotic impulse that forced the issue. It was a very delicate and far-reaching decision that the Congress had taken and he and other members of the Working Committee spent many a sleepless night in thinking over the issue and weighing the pros and cons of the step.

Needless to say, the decision had been arrived at after the most careful and mature thinking. The situation with which the Congress was confronted was not one between Britain and India alone. If it concerned the national freedom of India alone, he would have waited. But it was not so. India's demand was linked up with the freedom of the entire human race. He and his colleagues on the Working Committee were worried, because as a consequence of their step China and Russia would be injured. He had visited these countries and he had many friends there. He knew the cause for which they were fighting and sacrificing a great deal. The Congress was very anxious to avoid doing anything which might strengthen the Axis powers, because it was firmly convinced that an Axis victory would mean the perpetuation and continuation of slavery in the world.

All the same, he was not prepared to tolerate the slavery of India. Some people had expressed their surprise that he (Pandit Nehru) should have been a party to the Wardha resolution. There was nothing to be surprised about it. He had consciously and whole-heartedly supported the decision and the Congress was now deliberately plunging into a stormy ocean. The Congress was not in the least afraid of what the British Government might do.

Proceeding, Pandit Nehru said that the concern of the Congress for the democracies led Congress leaders to say incredible things to Sir Stafford Cripps. Japan was sitting at India's frontier, France had fallen and the rest of the democracies were not doing well. The British Government bungled at every stage and disaster was in sight. The cumulative effect on them was that they undertook to do things which normally they would not. He was greatly relieved since the negotiations failed, because he realised that Britain was not willing in the least to shed her imperialism. If Britain has made an honest gesture and liquidated her imperialism, then the whole face of the present situation would have changed. The Congress was not prepared to work within a circumscribed limit and operate only within a ring.

The continuance of the present regime foreshadowed nothing but great misfortune to the whole country and the world. There was an astonishing lack of efficiency and the

events in Malaya, Burma and elsewhere bore testimony to this statement.

The British Empire, Pandit Nehru asserted, was like a castle of cards. There was no parallel in the history of the world where a vast and mighty empire like the British empire suffered losses of such magnitude in so short a time. But, unfortunately, three years of war and reverses and terrible suffering had not taught them anything.

"I would rather have my arms cut off rather than do anything which would harm China," Pandit Nehru continued, "I am prepared to lay down my life for the freedom of India. But what can I do? Do you think we can do anything to help China situated as we are? I am equally determined not to allow myself to be kicked about by two imperialist powers, Britain and Japan. I do not desire that we should somehow secure our freedom only and preserve it. I want India to be free, so that she may play her great part in advancing peace and prosperity throughout the world. We have now very rightly decided that it is much better to fight with valour and go down rather than keep quiet."

Proceeding, he said, "Everything points to only one remedy that India should be freed immediately, so that she may face the aggressors whoever they may be. We have been striving for freedom for a number of years and if it had been merely a question of our freedom I would have chosen to wait for months, perhaps years. But the issue today is different. We cannot fight, which we have been asked to do, for a freedom which we do not enjoy. The enthusiasm of the people cannot be whipped up to defend something of which they have no knowledge. Let me emphasise that this is not going to be a struggle for swaraj for its own sake, but a struggle for the sake of facing an imminent danger and to survive. If we keep quiet now, the ineptitude of the Government will embroil us in a hopeless mess and injure the cause of China and Russia."

Pandit Nehru repudiated that he was not in favour of the "Quit India" movement. He was not only wholly in favour of it but had actually been advocating it for a number of years now. His only concern was in regard to the armed forces in India. Their withdrawal would mean the opening of the doors to Japan, but now Mahatma Gandhi had given a satisfactory explanation.

Pandit Nehru made an earnest plea for complete support to Mahatma Gandhi. He assured the audience that it would never be possible for the Japanese to overrun the whole country. It was not possible for them to replace an administrative machinery in this country and it would be equally

impossible for them to have an army of occupation throughout the length and breadth of India.

SARDAR VALLABH BHAI PATEL :

AHMEDABAD, July 28.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressing a crowded meeting of college students this afternoon declared :—

"The Congress Working Committee has decided to launch a mass struggle with great anguish. For three years the Congress followed the policy of non-embarrassment which led the British Government to offer the Cripps proposals which Mahatma Gandhi refused to consider at the very first glance, but the Congress Working Committee considered them for fifteen days at the end of which Sir Stafford Cripps changed his mind and laid the blame on the Congress Working Committee."

He said that during the course of negotiations Sir Stafford Cripps gave out that the National Government in India would be of the type of the British cabinet but subsequently he had to withdraw that proposal. He came to India to create American opinion in favour of England.

Proceeding Sardar Patel said that after the failure of the Cripps mission the Congress Working Committee approached Mahatma Gandhi although it had a difference of opinion with him. It withdrew the Poona offer which offered men and materials to Britain in war if real National Government was established in India and accepted the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi for a non-violent struggle. There was now no scope for negotiation on the question of independence of India. All the programme which the Congress had carried out during the last twenty years would be carried out on a mass scale without any restriction.

AHMEDABAD, July 29.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing an open air meeting of students this evening on the occasion of the inauguration of the National Students' Union said:—

"Mahatma Gandhi's last struggle will be short and swift, and will be finished within a week."

He said that no Indian would remain aloof from the coming struggle which would be unique of its type. Student would leave their studies and join it. There were divisions among the student world of India, but they should be bridged. Attempts were being made by the third party to divide Indians. But the Congress was prepared to hand over the administration of the country to the Muslims if it was offered to them.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel added that the members of the

Viceroy's Executive Council, had started advising the Congress to desist from the struggle. The Congress had never taken power except for the brief period of two and half years when it tried to serve the people as much as it could. The benefit of its struggles was reaped by others who were offered high posts. They said that the Congress was supported by only a handful of people. It would be seen how many people were behind the Congress when Mahatma Gandhi launched the struggle after the conclusion of the meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay.

Continuing Sardar Patel said that the British and American press was perturbed as it was never before perturbed. The Congress was asked to wait till the conclusion of the war when India would be freed. If India was really to be freed after the war, why was she not freed before the war? The promises given during the last war were not fulfilled and India was given the Rowlatt Act and the Jalianwalla Bagh for her unstinted help. The Congress had become wiser by experience, and wanted freedom for defending India against foreign aggression which was said to be imminent. Freedom of India would mean the end of all wars in the world.

AHEMDABAD, July 31.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressing an open air meeting in Santram's Temple at Nadiad declared:—

"The Congress will not be suppressed by repression that is being threatened".

He said that at the age of 74 Mahatma Gandhi was out to launch an unprecedented mass struggle to wrest power from the British Government to resist Japanese aggression. Previous struggles were launched to effect a change of heart in the British Government or to register moral protest and were restricted to select few only. The present struggle, which would include all the items of the previous struggles at a time, was restricted only by non-violence, all could take part in it without distinction. It would not be a struggle merely for going to jail. It would entail far greater sufferings, but not greater than those entailed by foreign invasion.

The struggle, he said, would be finished before foreign invasion took place. In fact, there would be no foreign invasion if India was free, as there would be no scope for foreign exploitation, and there would be world federation for the establishment of world peace.

India wanted to show a new way to the war-weary world under the unique leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who expected full support from Gujarat where he had stayed so long.

SURAT, August 2.

Vallabhbhai Patel addressing a public meeting here said:—
 "Let Britain only transfer power to Indian hands whether it is to the Muslim League or any other party, and the Congress is prepared to dissolve itself.

"The Congress could not wait any more because the country can not be defended by dependent people. Now Britain only would be responsible for any state of anarchy that may ensue as a result of the "Quit India" policy."

Further, he added that the Congress was started with the independence of India as its main and only goal and once that was achieved, the body would willingly cease to function.

The Sardar said that the coming movement would be a comprehensive satyagraha movement imbibing all the methods of satyagraha used by the Congress in 1910.

B. RAJENDRA PRASAD :

MONGHYR, May 26, 42.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in the course of a speech at a public meeting here said:—

"The Japanese too, in their turn, have begun assuring us that they are out to liberate India from the hands of our British masters, who had professed at the out-break of the war that theirs was a noble fight waged to ensure 'Freedom of the Nations and to reinstate democracy in the world.' To the former we say; 'God save us from such friends? The fate of Korea and Manchuria is a beacon-light of Japanese goodwill.' To the Britishers and their Allies, the Americans, who have sent their soldiers to defend our country, we say:—"Please let us alone and put your professions to practice. Not a drop of human blood need be spilled nor a round of ammunition wasted, and you can free India and rehabilitate democracy and make this country your eternal friend against all aggressions either from the East or the West."

PATNA, July 31, 1942.

"The no-rent campaign of Bardoli, the last individual civil disobedience movement all pale into insignificance before the decision of the Congress to use all its non-violent strength if the "Quit India" demand is not conceded by the British Government", observed Dr. Rajendra Prasad, addressing an emergency meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Sadaqut Ashram today.

Explaining the implications of the Wardha resolution Dr. Rajendra Prasad emphasised that the movement was not to be a mere jail-going business this time.

"Shooting, bombing, confiscation of property—are all possible. Congressmen, therefore, should join the movement with the consciousness that they may be exposed to all these dangers. The new plan of action includes all forms of satyagraha based on pure non-violence. This movement is going to be the last struggle for India's independence. We can face all the armed might of the world with non-violence, the greatest weapon in a mould of satyagraha," he declared.

Dwelling at length on the factors that led the Congress Working Committee to demand the freedom of India first, he said, "it is not an exaggeration to say that the Wardha resolution is the most significant and far-reaching resolution to the whole life of the Congress. Till now the demand for complete independence had been made with some mental reservations. Faint hopes lingered in the heart that a way out could still be found for the preservation of Anglo-Indian connections. The present resolution on the other hand, strikes a different note altogether."

Britain, he proceeded, "has evaded our demand, so far, on the plea that she cannot transfer power to Indian hands as there is no unity in India. The Congress also had believed that without this unity India cannot attain her goal, but it has now come to the conclusion that there can be no unity until British power disappears. The foreign element in the body politic of the country has created new problems which cannot be easily solved. Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, is now of the definite opinion that there can be no unity in India without Swaraj, though he once held the reverse view. This opinion is the result of bitter experiences and the outcome of the Cripps Mission.

"The assertion that the Congress will use all its non-violent strength to secure the freedom of India has spread consternation in the world. Britain and America say that the Congress move is preposterous. Germany and Japan appear to be pleased and displeased with it. They are pleased because they think it will hamper the British war effort. They are displeased because they find it envisages resistance to all foreign powers—the British and the Axis powers.

"In the life of every nation a time comes when it has to take a great and far-reaching step. It was so when Hitler decided to start the war. Similar was the case when America, England and other countries resolved to plunge into the world conflict. The people are called upon in these countries to sacrifice everything, including life, in response to the call of their leaders. The Congress, too, has reached a decision of great significance".

Concluding Dr. Rajendra Prasad affirmed that the Congress had no quarrel with anyone. It only hoped to convert its opponents by its suffering and sacrifice. He was confident that their opponents would join them in the great cause of Indian freedom.

PT. GOVIND BALLABH PANT :

CAWNPORE, JULY 10.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, addressing a public meeting yesterday evening declared :—

“We cannot effectively defend our country unless we are a free nation.”

After a rapid review of the situation since the outbreak of the war, in so far as it affected India, Pt. Pant asserted that India must become independent before she could take part in the fight for the cause of democracy. We could not afford to miss the present opportunity to gain freedom and organise ourselves to defend it. The war had now approached the frontiers of India and we had to prepare ourselves to meet every eventuality. We could not afford to postpone the issue of the country's freedom any longer. To do so would be to ignore to our peril the lessons we ought to learn from the neighbouring countries that had lost their freedom.

Proceeding, Pandit Pant said that soon after the outbreak of the war, India was asked to help Britain and her Allies in the fight for democracy, but how could India fight for the preservation of other countries when freedom was being denied her? India could help the Allies effectively only when her independence was recognised and conceded by the British Government. Sir Stafford Cripps, however, had made it clear that the British Government had no intention to transfer real power to Indian hands during the continuance of the war. It had also been made plain to us that we would have no real control over Indian defence. The duty of Indians was, therefore, quite clear. We had now to redouble our efforts to secure freedom. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee had issued instructions and it behoved us to respond to the call and prepare ourselves for the struggle.

Pt. Pant declared that it was absurd to expect any country, whatever its professions, to help them in gaining freedom. He wanted Indians to place no reliance on assurances of those who said they would grant India freedom. We must remember that such false assurances would be of no avail. India had no sympathy whatsoever with aggressor nations, but she could effectively help the Allies in the present struggle only when she was free.

Concluding, Pandit Pant Paid a tribute to the bravery and heroism of the Chinese and asked Indians to emulate their example.

BAREILLY, JULY 26, '42.

"The Congress exists for the people and will fight for the people", Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, in the course of a speech, at a public meeting held here last evening observed.

Referring to the proposed mass struggle, Pandit Pant said: "Mahatma Gandhi's plans, which are in a fluid state today will take shape after the Bombay session of the A. I. C. C. I appeal to my countrymen to respond to the Congress call."

ACHARYA KRIPALANI :

BENARES, JULY 30.

Acharya Kripalani addressing the students of the Hindu University said :—

"The British Government have mischievously misrepresented the Congress view point with regard to the demand for National Government as a demand for abdication in favour of the Congress, utterly disregarding the minorities.

"The Congress, far from asking power for itself," he said, "would be glad if the British Government asked Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League, Mr. Savarkar or the Hindu Mahasabha, or Dr. Ambedkar to form a true National Government, absolutely free from British control. Britain has made no such offer because she wants to keep the Indian pie for herself.

"British statesmen are inadvertently playing the Axis game by denying freedom to India and giving excellent material for propaganda for the consumption of Indians".

Referring to Gandhiji's contemplated move, Kripalani said : "Gandhiji has been compelled to contemplate a mass movement to resist hardships resulting from war measures, because it would mean schooling the masses in resisting actual invasion by Axis Powers if it should come. Gandhiji's move will greatly help the Allied cause. Time servers and sycophants would welcome the aggressor as they did in Malaya and Burma ; but good men and true, with courage of their conviction, would along put up a valiant fight".

Continuing Kripalani said : "It is shameful for Sir Stafford Cripps, with his revolutionary antecedents, to appeal to America to help the British Government in suppressing India's struggle for liberty. If Americans lend their support to this unholy cause, they will be writing the blackest chapter in their history unworthy of George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's glorious heritage".

From the above quoted speeches and statements of the prominent leaders and members of the Congress Working Committee, it can be clearly seen that the central and supreme idea in their minds was to organise "effective defence of India" and thus to avert the fate of Malaya, Singapore, Rangoon and Burma, in India. With this end in view, independence of India and formation of provisional National Government was desired. There was definite and distinct declaration of opposition to Japan or any other aggressor and positive sympathy with China and Russia. There was absolutely no pro-Japanese tendency in the expressions or minds of the Indian Congress Leaders. Besides no plan or programme for the coming movement was expressed by any one of them. Of course, every one laid a great emphasis on the non-violent character of the movement and invited the people to join it with preparedness of offering supreme sacrifices and sufferings.

Really speaking there was no plan or programme known to any of the Congress leaders and every one of them was entirely depending on when Gandhiji was to guide and give lead. This was the attitude of one and all of the Congress Leaders.

CHAPTER III

THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONGRESSMEN IN GENERAL

What Gandhiji expressed and explained was the all that the Congress leaders knew. What Congress leaders could say was the knowledge of the Congressmen in general. Nobody from the top laid down any definite detailed programme for the Congressmen in general on which they had to work. Thus everybody was anxiously awaiting for orders and instructions from the above that "above" was the light which Gandhiji was to receive and impart just at the time when he actually was to call upon the people to any action.

Before the Bombay session of the A.I.C.C. everybody's attention was rivetted on that momentous session. At Bombay all those Congressmen who went there tried to know the programme. They asked their provincial leaders and in their turn their leaders asked Gandhiji and Gandhiji could get no time and opportunity till he was arrested on the early hours of the 9th August, 1942.

Thus Gandhiji and with him almost all the other Congress Leaders were arrested before they could unfold and explain the plan and programme of action. Some of those who were left out did try to sit together to draw out a scheme of work but under what circumstances and influences they conferred

and planned is well known. Everywhere the Congressmen were being arrested, presses, public meetings, processions and other public activities were forcibly stopped. Lathi-Charge, flogging, shooting etc., were becoming very common. Thus in the words of Gandhiji Government took the "precipitate action" and "the wholesale arrest of the Congress-leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control".

The popular psychic influence worked tremendously even on Congressmen. They, in place of giving lead to the masses were virtually led by the them. They could neither check the popular enthusiasm nor could divert and direct it into any other way but the one towards which it drifted. The natural and common reaction of the Government action on the mind of the people could be nothing else under such extraordinarily provocative circumstances but the one of "maddening them". They lost self-control and lacked any guidance, naturally things happened in an unorganised and undesired manner. An average Congressman was not prepared to face such a situation. He failed to control and guide the people. The leader and influential Congressmen were already clapped in the jail. Thus when the popular feeling could not be checked or diverted the Congressmen left outside the jails could do nothing else but play the passive role under the circumstances created by the hasty and precipitate action of the Government. Some of the Congressmen were put in a fix and were arrested while actually doing nothing. Some others were arrested, prosecuted and persecuted while they were actually hiding themselves and avoiding any work. Still some others fell victim of the circumstances and were held responsible for directly or indirectly participating in the popular activities of the time that is of cutting telegraph wires, setting fire to post boxes etc., removing railway lines, and other such activities. Still some others tried to take out peaceful processions and organize peaceful demonstrations etc., but their attempts were brutally frustrated by indiscriminate firing and lathi-charge etc. The reaction of all this was that such Congressmen could not effectively attract and divert the excited popular attention. But this goes without doubt that the Congressmen in general did not organize nor openly participate in any of the activities of the period. It is because of this that "popular revolt" or "open rebellion" could be suppressed so swiftly and successfully by the brutally tyrannical machinery set up by the Government to deal with it.

Most of the Congressmen if can be charged of anything it is only of in-action or no-action for which the only plea which

can be advanced in their defence is that they were not kept prepared, rather kept for a long time under discipline of "No-action" by their leader Gandhiji since the out-break of the present war. Thus when time for action came even then they actually did "No-action" violent or non-violent.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE GENERAL PUBLIC BEHAVED

In the previous chapter we have also dealt as to the public-reaction to the Government action on the 9th August, 1942 and after. The general public in India is a mass of people unarmed and untrained in any sort of modern war-fare. Under the arms act they are prohibited to keep what of fire-arms even a long-blade-knife. They are thus reduced to such a state that they can not defend themselves from violent-wild beasts or armed dacoits. Even at this during that period they were prohibited from carrying in their hands ordinary lathis or bamboo sticks while moving out of their houses. The Indian masses were, from the very advent of the British rule in India, being systematically trained to impotency. They are now virtually harmless-creatures and can be subjected to any sort of treatment without any protest or retaliation from them. Hence even the gravest of provocation of the nature which the Government of India gave to them by arresting all their leaders and subsequently by snatching all their civic rights by sheer brutal force, they could react so "mildly" that despite their such a large number they could do so little that the Government could not only exist and do, not only all the atrocities which so far the human history has recorded but much more.

The Indian people or the Indian masses simply burst up to express their feelings, violent they could not be as they were left with no means to be so and non-violent they could not remain under the circumstances created by the Government. How actually the Indian people behaved is something really difficult to describe in the commonly understood language. However, the behaviour of the Indian people was an earnest, honest and very natural attempt to indicate that they were alive and not dead. What actually they did was something so little that they could be charged of doing not only "no harm" to their oppressors but doing wrong to themselves by reacting so softly and so mildly. They deserve pity and pity alone. But alas! they were treated by the christian Government, as Gandhiji has said :

"The Government goaded the people to the point of

madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic Law, that is, of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of all-powerful Government of India."

CHAPTER V

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HAPPENINGS IN AUGUST 1942 AND AFTER

The Government case is very well put by Mr. L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, in his speech in the House of Commons on 31st March, 1943.

Mr. Amery said :—

"The resolutions before the House concern only six out of 11 provinces of India. In the remaining five provinces Indian Ministers responsible to the Indian legislatures control a vast majority of the subjects affecting the daily life of their fellow citizens.

"It is only in the provinces controlled by the Congress Party's organization that self-government was suspended by the order of the so-called High Command of the Congress Party in October 1939, and the Governors had been compelled to shoulder direct responsibilities of Government. They do so under the provisions of Section 93 of the Government of India Act. These are emergency provisions and as such properly come before this House for a periodic review. I need not add that they are also under constant review by the Viceroy and the Governors concerned. In two provinces where the Ministries were originally ordered out by the Congress dictatorship, self-government has been resumed. A resumption of self government in the other provinces can take place whenever Ministers can be found in a position to conduct affairs and co-operate in the war effort. The door remains open and the whole situation remains under constant review.

"The origin of the situation and the reasons for its present continuance can only be understood in the light of the nature and policy of the Congress Party. Originally democratic in its organization and constitutional in its methods, the Congress Party has progressively become a dictatorship aiming at the expulsion by revolutionary, though professedly non-violent methods, of the existing British Raj and its supersession by a Congress Raj. For a detailed story of the evolution I can only commend to the House the masterly objective survey

of the last seven years of Indian politics embodied in the second volume of Professor Coupland's report to the Nuffield Trust. For myself I will only go back over the past sufficiently to make the events of the recent months intelligible. The particular character and methods of the Congress Party have largely been shaped by a single man, Mr. Gandhi. I shall not attempt here to assess the qualities of this remarkable and enigmatic personality. Many members have no doubt read the recent book "Grey Eminence" in which Aldous Huxley describes the combination in one person, Father Joseph De Trambly, of a devout mystic with an unscrupulous political adviser who helped Cardinal Richelieu to keep Europe distracted by a generation of disastrous war.

"It is enough for me to say that Mr. Gandhi's peculiar appeal to the Hindu veneration for the ascetic helped to make him the unquestioned dictator—a permanent 'super-President', to use Pandit Nehru's description—of by far the largest, best financed and most rigidly drilled party organization in India. In the provincial elections of 1937 the Congress Party secured 711 out of 1,585 seats. This was less than a majority even in British India. But it was enough to give the party an absolute majority in five provinces and control in three others. This unexpected result would seem to have intoxicated the Congress Party Leaders with a sense of new-found power. Overriding and ignoring the growing intensity of the opposition which they were piling up in India itself, they persuaded themselves that they and they alone were India. Only a relatively small effort, so it seemed to them, was still required to displace British rule at the Centre and for the Congress Party, to use Mr. Gandhi's phrase, to 'take delivery'. The imminence of war came as a shock not only to Mr. Gandhi's sincere pacifism but also to those dreams of early power. At the first sign of the preparation to meet the coming danger Congress members were ordered to boycott the Assembly. In their absence the Central Legislature unquestioningly accepted the brief statement in which Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, as the Leader of the House, declared that all present were determined to do their duty to the King and Country. The far-reaching provisions of the Defence of India Act were passed without a division. The Ministries and Legislatures of the Punjab, Bengal and Sind endorsed the attitude of the Central Legislature as did the Mahasabha and Liberal Parties. The Princes of India, both individually and afterwards by a unanimous vote of the Chambers of Princes, vindicated their traditional loyalty to the King-Emperor by their pledges and actions. The part which India has played in the war is known to all the world. It is as well that I

should remind the House of these facts. They are a conclusive answer to the wholly untruthful legend promulgated by the Congress Party and since, I regret to say, only too readily swallowed outside—the legend of a reluctant India dragged into a war in which she had no choice and in whose issues she felt no concern. During the next few weeks Lord Linlithgow strove with unwearying patience to persuade the Congress leaders to co-operate with the Government and with the leaders of other parties to support the war effort. The only answer was the summary edict of the 'High Command' suspending self-government in the Congress Party governed provinces.

"In the following August the Viceroy issued a far-reaching declaration which in effect pledged us to the acceptance at the earliest possible moment after the war India's completely free and equal partnership in the British family of nations under a constitution of her own devising. At the same time it invited party leaders on the strength of the pledge to co-operate in the war effort by joining the Viceroy's Executive. Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues contemptuously refused even to discuss the offer and Mr. Gandhi followed up the refusal by launching a campaign of individual protest against India's participation in the war.

"That campaign proved a complete fiasco and petered out in the course of 1941.

"In March last year the Minister of Aircraft Production, Sir Stafford Cripps went out to India. The proposals he was charged to explain were so far-reaching, so generous and so explicit that at one time it seemed almost inconceivable that they could be rejected. Even within the ranks of the Congress Working Committee influential elements were known to be strongly in favour of acceptance. Why then were they rejected? For two reasons. The first was the same reason as that which had led to contemptuous rejection of the declaration of August, 1940. It was the assumption underlying both the declarations that India can only be free under a constitutional system arrived at by agreement between main elements in her national life. Both, in fact, denied the Congress Party's claim to 'take delivery' of India at our hands.

"The vast Congress demands took the form of the immediate setting up of a National Government with full Cabinet powers and it was an attempt to snatch that delivery. Sir S. Cripps was bound to reject it, for acceptance would have wrecked all prospect of agreement with the minorities. There was, however, another and at the moment perhaps

even a 'stronger' reason for the rejection. What was that moment? It was the moment of our worst defeat in the East. The Cripps Mission was announced by the Prime Minister on March 11, three days after the fall of Rangoon. While negotiations were in progress the Japanese were advancing rapidly. Not only Ceylon but India's coastal ports suffered bombing raids which looked like the harbingers of far worse to come for the great cities of Eastern India. It never occurred to us here that there was any connection between the event and the sending of Sir S. Cripps. For Mr. Gandhi the connection would seem to have been only too obvious. In his eyes the Cripps Mission was the hoisting of a distress signal—a belated appeal to the Congress to commit itself to a war policy which could only help to bring upon India the horrors of invasion. Our offer was to him nothing more than—I quote his own words—a post-dated cheque on a falling bank.

"During the week that followed the rejection of our proposal a week of continuous reverses in Burma, Mr. Gandhi concentrated all his efforts on a campaign by which the British Government in India was to be forced to quit India and hand over the control of the continent to such a Government as might or might not emerge or abandon it to anarchy. How far he really believed the Government of India could be forced to surrender in view of the precariousness of the military situation or how far he was mainly concerned with reinsuring the Congress with victorious Japanese invaders it is impossible to say.

"The House will have read in the White Paper Mr. Gandhi's original draft resolution of last April which began with the conclusion "Britain is incapable of defending India" and free India's first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. It will also have followed the successive stages by which the original resolution was modified in deference to those elements like Pandit Nehru who were not only committed by their sincerely expressed past utterances to sympathy with China and Russia but were more alive to the desirability of conciliating opinion here and in the United States. With the one exception, however, of Mr. Rajgopalachari whose earnest and prophetic letter of "Appeal to Mr. Gandhi", I hope, has been read by every member, the doubting members of the Working Committee seem to have been content with the facade of the resolution.

"What is more significant is that they seem to have acquiesced in its concession from a general demand that contained in the resolution of July 14 last. This demand was to be enforced by a campaign of mass civil disobedience

or to use Mr. Gandhi's own words, "by open rebellion." They did endorse the demand that there should be an open rebellion unless their claim was admitted.

"On Aug. 8, the All-India Congress Committee gave definite endorsement and sanction to the rebellion. It may help to understand all that lay behind the decision when I remind the House that the month which preceded it had seen us driven in retreat within fifty miles of Alexandria and recorded the fall of Rostov and imminent threat to Stalingrad and Caucasus while only the monsoon shortly to break seemed to.... India and a Japanese invasion.

"Happily there was better and sterner stuff in India than the Congress leaders reckoned. Not only India but the whole Allied cause owed a deep debt of gratitude to these Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive whose swift and resolute decision to arrest the organisers of mischief caused the rebellion to go off at half cock. It owes no less to the loyal civil servants, Indian policemen and soldiers who stood faithful to their trust through the anxious and trying weeks which followed and to the vast majority of the Indian public, Hindu as well as Muslim, who stood aloof and even gave their active support to the authorities.

"With the actual character and course of the Congress rebellion I dealt at some length in the debate in October last. The whole subject is dealt with comprehensively and conclusively in the White Paper. If there are members who having studied the White Paper can still believe that a really non-violent movement of national protest was all that was ever intended or that Mr. Gandhi cannot have any illusions as to the nature of the conflagration which he was determined to spread all over India, I have really nothing to say to them, nor is there anything I can say to those who are still prepared to argue that a concentrated and skilled attack upon vital sectors of strategical communications and upon all Government buildings, associated as they were both physically and in public estimate with the Congress Party, were merely a spontaneous manifestation of public indignation at the arrest of popular political leaders.

"There is a limit to credulity and no one who has taken pains to go through the White Paper can remain in doubt as to what was intended and what was in fact attempted. The case against Mr. Gandhi and his associates is overwhelming. I have seen it asserted in certain quarters that the white Paper is a mere case for the prosecution unsupported by evidence required for conviction. It is a statement of facts, many of them elicited in the course of investigation before courts. These facts have not been arranged to obtain

conviction for there has been no trial still less conviction of Congress leaders. But they are abundant justification for the Government of India's decision to detain the leading mischief-makers in innocuous isolation. I say additional justification, for I must remind the House that the declared decision of the All-India Congress Committee was to paralyse the administration at a moment of grave national peril by a campaign of mass disobedience. That was ample justification and would have been ample if not a single drop of blood had been shed or a single rail torn up. Flickering remnants of the conflagration still occur sporadically. The need for watchfulness remains, but, broadly speaking I think it can be said that the Congress Party's rebellion has been successfully dealt with by the Government of India and the Provincial Government concerned.

"Since then there has been the curious epilogue of Mr. Gandhi's fast to capacity, happily successful in that respect, happily unsuccessful in the attempt to coerce the Government of India into granting his release by the creating of an emotional crisis. It is to be regretted that three members of the Viceroy's Executive, men who had done eminent public service and not the least in dealing with the troubles last autumn, should have allowed themselves to be swayed by that emotional crisis. Their places, I understand, will be filled in the near future by no less capable Indian Publicmen. There is no going back upon the expansion of the Council which Mr. Aney, one of the resigning members, has since his resignation described as an outstanding reform offering enough scope for solid service to the Indian people by Indian members even under the existing system and still more by conventions which steadily and slowly grow up.

"To return to Mr. Gandhi, I understand, the Viceroy has agreed to receive a deputation arising out of the recent meeting of the Non-Party Leaders in Bombay. These leaders apparently wish to suggest that Mr. Gandhi may now be disposed to be more reasonable if allowed to contact with his detained Congress followers and with political leaders outside. I think the full account which I have given to the House of Mr. Gandhi's attitude and of his party throughout the war culminating in the reckless and defeatist action of last year must have convinced the House how difficult and indeed dangerous it would be to consider any concession of that nature in the absence of the most explicit assurances and effective guarantees of the complete change of attitude and conduct on the part of those who have brought so much unhappiness upon India and might be still capable of so much danger to the whole Allied cause in those future

operations for which India must be a base. I can only say that no sign of any such change of heart in Mr. Gandhi can be traced in his recent correspondence with the Viceroy. Where do we stand? Is there no conciliatory gesture, no sympathetic initiative which might serve to break the deadlock, if not with the Congress leaders, at any rate, as between the other Indian parties? I do not believe it is fair either to Lord Linlithgow who has been unwearied in endeavouring to bring the parties together or to the other parties themselves or even to the Congress Party to suggest that the deadlock is something which can be resolved by more sympathetic handling or some happy expedient which may have been overlooked in framing last year's declaration. The differences are far too deep and far too sincerely held. Mr. Jinnah on the one side and the leaders of the Mahasabha on the other, to take two extreme points of view, are each contending for what they and millions behind them believe to be vital principles between which in their present mood and situation as they see it they can find no compromise.

"The Hindu majority of all parties, the Congress, the Mahasabha and the Liberals are substantially agreed on one thing—in insisting upon the maintenance of the unity of India at least for the most essential common purposes. The Muslim attitude was clearly and unequivocally defined by the Muslim League's Secretary and spokesman in the recent debate in the Assembly when he declared: "The Muslims in India will never accept any form of Central Government which will place them at the mercy of the majority community". Are their points of view really incompatible? They have not proved incompatible so long as the ultimate control has rested with the impartial authority of this House. Are they really and necessarily incompatible under that democratic freedom which not only the Indian parties but all parties in this House wish India to enjoy?

"The conclusion to which I have personally been driven by my own contact with this problem over the last three years is that the problem is not insoluble. But it cannot be solved unless we and still more India can get away from the idea that there is only one sealed pattern of democracy, namely, the particular form of parliamentary executive which we have developed in this country. I believe with all my heart that ours is the best type of democracy in the world—the most flexible and yet also the strongest and most durable.

"But it can only exist in a relatively homogeneous country where free discussion can convert the minority of to-day into the majority of tomorrow and where a strong tradition of national unity and parliamentary give and take

transcends the exigencies of party passion and the dictatorship of party organization. Imposed as the Central Government of a continent so deeply divided as India the system would only mean the tyranny of an immovably permanent majority or else the alternative of disruption. Would any one dream of making our system the basis of a Federal Government for Europe? Let me quote Switzerland with its three separate races. Switzerland lives in happy unity under one of the most democratic federal constitutions in the world, but one under which no one race or party can secure the control of the executive. I wonder whether Switzerland could have hoped under our system to have escaped the contagion of nationalist conflict outside our borders.

"Twenty-five years ago this House pledged itself to the progressive attainment of responsible Government for India. We intended it then and we intend it even directly and more immediately today that India should live under a Government responsible not to Parliament here, but to her own people under her own constitution. But what we have too lightly assumed and what we have led India to assume was that this Government would necessarily be our own particular type. The nearer we have come the fulfilment of our pledge the more acute has become the internal deadlock in India. The experience of responsible Government in the provinces as controlled by a totalitarian Hindu oligarchy has enormously accentuated it.

"Our recent declarations have only widened the breach and yet I firmly believe that there may be more than one road.

"Like wasps buzzing angrily up and down a window pane when the adjoining window may be wide open we are all held up frustrated and irritated by the unrealized but insuperable barrier of our constitutional prepossessions.

"If only our mind and, above all, the mind of India could emerge from the rut of our accustomed lines and look for fresh constructive solutions wherever they may be borrowed from and adapted to India's conditions. I am optimistic enough to believe that the necessary way round the present deadlock may be found and perhaps found more rapidly than now seems possible. It is for the Indians themselves to find the way. They alone can find a solution, for it is only when they have found it for themselves that they will be minded to make it succeed.

"There is only one thing more I want to add. The House has been very good to be ashamed of our past record. It has, I think given me credit for attempting to make such progress as difficult circumstances have allowed.

"It has, I hope, given me credit for endeavouring to

maintain a positive and constructive outlook in the face of baffling and bewildering problem. So I trust it will bear with me in what I am now going to say. We have no reason to be ashamed of our past record in India. Never, if I may venture to echo certain great words used by Prime Minister in a different context—never have so few done so much for the happiness of so many, done so much to dispel fear and alleviate want, as was done for the tolling millions of India by a handful of British administrators in the last century. The work was done it is true, within the limitations of the outlook of that age as well as the local conditions in India of that time. But it was good and enduring work for all that. It succeeded because those who did it believed in their task and believed in themselves and because we who sent them out believed in ourselves and had faith in our mission in the world. Because we believed in our mission India believed in it too and responded.

"Today we live in a very different age. We are dealing with a very different India. Our own outlook on all these problems of Government and racial relationships has undergone, and rightly undergone, a profound change. Have we brought into the new age the same faith or the same confident vision that inspired the earlier generation? There was inspiration, and no one can deny it, in the old vision of a beneficent paternal empire. How much more splendid, more inspiring is the vision of a commonwealth of free nations freely associated in equal partnership, regardless of all differences of race or creed, but a partnership, and what is more, a lead to the world, in all good living, in all right thinking, in all generous striving.

If we have failed to inspire India with that vision, if our response to Indian nationalism has looked to Indians too much like reluctant yielding to pressure, if our desire to keep India within the Commonwealth has seemed to them a mere instinct of hanging on to some last indefinite shred of past authority, may it not be due to the fact that we have not ourselves realised sufficiently clearly and vividly the vision of a united commonwealth? How can we expect Indians to share the vision of a united commonwealth in all the range of its opportunity, in all the breadth of its freedom if—I hope I may be allowed to quote the lines of Francis Thompson—It is we, it is our estranged faces that miss many splendoured things.

"As for faith, surely what we in this little island, what we of this loosely bound yet amazingly coherent commonwealth, this youngest yet infinitely hopeful experiment is supranational co-operation, that we have already shown to

the world in the darkest hours of the present struggle—sure that should give us faith in ourselves and in the ideas and possibilities of that Commonwealth in facing the task before us.

"Of those tasks there is none that can compare in its importance, to every member of our Commonwealth as well as to the future peace of Asia and of the world, with a solution on stable and enduring basis of this great and difficult problem of India. We cannot solve it by shirking our responsibilities to the peoples of India and to Allied cause, while the enemy is at India's gates. We can only help to solve it by our continuing good will to India by our active interest in India and by our encouragement of every effort that Indians may make to find their own way out of their present deadlock, above all it may be by imparting to them some measure of our commonwealth as our common future."

The Congress position is clearly explained and emphatically declared by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Member of the Congress Working Committee at a press conference in New Delhi on 25th. January, 1944, which runs as below:—

"Dealing first with waverers and the half-hearted among Congressmen, she declared that she would give freedom of thought to everyone just as she wanted it for herself but for people who had publicly endorsed the Congress decision, it was extremely undesirable, it was disloyal, while the leaders were in jail, to undermine the integrity of the Congress by action which was certainly not in accordance with the Congress decision.

"She emphatically repudiated the suggestions that the out-break of violence in India was in accordance with Congress plans and that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi were pro-Japanese.

"If anybody has the audacity to continue saying it, it will be scurrilous, it will be a lie", she said. "I can tell you authoritatively as the only member of the Working Committee outside jail, that so far from being pro-Japanese we have been consistently against any form of foreign invasion, no matter what label it may bear, because we have had quite enough of foreign invasions. There are no two opinions among us on this."

Mrs. Naidu revealed that about the end of May, 1942, Miraben who was in Orissa looking after the evacuees, sent Mahatma Gandhi a report of her work and along with that report a questionnaire asking what should be the attitude of the Indian people if the authorities got into a scare about the possibility of some kind of invasion from the East. Mahatma Gandhi dictated a letter in reply to the questionnaire. He

gave the fullest instructions in the most uncompromising manner and he declared that there should be no compromise, no trade, no barter and acquiescence and no co-operation with the invader.

Mrs. Naidu herself came to know of this letter at the time of the fast. At that time there was renewed propaganda about Mahatma Gandhi being pro-Japanese and Miraben being used as a messenger and so on.

Miraben then wrote a letter to Viceroy saying that as an English-Woman she was ashamed of the lying campaign in which her name had been brought in. She also enclosed a copy of the questionnaire and Mahatma Gandhi's reply. But she received no acknowledgement from the Viceroy.

Mrs. Naidu said she proposed soon to print the whole of the questionnaire and reply. "They would prove", she said, "that we of the Working Committee have always been anti-Japanese, we would be anti-anybody that tried to invade us, we are against all forms of aggression, as we are against all forms of exploitation. That is the position of the Working Committee".

"It is true, I believe," she continued, "that owing to this famine in Bengal, the misery of the people, the masses who do not know the difference between a Hottenlot and Zulu, a Chinese or a Russian, might feel that anybody who helped them is welcome. Possibly in Bengal that is the attitude. I do not know. It is a great danger. We must fight it. But, as far as the thinking people, the Congressmen and Mahatma Gandhi are concerned, there is going to be no quarter asked."

Questioned about the allegation that Mahatma Gandhi pulled the strings from behind from Wardha and prevented the Working Committee from accepting the Cripps proposals, Mrs. Naidu declared: "After Gandhiji left Delhi, we had no communication with him, to my certain knowledge. Mahatma Gandhi," she added, "had told the Working Committee to do exactly as it liked and declared he would not interfere in the slightest with any decision they might arrive at."

Mrs. Naidu described the efforts made during the Cripps negotiations to bring Mr. Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi together and referred to the letter that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote to Mr. Jinnah a day before the arrest of the Congress leaders.

An American correspondent asked whether the failure to bring the two together did not strengthen argument that the communal question was insoluble. Mrs. Naidu replied that the communal problem was after all only a matter of what she called "vulgar fractions". "The common sufferings of

the people, the food question these were softening communal differences. Those who said that the communal problem was insoluble did not know psychology or the pressure of history. Provided the will for a settlement was there, the communal problem was capable of solution and she felt it was going to be solved."

What did she think was the way out of the present position as between the Government and the Congress asked a correspondent, Mrs. Naidu replied that Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy contained in opening. The Mahatma had said there was no reason to withdraw what the Congress had done, but he asked Viceroy to send him someone who knew the Government's mind and convince him that he was wrong, and having convinced him put him in touch with the Working Committee.

Why, she asked, were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Jaykar, Mr. Rajgopalacharia and Mr. Phillips not allowed to see Mahatma Gandhi?

A correspondent asked what was her reaction to the situation in the country from her study of it during the past ten months?

"My reaction," she replied "is that the deadlock can be solved if the Government wants to resolve it. Waverers have increased in the country, because they never have been very strong. I have seen hunger, death, disease, as the result of wrong policies, the misery and bitterness of the people are enormously greater than when we went to jail".

"To some extent the people have lost their fear of the Japanese invasion," she said; "I think the people are much more sullen in their resentment, much more bitter and any vestige of faith they had has gone. The food situation and happenings in Burma have done much to destroy the legendary prestige of the British Government. Now is the occasion for Government to rectify past mistakes with the right gesture. We have made our gestures. I think it is possible to find some way to make a breach in the wall if they would let people meet and talk to Gandhi and let him meet the Working Committee and find out for himself what they thought and what was happening in the country."

"On fundamentals" she went on to declare, "We cannot surrender. I would rather that every one of us died in jail than that merely for the sake of coming out we should compromise the integrity of our position. We have spoken in the name of the nation. We cannot go back on it till we are convinced we are wrong."

"She reiterated that Gandhi never intended to start any movement. The idea was that failing negotiations, some

action might or would be taken and that was left to some future time."

"We discussed nothing in the Working Committee in the way of instructions or programme" she said, "if anybody says now that the Congress Working Committee or Gandhiji, especially Gandhiji, even by implication, by gesture, hint or blinking of the eyelash, suggested to anybody that violence was to be part of the programme, that person, Government or group are propagandists and to use an impolite word, liars."

Mrs. Naidu revealed that when the Government issued the white paper she wrote to Sir Richard Tottenham challenging the statement about the Working Committee having had anything to do with violence. She referred in the letter to the "Gigantic Violence" on the part of the Government in making wholesale and melodramatic arrests. "The Government," she said "was perfectly aware that the centres of incitement were not connected with the Congress High Command." She asserted further that she had been connected with the Working Committee for twenty years and she knew they had never once initiated, endorsed or condoned any programme or acts of violence whether by individuals or groups or Governments. During the war, she had stated in the letter, while adhering strictly to the Congress position of non-violence for attaining internal independence, the Working Committee had been anxious to come into line with the United Nations and give them cooperation, which it could give only on terms of perfect equality. The Committee was opposed to any kind of aggression, from east or west. If it was a crime to love liberty, the Working Committee was guilty in association with China and other nations who were fighting to gain or regain or retain freedom. She finally threw a definite challenge to the declaration that the Working Committee had anything, whatever, to do with violence.

That letter, she said, was shown to Mahatma Gandhi and was sent on February 14, 1943, on the fourth day of his fast and she only got an acknowledgement.

Asked about the slogan "Do or Die" she made it clear that it could not possibly mean anything other than do or die within the limitations of non-violence. "On the day that Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast, Dr. B. C. Roy asked categorical questions to him about the allegations regarding his attitude to violence. Mahatma Gandhi in the course of his letter asked, 'Do you think that after preaching and practising non-violence for fifty years I am going to destroy my life's work?'"

Referring to people who demanded release of Congress she said, "Nothing is more humiliating than intercession on

our behalf asking for release as a matter of mercy, I would beg kind friends, who when the Congress is out, are so much against us, to desist from pleading for our release. The Country's demand should be, try Congress leaders, face them with the charges against them."

Defining her idea of the trial, she said, "if you had impartial British judges, they would not be biased. I am willing to take my trial before them, not before men from here. But I want the Government also to be tried."

The Government case could not be expected to be put better by anybody else than the Secretary of State for India Mr. L. S. Amery. He has been directly responsible for the policy followed in India and it was he alone who should be able to defend it best. Hence the Government case is placed in his own words. As regards the Congress position, with authority and information who else could daresay better than Mrs. Naidu. Hence whatever could possibly be said under the circumstances that has been attempted by Mrs. Naidu in her above quoted press interview.

After this authentic exposition of the two cases, namely, of the Government and the Congress, there remains not much to comment. The Government allegations against the Congress and Gandhiji and defence of the Government action and policy are really unconvincing, being false and fictitious. Further they are fully falsified and exposed by the facts as authentically quoted by Mrs. Naidu. It has been very clearly shown there that Gandhiji or the Congress Working Committee have never been pro-Japanese or any-anybody that tried to invade India. She next clearly stated that Gandhiji never interferred in the slightest after he left Delhi in the decision of the Congress Working Committee about the Cripps proposals. Further she reiterated that Gandhiji never intended to start any movement. The idea was that failing negotiations some action might or would be taken and that was left to some future date. As regards violence, Mrs. Naidu very emphatically declared "The Congress Working Committee or Gandhiji, especially Gandhiji, even by implication, by gesture, hint or a beating of the eyelash, suggested to anybody that violence was to be part of the programme, that person, Government or group are propagandists and to use an impolite word, liars." To prove the statement she quoted Gandhiji himself and also her own personal experience and knowledge. She also explained the slogan "Do or Die" that "it could not possibly mean anything other than do or die within the limits of non-violence." Lastly she declared boldly that she was willing to take her trial before impartial

British judges if they would not be biased and not before men from here."

She also expressed that she wanted the Government also to be tried. But the Government responded this open challenge with a Ban Order on Mrs. Naidu that she could neither make a public speech nor join in any procession nor address any gathering of more than 5 persons. Besides the press was also banned from publishing her statements or speeches.

So the Congress case is proved beyond doubt, as the Government has no defence to offer beyond gagging the Congress and its exponents and spokesmen.

Of course, the then Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, expressed his view as holding the Congress responsible for "these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these students which has done so much harm to India's good name and the Congress Party" (Letter to Gandhiji January 13, '43.) Gandhiji in reply to this laid whole blame at the door of the Government and the answer is that the Government goaded the people to violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. The violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic Law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand to one. Further this fact has been admitted and emphatically declared by no less a man than Mr. James Maxton in the debate in the House of Commons :—

"I do not believe any Indian Politician, any supporter of Congress, any average Indian, ever did anything to harm a policeman." (Manchester Guardian, Saturday, September 12, 1943.)

The fact is that truth shall be out. It can never be suppressed. History gives its judgment and the world will have to bow down before it. The judgment shall be one and only one and that is that in August 1942 and after innocent Indians who aspired and demanded their right of independence were brutally subjected to such atrocities and savagery by the British Government in India as were never heard of in the history of humanity.