

PART II  
EVENTS LEADING TO QUIT INDIA MOVE

CHAPTER I

CONGRESS AND WAR

On September 1, 1939, Germany marched into Poland and two days later the British and French Governments declared war upon Germany. Under the British law the declaration of war by the United Kingdom was enough to drag India automatically into the war and make her a belligerent country and an enemy of Germany. It was left to the Viceroy of India simply to announce the decision which was made in London, the fact that India was at war, and this the Viceroy did with promptness.

No government and people outside the British, French and German empires entered the war on its outbreak. All free peoples of the world outside the three warring empires were neutral in varying degrees. Even within the British Empire, the Government and people of Ireland had chosen to remain neutral. The peoples of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, though they form part of the British Empire, were also not automatically dragged into the war and they took the decision to fight Germany in their own governments and parliaments.

The attitude of the Indian National Congress in regard to questions of war and peace was not unknown to the Government of the United Kingdom, when it assumed and declared India a belligerent country without reference to the Indian people. Through an unbroken chain of four successive annual sessions, the Congress had resolved on behalf of the Indian people not to take part in and to resist a war which Britain might force on India and which went contrary to the foreign policy which the Congress had sought to outline. The pillars on which this policy rested were as follows.

Firstly, India may not be declared a belligerent country nor any use of her resources, men and money made in a war without the consent of the Indian people.

Secondly, the decision on war can be made only by Free India.

Thirdly, the fascism of Hitler and others which suppressed the freedom of its own population and conquered and enslaved other peoples is to be looked upon with horror but the imperialism of Britain and others must be found to be equally at the root of the world's slavery, violence and wars. In fact, apart from what British imperialism does to the

populations subject to it and the standing model and incitement that it is to other well armed powers to outlive it, British foreign policy must also be held responsible for encouraging the forces of evil as in the Italo-Ethiopian, Spanish and China-Japan wars and, thus for hastening a world war. India therefore, can have nothing to do with a war whose object may in any way be the continuance either of imperialism or fascism. The World can be made secure against the crime of wars only if the imperialist and fascist systems are destroyed.

Fourthly, India offers her co-operation in the cause of real collective security of the peoples of the world and in that of freedom and democracy.

Fifthly, the increasing use of armaments and their rapidly mounting manufacture is a source of serious anxiety to the future of the world. In pursuance of this policy and the action notwithstanding of the Indian Government in despatching Indian troops overseas, the Congress Working Committee even before the outbreak of the present war had withdrawn Congress members of the Central Legislature from its sessions.

Events moved fast and confusingly till the Working Committee met and issued a manifesto on September 14. This manifesto examined the issues involved in the present war and outlined India's attitude towards them.

Firstly, it objected to the manner in which India had been declared a belligerent country and the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments limited under the various Ordinances. It saw in this action of the British Government a deliberate ignoring of the wishes of the Indian people.

Secondly, the manifesto made it clear that India could not associate herself in a war under compulsion and without her free consent which she could give only after she was assured her own freedom and considered the cause of the war worthy. "Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy", said the manifesto.

Thirdly, the Working Committee drew attention to the past of the British Government and its foreign policy which had ignored again and again high ideals and the sentiments of its own people. The war of 1914-18 which was declared to have been fought for the preservation of democracy, self-determination and the freedom of small nations had ended up in a treaty which had denied all these. Subsequently, the British Government betrayed democracy and peace in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain and Czechoslovakia.

Fourthly, the manifesto contemplated with anxiety the terrible state of the world to-day. It said, "Innumerable

innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows and violence and threat of violence shadow the world, and unless checked and ended will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages." In condemning the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland the manifesto reiterated the Congress disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism, their glorification of war and violence, their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour and their suppression of the human spirit.

Fifthly, the manifesto found the cause of the present war in "the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War". These conflicts arise principally out of attempts to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world. To resolve these conflicts and establish a new equilibrium and world-order domination of one country by another has to cease and economic relations have to be reorganised for the common good of all. Imperialism and Fascism alike have to be ended.

Sixthly, the Working Committee invited "the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their *war aims* are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new-order that is envisaged". Taking India to be the crux of the problem, the manifesto particularly questioned if these war aims include "the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation" and the right of the Indian people to frame "their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and if immediate effect was to be given to these aims to the largest possible extents".

Seventhly, the manifesto asserted that, "a free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation" and showed the willingness of the Working Committee to give their co-operation in the task of checking horror in Europe and China.

Eighthly, the Working Committee earnestly appealed "to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and in this grave hour of peril to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world."

The Committee also appointed a War Emergency Subcommittee with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as its Chairman.

On October 10, the All-India Congress Committee approved and endorsed the statement issued by the Working Committee and repeated the invitation to the British Government to state their war aims and peace aims. The All-India Congress Committee reiterated the objectives of the Congress and said, "the Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic state in India wherein the rights and interest of all minorities are preserved and safeguarded. The means it has adopted in its struggles and activities have been peaceful and legitimate, and it has looked war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilisation."

During the A.I.C.C. debate, the need and propriety of the Working Committee's invitation to the British Government to declare its war and peace aims was questioned. Was it not apparent to everybody what these aims were, what the past of British imperialism had been and its present structure and necessity to dominate and enslave the world, said the questioners. Answering this question at the end of the debate, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to the curious situation of British imperialism in which it was on the one hand continuing to maintain its domination and exploitation over a large part of the world and, on the other, professing to wage war against aggression and for the defence of freedom and world peace. This contradiction between practice and profession was not apparent to many millions in the world. The Invitation of the Working Committee, therefore, forced the British Government either to come out in their true colours and shed their professions or to shed their imperialism and act up to their declarations. This pressure on the British Government to reveal the truth for all the world to see was an act of service to India and the entire freedom-loving world. The manifesto of the Working Committee had, therefore, been acclaimed even by people outside India as the "Charter of the oppressed".

Meanwhile, the British Government in London had attempted to answer the Congress through the Secretary of State for India that the demand made by the Congress was inopportune and that the British people were susceptible to honourable treatment. Honour! If the British Secretary meant that the Indian people were no longer prepared to do honour to his government and be obediently loyal to it, he was indeed right. If he meant gentlemanly action, it should not have been difficult to choose between the British Government which had flouted the insistent wishes of a whole people and which was continuing to act contrary to its professions and the Indian

Congress which had spoken in the name of the freedom and the peace of the world. It was imperialism and bad manners and the Secretary of State for India that had succeeded in irritating a whole people who are generally of a forgiving disposition.

The Viceroy of India started a procession of interviews with many people, some men important because the Indian people thought them so, while many more because the Government thought them so. Altogether the Viceroy interviewed over fifty people. On October 8, he gave the British Government's reply to the Congress manifesto.

Firstly, in regard to their war aims and peace aims, the Viceroy said, the British Government sought no advantages from the war and were impelled to stop aggression and secure the peace of the world. It was easy to see that the Viceroy had side-stepped the issues that were raised by the Congress and that alone will shape the future of the world for good or for bad. The Congress had asked if the British Government were prepared to forego the unjust advantages accrued to them through their domination over and exploitation of one-fourth of the world, and the answer came that they did not wish for any fresh advantages. The Congress had asked if the British Government were willing to make all war impossible by ending the causes of war, which lay in imperialism and fascism, but their reply refused to disclose as to how they intended to secure the peace of the world. They had presumably in mind the old method of defeating the enemy and erecting a precarious peace on that basis.

Secondly, in regard to their aims concerning India, the Viceroy said, the British Government were committed to the goal of dominion status and would be willing to confer with Indian representatives as to the nature of advance to be made at the end of the war. There was no mention in the Viceregal statement of the words 'Independent India', and it was clear that the British Government were as afraid of this term as they probably would be of a bomber overhead or as they should be of their own conscience. They did not like to forego the right, precious to them but oppressive to the Indian People or arbitrating over India's future and they were willing at the end of the war to call in Indian representatives for purposes of consultation. The British Government forgot that the Indian people had long got over the stage of conferring and being consulted; they wished to be masters in their own country and did not particularly like to be advisers to foreign rulers.

Thirdly, in regard to the nature of advance to be immediately attempted, the Viceroy was willing to call together

a consultative committee of Indian representatives for purposes of association in the war. It is needless to add that there lay the wide gulf of centuries between the consultative committee proposed by the Viceroy and the widest possible application here and now of democracy and self-government demanded by the Congress. Of course, the Viceroy did not let go the opportunity of insisting on differences in Indian opinion which he had come to know through the differing viewpoints which were placed before him by his over fifty interviewers.

The answer of India's spokesmen to the Viceregal statement was prompt, short and unmistakable. Aside from the gap of a few hours caused by telegraphic transmission, the reactions of Mahatma Gandhi became known to the country immediately after the Viceroy's statement. "The Congress will have to go into wilderness again" said Gandhiji and added: "The British declaration shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it. The long statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of divide and rule is to continue".

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said: "If this is the final answer of the British Government to the people of India, then, there is no common ground between the two and our path diverge completely". As President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru appealed to Congressmen of the province to "keep ready. And whatever happens do not forget that we may do nothing against our high principles and not in keeping with India's honour. Keep calm and cool and disciplined. Keep ready".

After an extraordinarily short session, the Working Committee decided in its resolution of October 22, that "it can not possibly give any support to Great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress ministers to tender resignations."

Further, the Committee called upon "all Congress committees and congressmen generally to be prepared for all developments and eventualities and to show restraint of word and deed" and not to resort to "any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like". Congressmen were asked to remember that "a programme of resistance, commensurate with the magnitude of the issue before the country, requires perfect discipline within Congress ranks and the consolidation of the Congress organisation". Events were moving fast. Congressmen and the people generally felt that they were living in glorious times and that the time had come for them to shed their little lives and to sleep on

their haveisacks. The scent of adventure for great ideals was in the air.

The Congress ministries resigned. In the seven provinces of the Congress ministers, the Governors were unable to form ministries that could command popular support and suspended the constitution. In the eighth province of a Congress-coalition Ministry, the Governor formed a new ministry. The phase that had lasted 27 months was over. The constitution was wrecked. At the first touch of reality when the British-enforced constitution and the loyalty of Congress ministries to their fundamental pledge of India's freedom were alike on test, the utter unworkability of the constitution was proved and the British Government had to wreck it with their own hands. The people of seven provinces as represented in their provincial assemblies also accepted resolutions on the lines of the Working Committee's manifesto on war.

Between the Working Committee's decision to non-co-operate with the British Government and the almost entire wrecking of the constitution to date, the Viceroy of India invited Mahatma Gandhi, President Rajendra Prasad and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Muslim League President, to meet him. Subsequent to these meetings and exchange of some correspondence, the Viceroy suggested in a press statement on November 5, that "there remains today entire disagreement between the representatives of the major parties on fundamental issues" and, as a result of it, there was failure in negotiations, but that, undaunted by this failure, he proposed, "in due course to try again in consultation with the leaders of these great parties and the princes to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity."

To understand this talk of failure and unity, and fundamental disagreements, it is necessary to examine the correspondence that took place between the Congress President and the Viceroy. The Viceroy had asked the Congress and the Muslim League to get together and arrive at an agreement as to how they could send their representatives on the Central Government as members of his Executive Council and also work harmoniously in the Provinces. The Viceroy had also suggested that the privileges and obligations of the Congress and the League members of his Executive Council would be the same as those of the existing members of the Council. That was his entire proposal.

It is not difficult to see that this proposal was absurd as far as the Congress was concerned. The Congress had definitely decided not to play the role of advisers to foreign rulers and to help in the exploitation of Indian resources and

manpower in peace and much more so in war. The Congress wants to secure the peace of the world through the freedom of all peoples and had as such asked the British Government to agree to the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution in a Constituent Assembly and to provide for an interim arrangement conceding maximum possible political power to Indian representatives. This was a high national objective and an equally international aim, but the Viceroy had again managed to keep singularly quiet, in regard to them.

Failure, then of negotiations between whom, fundamental disagreements between whom, and the lack of unity between whom? Obviously, between the Congress and the British Government and not between the Congress and the Muslim League. Is it suggested that the Muslims of India or any organisations even partly representing them including the Muslim League do not want the freedom of their country or the peace of the world? There is nothing on record to prove that this is so. The Viceroy has been guilty of looseness of thought or of practising intentionally or otherwise, it is not for us to say, the old policy of divide and rule in describing what was a fundamental disagreement between him and the Congress as one between the Congress and the Muslim League.

The reply of the Muslim League President to the Viceroy also made the position clear. In his letter of November 4, Mr. Jinnah stated that the Congress was not prepared to discuss any questions relating to the Centre or the Provinces "until the British Government had complied with their demand as embodied in the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee", in other words, until the British Government had decided to give up its occupation of India. Mr. Jinnah did not, in this connection or any other during the course of this letter, talk of any disagreement between him and the Congress. In his letter to the Viceroy President Rajendra Prasad had, therefore, pointed out with eminent justice and great dignity that, "it has pained to find the communal question being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom (as suggested by the Congress)".

In its demand for India's freedom, the Congress does not seek power for itself or for any particular community in the country. The constitution of India will be framed by a



Constituent Assembly which "will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation." As such, the Congress fights for withdrawing political power from the British Government and for bestowing it upon the Indian people. This vital fact seems to be lost sight of by the British Government and certain other people. Any organisation in India anxious to achieve this ideal or that and to serve any one interest will, therefore, join with the Congress in the struggle for freedom and thus woo the electorate and the masses for its due share in the Governance of the Country.

The first step was taken when the Congress declared its non-co-operation with the British Government. Thereafter there were two possible policies either of which could have been adopted. The one that the Congress could adopt was to transform its co-operation with the Government into immediate civil resistance and thus work out its policy of resisting the use of Indian men and resources in an imperialist war and also defiantly maintain national dignity and the principle of freedom against the British challenge. The other which the Congress actually adopted was the policy of providing for an intermediate stage of preparation between the step of non-co-operation that it had already taken and that of civil disobedience when it became necessary. This stage of preparation was to be devoted to the removal of the more dangerous weakness in the national position. Arguments could be advanced to prove the greater desirability of the one or the other policy but by far the most effective argument that clinched the issue in favour of the temporary stage of preparation was that it was already decided upon by the Working Committee.

Thereafter the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Ramgarh passed a resolution on its war policy approving the previous resolutions and actions on the war situation by the A. I. C. C. and the Working Committee. Firstly it declared, that the Congress can not in any way, directly or indirectly, be a party to the war which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation (i. e. exploitation of the people of India as well as of other Asiatic and African countries) and it emphatically declared that nothing short of complete Independence can be accepted by the people of India. "Further about communal harmony it expressed," no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognised minorities will be fully protected by agreement. "As regards the sovereignty of the people it made clear, sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or the Provinces".

In this resolution while it was clearly mentioned that the

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Congress withdrew the ministries in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination, it also laid stress on discipline and constructive programme.

It is almost about a year after this that the Congress started its symbolic Satyagrah in November, 1940. In short this was the attitude and policy of the Congress towards the last world-war from its very start.

## CHAPTER II

### GANDHIJI AND WAR

Gandhiji on the very out-break of the last great world war expressed, when he was invited by the Viceroy to meet him, his abhorrence against the violent warfare and its horrors. Subsequent to this meeting Gandhiji issued a statement on September, 5. He said, "I am not therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England or France fall or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled." It is obvious that the thought of a ruined and humbled Germany was as much a matter of sorrow to Gandhiji as that of a defeated England or France. In like manner Gandhiji's concern at the destruction of London and the Westminster Abbey arose out of what he himself called a "purely humanitarian standpoint." To those who had misread into his concern at destruction a preference for Britain, Gandhiji explained on September, 11: "I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments". It is clear, therefore, that Gandhiji's sympathies, in so far as destruction caused by war is concerned, are evenly distributed over all victims, be they British or Germans.

After seeing the Viceroy, Gandhiji expressed his sympathies with Britain and France as much as with Germany and they were in accord with the Congress policy and his principles of distaste of war, violence and armaments.

He appealed to all war-mongers of the world to desist from the course of destruction of human life and property which were the best creation of God and man.

He gave his personal moral support to the British Government and their cause. He also advised the Congress for its unconditional moral support to the British Government in its hour of trouble and trial. He was opposed to any embarrassment to the British Government in its war efforts,

Hence this scheme of satyagrah in 1941, was so formulated as not to interfere in the least with the war efforts of the Government of India. He chose only his best Satyagrahis to offer a mere symbolic Satyagrah and that too who believed in non-violence as a faith. His Satyagrahis offered Satyagrah after giving previous notice to the Government as regards time and place of their offering Satyagrah, which was nothing else but merely shouting his faith in non-violence and his opposition to all armed wars, violence and aid to such wars with men or money. But that being symbolic did not interfere in the least with the war efforts of the Government of India. Most of such satyagrahis were arrested even before they actually went to shout or shouted but merely on sending a notice of their intention to shout such slogans.

Gandhiji further clarifying the issue between India and Britain said in his message to a London paper on November 14, "If there is to be a fight between Britain and the Congress, the world should know what it is to be for, does Britain intend to recognise India as an independent nation or must India remain Britain's dependency". Attempts are made by spokesmen of the British Government to confuse the main issue by flinging the minorities' question in India's face and by bracketing the Europeans of India and the Princes with the other minorities. If European interests are to be preserved, "rights acquired by conquest remain intact", says Mahatamaji and adds in regard to the Princes, "to raise the question of Princes is still more untenable. They are part of the Paramount Power. It is painful to think that British statesmen do not so much mention the millions of people of the States".

It may be mentioned here that the many millions of states' peoples as against their 600 and odd princes have spoken through the All-India States Peoples' Conference endorsing the Congress attitude on War. The Frontier Province, which has the highest percentage of Muslims than in any part of India was being ruled by a Governor who wrecked the constitution because the people of the Province refused to associate themselves with British War Policies. Aside from the Congress, certain other organisations also of Muslims such as Jamiat-ul-Ulema, Arbars, sections of Momins and Shias and others, have adopted the Congress attitude on War.

We give below some extracts from a speech about Gandhiji on India, Britain and the present war by Mr. Louis Fisher, a well known American Journalist delivered by him in his own country:—

"Gandhi has a devotion to the truth and an uninhibited

tongue which makes him tell the whole story. It gets him into all kinds of difficulties he said to me for instance and he has said subsequently in writing: 'I would go to Japan and sign a treaty of peace with the Japanese' Now he immediately added in the conversation to me, 'I know the British will never let me go to Japan and I know that if I ever go to Japan, the Japanese would not sign a treaty of peace with me'. Then why talk about it? Because the idea had occurred to him and for Gandhi the fact that an idea is not practicable does not mean that he must not talk about it. However, this statement has enabled persons who have ulterior motives and wish to defame Gandhi—to say that Gandhi is pro-Japanese. Now there are many Americans and many Englishmen whose word as to who is pro-Japanese I would not accept because many of those Americans and Englishmen were themselves pro-Japanese and appeased the Japanese and sent Japan the scrap and oil which our boys are now getting back in uglier form. There is one man whose word I would take as to who is pro or anti-Japanese and that is Chiang-Kai-Shek and he is pro-Gandhi and pro-Indian independence and he has intervened (as I told you) with President Roosevelt and with Winston Churchill in recent months repeatedly, with a view to the moderation of British policy in India. Chiang-Kai-Shek knows that Gandhi is anti-Japanese, pro-chinese and anti-axis. And Gandhi has proved it. But it's simply Gandhi's manner of speech that exposes him to these false charges.

Gandhi did the same thing in the current political crisis. Against the background of India's internal misery and the mounting resentment and bitterness there occurred the British Military reverses in the Far East—Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore and Burma—British prestige in Asia dropped to zero. There was panic in India. The Indians were afraid that the British would run from India as they had so recently from Burma. There was no confidence among Indians in England's ability to defend India. The British Government in London realized that an emergency had arisen in India, but it was only after a very healthy prod from President Roosevelt that the British War Cabinet rushed one of its members Sir Stafford Cripps out to India to repair the damage. Now whatever the causes of Cripps' failure. (And in the light of his subsequent dismissal from the War Cabinet—He was taken into the War Cabinet when the Churchill Cabinet shook as the result of the fall of Singapore and the escape of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the two German pocket battleships under the nose of the R.A.F. and the British Navy through the English Channel, Churchill

needed Cripps' popular support and took him into the War Cabinet and Cripps was dismissed from that Cabinet three days after Rommel's defeat in Egypt and after we landed in North Africa, in that perspective it becomes clear that Cripps' mission to India was only part of the destruction of Cripps. Stalin shoots his rivals as Churchill digests his. Cripps tried to succeed, but he failed because certain reactionary British imperialists did not want him to succeed—did not want him to become a greater figure in England than he was). But whatever, the causes of Cripps' failure, the fact is that he failed to repair the damage. The damage, therefore grew worse. It was as an intuitive, spontaneous reaction to that deterioration of the Indian situation that Gandhi said, 'I'm sick of this, the British must go.' Then he thought: friends talked to him and he said, 'That was wrong, I have no right to say that,' Gandhi is one of the few big men in the world who is big enough to admit his errors in public. And Gandhi said, 'I can not ask the British to quit India during the war. That would mean making a present of India to the Axis.' Gandhi has said from that day to this, 'The British and Americans can stay in India. They can reinforce their armed services in India. They can use India as Base for Military operations against the Axis Powers.' Neither Gandhi nor any other Indian Leader is asking the British to get out of India during the War. Neither Gandhi nor any Indian Leader expects complete independence during the war. All that Gandhi or the Indian leaders are asking for is an Indian National Government, which Gandhi said to me in so many words which were subsequently published, 'An Indian National Government which would not interfere with Military operations, but which would immediately sign a treaty of alliance with the United Nations to help them to win the War.'

The Indian leaders contend that it is only by giving India some such concession, some such instalment during the war on complete independence after the war, it is only in this way that you can arouse the Indian people to support the war for freedom. If we ask ourselves why the Russians and the Chinese have fought so stubbornly and well, whereas the Indians are completely apathetic to this war the answer is that one fights the war, that you and I are fighting this war, because we have something to lose or because we expect to gain something. But the Indians have very little to lose and nobody has told them in ringing terms that they are likely to gain anything.

On the contrary I sat in the gallery of the House of Commons in September, 1941 when Churchill, after his rendezvous

with President Roosevelt in the Atlantic Charter, came to the House of Commons. A member of Parliament arose and said, Mr. Prime Minister, does Article III of the Atlantic Charter (which gives every country right to choose its own form of Government) apply to India? Churchill stood up and said, "No Sir", and sat down. Nothing which Smuts or Halifax or Herbert Morrison or Cripps or any British spokesman has said since that day at all mitigates or diminishes the validity of those two words, "No Sir." Indeed Churchill had reinforced them on November 10, when speaking in London, he said, "England will hold her own. I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside at the liquidation of the British Empire". And by calling the British Empire a British Commonwealth you do not change its spots. Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia are free dominions, but India is an oppressed and unhappy colony. If we are to use India as a base for the defeat of Japan we will have a sorry time if there is turmoil and bitterness and discontent among the hundreds of millions.

What are our war aims in this war? The four freedoms—freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want (that means prosperity and security), freedom from fear (that means peace). These are things that we want for ourselves. This is not a war about a map. There may never be a Peace conference after this war. Peace will not be established by lifting up one country and destroying another or by tearing a piece of territory away from one country and tacking it on to the other. This is war about ourselves, this is a social war, this is a war about the fundamentals of the life that we live.

Some people, who think in two dimensions, say: "Hitler and Mussolini and France and the Japanese militarists made this war." That is correct, but we made them, Hitler, maniac, mad man though he be, is nevertheless the child of our civilization. He is a product of our society. We defeated the Kaiser, we got a Hitler. We could defeat Hitler and get a worse Hitler, unless we destroy the soil and the seed in which Hitlerism grows. This, therefore, is not merely a war against foreign Fascism and foreign Hitlers. This is equally a war against the 50 per cent Hitlers and the 10 per cent Hitlers and the 2 per cent Hitlers who live in the midst of the Democracies and who have helped to make this and other wars (Applause). The peace will depend on us, on what we think or what we do during the war. After all, the peace will be no better than the men who make it. Governments create peace in their own image. Peace like charity begins at home, and only to the extent that we prepare for a peace will

there be a peace. Some day, we may be grateful to Gandhi for having raised for all of us that fundamental question of whether we purify ourselves during the war as to be capable of making a better world after the war.

On July 4 while I was in India the British Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, gave a party in his great marble palace in New Delhi to celebrate America's independence from the British Empire (Laughter). At that party, I heard all the arguments against India's independence from the British Empire. A British General who had been in Burma said to me. "But could a free India after the war defend itself?" I said to him, "Could England?" What country nowadays can defend itself single handedly? Not England, not France, not Italy, probably not the United States and Russia. If only those countries which can defend themselves are to be independent after this war then there will be very few independent states, and the General's question only means that after this war there will have to be an international organization which will defend all countries against all aggressors. At the same party I was asked to sit down next to Lady Linlithgow, a handsome, regal lady, the wife of the Viceroy. She tried to talk to me about the weather which is a ubiquitous subject of conversation in India, it being 110° usually from morning until late in the afternoon, but I soon got her off on the subject of politics and India's independence, and she said, "But are these people capable of ruling themselves?" Some times I'm blunt in conversation. I said, "Lady Linlithgow, you know that's a very queer question to ask on a night like this. That's exactly what the British Tories said about the thirteen colonies in 1776". And as the President pointed out in his speech, which is printed in to-day's paper, "There were plenty of Americans, the skeptics, the cynics of Washington's day who did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government." I did not say to the wife of the Viceroy, but I went on thinking that some times when I look at the mess which the so called 'Civilized' nations have made in the world, I think perhaps we ought to call in the so-called 'uncivilized' nations like China and India to help us rule the world. We are very wonderful at making perfect frigidaires and automobiles and bombs, but we have run ourselves into two world wars in one generation—and that is no proof of our capacity to manage world affairs. At any rate just as the majority of Americans in Washington's day felt that they were entitled to freedom and independence, so the Indians, so the Asiatics feel that they want freedom and there will be trouble if we try to obstruct them. The capacity to use freedom is learned; you are not born

with it. It's learned in the exercise of freedom and independence.

I came away from India with the profound conviction that if there were the will, India could be united politically overnight and that of course would be only the first step towards ultimate social and economic union. I came away from India with the conviction that the obstacle to Indian independence does not lie in India. It lies in England. India is a very good thing. Many interests and companies and families in England have grown rich on India. But the problem is bigger than that. Neville Chamberlain was an appeaser, because he was afraid that if England became involved in a war his England (the England of caste and privilege and money and aristocracy) would die. But Churchill says, "No, England can fight this war and win it and remain the old England." And Churchill's England includes the emasculation of the Beveridge report and includes all kinds of reactionary measures.

The question therefore, is not whether India is ripe for freedom. The question is whether we are ripe for Indian freedom. If there were a new England emerging out of this war, if there were a new England to supplant the old England of Chamberlain and Churchill, it would not wish to hold India. That is really the issue."

Gandhiji was all along anxious to protect India from Japanese invasion. Hence realising the weakness of the British Indian Government, to save India from foreign and specially Japanese aggression, his anxiety grew much more for India's defence and at the same time he felt that there was not even genuine desire on the part of the Government to save India and hence reluctance for any sincere effort in the direction of gaining real co-operation and support of the Indians in its war efforts. The proof of this mentality Government gave convincingly from the Cripps' proposals and their ultimate fate. So Gandhiji's patriotism and burning desire to save his countrymen from utter ruin and destruction at the hands of the foreign invaders, made him really anxious to arouse genuine interest and support of the people of India in all sorts of attempts, non-violent and violent, for the protection of their mother-land. It is with this object and motive that he desired independence of India and felt compelled to think of launching his 'Quit India' movement.

Gandhiji can be extensively quoted in support of this contention. Gandhiji's own position about Cripps' proposals was that he saw Cripps at Delhi on 27th March and left Delhi on 4th April. There after in the issue of Harjan dated June 28, 1942 he wrote :-



"SIR Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Saheb would not let me go. I wish I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not, and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not having the conviction, allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence, the deliberations therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part".

Non-violence has been the first article of his faith and philosophy of life. He laid all possible emphasis on this as is clear from his various speeches and articles. Even the very resolution of the A. I. C. C. of Bombay laid the greatest possible emphasis on 'non-violence'. While sanctioning the movement it clearly stated, "the committee resolves to sanction a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength".

Gandhiji's position about the August Movement 1942, as has ever been the case with him, was quite definite and clear. He wanted to avoid any clash with the Government and if it was inevitable, he wanted to lead a non-violent movement strictly on his own set lines and after giving due time and notice to the Government. His movement was not going to be in any way secret or violent one. To him non-violence was dearer and higher than even the Independence of India.

The events and acts, which followed the arrest of Gandhiji and thousands of Congress leaders and workers on 9th August and after, were not premeditated and pie-planned but were as a result of sudden outburst of popular resentment on Government acts which were absolutely uncalled for, unreasonable and high-handed in the extreme. For which the entire responsibility is of the Government and not of Gandhiji.

Gandhiji's personal views about the movement and the Government action are very clearly and in short expressed by him in his letter to the Secretary to the Government of India, dated September, 23, 1942. An extract from which is given below :-

"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 overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness."

Gandhiji, true to his principles, has always been favouring, aspiring and endeavouring for peace and compromise and ever striving to avoid war and violence.

### CHAPTER III

#### CRIPPS MISSION ITS FAILURE AND CONSEQUENCES

How the Government was planning from behind the scene to secure the failure of Cripps proposals and face the consequences is vividly described by Shri Devi Das Gandhi, the talented son of Gandhiji in his foreword to a book "Why Cripps failed" the relevant extract from it is given below :—

"No one in this Country will be disposed to blame the failure on Sir Stafford Cripps alone. If there has been very caustic comment against him, some from those whom he counted amongst his best friends, the reason lies in some of the statements he made in the aftermath of controversy. Yet he alone, among the many British official spokesmen, laid stress on the need for avoiding rancour after the failure of the negotiations. The others with silent but characteristic disdain repudiated his tenderness and were glad to be able to use the bludgeon again. Weeks after the negotiations I had occasion to meet the representative in New Delhi of a leading British newspaper. He did not mince words, 'I do not think', he said, 'that His Majesty's Government had any faith in those proposals. They let him come out with them because they thought they would do no harm. In other words, a temporary upsurge of British Public opinion had forced the Cabinet to compromise with Cripps on India. But being more conversant than Sir Stafford Cripps himself with the prevailing phase of representative Indian opinion, some of his colleagues of the Group which control Indian policy in the Cabinet, certainly got the better of the give and take. Sir Stafford could not have known so well as did Mr. Amery, that India, alarmed at the prospect of a discontented and unorganized people falling an easy prey to Japan, regarded immediate freedom as more vital than a promise of future independence. He came out to India with the dice already loaded against him. That he is now sent out of the War Cabinet confirms the theory. The official remark in New Delhi too, when the proposals were made known, was that there was no danger of their acceptance in India'".

The existence of a strong section of opinion in this

country which holds that on grounds of expediency the Congress should have accepted the proposals must be admitted. But the obvious reply is that the Congress Working Committee tried its best to arrive at a compromise with Sir Stafford Cripps in full consciousness of the situation. The break came in spite of this. Nor was there any knowing that even if the Congress pocketed its pride in respect of many a point of vital principle in the hope of ultimate fulfilment, the Muslim League and the other bodies would have obliged. And by the consequent lack of "general" agreement Sir Stafford would still have faced discomfiture at the hands of those in England who saw the liquidation of Empire in his unimperialistic ideology. In the result everyone of note, both in India and England, except Mr. Churchill and Amery and those who enjoy and depend upon their patronage, finds himself placed in the most awkward position imaginable. It was a resounding triumph for someone.

The next step was to put the Congress out of the picture and to prepare for the defence of India both against Japan and itself. Again the old imperialist guard had nothing to lose. It was their normal programme. Although they did not quite anticipate it, the actual loss of thousands of Indian lives by shooting and the effect of floggings, imprisonment and collective fines on the masses of India did not and does not worry them. For propaganda purposes, however, they are anxious to place the blame on Congress leaders.

With nearly a hundred thousand men and women in jail there is today no spokesman available who may be competent to speak on behalf of the Congress. But as one who has long had the privilege of intimate contact with Congress Leaders, I take this liberty of recording here a little significant history which has an important bearing on the question. The All India Congress Committee at Bombay adopted its resolution on the general situation at about 8 P.M. on 8th August. I spoke on the long-distance telephone later that night to a friend in Bombay. He told me that everybody had gone to bed after a busy and animated session. When I asked about the next step he told me that just before retiring Gandhiji had, in the course of private discussion, announced his intention to make every effort to avoid a conflict and in any case to wait for three weeks at least, before advising action. At the very time that Gandhiji was thus unfolding in Bombay his plan of conciliation, the Viceroy's Council in New Delhi, at one of its extraordinary nightly sittings, was busy filling in the details on a decision arrived at some three weeks ago to put the Congress Working Committee under arrest as soon as the A. I. C. C. adopted its resolution. In sealing its earlier

decision the Government felt it no part of its duty to take into account the altered situation created by the numerous public statements made by responsible leaders in the preceding week. A long term policy had evidently been sanctioned and no thought of dangerous consequences could stand in the way of its execution. When the police party turned up in the early hours of the morning, Gandhiji was literally surprised. The grave disorder which spread immediately all over the country still continues in sporadic form, for one was convinced from the very beginning, and I said so to foreign correspondents who cared to see me then, that the outbreak was not only spontaneous but would, on that very account, be serious. To speak of Congress responsibility for the violence and loss of life (caused by the Government's military measures of the severest type) adds grave insult to injury. The position becomes ridiculous when the accusation is smugly levelled at leaders who were securely put away behind prison walls before the game of violence and counter-violence had started, and are still being kept there hermetically sealed against all contact with the outside world. They have no means of reply except through private petitions for mercy. Justice stands betrayed and so does the cause of the Allies in India".

The Cripps proposals failed not because of the Congress and Gandhiji but because they were so designed and desired from their very inception by their authors in Britain.

Gandhiji's position is very clear as can be seen from the following statements:—

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, stated on April 11th, 42 at the Press Conference:—

"Mahatma Gandhi's views as regards participation in any war are well-known and it would be entirely untrue to suggest that the Working Committee's decisions have in any way been influenced by that view. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi made it perfectly clear to the Working Committee that they were free to come to any decision on the merits of the proposals. Mahatmaji did not really want to participate in the earlier sittings of the Working Committee, but he was persuaded by me to stay on from day to day."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about the same on June 17th at Bombay said:—

"The statement of Sir Stafford to the effect that the Congress Working Committee had apparently accepted the proposals and it was only after further consultations with Mahatma Gandhi that they were turned down is entirely incorrect. It is true that the newspapers were making guesses, sometimes stating that the Congress Working Com-

mittee was likely to accept the proposals, but Sir Stafford ought to know that these newspaper stories had no basis".

Lastly Shri C. Rajgopalacharia declared :—

"Gandhiji is in prison and cannot again contradict this baseless story that will go into Hansard. I was present from beginning to end during these talks, and I can say authoritatively that Mahatmaji who was absent from Delhi during the later stages, was not responsible for anything that took place. In spite of Mahatmaji's adverse opinion expressed at the preliminary stage, the Working Committee entered into discussions with Sir Stafford and carried on according to their own policy and Mahatmaji did not interfere."

The Cripps proposals were unacceptable not only to the Congress but no other party in India was prepared to accept them as they stood. The Congress demand for really "National Government" was not at all met with Cripps proposals hence it was but proper for the Congress to reject them. The purpose of sending the Cripps mission and the cause of its failure are now well known not only to India but to America as well, for placating whose opinion the British Government was anxious.

How the Cripps mission reacted on India and the Congress and what were its direct consequences are the subject matter of a press conference which Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru addressed on 4th April, 1942 at New Delhi. This also amply ventilates Panditji's crushing reply to those who stigmatise Panditji as pro-Japanese.

The relevant extracts of it are given below :—

"India is the crux of the War to-day," said the Pandit, "Every party knew that India can only function effectively if the Indian people are enabled to function effectively. Every country realizes this with the exception of New Delhi and Whitehall".

Summing up the position as it emerged after the Cripps's negotiations, the Pandit said : "The average reaction in the mind of the Indian people will be irritation against the British Government. The issues before the Country are so grave that no responsible person can talk lightly about them or consider them in terms of bitter reactions. We cannot afford to be bitter. Bitterness clouds our minds and affects our judgment in a grave crisis. The fundamental factor is, not what the British Government has done to us or what we have done to them; but the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. So in spite of all that has happened, we are not to embarrass the British war effort in India or the efforts of our American friends in India". The problem before them was how without participating in the war effort,

and without embarrassing the Government in their war effort, they should organize their war effort in their own way for a free and Independent India. That was a question which the A.I.C.C. had to consider and decide at the next meeting.

"We are not going to surrender to any invader" said Pandit Jawaharlal. He could not tolerate the idea that he or anybody else should sit idle while the battle for India was being fought between two foreign armies. He could not tolerate any passive attitude but how far he could go in a particular situation depended on the circumstances. The background, however, was quite clear—just as they had refused to give in to British Government during the last 22 years, they were not going to surrender to any invader. They would have to resist invasion to the uttermost—by non-co-operation, by resistance, and by embarrassing the invaders in every possible way which a widely spread population could do.

The duty of every Congressman, of everyone in the Country, said Pandit Jawaharlal, was to organize self-protection and self-sufficiency. There was a fundamental difference between the approach of the Congress and that of British Government in this matter. The Congress wanted to rely upon the people, but the British Government did not even now want to trust the people. Ultimately, it was only the state which could defend the Country in an armed way. They could not, for instance, raise a citizen army without the State's help. But what the Congress had already begun was an intensive programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in rural areas mainly with the object of securing regional self-sufficiency in food, etc., if transport arrangements happened to fail. These units could not resist an invading army, but form the background of any resistance which they or the State might organize, they could try to prevent disorder and panic and help production. They had to organize the people for self-reliance—for looking after themselves.

Who is responsible for failure of the Cripps' negotiations? In answer to this question, Pandit Nehru explained in detail the various stages of the negotiations. If he had been asked just before his last interview with Sir Stafford Cripps he would have said that the chances of coming to an agreement were about 75%. At that interview, however, the full picture which Sir Stafford suddenly and for the first time, put before them of the proposals was such that he could not agree to it. "A big change had occurred somewhere in the middle" said the Pandit. It was obvious, he added, that there was some trouble between Sir Stafford and others. "Others were not us" said the Pandit amidst laughter.

Pandit Nehru went on to say "while it was my extreme

desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort—so great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century, things which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agree to give up—I am convinced personally that it is impossible for us to agree to the proposals as they eventually emerged from the British Government's mind. I am in complete and whole hearted agreement with the Congress resolution and the letters of the Congress President."

"So far as I know India, and I know it tolerably well, the major sentiment in India naturally is one of hostility to the British in India. You can not root out 150 years of past history and all that has happened in those years. It has sunk deep down into the Indian soul. Suppose we had come to an agreement and had to convert, to change that sentiment suddenly we could have done it if we could have given a sensation of freedom to the people of India. The fundamental factor to-day is distrust or dislike of the British Government. It is not pro-Japanese sentiment. It is anti-British sentiment. That may occasionally lead individuals to pro-Japanese expression of views. This is short sighted. It is a slave's sentiment, a slave's way of thinking, to imagine that to get rid of one person who is dominating us we can expect another person to help us and not dominate us later. Freemen ought not to think that way. It distresses me that any Indian should talk of the Japanese liberating India. The whole past history of Japan has been one of dominating others. Japan comes here either for Imperialist reasons straight out or to fight with the British Government. Anyhow, whatever the reason, if it comes here, it does not come here, to liberate."

"If an army comes here under the leadership of Subhas Bose what should be our reaction to it?" was the next question.

Before answering the question the Pandit referred to the differences between Mr. Bose and the Congress, and said "I do not frankly doubt the bonafides of Mr. Bose. I think he has come to the conclusion which I think is wrong, but nevertheless a conclusion which he thinks is for the good of India. We parted company with him many years ago. We have drifted further apart and to-day we are very far apart. It is not good enough for me, because of my past friendship, because I do not challenge his motives, not to realize that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only cannot accept but must oppose if it takes shape, because any force that may come from outside, it really comes as a

dummy force under the Japanese control. In effect it helps the invader. It may help under the mistaken notion that the invader will play fair. It is a bad thing psychologically for the Indian masses to think in terms of being liberated by an outside agency".

"I think," he continued "it is the job and function of every Indian to be in India to-day, to face the dangers and risks, whatever might happen in India."

The Cripps proposals were found so vere unsatisfactory that no section of Political party and public opinion agreed with them. They were universally condemned by almost all important political parties and personalities: Whether it was Muslim league, or the Momin Conference, or the depressed classes or Dr. Ambedkar, or Sur T. B. Sapru, or Dr. M. R. Jaykar. Thus it becomes evident that Cripps came not to appease and win over the hearts of the Indian people but only to add insult to the injury already inflicted on India by dragging her into the war without her consultation and consent.

## CHAPTER IV

### BURMA AND BRITISH ATROCITIES

It is since the last Government of India Act 1935 that Burma was separated from India which was a part of India since its annexation by the Government of India in 1885 after the Burmese War. In Burma the new constitution was introduced in accordance with the Act of 1935. The popular Premier of Burma M. U. Saw, at the beginning of the present World War, to fully yoke the resources of the country for complete support and through execution of the war, suggested and demanded independence for his country. His patriotism goaded him even to visit England in this connection where he clamoured for independence of his country for its really effective and timely defence. But alas! his voice was simply ignored and he was made a captive there. Since then nothing is heard of him. But his countrymen still remember him and the history of his country has a honoured place for him.

Soon after came the invasion of Burma by Japan. The British were found too weak to defend her. The whole country was in no time flooded over by the Japanese armies and the British rule in Burma was thrown to the winds.

The British population, both Civilian and Military, in Burma used all possible and available best means to leave for India without delay but the plight of the Indians in Burma became horrible. They could be neither here nor



there. Their British masters betrayed them and the Burmans who were themselves in trouble could hardly afford to help them. From the invading Japanese armies in those troublous time nothing better and helpful could be expected. There was no way out for the poor Indians but to attempt escape to India. But this was not an easy job. All the best available roads and conveyances were under the use of the British, and the Indians were prohibited to use them. Hence they were left with no other option but to take to the worst hilly and waterless track through the fierce woods where, on the way, many of them were simply starved and parched to death. As they had no means of conveyance and transport so most of them left their belongings and beloved children and old persons behind. Thus men of money and family were reduced to beggary without a family and hearth and home. We, hereunder, give an account of the Burma campaign by a British Civilian. Even from it glean out the facts which can be very well imagined by the intelligent readers :

Mr. T. L. Hughes, in an address to the Central Asian Society on November 3, on the Burma campaign, gave the result of a careful research into the various reports and charges dealing with the civil side of the campaign. Mr. Hughes resigned from the Indian Civil Service in 1939 and became the Political Secretary to the Burma Chamber of Commerce. During part of the Burma campaign he was the Chief Liaison Officer to General Alexander. He has been Secretary to Sir Dorman Smith, Governor of Burma, for a year.

Mr. Hughes bluntly stated that much arrant nonsense has been said and written by alleged eye-witnesses or first-hand observers whose information in some instances at least would seem to have been collected in the bar of Calcutta's leading hotel. The over-riding fact was that the situation in Burma could be linked to that which existed in Great Britain at the time of the fall of France. But Great Britain's hastily improvised defence measures were never tested by the reality of invasion and she was given time to face up to the new threat. Burma, on the other hand, was given no such breathing space. Japanese troops invaded Burma's soil on December 9, just two days after Pearl Harbour.

Mr. Hughes said he could not too strongly emphasize that Burma was lost because our pitifully inadequate military forces were overwhelmed and outmanoeuvred by a superior enemy force. But it should not be forgotten what was achieved by the Burma campaign; our military forces in Burma fought a stubborn rearguard action for five vital months, vital in so

much that the breathing space enabled India to prepare for the threat of invasion.

Such actions or omissions for which the civil administration was responsible had no influence whatsoever on the result of the campaign. Only additional troops, tanks, guns and aeroplanes could have turned the tide. If it could be maintained that the civil administration utterly broke down, utterly failed to co-operate with the military, then some portion of the odium for the loss of Burma could deservedly be attached to the civilians. But, Mr. Hughes denied that this was so. On the contrary, the administrative machine kept going until the end in spite of numerous missing cogs in the wheel.

#### EVACUATION OF REFUGEES

Evacuation of refugees was undoubtedly the biggest problem facing the the civil officers. After the fall of Rangoon, our forces were by no means defeated, and General Alexander had not given up the hope of assuming an offensive. Had the civil officers ignored every issue save that of evacuation, it is not improbable that the provisioning of various evacuation routes with food and medical supplies would have made greater progress. But, what an edifying example they would have set to military forces and to essential workers and only with General Alexander's decision to withdraw to India did the realization come that our days in Burma were indeed numbered.

From statistics compiled at the various evacuation centres on the Indian frontier it would probably be a conservative estimate to put the total number of evacuees, who reached India, at 4,00,000. A supreme handicap in dealing with that pitiable mass of refugees was the uncertainty of the military situation. How many casualties there were during the evacuation could not be known. But, they seemed to be about 10,000 or 2½ per cent of the total number of evacuees. Such a casualty list is surprisingly small although, of course, it did not include many who died in cholera epidemic at Prome and Mandalay or who died in India after their arrival. The tale of that terrible trek, when it is told, would be a tale of sheer guts of ordinary men and women in the face of a disaster entitling them to a place on the same civilian roll of honour as the people in Britain who, in the dark days of 1940, showed that the country still produced a race of men and women worthy of their heritage."

Their tales of sufferings and miseries travelled fast and wide in India. From one corner to the other, whole

of India was moved at this miserable plight of her countrymen in Burma. The worst part of the whole tragedy was the treatment meted out to the Indians in Burma by the British Government of India and Burma.

The pathetic tales of the sufferings of the Indians in Burma were luridly narrated by the Indian evacuees and refugees from Burma. The very soul of India was stirred at the ghastly tragedy and the beastly inhuman treatment of the British towards the Indians and specially the invidious distinction they made between the Indians and the British. (It is for this reason that the Burma Evacuation Report was not published by the Government of India. But for its not publication, the reason assigned is, of course, quite different. In the session of the Central Assembly at New Delhi, on November 7, 1943, Dr. N. B. Khare, Indians Overseas Member in reply to the question of Sardar Mangal Singh said, "In the course of Mr. A. K. Chanda's work on the preparation of a consolidated report on the evacuation of Burma, it became apparent that it would be impossible to present a clear picture of the whole of operation without including matter that might be of great value to the enemy. The question has, therefore, been re-examined in the light of the existing military situation and after detailed consideration, the Government of India has decided not to publish any report on the subject for the present.") This was the rudest shock to the faith and feelings of the Indians in general. The feeling of resentment and frustration surcharged the hearts of the Indians. They were not only filled with hate and anger for the British but were also merged in anxiety and care for their own defence.

Every Indian could and did see a sad plight and sorry picture for himself and his country if there were an invasion of Japan on India. Specially the Indian people were very much terrified by the treacherous treatment of the British in Burma. Hence every Indian's heart was enflamed with burning desire to be free from the British control which was strangling the very life and liberty of the people and was a terrible obstacle in the way of India's defence against the Japanese attack. With the British rule in India, Indians could never be inspired to lay their lives for the defence of India which meant and correctly, the protection of her slavery and perpetuation of her subjection under the British authority. Hence logically and psychologically came the cry for India's independence and prepared the people for the very natural move of "Quit India" which was so opportunely suggested by Gandhiji—the real pulse-feeler of the people of India.