

PART IV
THE AUGUST MOVEMENT 1942

CHAPTER I

THE GOVERNMENT PLAN TO POUNCE UPON THE CONGRESS

Gandhiji had clearly declared his intention to make every effort to avoid a conflict. He had definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and starting of the struggle. In any case he intended to wait at least for three weeks before advising action. In his own words, "the emphasis in any non-violent struggle, projected or in operation, is always on peace; war, when it becomes an absolute necessity." At that very time when 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 earlier to put the Congress Working Committee under arrest as soon as the A. I. C. C. adopted its resolution.

On one side Gandhiji even after the passage of the Resolution by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay on the night of August 8, declared that he would write to the Viceroy intimating to him the contents of the resolutions and the implications thereof but on the other side the Government of India on the very night of Aug. 8, 1942, just after the A. I. C. C. ratified the Working Committee Resolution at Bombay, published the Resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council in which the Congress resolution was declared "challenge" and hence their determination to meet it. It is stated therein:—

"There is nothing that the Government of India regret more than this challenge at so critical a juncture. But on them there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different section of her people without fear or favour. That task the Government of India will discharge in face of the challenge now thrown down by the Congress Party with clear determination, but with an anxiety that action shall be preventive of the interruption of the war effort and the other dangers to which they have referred rather than punitive and with a full consciousness of the responsibility to India and to the cause of the Allies and of civilisation. Their duty is plain and they have to discharge it, profoundly as they must deplore the situation which they have been called upon to face."

For the above decision Government gave in this very resolution the following justification:—

"The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware too, for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful, and in some cases violent, activities, directed, among other things, to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organisation of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with defence-measures, including recruitment.

The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope. To a challenge such as the present there can only be one answer."

That one answer was repression, suppression and extreme barbarity on the innocent, non-violent and unarmed people of India. The Government waited so long after the Allahabad meeting of the A. I. C. C. held from April 27 to May 1, 1942 not because they wanted to give time to the Congress to reconsider but for their own preparation and securing pretext to pounce upon the Indian National Congress and the people of India. They found a justification in the passage of the August resolution of the Congress at Bombay to pounce upon the Congress and the Indian people in an indiscriminate and inhuman manner. The Government resolution alleged that they were aware for some days past of "*dangerous preparations*" by the Congress party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities. But so far the Government has given no proof of this baseless allegation against the Congress nor the facts go even to the extent of creating any doubt about such preparation by the Congress. Neither the Congress organisation nor its leaders and workers even know any plan or programme of the movement which were hidden in the inner-self of Gandhiji alone. Gandhiji's plans have all along been revealed to him by his own instinct, not evolved by the cold calculating logic of the mind. His inner voice is his mentor and monitor, his friend, philosopher and guide. So to charge, the Congress under Gandhiji of any previous plans and dangerous preparations is not only false but mischievous. Really speaking even the closest associates of Gandhiji knew no plans and worked out no programme. All were looking to Gandhiji for guidance. Everybody was expecting some instructions and details of the programmes which were never issued directly or indirectly, openly or secretly by the Congress or anyone of its leaders right upto first and final blow of the Government on the Congress by arresting its leaders etc.

Throughout the period from the inception of the idea of "Quit India move" to the passage of the "August Resolution" the people in India were kept in unexpectant mood without any definite plan or programme. The leaders only exhorted the people to be prepared for the maximum sacrifice but nothing beyond that. Hence the arrest of Gandhiji with other leaders and thousands of Congress workers was a terrible surprise to the Country as a whole. The preparations were made by the Government with minutest details and descriptions long before. At one and the same time throughout the Country, all the Congress workers, office-bearers and Congress members of the Indian Legislatures were arrested in the early hours of the morning of the 9th August, 1942. This day will ever be remembered as the red-letter day in the history of India. The Government actually pounced upon the Congress and the Indian people with all their force and fury. The warrants of arrests were issued much before the 9th of August. The lists of those to be arrested in the first, second and third round were elaborately prepared. The ubiquitous and all powerful police was fully authorised and entrusted with the job of not only arresting and detaining the persons of the lists previously prepared but any one they desired. Thus the first reply to the Congress resolution and demand was the whole-sale arrest of the thousands of the Congressmen while most of them were actually sleeping in their homes. Even Gandhiji was not expecting this sudden outburst of the Government frenzy. He was really taken in surprise and caught in his own cage. He simply smiled and walked upto the Police Car and the same happened with the other leaders. The people in general throughout the Country heard the news of these arrests and gathered together on the streets in surprise, curiosity and a sort of anxiety. They had no programme and no plans of work. They simply resorted to the simple non-violent method of expression of their feeling for such occasion. Hartals were observed and peaceful processions and public meetings were announced. But the Government had their own plans and projects. So they started with a reign of lawlessness by suppressing all legitimate civic rights and privileges. The press was gagged. The publication of the news and views regarding the doings of the Government and the people after the arrest of Gandhiji and Congressmen was so much restricted that most of the nationalist papers suspended their publications. Thus the liberty of the press was killed. The platform was snatched away by prohibiting the holding of public meeting. The processions were forbidden. The Defence of India rules under Defence of India Act were framed to simply bring the people under their clutches for

each and everything. The police was empowered to apply them as they pleased. The Congress was declared unlawful. All its offices were taken over forcible possession by the police. All its property was forfeited. Even those institutions which were indirectly supposed to be connected with the Congress were captured such as Khadi Bhandars and Ashrams which were merely commercial, or industrial or educational concerns. Non-violence was put to so serious a test that its pusuance itself became a violence. The Government with all their previous experiences of Gandhiji's movements became more daring for perpetrating barbarities. They planned very dextrously to kidnap leaders and workers before actually they could rise from their beds on the morning of the 9th Aug., 1942. The first sight to the Congressman was the police at the early hours of the 9th August morning. After the arrests, the police with the help of the military and arms started the work of simply crushing the people as in a frenzy. The sanctity of human life was no more. There was a wanton dance of police goondaism and excesses. But all that the police and military did was uniform, organised and under the direct control of the entire British Bureaucratic machinery in India.

The people were all unorganised, undisciplined and without any leadership. They were actually a mass of crowd and gathered together in a very natural and innocent manner everywhere in the cities and towns as they heard of the general arrest of their beloved leaders. Their mentality was truly fitting to their character and nature that is of an unorganised crowd which is excessively emotional, impulsive, hckle, inconsistent, irresolute, extreme in action, displaying only the coarser emotions and the less refined sentiments, careless in deliberation, hasty in judgment, incapable of any but the crudest reasoning; easily swayed and led and lacking in self-consciousness and confidence. Such crowds gathered everywhere still they exhibited extraordinary sense of discipline and non-violence. It was all due to Gandhiji and the cause he represented, till men, as they were, could be excited to resist and resist till death. What actually the people did can be very correctly compared with the pricking of nails or teeth by a pigmy faced with imminent end of his life in the cruel grip of a giant. But the Government got the desired chance of firing, and fired indiscriminately on the people in the cities and villages, without any regard for age or sex. When the people retorted by persuing their peaceful demonstrations they were faced with still greater severity and strength. Thus well-planned and very well organised violence of the Government was practised on the unarmed and non-violent people of

India on such a wide scale that hardly an example parallel to it can be traced out from the entire history of the humanity. We shall deal with all this at much greater length in the next few chapters. Here we conclude only with this that the Government of India which started their policy of repression with the declaration that their action shall be "preventive" of dangers rather than "punitive" ended actually with the general orders sent secretly under double covers to the District Magistrates that let the responsible officials specially of the police and the executive be informed that they should clearly and strongly give out to their assistants and staff that anybody bringing a dead body of an Indian supposed to be interested in any way in the Congress, will be rewarded (perhaps Rs. eighty per head). Thus it gave rise to indiscriminate shooting of the innocent persons and reduced an Indian to a position of actually a stray mad dog. Give a bad name to a dog and shoot it, was made the order of the day. So put a blame on an Indian and kill him has been the policy of the British Government in India and its worst manifestation was done during the days of August and September 1942. The Government exhibited itself in its most barbarous, wildest and crudest form. The atrocities committed by the Government were not stray or a few but general, regular and innumerable. This gives the positive proof of the pre-planned and organised scheme of the Government to suppress the Congress and the Indian people by pouncing upon them with all the might and resources at the command of the Government. To say the least the Government violence and atrocities on the Indian people, were a sort of a well-organised hunt of a sleeping, feeble and old lion in his den by surrounding him from all directions and pouncing upon him as the kites and the vultures fall upon a piece of flesh or a corpse. Thus the August movement of 1942 was *a game of hunting* played by the British Government in India by pouncing upon the unarmed and defenceless Indians.

The story of this "game of hunting" is so ghastly and tragic that the readers will have to clench their hearts with both the hands and all the might still their stirred and pierced hearts at the plight of "*the poor Indians*" will not be controlled and will burst out in rivers of tears, not of mere water but actually of blood, if they are not gone absolutely cold.

CHAPTER II

BOMBAY ARRESTS AND AFTER

August 9th, 1942, saw the sun-rise with a surprise and astonishment and the whole atmosphere was surcharged

with "feelings," "sentiments" and "high emotions." It was really, in the words of Wordsworth, such a time that —

"To be alive was a bliss

and to be young was very heaven".

It was not the sound of the trumpets of triumph but it was a call to the nation "to do or die". On previous night, 8th August, 1942, the people of India learnt that the A. I. C. C. at Bombay passed a Resolution of Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee with a overwhelming majority only 13 voting against it out of the total number of about 270 members present in the session. It was 10 in the night when the A. I. C. C. session concluded with the following words of the Congress President, Maulana Azad, ringing into the ears and hearts of the Indians: "It was for Indians to take a determined step forward, no matter what happened to them, whether they sank or swam, whether they won or lost".

Rulers of yesterday were the prisoners today. All those Congressmen who were controlling the administration of seven big provinces of India were made state-prisoners and clapped in various British Jails in India. From the early hours of the morning of the 9th August, Congressmen were being hunted out from their bedroom to be lodged in jails. The police was hotly pursuing the Congressmen throughout India to arrest them wherever they were found and putting them safely in the jails. This work commenced from such early hours of the 9th Aug. morning when even thieves and nocturnal wanderers take to their shelters and retire for rest. But the Indian Police under the British Government of India, which came in the dark cover of treachery, deception and trade, could be expected to do nothing better. The preparations for staging the tragic drama, in which innocent, non-violent and peaceful Indians were once again to be given a blood-bath, were made very elaborately and from a very long time. Hence they were perfect and consummate. The Government of India was impatiently awaiting for the opportunity. The humble-pie which they had to swallow everytime when they came in clash with the saint-statesman of India "Gandhi" was a pricking thorn in the heart of the Government which they wanted to avenge because they thought thus, they would succeed in bringing out the ever-aching thorn from their heart but actually what their action has done, only history will tell.

The Government of India acted first. It may be stated that the measures contemplated by the authorities were in a nature of a "blitz" not only to prevent the Congress movement getting a start and gathering momentum but to suppress and strangle the Congress and the people of India.

to such an extent that they may be rendered incapable of even raising a voice or finger against the autocratic, atrocious and barbarous deeds of the Government of India. The Government took the decision long before the A. I. C. C. passed the resolution at Bombay and kept it a well-guarded secret so far as India was concerned. One of the strongest supporters of the Government policy admitted it and explained the Government action as below :—

"Action has been taken *precipitately* because reports from certain Provincial Governments had stated that the rank and file of the Congress were planning extensively to sabotage the war efforts."

With the arrest of Gandhiji and the other members of the Congress Working Committee the general round up of all important Congress Workers, Office-bearers of the Congress Committees and the Congress members of the legislatures was started everywhere throughout the country. It is an admitted fact that this action of the Government was of an all-embracing character and was taken precipitately. The total number of arrests even by the evening of the 9th August, '42, reached to thousands in the country to which the Government of India refer not exceeding "few hundreds." This is the *measure* of the Government of India giving facts and figures. We should carefully take note of it. Ten times decrease or increase in the figures, to favour and suit the interest of the Government, can be manipulated by them without slightest hitch and it would be regarded as gospel truth. Here do they not compete or even excel Goebbles, the propaganda minister of the Nazi Germany under Hitler, who is declared to be "the Master of lies" and who claims that repetition and repetition and still again repetition of a lie turns it into "truth" unchallengeable and unrefutable. This general arrest business was done everywhere with such a haste and promptness that almost all the important Congressmen were arrested by the evening of the 9th August.

The news of Gandhiji's and other leaders' arrest spread like wild fire throughout the country. Since the arrests were also being effected everywhere else so naturally there was extraordinary stir everywhere in the country. The people on their own accord, gathered together at important places and the talk on every tongue was of the great conflagration. There was, as should have been, extraordinary excitement and enthusiasm in the people. Hartals, processions and public meetings were generally announced everywhere simultaneously with the announcement of the news of the arrest of Gandhiji and other leaders. This was very

natural and common with the people who had a long training of the non-violent movement under Gandhiji and the Congress. Besides when all their popular leaders including Gandhiji were arrested all at once the provocation and excitement to the people was naturally of the extreme degree. Such an occasion never occurred previously in India when all the leaders including Gandhiji were arrested all at once. This was like a bolt from the blue. The people were actually thunderstruck. They came out as helpless and desperate still they were quite within the four-walls of non-violence and they exhibited extraordinary self-control and discipline.

It is admitted even by the Government that ; "First reactions to the arrests were *surprisingly mild*. On 9th August there were disturbances in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona but the rest of the country remained quiet. On August 10th disturbances occurred also in Delhi and a few towns in the United Provinces; but still no serious repercussions were reported from elsewhere. It was from August 11th that the situation began to deteriorate rapidly. From then onwards, apart from the hartals, protest meetings and similar demonstrations that were to be expected, concerted outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder and sabotage took place; and in almost all cases these were directed either against communications of all kinds (including railways, posts and telegraphs) or against the Police. Moreover, these outbreaks started almost simultaneously in widely separated areas in the Provinces of Madras, Bombay and Bihar and also in the Central and United Provinces. The position was at one time extremely serious in the whole of Bihar, except its most southern districts, and in the eastern part of the United Provinces. In these areas, the trouble soon spread from the big towns to the outlying areas. In all the affected Provinces, students were in the forefront of the initial disorders."

The Government was not only prepared to meet all this but was actually responsible for creating them by behaving rashly, unreasonably and brutally at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona. They used tear-gas to disperse peaceful processions of the ladies. They resorted to Lathi-charges and even firing on the peaceful crowds of the people, who were trying to hold meetings only to disperse them. The people were excited and enthused by the whole-sale arrests and thereafter they were forcibly suppressed not to give vent to their feelings publicly even in the most non-violent manner then naturally the patience of the people was taxed to the extreme and their store of tolerance like dumb-sufferers was exhausted. At

such a point too they resorted to no act of violence, hooliganism and destruction. But when they were fired at freely by the police and military then in sheer excitement, here and there, they uprooted some telegraph poles or cut telegraph wires or burnt some letter-boxes or removed somewhere Railway Lines or set fire to some goods-sheds or some Railway Stations or some other Government buildings. But all this shows that there was absolutely no systematic work, no organisation and no preplanned-schemes. It is already admitted by the Government itself that "the students invariably were in the forefront". This also furnishes a cause of less activity on 9th August, as it was a Sunday and the students could not meet together. From Monday onward when they met they did participate in the demonstrations in their own way. The students were never organised nor they were any stable force with any Congress movement. They, young as they are, are easily susceptible to excitement and even rash actions, so in such extraordinarily tense atmosphere how could they afford to sit at the fence! They naturally participated and began with peaceful processions but when they were not allowed even to take out such peaceful processions and their perfectly non-violent resistance even was retorted with violence, wanton and inhuman, their blood too felt some warmth on such moments. Still they did no acts of violence. They did not resort to murderous assaults. They simply attempted here and there, to do such things as enumerated above. But all what they did was nothing uncommon and new.

It did not show any preparation on their part nor any organisation from their side. All what they did was at the spur of the moment for which sufficient and repeated provocation was afforded to them by the Government Officials, police and military, who recklessly and wantonly resorted to firing, lathi-charges and use of teargas. The victims of lathi-charges and firings were innocent persons without any regard for their age and sex. Still how gracefully and bravely people faced them is and will remain for ever a glorious example of suffering, sacrifice and heroism in the history of the world. Students faced bullets bravely at their chests and were shot dead mercilessly by the police and military while leading peaceful processions. People were charged with lathis and fired upon with bullets freely and repeatedly but even the death could not deter them from their non-violent resistance. But all these heroic deeds were performed spontaneously and bravely by the people in general and not the Congress-workers and well-known Congressmen specially because most of them were arrested on the 9th of sbpn after

and the rest were avoiding arrest hence hiding themselves. Thus the actual movement in its first phase, just on and after the Bombay arrests, was directly carried on by the people themselves at the spur of the moment on the natural excitement over the whole-sale arrests of their beloved leaders and subsequent further provocation was given by the Government by resorting freely and indiscriminately to firings and lathi-charges and abdicating the rule of law to the rule of lawlessness. Ordinance-rule was the rule of the police, military, civic-guards and virtually of the extreme type of goondaism and violence... Arrests, suppression of all civil liberties, that is, declaring Congress and allied organisations illegal, forfeiture of their offices and property, prohibition of public meetings, processions, stopping of news-papers and publication of news and views regarding the doings of the Government and the popular movement and curfew orders in almost all the cities and big towns, firings, lathi-charges, beating and terrorising was the first phase of the police and the Government measures to meet with the people's enthusiasm and their acts in the atmosphere of tense excitement and provocation. The second phase of the Government repression to meet with the activities of the rural areas began with the collective fines, their realisation and then whole-sale terrorising of the villagers with setting fire to their hearths and homes and even humiliating their women which went in extreme cases to most brutal type of rapes and beatings. Virtually it became a reign of general loot, arson, merciless murders and tortures of the people by the police, military and their hirelings—ruffians and goondas. These excesses and atrocities were vying with, rather outdoing, the atrocities of 1857 by General Neill, Campbell, Havelock and Montgomery, and of 1919 of General Dyer and others, which we have referred to in the previous chapters. All this was being done in the villages and retired places away from the cities.

In the jails, detention places, and police custody, there was going on serious type of torturing, beating and whipping. All this was being done progressively. From the Bombay arrests which reached in its latest phase to the worst type of barbarous treatment when man was reduced to a chattel to be treated mercilessly by a tyrant. Thus in short it can be said that the Government started their repressive policy from the arrest of the leaders at Bombay and continued it on a progressive scale till their tyranny reached to its climax when nobody could raise its finger or utter a word in protest of the Government acts of tyranny, and barbarity which were being perpetrated in the cloak of suppressing an open rebellion.

Really speaking all what was done from the Bombay arrests and after, was nothing short of pursuing the policy of "iron and blood". It was the British edition of the atrocities of the Nazi-Germany to exterminate the Indian National Congress and Indian Nationalism. All this was done in the name of defence of India and to foil the alleged attempts at sabotage of the war efforts of the Government of India. But to the British Government, through its best representative, Mr. L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, a warning, how true and real, is given by Mr. M. Thein Pe, a young Burmese revolutionary leader as below :—

"Mr. Amery must know that dissatisfaction of a people who have lost their freedom for long and who cannot feel the ecstasy of freedom in the present, is real and not imaginary. Mr. Amery and his kind are thinking that the noises of discontent are only the creation of the disgruntled leaders and masses are erratic and can be easily moulded into any shape by catch-words and slogans, uttered by some tip-top leaders. In short, Amery and Co., refuse to recognise the role of the mass, the invulnerable role of the people. They are even now wavering about a people's war. They still do have faith in the Fascist methods of conducting a total war. But they are too late to profitably adopt those methods. Herein, lies their failure. They have yet to realise that a real people's war on all fronts is the only effective challenge to Fascist total war.

"Suppression of the people may lead to internal peace but that peace is the peace of the grave and people have a ghostly and ghastly way of voicing their discontent."

CHAPTER III

THE MOVEMENT

THE REACTION ON THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

The first to attack and take the offensive was the Government of India. Their attack was of a nature of "Blitz". They started with the wholesale arrests of all Congress leaders and important Congressmen throughout the country. All the members of the Congress Working Committee including Gandhiji, who were present at Bombay, were arrested between 5 and 6 a. m. on 9th August, '42. Simultaneously from the early hours of the morning of the 9th August, '42, the work of arresting the Congressmen was carried out briskly, uniformly and in organised manner throughout the country. At a very low estimate about 5,000 Congressmen were arrested for indefinite detention under Defence of India Rules on the 9th

of August, 1942, and thereafter the work of arrests continued from day to day on an increasing scale till the number of arrests reached over a lakh by the end of September '42. All Congress and allied organisations were declared unlawful. Their offices and property were forfeited and forcibly taken possession of. All public meetings and processions were prohibited. Strongest restrictions were placed on the publication of news and views in the newspapers. Over 90 nationalist newspapers ceased publications and others were publishing news and views only authorised by the Government. Mr. S. A. Brelvi, in his speech as the Chairman of the 3rd Session of All India Newspapers Editors' Conference at Madras, summarised this as below :—

"The Press in India was confronted with a great crisis when the Government sought to control, muzzle and humiliate it in a manner familiarized to us by the Nazis and the Fascists.

"A number of newspapers has been suppressed or had suspended publication as a result of the new restrictions or the manner in which they were applied. The most harmful use made of these restrictions was to deny publicity to statements and reports supporting the Indian demand for freedom and legitimate political activity.

"Government suppressed all news regarding Prof. Bhansali's fast and imposed draconian restrictions on the publication of news and comments about Gandhiji's fast. Bhansali was neither a detenu nor a prisoner. As a free citizen he was entitled to undertake a fast.

"The most obnoxious feature of the executive high-handedness was that the pains and penalties of the Defence of India Rules were requisitioned to prevent the Press even from informing the public that it had been gagged."

Curfew Orders were promulgated in the cities and were observed very cruelly. All attempts of the people, however, peaceful and non-violent, to take out processions and hold public meetings were strongly and brutally foiled by the police and the military. The use of tear-gas, lathi-charges and firings, was resorted to freely and indiscriminately. The very first day on 9th August firing was done at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona. Thereafter the business of firing became the order of the day. Most of the big cities, towns, and even villages had a taste of firing done indiscriminately and wantonly. All these suffocating restrictions and depriving of the people of all their legitimate and peaceful civic rights besides exciting and provoking treatment of the individual Government Officials, particularly of police and the military, could not be tolerated by the people lying down. All this acted and

reacted on the people very strongly. Their first action was the direct outcome of the general and whole-sale arrests which was nothing else but observance of peaceful Hartals and attempt to take out peaceful processions and to hold mass public meetings. But they were not allowed even to do this and were violently and forcibly compelled to desist from taking out processions and holding meetings. In the attempts of dispersing the non-violent and peaceful crowds of the innocent people, who came out to express their feelings on the arrests of their leaders, the police and military used their utmost force of violence by resorting to the use of tear-gas, free-lathi-charges and firing. At this the people felt compelled and provoked to persist in their attempts with greater resistance. Acts of violence on the part of the people were the result of the provocation and excitement caused to them by the Government. The subsequent incidents shaping like the general movement in the country were the "natural and spontaneous outbursts" of the people on the doings of the Government. This contention is proved by the facts which are even accepted rather published by the Government itself. The inference drawn by the Government from the facts and happenings that this contention is "countered" is absolutely wrong and does not stand to reason and facts.

While the Government took the offensive as against the contemplated movement by the Congress and Gandhiji following the dictum and policy that "the most effective defence is to take the offensive first." The people were left without leaders and any definite programme and instructions hence they did what struck them feasible and possible at the spur of the moment. They were excited and provoked and thus were driven to such acts which they would have never even contemplated to do in the ordinary circumstances. The students were undoubtedly most excited and most active. The clash started from the cities and then it proceeded to the towns and villages. The conditions and circumstances, as were created by the sudden offensive of the Government, were being similar, the reaction was also similar throughout the country. The people's objects of attack were the police stations, Rly. stations and other Government Offices besides cutting of Telegraph Wires, burning of letter-boxes and tempering with the permanent Roads and ways and Railway tracks. But all this was done in a sort of excitement on a country-wide scale, of course in some parts it was done more widely and intensely than in the others. But all this was done in a most disorganised and crude form. It lacked training and even expert advice or help. The damage done to the Government property

under above heads was almost nominal as compared to size and extent of the Country and the excitement in the people. This shows and clearly proves that there were absolutely no preparations, no pre-planning and no pre-arrangements. All what was done was at the spur of the moment and by the mobs either consisting of the villagers or the students. No doubt as the people as a whole were tired of the British rule and its policy in India so they desired to paralyse the administration but certainly they had absolutely no preparation for it and had no equipment, implements, instruments and armament. They ran a different race in a hap-hazard manner as they were provoked to do so by the Government and its revolt-exciting and blood-boiling policy. It was all done in a blind manner with a sheer force of number, excitement and sentiment but certainly not under any well-guided leadership, plan, or policy. It was no movement, no strategy, no warfare and no organised action of any sort, violent or non-violent. It was merely the resultant of a "Spontaneous outburst" of the suppressed people on a highly exciting provocation and shock given by the Government through their policy and conduct. The responsibility for all this primarily, directly and largely rests on the Government of India.

We quote below the facts and figures supplied by the Government themselves about their alleged losses by the people in the whole of India and throughout the uprising or so called disturbances :—

Losses of the Government

A—PROPERTY

I—Railways

1. Rolling Stock	Rs. 18 lakhs.
2. Track	9 "
3. Station buildings	8½ "
4. Ancilliary Equipment	6½ "
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	Rs. 42 lakhs.

The maximum destruction was done to the E.I.R. and B. & N.W.R., the replacement and reconstruction of the former will cost over Rs. 12 lakhs and of the latter over Rs. 14 lakhs. By the end of December 1942, 318 Stations were attacked, many were burnt and others were wholly or partially destroyed. There were 59 derailments, involving many passenger trains, out of all, 3 were bad cases in which 27 persons were killed and 112 injured. Of course all of them were Indians. Besides there were late trains

or no trains at all uptill November when normal traffic was resumed.

II—Post Offices

895 post offices raided, 57 completely destroyed and 252 seriously damaged.

(a) Loss of Cash etc. about	Rs. 2 lakhs.
(b) Loss of furniture etc.	1 "
	<hr/> Rs. 3 lakhs.

III—Treasury

Treasury looted at Ram Tell (C.P.) Rs. 3½ lakhs.

Thus we take in round figures. The actual losses of the Government in their own words were of about Rs. 50/- lakhs maximum.

LIFE

I. 53 Government servants were killed.

II. As regards injuries sustained by the Government servants, no definite figure is mentioned by the Government.

Besides the above figures following are the salient facts as reported by the Government about the activities of the people during this uprising, revolt or disturbance, call it as you please :—

I—GENERAL

"A crowd varying from 500 to 10,000 marched upon a police station or a post office or a railway station attacking officials, destroying records and in many cases setting buildings on fire. In quelling riots hundreds of policemen suffered injuries from brick-bats and bottles.

IN BIHAR

"A passenger train was stopped at Fatvah by a crowd in which two Air force officers happened to be travelling. The crowd promised to spare their life if they surrendered their arms. The officers agreed only to be brutally hacked to death. Their bodies were paraded through the town and later thrown into a river."

"In Monghyr district, villagers surrounded a plane which had crashed in a river, offered to row the survivors to the bank if they surrendered their arms. The victims trusted the crowd, who having reduced them to defencelessness, pounced upon them; two survivors who jumped into the river were beaten to death with lathis.

Attempts in Bihar cost Police Officers their lives at Katra,

Minapur, Singhai, Rupali and Sarath, and similarly the lives of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Sitamari, and his party.

On August 16, an armed mob of 4,000—about a thousand of whom marched in regular formation—attacked the Minapore police station, seriously wounding a Sub-Inspector and injuring several constables on duty. The Sub-Inspector was beaten and disarmed, tied to a pole and thrown into a fire which was already consuming the station. The tortured officer crawled out of the fire, but was beaten with lathis, thrown back into the flames and pinned in the fire with poles and lathis."

"A Similar horrible outrage took place at Rupali police station. A mob of 10,000 to 12,000 attacked a station and stoned the police staff, including a junior Sub-Inspector and the constables on duty. Kerosene oil was poured on the police station and the policemen were consigned to the flames."

"An armed mob looted the Silk Institute."

"In district Monghyr, five persons accused of theft were produced before a panchayat court which promptly delivered judgment. The fingers of their right hands were cut off, three men lost an eye each and some were branded with hot irons. In Gaya district, two burglars tried by a self-constituted court were condemned to death and killed on the spot."

"A pujari of a temple in Bihpur in Bhagalpur district, suspected of being a police spy, was done to death on November 30."

"Six hundred prisoners mutinied in Bhagalpur jail on September 4th. A deputy superintendent, the carding master and a warder lost their lives in this affair and their bodies were burnt. Extensive damage was also done to the jail factory, which was set on fire."

Mr. Jaglal Chaudhury, who had been a Congress Minister from 1937 to 1939, and who was one of Mr. Gandhi's trusted men, personally instigated the burning of a police station in the Saran district and during the attack urged the crowd to tie up the Sub-Inspector in a sack and throw him into the river. This same Minister made plans to resist troops with spears, lighted torches and boiling oil. He has been tried and sentenced to ten years imprisonment, the sentence being reviewed and upheld by a Judge of the Patna High Court."

"There was an attack on the police station of Minapur in Muzzaffarpur district on August 16th by an armed mob of four or five thousand men. They looted and burnt the police station, assaulted the officers and constables and burnt the Sub-Inspector alive. There is no doubt whatever that these acts were perpetrated in the name of the Congress.

Leading members of the mob were shouting Congress slogans and carrying Congress flags. The main accused, who was responsible for holding the Inspector down in the fire (and who has been sentenced to death) was seen hoisting a Congress flag on the roof of the thana; this was an exhibit in the case. At the conclusion of the judgment in discussing the interpretation of section 121 of the Indian Penal Code (waging war against the King-Emperor) the Judge observed:

"It is a matter of common knowledge that the object of the recent disturbances and risings throughout the country was to paralyse the administration and to compel the Government to submit to the demands of the Indian National Congress.

ORISSA

"In Balasora district a body of armed police who had gone to make some arrests there found themselves confronted by a mob of four or five thousand persons, who had been mobilised by the sounding of conch-shells from village to village as the police party approached. They disobeyed an order to disperse, and the police had to open fire, ultimately causing 25 or 26 deaths and about 50 injuries."

"A mob of 1,000 killed a forest guard of Jeypore State and injured 15 other servants and a magistrate."

CENTRAL PROVINCES

"On August 16, a mob attacked the police station at Ashti, demanding the surrender of the thana. The police were compelled to open fire in self-defence, but were overpowered when their small stock of ammunition gave out. A Sub-Inspector was stoned to death, and one head constable and three constables were murdered. Half-dead constables were burnt alive with keiosene. Only one head constable and one constable escaped. The same day at Chimur, a mob of thousands stormed the rest-house killing the sub-divisional magistrate and leaving the naib-tehsildar nearly dead. The rest-house and furniture were then set on fire. Later, in an encounter with the police, a Sub-Inspector and a constable were wounded and carried away, and a constable and an Inspector were overpowered and beaten to death. The mob then returned to the rest-house armed with police muskets and bayonets. The naib-tehsildar, who was still alive, was done to death with a bayonet, and his and the sub-divisional magistrate's bodies were thrown into the rest-house and burnt to ashes."

"Hooligans sacked a C. I. D. Inspector's bungalow at Nagpur."

"Fifteen miles from Nagpur on the Bhandara road, a

crowd attacked a police station. Some of the rioters were armed with guns. The police were fired on and a head-constable and a constable were wounded. The crowd took away rifles and ammunition from the station house. When subsequently the police searched the house of the alleged leader, they found an electric-generating set for use with a wireless transmitter."

"On August 11th the son of a prominent Congressman of Wardha who had returned from attending the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay read out in a public meeting the Congress programme which included school and railway strikes and the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires; the District Superintendent of Police succeeded in seizing the copy of the programme but the police party was at once mobbed. On the same day a professor in the Commerce College at Wardha, who had resigned his post on the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, harangued a crowd, urging them to boycott the police and threatening traders that their shops would be looted if they sold any articles to the police; the deaths of two men at Wardha by police firing would be avenged, he said, and two men would be considered equivalent to two hundred constables. As a result of these speeches a post office and police station records were burnt and telegraph wires and poles were broken. On August 14th, Pandit R. S. Shukla, the former Congress Premier of the Central Provinces, told the police officer in whose custody he was that if they had been given ten days time instead of being arrested on their way back from Bombay, every police station in the district would have been burnt down. On August 15th the vice-president of the Mandla District Congress Committee asked a crowd of about 1,500 people to destroy Government records, railway lines and bridges. In the same district the previous day four members of the Congress party had instigated villagers to blow up a bridge; when they failed in their attempt they looted some passing Government grain carts instead. Two prominent Congress workers (one being a woman) in Akola addressed lightning meetings of mill hands on August 13th and urged them to sabotage communications, march on banks, railways and post offices and burn them down. As a result of these speeches the mill hands succeeded in destroying some telephone poles and wires before they were dispersed by the police. On August 14th a crowd of two or three thousand set fire to all the public buildings of Ramtek including the tehsil, the civil court, the police station, the post office and the railway station; a train in the station was set on fire and the

treasury looted of about three lakhs of rupees ; many known Congressmen took part in this affair.

UNITED PROVINCES

"In an attack on the police station at Qasimbabad a Sub-Inspector and a constable were killed and the police arms seized.

"Houses of some Government officials were looted in Ballia."

"In the waiting hall of the Aligarh railway station a bomb in a suit-case exploded, killing two constables and a coolie. This bomb had a cast-iron casing with scrap iron filings and there was evidence of an electrical firing device."

"21 seed stores were burnt and the land records of some 420 villages were torn up or destroyed."

"In an attack on Saudiaja Station on the main East Indian Railway line near the Bihar border the attackers advanced in some sort of formation and when repelled, carried off their dead in bullock-carts brought either for that purpose or for loot."

"A typical instance of mass attacks on Government buildings led by Congressmen occurred at a tehsil in Ballia district (which was one of the main storm centres in the opening phase). At this tehsil, there was a well-constructed office with a strong record-room and good quarters. A mob, led by a local Congressman, who installed himself as "Swaraj Tehsildar" for a short period, broke down the perimeter wall, destroyed every record in the office, broke into the treasury, and looted Rs. 15,000. At the headquarters of this district, a mob led by prominent local Congressmen sacked the residences of four Government officers and two non-official gentlemen who had given some support to Government; one of the latter was a doctor the entire contents of whose dispensary was wantonly destroyed. In the neighbouring district of Azamgarh, the District Magistrate was besieged in an outlying police station by a mob of about five thousand men and a pitched battle lasting two hours took place before the mob was driven off. Before the battle started, the leaders explained that as Swaraj had been attained they wanted to hoist the Congress flag on the police station. In the Pilibhut district an excited crowd directed by three local well-known Congressmen, including a secretary of the District Congress Committee, murdered a constable, for no other reason than that he was a constable. In the Bijnor district a mass attack on the police station was led by a "four-anna" Congressman mounted on horseback. In another part of the same district, the secretary of the local Tehsil Congress Committee organised and led a mass attack on a railway station. In another attack on a railway station

in Barabanki district the local Congress "dictator" and nine other members of the District Congress Committee were prominent among the attackers. In the Muttra district, thirteen men, all of whom were members of the Congress party, were concerned in the derailing of a goods train. In Allahabad city, the president of Ward Congress Committee was involved in an attack on a police outpost, the looting of cash and the cutting of telephone wires on August 12th. In the same district 17 persons, all of them four-anna members of Congress were convicted of looting a post office and burning a dak bungalow."

BENGAL

"In some places, the perpetrators came armed with bows and arrows. During an unsuccessful attack on a police station in Dacca district, a policeman was shot dead by an arrow and about a hundred arrows were shot at a small police party at village Parila during a pitched battle with the rioters. Several police officers paid with their lives while quelling disturbances. At Bhanga a police Sub-Inspector was felled to the ground and bludgeoned to death."

"Officials and persons suspected of loyalty to Government were threatened and molested and in some cases their paddy was looted."

"A bomb was thrown in a canteen at Sealdah station, Calcutta, as a result of which two lady volunteer helpers and a British soldier received injuries.

In some Bengal villages, each household was asked to give a volunteer for making raids on Government property, the penalty for refusal being the destruction of the house.

In some parts of Bengal, citizens suspected of loyalty to Government were kidnapped, beaten, kept in detention and sometimes held to ransom. Peaceful citizens were blackmailed in the guise of "fines". During one raid seven citizens, including a collectorate clerk, were rescued from one of the so-called "Gandhi jahats". A head-master and his four brothers and several watchmen were kidnapped in Midnapore. A citizen on his way from Kadamtala to Tamluk was waylaid, overpowered, blindfolded and carried away to a dilapidated hut. The kidnappers took him from village to village at night and finally decided to try him in a self-constituted criminal court. Another kidnapped person was kept in detention for a fortnight, blindfolded with rubber pads and brutally beaten. Because he was suspected of being a police spy.

In Midnapore in Bengal, the operations of the rebels indicated considerable care and planning; an effective warn-

ing system had been devised, elementary tactical principles were observed, for instance, encirclement and flanking movements, clearly on pre-arranged signals. The forces of disorder were accompanied by doctors and nursing orderlies to attend to casualties and the intelligence system was efficient.

DELHI

A police Sub-Inspector who tried to save the Railway Clearing Accounts Office in Delhi, was killed.

C. Krishnan Nair, an important rural Congress worker of Delhi and a member of the Narela Gandhi Ashram, who went underground at the time of the August arrests, has been sentenced to two years imprisonment for setting fire to a railway station on November 12th.

MADRAS

A mob entered a salt factory in Trinnevelly District, overpowered a petty officer and four officers on duty and set fire to the weighing shed. The Assistant Inspector, who was living nearby, hurried to the spot and was brutally killed.

Hooligans sacked the officer's quarters attached to the Agricultural Institute at Sabur, a Revenue Inspector's bungalow and a village Munsif's house in the Madras Presidency. Four strangers, boarding a mail bus in Bellary, threw chilly powder into the eyes of the driver who had to stop the bus. Immediately 20 persons, with their faces covered and armed with daggers and sticks, entered the bus and took away the mail bags.

A country-made bomb was thrown at an audience in a drama in aid of the Red Cross Society in Kistna. Five persons were injured by the explosion, but the District Magistrate, for whom the bomb was obviously intended, escaped. Nor were troops spared. A bomb exploded in a cafe frequented by British service men, injuring ten persons including a Naval rating who subsequently succumbed to his injuries. Another burst in the compound of a cinema just as the troops were leaving after the show. Eighteen British soldiers and two Indians were injured. A boy of 15, working as a vendor in a tea-stall was killed.

Two drivers and a coolie were burned to death when a lorry shed adjoining an aerodrome in South India was attacked by a mob and set alight. A watchman and his wife met with a similar fate in a blazing toddy shop in Tuticorin.

In Madras, the campaign of sabotage of communications started with the violent attack on Tenali railway station in Guntur district on August 12th; the previous day two persons who had just returned from the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay

had held a public meeting at Tenali, at which a most provocative description of the events at Bombay had been given.

BOMBAY

In Surat, crops belonging to police patels were burnt or otherwise damaged.

In another outrage in Bombay, three British soldiers were injured, and seven passers-by, one of whom subsequently died. An explosion in a Poona cinema injured seven British soldiers, three fatally."

The above are almost the exhaustive charges of the Government against the Congress to throw responsibility on it of all what the people and the Government perpetrated on the Indian soil.

We also give below some other facts and figures which the Government have admitted and given out :—

(A) COLLECTIVE FINES

Mr. Amery (Secretary of State for India) in reply to a question in the House of Commons said :—

"My latest information does not extend beyond August 31 last up till when collective fines had been imposed in 1,556 cases. The total amount of fines was approximately Rs. 90 Lakhs of which Rs. 78½ Lakhs were collected."

In the Central Assembly Session on 12th February 1943, the Home Member, Sir Reginald Maxwell, replying to Saïdar Sant Singh's question said :—

"Firing had been resorted to 538 times upto about the end of the year 1942 in connection with the disturbances following the Congress arrests. The number of persons killed by police or military firing up to about the end of the year was 940 and the number injured 1,630, and 60,229 persons had been arrested up to about the end of the year. The number of persons convicted up to about the end of the year was approximately 26,000. He had no information about the number of persons prosecuted or the number of sentenced to death or executed. Approximately 18,000 persons had been detained under rules 26 and 129 of the Defence of India Rules up to about the end of the year."

Here, without going much into the details, and even on the basis of the Government facts and figures, we find that where the losses of lives on Government side are 53 lives lost they killed 940 and injured 1,630 of the people and for the monetary loss of about Rs. 50 Lakhs, they imposed Collective Fines alone of Rs. 90 Lakhs out of which Rs. 78½ Lakhs were actually deposited in the Government Treasury. But the reliance should be put in these figures only to

that extent as in the Government figures in such matters. Still even from these facts and figures an intelligent reader can very well judge and estimate to a large extent the actual facts and figures. According to our estimate, no less than 2,500 persons, from the people's side, either in the course of encounters or wanton stray shooting at unwary and harmless individuals, were killed.

There is no denying of the fact that the people were provoked to launch a sort of campaign against the British administration in India which had been a torturing bondage to the people from which they desired and strove hard to be free. Left to themselves, without any proper and regular lead and leader, they adopted to the method suggested to them in an irresponsible and stray manner but in all their activities, the main motive force was the Government repression, to move for freedom from the British rule in India. What the people did we have put barely in the words of the Government. But what the Government did to excite the people to do all what they did and thereafter, is still to be narrated which we shall do in the following chapters.

Here we conclude with a quotation from the letter of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji, a former minister of Bengal, which he wrote to the Viceroy on August 12, 1942. It runs as below :—

"Repression is not the remedy at this critical hour. Indeed the history of all countries struggling for freedom amply discloses that the greater the repression from the ruling power, the more intense is the spirit of resistance of the people who regard themselves as oppressed and downtrodden. You may keep down by a severely repressive policy the external manifestations of discontent,—even that may become difficult to achieve without using extraordinary force, which again will have the most disastrous effects on the public mind of India. But even if you succeed, discontent is bound to be driven underground and anti-Government, especially anti-British feelings will stiffen throughout India. The enemy's object will be attained, for he cares not about Indian freedom but merely wants a chaotic condition in India, of which he will not fail to take the fullest advantage at the right hour. Indeed a blind pursuit of a repressive policy and a failure to satisfy India's legitimate aspirations may well create an atmosphere in India which will make us look upon the enemy as a virtual liberator from the hands of the British oppressors, a state of feeling with which many Indians hailed your ancestors under different surroundings in this very country about 200 years ago, when they gradually changed from their role of traders to that of masters of Indian affairs.

I therefore appeal to you to take a realistic view of the Indian situation, which must be examined in the light of rapidly-changing world-movements. There is none who is satisfied with the present system of Indian administration, and an immediate transfer of power is essential for the solution of the Indian deadlock. The substance of the Congress demand is nothing more than this. If there is a hidden motive to the contrary in the minds of the Congress leaders, which I for one am not prepared to believe, that motive will come out in its true colour as soon as your constructive proposals for the transfer of power are made known to the public of India.

What is regarded as the *most unfortunate decision on the part of the British Government was its refusal to negotiate with Mahatma Gandhi*, even after he gave his emphatic assurance that the movement would not start until all avenues for an honourable settlement had been explored. *Indeed the movement has not been started by the Congress but it is the British policy which has accelerated the crisis.* This is an important aspect of the present situation which one cannot but deplore.

I would request you to apply your mind immediately to the problem of the solution of the present deadlock which is equally disastrous to India and Britain."

CHAPTER IV

THE START AND THE NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

The start of the movement was actually forced by the Government by the arrest of Gandhiji and other leaders. The people of all classes and the masses in general were excited to act. But the people could not launch their movement according to any plan or programme. It was a thing forced upon them by the circumstances created by the sudden, swift and serious attack of the Government.

The Congress organisation as such was paralysed. Almost all really influential and active Congressmen were arrested and clapped in the jails. Besides the people were deprived of all civil liberties *i. e.* of association, press and platform. Thus all legitimate and legal ways of protest were blocked and what the people desired or attempted to do became illegal hence was suppressed by all the force at the command of the Government. The use of force was absolutely unchecked and uncontrolled. In a way, the forces of lawlessness, autocracy and individual official atrocities both organised and unorganised, were let loose. The people were made easy victims of

the lawless administration or Goonda-Raj. If there was any law it was the law of the Jungle.

So even this serious conflagration, set up so suddenly and strongly by the Government, could not terrify or bow down the people. They started their resistance very gallantly. Every member of the society did its best to save the national honour and to uproot the foreign tyrannical administration of the country. The general discontentment and disaffection against the Government became acute and active. Everybody was prepared to risk his all to liberate the country from the foreign rule. The upper-classes, big industrialists, businessmen, bankers and traders, were to finance the movement liberally. The middle-class businessmen shop-keepers were still more advanced. They suspended their work and observed Hartal for days together even at the cost of their being brutally penalised by the Government. In the cities after these two sections, the most active and daring was the Student Class in general. Everywhere Students in the country exhibited extraordinary enthusiasm and activities. They went on strike—wholesale—took out large processions and held big meetings defying all Government orders and authorities. Neither the Lathi-Charges nor the Bullet-shots could deter them from pursuing their course. They became rather rash and more revolutionary when they were ill-treated, beaten and even shot at, then, of course, the acts of destruction of post offices, police stations, railway stations, Government Offices, cutting of telegraph-wires and even removing of railway lines were done. They were joined by other people too. But all these activities lasted on a mass scale only for a few days in the cities specially so far as the educational institutions were not closed, which were closed thereafter for the month of August, September, October almost everywhere. When the students were thus relieved from their attendance in the colleges, they turned towards the villages. In the villages the peasantry was more anxious to be relieved from the present rule than the city-labourer. Hence they welcomed the attempts of ending the British rule in India. But they had no means and no organisation. They also liked the first wave in the cities of expressing protest against the British policy and rule and attempted to do the same. They also attacked, according to the circumstances, the police-stations, post offices and railway stations. But these activities were sporadic and disorganised and were the direct outcome of the shocking blow of general repression hurled upon the country by the Government.

There was undoubtedly a wave of public resentment, active and energetic, expressing very explicitly and boldly

that the British rule in India was no more wanted and the people were anxious to be free from this curse of the foreign rule. The immediate cause of the movement was the policy of the general and wholesale repression which was ill-conceived and uncalled for. Among other causes was the general discontentment of the people which suddenly burst out as a reaction of the severe repression. As was the nature of the general repression so was the nature of the movement. In this aspect the movement was very scientific and natural reaction. Every action was a reaction and the intensity of the second is in equal proportion to the first because the second derives its force from and depends on the first. The force which was exhibited by the Government in their policy of repression produced in result, its reaction of no less strength. Besides intensity, the extensiveness was also in the same proportion. As the repression was India-wide and general so was the movement. The force of the repression, for instance, was not so much in the Frontier Province as in U. P., C. P., Bihar, Bombay, Madras or Bengal because comparatively repression, there, was not so serious as in other provinces. Besides, so far the nature of the repression was general, indiscriminate and wholesale, the movement was also a mass-movement. When the repression was more brisk and severe in the cities, the movement was also very intense in the cities. The repression, really speaking, lit the fire of the movement and added fuel to it more and more by its additional dozes. When the repressive-machinery of the Government moved towards the villages then movement also shifted its operations from the cities to the rural areas. When the Government resorted to the policy of revenge and individual persecution rather than general repression, then the movement went under-ground and forced the workers to adopt to the policy of individual terrorism. The stray instances of Bomb out-rages and other such activities were the direct result of the Government acts of individual persecution which turned some persons to these desperate actions. But the increasing repression and use of greater and greater force by the Government completely crushed the people and even terrorised them to sullen silence but all this could only create the silence of the grave and not the peace of life.

The people were hunted like beasts and were treated like brutes. Still worse was that the innocent people themselves were blamed and penalised for all this and the guilty police and military-men escaped scot-free with admiration and rewards. This should have been when the rule in India

has been of the same who are actually responsible for all the troubles since August '42 and after. They are, to begin with, number one Mr. Churchill himself, number two his right hand, Mr. Amery, and then number three and four Linlithgow and Maxwell—couple who control the actual administration of the country. In 1943 February Session of the Central Assembly, when discussion on Mr. K. C. Neogy's resolution, moved in the session of September '42, urging an enquiry by a committee of members of the house, into allegations of "excesses" committed by the police and the military in dealing with the August disturbances in the country, was resumed, the Home Member, Sir Reginald Maxwell, replying the debate, could have cheeks to say:—

"The Government would oppose all attempts to place their employees in the dock. Public servants must be supported in all their legitimate actions. The House would agree that all outrage must be suppressed by all means available. Law and order would become impossible if Government servants had to face an enquiry as proposed by the resolution. Without a firm and loyal police and public services, the writ of the House, and similar institutions could not run.

"The Government had not been idle since the resolution was first debated last session. They had sent round to the provincial Governments, copies of the debate for such action as they thought fit to take. No enquiry is possible into vague and indefinite allegations and most of the allegations made during the debate are vague, indefinite, or represent only one side of the story.

"For instance, Mr. Jamnadas's story of Nanded, omitted the fact that the police had to deal with a mob of 1,000 strong, which was pelting stones and brick-bats on the former. The police fired 19 rounds. Fourteen people were injured and five killed but only amongst those killed, and three amongst the injured, were under 16 years of age. The House must remember that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta was not present on the spot and his statement was based on hearsay evidence.

Mr. Neogy : Was the hon. gentleman present on the spot ?

Sir Reginald : No.

Mr. Neogy : Then his statement are equally based on hearsay statements.

"Government entirely deny that there is any policy of frightfulness as alleged by Mr. Jamna Das Mehta. No excesses were committed and no excessive force was used in putting down the disturbances of last August. If excesses had taken place they represented only isolated cases and not the general policy of the Government. The Governments concerned, however, had taken action against persons in

those cases. For instance, cases against policemen were pending in C. P., U. P., and Delhi. As these excesses were not a part of the general policy of the Government, there was no case made for an all-India enquiry.

"The House must remember that it was the mob which was violent to begin with and the police had the arduous task of restoring order and protecting Government property. Till the middle of November last, 49 fatal and 1,363 non-fatal cases amongst the police force were reported from mob violence. Mob violence was responsible for destroying or badly damaging 192 police stations and posts, 494 Government buildings, 318 railway stations and 309 post and telegraph offices.

"There were 103 cases of serious damage to railway track and 11285 cases of serious damage or destruction of telegraph and telephone lines and installations. There were three cases in which military property and installations were destroyed or damaged. There were 14 fatal cases and 70 non-fatal cases amongst the military from mob violence. These figures would indicate the seriousness of the rebellion the Government had to face in this country.

"As for women and children, it was not denied that in dealing with mob violence of the character referred to above, in some cases, innocent persons had suffered. But it was not wilful action against them. The House must also take into consideration how innocent persons were made to suffer by mob violence and bomb out-rages in various parts of India. The Government, is however, opposed to any enquiry and, therefore, would oppose the resolution and the various amendments."

The above statement of the Home Member gives out the Government side of the movement and supports the contention that the movement was suppressed with such brutality as involved serious sufferings of the innocent persons including women and children. The cases of the punishment awarded to the police for their brutalities in C. P., U. P., and Delhi, were not the proof of the adequate punishment inflicted on the police but were only the instances of the horrible police atrocities which support the contention that the excesses of the police and the military required thorough inquiry to meet the ends of justice. But alas! demand of justice from those whose very existence is based on negation of justice! This is as impossible as an expectation and demand as can be conceived of! Hence it was never met and the British Government in India still stands with pride though condemned in the eyes of "justice", "humanity", "fairplay", and "freedom."

The movement was a sincere and strong expressing of

the people's yearning for liberty and was a revolt against tyranny, injustice, inhumanity and slavery. It was crushed and defeated because it was never started under any plan, scheme, programme, organisation and leadership. It was a spontaneous outburst of the people's feelings rudely shocked by the whole-sale arrests of their leaders and subsequent repression of their ordinary, legitimate and peaceful civic rights and civil-liberties. It persisted and prolonged so long and passed through so many phases only because the mighty and tyrannical Government knowingly or unknowingly behaved through their policy and actions in such a way that the movement could take no other course but the one it took.

We have dealt in this chapter how the movement started and what were its nature and course. Now in the next part we shall deal in detail with the Government policy, their activities and atrocities in as much detail as possibly we can collect correctly and reliably.

Here we remember the memorable words of Gandhiji which he expressed in his written statement before the court during his trial at Ahmedabad in March, 1922 :

"A subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organised display of force on the one hand and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people."

True, the people of India are so emasculated that they can do nothing effectively, non-violently or violently or in any other way. Theirs has become a plight so sad and so bad that to change it: they are required not only to suffer and suffer patiently or to resist and resist strongly but to be prepared to end themselves bit by bit.

Mrs. Sarojini Devi, on the eve of the Independence Day (26th January, 1944), in a memorable message to "Followers of Congress" said :-

"They must speak with one voice, act with one will which leaves no scope for variations of personal interpretations of the essential principles for which the Congress stands : Non-violence, national unity, unceasing resistance to all forms of aggression and exploitation which despoil our people and devastate our land.

"For us, there can only be, the open path of honourable peace or the steep and *perilous path of sacrifice* which ensures freedom.

"Let us then, with invincible faith and invulnerable courage, address ourselves to the fulfilment of our glorious task and in the history of our times, be accounted among the 'boldest' of hearts that ever faced the Sun and sang a kindred song out to its face."