



RASHTRAPATHI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

PRESIDENT

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. HARIPURA

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### A SHORT LIFE-SKETCH

Our President of the Indian National Congress, Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, was born on 23rd January 1897 at Cutack. Born of rich parents, the young boy Subhas received his early education in the European School at Cutack. He was then admitted to the Revenshaw Collegiate School. He was a very intelligent student. Throughout his school career he topped the class. With his excellent grasp of the subjects coupled with keen interest and study he passed his Matriculation with distinction securing the second place in the Calcutta University which, it is to be recalled, had at

that time jurisdiction over the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and even Assam. Even from his very young days Subhas had a taste for self-sacrificing social service. His self-sacrifice was such that he and his friends would form bands and go out to nurse sick people and carry dead bodies of destitutes to the cremation ground. So much was he sometimes moved by compassion that when employed in such social service he would in the course of his morning walks give up his wrappers to helpless sufferers. His parents, unlike most others, did all they could to encourage and develop these great qualities in this young man.

In 1913 he joined the Presidency College to continue his studies. After passing the Intermediate examination he took up the study of Philosophy. In the Presidency College he came to be closely associated with Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, the President of the All India Trade Union Congress (a student of the Medical College then) Mr. Bose was the leader in his class at that time. In 1916 there was trouble in the College. Subhas was one of the leaders of the strike and fell into official disfavour. A month later a professor by name Mr. Oatten who had earned in those days a notoriety for insulting his Indian students, assaulted a student. Some young students instilled by the surging wave of Nationalism took vengeance upon the unfortunate professor by thrashing him in retaliation for his insults and wounding the feelings of Indian students. In this affair a number of students were expelled from the college and undoubtedly young Subhas was one of them. Thus his career was checked for a time.

For the first time in his life he felt that the occasion had come when he must make a bold stand against the pride and arrogance of the ruling class regardless of all consequences. We can well imagine how he felt this sentiment in his scholastic career in his own words in his Presidential Address at the C. P. and Berar Students' Conference.

“Judged from the point of view of ‘good conduct’ my University career is not without a stain. I still remember very clearly the day when the Principal summoned me to his presence and announced his order of suspension and his words still ring in my ears ‘You are the most troublesome man in the College.’ That was indeed a red letter day for me—in many respects a turning point in my career. It was the first occasion in my life when I had a taste of the joy derived from suffering for a cause, a joy in comparison with which other joys of life pale into insignificance. It was also the first occasion in my life when theoretical patriotism were put to a trial and a very severe test—and when I came out of the ordeal unscathed, my future career had been chalked out once for all.”

After two years, through the efforts of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, who appreciated the courage and conviction in Subhas Bose, he (Subhas Babu) was permitted to resume his studies. He joined the Scottish Churches College and there he passed his B.A., (Hons.) in Philosophy standing first in the University. During this period he joined the University infantry, which had been newly formed to give Military training to the students.

In 1919 Subhas Babu, when he was studying for the M.A., examination suddenly left for England to compete for the Indian Civil Service Examination. After having studied in Cambridge he won a position in the Indian Civil Service. While he was a probationer for Indian Civil Service in England he incurred the displeasure of the Authorities by maintaining that a certain circular cast aspersions on poor Indian syces. He protested and finally the circular had to be changed. Now there came the call of the Motherland in her political bondage. The Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1920 decided to launch the non-co-operation Movement against the Montford Reforms and the country plunged into the fight. The Non-co-operation Movement swept over the country like a gigantic tidal wave. Nothing since the Great Rebellion of 1857 had so stirred the masses of India. The Congress issued a call to the lawyers to quit the courts, to title-holders to relinquish their titles, to students to leave their colleges, to Government servants to resign their offices. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his Knighthood. C. R. Das left his lucrative practice at the Bar; hundreds of students came out of Colleges and schools. Subhas who was then in England could hold himself no longer. What was his duty to the call of the Motherland in bondage? How could he continue in the Service of a Government which Mahathma Gandhi denounced as Satanic? These questions troubled him. He disregarded the entreaty of his friends and resigned from the Indian Civil Service in response to the call of the Country to share the woes and sufferings of his people in the struggle.

The association of Subhas Bose with C. R. Das started from that day. Subhas Babu, the trusted

lieutenant of late Mr. C. R. Das, became the Principal of the National College and was also appointed as the Publicity Officer of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and in this capacity he issued various statements in reply to the many criticisms regarding Congress work in Bengal silencing the critics and satisfying the public. Even the 'Statesman' has rightly observed this when it wrote that "Mr. Bose has beaten Simla hollow in the art of issuing *Communiques*."

Next he served as a captain of the Swaraj Sevak Sangh (National Volunteers' Corps). In this connection one cannot but recall the fine lead he had given to the University Training Corps while a student in the Scottish Churches College.

Very soon a successful 'Hartal' was lauched in connection with the visit of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales to India in which Subhas took the leading part as an organiser. This successful 'Hartal' led by Subhas Babu was a symbol of the spirit of protest of the Indian people against the unwanted British Raj (Rule) in the country. Many Europeans and Anglo-Indians and other vested interests howled against the Non-Co-operators who had taken part in the 'Hartal'. Anglo-Indian news-papers poured fourth the venomous abuses on the Non-co-operators in their headlines. Armoured cars rolled out of the Fort and patrolled the streets. The Congress and volunteer organisations were immediately declared illegal in Bengal by the bureaucratic British Government. Offices of the Congress and other organisations were raided and all accounts books, papers and documents were seized; all public assemblies were

suspended. An Indian paper writing the accounts of these terrible happenings stated—

“By the time the Prince of Wales will reach Calcutta he will see India already soundly thrashed, bound hand and foot and gagged.”

Now Mr. Subhas Bose was clapped into prison along with Deshabhandu C. R. Das. In the jail Subhas Babu served Deshabhandu C. R. Das as a cook, secretary and sometimes as a tutor too; even in jail his feelings could not be damped.

After he was released in 1922 he proceeded to north Bengal to organise relief measures for the flood-stricken people of that area. His work in that connection was very much appreciated not only by the public but also by the then Governor Lord Lytton who personally congratulated him at Santahar. In December 1922, at the Gaya Congress presided over by Deshabhandu C. R. Das, the Swaraj Party was launched. Mr. Bose threw himself heart and soul into the organisation of that Party. After his return from Gaya Congress he rendered yeoman's service in connection with the organisation of the Swaraj Party. He started a vernacular daily 'Bengal aur katha'. Later he was commissioned by Deshabhandu to organise the paper 'Forward' as the organ of the Swaraj Party which came out in October 1923 which soon established its reputation as an undaunted champion of the rights and liberties of the people. Then in the Council election of 1923 and in the Calcutta Municipal election of 1924 he played an important part.

When the Calcutta Corporation came under the control of the Bengal Swaraj Party the same year, Mr. Bose was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer. The matter of approval of his appointment remained with the Government of Bengal for over a month. Ultimately the approval was given. He accepted Rs. 1500 only as his remuneration instead of Rs. 3000 which was the salary of that post. Before six months had elapsed he was arrested but within that period he was able to do much to execute the programme of Deshabhandu Das, the first Mayor.

In 1924 Regulation III of 1818, was thrown into Bengal and in that tumult indiscriminate arrests were made. From the dawn of the day houses and institutions were raided by the police and in that period Mr. Bose was arrested under the Regulation III of 1818 and books, documents and even the Corporation files were carried away by the police. Then he was deported to Mandalay (Burma.) This arrest and imprisonment without trial created a great stir throughout the length and breadth of the country and when he was still behind the prison bars he was elected to the Bengal Council. Here in the jail with his brother he went on a hunger-strike for 41 days as a protest against the decision of the Government not to allow the prisoners to celebrate "Durga Puja." While he was in jail his health was shattered and symptoms of tuberculosis developed. For reasons of health he was released in 1927. Then followed the period of intense agitation throughout the country against the Simon Commission.

Now Mr. Subhas organised the "Go back Simon" campaign very successfully. All the students organised



strikes spontaneously and all the classes were empty. Mr. Bose was G. O. C. of Hindusthan Seva Dal Conference (Volunteers Corps Conference) and did wonderful work in the 41st Indian National Congress Session in Calcutta presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru. His organised heroes of the Corps marched back in triumph at the head of victorious forces. Balconies and casements opened wide to rain down love and admiration. Not an eye could ignore Subhas the G. O. C. and not a camera could miss him. He stood masterly as a Commander—his sweeping hand directing at times like a General signalling an army to action. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928 Mr. Bose made a bold stand against the compromise resolution and Mahathma Gandhi. He said in the Congress :

“ We stand for Independence not in the distant future but as our immediate objective. There can be no true freedom till the British connection is severed.

In 1928 Mr. Bose presided over the Hindusthan Seva Dal Conference. After the session of the Calcutta Congress, Mr. Bose with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Congress founded the All India Independence League.

Between 1927-29 Mr. Bose was President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee. He was also a member of the All Parties' Committee of the Nehru Committee.

In 1929 he was elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress which office he held till 1931. In

August 1929 Mr. Bose led a procession in Calcutta in connection with All India Political Sufferers' Day. Mr. Bose was arrested on this occasion. During his absence on tour a warrant was issued in the Panjab against him. Mr. Bose took a leading part in the funeral procession of Mr. Jathindranath Das, a political prisoner who had been on hunger-strike for 63 days as a protest against the ill-treatment meted out to political prisoners. In 1929 he presided over the Panjab Students' Conference in which he inspired the youths of the Country by his ideal of freedom. He expounded his ideal of freedom which meant all-round freedom for the individual as well as for society; freedom of man as well as woman; freedom for the rich as well as for the poor. This freedom implied not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social inequities and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance. “ This may appear utopian to hard-headed men and women—but this ideal alone can appease hunger of the soul ” said Subhas Babu in the Panjab Students' Conference.

In 1930 he was again sentenced to nine months rigorous imprisonment and while he was in prison he was elected Mayor of Calcutta.

In March 1931 he started for Karachi to preside over the All India Political Sufferers' Conference. At the Karachi Congress Mr. Bose condemned the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as highly disappointing and unsatisfactory but at that critical juncture he thought it was not advisable to divide the Congress and walk into the trap, the Government had laid for them by executing Bhagath

Singh and his comrades. On 26th January 1931, he was severely assaulted by the police for leading a procession on the Independence Day and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment. He was released at the time of Gandhi Irwin Truce only to be arrested twice during the Truce. On September 17, 1931, Mr. Bose resigned the Presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and also the Aldermanship of the Calcutta Corporation on receipt of the news of the tragic incidents in the Hijli detention camp where two detenus were killed and a large number of detenus injured as a result of Police firing in the camp.

Early in January 1932, Mr. Bose was again arrested at the Kalyan Railway station in the Bombay Presidency under regulation III of 1818 and kept in prison till February 1933. During this period he was kept in various prisons in different parts of the country. When his health was shattered he was permitted to go to Europe to recoup his health but was not permitted to see his parents. From the boat by which he had to travel to Europe Mr. Bose gave a touching parting message to the country in which he said "Who lives if Bengal dies? Who dies if Bengal lives?"

Mr. Bose met late Mr. V. J. Patel, the veteran Indian political leader, who had also gone to Europe for treatment. From Vienna Mr. Bose with late V. J. Patel issued a long statement criticising Mahathma Gandhiji's action in suspending the Civil Disobedience movement. Patel did not live long. He expired in Vienna where Mr. Bose was with him till his (Patel's) death.

Mr. Bose had to live virtually an exile from home away from his near and dear ones. There was a ban on

his visit to England, Russia and United States of America. He was invited to preside over the London Political Conference organised by the Indian Republic Association, London. He was not allowed to go to England. His written Address, however, was read out at the Conference. This Presidential Address was banned in India under the Sea customs Act. His Book entitled "The Indian Struggle," was published by a London firm, which had a very large sale in Europe praised by eminent thinkers and publishers of the world and which met with the same fate in India as that of his Address.

In December 1934 Subhas on receiving a cable from his mother that his father was seriously ill, flew to India. On reaching Karachi he was shocked to hear that his father was no more. Then a C. I. D. officer stepped in and searched his belongings. A typed copy of the manuscript of the "Indian Struggle" which was in the Press was seized. On his arrival in Calcutta he was arrested and home-interned. But Mr. Bose was served with an order to leave the country within seven days of his arrival.

On his return to Europe, Mr. Bose had to undergo an operation performed by the famous surgeon Dr. Danniell. The operation was a success and Mr. Bose was on fair way to recovery. He attended the Conference of the Indian Central European Society held in Vienna. He also attended the Asiatic Students' Conference held in Rome which was opened by Signor Mussolini and presided over the Third Convention of the Indian Students. Early in February 1930, Mr. Bose visited Ireland.

Mr. Bose wanted to return to India to take part in Lucknow Congress deliberations but the Government of India instructed him that should he return to India he could not expect to be at liberty. But Mr. Bose preferred to remain a prisoner in his own country than to be a permanent exile in foreign land. Mr. Bose arrived in Bombay on April 8, 1936 and was immediately arrested, even before he landed. The arrest of Mr. Bose evoked indignant protests all over the country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the ex-President of the Congress protested against this act of the Government. Mr. Subhas Bose's health suffered a set-back in the prison. On March 17, 1937 he was released. There was a universal rejoicing all over the country. On November 28, Mr. Bose left by air to Europe to recuperate his health and after six weeks' stay there, went to England where he had a rousing reception and had discussions with prominent members of the British Parliament about the Indian problems. Greatly improved in his health Mr. Bose returned to India.

In him Imperialism has recognised an enemy whom it could not conciliate. The record of service and persecution in the hands of Imperialism has won this illustrious son of the Motherland, the highest place, the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. Subhas Bose, the new President of the Congress, who has taken over the light that is burning aloft from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, stands in a unique position. His one thought and aim of his life is the attainment of Purna Swaraj. There is one song which is continuously running in his head—the song of Freedom for India. This is the only music

that holds him entranced and Socialism so far he can see, is the only hope and panacea of the starving millions of his countrymen.

His firm conviction that India will attain Swaraj before long is clearly illustrated in his recent speech in Calcutta when he was accorded an enthusiastic ovation after the Haripura Congress Session. His optimism in the Freedom of the country is revealed in this speech when he expressed—

“It is not an idle talk when I say we shall see India free during our life-time. Anybody who is conscious of the everincreasing strength of the Indian National Congress, anybody who is conscious of the realities of the situation in India and abroad will tell you that. I only give expression to my very firm conviction when I say that India will be free during our life-time.”

Let Rashtrapathi Subhas Bose, our respected President and comrade Jawaharlal Nehru lead and the country will follow them.

**BHARATH MATHAKI JAI**

### **DR. PATTABHI SITHARAMIAH**

President of the All India States' Peoples' Conference, and Member, Congress Working Committee and President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee writes in the course of his message—

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## THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

OF THE

51st Session of the Indian National Congress

Delivered by

Sjt. SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

at Vithalnagar, Haripura

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by electing me as the President of the Indian National Congress for the coming year. I am not so presumptuous as to think for one moment that I am in any way worthy of that great honour. I regard it as a mark of your generosity and as a tribute to the youths of our country, but for whose cumulative contribution to our national struggle, we would not be where we are to-day. It is with a sense of fear and trepidation that I mount the tribune which has hitherto been graced by the most illustrious sons and daughters of our motherland. Conscious as I am of my numerous limitations, I can only hope and pray that with your sympathy and support I may be able in some small measure to do justice to the high office which you have called upon me to fill.

At the outset, may I voice your feelings in placing on record our profound grief at the death of Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji. Shrimathi Swaruprani

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*one of the same country*  
*Partner*

Nehru was to us not merely the worthy consort of Pandit Motilal and the revered mother of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Her suffering, sacrifice and service in the cause of India's freedom were such as any individual could feel proud of. As compatriots we mourn her death and our hearts go out in sympathy to Pandit Nehru and other members of the bereaved family.

*human part*

To Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, India will always remain beholden for being the first to secure for her an honoured place in the modern scientific world. A nationalist to the core of his heart, Sir Jagadish gave his life not merely to Science, but to India as well. India knows it and is grateful for it. We convey our heartfelt sympathy to Lady Bose.

Through the untimely death of Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, India has lost one of the brightest stars in her literary firmament. Though his name has been for years a household word in Bengal, he is not less known in the literary world of India. But if Sarat Babu was great as a litterateur, he was perhaps greater as a patriot. The Congress in Bengal is distinctly the poorer to-day because of his death. We send our sincerest condolence to the members of his family.

*2*  
*Condolence*

Before I proceed further I should like to bow my head in homage to the memory of those who have laid down their lives in the service of the country since the Congress met last year at Faizpur. I should mention especially those who died in prison or in internment or soon after release from internment. I should refer in particular to Sjt. Harendra Munshi, a political prisoner

*2-2-1946*  
*2-2-1946*  
*Picture*

in the Dacca Central Jail, who laid down his life the other day as a result of hunger-strike. My feelings are still too lacerated to permit me to say much on this subject. I shall only ask you if there is not "something rotten in the state of Denmark" that such bright and promising souls as Jatin Das, Sardar Mahabir Singh, Ramkrishna Nama Das, Mohit Mohan Maitra, Harendra Munshi and others should feel the urge not to live life but to end it?

When we take a bird's eye-view of the entire panorama of human history, the first thing that strikes us is the rise and fall of empires. In the East as well as in the West, empires have invariably gone through a process of expansion and after reaching the zenith of prosperity, have gradually shrunk into insignificance and sometimes death. The Roman Empire of the ancient times and the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires of the modern period are striking examples of this law. The empires in India—the Maurya, Gupta and the Moghul empires—are no exception to this rule. In the face of these objective facts of history, can any one be so bold as to maintain that there is in store a different fate for the British Empire? That Empire stands to-day at one of the cross-roads of history. It will either go the way of other empires or it must transform itself into a federation of free nations. Either course is open to it. The Czarist empire collapsed in 1917 but out of its debris sprang the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There is still time for Great Britain to take a leaf out of Russian history. Will she do so?

The British Empire is a hybrid phenomenon in politics. It is a peculiar combination of self-governing countries, partially self-governing dependencies and autocratically governed colonies. Constitutional device and human ingenuity may bolster up this combination for a while, but not for ever. If the internal incongruities are not removed in good time, then quite apart from external pressure, the empire is sure to break down under its own strain. But can the British Empire transform itself into a federation of free nations with one bold sweep? It is for the British people to answer this question. One thing, however, is certain. This transformation will be possible only if the British people become free in their own homes—only if Great Britain becomes a socialist state. There is an inseparable connection between the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and the colonies abroad. As Lenin pointed out long ago, "reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations." The British aristocracy and bourgeoisie exist primarily because there are colonies and overseas dependencies to exploit. The emancipation of the latter will undoubtedly strike at the very existence of the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and precipitate the establishment of a socialist regime in that country. It should, therefore, be clear that a Socialist order in Great Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonialism and that we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British Empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.

It is a well-known truism that every empire is based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any empire in the world has practised this policy so skilfully, systematically and ruthlessly as Great Britain. In accordance with this policy, before power was handed over to the Irish people, Ulster was separated from the rest of Ireland. Similarly, before any power is handed over to the Palestinians, the Jews will be separated from the Arabs. An internal partition is necessary in order to neutralise the transference of power. The same principle of partition appears in a different form in the new Indian Constitution. Here we find an attempt to separate the different communities and put them into water-tight compartments. And in the Federal scheme there is a juxtaposition of autocratic Princes and democratically elected representatives from British India. If the new constitution is finally rejected, whether owing to the opposition of British India or owing to the refusal of the Princes to joining it, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralising the transference of power to the Indian people. Therefore, any constitution for India which emanates from Whitehall must be examined with the utmost care and caution.

The policy of divide and rule, though it has its obvious advantages, is by no means an unmixed blessing for the ruling power. As a matter of fact it creates new problems and new embarrassments. Great Britain seems to be caught in the meshes of her own political dualism resulting from her policy of divide and rule.



Will she please the Moslem or the Hindu in India? Will she favour the Arab or the Jew in Palestine, the Arab or the Kurd in Iraq? Will she side with the king or the Wafd in Egypt? The same dualism is visible outside the Empire. In the case of Spain, British politicians are torn between such alternatives as Franco and the lawful Government—and in the wider field of European politics between France and Germany. The contradictions and inconsistencies in Britain's foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogeneous composition of her Empire. The British Cabinet has to please the Jews because she cannot ignore Jewish high finance. On the other hand, the India Office and Foreign Office have to placate the Arabs because of Imperial interests in the Near East and in India. The only means whereby Great Britain can free herself from such contradictions and inconsistencies is by transforming the Empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history. But if she fails, she must reconcile herself to the gradual dismemberment of a vast empire where the sun is supposed not to set. Let not the lesson of the Austro-Hungarian Empire be lost on the British people.

The British Empire at the present moment is suffering from strain at a number of points. Within the Empire in the extreme West there is Ireland and on the extreme East, India. In the middle lies Palestine with the adjoining countries of Egypt and Iraq. Outside the Empire there is the pressure exerted by Italy in the mediterranean and Japan in the Far East, both of these

*in India*  
*in consideration*

countries being militant, aggressive and imperialist. Against this background of unrest stands Soviet Russia whose very existence strikes terror into the hearts of the ruling classes in every Imperialist State. How long can the British Empire withstand the cumulative effect of this pressure and strain?

To-day, Britain can hardly call herself "the Mistress of the Seas." Her phenomenal rise in the 18th and 19th centuries was the result of her sea power. Her decline as an empire in the 20th century will be the outcome of the emergence of a new factor in the world history—Air Force. It was due to this new factor, Air force, that an impudent Italy could successfully challenge a fully mobilised British Navy in the Mediterranean. Britain can rearm on land, sea and air up to the utmost limit. Battleships may still stand up to bombing from the air, but air force as a powerful element in modern warfare has come to stay. Distances have been obliterated and despite all anti-aircraft defences, London lies at the mercy of any bombing squadron from a Continental centre. In short, air force has revolutionised modern warfare, destroyed the insularity of Great Britain and rudely disturbed the balance of power in world-polities. The clay feet of a gigantic Empire now stands exposed as it has never been before.

Amid this interplay of world forces India emerges much stronger than she has ever been before. Ours is a vast country with a population of 350 Millions. Our vastness in area and in population has hitherto been a source of weakness. It is to-day a source of strength if we can only stand united and boldly face our rulers.

From the standpoint of Indian unity the first thing to remember is that the division between British India and the Indian States is an entirely artificial one. India is one and the hopes and aspirations of the people of British India and of the Indian States are identical. Our goal is that of an independent India and in my view that goal can be attained only through a federal republic in which the Provinces and the States will be willing partners. The Congress has, time and again, offered its sympathy and moral support to the movement carried on by the States' subjects for the establishment of democratic government in what is known as Indian India. It may be that at this moment our hands are so full that the Congress is not in a position to do more for our compatriots in the States. But even to-day there is nothing to prevent individual Congressmen from actively espousing the cause of the States' subjects and participating in their struggle. There are people in the Congress like myself who would like to see the Congress participating more actively in the movement of the States' subject. I personally hope that in the near future it will be possible for the Indian National Congress to take a forward step and offer a helping hand to our fellow-fighters in the States. Let us not forget that they need our sympathy and our help.

Talking of Indian unity, the next thing that strikes us is the problem of the minorities. The Congress has, from time to time, declared its policy on this question. The latest authoritative pronouncement made by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta in October, 1937, runs thus :

“The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy in regard to the rights of the minorities in India

and has stated that it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India. This objective of unity and mutual co-operation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life, which have to be preserved in order to give freedom and opportunity to the individual as well as to each group to develop unhindered according to its capacity and inclination.

“In view, however, of attempts having been made to misinterpret the Congress policy in this regard, the All-India Congress Committee desire to reiterate this policy. The Congress has included in its resolution on Fundamental Rights that

(i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.

(ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

of the minorities, and though we are anxious to finally settle this problem, I must say that the Congress is equally desirous of doing justice to the other minorities, and especially the so-called depressed classes whose number is a very large one. I would put it to the members of the minority communities in India to consider dispassionately if they have anything to fear when the Congress programme is put into operation. The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the Indian people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population. Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the “have-nots” who will benefit at the expense of the “haves” and the Indian masses have to be classified among the “have-nots.” There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, viz., religion and that aspect of culture that is based on religion. On this question, the Congress policy is one of live and let live—a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas. The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom—on the contrary they have everything to gain. So far as the religious and social disabilities of the so-called depressed classes are concerned, it is well known that during the last seventeen years, the Congress has left no stone unturned in the effort to remove them, and I have no doubt that the day is not far off when such disabilities will be a thing of the past.

I shall now proceed to consider the method which the Congress should pursue in the years to come as well its role in the national struggle. I believe more than ever that the method should be “satyagraha” or non-violent non-co-operation in the widest sense of the term, including civil disobedience. It would not be correct to call our method passive resistance. “Satyagraha”, as I understand it is not merely passive resistance but active resistance as well, though that activity must be of a non-violent character. It is necessary to remind our countrymen that satyagraha or non-violent non-co-operation may have to be resorted to again. The acceptance of office in the provinces as an experimental measure should not lead us to think that our future activity is to be confined within the limits of strict constitutionalism. There is every possibility that a determined opposition to the forcible inauguration of Federation may land us in another big campaign of civil disobedience.

In our struggle for independence we may adopt either of two alternatives. We may continue our fight until we have our full freedom and in the meantime decline to use any power that we may capture while on the march. We may, on the other hand, go on consolidating our position while we continue our struggle for Purna Swaraj or complete independence. From the point of view of principle, both the alternatives are equally acceptable and a *priori* considerations need not worry us. But we should consider very carefully at every stage as to which alternative would be more conducive to our national advancement. In either case

the ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection. When that severance takes place and there is no trace left of British domination, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily entered into by both parties. What our future relations with Great Britain will or should be, it is too early to say. That will depend to a large extent on the attitude of the British people themselves. On this point I have been greatly impressed by the attitude of President De Valera. Like the President of Eire, I should also say that we have no enmity towards the British people. We are fighting Great Britain and we want the fullest liberty to determine our future relations with her. But once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why we should not enter into the most cordial relations with the British people.

✓ I am afraid there is a lack of clarity in the minds of many Congressmen as to the role of the Congress in the history of our national struggle. I know that there are friends who think that after freedom is won, the Congress party, having achieved its objective, should wither away. Such a conception is entirely erroneous. The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly. If other people are pitchforked into seats of power which they were not responsible for capturing, they will lack that strength, confidence and idealism which is indispensable for revolutionary reconstruction. It is this which accounts

for the difference in the record of the Congress and non-Congress ministries in the very narrow sphere of provincial autonomy.

No, there can be no question of the Congress Party withering away after political freedom is won. On the contrary the party will have to take over power, assume responsibility for administration and put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfil its role. If it were to forcibly liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-War Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction. I know that it will be argued that the continuance of a party in such circumstances, standing behind the State, will convert that State into a totalitarian one; but I cannot admit the charge. The State will possibly become a totalitarian one, if there be only one party as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis, unlike for instance the Nazi Party which is based on the "Leader Principle." The existence of more than one party and the democratic basis of the Congress Party will prevent the future Indian State becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below.

Though it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction, we might as well consider some of the principles according to which our

future social reconstruction should take place. I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines. The very first thing which our future national Government will have to do would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and a long-period programme. In drawing up the first part, the immediate objectives which will have to be kept in view will be threefold—firstly, to prepare the country for self-sacrifice; secondly, to unify India and thirdly, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy. The second and third objectives may appear to be contradictory but they are not really so, whatever political talent or genius we may possess as a people will have to be used in reconciling these two objectives. We shall have to unify the country so that we may be able to hold India against any foreign invasion. While unifying the country through a strong Central Government, we shall have to put all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as Governmental affairs. Especial efforts will be needed to keep our people together when the load of foreign domination is removed because alien rule has demoralised and disorganised as to a degree. To promote national unity we shall have to develop our lingua franca and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television etc., we shall have to

bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population. ✓

So far as our lingua franca is concerned, I am inclined to think that the distinction between Hindi and Urdu is an artificial one. The most natural lingua franca would be a mixture of the two such as is spoken in daily life in large portions of the country and this common language may be written in either of the two scripts, Nagari or Urdu. I am aware that there are people in India who strongly favour either of the two scripts to the exclusion of the other. Our policy, however, should not be one of exclusion. We should allow the fullest latitude to use either script. At the same time, I am inclined to think that the ultimate solution and the best solution would be the adoption of a script that would bring us into line with the rest of the world. Perhaps, some of our countrymen will gape with horror when they hear of the adoption of the Roman script, but I would beg them to consider this problem from the scientific and historical point of view. If we do that, we shall realise at once that there is nothing sacrosanct in a script. The Nagari script, as we know it to-day, has passed through several phases of evolution. Besides, most of the major provinces of India have their own script and there is the Urdu script which is used largely by the Urdu-speaking public in India and by both Muslims and Hindus in provinces like the Panjab and Sind. In view of such diversity, the choice of a uniform script for the whole of India should

be made in a thoroughly scientific and impartial spirit, free from bias of every kind. I confess that there was a time when I felt that it would be antinational to adopt a foreign script. But my visit to Turkey in 1934 was responsible for converting me. I then realised for the first time what a great advantage it was to have the same script as the rest of the world. So far as our masses are concerned, since more than 90 per cent are illiterate and are not familiar with any script, it will not matter to them which script we introduce when they are educated. The Roman script will, moreover, facilitate their learning a European language. I am quite aware how unpopular the immediate adoption of the Roman script would be in our country. Nevertheless I would beg my countrymen to consider what would be the wisest solution in the long run.

With regard to the long-period programme for a free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population. I do not desire to go into the theoretical question as to whether India is overpopulated or not. I simply want to point out that where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty millions during a single decade. If the population goes up by leaps and bounds, as it has done in the recent past, our plans are likely to fall through. It will therefore be desirable to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist. It is not necessary at this stage to prescribe the methods that should be adopted to prevent a further increase in population. But I would urge that public attention be drawn to this question,

Regarding reconstruction, our principal problem will be how to eradicate poverty from our country. That will require a radical reform of our land system including the abolition of land-lordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of the co-operative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land.

To solve the economic problem, agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-control will be indispensable. A new industrial system will have to be built up in place of the old one which has collapsed as a result of mass production abroad and alien rule at home. The planning commission will have to consider carefully and decide which of the home industries could be revived despite the competition of modern factories and in which sphere, large scale production should be encouraged. However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its train, we cannot go back to the pre-industrial eras, even if we desire to do so. It is well therefore that we should reconcile ourselves to industrialisation devise and means to minimise its evils and at the same time explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries where there is a possibility of their surviving the inevitable competition of factories. In a county like India, there will be plenty of room for cottage industries, especially in the case of industries including handspinning and weaving allied to agriculture.



Last but not least, the State on the advice of a planning commission, will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in both the spheres of production and appropriation. Extra capital will have to be procured for this, whether through internal or external loans, or through inflations.

Opposing or resisting the provincial part of the constitution will be hardly possible now, since the Congress Party has accepted office in seven out of eleven provinces. All that could be done would be to strengthen and consolidate the Congress as a result of it. I am one of those who were not in favour of taking office—not because there was something inherently wrong in doing so, not because no good could come out of that policy, but because it was apprehended that the evil effects of office-acceptance would outweigh the good. To-day I can only hope that my forebodings were unfounded.

How can we strengthen and consolidate the Congress while our Ministers are in office? The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy. If this is not done the Congress Party may come to grief. In every country, the Ministers come and go, but the steel frame of the permanent services remains. If that is not altered in composition and character, the Governmental party and its cabinet are likely to prove ineffective in putting their principles into practice. This is what happened in the case of the Social Democratic party in post-War Germany and perhaps in the case of the Labour party in Great Britain

in 1924 and 1929. It is the permanent services who really rule in every country. In India they have been created by the British and in the higher ranks they are largely British in composition. Their outlook and mentality is in most cases neither Indian nor national. A national policy cannot be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality. The difficulty, of course, will be that the higher ranks of the permanent services being, under the statute, directly under the Secretary of State for India and not under the provincial Governments, it will not be easy to alter their composition. ✓

Secondly, the Congress Ministers in the different Provinces should, while they are in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the spheres of education, health, prohibition, prison reform, irrigation, industry, land-reform, workers' welfare, etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have, as far as possible a uniform policy for the whole of India. This uniformity could be brought about in either of two ways. The Congress Ministers in the different provinces could themselves come together—as the Labour Ministers did in October, 1937, in Calcutta—and draw up a uniform programme. Over and above this, the Congress Working Committee, which is the supreme executive of the Congress, could lend a helping hand by giving directions to the different departments of the Congress controlled Provincial Governments in the light of such advice as it may get from its own experts. This will mean that the members of the Congress Working Committee should be conversant with the problems that come within the

purview of the Congress Governments in the Provinces. It is not intended that they should go into the details of administration. All that is needed is that they should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy. In this respect, the Congress Working Committee could do much more than it has hitherto done and unless it does so, I do not see how that body can keep an effective control over the different Congress Ministries.

At this stage, I should like to say something more about the role of the Congress Working Committee. This Committee, in my judgement, is not merely the directing brain of the national army of fighters for freedom. It is also the shadow of the Cabinet of an independent India and it should function accordingly. This is not an invention of my own. It is the role which has been assigned to similar bodies in other countries that have fought for their national emancipation. I am one of those who think in terms of a free India—who visualise a national Government in this country within the brief span of our own life. It is consequently natural for us to urge that the Working Committee should feel and function as the shadow cabinet of a free India. This is what President de Valera's Republican Government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run. And this is what the executive of the Wafd Party in Egypt did before it got into office. The members of the Working Committee, while carrying on their day to day work, should accordingly, study the problems they will have to tackle in the event of their capturing political power.

More important than the question of the proper working of the Congress Governments is the immediate problem of how to oppose the inauguration of the Federal part of the Constitution. The Congress attitude towards the proposed Federal scheme has been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha on February 4, 1938, which will be placed before this Congress after the Subjects Committee has considered it. That resolution says :

“The Congress has rejected the new constitution and declared that a constitution for India which can be accepted by the people must be based on independence and can only be framed by the people themselves by means of a Constituent Assembly without the interference by any foreign authority. Adhering to this policy of rejection, the Congress has, however, permitted the formation in the Provinces of Congress Ministries with a view to strengthening the nation in its struggle for independence. In regard to the proposed Federation, no such consideration applies even provisionally, or for a period, and the imposition of this Federation will do grave injuries to India and tighten the bonds which hold her under the subjection of an Imperialist domination. This scheme of Federation excludes from the sphere of responsibility the vital functions of a Government.

“This Congress is not opposed to the idea of federation, but a real federation must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units, enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by a democratic process of election. Indian States participating in the Federation

should approximate to the Provinces in the establishment of representative institutions, responsible Government, civil liberties and the method of election to the Federal House. Otherwise Federation as it is now contemplated, will instead of building Indian unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the State in internal and external conflict.

"The Congress, therefore, reiterates its condemnation of the proposed scheme and calls upon Provincial and local Congress Committees and the people generally as well as Provincial Governments and Ministries, to prevent its inauguration.

"In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way and the provincial governments and ministries must refuse to co-operate with it.

"In case such a contingency arises, the A. I. C. C. is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard."

I should like to add some more arguments to explain our attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the proposed Federation. One of the most objectionable features of the Federal scheme relates to the commercial and financial safeguards in the new Constitution. Not only will the people continue to be deprived of any power over defence or foreign policy, but the major portion of the expenditure will also be entirely out of popular control. According to the budget of the Central Government for the year 1937-38, the Army expenditure comes to 44.61 crores of rupees (£ 33.46 millions) out of

a total expenditure of 77.90 crores of rupees (£ 58.42 millions)—that is, roughly 57 per cent of the total expenditure of the Central Government. It appears that the reserved side of the Federal Government which will be controlled by the Governor-General, will handle about 80 per cent of the Federal expenditure. Moreover, bodies like the Reserve Bank and the Federal Railway authority are already created or will be created which will work as *imperium in imperio* uncontrolled by a Federal legislature. The legislature will be deprived of the powers it possesses at present to direct and influence railway policy and it will not have any voice in determining the currency and exchange policy of the country which has a vital bearing on its economic development.

The fact that the external affairs will be a reserved subject under the Federal Government will prejudicially affect the freedom of the Indian Legislature to conclude trade agreements and will seriously restrict, in effect, fiscal autonomy. The Federal Government will not be under any constitutional obligation to place such trade agreements before the legislature for their ratification. Even as they decline at present, to give an undertaking to place the Indo-British Trade Agreement before the Indian Legislative Assembly, the so-called Fiscal Autonomy Convention will have no meaning unless it is stipulated that no trade agreement on behalf of India shall be signed by any party without its ratification by the Indian legislature. In this connection, I should like to state that I am definitely of opinion that India should enter into bilateral trade agreements with countries like

Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America with whom she has had close trade-relations in the past. But under the new constitution, it will not be within the power of the federal legislature to force the Federal Government to enter into such bilateral trade agreements.

The iniquitous and inequitable commercial safeguards embodied in the Act will make it impossible for any effective measures to be adopted in order to protect and promote Indian national industries, especially where they might, as they often do, conflict with British commercial or industrial interests. In addition to the Governor-General's Special Responsibility to see that provisions with regard to discrimination, as laid down in the Act, are duly carried out, it is also his duty to prevent any action which would subject British goods imported into India to any kind of discriminatory or penal treatment. A careful study of these stringent and wide provisions will show that India can adopt no measures against British competition which the Governor-General cannot, in effect, stultify or veto whether in the legislative or in the administrative sphere. It is, of course, preposterous to permit foreigners in this country to compete with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine Swaraj if India is to be denied the power to devise and adopt a national economic policy including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between nationals and non-nationals. In a famous article in *Young India* under the caption "The Giant And The Dwarf" written soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in

1931 Mahatma Gandhi declared plainly that "to talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights of between a giant and a dwarf?" Even the meagre powers enjoyed by the Central Legislature at present to enact a measure like the reservation of the Indian coastal trade for Indian-owned and Indian-managed vessels has been taken away under the so-called reformed constitution. Shipping is a vital industry which is essential for defensive as well as for economic purposes, but all the accepted and legitimate methods of developing this key industry including those adopted even by several British dominions, are henceforth rendered impossible for India. To justify such limitations on our sovereignty on the ground of "reciprocity" and "partnership" is literally to add insult to injury. The right of the future Indian Parliament to differentiate or discriminate between nationals and non-nationals whenever Indian interests require it, should remain intact and this right we cannot sacrifice on any account. I would, in this connection, cite the Irish parallel. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1935 provides for a distinct Irish citizenship in connection with the electoral system, entry into public life, merchant shipping law, aircraft as well as in connection with special privileges which it is thought proper to reserve for Irish nationals, such as, for example, those conferred through measures for assisting Irish industry. Irish citizenship, in other words, is distinct from British, which cannot claim equal right in the State of Eire (or Ireland) on the basis of British citizenship which is not recognised there. I feel that India must similarly

seek to develop her own distinct nationality and establish a citizenship of her own.

While on the question of fiscal autonomy and commercial safeguards I might refer briefly to the need of an active foreign trade policy for India. India's foreign trade should be viewed not in a haphazard or piecemeal manner as is often done in order to provide some immediate or temporary benefits to British industry but in a comprehensive manner so as to co-ordinate India's economic development with its export trade on the one hand and its external obligation on the other. The very nature of India's export trade makes it essential that it shall not have any restrictive agreement with England such as would jeopardise its trade with the various non-Empire countries which have been in several respects its best customers or such as would tend to weaken India's bargaining power *vis-a-vis* other countries. It is unfortunate that the protracted negotiations for an Indo-British trade agreement, are still proceeding, while the Ottawa Agreement even after the expiry of its notice period and despite the decision of the Legislative Assembly to terminate it, still continues, and along with the differential duties on British steel and textiles the said Ottawa Agreement secures the prevailing advantages for British industries. There is no doubt that under the existing political conditions, any trade agreement between England and India is bound to be of an unequal character because our present political relationship would weigh the scales heavily in favour of England. There is also no doubt that the British preferential system is political in origin

and before we permit non-Indian vested interests to be established or consolidated in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, we should be careful as to its political repercussions and economic consequences. I trust that the present Indo-British trade negotiations will not be allowed to impede the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements with other countries whenever possible and that no such trade agreement will be signed by the Government of India unless it is ratified by the Indian Legislature.

From the above, it will be quite clear that there is no analogy between the powers of the proposed ministries and those of the proposed Federal ministry. Moreover, the composition of the Federal Legislature is reactionary to a degree. The total population of the Indian States is roughly 24 per cent of that of the whole of India. Nevertheless, the Rulers of the States, and not their subjects, have been given 33 per cent of the seats in the Lower House and 40 per cent in the Upper House of the Federal Legislature. In these circumstances, there is no possibility, in my opinion, of the Congress altering its attitude towards the Federal scheme at any time. On our success in resisting the imposition of Federation by the British Government will depend our immediate political future. We have to fight Federation by all legitimate and peaceful means—not merely along constitutional lines—and in the last resort, we may have to resort to mass civil disobedience which is the ultimate sanction we have in our hands. There can be little doubt that in the event of such a campaign being started in future, the move-

ment will not be confined to British India but will spread among the States' subjects.

To put up an effective fight in the near future, it is necessary to put our own house in order. The awakening among our masses during the last few years has been so tremendous that new problems have arisen concerning our party organisation. Meetings attended by fifty thousand men and women are an usual occurrence now-a-days. It is sometimes found that to control such meetings and demonstrations, our machinery is not adequate. Apart from these passing demonstrations, there is the bigger problem of mobilising this phenomenal mass energy and enthusiasm and directing them along proper lines. But have we got a well-disciplined volunteer corps for this purpose? Have we got a cadre of officers for our national service? Do we provide any training for our budding leaders, for our promising young workers? The answers to these questions are too patent to need elaboration. We have not yet provided all these requirements of a modern political party, but it is high time that we did. A disciplined volunteer corps manned by trained officers is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, education and training should be provided for our political workers so that we may produce a better type of leaders in future. This sort of training is provided by political parties in Britain through summer schools and other institutions—and is a speciality in totalitarian States. With all respect to our workers who have played a glorious part in our struggle, I must confess that there is room for more talent in our party. This defect can

be made up partly by recruiting promising young men for the Congress and partly by providing education and training for those whom we already have. Everybody must have observed how some European countries have been dealing with this problem. Though our ideals and methods of training will be quite different from theirs, it will be admitted on all hands that a thorough scientific training is a requisite for our workers. Further an institution like the Labour Service Corp of the Nazis deserves careful study and, with suitable modification, may prove beneficial to India.

While dealing with the question of enforcing discipline within our own party, we have to consider a problem which has been causing worry and embarrassment to many of us. I am referring to organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas and their relations with the Indian National Congress. There are two opposing schools of thought on this question—those who condemn any organisations that are outside the Congress and those who advocate them. My own view is that we cannot abolish such organisations by ignoring or condemning them. They exist as objective facts and since they have come into existence and show no signs of liquidating themselves, it should be manifest that there is an historical necessity behind them. Moreover, such organisations are to be found in other countries. I am afraid that whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence. The only question is how the Congress should treat them. Obviously such organisations should not appear as a challenge to the National Congress which is the



organ of mass struggle for capturing political power. They should, therefore, be inspired by Congress ideals and methods and work in close co-operation with the Congress. To ensure this, Congress workers should in large numbers participate in trade union and peasant organisations. From my own experience of trade union work I feel that this could easily be done without landing oneself in conflict or inconsistency. Co-operation between the Congress and the other two organisations would be facilitated if the latter deal primarily with the economic grievances of the workers and the peasants and treat the Congress as a common platform for all those who strive for the political emancipation of their country.

This brings us to the vexed problems of the collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organisations to the Congress. Personally, I hold the view that the day will come when we shall have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organisations under the influence and control of the Congress. There will, of course, be difference of opinion as to the manner and the extent to which this affiliation should be given and the character and stability of such organisations will have to be examined before affiliation could be agreed to. In Russia, the United Front of the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers played a dominant part in the October Revolution—but, on the contrary, in Great Britain we find that the British Trades Union Congress exerts a moderating influence on the National Executive of the Labour Party. In India we shall have to consider

carefully what sort of influence, organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas will exert on the Indian National Congress in the event of affiliation being granted and we should not forget that there is the possibility that the former may not have a radical outlook if their immediate economic grievances are not involved. In any case, quite apart from the question of collective affiliation, there should be the closest co-operation between the National Congress and other anti-Imperialist organisations and this object would be facilitated by the latter adopting the principles and methods of the former.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the question of forming a party, like the Congress Socialist Party, within the Congress. I hold no brief for the Congress Socialist Party and I am not a member of it. Nevertheless, I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning. In the first place, it is desirable for the Leftist elements to be consolidated into one party. Secondly, a Leftist *blocc* can have a *raison d'être* only if it is Socialist in character. There are friends who object to such a *blocc* being called a party, but to my mind it is quite immaterial whether you call that *blocc* a group, a league or a party. Within the limits prescribed by the constitution of the Indian National Congress it is quite possible for the Leftist *blocc* to have a Socialist programme, in which case it can be very well be called a group, a league or a party. But the role of the Congress Socialist Party, or any other party of the same sort, should be that of the Left-wing group.

Socialism is not the immediate problem for us—nevertheless, Socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for Socialism when political freedom has been won. And that propaganda can be conducted only by a party like the Congress Socialist Party, which stands for and believes in Socialism.

There is one problem in which I have been taking a deep personal interest for some years and in connection with which I should like to make my submission—I mean the question of a foreign policy for India and of developing international contacts. I attach great importance to this work, because I believe that in the years to come, international developments will favour our struggle in India. But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it. The lesson of Egypt stands before us as an example. Egypt won her treaty of alliance with Great Britain without firing a shot, simply because she knew how to take advantage of the Anglo-Italian tension in the Mediterranean.

In connection with our foreign policy, the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country, men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their own political views may be. In this matter I should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a Communist State, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non-Socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should therefore

aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who would feel sympathetic towards India. To create and develop such a nucleus, propaganda through the foreign press, through Indian-made films and through art exhibitions would be helpful. The Chinese, for example, have made themselves exceedingly popular in Europe through their art exhibitions. Above all personal contacts are necessary. Without such personal contacts, it would be difficult to make India popular in other countries. Indian students abroad could also help in this work, provided we, in India look to their needs and requirements. There should be closer contact between Indian students abroad and the Indian National Congress at home. If we could send out cultural and educational films made in India, I am sure that India and her culture would become known and appreciated by people abroad. Such films would prove exceedingly useful to Indian students and Indian residents in other countries, who, at present, are like our non-official ambassadors.

I do not like the word propaganda—there is an air of falsity about it. But I insist that we should make India and her culture known to the world. I say this because I am aware that such efforts will be welcomed in every country, in Europe and America. If we go ahead with this work, we shall be preparing the basis for our future embassies and legations in different lands. We should not neglect Great Britain either. We have even in that country a small but influential group of men and women who are genuinely sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. Among the rising generation,

and students in particular, interest in and sympathy for India is rapidly on the increase. One has only to visit the universities of Great Britain to realise that.

To carry on this work effectively, the Indian National Congress should have its trusted agents in Europe, Asia, Africa and in North, Central and South America. It is a pity that we have so far neglected Central and South America where there is profound interest in India. The Congress should be assisted in this work of developing international contacts by cultural organisations in India, working in the field of international culture and by the Indian Chambers of Commerce working in the sphere of international commerce. Further, Indians should make it a point to attend every international Congress or Conference. Participation in such Conferences is a very useful and healthy form of propaganda for India.

While talking of international contacts, I should remove a misgiving which may be present in some minds. Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government. We do not need go in for such intrigue and all our methods should be above board. The propaganda that goes on against India all over the world is to the effect that India is an uncivilised country and it is inferred therefrom that the British are needed in order to civilise us. As a reply, we have only to let the world know what we are and what our culture is like. If we can do that, we shall create such a volume of international sympathy in our favour that India's case will become irresistible before the bar of world opinion.

I should not forget to refer to the problems, the difficulties and the trials which face our countrymen in different parts of Asia and Africa—notably in Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, Malaya, and Ceylon. The Congress has always taken the keenest interest in their affairs and will continue to do so in future. If we have not been able to do more for them, it is only because we are still slaves at home. A free India will be a healthy and potent factor in world-politics and will be able to look after the interests of its nationals abroad.

I must, in this connection, stress the desirability and necessity of developing closer cultural relations with our neighbours—viz., Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal, China, Burma, Siam, Malaya States, East Indies and Ceylon. It would be good for both parties if they knew more of us and we knew more of them. With Burma and Ceylon, in particular, we should have the most intimate cultural intercourse, in view of our agelong contacts.

Friends, I am sorry I have taken more of your time than I had intended at first, but I am now nearing the end of my address. There is one other matter—the burning topic of the day—to which I should now draw your attention—the question of the release of detenus and political prisoners. The recent hunger-strikes have brought this question to the forefront and have focussed public attention on it. I believe that I am voicing the feelings of at least the rank and file of the Congress when I say that everything humanly possible should be done to expedite release. So far as the Congress Ministries are concerned, it would be well to note that

the record of some of them has not come up to public expectation. The sooner they satisfy the public demand, the better it will be for the Congress and for the people who are suffering in Provinces ruled by non-Congress Ministries. It is not necessary for me to labour this point and I fervently hope that in the immediate future, the public will have nothing to complain so far as the record of the Congress Ministries on this point is concerned.

It is not only the detenus and political prisoners in jail and detention who have their tale of woe. The lot of those who have been released is sometimes no better. They often return home in shattered health, victims of fell diseases like tuberculosis. Grim starvation stares them in the face and they are greeted, not with the smiles but with the tears of their near and dear ones. Have we no duty to those who have given of their best in the service of their country and have received nothing but poverty and sorrow in return? Let us therefore send our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have suffered for the crime of loving their country and let us all contribute our humble mite towards the alleviation of their misery.

Friends, one word more and I have done. We are faced with a serious situation to-day. Inside the Congress, there are differences between the Right and the Left which it would be futile to ignore. Outside, there is the challenge of British Imperialism which we are called upon to face. What shall we do in this crisis? Need I say that we have to stand four-square against all the storms that may beset our path and impervious

to all the designs that our rulers may employ? The Congress to-day is the one supreme organ of mass struggle. It may have its Right-bloc and its Left—but it is the common platform for all Anti-Imperialist organisations striving for Indian emancipation. Let us therefore rally the whole country under the banner of the Indian National Congress. I would appeal specially to the Leftist group in the country to pool all their strength and their resources for democratising the Congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In making this appeal, I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in keeping with that of the Indian National Congress.

In conclusion, I shall voice your feelings by expressing that all India fervently hopes and prays that Mahatma Gandhi may be spared to our nation for many, many years to come. India cannot afford to lose him and certainly not at this hour. We need him to keep our people united. We need him to keep our struggle free from bitterness and hatred. We need him for the cause of Indian Independence. What is more—we need him for the cause of humanity. Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism—but against World Imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are therefore fighting not for the cause of India alone, but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.

VANDE MATARAM !



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**COMRADE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

EX-PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS

1929  
LAHORE

1936  
LUCKNOW

1936 (Dec.)  
FAIZPUR

Comrade Jawaharlal Nehru the illustrious son of our Motherland who has given up his place of the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress to Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, is the only leader of the country who has held for three times the highest and the most coveted office of the Presidentship of the Congress.

Born of a very rich family, bred to ease and comfort, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru preferred the thorny path of National service to the high and luxurious life. Young in age but with an experience which men twice his age do not possess, undaunted in spirit though subjected to trials and tribulations, which few could have withstood,

Pandit Nehru, with a glorious record of service and sacrifice, is called to-day to lead the country with the most honoured President Subhas Chandra Bose and the whole country looks forward to them for guidance in its national struggle for complete Independence—Purna Swaraj.

“There must be no compromise with the British bureaucrats or any Imperialists until Swaraj is won. Swaraj or no compromise.” These are the brave words of his gospel to his countrymen. Purna Swaraj in his vision is the promised Socialist Land, overflowing with milk and honey where there can be no poor labourer or a peasant starving for a morsel of food or a millionaire to boast of his wealth. His ideal of Purna Swaraj, unlike the aims of many National leaders of the country, is emancipation of the unfortunate poor of the country, nay of mankind as a whole, by eradicating the most wretched disease—poverty which is eating the vitals of the country. His ideal of Purna Swaraj means complete Independence with full freedom for every individual be he or she a labourer or a millionaire, high or low, rich or poor or educated or illeterate. It is Jawharlal, who has won the love and confidence of the toiling millions of Hindustan in an abundant measure that deliberately takes upon himself the task of helping the weak and the hungry.

Jawaharlal has only to touch a thing and immediately it assumes the greatness of national importance in the minds of the people. A word from Nehru means a command to all the youths of the country and poor peasants and labourers, for he can touch the heart of

every one by his kind words and gesture. Imagination delights to follow him, as he flies in aeroplanes, so to speak, to Pathans in the Frontier or the labourers in Assam or the Paharis in the Himalayas. To him it is but a stride from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. His body keeps pace with his thought and his thought keeps pace with the vision of Complete Independence of the country on Socialist lines. No one has filled the place of Jawaharlal Nehru as he has done as a man of action and glorious ideals.

After laying down his office of Presidentship of the Congress comrade Nehru submitted a report beautifully surveying the activities and achievements of the Congress and international problems, which act upon the future destiny of the country during the time of his Presidentship. This *Report* is one to be treasured with care for guidance. And as we believe that our efforts in this Souvenir will not be complete without this invaluable *Report*, to guide the Country, with great pride we have included this precious *Report* in this our publication which is to be read and reread by every one who cherishes the Independence of our Motherland in thought and deed.

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## Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Report

My colleague, the General Secretary, is submitting to the A. I. C. C. the report of Congress work during the year. It has not been the practice for the retiring President to add to this or to have a separate say, but nevertheless I am venturing on this course as I should



like to place certain considerations before the Committee. Although I have called this note a report, the designation is not quite correct. I am not traversing the ground covered by the General Secretary, nor do I propose to make a survey of the past year's activities. But I do wish to draw attention to certain important aspects of the problems we have to face.

These problems grow more complex and the burden of responsibility on the Congress ever increases. This is the inevitable consequence of the growth of the Congress itself and the ever-widening influence that this great organisation exercises on the hundreds of millions of our countrymen. History has cast on us of the Congress the task of moulding India's destiny and the history of to-morrow will record how we have faced this great task. We have rendered a good account of ourselves in the past, and with all our faults and weaknesses, served India with fortitude and with abundant love for her suffering children. But the future is harder to face. What will it say of us and of the Congress? We who meet here at Haripura, in a corner of Peasant India, have to carry this heavy and crushing burden of the future, and what we say and do here will fashion to some extent that future that is to come.

What are we? Individuals linked together in a mighty organisation. Individuals play their role on the public stage and sometimes influence events; organisations give content to the lives of large numbers of people and mould their activities. But the individual and the organisation move in their narrow spheres, ineffectively, so long as they do not represent in some way the inner

urge of the masses and the great forces that go to the making of history. It is because the Congress became the instrument of these great forces in India, because it came to represent the hunger for freedom of our people and their passionate desire to be rid of their poverty, that it played the great role of India's standard bearer in the face of imperialist might.

We cannot shirk the responsibility that has been cast on us. That responsibility includes not only our domestic problems, vitally important as they are, but also our international problems. Engrossed as we are in our struggle for freedom, we have already begun to take part in international affairs, and that part is certain to grow. In any event we could not have ignored the growing shadow of war and the strange evolutions of power politics in the world. They affect us intimately, both directly and because of their effect on British imperialism. But as the day of our independence draws near, we have to be clear in our own minds about our foreign policy and the part we shall play in international affairs.

We have already made it abundantly clear that we shall be no parties to imperialist war, and if British imperialism seeks to drag us into it, we shall resist the attempt. Further we have repeatedly stated that imperialism itself, and the economic roots that underlie it, which result in the subjection of one nation by another and in international rivalry, is the dominating cause of war. Imperialism and peace are as the poles apart, and to have peace in this world we must rid it of imperialism.

We see to-day fascist aggression all over the world and frightfulness beyond description accompanying it

and an open glorification of war. We see also countries genuinely anti-imperialistic and desiring peace, as well as imperialist countries, stated with conquest and the spoils of conquest, fearful of war lest they lose what they have. There is a talk of the fascist Powers and the democratic countries, and we are asked if, in the conflict that seems to be inevitable, we are going to refrain from helping the democratic countries. We must clear this confusion in our own and in other people's minds.

We are entirely against fascism and the Congress has given the strongest expression to its condemnation of fascist aggression in Africa, Europe and the Far East. But what are the democratic Powers and what will they be fighting for when world war overwhelms us? England? England is certainly democratic to some extent, but only in the domestic sphere. It is anti-democratic and imperialistic in regard to its empire. So far as we in India are concerned we have this imperialism as our constant companion. If England fights and wins, it is British imperialism that wins and the British hold on India is strengthened thereby. On no account therefore can we be parties to India helping in such a war even against the fascist Powers. If democracy is going to fight facism, then democracy must live up to its name and be democratic at home and abroad.

Labour leaders and pacifists in England are indignant against facism and are even prepared to shed their pecifism in defence of England. But they view with equanimity the continuance of British imperialism in India, and console themselves with the thought that

if they left India we would fall a prey to Japan or Germany or Italy. It is a curious and comforting delusion and it shows how a dormant imperialism colours the outlook of even those who call themselves democrats, pacifists and socialists. The obvious contradiction in a policy based on democracy at home and imperialism abroad is not seen. But the contradiction persists nonetheless and inevitable consequences will flow from it. These consequences are that we will on no account assist British imperialism and that our primary objective is to get rid of that imperialism. Every socialist, as well as every one else desiring world peace, must, if he understands the implications of this creed, support us in this attitude and strive to end imperialism in India and elsewhere.

To talk of a Japanese or German or Italian invasion of India is to forget realities completely and to live in a world of fantasy. Japan is further away from India, for all practical purposes, than England is. The land route is entirely closed and impossible of passage, even for air-craft. The sea route is very long and terribly dangerous and cannot be negotiated till Japan is master of the sea and air, and Britain and the United States have been wholly disabled. Japan cannot think of coming to India till she has absorbed the whole of China, a task almost certainly beyond her competence and resources. Even after that, the next countries on the list are Australia, the Philippine Islands and Netherlands India.

It is equally fantastic to think in terms of a German or Italian invasion of India. Both these countries will

have their work cut out for them in Europe and their objectives lie in Europe or North Africa. But if by any chance the fascist Powers gain an overwhelming victory in a world war and the world lies prostrate before them, then of course anything might happen. Even so India will not go as a gift to anybody. She will resist the invader to the utmost and, in spite of lack of military and such like resources, she has developed enough strength and technique of her own method of struggle to make an invasion a terribly burdensome operation. We have to struggle to-day with an entrenched system which has dug itself deep into our very soil. It will be far easier to deal with a newcomer who comes with hostile intentions.

Recently we have had the farce of air-raid precautions in some of our cities and gas-masks have been flourished before us. The idea of giving gas-masks instead of food or work to starving people may have some humour in it, or probably it is just the product of the average military mind, but in India, to-day it is a manifest absurdity. There is no obvious risk of air-raids in India except possibly some stray attempts. Are German or Italian or Japanese planes coming across thousands of miles over continents and oceans to bomb Indian cities? That would be difficult enough under any circumstances and it would be totally useless from the point of view of the larger objective that the enemy forces would have. It is clear that the air-raid precautions in India have only one end in view—to familiarise the Indian people with the idea of approaching war, to create an atmosphere favourable to our

joining it. Many of our countrymen have not realised this and seem to welcome these fanciful activities of the military in India. It is time they understood their significance and opposed them for what they are—preparations of British imperialism to rush us into imperialist war.

For the same reason we have opposed the despatch of Indian troops to China. India has sent her whole-hearted sympathy to the people of China in their travail and we would gladly help them to the best of our ability. But we will not tolerate the use of Indian troops for the purposes of British Imperialism.

If we are opposed to any participation in imperialist war we must be equally opposed to any increase in armaments in India. The army in India is not a national army. It is an imperialist army and partly a foreign army of occupation. To increase its strength or effectiveness is to strengthen imperialism and we can be no parties to this. Indeed we cannot approve of any expenditure on it. Recently the mechanisation of the British Army in India was debated in the Central Assembly. We are totally opposed to this not only on the ground that it is the British part of the army that is mechanised, or that we object to additional military expenditure, but on the more fundamental ground of resisting the strengthening of the apparatus of imperialism in India. We are told that this is required for the defence of India, but the defence of India, in the vocabulary of our rulers, means the defence of British imperialism and British vested interests in India.

The world seems to be in a perpetual state of crisis and no one knows when this might lead to catastrophe.

We must therefore be perfectly clear in our own minds how we stand and what we propose to do and we must let other people know our minds. In the conflict between fascism and democracy, we are all for democracy, but England does not come to us in democratic garb and we will not co-operate with her imperialism. Even apart from India, British foreign policy during the past eight years has been singularly pro-fascist. Britain has actively supported or passively accepted fascist aggression in the Far East and in the West. In spite of brave words to the contrary, she has consistently helped the fascist Powers to grow in stature and power and has weakened the League of Nations. The key to the understanding of international affairs in recent years is this attitude of the British 'National' Government. Disarmament came to grief because of it, Germany repudiated the Treaty of Versailles and entered into a naval treaty with Britain over the head of the League of Nations. The British Government is very largely responsible for the shameful farce of non-intervention in Spain, and recently this Government has even sent an official representative to the Rebels in Spain. France might have followed a different policy but fear of being isolated has made her a hanger-on of British foreign policy. Thus the British Government must largely shoulder the responsibility for the failure of disarmament the fading away of the League of Nations, and the deplorable deterioration in international relations. Imperialism must necessarily result in ever increasing armaments.

The policy of the Congress is governed by two basic considerations—complete independence, our constitu-

tion being framed by a Constituent Assembly elected by the Indian people, and resistance to India's participation in Britain's wars. Both these are aspects of one and the same thing—anti-imperialism. On the constructive side of peace we are prepared to go to the fullest extent to outlaw war and establish world peace and collective security. Indeed we go further, as the very basis of our national struggle has shown, for we want to eliminate all violence from national or international affairs. As such we must stand for disarmament on the widest possible scale. Believing as we do in a world order, we shall co-operate with every attempt to evolve co-operation between nations.

The League of Nations was undoubtedly such an attempt, but the League was in effect a league of governments, and our government being a foreign government we have so far had no place in the League. In the name of India the British Government has had an additional vote. We cannot agree to this misrepresentation and hence we have condemned the League and often demanded India's withdrawal from it. A free India would gladly co-operate with the League and would seek to make it a real league of peoples and not governments. Only when India is independent, will she be properly represented in it.

Our ardent desire to work for world peace and to co-operate with other nations in this vital task is evidenced by the Congress joining the World Peace Congress. An essential part of the programme of the World Peace Congress is the strengthening of the League of Nations. We accept this, but subject to our

present opposition to the League when we can find no place there. We must also make it clear that by accepting the League when we are free, we do not accept the *status quo* in international affairs or many of the grossly unfair treaties imposed by imperialistic countries on weaker nations. The League can only function effectively on a basis of equity and democracy and anti-imperialism.

Collective security would involve the use of some kind of sanctions against the aggressor nation. India would unhesitatingly join in sanctions, but it must be remembered that the whole Congress approach to this problem, as to others, will be governed by the policy of non-violence. If we have adhered to non-violence in our struggle for freedom, equally so will we think in terms of it in considering international affairs and the coercion of an offending and aggressor nation. It may perhaps be open to doubt how far this policy will be applicable in defending a country against foreign aggression. Most of us, if we were in Spain or China to-day, would probably be compelled by force of circumstances to adopt the violent method of defence, rather than be ineffectual spectators of tragedy and disaster. But in considering international sanctions the Congress is bound to oppose military sanctions for these would lead to war on a more extensive scale. Our policy would be economic sanctions which, if properly applied, are likely to be even more effective in the long run.

In world affairs to-day England is often referred to as a democratic nation, and yet the democracy under-

lying Britain's government can be judged by the new Constitution in India with all its safeguards and special powers vested in the Governors and the Viceroy. Even more so by the proposed Federation which seeks to bolster up the feudal States and through them British Imperialism. India will resist this Federation and the imperialism that lies behind it, and we shall continue our struggle for freedom whether war comes or crisis.

The Indian States still function in their old bad way and try to hold on to a century that is past. They endeavour to crush all attempts at political activity and yet all over India there is a stir and an awakening among the people of the States. The Congress objective in regard to the States is clear. The independence of India includes the States, and the people of the States must have the same freedom as those who live in other parts of India. Our movement for freedom includes in its scope all the States. While the objective is clear, there has been some doubt as to the way of approach to it by the Congress. Some have advocated a policy of non-interference by the Congress in the States, leaving it to the people of the States to shoulder the burden of their struggle. Inevitably that burden must fall on them, but it is neither possible nor desirable for the Congress to keep aloof. We can and should prevent the name of the Congress being exploited, but the Congress is vastly interested in every struggle for freedom in the States and, wherever possible, it has to give its support. The States are dark and unwholesome corners of India where strange things happen and people disappear leaving no trace behind. During the past year, one of

the most advanced States of India, Mysore, has gained an unenviable notoriety because of its attempt to crush an agitation aiming at responsible government in the State. The A. I. C. C. passed a resolution condemning the repression there. This resolution was criticised as *ultra vires* by Gandhiji, but I think it was entirely in the competence of the A. I. C. C. If a State like Mysore behaves in this fashion, what shall we say of the other States?

We have now had six months' experience of the working of the Congress Ministries and life has not been easier for us because of the new problems that have faced us. The Ministries have functioned bravely in spite of enormous difficulties and have a substantial record to their credit. And yet we wish it was more. There are so many things that cry aloud to be done, so many abuses to go, so much lee-way to be made good. A vast amount of the Ministers' time and energy is spent in getting little things done which the representatives of the old order do not like. The conflict inherent in the Constitution is always there in spite of all attempts to cover it up, and even though it may not see the light of day, it eats up this time and energy, and important work suffers. The old services, even with good-will, which is not always present, cannot be the agents of the great changes that the Congress wants to introduce. They have been brought up in a different tradition and their competence is largely confined to work in the ancient ruts of an irresponsible imperialist administration. An attempt to leave the ruts fills them with apprehension, and where we demand and require a

flaming enthusiasm for the new order, we get a reluctant passivity. It is difficult to carry on effective work in this way and our over-worked Ministers live a care-worn and exhausting life. They deserve our fullest sympathy in their thankless task.

We see in India to-day a rapid development of social forces and sometimes of social conflict. The Congress, representing as it does different forces, itself becomes to some extent the forum for these conflicts. We have thus certain disrupting tendencies and at the same time the strong unifying tendency which has held us together for so long. I have no doubt that the unifying tendency must be made to triumph for any other outcome would do great injury to our cause. Much has happened recently before and during our Congress elections which has made many of us think hard and pained us greatly. I do not wish to discuss these matters here except to say that the spirit of faction is far too evident. Inevitably there is a right wing of the Congress and a left wing and various middle groups, though this simple classification sometimes misleads. An attempt to drive out the Left, if successful, would be fatal for it represents a vital part of the movement without which it would lose much of its flair, and become increasingly wedded to petty reformist activities. It would spread confusion in the mass mind, more especially the peasantry, and thus weaken the Congress. I feel that some such attempt has been made during recent months and it has created considerable bitterness.

Certain Leftist elements in the Congress and outside have also erred and thus themselves partly created a



situation which has done them harm. There has been too much of a tendency to take advantage of a temporary mass excitement, too much of an identification of their own wish-fancies with the supposed urges of the masses, sometimes a support of methods which are not in consonance with Congress policy and sometimes a support of wrong action for fear of losing influence with the people. Such a policy is likely to become adventurist and bring at least temporary failure in its train.

We have to hold to our anchor and not allow ourselves to be swept away in these grave times by momentary excitement or by party strife, or by desire of temporary gain at the cost possibly of the larger good. We have to remember that during these many years we have tried, not without success to function politically on an unusually high ethical plane, and we have to live up to those standards of integrity in public affairs which we have so often proclaimed. We may not forget that non-violence is not a mere phrase for us, but a deliberate policy which we have adopted and pursued with remarkable results. It is true that many who talk loudly of truth and non-violence have little to do with either, and they use these terms for narrow purpose of their own. Nevertheless truth and non-violence have to be adhered to by us to the best of our ability. What will this game of politics be worth for us if we lose our ideals and tarnish our integrity?

We have seen recently a strange and disturbing outburst of communalism. We have welcomed the new orientation of the Muslim League with its objective of

independence. We have welcomed the rapidly rising political consciousness of the Muslims, which has sent large numbers of them to the Congress, and moved large number of others to function outside the ranks of the Congress. But the communalism that these latter have exhibited has been distressing, for separatism is always a sign of backwardness. But far more distressing has been the singular lack of decency and the ordinary standards of public life that has been in evidence. Violence has often been openly encouraged and has already led to some deplorable occurrences.

But this will pass and what will remain is the new awakening among the muslim masses. It will pass if the Congress holds hard to its policy of treating all minorities not only with full justice but with generosity so as to gain their confidence and goodwill. It will pass because other and more vital problems confront us. It is the Peasant who is beginning to dominate India, and it is to him and his kind that we shall have to go again and again, and if we find favour in his eyes and give him relief from his age-long bondage, it is well with us. But it will not be well with us if we fail him and do not keep the promises we made to him.

I believe as firmly as ever that only Socialism will solve our problems as also those of the rest of the world. But the fundamental tasks before us at present are two: to put an end to imperialism, and to end the relics of feudalism in the States and in our land system.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION!

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