



AS-003351

CSL

REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

BY
ALFRED NUNDY
BAR-AT-LAW

AUTHOR OF PUNJAB DISTURBANCES, POLITICAL
PROBLEMS, INDIAN UNREST, 1919-20,
NON-CO-OPERATION, DEIFICATION OF
MR. GANDHI

Rs. Three

(218)

PRINTED BY
TANDON & Co.,
LAHORE.

1922

THE LIBERAL PRESS.



CSL

-54
954.0841
NUN-R

323-254
Nun N22R

PUBLISHED BY MR. K. N. PAUL,
22 Warris Road, LAHORE.



CENTRAL
Division
Acc. No.
Date
Call
Processed
Date of Transfer

4
CSL

FOREWORD.

This volume was intended to be a continuation of "Indian Unrest, 1919-20" and to record the political events of the year 1921, but the delay in printing has given an opportunity to bring the book up to date. To combine the functions of a historian and an impartial critic is not an easy task. How far the writer has succeeded he will leave the readers to judge.

DEHRA DUN, }
15th August, 1922. } ALFRED NUNDY.



CSL

5

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A Campaign of Destruction ...	1
II. The Psychology of Force ...	33
III. The Apostles of Force ...	58
IV. An Attack that Failed ...	83
V. The Song of the Spinning Wheel ...	121
VI. The Boycott of Foreign Cloth ...	155
VII. Civil Disobedience ...	191
VIII. Ali Brothers on the War Path ...	227
IX. On the Road to Anarchy ...	255
X. The Evolution of Home Rule ...	301
XI. A Fight to the Finish ...	339
XII. Watchman ! What of the Night ? ...	379



CSL

REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I

A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

It is an undoubted fact that the year 1921 opened out with unrest more deep and widespread than it had been at any previous period. The bitterness of feeling between the English on the one side and the Indian people on the other side was more accentuated. There was an organised and determined movement afoot to eliminate British rule from India, even at the cost of future anarchy. And yet there is ample evidence that much had been done by the Government to disarm antagonism and to mitigate this unrest, and that there was a complete change in the angle of vision on the part of the English, officials and non-officials. Apart from that, India was about to take a momentous step which would completely transform the nature of its rule. What then is the solution of this curious problem? To put it down to an unholy alliance between a simple and idealistic Hindu and a couple of astute and militant Mahomedans does not carry us very far, for it merely raises another question, as to why the ordinarily patient, law-abiding and peace-loving people of India should have allowed



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

themselves to be exploited by wrong-headed individuals, each of whom had his own particular axe to grind.

In a previous volume entitled 'Indian Unrest, 1919-20' the writer has traced the rise and progress of this unrest during the period under review. It started during the early months of 1919 with a sudden ebullition of feeling which found expression in a series of deplorable excesses committed by Indian mobs in various parts of the country. These were put down by the aid of the military after a number of rioters had been shot in several prominent cities in India. The resentment to which this gave rise was shortlived, but the action of the Punjab officials provoked such unprecedented irritation and bitterness that to it is mainly due the unrest which is hanging like a millstone over this country. With the view of continuing the narrative the writer has been at some pains to ascertain the views of men of all classes and parties. He is constrained to admit that he has found a strange unanimity of opinion in respect to the hostile feeling against Government. It was due to the continued existence of the causes originally responsible for the unrest, with the difference that their influence was stronger and they were more intensely resented two years later than they were at the outset. India was



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

Not exempt from the general unrest produced by the European war, and unfortunately other factors intervened to intensify the feeling of excitement and discontent. The Turkish question remained unsolved, and amongst the ignorant Moslems much capital was made out of it. The Punjab affair still hung fire, and we find Sir Valentine Chirol writing towards the end of last year: 'Unless the Government takes definite steps to assuage the rankling sense of racial humiliation engendered by the Punjab methods of repression.....we shall drift still further into chaos and disaster'. The Reforms were put in operation, but the new scheme was on its trial, and many doubts were entertained as to its capacity to confer responsible Government. No appreciable relief had been afforded to the masses, who were restive because of economic causes, high prices and low wages, and the stagnant condition of the industries. The educated classes continued to entertain the same antagonism towards the English on account of the racial feeling with which these were credited, and ex-Professor Ruchi Ram of Lahore by no means unfairly represented the popular view when he wrote to the *Civil and Military Gazette*:—'I think that first and foremost the average Britisher in India—not excluding ministers of religion—stands for racial pride, racial superiority and racial



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

supremacy. Justice, humanity and other like virtues, which our Government has so often claimed and proclaimed before the whole world as its predominant characteristics, occupy only a backward place in their composition.'

At the beginning of the present year two adverse forces were at work. Non-co-operation, with its programme of seven items, to which celibacy was subsequently added as an eighth, had been sanctioned by the Special Congress which met at Calcutta, and was confirmed three months later by the 1920 Congress held at Nagpur. Persuasion, cajolery and intimidation, of which social boycott was the worst feature, were utilised to secure the general adoption of this drastic remedy for the achievement of the political salvation of the people. On the other hand the constitutional reforms were ripe for being set in motion, and the Duke of Connaught was expected to inaugurate the new Councils, which were intended to change the character of the administration of the country from autocracy to that in which the will of the people was to be allowed a large and gradually increasing share in shaping the future destiny of India. Non-co-operation has run its course unimpeded, and judgment can now be pronounced on its general effect on the people and on the extent to which it has promoted the promised attainment of *Swaraj* by paralysing British rule in India.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

5 SL

India wants *Swaraj*. There is complete unanimity of opinion in respect to it. Mr. Gaudhi and his adherents insist on *Swaraj*. The moderates demand *Swaraj*. The Government affirms with considerable emphasis that it has put us on the way of getting *Swaraj*. Certain Englishmen, official and non-official, say:—'Take *Swaraj* and be d.....d.' What then is the point of disagreement? It is in the process of its attainment, the advanced party favouring revolution, the other evolution. The one seeks the aid of the magician's wand to obtain the heart's desire, the other relies on the stern logic of facts. The ultra-extremists desire immediate *Swaraj*, having fixed the 1st August 1921 as a time limit, and from it the British connection was to be eliminated. The moderates are content to work out their political salvation gradually by giving practical evidence of their capacity for bearing greater responsibilities, and they deprecate the loosening of the tie that binds India to England. Mr. Gandhi utilised non-co-operation to secure *Swaraj*, which was purposely left undefined, as the extremists could not agree as to its significance. Mr. Shankat Ali stated in Madras in 1919 that it aimed at independence, while other leaders declared they had no desire to make a fetish of the British connection. Opinions are divided as to the result. The disciples of the new cult say they



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

6.
have scored a success, because they have aroused in the masses a conviction that they are a down-trodden race, and that the Government is depraved and beyond redemption. But with it they have also inspired in them a spirit of lawlessness, which finds expression in the deplorable excesses that have been committed of which their own countrymen are the victims, and which provoked the taking of repressive action against the offenders. On the other hand, the moderates in their quest after *Swraj* have placed to their credit a volume of work done which speaks for itself. The future historian of India will have no difficulty in deciding which of the two has chosen the better part.

It is impossible to enter into any details of the activities of the non-co-operators. That they were many and varied is obvious, for such was the nature of the propaganda. That a certain amount of liveliness should be displayed was to be expected, but it exceeded all bounds to the discomfort and annoyance of some and to the incalculable harm of others. Non-co-operation has been described as a movement in which nothing that is original is good and nothing that is good is original. For it contained elements of a disruptive nature which completely put in the shade the great and erratic poet, novelist and statesman, who had inspired Mr. Gandhi and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
7

who had reveled in the idea of bringing into existence a republic where every man would live in a state of nature 'as a happy wild beast in the forest.' He lived a simple life, and ate the simplest of food. He denounced marriage except where it was necessary for the continuance of the race. Whether he had received a special indulgence in this respect or it was an ordinary case of a difference between precept and practice he had no less than 13 children to carry his name down to posterity. He hated towns and the competition of capitalists and merchants. Money was an evil, wealth a sin, and education a superfluity, though he took good care to employ English and German governesses to train his offspring. He denounced culture as the enemy of happiness, and as a Nihilist engaged in a war on organised society. He was not so much the enemy of any particular Government as that he wanted no Government.

Fed on such doctrines, and bolstered with a letter of advice from Tolstoi who prescribed a special specific for paralysing Governments, is it a wonder that Mr. Gandhi should evolve a rule of life which was entirely destructive in its nature and had nothing constructive about it? Education which is one of the triumphs of British rule in India was to be rooted out because it develops slave mentality and is more demoralising than



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

elevating. Doctors were to be ostracised because by the practice of European medicine they were deepening our slavery, and hospitals were to be discountenanced because they propagate sin. Lawyers, who, like prostitutes, are fattening on the proceeds of their immoral profession, which plays havoc with the people all round, and who tighten the English grip, should be summarily suppressed. Courts should be shunned, because they make the people unmanly. Modern civilisation with its hundred and one accessories should be eradicated as a fell disease. Railways afford striking evidence that man has gone further away from his Maker, and that they are the distributing agency of the evil one. If it is a debatable matter whether they spread famines it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil. Parliament is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time. It is simply a costly toy of the nation, and if India copies England it is sure to be ruined. And as Government cannot get on unless it carries its Legislature with it, therefore down with the Legislatures, and this can only be achieved by avoiding them as you would an unclean article. The Indian iconoclast would spare nothing and nobody. All were to go into the melting pot. It was these principles to which effect was given in the programme of



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

the non-co-operation propaganda. And the ludicrous part of it is that for setting it in motion the provocation was the alleged high-handed action of the British Government in respect to the Khilafat, which in reality was no grievance at all, and in which Indians as a whole were in no way interested. The Punjab affair and *Swaraj* were subsequent accretions.

The educated classes, who were the first to be exploited, rejected for the most part every item of the programme. Though a fairly large number subscribed generously towards the funds raised to further its expansion, and many more were willing to shout *Gandhi ji ki jai*, and a still larger number gave a nominal assent to it, they as a whole refused to give practical effect to a movement which they realized was teeming with the most dangerous potentialities. The extremist leaders kept away from the Councils, and the more is the pity of it, for some of them would have proved a tower of strength to the popular cause. But they served thereby to demonstrate that the stock of good fish in the sea is unlimited. The Councils, in spite of the presence of the carter and the porter, who were the accredited representatives of the extremists, sent there to excite ridicule and contempt, have succeeded in attracting men, some of them perhaps untried in the political arena, who have, as we shall see,



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

rendered a good account of themselves, and have once for all removed the reproach that the popular assemblies were destined to be instruments for registering the decrees of the bureaucracy. And Mr. Gandhi's heart must have been torn with violent emotions to find two of his prominent followers, as stated by Mr. Jannadas Dwarkadas, soliciting the aid of the members of the Legislative Assembly in connection with matters in which they were personally interested.

No appreciable advance can be noticed in the number of those who surrendered their titles or honorary positions, the relevancy of which for the purpose of paralyzing the Government will continue to be an enigma. Reliable statistics are not available in respect to the number of lawyers who relinquished their practice, but they are so few and far between that no relief has been afforded to an overcrowded bar. Most of those who threw in their lot with the non-co-operators have had to be supported from the Congress and Khilafat funds, from which an inference may be drawn as to their actual status. When the Special Congress met in Calcutta in September 1920, Mr. Moti Lal Nehru was the only legal practitioner of any consequence who had given up his profession, and now even he, though, clad in *Khaddar*, has made a graceful bow to the judges of the Allahabad High Court, as



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

CSL

representing one of the parties in a suit involving half a crore of rupees. This is a tacit admission on his part that the movement for which he sacrificed so much has exhausted itself. And the same may be said as regards Mr. C. R. Dass, who has made still greater sacrifices, being the leader of the Calcutta bar and of the extremist party in Bengal. He made his re-appearance in one of the Behar Courts on behalf of the Dumraon Raj, in a case of enormous value. As a devoted champion of the spinning wheel, he will now be able to spin yarns both in court and at home. Mr. Satyamurti, one of the extremist pillars in Madras, resumed his practice after two years, frankly admitting that was the only alternative left to him to obtain an honourable living, having no desire to live on the charity of others. In sheer desperation Mr. Gandhi's latest advice to lawyers as to giving up practice was that they should draw lots as to who was to take the plunge. Those whose names were drawn should non-co-operate, while the rest should subscribe for the maintenance of the non-co-operators and their families. Needless to say counsel so unpractical elicited no response.

The immature youths of schools and colleges next received the devoted attentions of Mr. Gandhi and his lieutenants. Aligarh, Lahore, Benares and Calcutta were successively exploited,



With some little success to start with, for a fairly large number of boys were victimised. But the bulk of them resumed after a time their seats in their classes, sadder and it is to be hoped wiser than they were when they listened to the voice of the charmer, and treated themselves against the wishes of their parents and teachers to an unauthorised holiday. The national schools and colleges are still in a state of incubation, while the institutions they were intended to replace are pursuing their normal course, bereft here and there of a few students who have been enticed away to take a hand in turning the *charkha*. Finally the net was widened to embrace the ignorant and credulous masses, who have frequently been described by Mr. Gandhi as the hope of the country. He exultingly proclaimed that the agitation engineered by him had with them a considerable measure of success. He certainly inspired them with the spirit of revolt against law, order and established institutions of all kinds, and may derive what satisfaction he can from the serious injury he has inflicted on them. Mr. C. R. Das, with reference to the stampede of the coolies from the Assam tea-gardens strenuously protested against the humanitarian question being raised in connection with the consequences which issued from these unfortunate people taking such a serious step. He actually



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

gloated in their sufferings and of the steamer and railway men who were induced to go on strike at Goalundo as affording proof positive of the strength, dignity and efficacy of Mr. Gandhi's propaganda.

Non-co-operation aimed to bring the Government down on its knees. This it assuredly failed to do, but it achieved certain things outside its programme. It completely demoralised the rank and file of the Indian politicians, and weakened political activity. It brought estrangement into family circles, and was a fruitful cause of social antagonism. It professes to be a patriotic movement, but it is a negative patriotism, born of hatred of the foreigner. It set up an autocrat in the person of Mr. Gandhi, at whose very nod the people professed to tremble, and yet in opposition to his injunctions indulged in a course of conduct which was but the preliminary step to anarchy. It established a tyranny of dogma, which suppressed the faculty of independent judgment and independent action. That the moderates should be held up to derision and contempt is intelligible and that Mr. Lajpat Rai should keep up his reputation for mud-flinging is natural, but we find also that extremist leaders, if they ventured to express any doubts about this movement, were abused and denounced as rebels. By demanding conformity to a certain standard of conduct, and by investing it with the



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

halo of patriotism, it bred hypocrisy and insincerity. Bipin Chandra Pal and Mahomed Ali, each of whom in his own way unfurled the standard of revolt, are but typical of a class of adherents who professed to conform to views which their minds totally rejected. It nurtured a spirit of unity which was artificial, and which had the hatred of another for its basis, taking no common interests into account to bind the Mahomedan to the Hindu. By a needless interference with the masses it set the country ablaze with lawlessness and disorders, accompanied, by violence of a more or less serious nature. To tell the ignorant and simple-minded tenants that, by the laws of nature, the man who cultivates the land is its owner, and that the Zamindar has no right to exact any rent, was a direct incitement to them to commit disturbances of which the Kisan riots of Rae Bareilly and Partabgarh are fair illustrations. To preach to the masses that the Government which rules over them is Satanic, and should be got rid of at all costs, was like throwing a match in a hay stack. The riots at Giridih in Bengal, at Malegaon in the Bombay Presidency and at Aligarh in the United Provinces where murder, incendiarism and looting, accompanied by an organised attack on all those in authority, formed the common ingredients, were but the natural fruits of this new gospel. To teach the boys to discard parental authority and to



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

repudiate school discipline was bound to lead to the breach of Mr. Gandhi's own injunctions to them not to break up meetings or indulge in lawless acts in defiance of constituted authority. Mr. Gandhi set before him a stupendous task, that of producing a political revolution by non-violent methods, ignoring the fact that never before in the annals of the world had such a curious phenomenon been witnessed.

'I know I am charged with claiming divinity' said Mr. Gandhi at the Special Congress in Calcutta, 'and I also know that I do not claim any such thing'. But he admits that he is not so much a politician as a religious man and that his mission has specially in view the spiritual and moral elevation of India. It is by this means he hopes the country will attain political salvation. Has it occurred to him that the propaganda for which he is responsible, so far from achieving the end he has in view, is undermining the moral character of individuals, apart from communities? On a good many boys it has had an unsettling and demoralising effect for it has forced on them the necessity of practically living on their wits. Within the last two years money has been collected for a variety of objects and an army of collectors has been let loose on the country. Temptation has been put in the way of honest persons, while to the dishonest it has been a



CSL

A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

golden opportunity to make hay while the sun shone. Without any regular organisation, and in the absence of any proper check, money has passed into the hands of irresponsible persons, who have forced themselves to the front mainly with the desire to exploit the country for what it is worth so as to bring grist to their own mill. Am I accusing the people of India with being dishonest? They are no more dishonest than the people of England, France, Germany or America. These are civilised countries, and pay the penalty of civilisation by producing more ingenious rogues than countries less civilised. When it was a question of life and death with the nations involved in the European war not one of them can boast that it was free from an organised system of cheating and embezzlement on the part of some of its officials and on the part of people who went about collecting money for alleged philanthropic objects connected with the war. The propaganda that India is blessed with at present offers a large field for malpractices of all sorts and there is nothing to be surprised at in the abuses which form the subject of general complaint. Respectable persons are fighting shy of being members of committees where cash is to be handled or disbursed. All over India there are bickerings and mutual recriminations over money matters. The demoralisation is as complete



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
17

as it can possibly be. Commenting on the exclusion of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar and Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar from the new Provincial Congress Committee, Madras, the *Hindu* writes: 'These two had apparently made themselves obnoxious to the party in power and in possession of the fund by the searching scrutiny which they brought to bear on the accounts of expenditure submitted to the committee at its last meeting.'

The reluctance to wash dirty linen in public is enough to account for the fact that when a discovery is made that money is being misappropriated or frittered away people prefer to keep a silent tongue. It cannot be said that any one community is more dishonest than another. If any thing the Mahomedans have shown a greater regard for probity in that they have not hesitated to expose the abuse of public funds and have even called to account some of the foremost amongst their leaders. It is impossible in view of presenting a faithful record of events to ignore a reference to what has appeared and is appearing in the columns of the Urdu newspapers of Lahore, Amritsar, Calcutta, Budaon, Gorakhpur, Aligarh, Delhi and a number of other places. The questions raised and the allegations made are in several cases most specific. It appears as if Khilafat committees throughout the country are at present losing the confidence of the Muslim



public, at least so far as the administration of funds is concerned. Local newspapers are demanding accounts and charging the committees with extravagance and even worse, the word embezzlement being freely bandied about. In a number of cases no replies have been given to the criticisms in the press and in other cases no satisfactory reply has been vouchsafed. The *Aligarh Gazette* specifically challenges certain leaders to account for the following funds that were entrusted to them:

(1) Mr. Mahomed Ali.

- (1) The Turkish Relief Fund.
- (2) The Cawnpore Mosque Fund.
- (3) The Mirza Ghalib Mausoleum Fund.
- (4) The Balkan Fund.
- (5) The Hamdard Debenture Fund.
- (6) The Turkish Mission Fund.

(2) Mr. Shaukat Ali.

- (1) The Baitulmal Fund.
- (2) The Khuddam-i-Kaaba Fund.

(3) Seth Chotani.

The Military Contracts taken from
the Government.

(4) Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari.

Delhi Martyrs' Memorial Hall Fund.

The *Paisa Akhbar* writes: 'We publish to-day the balance sheet, sent to us by the Majlis-i-Khilafat, Punjab. Possibly this is the first



ever put forth by that body. It is so carefully drawn up that a note at the end points out, that a sum of two annas and $10\frac{1}{2}$ pies has been overdrawn from August 29. We are also told that the total sum received amounted to Rs. 1,05,746 odd ; of this Rs. 50,000 were remitted to Bombay and Rs. 1,000-6-6 spent otherwise. But the chief thing demanded by the public, by way of information, is still not forthcoming ; we wish to know this,—How much has been spent on the salaries and travelling expenses of the Khilafat workers ? Have they been travelling third class like Mr. Gandhi, or first or second class, using motors as well ? How much was spent on the recent propaganda in connection with the recent Municipal elections at Lahore ? We wish to know the things that really matter and not petty details about unimportant matters. Besides all published accounts should be audited by a properly qualified accountant. We consider the present balance sheet as a mere joke against the public.' (Translated.)

The following is a summary of Dr. Kitchlew's audit report of the Amritsar Khilafat Committees accounts :—

(a) The register of members and their subscriptions is quite irregular and incomplete, and was formed nine months after the establishment of the committee.



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

(b) The minute book was written quite haphazardly, and does not contain the signatures either of the secretary or of the chairman.

(c) The accounts register from November 1919 to December 1920 is, as the secretary admits, written in one hand and at one time.

(d) The file of receipts and other papers is quite irregularly arranged.

(e) The income of the All-India Khilafat Conference held on the 31st December 1919 amounts to Rs. 3,055. but no regular accounts have been brought forward.

(f) There are no proper records of the gold and silver ornaments which were donated on the occasion of the public meeting. The statement of the secretary is that a list of these was sent to the press, but no papers have been shown to me and the matter is still open to doubts of embezzlement.

(g) The sum of Rs. 2,305 is shown as having been received from Khilafat workers, but no details are supplied as to what arrangements were made for collection, nor is it shown as to what precautions were taken to ensure that all the sums received were deposited with the Committee.

(h) As regards expenditure, many amounts were not sanctioned by the committee,



and the bills were neither sanctioned before nor after.

(i) Many complaints have been brought to my notice that the money was lavishly spent in entertaining the representatives of the Khilafat committee on their arrival and departure. In my opinion these are quite legitimate and are based on facts. For example, the expenses of Maulana Azad's stay, excluding the motor car and procession charges, are Rs. 200 and Maulana Mahomed Ali's one day's expenditure is Rs. 103, in which are included, Rs. 9-9 expenses of Mahatma Gandhi's stay. As regards travelling allowances, the secretary generally travelled by second class while going to Calcutta and Bombay, and once he travelled by first class from Amritsar to Delhi. It is clear from the bills that he took his food, etc., in travelling from the Khilafat funds although such charges are met by the local organisations.

In conclusion Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew says that the money of the Khilafat Committee was spent quite mercilessly, and the accounts are not at all clear. The accounts are kept in such a way that embezzlements can be suspected. Amritsar is not the only place where the management of the Khilafat funds has been found open to objection. The Gujrat Khilafat Committee have had occasion to find fault with the manner



CSL

A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

in which the funds collected for Khilafat and the Azad High School in the town have been managed, as it is alleged that no accounts have been kept and no receipts granted to the subscribers. At a meeting of the Khilafat Committee of Gujrat held some days ago with the president of the committee, Mr. Muhammad Munmtaz, bar-at-law, in the chair, a resolution was passed to the effect that criminal proceedings should be taken against the person responsible.

Mr. Gandhi is incessantly preaching the doctrine of purity in private life, without which he says it is impossible to attain *Swaraj*. But strange things are happening in the pursuit of his propaganda. Prostitutes are being enlisted as volunteers, and form part of the non-co-operation processions, singing songs and smoking cigarettes. Some of these unfortunates refused to extend their favours to any but non-cooperators. When Mr. C. R. Das went to Jalpaiguri there was a great procession led by public women singing songs. At Goalundo public women volunteers were seen accompanying the other volunteers. A meeting was held at the Theatre Hall at Faridpur where a number of ladies were present. Public women volunteers were present at the meeting and they were seen smoking cigars. Mr. Andrews, who is undoubtedly a very long suffering man, has been obliged



to lift up his voice in protest, and has written with much warmth that, if this is the character the national movement is to take, those who are participating in such immoral acts had better start a separate movement from that of Mr. Gandhi, forgetting that it was with the express consent of the Mahatma that the names of such women were inscribed in the Congress register. And if they are members of the Congress, why should they be deprived of the privileges appertaining thereto? The liquor vendors of Bombay complained to the Mahatma that the pickets that had been set under his orders to prevent people from coming to their shops were not only indulging in violence but were using language that was filthy and indecent. To check one class of immorality with another class is a novel remedy. In the realm of morals, just as much as in that of politics, non-co-operation has had a tendency rather to destroy than to stimulate or build, even making allowance for Mr. Gandhi's efforts to promote temperance, which again are tainted by all the evils attendant on picketting.

That the engines of destruction were unable to achieve the desired end, which was the subversion of the political and social economy of the people, was entirely due to a redeeming feature in Mr. Gandhi's programme, and that was the absence of any thing constructive about it. Had



there been any the least trace of it the people as a whole might have been disposed to give it a trial attracted by the pleasing prospect of putting through a chastening process a Government for which they had no special regard. As it was a good number of emotional persons gave their adhesion to the new cult partly to embarrass the existing rule and partly in their respect and reverence for one whom they had come to look upon as infallible, while those who brought their judgment to bear on this matter found that after the deluge there would be no land left where they could get a foothold. The very nature of the programme proved to be their salvation. Supposing by some divine interposition a peaceful revolution became an accomplished fact—What then? Here it is Mr. Gandhi's helplessness stood out in broad relief. To satisfy the importunities of the people he took refuge in the word *Swaraj*, and was obliged to play on its meaning for all it was worth. At the Congress he gave it the significance of some sort of Parliamentary Government either within or outside the British Empire. And he informed the Parsis he would be content with Dominion Self-Government, with control over the army, law, police, revenue, etc. But to a mixed audience at Santa Cruz he admitted he could not define *Swaraj*. And we shall see further on that he had centred his hopes of *Swaraj* on the universal plying of the *Charkha*.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 25

And later on it was made to depend on the absolute boycott of foreign cloth.

Mr. Gandhi is a truthful man, and though forced by circumstances to be inconsistent he has not deliberately told an untruth. His ideal of *Swaraj* is fully elaborated in his book "Home Rule" It is his Confession of Faith and he has never retracted a word of what he had said there. The dislodgment of British rule in India cannot be followed by any kind of parliamentary government, for he has inveighed against it in the most scathing terms, and has neither withdrawn nor even qualified his views. In his Utopian Government there can be no schools and colleges for he asserts they induce slave-mentality. In response to Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore's protest he reiterates that the present education has unmanned us and rendered us helpless and godless. When heckled by the D. A. V. College students in Lahore as to what provision he had made for them if they left their college, all he could say was that they should cut themselves adrift from their institutions and let the future look after itself. No one can accuse him of any special anxiety to establish national schools and colleges, for if he had any serious designs in this direction a net work of such institutions would have been scattered all over the country. At the last Indian Congress Committee meeting at Bombay



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

a resolution was passed to use all national institutions as far as possible for hand-spinning and hand-weaving. He has said plainly he would like to see all the boys plying the *Charkha*. He is faithful to his creed which is to destroy and not to build. His programme aimed not only to embarrass the Government but to get the country accustomed to a time when there will be no councils, no schools, no courts, no lawyers, no doctors, no Western goods and no machinery. Every man would dwell at peace under his own palm tree. But who would rule? No one, for there would be no army and no weapons, not even a stick. There would be no necessity for a government, for the people would beat peace with each other. If a robber forcibly takes away your goods and you are left alive, ask him politely not to do it again. He will at once prostrate himself before you and give up robbery. But if you are dead you will have lost the opportunity of delivering a homily, and after all a man has to die some time or other. It was evidently a practical joke on the part of Lord Reading to ask a man holding such views to give evidence before the Military Requirements Committee.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal has probably hit upon the truth as regards Mr. Gandhi that when his self-imposed task of destruction is accomplished he would retire and leave it to the people to work



out their own political salvation. He thinks it is neither right nor wise to allow the Mahatma to work in secret and through confidential interviews with the authorities when it comes to the settlement of the great national issue before us, and goes on to say:—‘Here he must be guided and controlled by the open mandate of the whole country. This warning is necessary because judging from his past acts and attitudes one would not be very wrong to presume that if he is left to himself, Mr. Gandhi might be satisfied if the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs are righted, and the Government of India shows signs of repentance. I know it from an unimpeachable source that as late as November last year, Mr. Gandhi told an English friend that he would be satisfied if these wrongs were sought to be repaired. Asked—‘what about *Swaraj*?’ he said that he ‘would leave it to the other leaders to carry on that agitation.’ I had no reason to disbelieve this statement; because it is public property that in September last, during the special session of the Congress in Calcutta, Mr. Gandhi had openly said that he did not set any special value upon *Swaraj*. Any other form of Government, whether indigenous or foreign, that secured justice to the people, would be as good. Even now he puts the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs first and the demand for *Swaraj* next, in all his public announcements. *Swaraj*



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

is, evidently like an appendix to his cause, added on to his programme by his extremist followers, and accepted by him to secure their adherence to it." Considering Mr. Pal was one of the chief amongst these followers, the significance of his statement cannot be minimised. He gave practical evidence of his revolt from Mr. Gandhi's domination by agreeing to give evidence before the Military Requirements Committee, for he took the practical and sensible view that, so far as the aim and intention of Government are concerned, in defending our borders from outside invasion or preserving internal peace in the event of that invasion, there cannot possibly be any real and material difference between them and ourselves.

It is beyond doubt that the campaign on which Mr. Gandhi has embarked is altogether destructive and has nothing constructive to offer. Can it be the bump of destructiveness is specially developed in him? If not, how can we account for his strenuous efforts to dislodge every living institution which ministers to the well-being of society with nothing to substitute in their place. His desire to subvert British rule cannot be put down to an instinctive hatred for it, for, apart from the fact that he is constitutionally unable to hate anything or anybody, his hostility to it is such a recent acquisition and his main reason



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

for it is so flimsy that we shall have to go further for an explanation of his attitude. Mr. Gandhi is a visionary of the extreme type, and he indulged in the fond dream that he would be able to unite the Hindus and the Mahomedans over the Khilafat question. He fell into the hands of the two Moslem brothers, who cherished an inveterate hatred to British rule. Under their influence he embarked on a campaign which could only have been justified if it could have afforded an adequate relief from the existing evils. It failed because there was nothing to commend it on the ground either of expediency or of morality. Granted that there was reason to complain of the conduct of the present rulers of India, that little heed was being paid by them to our legitimate demands, that there had been a most reprehensible exhibition of racial feeling and that our case had become desperate, the question still remains whether a remedy can be justified which was worse than the disease. To let loose the forces of destruction in the name of patriotism is the work not of a practical statesman but of a wild visionary. While preaching Peace, Love, Unity, to inaugurate a cult which gave free scope for intolerance, irreverence and violence to run riot, and which employed calumny and misrepresentation as the weapons to serve the purposes of disruption is an achievement



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

which can only give satisfaction to a man whose idealism is of a transcendental nature. To eradicate race hatred by instigating and fostering a similar feeling, but more pronounced in its virulence, is incapable of defence under the ordinary canons of morality. To overthrow despotism by setting up an autocracy which expected obedience to mandates, never mind how illogical and preposterous they were, only proves what was well said by Mr. Vijayaraghava Achariar that Mr. Gandhi was trading on his past reputation. To be unable to command obedience to the mandate which formed the basis of the new propaganda, prohibiting the indulgence in violence, demonstrates what in fact needed no demonstration that the dictatorship of an individual is bound in the long run to lead to chaos and anarchy.

We are fortunately living at a time when the effects of anarchy in a distant land have aroused the apprehensions of all thinking men as to what may be expected by letting loose the forces of disruption. And it is refreshing to find even extremist organs alarmed at the prospect of the country being plunged into disasters, of which pillage and bloodshed are by no means the worst, as the result of the destructive propaganda which is now in progress. The necessity of a constructive programme to replace the old order of things



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

is a doctrine which is receiving fresh converts. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* writes:- 'The non-co-operator cannot rest by simply paralysing the present administration. If he is not out for a revolution which can never be non-violent, he must build as he pulls down, construct as he destroys, organise inch by inch and part by part the organs and instruments of the physical, the economic, the educational and the judicial administration of his society, that must replace the existing instruments of the government in the country. The work is far more serious and complex than we are apt to think. It is not a work that can be undertaken by, or entrusted to, mere amateurs or enthusiasts. It requires a thorough knowledge of existing conditions of the country, upon which our programme of reconstruction must be based.' It is a healthy sign that people are beginning to realise that evolution and not revolution will ultimately secure their political salvation.

It is Mr. Gandhi's great ambition to be acclaimed as the apostle of soul force, but he is more likely to be known to posterity as the hero of destruction. Finding that his first programme which was to unsettle and pull down every living institution, including the Government, was producing no tangible results, and his best friends were appealing for some constructive



A CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION.

CSL

work he evolved another on the 1st April at Bezwada in which the destructive features were eliminated. It called on the people to concentrate their energies on the plying of the spinning wheel which would in due course secure the blessing of *Swaraj*. Even the moderates heaved a sigh of satisfaction, for leaving aside the question as to how far the new scheme was practical, at any rate it aimed at improving the economic condition of the country. But evidently the imp of destruction keeps dodging Mr. Gandhi's foot-steps, for the cult of the *char-ka* developed just three months later into huge bonfires of foreign clothing, with the Mahatma officiating at what was supposed to be a solemn function, but which excited the ridicule of his opponents. Outbursts of indignation, mock or real, sentiment bordering on bathos and sensationalism of an extreme type were utilised to strike the imagination of the masses. And the greater the shock inflicted on sober-minded people, the more did it gratify the extremists. Non-co-operation was somehow to be kept alive and the huge conflagration was better calculated to secure this end than silent and unostentatious work done for the benefit of the country. Destruction is the chief article of faith of the revolutionary, and the non-co-operators are faithful to their creed.





CHAPTER II.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

British rule in India, according to the dictum of Mr. Gandhi, is unjust, immoral, debasing and satanic. Not being an apologist of Government, which is fully able to look after itself, I shall let it stand. I shall go further and state that so far back as May, 1919, I made the discovery and put on record the fact that it was by no means angelic, which I have not retracted and have no intention of doing. It was somewhat late in the day, in August 1920, Mr. Gandhi came out with his choice expletives, so that not only had I the start over him but I may rightly claim to have further scored in that the Government has made amends in respect to the matter to which my criticism was directed and is imploring the people to forgive and to forget. But his main grievance is neither admitted nor has it any interest for the people of India, except it be a few Pan-Islamic enthusiasts. But let it pass. We will assume that the Mahatma had a sudden inspiration in respect to the moral turpitude of Government for reasons known and unknown. The question we have to consider now is what can be done with such a Government. We must either mend it or end it, a task which Mr. Gandhi says that he has undertaken, and as regards these alternatives the further question arises how this is to be



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

done. Is it to be by a revolution, the operations of which are as striking as they are swift, or by a process of evolution by which India will gradually attain the same end but in a longer period of time ?

The Government also has a similar problem to solve. It verily believes, and indeed deplors the fact, that it has a perverse people to deal with, who are not amenable to reason and, while they are entirely destitute of the feelings of gratitude for favours received by them, they lack a perception of what is good for them. At times they display a liveliness that is far from being agreeable and is occasionally most embarrassing. What is to be done with them? Lord Chelmsford took a London audience into his confidence and said he had just escaped from a position where he was placed between two fires. The Indian extremists levelled their artillery of criticism at him, imputing to him all sorts of crimes and misdemeanors. The English extremists were constantly urging on him, 'Why not use force'? It was because he had burnt his fingers in India that now in the solitude of his English home, free from official cares and bureaucratic influence he is able to recall the wisdom of the words uttered by Edmund Burke, who wrote:- 'Those who wield the thunder of the state may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms, but I



confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favour of prudent management than force, considering force not as an odious but a peaceable instrument. Terror is not always the effect of force, and an armament is not victory. If you do not succeed you are without resources. for conciliation failing you, force remains, but force failing, no further hope but conciliation is left'. But Burke had said something more besides that. 'I am not one of those', he said, 'who think that the people are never wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and this. But I do say that in all disputes between them and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people.' In quoting this dictum Lord Morley, who as Secretary of State for India had been intimately in touch with that country, adds:- 'Nay experience perhaps justifies him in going further. When popular discontents are prevalent, something has generally been found amiss in the constitution or the administration'. On the same lines we find Sully writing:- 'The revolutions that come to pass in great states are not the result of chance, nor of popular caprice...As for the populace it is never from a passion that it rebels but from impatience of suffering'. To a large extent the secret of the present unrest is here disclosed.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

India is going through a peculiar crisis. The people have lost confidence in their rulers who in spite of the fact that they are now ready to give with an unstinted hand are unable to conciliate a certain section of the extremists or to appease their outraged feelings, which there is reason to believe are at least partly assumed. What is the remedy? Force, cries a certain class of bureaucratic administrators. But happily there are Englishmen who raise their voice in remonstrance and warning, as has been done by the Bishop of Calcutta in an article contributed to the Calcutta Diocesan Record. 'There are two Christian principles', says the Bishop, 'which I desire to emphasise. Under existing conditions a Government charged to maintain law and order may be compelled to employ force...I gravely doubt from the evidence which has been furnished whether such a necessity existed at Chandpur—but do we, as Christians, realise that the employment of force is a confession of moral and spiritual impotence? It is not the employment of force in real emergencies which I regard as un-Christian, but the attitude of mind which believes in force as an essential and efficient instrument for the accomplishment of the higher purposes of Government. It may on occasions be a deplorable necessity, but it must always denote the failure of those powers of persuasion and conciliation which are the really effective means of good government.'



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
57

While these lines are being written Mr. De Valera, the so-called President of the Irish Republic, is sitting in conclave with the Prime Minister and his colleagues to settle the fate of Ireland. Force, sufficient in all conscience, has been used to bring the Irish Nationalists to reason, and has it succeeded? History will give the reply by furnishing a full catalogue of the foul outrages committed on both sides, though undoubtedly on the part of the English under great provocation, and of the series of brutal murders of innocent persons, of deeds of incendi-arism and other crimes of the darkest hue for which the Sinn Feiners are responsible. The question as to who is right is quite apart, but force as a remedy has failed. In India outbreaks of violence have been followed by repression, and sometimes it is repression which has led to deeds of violence being committed, for when it is unwisely enforced and against the sober sense and judgment of the community it aggravates the situation and strengthens those forces of discontent which are the breeding ground of a revolutionary propaganda. The experiment of utilising force as a remedy has been no more successful in India than it has been in Ireland.

It is gradually dawning on the minds of the English nation that the present unrest is largely the effect of the attempt made to utilize force to produce a moral effect. The principle involved



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

therein has been repudiated and honestly repudiated, but at the time, it had in India its supporters, and in influential quarters too. These were obsessed with traditions which were a legacy left them from days when British rule in India was a benevolent despotism, and the atmosphere they breathed was responsible for their peculiar mentality. But that atmosphere has cleared, and now a desire is being expressed for reconciliation and for the past being wiped out. Greater harm was however done by the attitude adopted by a certain section of the English nation. Be it said to its credit as a whole that it discountenanced the exploits which have earned for the Punjab an unenviable notoriety as also the principle of the application of force to produce a moraleffect. Mr. Montagu passionately denounced General Dyer's savagery as inconsistent with the principles of the British Government and indeed of all civilised Governments, and was supported by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill, but there were others who took part in the debate in the House of Commons who displayed a mentality on which subsequent events in India have had a sobering effect. Prejudice and ignorance ran riot in the House of Lords, and the doctrine of force received as warm an approval as was extended to its exponents in India. And now? Disillusion has come with somewhat startling suddenness, and there is not



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

an individual in Parliament but joins in the cry of forgive and forget. The English nation was weighed and found wanting, and to the extremist cry 'out with such a rule', the more sober-minded people could only put forward the sorry plea, 'we cannot do without it'. To such straits has British rule in India been reduced as a result of making a fetish of physical force. Its glorious achievements, for it cannot be said England has done nothing for the good of India, have all been forgotten, and the country is convulsed with unrest. Unscrupulous agitators are no doubt at work, but the field had been prepared for them, from which they hope to reap an abundant harvest.

But it is not only amongst a certain class of Englishmen that physical force has secured its devotees. Some there are amongst the people of India who dream of a freedom from alien rule by measuring swords with those who are keeping them under subjection. As to these militant Indian extremists, the number of whom is happily limited, they ignore the past history of this unfortunate country and its present state of absolute helplessness, brought about mainly by the disintegrating influences that have been at work for centuries past. It is a curious feature that almost exclusively such men are to be found amongst Pan-Islamic enthusiasts who long for a Moslem domination over Asia and Africa,



CSL

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

oblivious of the fact that, come what may, the rest of the Indian population will never again tolerate a Mussulman rule. They have but recently come into evidence, taking advantage of the unrest, which is now brooding over the land, but though small in number, they have, as we shall see, laid a vast amount of mischief to their credit. How they came into existence will furnish an interesting topic for study.

For over thirty years an agitation had been in progress for the redress of certain grievances and the acquirement of such rights and privileges as would secure a share in the administration of the country. Up till two years ago it was engineered on constitutional lines, which were entirely peaceful. Mrs. Besant was the first to take active steps to place the agitation for self-Government on a stable footing by organising the Home Rule League, and had to pay the penalty of being interned for a time, though she never for a moment advocated a breach in the British connection. Tilak has been credited with being the most uncompromising critic of English rule in India, and his demands always approached the utmost limits of extremism, which he expiated by a term of imprisonment and another term of transportation. In 1914, on his return to India from the six years transportation, which was spent in a Burmese prison, he



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

published what he called a declaration of faith, wherein he stated :—‘I may say once for all that we are trying in India, as the Home Rulers have been doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government, I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which have been committed in the different parts of India are not only repugnant to me, but have, in my opinion, only unfortunately retarded, to a great extent, the pace of our political progress. Whether looked at from an individual or from a public point of view they deserve, as I have said before, on several occasions, to be openly condemned.’ Tilak stigmatised the Montagu Reform Act as inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing, and therefore, three months before his death, in July 1920, he organised what he called the Congress Democratic Party for the purpose of agitating for another Reform Bill so as to acquire full responsible Government. To achieve this end it was proposed to carry on a resolute and energetic campaign in India and in the countries represented on the Leagues of Nations. The watch-words of this party, were to be, ‘Educate, Agitate, Organise,’ and the Reform Act was to be worked on the lines of ‘Co-operation or resort to constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will’. No trace is here to be found of any idea



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

separation from England, and much less of the use of force for this purpose. Its chief exponents as we shall see were the Ali brothers.

Writing in *Young India* on the efficacy of non-co-operation as an agent for securing our ends Mr. Gandhi says: 'My faith, however, in the British nation is such that when we have shown sufficient strength of purpose and undergone enough measure of self-sacrifice the British people will respond fully. My reading of history is that they do not yield to justice pure and simple. It is too abstract for their common sense. But they are far-seeing enough to respond to justice when it is allied with force. Whether it is brute-force or soul-force, they do not mind.' And non-violent non-co-operation, he asserts, is but the application of the soul-force. The weak point about it is that the activities connected with the propaganda are such as to lead inevitably to violence. This is a lesson Mr. Gandhi is learning slowly but surely. A rival theory has been propounded by Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, who believes that anything can be extorted from the British Government, under the influence of fear, which includes moral pressure of such a nature that the Government finds it irresistible, and surrenders to the popular demand. But this moral pressure he considers, 'is a mere euphemism for fear of mortal physical consequences. The



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

moment the British power in India realises that it will be in its own interest to remove the present subjection from us, and that unless this is done without delay it may be impossible to keep up India's connection with the Empire, this power, however apparently impervious to the call of what Mr. Gandhi calls 'justice' it may be now, will hasten to make up the present quarrel with us.' Of course there is the third theory of physical force, enunciated and quietly practised by the Ali brothers.

Both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal contend that a mere sense of justice will not in all instances induce a dominant power to do that which is ethically right. That they are correct is illustrated by the Punjab affair. A wrong had been committed, and by every canon of justice and morality some amends should have been made, instead of which there was a denial of wrong doing. But, as stated by Sir Valentine Chirol, 'the shadow of Amritsar lengthened through the whole of India, and weighed heavily on the most moderate and loyal Indians, Hindus and Mohammadans, Christians and Parsees, arousing a bitterness which it is difficult to realise unless one actually comes to the Punjab.' It was when this bitterness had developed into active hostility that amends that were tardy and half-hearted began to be made. The *Times* correspondent



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

rightly remarked that 'it was this that largely robbed apologies for the past and assurances for the future of value which most Indians would have willingly attached to them had the official repudiation of errors been immediate and spontaneous, and endorsed in the same spirit by British public opinion both here and at home.'

Of these three theories that of physical force, pure and simple, needs to be carefully considered. It was by a combination of peculiar circumstances that India fell under British rule, which with all its faults, has in a large measure justified itself inasmuch as it has inspired a feeling of nationality, which there was no possibility of realising under the previous rule. And India cannot be regained by the people by the use of sword and pistol, which as a matter of fact they do not possess. And even if they did, any attempt to utilise them would end in political suicide. The Ali brothers found that a certain section of the Irish had declared a republic and were defending the position taken up by a show of force. Assuming that a certain amount of success did attend their efforts, does that afford any encouragement to India to follow in their steps? In South Ireland there is more or less a complete unanimity of political views. Can the same be said of India? What is the number of those who really desire to break with the present Government? Besides the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

Ali brothers and a few professional agitators, who are now making a living out of agitation, there may be found a stray individual here and there who advocates the adoption of so extreme a step, the fruition of which would land the country into anarchy pure and simple, and produce all the horrors connected with it. But before this comes to pass there is another factor to be taken into account. Whether this rule is good or bad and whither it is tending will be discussed elsewhere, but assuming that it is bad does any sane person really believe that it can be got rid of by the exercise of physical force, with all the resources Englishmen have at their command? It is useless enlarging on a subject in respect to which there is no difference of opinion. If it is desired to harass or embarrass the Government the only method that has a ghost of a chance of success is that evolved by Mr. Gandhi, if it can be carried out on the lines of non-violence, proposed by him. But his scheme is bound to be a gigantic failure because violence cannot be eliminated from it and because the bulk of the people have no taste for revolutions peaceful or forcible, while they feel convinced that the same end can be attained and is being attained by a process of evolution in which the country is gradually acquiring what the people desire to possess. They find there



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

is a decided change in English mentality and they build their hopes for the future on it.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal assumed a little too much when he attributed to fear of mortal physical consequences a surrender on the part of the English. To utilise again the illustration of the Punjab affair it may be that an apprehension of this nature led to a change of attitude on the part of certain Englishmen who were at the outset and still are warm advocates of the doctrine of force in that Province, but find it inexpedient now to give expression to their views. Sudden conversions are always suspicious and especially if they are wholesale conversions. But at the same time it would be unfair to attribute the surrender that has taken place as emanating entirely from fear. It is more than probable that with the bulk of Englishmen it was preceded by the conviction that a wrong had been done. Moral pressure, or it may be the apprehension of a resort to physical force of some kind, necessitated a review of the position, which led to the recognition of the existence of a lapse, and this stimulated the inborn British sense of justice. Then followed the amends. But supposing there had been no adequate grounds for exciting this sense of justice, would the English have yielded? Recent events in Ireland give the answer to this. The Sinn Feiners had immense



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
47

faith in the potentialities of brute force, which they were utilising in its most forbidding aspects, but England was obdurate, and refused the demand of the majority as being unfair to the minority. So that pressure, moral or physical, must be accompanied by the justice of the cause, which must indeed be antecedent to it. This brings us nearer to the theory of Mr. Gandhi, but raises the question why success did not attend his efforts, so that he is engaged in carrying on the agitation as strenuously as before. The failure was due to the fact that the cause for which non-co-operation was started, *viz.*, the Khilafat, was weak, and therefore not susceptible of any satisfactory solution. And curiously enough the other two matters, the Punjab and *Swaraj*, which were subsequent accretions, have been attended with a varying amount of success, for the reason that the cause was good. At the same time we should avoid the danger of being led astray by any indications of yielding on the part of Englishmen, which is not necessarily a sign of weakness. Up to a certain point they go on yielding, considering it the lesser of two evils, but if they find that their attempts to conciliate the people are futile and that if they yielded further, injustice may triumph, they will fight with all the energy they possess and without hesitation employ the unlimited resources at their command.



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

And this is precisely what happened in the closing days of the year 1921. For nearly two years the Government had met with marvellous composure the aggressions of the no-co-operators. Their patience and forbearance was most commendable. Their official acts were on the whole characterised with a genuine desire to conciliate the people, who not only failed to appreciate a policy of leniency, but a good many construed it as a sign of weakness on the part of the rulers. The time of reckoning came when a most unjustifiable affront offered to the Prince of Wales on the day he landed in India, accompanied as it was by coercion, intimidation and violence in various parts of the country, suddenly precipitated a departure. The Seditious Meetings Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were put in motion. Arrests and prosecutions of the rank and file of non-co-operators followed in rapid succession and repression pure and simple became the order of the day. It is impossible to controvert the Viceroy's plea that the change of policy had for its object the giving protection to law-abiding citizens and that it is a policy which lies at the root of all civilised governments, *i. e.*, the maintenance of law and the preservation of order. But does it stand justified by the result? It rather supports the line of thought embodied in this chapter that in the long run force or



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

49
SL

repression does not pay. Except by officials it has been generally condemned.

To start with, Mr. Gandhi and his followers, are accusing the Government of India and the Local Governments with the desire to precipitate a conflict with the people. If this opinion is honestly held it only indicates how far the English rulers have forfeited the confidence of at least a certain class of persons, which is rapidly increasing as the Mahatma has somehow obtained the ear of the people. Clad in a loin cloth and sitting on a table he expresses opinions and pronounces verdicts which are accepted as the gospel truth by a large number of thinking and unthinking persons. Has repression broken the power of the non-co-operators? On the contrary it has stiffened their backs and has contributed a large accession to their ranks. It has inspired them with the zeal of martyrs. So far Mr. Gandhi had consistently opposed violence, but at the last sessions of the Congress in Ahmedabad he was found uttering the threat that if he failed in the campaign he was carrying on he would dissolve the compact of non-violence, and his hesitation to take this step was, he said, due to his conviction that at the present moment violence had no chance of success. He had almost single-handed fought the battle against the inauguration of civil disobedience.



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

He consented to its immediate promulgation by the Congress as the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion. At the Khilafat Conference Moulvi Hasrat Mohani boldly advocated the declaration of independence to be achieved by means both non-violent and violent. It was Mr. Gandhi's influence that brought about his defeat. Did repression succeed in breaking the spirit of the 'volunteers'? They were sent to jail by the hundred and went rejoicing to meet their fate. Thousands were ready to replace them. Have the meetings that were proscribed been suppressed? Many were being convened openly in defiance of the law and many more were being held in secret, feeding the resentment of the people and spreading disaffection in their minds. So far from putting down unrest and sedition repression had undoubtedly a stimulating effect.

The Government rightly looks upon and appeals to the moderates to rally to its help. These so far as their professions go are ready to stand by the side of law and order. But they are rigidly averse to the exercise of force. The National Liberal Federation which met during Christmas week at Allahabad while fully realising the difficulties of Government and the necessity for the protection of peaceful and law-abiding citizens against any interference with their liberties went on to state in the resolution relating



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

to the new departure that 'it views with great concern the inauguration of a policy of indiscriminate arrests and extensive application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and is strongly of opinion that such a policy defeats its own object by alienating popular sympathy and aggravating general unrest...The Federation therefore strongly urges on the Government an immediate reconsideration of its policy in order to ease the present situation.' Other Associations and groups of individuals expressed more or less similar views, and even the All-India Indian Christian Conference passed a resolution which was moved by the writer :—'That in order to restore peace and harmony in the country it is necessary for Government to adopt a policy of conciliation by ceasing to put into force the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908 and the prevention of Seditious Meetings Act of 1911 and such other measures as have a repressive effect and by releasing those arrested and imprisoned under these Acts, while on the other hand, the campaign of non-co-operation should forthwith be suspended by the leaders of non-co-operation so as to facilitate a sane settlement under conditions essential for mutual understanding.' Even Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was most active in the role of peacemaker by bringing about a round table conference, if he has been correctly reported by



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

The Associated Press, justified civil disobedience in so far as the notification disbanding and proclaiming the Congress and Khilafat volunteers was concerned.

Perhaps the most notable contribution in this respect was made by the Conference which met at Bombay to devise a scheme whereby a Round Table Conference could be held with the Government. It was composed entirely of the moderates, to which the writer was invited but was unable to attend. The extremists kept out entirely, Mr. Gandhi putting in an appearance as he said unofficially and as an adviser. But in reality it was in the capacity of a dictator. The following is an extract from the resolutions that were passed :—

1. This Conference is strongly of opinion that the policy adopted by Government within the last few weeks of extending and applying the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Seditious Meetings Act to various parts of the country and of misusing the ordinary law in connection with political offences leading to wholesale arrests and imprisonments, including those of some of the most respected leaders and citizens, constitutes an unwarranted encroachment upon the elementary rights of citizenship, of freedom of press and liberty of speech and association has defeated its own object by alienating popular sympathy



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

and aggravating general discontent and ought to be reversed without delay.

2. This Conference is further of opinion that until it is clear beyond any doubt that no other means will secure a redress of the country's grievances and the status of full responsible government civil disobedience contemplated by the Ahmedabad Congress ought not to be resorted to.

3. This Conference supports the proposal for a round table conference between the Government and popular representatives and is of opinion that in order to provide a favourable atmosphere for the dispassionate consideration of the point in controversy all the notifications issued and orders passed by Government under Act XIV of 1908, part 2, and the Seditious Meetings Act should be withdrawn and all prisoners convicted or under arrest or prosecution under the aforesaid notifications or orders should be released as also the *Fatwa* prisoners.

We see here in full force the extent to which Mr. Gandhi manipulated the Conference and indeed dominated over it, for the clause relating to the release of the *Fatwa* prisoners, which meant the Ali brothers and their comrades, was put in at his instance. This was considered by Sir Sankaran Nair such an unreasonable and



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

impudent demand that he retired from the position of President of the Conference. It is also significant that in the resolutions the repressive policy of Government is expressly and strongly condemned whereas only a mild disapproval is expressed of the action of Mr. Gandhi in promulgating civil disobedience. It bodes ill for India if level-headed and patriotic persons lack the courage of their convictions, to which they failed to give expression at a critical period in the history of the country. We shall see as we go further on that there were no adequate grounds for proclaiming civil disobedience and that the Government had by the force of circumstances embarked on a policy which, though unwise on the ground that it was ill calculated to achieve the end in view, was none the less honestly believed to be the only alternative left to it. This was, however, controverted by the Indian press without a dissentient voice. The extremist organs started a fierce campaign against Government, and some were muzzled by heavy securities being taken from them, while others were suppressed. Editors and managers were prosecuted and sent to jail without any good result being achieved. The moderate press also deprecated the repressive policy in no uncertain terms, and prayed for its immediate withdrawal. The *Leader* while



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 55

advocating the rights of the people has been a consistent supporter of Government in its efforts to preserve law and order. But we find it stating that there can be no doubt that the present policy of indiscriminate arrests has weakened the moral position of Government by further alienating popular sympathy and aggravating general discontent, and has *parri passu* strengthened the position of Mr. Gandhi. The *Indian Social Reformer* emphasized the fact that the question is not so much as to whether the policy is just but rather whether in its own interests it is the right policy for Government to pursue.

It is, therefore, clear that there is a consensus of opinion against the adoption of a policy in which force constitutes a predominant factor. And support is lent to this view by the fact that only a few months before Sir William Vincent had stated in the Legislative Assembly that a policy of repression would lead nowhere, that it would strengthen the hands of the non-co-operators, whom the Government sought to weaken and that it would precipitate disaster. And it is a significant fact that the Bombay Government in spite of violence and bloodshed kept its head cool and abstained from a resort to repressive measures while the Behar Government had given up a similar policy on the advice



PSYCHOLOGY OF FORCE.

CSL

of the Legislature. What then should the Government have done in the emergency that had arisen. It would have been a notable act of wise statesmanship to have averted this emergency, and this would most probably have been achieved by the Government giving an impetus to the evolution of self-government. It is here that an effective remedy can be found, for we shall see further on a good deal has been done in respect to the other two grievances, the Punjab and the Khilafat, though Mr. Gandhiⁱ continues to harp on these two topics and is making demands in respect to them which are calculated and intended to humiliate Government. The call to the Government to repent in sack-cloth and ashes for its misdeeds can have no other meaning. But the evolution of the self-governing principle must proceed apace. Some advance no doubt has been made and indeed the extent of progress is hardly realised by the people. For instance the year 1921 has evolved a class of persons who are destined to play an important part in the political affairs of the country when they begin to grasp the potentialities in store for them. On the one hand is a Government that was autocratic but is now gradually and may be unwillingly bending to the will of the people. On the other hand is a corporation equally autocratic and oft times



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

most unreasonable in its demands and unscrupulous in the method of enforcing them. The moderates, if only they could realise it, hold the balance of power in their hands. Though comparatively weak they can nevertheless turn the scale whichever side they join. And if only they are actuated by pure and unselfish motives and have the courage to assert themselves they may achieve much for the good of the country. But it is this last characteristic in which they are found wanting. It would be an insult to their intelligence to suppose that they do not realise the true significance of the activities of the non-co-operators who are slowly but surely advancing towards revolution or anarchy. It would be a travesty of the truth to say that they have asserted themselves adequately to condemn these acts. Oft times though entirely out of sympathy with certain operations of the extremists they have not even taken the trouble to dissociate themselves from what they found objectionable and thus have been tacit supporters of wrong doing. Every allowance should be made for the dread of obloquy and odium, but on the other hand the interests that are at stake are entitled to some consideration and the time has surely arrived for the moderates to declare with no uncertain voice that they stand for law and order and that civil disobedience is but a stepping stone to chaos and anarchy which are abhorrent to them.



CSL

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

Mr. Gandhi says he is a man of peace. The propaganda he has initiated is styled non-violent. But it has not been non-violent, and as a matter of fact cannot be non-violent. And it is a curious fact that though the leader of the movement is incessantly impressing on his followers the imperative necessity of abstaining from the exercise of force, when he finds this has been put into practise he has either winked at it or tried to minimise it or has found an excuse for it in the alleged provocation given by Government officials whether European or Indian, or has attributed it to some unknown person, unconnected with non-co-operation, as in the case of the attack on Mr. Baker of Hardoi. He certainly imposed on himself the penalty of fasting in connection with the Satyagraha episode of 1919 and to another spell of fasting after the Bombay riots on the day the Prince of Wales landed in India, and on both occasions he animadverted strongly on the conduct of his followers, but as a general rule he has tried to ignore acts of violence as a passing phase of the human mind which it is impossible to control. 'It was possible,' he said, 'to isolate Malabar. It was possible to disregard Malegaon, but it was not possible to ignore



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

Bombay'. It was because he was an eye-witness to the excesses committed by the mob. But what about the nameless atrocities for which the Moplahs were responsible? Oh! that was only 'a passing fit of madness'. Did he issue a manifesto condemning the excesses of the mob at Aligarh which directed its fury against Government officials and Government buildings and indulged in indiscriminate looting and incendiarism. During one of his moods of repentance he admitted that coercion and intimidation were being practised by the Congress and Khilafat 'volunteers'. Did he beyond uttering a few platitudes adopt any serious measures to check their lawless and violent conduct? A man calling himself Swami Krishnanand was convicted in Karachi for assault, while indulging in language so grossly indecent as to be unfit for publication. Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: 'The Swami is undoubtedly a popular and fearless worker. He had produced by organised picketing a marked impress on the receipts of the liquor dealers'.

Is Mr. Gandhi then dishonest or a hypocrite? Not necessarily so. He is a man who believes he is entrusted with a special mission to achieve the political emancipation of India and to regulate and promote the moral and economical welfare of the people. Non-violence is essential to the success



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

of this propaganda, but he has a thorough insight in the operations of human nature and clearly recognises the limitations to which mankind in general are subject. He knows that in spite of his admonitions and injunctions there will be ebullitions of violence and he accepts them in as philosophic a mood as possible. If his emotions are aroused as they were in Bombay he gives vent to his feelings, in language which though extravagant is nevertheless honest. But he soon lapses into his mood of comparative indifference to the methods by which the propaganda is being carried on, or at any rate to a placid toleration of the eccentricities and excesses which are inevitable and sometimes are useful for furthering the end in view. This explains how a man, who was honestly opposed to violence of any kind and who took a pride in being considered a man of peace not only encouraged but was himself prepared to exercise force in respect to certain matters.

The propaganda inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi had laid itself open in its earlier stages to the charge of being destructive in its nature. Beyond a few enthusiasts it failed to receive general acceptance at the hands of the people. To prevent a collapse it was therefore considered necessary to evolve a constructive programme, which gradually developed



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

into the enforcing of total abstinence and the boycott of foreign cloth. In respect to both these he advocated an organised system of picketing which has led and is likely to lead to violence. Even if the result be 'rivers of blood,' he was determined to give effect to his views and to force people to become temperate and to use swadeshi cloth. Mr. Gandhi is indebted for the original programme of non-co-operation to Tolstoi, whose sage advice he had evidently forgotten that 'men do far more harm and inflict far more injury on one another by attempting to prevent evil by violence, than if they endured evil patiently. He borrowed the idea of picketing from America. He had posted himself with the literature on this subject and had found that in America going dry picketing played an important part. But Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson, who visited India, in course of an interview with Reuter's representative incidentally mentioned that American experience showed that methods of violence did not advance but retarded reform and that it was his intention not to intervene in current Indian political and religious questions. So Mr. Gandhi in his inability to conform to these views was forced to do without the co-operation of the great temperance reformer and thus practically defeated the cause he had at heart.



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

The Bombay riots were the direct outcome of the *hartal* ordered by Mr. Gandhi. His heart was torn with anguish by reason of the excesses committed by the mob." He confessed his inability to control the masses. He had no guarantee that similar excesses would not be committed in the future, and as a matter of fact they were committed in Calcutta, Madras and elsewhere, but did he call off *hartal*? Did he forbid picketing by "volunteers" of cloth shops and liquor shops, for he was aware of the intensive campaign that was in progress in this respect? In fact he encouraged them to redouble their efforts in furthering the good cause they were engaged in. He, no doubt, enjoined them to refrain from violence, but he knew perfectly well that this was advise that was thrown away. After the repressive measures had been launched the Viceroy was approached by the moderates to agree to a round table conference. The Government was agreeable, provided in the *interim* there was a cessation of the illegal activities of the "volunteers" and the *hartal* was called off. Mr. Gandhi declined to assent to a proposition, the reasonableness of which was obvious. It would seem as if violence is the trump card Mr. Gandhi holds in his hands. On the one hand the people are terrorised into carrying out his behests and on the other hand the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

Government is either paralyzed, and forced to rest on its oars or it is goaded into taking action, which serves his purpose just as well, for it accentuates disaffection and sedition. He has warned his followers that they will be shot at and that they must quietly submit, for thus will they have paved the way for *swaraj*. Mr. Gandhi has to thank himself for a verdict being pronounced, that in reality he is an apostle of force and not of peace. As a matter of fact in certain matters he is an advocate of non-violence, and in respect to others he tolerates it.

But he is bound to be disillusionised if he continues the agitation on the present lines. Up to a certain point people will follow him, but excessive pressure exercised against their will, may cause them to revolt. He has begun to realise that no Government worthy of this name will put up with violence and what is more to the point it would in the long run have the support of the entire nation, except of a few crack-brained enthusiasts. Mr. Gandhi will then learn the lesson to be more consistent in the future and not to be so ready to give force and violence any significance it pleases him. The Madras Government was the first to notify to merchants and importers of foreign cloth that they may rely on official support in opposing all unlawful attempts to force them in this matter. The other



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

Governments followed, till, as we have seen in the previous chapter, repression in a good part of India has become a settled fact. In reply to the address of the Bengal Mahajan Sabha the Viceroy stated : 'The policy of Government of preventing intimidation and unlawful oppression and of enforcing due regard for law is one in which Government must persist'.

If a man is to be judged by his associates it is much to be feared Mr. Gandhi's reputation for honesty will not stand very high. He formed an offensive and defensive alliance with the Ali brothers, whose fortunes he followed through prosperity and adversity and whom he befriended in every possible way. And yet they stand out in broad relief as the apostles of force, of which they were the chief exponents, it being a necessary corollary to their peculiar attitude towards British rule. They were not merely critics of this rule, but they entertained such a deep hatred for it that they wished India to be rid of it. They were interned and refused to obtain a release by modifying their sentiments. Being unconditionally released during the amnesty, they took up the Khilafat question, and worked it for all it was worth, and more besides, with the same end in view, that of subverting this rule and substituting some sort of *swadeshi* rule. In August 1920, Mr. Shaukat Ali threw off his



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

allegiance to the British Government, and declared that the *swaraj* which was the goal of their agitation aimed at India's independence. At the Nagpore Congress, in December, Mr. Mohamed Ali stated British rule was dead and buried, and he hoped before long to see another rule spring up from its ashes. They have neither withdrawn nor qualified these statements and have entertained no illusions as to the part force was to play towards the attainment of the end in view. Speaking in course of his tour at the Madras Presidency Muslim Volunteer's Conference, Mr. Mahomed Ali admitted that he differed from Mr. Gandhi in that he favoured violence, and that as a Mussalman he would not flinch from a resort to force, but was deterred from doing so because he had given his adhesion to non-violent non-co-operation and that it would be a shame for the crores of Indians to fight a handful of Englishmen. Very considerate certainly. To the principle of non-violence, he gave practical effect by taking part in a propaganda of violence in so far that the Government decided on instituting a criminal prosecution against him and his brother. But Providence would not permit either of them to show an expectant world how as Mussalmans they were prepared to face the consequences and to furnish convincing evidence that they had the courage of their convictions.



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

for both of them submitted an abject apology to Government and saved their skins. The prosecution was withdrawn. Nothing daunted they swore they had not apologized, but of this and their subsequent achievements more further on.

The incident of the apology however elicited certain points which are pertinent to the question under discussion. It demonstrated that there was a good deal of bravado and bluster in the wild talk of the Ali brothers. Their bark was worse than their bite. That they could bite in a moment of desperation was possible, but only when they had parted or were prepared to part company with Mr. Gandhi, and he so far was firm on the question of non-violence. For he realised that the greatest danger to his propaganda lies in a departure from the policy he had deliberately chalked out, which would at once bring down the repressive powers of Government and would strangle the agitation in which he is engaged. He was astute enough to refrain from playing into the hands of Government, and therefore kept a strong check on the Ali brothers who employed every device to demonstrate that failing peaceful measures there was force to fall back upon. They occasionally trespassed on the forbidden path, hoping to force Mr. Gandhi's hands, with the result that he had to exercise a certain amount of diplomacy and to profess to back up his



lieutenants by protesting that they had no desire to depart from the policy of non-violence, while he was really sore at heart at their actions. On the other hand the Ali brothers knew that if they parted company from Mr. Gandhi they would be mere puppets, denuded of all power, prestige and influence and they therefore swore by all that was sacred that violence was anathema to them.

Mr. Gandhi, when embarking on his cherished propaganda, wrote to the Viceroy that it was his influence which kept Mr. Shankat Ali, his brother being then on deputation in England, from preaching the gospel of force. This is correct, and it cannot be questioned that he deprecated violence and that he kept his followers under restraint. When as the result of Satyagraha there was a series of disorders he admitted that his experiment was a Himalayan error, and at the Amritsar Congress he moved a resolution deploring the unwarrantable excesses of the mob. Why then was he so closely associated with persons who openly declared that their creed and their conscience enjoined them to obtain by force what they consider they were entitled to by right, though they vehemently asserted that in deference to one who for the time being they acknowledged as their leader they had surrendered their views to his? But though



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

they constantly compromised him, he clung to them, and so did they to him, while their hearts were full of bitterness at having to follow the peaceful and effeminate methods inculcated by him. If they had their will they would have preferred to wield the sword instead of plying the *Charkha*. But they were shrewd enough to realise that the end they had in view, of doing as much injury as they could to Englishmen, or of driving them out of the country, was more likely to be attained by being associated with him than by detaching themselves from him. They had also learnt from experience that in his company they were allowed a greater license of speech than would otherwise have been permitted them. And Mr. Gandhi also was aware that with the defection of the Ali brothers, which would mean that of the militant portion of the Moslem community, he would dwindle into a bombastic agitator incapable of doing anything effective. It was therefore a mutual accommodation, the one being indispensable to the other.

This will explain why Mr. Gandhi treated Mohamed Ali and Shankat Ali as his long lost brothers. His affection for them was only exceeded by the confidence he reposed in them, for they worshipped in the same shrine of Hindu-Mahomedan unity, that being an indispensable requisite for the attainment of *swaraj*, to which both stood



committed. Had not the two 'Moslem brothers in deference to the wishes of the Mahatma agreed to allow their swords to remain in the scabbard, in the hope that his *swaraj* may secure them their hearts desire? But there is a limit to every thing. So long as the pretence was kept up that this *swaraj* implied the elimination of British rule and its substitution by some kind of swadeshi rule the two brothers put their own particular views in the background. They harangued meetings, and took a part in the agitation as hearty supporters of non-violent non-co-operation. But if *swaraj* was to mean merely the introduction of the *charkha* in every Indian home, why it was time to make a frank declaration of their views in respect to the phrase non-violent, which finds such a prominent place in Mr. Gandhi's gospel. Mr. Mahomed Ali was present at the Indian Congress Committee meeting held at Bezwada towards the end of March. It is reported he made a most spirited speech, and with reference to the repressive measures that were being adopted he said Government was goading the people to violence. He has admitted that the question of non-violence was discussed by him with Mr. Gandhi, and indeed it was bound to be when he found his *Guru*, as he calls him, was airing extraordinary views about *swaraj*. If this merely



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

meant the general use of the *charlha*, then Mr. Mahomed Ali rightly considered he was free to ventilate his own views about *swaraj* and how it was to be secured.

The two Moslem brothers left Bezwada for Madras, and there they made a pronouncement as regards their relations to the British Government, which they said was nothing new, for while still interned they had in a communication to the Viceroy stated in precise terms that under certain contingencies they would help Afghanistan if it invaded India. 'If the Amir of Kabul', Mr. Mahomed Ali said, 'came to India to fight against those who have always had an eye on my country, who wanted to subjugate my people, who hold the Holy Places of Islam, who want to crush Islam in their hostile grip, who want to destroy the Muslim faith and who were bent on destroying the Khilafat, then not only shall we assist, but it will be our duty and the duty of everyone who calls himself a Mussalman to gird up his loins and fight the good fight of Islam.' Mr. Mahomed Ali further amplified this statement in the course of an interview granted to the representatives of the *Independent and Leader*, both of Allahabad. He enlarged on the duties of Hindus, who he stated are quite welcome to assist their Mussalman brethren in their religious war,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

but there is no compulsion on them to do so, and they can remain perfectly neutral. Should they not remain neutral, and are found assisting the Government, they will be treated as enemies and be killed by the Indian Moslems to whom the Turk and the Afghan is dearer than the Hindu. To speak in this dictatorial manner indicated that Mr. Mahomed Ali attached no little importance to his own personality in the extremist camp, which was confirmed by his modest references to himself and his brother. In his Madras speech he stated that their incarceration would mean freedom to the nation, and the death of either would mean the life of the nation itself. Why then he should have delayed this happy consummation by submitting an abject apology remains yet to be explained. Anyhow the Hindus cannot complain that they did not receive a clear intimation as to what was in store for them. Thus it was a serious blow was given to the much vaunted Hindu-Mahomedan unity, on which Indian nationalism was to be built. But Mr. Mahomed Ali can say with good reason that if Mr. Gandhi had not brought in the *charkha* and all it implies, he would have been faithful to his nominal adhesion to the cult of non-violence, though at heart he, his brother and a good many other Moslems had at no time any illusions that force could be altogether dispensed with.



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

Mr. Gandhi followed Mr. Mahomed Ali to Madras, and ignoring the latter's speech about Moslem relations to Afghanistan, he dwelt on the importance, of non-violence, and emphasized that the greatest triumph of their trial would be when they could endure torture without violence on their part. But finding himself heckled in the press about coquetting with the clear and precise declaration of Mr. Mahomed Ali that the Indian Moslems would be prepared to throw in their lot with the Afghans should they invade India and declare *jehad*, Mr. Gandhi defined his own position in the columns of *Young India*. 'I would in a sense,' he wrote 'certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government. That is to say I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a Government which had lost the confidence of the nation. On the other hand I would not ask India to raise levies for the Amir.' He evaded the question as to what he would do if there was a call on the Hindus to help the Afghans, by assuming that having regard to the Hindu-Moslem compact such a demand would not be made. But Mr. Mahomed Ali had specifically asserted just the contrary and he meant it too, though there was a certain amount of bluff in his talk. On Mr. Andrews pointing out to Mr. Gandhi that this expression of his



opinion might be interpreted as an invitation to the Afghans to invade India, he emphasized the fact that, 'I do not invite the Afghans or anybody to come to our assistance. I am quite confident of India's ability to settle with the Government without extraneous help. I should therefore strain every nerve to keep the Afghans out of the Indian border, but my anxiety to keep them off will not go so far as to assist the Government with men or money. While this was a left-handed blow to Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was standing with open arms to welcome the Afghans, at the same time to tell them that if they cross the border they will find him and his friends standing with folded arms was a curious method of straining every nerve to keep them out. This sort of trifling with a serious subject was not calculated to enhance the reputation of any individual, be he a sinner or a saint. But a man who had the courage to make the Bezwada announcement, fully realising that it may bring about his downfall was not likely to be perturbed about trifles. As an autocrat Mr. Gandhi usually expects a rigid acceptance of his views, but he found that his pronouncement in respect to Mr. Mahomed Ali's outburst not only failed to evoke any enthusiasm but was received by some of his Hindu followers in grim silence and by others with protests more or less forcible as to the



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

extent he was allowing himself to be dominated by the Ali brothers, and that he was affording ground for a charge being brought against him that he was an opportunist waiting for the psychological moment, when, as he has said, India will be prepared to meet force by force.

That Mr. Lajpat Rai should follow in the footsteps of Mr. Gandhi was natural, but the Punjab hero need not be taken seriously, as I have stated before he is a man absolutely destitute of any principles. He says one thing to-day and will say the contrary to-morrow. At the Allahabad Khilafat Conference he stated that 'it would be the duty of the people to repel an Afghan invasion if there were one.' Speaking shortly after at the Allahabad District Conference he said he would refuse to take a hand in repelling the attack and as regards the threat of Moslem domination he would welcome it in preference to the domination of an outside power from across the seas. Exactly five days later, having attached himself to the tail of Mr. Gandhi, who had gone to Simla at Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's invitation to interview the Viceroy, we find him stating at a public meeting there that those who indulged in the threat of an Afghan invasion ought to recollect that, 'we who are non-co-operating with the British Government would not have any other



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

26
SL

foreign power ruling over us.* This is all very well, but in as clear terms as possible an appeal was made by the Ali brothers to effect by force a revolution in India. There is no reply to that. We need not be too inquisitive for an answer from a person of his antecedents.

To the people a sudden shock of another kind, was also suddenly administered. A good many non-co-operators were under the illusion that by some mysterious process, under the direction of Mr. Gandhi, they would, without the exercise of violence, for which they had a natural aversion, obtain freedom from a Government that had alienated their good will. They now found that Mr. Mahomed Ali's creed did not exclude violence, and that he would even welcome the Afghans if they invaded India. The call was made on them either to give up non-co-operation or to continue it bereft of its distinctive quality of non-violence and saddled with a prospective foreign domination. The response was given in no uncertain terms, and it must have been very disconcerting to the Moslem leader to be disabused of the idea that the Hindus would unconditionally help in the expulsion of the English out of India. He found he could not even be certain of his brother Moslems. There were some whose feelings were not aroused by the cry of Islam in danger; there were others who did not hold England responsible for



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

the fate of Turkey, and provided certain concessions were made to their growing desire for self-government they had no desire to oust British rule from India; and there were others again who entertained a genuine horror of the idea of an Afghan invasion or an Afghan domination. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was not far wrong when he damped the ardour of the Afghan emissary a year ago by informing him that the Hindus to a man and the Moslems in a vast majority would range themselves against the invaders, who would be lucky if they got home without being chased by a British Indian army.

There is a limit to the sacrifice Hindus are willing to make to the fetish of Indian unity, and they were aghast at the declaration of Mr. Mahomed Ali, 'I am a Moslem first and every thing else afterwards.' And if to this be added the claim of the Khilafat people that the Sultan is their temporal as well as their spiritual sovereign, it is obvious that they cannot give allegiance to any form of government in India which is not entirely Moslem, and to them *swaraj* means an India which is under the control of the Khalifa. In spite of the disaster to Turkey, the Pan-Islamic dream still holds considerable sway over a certain class of militant Moslems. No wonder the Hindu extremists began to realise the risk of jumping from the frying pan into



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

the fire, and this will have a considerable effect on their pursuit after *swaraj* in the company of Mr. Mahomed Ali and his friends, whose Pan-Islamism constituted a great menace to nationalism. A breach in the Hindu-Mahomedan partnership was only averted by the strenuous efforts of Mr. Gandhi to maintain a truce. Speaking later on at Karachi Mr. Mahomed Ali compared his relations with the Mahatma to the magic drug which cured all diseases. But there were significant indications of a general dissatisfaction as regards these relations. The Moslems more than suspect that they are being exploited and lured to their destruction by Mr. Gandhi to help to bolster up his co-religionists, whilst the Hindus consider that there has been a deliberate evasion of the promise that concessions would be made to them in respect to cow sacrifice by way of return for their support of the Khilafat question. Here we have incipient diseases which may some day develop a virulent form; then a long and sad farewell to Hindu-Mahomedan unity.

The general situation was not very acute, and was met on the whole with commendable patience by the Government, but unfortunately there were a few individuals who must be put down in the category of irreconcilables, and amongst them were the two Ali brothers.



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

The question of their apology will be dealt with separately but the point the Government was interested in was their abstention from any incitement to violence. As regards this Mr. Mahomed Ali affirmed at Karachi that he and his brother had pledged themselves to remain non-violent and to preach non-violence and they would respect that pledge in the face of all provocation. But though keeping to the letter of the undertaking he was practically violating it in the spirit, for only a few days after their apologies were published we find him stating in Bombay that he was a non-violent non-co-operator, but should non-co-operation fail he would say it again as he had said it so often he would use violence because such was the mandate of their holy religion. That mandate had been given to them by the God Almighty. A couple of weeks later we find him stating in Karachi:—‘In this next Congress we shall tear up the old Nagpur creed, give up all quibbling and shall declare India a free republic having the tricolour with the *charkha* in the centre as our national flag. The British want to drive the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe, we shall, however, ask the British officials to walk out, not bag and baggage, because they are ours, but without them.’ That this was not said in the heat of the moment is evident from the fact that Mr. Shankat Ali had previously in Bombay made



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL 70

the following deliverance :—‘In July all foreign cloth would go, in September all liquor would go, and in October they were determined to have *swaraj*. If the British Government did not make peace with us then the Empire which was strong enough to fight the Germans would be beaten by a weak nation which would rise against them... If after October it did not come to its senses and give us *swaraj* and come to terms with Mahatma Gandhi, then in the December session of the Congress at Ahmedabad, the Congress would declare its first republican parliament of India.’ We also find that the Khilafat Congress at Karachi passed the following resolution :—‘If the British Government, directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, fights the Angora Government, the Muslims of India will start civil disobedience and establish their complete independence at the next session of the Indian National Congress to be held at Ahmedabad and hoist the flag of the Indian republic.’ There is the Gandhi cap and the National flag and the more the merrier. From Karachi the Ali brothers went on to Hyderabad (Sind), and there it is reported Mr. Mahomed Ali lost all control over himself, cursed all and sundry, damned the C. I. D. and Emir Faisal, denounced Mrs. Besant and Theosophy, hurled ridicule on the Mahatmas, called the editor of a local paper ‘Satan,’ and invoked the doom of God on many others. He threatened if on August 1st he



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

found a man attired in foreign clothes, violence or non-violence, he would strip him of them. And finally he disclosed something of the utmost significance, that amongst others Mr. Gandhi also had favoured the idea of beginning civil disobedience. On his attention being drawn to these speeches Mr. Gandhi declared that he felt assured that the Ali brothers would never depart from a policy of non-violence, and defended their attitude by pointing out that the Congress creed had been purposely made elastic enough to admit of a demand for independence. But here we have another instance of the Ali brothers trying to force the hands of Mr. Gandhi and of his lame attempt to explain away the effusions of his unruly lieutenants. But he soon let it be seen he was master of the situation and that if the agitation is to be continued it must be on the lines laid down by him. A few days later the Indian Congress Committee met at Bombay, but the question of the republic was entirely ignored, and so far from Mr. Gandhi being prepared to start civil disobedience he was absolutely opposed to it. Not on principle, but he objected to sanction it on the ground that the psychological moment for enforcing it had not arrived when there would be a certainty of the stability of the non-violent atmosphere, and when he felt sure he could depend on the self-restraint and the readiness to suffer



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
81

of the non-co-operators. It will have to be admitted that Mr. Gandhi again furnished evidence that he was faithful to his creed of eliminating all chances of an outbreak of violence.

The National Congress and the Moslem Associations met at Ahmedabad during Christmas week, but the Ali brothers were unable to help in their deliberations having been prosecuted at Karachi and sentenced to imprisonment for offences to be detailed in another chapter. They found a worthy successor in Mr. Hasrat Mohani who it would appear had voluntarily assumed their mantle. At the subjects committee of the Khilafat Conference, he carried a resolution which demanded a declaration of India's independence, which in his opinion was the only meaning that could be given to the term *swaraj*, the goal of the peoples aspirations. In the Congress he moved a similar resolution, but Mr. Gandhi opposed it strongly and it was defeated. Mr. Mohani also entertained certain views of his own in respect to the exercise of force. Speaking as President of the All-India Muslim League, and so far from condemning the atrocities committed by the Moplahs, he praised their 'sacrifices.' He quoted the Quoran to justify the guerilla warfare they were carrying on, and added: 'It is unfair to characterise as plunder their commanding of money, provisions



THE APOSTLES OF FORCE.

CSL

and other necessities for their troops from the English or their supporters.' The attacks on the Hindus by the Moplahs were, we are told, in the nature of retaliation merely, and the money and other belongings of the Hindus taken from them were 'lawful spoils of war taken from those who have aided and abetted the enemy.' In spite of the injunctions and exhortations of Mr. Gandhi there can be no question that Mr. Mohani correctly describes what is likely to happen under certain eventualities:—'On the declaration of martial law the non-violent non-co-operation movement will prove totally insufficient and useless. Amongst the Mussalmans at least there will hardly be found a man who will be prepared to sacrifice his life uselessly. A man can have only one of two feelings when faced by the barrel of a gun, either to seek refuge in flight or to take advantage of the law of self-preservation and despatch his adversary to hell. The third alternative, that of cheerfully yielding up one's life to the enemy and considering it to be real success, will remain confined to Mahatma Gandhi and some of his adherents and fellow-thinkers.' It is obvious then that force is an element in political life which has got its apostles and which has by no means been eliminated from Mr. Gandhi's propaganda.



CSL

CHAPTER IV.

AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

By gradual steps Mr. Gandhi assumed the position of dictator in India. He honestly believed that India had been struck with a fell disease and that he had a roving commission from some authority known or unknown to come to its rescue. But dangerous diseases require desperate remedies. And if his antidotes constantly varied they at any rate do him credit for his unrivalled versatility. Doses, big and small, bitter and sweet, made up of ingredients that only his ingenious mind could have concocted were poured down the throats of his followers, whether they were willing or unwilling. Each prescription was heralded by the announcement that it was an infallible remedy, in so far that a date was fixed for the recovery of the patients. If the decoction developed symptoms that were more likely to kill than to cure, it by no means left the Mahatma either dejected or dismayed, for his resources were unlimited, his faith in himself was unbounded and his contempt for his admirers was supreme. Under no other theory is it possible to explain how for over a year non-co-operation in its various phases ran its course. In spite of a repeated change of prescriptions and a consequent postponement



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

of the date when freedom was to be achieved the *swaraj* which was to signalise the victory of Mr. Gandhi and which was said to be coming by leaps and bounds is still outside the range of human vision. Not only is a Satanic Government still ruling over the land, but it has changed its passive attitude of forbearance and acquiescence in the political experiments of Mr. Gandhi to one of violent antipathy and active hostility. But we need not anticipate the sequel, for there is a whole year to be traversed and a faithful record has to be presented of the sequence of events in 1921 which will make intelligible the political situation when the year 1922 was ushered in.

In a previous volume dealing with the unrest of 1919-20, the origin, scope and ethics of non-co-operation have been dealt with in detail. To obtain a clear insight into its achievements in 1921, it will be helpful to the general reader to give a bare outline of its progress from the time of its inception. For this summary I am partly indebted to the *Servant of India*.

Though non-co-operation gained prominence only in March 1920, the first public utterance to the idea was given by its author, Mr. Ganhi, as early as 23rd November, 1919, when he presided over the Khilafat Conference at Delhi. The first part of the third resolution of that



Conference runs thus: 'In the event of the Khilafat being put in jeopardy through the unjust treatment and dismemberment of Turkey in the peace settlement, Indian Mahomedans will be compelled to withdraw all co-operation from Government as a matter of religious duty'.

It is noteworthy that the Mahatma was one of the staunchest advocates of co-operation at the Amritsar Congress which followed a month later, that the Khilafat resolution of that Congress (Resolution No. 15) merely records its discontent and does not go beyond protesting, as also the Muslim League resolution of that year, which gives vent to its disappointment and contents itself with the remedy of constitutional agitation.

Non-co-operation makes its appearance next in *Young India* of 14th January, 1920, but its first mature programme is to be found in *Young India* of 10th March, 1920. (1) There should be no violence in thought speech or deed. (2) Therefore, there should be no boycott of British goods, by way of revenge or punishment. Boycott is a form of violence. Moreover, even if it were desirable it is totally impracticable. (3) There should be no rest till the minimum is achieved. (4) There should be no mixing up of other questions with the Khilafat, e. g., the Egyptian question.

What was the programme of non-co-operation at first? (1) Cessation of business on the 19th



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

inst. (March, 1920) and expression of the minimum demands. (2) Those who are holding high offices of honour or emolument ought to give them up. (3) Those who belong to the menial services under Government should do likewise. (4) Advice to the soldiers to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last, not the first step.

The second programme of N. C. O. appears in *Young India* of 5th May, 1920. The four progressive stages fixed there are:—(1) The giving up of titles and resignation of honorary posts. (2) Withdrawal from Government services, saving for the time the police and the military departments. (3) The withdrawal of the police and the military. (4) The suspension of taxes.

It may be mentioned here that although non-co-operation was originally conceived as a remedy against the Khilafat wrong only, it was later on extended to the Punjab wrong also; and the first time when this extended use is openly given out is in the leading article of *Young India* of 9th June, 1920.

Then about the end of June, 1920, deputation of Mahomedans waited upon the Viceroy and tendered him a virtual notice that, in case the Khilafat wrong was not redressed in the meanwhile to the satisfaction of the Indian Moslems, they would be driven to inaugurate the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
37

movement of non-co-operation as from 1st of August next (i. e., 1920). About the same time Mahatma Gandhi also addressed an open letter to the Viceroy to the same effect.

Then came the third programme, the details of the first stage of which are given in *Young India* of 7th July, 1920, as:—(1) Surrender of all titles of honour and honorary posts. (2) Non-participation in Government loans. (3) Suspension by lawyers of practice and settlement of civil disputes by private arbitration. (4) Boycott of Government schools by parents. (5) Boycott of reformed councils. (6) Non-participation in Government parties and such other functions. (7) Refusal to accept any civil or military post in Mesopotamia, etc. (8) Vigorous prosecution of swadeshi. It may be stated here that in *Young India* of 14th July, 1920, is thrown out the first indirect suggestion that besides the problems of the Khilafat and the Punjab, the problem of Swaraj also can be solved by the self-same remedy of non-co-operation. In due course the 1st August dawned and the banner of non-co-operation as already notified, was unfurled by the Mahomedans under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi.

It is desirable to emphasize here the fact that so far Mr. Gandhi was acting on his own initiative,



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

hoping to carry the country or at least the bulk of the political agitators with him. He was slowly but surely consolidating his authority in the face of serious obstacles, for on the one hand there was the National Congress to be reckoned with and on the other hand the militant Shaukat Ali to be humoured. Without a mandate from the Congress his novel propaganda ran the risk of being nipped in the bud, while the Moslem leader unless kept under restraint was capable of rendering nugatory its chief characteristic of non-violence. In 1921 Mr. Gandhi was seen figuring as an autocrat and a dictator, but in 1920 he approached the Congress in the attitude of a humble and accommodating follower, who while unwilling to surrender his own views had nevertheless no disposition to quarrel or even to part company with those who disagreed with him. He therefore advocated the curious line of action that neither side if defeated should secede from the Congress and that any resolution that may be passed should be considered as merely advisory and in no way interfering with the freedom of action of any individual. It was under such conditions that the special session of the Congress met at Calcutta in the second week of September, 1920, where the non-co-operation resolution was adopted by a vast majority. This is the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

89
SL

fourth programme. The preamble clearly states the three goals—Khilafat, Punjab, and Swaraj. The details of the programme are nearly the same as in the previous one, the only change being that item No. 2 was dropped and boycott of foreign goods was added.

Here it may be observed that it was in his speech at this Congress that Mr. Gandhi made the first announcement of Swaraj in a year. He said: 'I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain Swaraj in the course of a year'. During the four months intervening between the special session of the Congress at Calcutta and the ordinary session at Nagpur the items that were concentrated upon were the Council-boycott and the boycott of educational institutions.

Then met the Nagpur Congress in the last week of December, 1920, which re-affirmed the Calcutta position in general. It, however, dropped from its programme the items adopted at Calcutta about, (a) renunciation of titles, etc., (b) non-participation in state functions, (c) refusal to accept service in Mesopotamia, and (d) boycott of councils and added the new items of, (1) utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice by one and all, (2) organization of non-co-operation committees in each and every village, (3) organization of Indian National Service, (4) the Tilak Swaraj Fund, (5) special effort to rid



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability. It also amplified the educational boycott in three different items as (i) boys under 16 to be approached only through their parents, (ii) boys over 16 to be approached directly, and (iii) managers and trustees of educational institutions to be called upon to help to nationalise them. The concluding portion of the resolution lays special stress upon Swaraj within one year, and exhorts people accordingly. This is programme No. 5.

For about three months following the Nagpur Congress, *i. e.*, the months of January to March, 1921, the movement about boycott of schools and courts was at its height; but new schemes of work continued, in the meanwhile, to appear in *Young India*. Its issue of 23rd February laid down the following six conditions of Swaraj (1) cultivating the spirit of non-violence, (2) setting up the Congress organization in every village, (3) introducing the spinning wheel in every home and manufacturing all the cloth required for our wants through the village weaver, (4) collecting as much money as possible, (5) promoting Hindu-Muslim unity and (6) ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying ourselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs.

This may be called programme No. 6. It was crystallised at the sitting of the All-India



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

975
SL

Congress Committee at Bezwada at the end of March into, (1) the collection of one crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, (2) enrolling one crore of members on the Congress register, (3) introducing twenty lacs of spinning wheels in Indian homes.

This programme was to be completed before the 30th of June. Side by side with these three activities the picketting campaign was in full swing during the period. While the old cries of boycott of the educational institutions and law courts were not heard of, *Young India* of 25th May reiterated the same programme with special emphasis on (1) the removal of untouchability and (2) the removal of the drink curse.

In the last week of July, the All-India Congress Committee again met at Bombay and fixed upon the boycott of foreign cloth as the only item to be completed before the 30th of September. This marks the 7th programme of the non-co-operation movement.

Meanwhile came the Moplah outbreak and the arrest of the Ali brothers. *Young India* of 22nd September emphasised the same programme thus, (1) be non-violent under the greatest provocation, (2) preserve the Hindu-Moslem unity even under the greatest strain, (3) boycott the use of foreign cloth, even though you may have to



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

be satisfied with the merest loin-cloth, and take to hand spinning during every odd moment that can be spared.

In *Young India* of 6th October the following advice was given: 'I suggest to every Congress and Khilafat worker the advisability of organizing hand-spinning and hand-weaving in his respective district to the exclusion of every other activity.'

The working committee that met at Bombay on the 5th November passed resolutions which give the latest, i. e., programme No. 8, (1) it is the clear duty of every Government employee, whether soldier or civilian, who can support himself without Congress assistance to leave such service, (2) the working committee advises all Congress committees to organize meetings to adopt the * following resolution of the working committee including among other things the supporting of the Karachi resolution, (3) boycott of foreign cloth, to be completed before the end of the current month, (4) although general civil disobedience is positively disapproved, active workers in the cause of swadeshi are authorised to practise it in their individual capacity under certain precautions. These made this provision a dead letter.

The first item of the new programme introduces a new step, viz., the call to withdraw



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 77

from Government service; and the second and fourth items together in effect usher in the adoption of civil disobedience, though yet on a limited scale.

To sum up, the main items tried until now are, (1) giving up of titles and honorary posts, (2) boycott of councils, (3) boycott of educational institutions, (4) boycott of law courts, (5) the anti-drink campaign, (6) the Tilak Swaraj Fund, (7) enrolment of Congress members, (8) removal of untouchability, (9) handspinning, (10) use of *khaddar* and (11) boycott of foreign cloth.

Such in short is a summary of the development and progress of non-co-operation up to the end of 1921. It was during the first quarter of this year that its activities were most pronounced and it secured the largest number of victims. Why it was that it failed to receive general acceptance at this opportune period is elucidated in this chapter.

Non-violent non-co-operation was a contradiction in terms, and carried with it the seeds of dissolution; nevertheless the good sense of the Government and of the people taken as a whole contributed towards its ultimate collapse, leaving as a legacy the stimulus given to the use of *Swadeshi* articles and to temperance. The Government exhibited considerable tact, patience and restraint in allowing this propaganda a free scope,



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

no doubt, influenced by the knowledge that some of the items of its programme were impracticable, and others were innocuous, while none of them was calculated to bring about the intended result, which was its own discomfiture. Though credited with being immoral, debasing and Satanic, it allowed, never mind for what reasons, a change to take place in the autocratic nature of its rule, and slowly but surely paved the way for the gradual attainment by the people of *Swaraj*. The introduction of a responsible Government which set to work in the development of a constructive policy finally sounded the death knell of non-co-operation as it had been sanctioned by the National Congress. The popular share consisted in that, though a large number of impressionable people were at the outset carried away by the magnetic influence of a strong personality, and by the resentment connected with what are known as the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs, they came to realise that they were being lured to their destruction by political enthusiasts. The conviction was gradually forced on them that while the kind of *Swaraj* these desire was a remote and uncertain contingency, the reality was bound to be an outburst of lawlessness and disorder, which was repugnant to peace-loving citizens. In the meantime the significance attached to the two



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 79

grievances had also undergone a change. As the catchwords of the non-co-operators they had spent their force, and had brought home to Mr. Gardhi the conviction that some modification in the plan of operations was called for to prevent the propaganda dying out from sheer inanition.

It has already been pointed out that there were two contradictory forces at work at the beginning of the year. Unrest had reached an acute stage, and non-co-operation was the outward expression of the dissatisfaction and discontent of the people. It had a furious run for the first two months of the year, because it was engineered by one in whose honesty, unselfishness and sincerity the people placed implicit reliance. But his injunctions were so unpractical and teemed with such dangerous possibilities that the propaganda was doomed from the outset, though to some extent the inevitable collapse was facilitated by other contributory causes. There were counter forces at work which diverted the minds of the people from engaging in haphazard ventures. The extremists made the most strenuous efforts to decry the message of peace which was being repeatedly delivered by the Duke of Connaught, but there can be no question that it exercised a potent influence in conciliating the people and wearing out as it were the edge of their resentment. His appeal for a cessation of



CSL

AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

controversy and strife struck a responsive chord in their hearts by reason of its sincerity and the conviction that it was promoted by the desire to promote their political and material welfare. The welcome extended to him was warm if it was not enthusiastic, though Mr. Gandbi had proscribed it as a 'crime and a mistake.' He asserted that the Duke had come 'to sustain the power which had been so horribly abused and to add prestige to an institution which we consider to be corrupt at its very source.' This was a gross travesty of the truth, for he had come not to perpetuate the old order, but to inaugurate a new era wherein the constitutional reforms were to be set in motion which were to pave the way for the gradual attainment of self-government. To the credit of the Indian nation be it said that it was not dead to the call made on its instincts of hospitality or to the claims of gratitude towards one who at an advanced age undertook an onerous task at a great personal risk and sacrifice, merely to discharge what was no more than a labour of love. The parting words of the Duke need a permanent record:- 'What is there that I can say to India in this hour of farewell? As I fervently pray so I firmly believe that the new constitutions now inaugurated place India securely on the upward road and that through them if moderation rule your



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

counsels, if you practise wisely what to discard and what to establish, the high ideals which India holds dear will assuredly be realised. Press forward on the broad highway which now lies open before you and the future is in your hand and as you march onward remember that the future has its roots in the past...And what message can I take back to England? I shall say the heart of India is sound and true, her loyalty is untarnished. Her progress is great and her hopes are high. Keep in close and sympathetic touch with her. Send her your best, your second best will not be good enough, and you need have no doubt or misgiving as to the course of your future partnership'.

It would be idle to ignore the fact that the appointment of Lord Reading had a soothing and pacifying effect. His reputation stood high, his antecedents were brilliant and his promises profuse and characterised with sincerity. In view of the various pronouncements made by him that he was coming out to India to execute justice and govern righteously expectations ran high as to what he would do to remedy the wrongs of the people and satisfy their ambitions. His request to be allowed time to look around and understand the complexities of the political situation seemed reasonable. Even Mr. Gandhi, forgetting his ungracious attitude towards the Duke of



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

Connaught, forbade any *hartals* on the arrival of the new Viceroy or any attempt to boycott him, for he said he waged a war not against men but against measures. So strong was the popular feeling in favour of Lord Reading that appeals were made to the Mahatma to suspend his propaganda, though even temporarily, but without success. We shall, however, see further on that non-co-operation had spent its force and had assumed a new and seemingly innocent aspect prior to the change of the Viceroys.

It was Lord Chelmsford's misfortune to be severely criticised for some of his official acts, whether rightly or wrongly we need not pause here to consider. In one respect the criticism was most unjust and undeserved, and that was the Turkish question. On the 4th February, in Calcutta, in reply to the address of the deputation representing the Mahomedan elected element in the Bengal Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, he recapitulated all that had been done by him personally and by the Government of India to support the case of the Indian Moslems not only before His Majesty's Government, but also before the Peace Conference and stated that recently he had asked certain Mohomedan gentleman to go to Europe to represent the case of the Indian Mussalmans. And he wound up with the remark: 'We have left



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CL
81

nothing undone which we could do.' The general correctness of this assertion is beyond question. This deputation consisted of His Highness Aga Khan, Mr. Hassan Imam and Mr. Chotani, who was accompanied by Dr. Ansari as his Secretary. The Indian point of view was fully placed before the Allied Conference which was then sitting in London to revise the Treaty of Sevres. Previous to this no less than eleven communications had been sent to the British Cabinet by the Viceroy, who also forwarded the views of the Houses of the Indian Legislature on the Turkish question, eliciting from the Secretary of State for India the reply that :—'I lost no time in communicating the representation of the Council of State to the Prime Minister, and I am sure both the Council of State and your Government must be aware that I am leaving no stone unturned in anything which may possibly lead to the final settlement which could be found acceptable by loyal Indian Moslem opinion'. And this was followed up by an official communication to the Indian delegates, in which they were assured that the Premier desired to pay the fullest regard to the religious sentiments of Mussalmans, that the treaty with Turkey will safeguard Moslem control of Moslem holy places, that the Allies did not intend to interfere in the slightest with the Sultan's Khilafat, and that if there is any obscurity



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

in this connection, Mr. Montagu will do his best to remove it.

Mr. Hassan Imam, one of the delegates, on his return from England stated that he and his colleagues did all that was humanly possible to do for securing better terms for Turkey, but that he felt constrained to admit that their representations had no appreciable effect in shaping the policy that was to be pursued as regards the modification of the Peace Treaty. At the same time he added that 'the Premier viewed the Moslem representation with sympathy, and if he is unable to fulfil the hope of Indian Moslems it will not be for want of inclination, though it may be by reason of his limitations.' There was, however, a significant omission, and that was any reference to the Khilafat. It was naturally a delicate matter for him to touch, but it helps to bear out what has been stated before that no one outside India cares a rap as to what becomes of the Khilafat, for the minds of the Turks were more exercised on account of the loss of territory than by the prospective loss by the Sultan of his prerogatives as Khalifa.

From the official account of the interview with the Prime Minister, published by Mr. Hassan Imam, it would appear that the Indian deputation, which was sent to England at Government expense, pointed out that Article 139 of the Treaty



of Peace might interfere with the jurisdiction and authority of the Khalifa, to which Mr. Lloyd George replied, 'The Turks never raised that point. They do not think that Article 139 interferes with them at all, and after all the Sultan is theirs specially.' If the view advanced by the Indian Moslems is correct, it only bears out what has been urged by me before that the Turks are not very much concerned about the Khilafat. And it is obvious Mr. Hassan Imam as a Shiah cannot be very keen about it, though as a Pan-Islamist, which every educated Mahomedan is, he feels acutely the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The agitation, except where it was artificially engineered, was therefore on the decline. The Bengal Muslim Association appointed about a dozen Maulvies to preach against what was styled by the Secretary, 'the evil and nauseating movement of Mr. Gandhi.' As regards the Shiahs, it may safely be said that as a body they have withdrawn their support of this propaganda, as they realise the utter futility of its being able to afford relief in respect to the matter they are most interested in, and that is the resuscitation of Turkey. I say this in spite of the fiery resolutions passed at the so called All-India Shiah Conference, which met about this time at Lucknow. It was really a gathering of the irreconcilables, and in no way represented the genuine opinions of the Shiah community. The fact that the speech of the



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

President was proscribed by Government and that the unsold copies were attached tells its own tale. The Ahmaddya community is numerically not very strong, but is of sufficient importance to admit of the Viceroy receiving a deputation of its representatives. In the address presented by them they stated that the independence of the Hedjaz is now advantageous to the interest of Islam and is preferable to its being under the dominion of Turkey. Was the Khilafat movement then dead? Far from it, but as the objective of the non-co-operation propaganda had, at the instance of Mr. Gandhi, undergone a complete change, the supporters of the Khilafat while still working under its banner, were disposed also to transfer their energies in another direction. Mr. Mahomed Ali sounded a note the effect of which, as regards himself, his community and the people at large, it was not long before it declared itself. In the meantime a most reassuring communication was made by Lord Reading that the latest information leads to the hope that the revised proposals for the alteration of the Turkish treaty will satisfy the Indian Muslims, that their religious sentiments have been respected and that their claims to help determine the peace with Turkey have been abundantly recognised.

The grievance relating to the Punjab deserves a more detailed treatment. The bitterness it



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

had aroused was so intense that the Government had the good sense to realise that something substantial had to be done by them in the shape of making amends. In a previous page an allusion has been made to the fact that the Duke of Connaught had undertaken the task of acting as the peace-maker. He had on landing in Madras made a most sympathetic speech in general terms, but with an implied reference to the Punjab affair. This was followed by something more specific on the occasion of the inauguration of the new Indian Legislature, when the momentous pronouncement was made : ' I repudiate in the most emphatic manner the idea that the administration of India has been or ever can be based on the principle of force or terrorism '. So here we had from the highest quarter something definite by way of reparation as had been outlined by me in the previous volume, and to support this declaration the King Emperor was brought into requisition, for His Royal Highness went on to add :—

“ Since I landed I have felt around me bitterness and estrangement between those who have been and should be friends. The shadow of Amritsar has lengthened over the fair face of India. I know how deep is the concern felt by his Majesty the King-Emperor at the terrible chapter of events in the Punjab. No one can deplore those events more intensely than



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

I do myself. I have reached a time of life when I most desire to heal the wounds and to reunite those who have been disunited. In what must be, I fear, my last visit to India I love so well, here in the new capital inaugurating a new constitution I am moved to make you a personal appeal, put in the simple words that come from my heart, not to be coldly and critically interpreted. My experience tells me that misunderstandings usually mean mistakes on either side. As an old friend of India, I appeal to you all, British and Indians, to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive and to join hands to work together to realize the hopes that arise from to-day."

It is gratifying to have to record that this appeal received a prompt and adequate response both on the part of the Moderates and of the officials. The Punjab disorders were bound to be discussed in the new Legislature, and the occasion arose on a resolution moved by Mr. Jammanadas Dwarkadas in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th February, 1920. This gave the Government an opportunity to make a full and frank declaration of its policy, and of its matured judgment in respect to the conduct of certain officials in the Punjab. To start with, the Commander-in-Chief repudiated the theory that it was part of an officer's duty when taking



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

98105 SL

repressive measures to attempt to produce a moral effect on the country at large, while Sir William Vincent admitted the infliction of 'over-drastring and severe punishments calculated to humiliate the people, which were considered unpardonable.' He further added: 'There were many cases of improper conduct by officers which might be described to be worse, and for them Government could only express their deep regret, which extended also to actions which were calculated to humiliate Indians.' He finally said: 'I do hope that what I have said would go a long way to finally close the most unhappy episode in the history of British rule in India.' Dr. Sircar, the Legal Member, emphasized the fact that Government had expressed regret where regret was due, and he further expressed regret for the student community, which Sir William Vincent had forgotten to do. Having regard to these expressions of opinion, and in deference to the appeal made to him by other members, Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas withdrew clause (3) of his resolution to mete out deterrent punishment to officers who were found guilty of improper exercise of their powers, while the Government accepted clause (4) which asked for adequate compensation to be awarded to the families of those killed or injured at the Jallianwala Bagh or in other places.

Expectations ran high as to what Lord Reading would do in respect to the Panjab question.



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

He promptly visited Lahore, and did what no other high official had done, he went right through the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. In reply to an address presented by the Punjab Chiefs Association, the Viceroy, in language, as eloquent as it was feeling, endorsed the Duke of Connaught's appeal, and then he added :— 'Can we not do our utmost to banish suspicion, to cease imputing evil motives, to believe again in the sympathetic justice of the Government, to concentrate in the united effort to reach by peaceful and constitutional means the end which is promised under your new forms and which indeed is already in the course of fulfilment? Let us, you Indians in your hundreds of millions and we British in our small numbers, join hands and determine to work together for the realisation of this great aim and ideal.' After leaving the Punjab, Lord Reading called for the records of cases of those martial law prisoners who are still undergoing sentence with a view to satisfying himself that there is no case still remaining in which clemency can suitably be exercised. And later on in reply to the address presented by the United Provinces Liberal Association the Viceroy stated :— 'As for the unhappy mistakes in the Punjab, the mistakes had been admitted, regret had been expressed and a moving appeal was made-



to forgive and forget. Let bygones be bygones, and let this chapter be closed save for the lessons to be deduced for the guidance of the future.' Further comment is superfluous. You cannot whip a dead horse. But something practical had also been done. Amritsar, Gujranwala and Kasur were relieved of the indemnities, which they had been called upon to pay. A commission was appointed to hear applications for compensation from Indians who innocently suffered at the Jallianwala Bagh. And its recommendations which were characterised with commendable generosity were given effect to by the executive authorities. Is it possible to resist the conclusion that the agitation for further redress was being artificially engineered? The Punjab question, if not dead, was gasping its last breath when the Indian Congress Committee met at Bezwada, and some momentous decisions relating to non-co-operation were arrived at, indicating a radical change in its future scope, for the Khilafat and the Punjab grievances could no longer be relied upon as war-cries.

There were also other factors which intervened to bring about the collapse of the original programme of non-co-operation. Its ultimate goal was Swaraj, but it was obvious to the meanest intellect that the chances of attaining this end by means of the programme



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

sanctioned by the National Congress were most problematical. After the first excitement was over, the various injunctions were honoured more in their breach than in their observance. On the other hand the conviction was gradually gaining ground that the heavenly boon that was denied to the extremists was being secured by the moderates. Hence the bitter tirade against these as traitors to the cause of India's freedom, which was largely due to the fact that by co-operating with the Government they were in a fair way of bringing *swaraj* nearer to India, and that a part of the course had already been traversed. They were guilty of the enormity of recognising that a decade or two in the life of nations is after all not such a great span as it is made out to be by their opponents. British rule up till last year was best described as a benevolent despotism, though a good many thoughtful persons, by no means ill-disposed to this rule, stigmatized it as despotism pure and simple. What is it now? Mr. Harkishen Lal, ex-rebel, ex-convict, and now one of the Ministers of the Punjab Government, hearing in the Provincial Council an irate member impugning an administrative act, for which he was responsible, as the product of 'British rule', quietly ejaculated, 'Our rule.' Here is a text on which much could be written and the writer who can give a fair abstract of the work done in the first session of the Imperial and



CSL

Provincial Legislatures will render a real service to the country. But a few general remarks, which only are permissible here, will convince any unprejudiced mind that we have really entered a new phase of political existence, which has been aptly described as 'Our rule.' For this there is abundant evidence.

The extremists rejected the Reforms Act, but the moderates accepted it as a workable scheme though not fulfilling their expectation. It was a liberal and far reaching measure of responsible Government. The Rules and Regulations framed under the Act incurred a good deal of odium, and especially in the Punjab, where disinterested witnesses like Sir Valentine Chirol and Col. Wedgwood accused Government of gerrymandering. Either there is some truth in this charge or the unfortunate reputation of the Punjab officials was pursuing them, so that they failed to get credit for acts, however overflowing they were with good will towards the people. But in spite of these drawbacks, it would be idle to dispute the truth of the assertion made by Lord Chelmsford on the occasion of the opening of the Indian Legislature that the character of autocracy had once for all departed from the Government which rules over India. The Central Government has three and the Provincial Governments have ten Indians as



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

members of the Executive Council and 19 Ministers.

The Ministers, who are appointed from the elected members of Council, have charge of certain departments over which they exercise more or less full control. The officials in charge of reserved departments know that a Council, with responsible Ministers, is carefully watching their work, and also the events in each province, and that any wrong done will at once be brought to the notice of the Council, in which there is a large elected majority. The budget even in respect to departments that are reserved is open to discussion in the Councils, and though their vote is not final, it is only under exceptional circumstances the power of veto is expected to be exercised by the Governor. Such a contingency arose in the Bengal Council, where the budget on the police expenditure was reduced by 23 lakhs by an adverse vote of the members. Lord Ronaldshay could have exercised the power given him under the Act, and restored the original item in the budget, but understanding the real intention of the Council, he prorogued it to allow the House to reconsider the refused sum, with the light of a supplementary statement giving all the necessary detail for the information of the members; and thus helped them to and satisfactorily the deadlock that had arisen. The principle is now admitted that where a



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CL

serious cleavage exists between the head of the executive Government and the representatives of the people it is not for them to yield, but for him to resign.

The propaganda initiated by Mr. Gandhi was intended by him in all sincerity to be non-violent. He even threatened to retire to the Himalayas if there was any departure from the peaceful character of the agitation. But in his simplicity he failed to realise that non-co-operation translated into action would, so far at least as the unsophisticated masses were concerned, necessarily degenerate into violence. Apart from that his chief Mahomedan colleagues entertained opinions on this point that were diametrically opposed to his, and though professing to be faithful adherents of the new propaganda, the chief characteristic of which was ostensibly that it was non-violent, they gave free vent to their natural proclivities in so far that the Government, as stated before, decided to institute a criminal prosecution against them. At Karachi Mr. Mahomed Ali lost all control over himself and threatened that on August 1st if any man had a *bidesi* turban, violence or no violence, he would strike it off, and any man wearing a Manchester *dhoti* would be obliged to walk home bare-bodied. Under the circumstances can it be wondered that the foundations of law and order were sapped.



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

The masees were set up against the classes, and both defied the constituted authority of the land. The gospel of liberty was preached, but it degenerated into license. The seed of freedom was implanted, but the fruit is akin to anarchy. It is beyond doubt that the frontier and trans-frontier troubles were at least partly encouraged by the unprecedented unrest caused by non-co-operation. During the Punjab disturbances Sir Michael O'Dwyer announced that the Province was in a state of rebellion. Within a few weeks the Afghan forces were marching towards India, and we had the last Afghan War in hand. It is said the Turks have entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Amir of Cabul. Is it not at any rate partly the result of the repudiation of allegiance to British rule by a certain class of Indians that is stimulating outsiders to cast longing eyes towards India, which they know is helpless to exercise rule over itself and has for centuries been dominated by some foreign power? There can be no question that considered from the point of view of its inability to retain its peaceful character non-co-operation was a decided failure, and therefore bound to collapse.

An impartial record of the progress of non-co-operation during the first three months of the year will bear evidence to one disaster succeeding



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

another. 'Will you come into my parlour', said the spider to the fly? The educated classes, though hovering round, refused to enter it. A fairly good number of boys succumbed to the cajoleries that were employed, and were devoured. The invitation was next extended to the masses who, without the remotest notion as to what *swaraj* implied or how it was likely to benefit them responded to it, but let their hosts understand that they were anything but submissive victims, and were determined to enjoy as much diversion as possible from the novel doctrines that were preached to them, and that if their respect for constituted authority had been undermined it had not been replaced by a blind submission to one who stood in the way of their making things hum and to their indulgence off and on in acts which under the efete regime bore certain odious names and had sundry pains and penalties attached to them. Disappointed and mortified, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* :—' We must not tamper with the masses. It is dangerous to make political use of factory labourers or the peasantry, not that we are not entitled to do so, but we are not prepared for it. We have neglected their political (as distinguished from literary) education all these long years. We have not got enough honest, intelligent, reliable and brave workers to enable us to act upon these countrymen of ours'.



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

Mr. Gandhi protests he is not a politician but a religious man. Why then did he plunge into politics? He affirms that his lines were cast more in the company of moderates than of extremists and that even when engaged in passive resistance in South Africa he was a rigid supporter of Government. This is true, for it is evidenced by his having won the respect and esteem of the officials there. To find himself in the company of extremists, making strenuous efforts to paralyze the Government, could by no means have been much to his taste. But he had to undertake this role because there was something to be gained which he says was preferable to the British connection, and that was Hindu and Mahomedan unity. To secure this he threw himself heart and soul into the vortex of political strife. He found the two communities pulling in different directions, each absorbed in pursuits that were selfish and ignored the common welfare. He evolved a plan to bring them together. He found in the Ali brothers excellent instruments and coadjutors, and formed an offensive and defensive alliance with them. The Mahomedans, except a limited number who were educated and were the products of the Aligarh College, were apathetic in their interest in political matters, and the only method of arousing them was by appealing to their religious



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
115

susceptibilities. The Khilafat question offered a convenient and suitable subject on which to stimulate their enthusiasm. But the Hindus had no interest in this matter. He made a strong appeal to their patriotism to take up this cause so as to be able to present a united front in fighting for their political freedom. The bait was swallowed, for just at that time, for certain other reasons, their minds were in a ferment, and there was prevailing a strong feeling of resentment against the English Government and the English generally. It was emphasized that the political agitation in which they were engaged would receive an accession of strength by the people of India speaking with an united voice. But Mr. Gandhi also offered something that was more tangible and practical by way of an inducement, and that was that the Mahomedans would make certain concessions to Hindu susceptibilities in the matter of cow sacrifice. This was a bait that could not be resisted.

A seven months experience of non-co-operation demonstrated how delusive were the hopes that were entertained as to the union of the two communities. It was an excellent theme on public platforms, and certain enthusiasts enlarged on the growing amity of the Hindus and Mahomedans. They were sometimes able to infuse amongst the rank and file a desire to cement it and to



CSL

AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

extend it by closer bonds, but there were clear indications that the latent forces of disunion had not been subdued and that each side was pursuing its wonted course of selfishness and hostility to the other. The most that had been achieved was that extremist politicians were willing to make common cause, so as to embarrass the Government, but the people so far as their ordinary interests were concerned were reluctant to make any advances that would draw together the two communities in the bonds of friendship. Communal representation was not only insisted upon by the Mahomedans, but they tried to have the principle extended in new directions. Municipalities district boards, universities and other corporate bodies were to be exploited for their benefit. In several important cities where non-official chairmen were to be elected by the members of the municipal committee no agreement could be arrived at as each community favoured its own nominee. High appointments were to be filled up not by the best man being appointed, but in view of preserving a certain ratio between Hindus and Mahomedans. As to the minor communities each was fighting for its own hand, and the anti-Brahman agitation in South India assumed such large proportions as to constitute a menace to the public peace. The Sikhs and Anglo Indians have secured communal representation,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

and the Indian Christians and Marwaris are seeking to obtain it. The depressed classes will before long present a problem which will not be easy of solution.

There was no doubt a certain amount of Hindu and Moslem fraternisation in the celebration of their respective festivals, but it was entirely under the direction of political leaders and for political purposes. Remove these leaders and this object, and we shall find verified the frank admissions of the representatives of the two communities that there has been no material advance in their mutual regard. Recriminations have been indulged in which tell their own tale. A note has been sounded calling the Hindus to be on their guard against what is called an attempt to prepare for the restoration of Moslem domination in India. Even Mr. Gandhi did not escape being charged with a deliberate attempt to injure the Aligarh College by urging the pupils to boycott it, whereas his assaults on the Hindu University were alleged to have been but half-hearted. There are some Moslems who are convinced that non-co-operation was started more for the discomfiture of their community than that of the Government. On the other hand Hindus are found accusing Mahomedans of a breach of faith in that these have as yet made no concessions in respect to cow sacrifice, and that



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

In certain places beef is allowed to be sold publicly to their annoyance, when other arrangements could easily be made if there had been any genuine regard for their susceptibilities. The Hon'ble Lala Sukhbir Sinha with his enthusiasm for Hindu-Moslem unity moved in the Simla session of the Council of State for the abolition of cow-killing, but in spite of the qualifying clauses put down out of consideration of Moslem sentiments he failed to enlist the sympathy of the Mahomedans. An appeal was issued by some of their leaders to the community to abstain from cow sacrifice on the Id day. The response made was not very much appreciated by the Hindus, who are by no means satisfied with Mr. Gandhi for his repeatedly pressing on them to postpone the cow question till after the Khilafat matter has been settled and who accuse him of sacrificing the interests of his co-religionists on the fetish of a unity whose foundation was laid on sand, and which is unable to resist the inroads of conflicting interests. Appeals are being addressed to him to settle the question once for all.

The net result was that, with the Punjab and Khilafat grievances at a discount, with the educated classes refusing to carry out the programme as sanctioned by the Congress, with the masses indulging in deeds of violence, with a



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
112

Moslem domination under contemplation, with no substantial progress in the extension of more cordial feelings amongst the various communities and with the Government adopting an attitude of contemptuous indifference instead of being down on its knees, no other alternative was left to Mr. Gandhi but to ring the death-knell of the propaganda which had failed to achieve the object for which with every pomp and circumstance it had been started. It was to be continued on different lines, but as to what these were to be there was considerable difference of opinion. Internal dissensions were rife in so far that a body of ultra-extremists were coming to the front and ousting all those who were not prepared to subscribe to the most advanced revolutionary ideas or were inquisitive as regards the expenditure of funds. The election of the members of several Provincial Congress Committees was disputed, and an appeal to the General Committee proved abortive, for Mr. Gandhi considered that, apart from the merits of the complaints that were made, any disturbance of the elections would interfere with the working of the programme, so that these were allowed to stand. At the next Indian Congress Committee meeting there were stormy scenes and mutual recriminations, which in one instance almost led to an exchange of blows between a representative of



AN ATTACK THAT FAILED.

CSL

the Punjab and another from the Maharashtra. Certain resolutions were carried and amendments were defeated only on Mr. Gandhi threatening to retire from taking any part in the agitation. The portents were not very favourable, and a catastrophe seemed imminent, as Sir George Lloyd had intimated that the patience of Government was pretty nearly exhausted and unless matters took a different turn incitements to violence that were being indulged in would be put down with a stern and unsparing hand. Mr. Gandhi was certainly riding for a fall. His head was full of fads and fancies, and not the least amongst these was his idea that a revolution can be achieved on peaceful lines.

—: O :—



CSL

CHAPTER V.

THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

The 1st of April 1921 will be a red letter day in the annals of non-co-operation. For on that date at a meeting of the Indian Congress Committee held at Bezwada Mr. Gandhi made an announcement which completely transformed the essential features of the programme as sanctioned by the National Congress. In spite of efforts, the most strenuous, the country as a whole refused to give effect to the various activities that had been prescribed, the only tangible result being the indulgence on the part of the masses of a course of conduct which entirely negatived the non-violent character of this propaganda. It had moreover failed to achieve the object for which it had been set in motion, that is, the paralyzing of an immoral and satanic Government. For these reasons Mr. Gandhi outlined a complete change in the programme, which involved the surrender of the old in favour of a new set of activities on which the people were to concentrate their attention so as to ensure the realization of Swaraj. The cult of the *charkha* was thus introduced, and it demanded :—

1. The collection of a crore of rupees.
2. The enrolment of a crore of members on the Congress register.



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

3. The introduction of 20 lakhs of *charkhas* in Indian homes.

All this was to be achieved before the 30th June. Mr. Gandhi's claim may be conceded that the Bezwada programme was the most concrete ever placed before a nation. But was it necessary to evolve a new programme in supersession of the old?

In view of the mob violence that was being freely indulged in, without placing any good to its credit, appeals were made to Mr. Gandhi to call a halt to the propaganda which he had started, more especially to enable the new Viceroy to study the situation, but his response was by no means favourable. In reply to Mr. Ali Raza he stated: 'Non-co-operation is like a virtue whose practice cannot be suspended at will'. He evaded the question of the disorders and outrages, and enlarged on the impropriety of being asked to give up temperance, *swadeshi* and national education, which he knew commanded general approval. But he would have been false to himself if he had not been impressed by the unfortunate turn the propaganda had taken, entirely in contravention of his injunctions. We therefore find him at Bezwada evolving a new scheme, in supersession of the old, which he considered had been, so far as it had gone, an unqualified success. This was of course a bit



of camouflage which was excusable, for no man, especially one who has come to be looked upon as infallible, likes to acknowledge a defeat. The reason advanced for this view was that 'the Congress has achieved the real object of the propaganda, namely the demolition of the prestige of the bureaucratic Government of this country and of its various institutions'. If there has been a decline in the power and prestige of Government it is due partly to the Punjab affair and partly to its voluntarily taking the people into partnership in the administration of the country, and thereby reducing its own authority. As to the demolition of the prestige of titles, councils, educational institutions and courts, this to the ordinary mind is certainly not perceptible. The honour's list if anything is more portentous, the Councils have a full complement of members and have done and are doing good work for the country, the educational institutions are demanding increased accommodation for the students, and the cry is for more universities and colleges while the courts are as active as ever they were. But as Mr. Gandhi exacts implicit obedience, he was able to impose his dictum that a change in the programme was urgently called for.

It is impossible to withhold a tribute to Mr. Gandhi's sagacity and foresight. After the



Nagpur Congress he toured all over India, and considering the attendant noise and hubbub, and that thousands of persons were eager to catch a glimpse of him, even if they could not pay him their personal homage, this may indeed be called a triumphal progress. He visited some places more than once. He persuaded and implored the educated classes to give practical effect to his propaganda. He even resorted to a mild form of intimidation, inasmuch as he threatened them with his displeasure if they refused to do this. But the result as a whole was discouraging. He tried his hands with immature youths, and on the whole retired baffled and discomfited. He widened his net so as to bring the masses within the scope of his agitation, and found as before that they were beyond being controlled, and were disposed to indulge in disorders and outrages which were the preliminary step to anarchy. Mr. Gandhi has oft times stated that he would even prefer anarchy as the result of the dislodgement of a Government that was unjust and satanic, but he has consistently advocated that to bring about this result there must be no resort to violence. He desired a revolution, but it was to be a peaceful revolution. Whether such a thing is possible we need not wait to discuss here. Anyhow he was faced with a peculiar situation,



though it was of his own creation. He had two alternatives, either to allow his propaganda to collapse, and to retire humiliated and defeated, or to continue it and divert it to another channel, keeping the same end in view, and that was *swaraj*. He therefore made the eight items in his original programme subservient to one new item, which he declared was of vital importance, namely the plying of the spinning wheel. He was accused of being a servile imitator of Tolstoy, he would show he was not entirely devoid of originality. So the *charkha* was to become the non-co-operator's war cry, and it was to secure *swaraj*.

But what is *swaraj*? Mr. Gandhi unburdened his soul at Bezvada. 'This realisation of *swaraj*', he said, 'is to be brought about among the masses by making them feel through the use of the spinning wheel that they were no longer dependent on foreigners for their livelihood and progress. If this was achieved, *swaraj* could have been considered to have been realised'. The mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse. All this hubbub and turmoil had then for its end not the displacement of the present Government, though it is satanic, by another which would be angelic, but the introduction of the *charkha* in the houses of the people. If any one else but Mr. Gandhi had ventured



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

to make these startling statements he would have been hissed and yelled at by his supporters, for they had been looking forward to the present rule being substituted by swadeshi rule. But he occupied a position that was unique. He was allowed a latitude denied to others. At a public meeting in Simla, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya rebuked the great Lalaji of Lahore, and imputed to him 'sin' in questioning the *ex cathedra* utterance of Mr. Gandhi. Apart from that, his position was invulnerable. He had certainly announced that the goal non-co-operation had in view was *swaraj*, but as he had never at any time clearly defined it, nor had the Congress fixed an official stamp on its significance, he was at liberty to attach any meaning he liked to it, and could ignore any construction the people may have put on it. When pressed at Nagpur to fix a definite meaning to it, so as to avoid further misunderstanding, he had replied, in substance, '*swaraj* is *swaraj*, wait and see when it is realised on the 1st August 1921, meanwhile train yourself, discipline yourself, for its enjoyment.' In the previous pages we have seen that originally it was self-control or self-rule towards which his mental vision was directed. This he believed could best be attained by the exercise called forth in plying the spinning wheel, which was besides credited with a



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

127
SL

special value from an economic point of view, and he emphasized the fact that when a certain number of people were able to feed and clothe themselves by means of the *charkha*, India would be considered to have realised *swaraj*. This neglected article was therefore introduced into hundreds of thousands of homes. I noticed it at the house of one of the Provincial Ministers, who evidently had faith in the spinning wheel as a factor in rehabilitating India. The victory was therefore with Mr. Gandhi. Long live the *charkha* ! I say this in all seriousness, for, from an economic point of view, it has certain potentialities for advancing the prosperity of the country. The boycott of foreign goods is indefensible, but no exception can be taken to the stimulus given to the use of *swadeshi* articles, and so far it must be admitted Mr. Gandhi scored a success, and a legitimate success. But how long the song of the spinning wheel will continue to be sung, is a question in respect to which it is not safe to hazard an opinion having regard to the experience of Bengal, where the boom given to *swadeshi* had a short lived career. Possibly a similar fate awaits the *charkha*, unless official help comes to its aid, and now that we have Indian Ministers in power such an event is not unlikely.

At the instance of Mr. Gandhi both the scope and the method of working non-co-operation



8 THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

were changed. He declared there was no necessity for any further concentration of effort on the programme as sanctioned by the Congress. He practically dispensed with the co-operation of the educated class, but to achieve *swaraj* within the prescribed period he declared that the masses should be attended to so as to enable them to give form and shape to their aspirations. An appeal was therefore made for men, money and munitions—one crore men to be added to the Congress list, one crore of rupees to be collected and 20 lakhs of *charkhas* to be introduced in Indian homes—all before the 30th June. Mr. C.R. Das, in seconding Mr. Gandhi's resolution, said: 'the spinning wheel, movement was in every way calculated to achieve *swaraj*, which did not mean any particular system of Government, and it was futile to discuss forms of *swaraj*. Man has got a hidden treasure in him. He who is able to find out or discover the real truth of a thing would get *swaraj*'. It is therefore obvious that, according to this new definition, *swaraj* is something which consists in individual realisation, and not on any system of self-government. The *charkha* has been discovered as the best agency by which this can be secured. Mr. Gandhi was so far impressed with its potentialities that he offered a reward of Rs. 5,000 for a new and improved



spinning wheel. And was it a mere coincidence than an English firm was manufacturing and advertising a cheap but efficient spinning wheel? What the cotton spinners in England will lose may at least partially be made up by the inventors of a cheap and serviceable *charkha*.

Taking Mr. Gandhi at his word, the Hon'ble Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhry, Minister in charge of Agriculture and Public Works in Bengal, convened a conference of the chief officials of those departments and of Divisional Commissioners, and it was agreed to make an agricultural survey of the districts. In view of the national demand for cotton cultivation, and the renewal of the spinning wheel as a home industry, every officer of the department was to try to give all the assistance in his power to the improvement of cotton cultivation. The Minister also made a number of other suggestions for the improvement of cattle, the establishment of dairy farms and industries of various kinds in the mofussil. To improve the efficiency of technical schools all over Bengal he obtained the sanction of the Council to spend a lakh of rupees in payment of grants-in-aid to technical schools. The United Provinces Government outlined a somewhat ambitious scheme for the future expansion of industries, but Sir Harcourt Butler very rightly expected the people to do



30. THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

their share, for he thinks that it is to private initiative, private enterprise, private capital and private enthusiasm that those who hope for the industrial development of India must look in the main. The Behar Government resolved to hold an All-India handweaving exhibition in Patna about the first week of December.

The *charkha* came therefore to be the future war cry of the non-co-operators. But as no battle can be fought without a flag the necessity for a National Flag was expounded in an article in *Young India*, which deserves perusal in full. It starts:— 'A flag is a necessity for all nations. Millions have died for it. It is no doubt a kind of idolatry which it would be a sin to destroy. For a flag represents an ideal. The unfurling of the Union Jack evokes in the English breast sentiments whose strength it is difficult to measure. The stars and stripes mean a world to the Americans. The star and the crescent will call forth the best bravery in Islam. It will be necessary for us Indians—Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Jews and Parsis, and all others to whom India is their home—to recognise a common flag to live and to die for.' The three last named communities however required a little further education before they could duly appreciate the consideration shown



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

131

them by being allowed to share in the benefits meant specially for the Hindus and the Mahomedans. If this flag was to be used as a sign of notional unity they were prepared to accept it. If it was meant to stimulate the industrial development of India, by encouraging a love for *swadeshi* articles they would accord it a whole-hearted welcome. But if it was to be utilised when deeds of violence or lawlessness were being committed, or to rally the people of India to join with the Afghans or any other foreign invaders to drive the English out of India, they hoped Mr. Gandhi would allow a little freedom of choice in respect to the adoption of this flag. The article then went on to describe the flag which was to have a background of three equal parts and in three different colourings, the red representing the Hindu, the green—Islam and the white, other faiths. The weakest numerically occupy the first place, the Islamic colour comes next, the Hindu colour red comes last, the idea being that the strongest should act as a shield to the weakest. The white colour moreover represents purity and peace. Thank you Mr. Gandhi. After this there can be no objection to support your request that:—‘Those who believe with me will make haste to introduce the spinning wheel in their home and possess a national flag’



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

of the design suggested by me.' And as this flag is to be made of *khaddar*, no doubt, it will have a tremendous boom.

Coming events cast their shadows before, and so we find the ultra-democrat, Bipen Chandra Pal, anticipating the Bezwada pronouncement by a few days, and unfurling the standard of revolt. As president of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal he emphasized the fact that he was unable to accept pontifical authority in politics after he had discarded it in religion, and was therefore unwilling to respond to the call, 'Sell all thou hast and follow me', that he was not prepared to accept the dictum '*swaraj* is *swaraj*, it is to be felt within and not to be defined by words', that he repudiated the *swaraj* sanctioned by the Congress, which may imply an emancipation in the religious or theological sense, but was otherwise meaningless that the time had arrived when a precise definition of *swaraj* must be announced, because a day of reckoning will come when the people will find out that they have been dreaming of one thing and you were talking of another thing and that it appeared to him that 'the only possibility of the attainment of *swaraj* by non-violent non-co-operation is through a compromise between the British Government and the people of India'. The fat was in the fire, for the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

joke being perpetrated at the expense of Mr. Gandhi was more than the audience could relish. Mr. Pal threatened to leave the chair, complaining that it was 'the unkindest cut of all', inviting him to discourse on *swaraj* and then denouncing him because he had uttered some unpleasant truths. He, however, forgot that his real mission was that he was called upon to bless the Mahatma instead of which he had cursed him. Thanks to the wear and tear of eight months excitement, the educated extremists were losing their ordinary ferocity, but for which the much respected president would have been hunted out of the Assembly. This split in the extremist camp in Bengal was an index that in that Province at least non-co-operation was at discount.

Having burnt his boats, Mr. Pal, in his closing speech, announced that having no faith in Mr. Gandhi's gospel, he had no option but to part company with him. 'Conscience', he added, 'demands this practical protest against a tendency which I believe to be fatal to our future.' I pass over Mr. Pal's idea of *swaraj*, for the last time we met he accused me of an absolute ignorance of democratic institutions, to which I retorted that considering he always talked so much over my head, I was not likely to learn anything from him. He was certainly talking over the heads of his Barisal audience.



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

When he pronounced his scheme of a truly democratic swaraj, commencing with the central or the Government of India upon a federal basis, the component parts of this Pan-Indian Federation being the different provinces reconstructed on a linguistic basis, and then passing through various gradations to end with the revised and reconstructed village communities. If Mr. Pal and I can manage to live for a hundred years, it will be time enough then to discuss how far his scheme is practicable. Meanwhile his resignation of the membership of the All-India Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee left a blank in Bengal which it was not easy to fill.

Had Mr. Pal then sold himself to the Government or had he even joined the ranks of the moderates? Neither the one nor the other. He remained a non-co-operator but desired non-co-operation to be worked in such a way that it would bring in the promised *swaraj*, which he construed as a form of Government in which the will of the people would be supreme without necessarily cutting asunder the English connection. As a practical man, he objected to the energies of the people being frittered away in irrelevant ventures. He valued the *charkha*, and desired to see it more commonly utilised, but he was unable to see what connection it had with *swaraj*, especially when



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL 135

this *swaraj* had no specific meaning, attached to it. The Hindu thinks of a Hindu raj, the followers of the Prophet, who say they are Moslems first and Indians next, are yearning for the foundation of a Mussalman empire, the Sikhs and Mahrattas would like to see their past glories revived, the Indian Princes long for their arbitrary rule to be strengthened. Therefore asked Mr. Pal :—‘This *swaraj* for which we are crying so much—Whose Raj will it be ? Is it possible to gain that object if that object is not known ?’

So far as the Bezwada programme was concerned it had by reason of the economic advantages accruing therefrom to the country, received the approval of the moderates, apart from its being imposed on the extremists. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya kept hanging on for a time to both parties, till the extremists called him a juggling politician and jeered at him, and practically drove him out of their ranks. He did a good turn, as we shall see further on, to Mr. Gandhi and to the Ali brothers, by arranging the Mahatma’s visit to the Viceroy. This emboldened him to renew his relations with the extremists, and he wired from Simla to Mr. Gandhi that, ‘I am one with you in desiring the carrying out of the constructive Bezwada programme.’ He received no reply, for the said wire contained a



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

piece of advice which must have amused the dictator and sent the Ali brothers into uncontrollable fits of laughter. 'In my opinion', the Pandit wrote, 'avoiding all unnecessary conflict both with Government and among ourselves, all lovers of the motherland should unite in creating a body of solid public opinion, represented by a crore of men and women awakened to a living sense of their duty, their rights and responsibilities as sons and daughters of this ancient land, firm in their loyalty to the potent principles of non-violence, in thought work and deed, and under a vow not to shrink from any sacrifice and suffering which may be needed to raise the motherland by legitimate and peacefull means to a status of equality with the self-governing Dominions of the British Commonwealth and to a place of honour among the nations of the world.'

Now though Mr. Gandhi abandoned the old programme he had by no means dropped the idea of bringing the Government down on its knees, for in an appeal he soon after issued to Englishmen he says:—'I give you the whole of my motive when I tell you, that I am impatient to end or mend a system which has made India subservient to a handful of you, and which has made Englishmen feel secure in the shadow of the forts and the guns that obtrude themselves on



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

CSL 197

One's notice in India'. This was pretty conclusive. And so far as the Ali brothers were concerned Mr. Mahomed Ali at Karachi was threatening to start civil disobedience and to unfurl the standard of an Indian republic. The simple minded Pandit was a little premature. Though no serious exception could be taken to the wording of the Bezwada programme, there was something behind it to which publicity was not given and which was far more dangerous than the old programme which merely aimed at the destruction of this, that and the other. Mr. Gandhi is credited with being truthful, but was he frank? The facts will speak for themselves.

The impression left on the minds of the people was that Mr. Gandhi having seen the fruits of a destructive programme had embarked on a constructive programme at Bezwada. In the issue of *Young India*, published directly after the Indian Congress Committee meeting there, he wrote :- 'Questions have been persistently asked as to why this large sum is required. The answer is simple. It is a profitable investment, not for purely personal, but for public good. The amount will be devoted chiefly to distributing spinning wheels and conducting national schools. We have, say, six crore homes, if broken down families may deserve so sweet a name. We must provide these families with spinning wheels, and



enable them to become real homes. One crore of rupees is surely the least amount required for establishing home-spinning on such a basis as to become self-propagating. Similarly, if we are to reconstruct our educational system, we shall need more than one crore of rupees for the purpose. The second question that has been asked is what security is there for honest accountancy? In the first place, we have in Messrs. Chotani and Jamnalal treasurers of unimpeachable integrity. Secondly, we have in Pandit Motilal Nehru a working secretary of great ability, experience and equally unimpeachable integrity. Thirdly, we have a vigilant working committee composed of fifteen representative Indians, who meet at least once a month in order to be able to exercise effective control over Congress affairs. So much for the All-India finance. The All-India Congress Committee is directly liable for the expenditure of one fourth of the fund. The remaining three fourths are to be retained by the Provincial committees for local needs. As with finance, so with the registration of members and manufacture and introduction of spinning wheels. These three are simple and effective tests of our constructive capacity. I suggest to all Congress and Khilafat workers, that they should set apart the last ten days as special Congress days to be solely devoted by them to finishing the Bezvada



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

programme. No speeches are required, no meetings are necessary. Quiet house to house visits and personal canvassing are more effective than meetings, for the class of work before us.'

A crore of rupees sounds a large sum, but it is none too large for establishing home spinning on a permanent or profitable basis. 'Distributed over a large area,' wrote Mr. Gandhi, 'the crore is not much to spend till the end of the year in placing the spinning wheel on a commercial footing.' The question was raised whether having regard to the theory of supply and demand it could ever be a source of profit. Mr. Gandhi asserted it would be so remunerative that by means of the *charkha* it would be quite possible to provide funds for universalising primary education without any extra taxation. He considered it a wonderful instrument which would liberate India and is the biggest part of the machine which would bring *swaraj* to her. He called it a dynamo which keeps the electric light of Khilafat bright and an engine with a hundred and seventy five horse-power to upset the Government. He described it as an airship, which would lift up Hindus and Muslims to God. It is not given to every one to soar to such high flights of the imagination, but Mr. A. K. Thakkar of the Servant of India Society gives the result of an experiment on a fairly large scale which was being



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

carried on in Kathiawar and was certainly interesting, though on the whole not very encouraging. Over 5,000 *charkhas* were at work at 25 centres, a quarter of them being supplied to the spinners by the promoters of the experiment, and the rest being supplied by the spinners themselves. Cotton was regularly supplied and yarn collected at the different centres by paid agents. The spinners mostly belonged to the ordinary cultivating class and the lower middle class and earned at the rate of about two annas a day. They are all women and are not in a position to go out to earn a livelihood. Some of them are *purdah* women, who will not stir out of their homes. However small the income may appear to be they feel it a great boon and bless the soul that has revived the spinning wheel. It must be borne in mind that it is only a supplementary income. Two annas a day may not be much, but it is better than nothing to these poor people. A maund of 40 lbs. of ginned Mathia cotton costs at present about Rs. 9 and the same quantity of cotton turned into cloth (about 31 lbs) costs about Rs. 32. Of this Rs. 2½ goes to the carder, Rs. 6½ to the spinner, Rs 10½ to the weaver and Rs. 3½ for supervision and miscellaneous charges. The *khaddar* costs about seven annas per yard by 27 inches. The whole business is conducted on commercial and not on philanthropic lines but



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
MR

no profits are earned and the *khaddar* is sold at cost price. At present about 80,000 rupees are employed in capital expenses and during the last month over Rs. 20,000 in all were distributed in wages to the different classes of workers. Mr. Thakkar thinks there is a great future for spinning, provided cotton is regularly supplied at various places, but it has to be borne in mind that his experiment is being carried on at a spot which was specially selected by him for its peculiar advantages. And he further emphasized the fact that it is only as a supplementary income that home spinning will be of any value, for by itself it is incapable of providing a living wage to a man or a woman. Those who depend on it as a livelihood will have starvation staring them in the face. A five yard piece of cloth, say a *dhori*, requires 22,500 yards of yarn for its production. One man working six hours a day can spin uneven and rough yarn 700 or 800 yards long of 30-40 counts. So he will have to labour hard for one month before he can produce yarn sufficiently long to weave one *dhori* of 5 yards. But even after one month's spinning the problem of weaving the cloth out of the yarn will still remain. The market price of thread for such a single piece of cloth is between a rupee and quarter and two rupees. So that it comes to this that hand spinning will not fetch more than an



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

anna a day. This is the wages for 6 hours' hard labour every day without respite and that at a time when the price of cloth is abnormally high. When it goes down to its original level, hand spinners will not probably earn even half an anna a day. But even assuming that he works 10 hours a day he cannot earn more than an anna at most, but from this has to be deducted the price of the raw material that is used, so that his net income will not exceed three pice a day. The *Standard Bearer* points out a serious difficulty in the matter of the uniformity of the hand-spun yarn. 'All our experiments,' it says, 'have little availed us to remove from our minds all remnants of doubt and hesitation as regards the success of this industrial movement in the ordinary way. We have given the *charkha* to our students in our school for trial, we given it to our women at home, not to speak of our youths who tried their hands at it, but found it only too difficult to be uniform for a considerable length of the yarn spun. And considering the time and toil and tedious application necessary for the patient job, one has really to heave a sigh of despair and sorrow.

As a matter of fact what is wanted is more hand-loom than hand-spinning. A larger quantity of yarn is produced by Indian spinning mills than can be utilised in the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

143
SL

country and is therefore largely exported. The *Servant of India* dealing with this question states:—

‘At the end of 1917-18 there were in India 72 mills which did only spinning and 163 which did spinning in addition to weaving. These 235 mills produced 62·7 crores lbs. of yarn in that year but the average for the previous four years was somewhat higher. About one-fifth or 13 crore lbs. was exported during the year, while in the four previous years the average quantity exported was nearly 16½ crore lbs. About four yards of cloth of all kinds is manufactured from 1 lb of yarn so that the yarn which is now being exported mostly to China and Japan would suffice for 60 to 65 crore yards of *dhotis*, *chadars*, etc. Supposing an average adult weaver produces 3 yards per day by hand-loom and that he works for 300 days in the year, the yarn which is now sent out of the country would find employment for more than six lakhs of men and they would perhaps be able to clothe nearly all the indigent and clothless people in the country. So it is not the spinning wheel which the situation requires; with greater justice it may be said to be the loom.’

In one of the weekly issues of *Young India* an account is given of the work done in connection with spinning and weaving in Mr. Gandhi's Satyagrah Ashram at Ahmedabad. Nothing could be more depressing or discouraging from the point



44 THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

of view of giving a stimulus to the use of the *charkha*. There were 28 students, male and female and each had to spin 1000 yards a day and was then able to earn a wage of nine pies and a half, thus practically confirming the figures given above. But this does not take into account certain drawbacks which are recited in all fairness. 'The conduct of the class,' it is said, 'is not an easy job. Their spirits are in continual need of cheering. Some of them spin very rapidly. But sometimes there is a grievous attack of headache, at other times there is a still more grievous attack of idleness. Sometimes the hand is fatigued, at other times the wheel gets out of repair.' When this last contingency arises 'the students rise and flee' This is due to the effects of English education, for 'we have not only lost the power of our hands and feet, but we also lack in patience and perseverance. We cannot bear to take the trouble of correcting anything that is wrong.' But an educated man can work wonders. By way of illustration it is stated one of these after a month's training 'worked *twelve to fourteen* hours daily for a number of days and thus proved the *possibility of earning three annas a day*' What an enormous amount to feed and clothe himself, his wife and children!

Then again the song of the spinning wheel has its limitations. It may help in the production of yarn, but will it charm men to take to the hand-loom.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

145
SL

whose activities are mainly, if not solely, dependent on men with whom weaving is a hereditary trade. A large number of these under the pressure of machine made cloth, which rendered their task unremunerative, have taken to agriculture, or have enlisted in the army and Mr. Gandhi says have even become sweepers. Women, whether of high caste or low caste, educated or ignorant, will not think it beneath their dignity to give a little of their spare time to spinning, but will most decidedly draw the line at weaving. Men who will do anything in a factory will hesitate to touch a loom in their villages. They will apart from that lack the requisite expert knowledge, so that in the absence of a sufficient number of hand-loom, to supply which no provision whatever has been made, the production of *khaddar* for general consumption is not so easy a feat as some enthusiastic persons are inclined to credit it with. And supposing a large quantity of *khaddar* is turned out, how is its price to be regulated? Will not this depend on the question of supply and demand? If the demand is great the price will be raised and has been raised, but never mind, says Mr. Gandhi, the well-to-do classes must buy it, partly because they can afford to pay the higher price but mainly because they will be responding to the call made on their patriotism. The products of the Indian mills must be left for the poor. But how if these mills raise



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

their prices, as indeed they have done, especially if foreign cloth was to be boycotted. But we are trenching on a matter reserved for another chapter. We will see that Mr. Gandhi had in view a fantastic method of keeping down prices.

Mr. Gandhi is a man who opens out his mind by stages. Nothing could have been more definite than his pronouncement quoted above as to how the crore of rupees was to be utilised. A few weeks later when the amount had been raised or promised he enlarges the scope of the purpose to which this amount was to be applied. He writes again in *Young India* :—'The funds ought not to be used outside the purpose of non-co-operation, nor generally for any purpose outside (1) the spread of the *charkha* and *khadi*, (2) the removal of untouchability, and hence the elevation of the suppressed classes, (3) the conduct of national schools, where spinning and weaving are a part of the training and (4) the advance of the liquor prohibition campaign. These objects necessarily include the upkeep of the national service. It will be through the instrumentality of that service, that we shall be able to achieve the objects above named. And to achieve the objects above-named is to demonstrate our fitness and ability for attaining *swaraj*'. As regards national education Mr. Gandhi said it needed more than a crore of rupees. If it appropriated this amount



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL 147

there was nothing left for the spinning wheel, and if it was spent on the *charkha* and *khaddi* there would be nothing left for national education. But there were two other campaigns which had to be financed out of this sum, and finally the most important item of all was the upkeep of the national service. It was a vague term, but as was to be expected it swallowed up the bulk of the crore of rupees, leaving very little either for national education or the *charkha*.

With the Bengalis national education is a sore point. It is a case of once bit twice shy. During the partition days of 1905 onwards a large number of national schools was started and an enormous amount of money was spent on them. Where are they now? Hardly a trace of them can be found anywhere. Mr. Pal rightly contended that Bengal will be in no hurry to try another experiment of the same kind. It is impossible to deal with each Province, but what is happening in the Punjab will serve as an illustration and will open the eyes of those who are in ecstasies about the so-called constructive programme of Bezwada. Apparently the Tilak School of Politics in Lahore, which opened with such a flourish of trumpets, was closed after a short career. The Lahore National College has, it appears, no students, and is taken seriously by no one. These few students fared none too well in the so-called examinations they had to



go through, such is also stated to be the case with the National College at Hariana. The Guru Nanak Khalsa College at Gujranwala appears to be in an almost equally moribund condition. Apparently many of the subscriptions which were promised in the first heat of enthusiasm have not been realised, with the natural result that the professors have not been paid and the benches are empty. Confirmation is lent to these gloomy reports by the rumours about the condition of the National school at Amritsar. Here an edifying series of disputes has been going on between two parties who are fighting from personal motives for the control of the institution. We hear that on one occasion at least blows were exchanged, and the matter culminated in each party placing its own series of locks upon the school building. What is Mr. Gandhi doing? He is busy issuing manifestos to all and sundry. But as he honestly believes education is a superfluity he cannot be expected to be much interested in schools, national or otherwise in spite of the Bezvada programme. In the face of an obvious inconsistency he is consistent, for his mission is to destroy and not to create. As pointed out before a resolution of the last Indian Congress Committee enjoins the conversion of the national schools into institutions for hand-spinning and hand-weaving as far as possible.

Let us see how this problem of expenditure works out in practise. The actual sum collected



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

149
SL

or promised is one crore and five lacs, but it has to be borne in mind that there will be a good many defaulters amongst those who have promised big or small donations. When I was in Rawalpindi Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya went there, and held meetings for the collection of funds for the Hindu University. Here was an object which appealed to all classes. The utmost enthusiasm was displayed, and a substantial sum was collected and a fairly large amount was promised. A couple of years later I was told that the net realisations did not exceed more than half of the total amount that had been announced with a great flourish of trumpets at the meetings. Some of the donors of the biggest sums were the defaulters. Apart from this it now turns out that the amounts announced as having been collected by the various Provinces are in some instances entirely fictitious. Bengal had 25 lakhs placed to its credit, but it appears that no more than 3 lakhs have been realised. Mr. C. R. Das says he hopes to raise the balance sometime or other. Granting that Mr. Gandhi's personal magnetism can effect a great deal, but he cannot be everywhere and he cannot interview every one. Then again in view of the fact that he has proclaimed a boycott of foreign piece-goods some of the subscribers have threatened that they will ask for a refund of their subscriptions, and others who have not paid that they will decline to pay them. If



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

out of the one crore and five lacs the net realisation is sixty lakhs it is putting it far above the mark. But out of this $\frac{1}{4}$ th goes to the Indian Congress Committee, leaving a balance of say roughly forty-five lakhs. As regards the money which goes to the Central Committee, with men like Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Mr. C. R. Das, Dr. Ansari and Mr. Chotani every pice is sure to be spent in a legitimate manner, and that is for purposes mainly of propaganda, which includes special trains for Messrs. Gandhi, and Mahomed Ali and the travelling expenses of the other leaders in their constant movements from one part of India to another, though Mr. Gandhi is also found complaining that all the Provincial Congress Committee have not paid in their fixed quotas. But so far as the money in the hands of Provincial Committees, District Committees, and Village Committees is concerned at least 30 per cent. or more of the money will be embezzled or spent in illegitimate purposes. What has already appeared in the preceding pages fully justifies this estimate, and as a matter of fact those who are in touch with the various movements that are now in possession of the field of agitation consider this to be a moderate figure. If then out of the balance of 45 lakhs say 15 lakhs are misspent the net amount in hand will be 30 lakhs. The first charge on



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
151

this sum will be the upkeep of the men and women engaged in national service.

It has to be borne in mind that a vigorous propaganda is to be carried on in respect to the drink question, the removal of untouchability, the spread of the *charkha* and the enrollment of one crore men on the Congress register. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and it is a fact generally known that a class of men have within recent times come into existence who were unknown before, and they constitute the large army of professional agitators who give their services not from patriotic motives, but merely because they are paid for it. When the Nagpore Congress was held the Chairman of the Reception Committee donated the sum of rupees one lac to be spent on pleaders and students who were dependent on public funds for their support. The actual amount spent on what is called national service will never be disclosed, but we may form a general idea in respect to it by ascertaining what is really devoted to the objects for which the fund was originally raised. We have Mr. Gandhi's specific statement that it was to be applied to the support of national schools and the supply of *charkhas*. We have seen that any such schools that were started when the non-co-operation excitement was at its height are languishing for want of funds. In the course of a year or so they



2 THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

will be gradually wiped out of existence unless converted into *charkha* schools as Mr. Gandhi wishes. Even as regards the *charkha* though there was an impetus given to it in the early days of the propaganda there is a total absence of any organised effort to supply these in villages where they are most likely to be utilised. I myself believe the *charkha* has come to stay and that it will never be entirely given up. In the Punjab it has undoubtedly obtained a good footing. The women have been sufficiently roused to do their little bit to help the national cause, and they find in the spinning wheel an outlet for their patriotic energy. As to the men Mr. Gandhi publicly rebuked them for protesting that spinning was none of their business, and impressed on them that if they wanted to free India they ought to use the *charkha* and thus alone would poverty be banished from the land. The *khaddi* will become more and more popular with all classes of the community and as a supplementary income the spinning wheel will bring bread to thousands of starving families, provided there is a sustained effort for years, and especially in the direction of producing finer counts of yarn. But that the *charkha* was going to benefit largely by the crore and five lacs that were said to have been collected or promised grave doubts were rightly entertained.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
58

We shall presently see that behind the Bezwada programme as made public there was a project to which publicity was not given and which was to have a prior claim on any funds that might come into the hands of those who are directing and controlling the present day agitation. The money, wrote Mr. Gandhi, is to be collected within a month's time and then 'we must wait for the All-India Congress Committee to give us a definite lead for the months to follow.' He knew perfectly what this was to be, for it is he himself who was to give it, though in the name of the Congress Committee. But it is pertinent to inquire where was the necessity for any further lead when at Bezwada a programme had been drawn up which definitely stated the amount that was to be raised, the purposes for which it was to be utilised and on what lines the propaganda was to be conducted. By way of a preliminary canter the Working Committee of the Indian Congress Committee (*alias* Mr. Gandhi) published its decision before even the money had been collected 'that it is open to the Provincial Congress Committees to spend any part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund administered by *them for any purpose that may further the cause of non-co-operation*. This was significant, for it nullified Mr. Gandhi's engagement that the money was to be utilised in the



THE SONG OF THE SPINNING WHEEL.

CSL

spread of national education and the *charkha*. And so it happened that when the Indian Congress Committee did meet in Bombay, no special sum was allotted for any specific purpose, but a number of objects were mentioned to which it was to be devoted. We shall presently see how it was appropriated and it was no more than giving effect to certain deliberations which took place at Bezwada, and which were not reduced into the shape of a final resolution.

—: O :—



CHAPTER VI.

CSL

THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

On the first August 1929 all that was mortal in Bal Gangadhar Tilak was cremated on the Chowpatty Sands of Bombay amid the lamentations of a seething mass of humanity who came to pay the last tribute of respect to one in whom they recognised the greatest patriot India had produced. Even the heavens joined in the general mourning, for there was a steady downpour of rain for hours. On the eve of the first anniversary of this day, on the self-same spot, another cremation was witnessed of articles aggregating about a lakh and a half, that had been loved and appreciated once upon a time, but were now the objects of contumely and hatred. They had ministered to the comfort of mankind, but were being reduced to ashes because such were the injunctions of one who had secured the position of an autocrat and who revelled in doing that which was extraordinary. Instead of manifestations of grief there were explosions of indignation against a Satanic Government which it was verily believed had done India a grievous injury. But a casual glance at the vast gathering of men and women, who jostled each other to secure a convenient position as on-lookers, was enough to raise the suspicion that the predominant feeling was a pardonable curiosity in respect to the political leaders of the day,



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

or the desire to witness a spectacular display which was all the more attractive by reason of its originality. Bonfires of sorts are not unknown in India, but never in its varied history did it happen that the combustible material was composed of clothings that were still serviceable of men, women and children. But the decree had been passed that foreign cloth should be burnt, which freely interpreted, brought together a large and miscellaneous heap consisting of foreign caps and hats, costly coats and trousers, embroidered Mahomedan vests, bright coloured silk saris, ties, and laces, a variety of umbrellas and parasols and boots and shoes of all sizes.

But what led to this conflagration of such useful articles? Mr. Gandhi in his speech, delivered the next day, congratulated the people for having burnt the greatest pollution, namely foreign clothing. By their noble sacrifice they had qualified themselves for celebrating Lokmanya Tilak's memory. He urged all to dedicate themselves for the realisation of Tilak's dream of *swaraj* which could not be attained without true *swadeshi*. It was a piece of sacrilege to take Tilak's name in this connection. When living he was considered the stormy petrel in Indian politics. He returned from his last incarceration in 1914, and in the *Mahratta* of August 30, 1914, we find him writing in connection with the War that had by now



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

157
SL

broken out :—‘The present crisis is, in my opinion, a blessing in disguise inasmuch as it has universally evoked our united feelings and sentiments of loyalty to the British Throne. At such a crisis it is, I firmly hold, the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor, to support and assist His Majesty’s Government, to the best of his ability.’ Here was a rare example of magnanimity, for Tilak was no hypocrite. The words proceeded from his heart. He would have scorned to take a part in this artificial display of indignation on the part of individuals who were suddenly inspired by the idea that a bonfire of foreign clothes was necessary for their political salvation.

Like many an Indian politician Mr. Gandhi is deeply impressed with the necessity of stimulating a *swadeshi* spirit for the promotion of the material welfare of the country. It is by no means an original idea, for much has been said and written about it. There are a good many persons who have given practical expression to it by restricting themselves to the use of home made articles and amongst these is Mr. Gandhi himself. Some years ago in a temporary fit of indignation over the partition question Bengal not only adopted the *swadeshi* cult but went in for a strict boycott of foreign products. The experiment was far from satisfactory. In fact



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

Bengal admits its defeat, which was brought about by a curious combination of adverse circumstances. The Bombay millowners doubled the price of *dhotis* which are the chief article of clothing of the people. English cloth of the same kind could be had about 20 to 30 per cent. cheaper. While on the one hand an intense spirit of self-sacrifice was in evidence, amounting almost to religious fervour, on the other hand the Bhatias of Bombay and the traders of Gujerat were taking advantage of it to enrich themselves by resorting to a variety of tricks. Then again there was an absence of unanimity to contend against. The educated Hindus plumped for a close boycott, but the Moslems, Marwaris and other Hindusthanis were against it. And when it was found that the supply was not equal to the demand the collapse of the boycott was inevitable.

It is strange that in the face of the experience of Bengal Mr. Gandhi should try to resuscitate a movement which when previously set in motion proved a failure. But it is a greater puzzle why he should be acting contrary to his deliberately formed views on this question. He is a man of intense feeling, which finds expression in language that in others would savour of exaggeration. In 1919 he contributed an article to the *Gujrati*, entitled 'The Swadeshi



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

159
SL

'Vow', a translation of which appeared in the Indian Review of May 1919. He stated therein that in patronising foreign cloth we had committed a deep sin, and he asked the people to take a vow to abstain altogether from clothing of a foreign manufacture. Such a vow, he held, would be indicative of a desire to do penance for our sins, to resuscitate the lost art of hand-weaving and to save the country the crores of rupees which go out of it annually in exchange for the cloth we receive. And he then went on to distinguish between *swadeshi* and boycott. '*Swadeshi*,' he said, 'is a religious conception. It is the natural duty imposed upon every man. The well-being of people depends upon it and the *swadeshi* vow cannot be taken in a punitive or revengeful spirit. The *swadeshi* vow is not derived from any extraneous happening, whereas boycott is a purely worldly and political weapon. It is rooted in ill will and a desire for punishment, and I can see nothing but harm in the end of a nation that resorts to boycott. One who wishes to be a Satyagrahi for ever cannot participate in any boycott movement.' When Mr. Gandhi first started non-co-operation it had four stages attached to it, and in none of them do we find any inculcation in respect to *swadeshi* or boycott of foreign cloth. Only the first stage had been put in force before the Special Congress met in Calcutta in September 1920, and sanctioned an



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

amplified programme of non-co-operation. The resolution relating to it was moved by Mr. Gandhi because in the Subjects Committee his proposal had been found acceptable ; and clause (g) of the resolution merely advised immediate stimulation of further manufacture of cloth on a large scale by means of reviving handspinning in every home and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who for want of patronage had been forced to abandon their calling. But in the Committee an amendment moved by Mr. Vijjiyaranghavaachariar had been carried by which the words 'boycott of foreign cloth' were to form part of cluse (g) as framed by Mr. Gandhi. It was with reluctance he moved the resolution with such a provision for he considered boycott a kind of violence. He made no secret of the fact that he would get it altered at the approaching regular Session of the Congress. In this he was foiled as the very person at whose instance these words were added was elected as the President. Mr. Gandhi, however, allowed this clause to remain a deed letter, and in the strenuous propaganda on which he embarked, boycott of foreign cloth found no place, for he resented what he called an 'unfortunate interpolation due to a misapprehension.'

We now pass on to the next stage which takes us on to the 1st April, 1921, when the old



programme was superseded at Bezwada by another in which the demand was made for men, money and munitions, the last in the shape of *charkhas* which would certainly win *swaraj*. Here again we find no mention of the boycott of foreign cloth, nor in any of the speeches he delivered in his extended tour till he found himself at Simla. Here there was an interesting deal with reference to his friends the Ali brothers, and on the 15th May he addressed a public meeting at which he stated that the attainment of *swaraj* depended upon the spirit of fearlessness and sacrifice, non-violence, Hindu-Moslem unity and the use of the *charkha*. No mention was made either of boycott or *swadeshi*. Just about a week later appeared in *Young India* an amplified form of the programme, one of the items being the ceaseless introduction of the spinning wheel and the ceaseless production of *khaddar* leading to an almost complete boycott of foreign cloth. There was no direct incitement to boycott, which was to be the indirect result of the extensive use of *khaddar*. From Simla Mr. Gandhi went on to Bombay, where on the 29th the Ali brothers published their apology. That same evening Mr. Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu and others addressed a public meeting at Matunga. All the speakers urged a strenuous and united action for the attainment of *swaraj*, but no mention was made of boycott of foreign cloth as furthering the end, while Mr. Gandhi complained as to the



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

inadequate response to the Bezwada programme. On the 30th May the Government communique relating to the apology of the Ali brothers was published.

During the month of June Mr. Gandhi's mind was exercised by two different matters. The first was the effort to repudiate the fact that the Ali brothers had submitted an apology to the Viceroy or to the Government. The other matter related to the raising of the crore of rupees for the Tilak Swarajya Fund. The prospect of realising this amount by the end of June seemed far from promising. On the 20th June Mr. Gandhi had what he called a heart to heart talk with the Parsees at the Central Parsee Association, where he said he was fighting for Parliamentary Government and would be content with Dominion Self-Government. No allusion was made to *swadeshi* or boycott. On the 26th June Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya sent a wire from Simla to Mr. Gandhi in Bombay, a portion of which has already been quoted. He said with reference to this Fund that he hoped that the amount collected would reach 50 lakhs of rupees by the end of the month and that it would be gratifying if the full crore of rupees could be attained before the Congress meets in December. He made an appreciative reference to the Bezwada constructive programme, a clear indication that he



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

163
SL

had no knowledge that it was under contemplation to make the boycott of foreign goods the main plank of the future agitation for *swaraj*. Mr. Gandhi and his adherents were busy during the week with the Tilak Swaraj Fund. He addressed on the 30th June eleven crowded public meetings in different parts of Bombay, but not one word relating to boycott was reported.

Suddenly the scene changes. The Associated Press wired from Bombay that since the 1st July, after Mr. Gandhi's crore had been fully subscribed, he had struck a different note. In a letter written to the *Bombay Chronicle*, under the heading 'What must we do now?' he sprang on an unsuspecting public a new demand to the effect that:—'Our inevitable next step is to bring about a complete boycott of foreign cloth. On the 1st August falls the anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak's death. We can if we work with the same zeal as we have worked for the collection, bring about almost a complete boycott before that date, without which India will not have the power to establish *swaraj*.' This is the first intimation that boycott of foreign cloth was requisite for the attainment of *swaraj*. The *Bombay Chronicle* further published the instructions issued by Mr. Gandhi in respect to this boycott. Importers were advised not



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

to buy foreign goods and consumers to refuse to purchase foreign cloth and to buy *khaddi* wherever possible. The mill-made cloth was to be used only by the poor, 'as they do not know the distinction between *swadeshi* and *pardeshi*.' Foreign cloth was to be destroyed or sold for use abroad or to be worn out for all dirty work during private hours. And Mr. Gandhi added, 'it is needless to say at this time of day that the proposed boycott of foreign cloth is not a vindictive process, but is as necessary for national existence as breath is for life.' In the course of an informal conference with piece-goods dealers he gave these to understand that they would be allowed two months' time to clear their present stocks and cancel their orders, and that if they did not refrain from dealing in imported piece-goods their shops would be picketed. He also addressed an open letter to the mill-owners urging them to help the country by not raising the prices of their goods when an impetus was given to the demand.

Non-co-operation at the start was a protest against the despotism of the bureaucracy. In a few months it had set up a dictatorship more arbitrary, autocratic and dogmatic than the worst form of bureaucracy. The National Congress in 1921 was in a moribund condition. With all its noise and fury it existed merely to register the decrees of the autocrat. The Congress



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
185

Committee had been so manipulated that its members, though sometimes inclined to revolt, ended by tamely accepting and endorsing Mr. Gandhi's proposals. He did not even pay them the compliment of obtaining their nominal sanction before starting a new scheme or initiating a new policy. In the matter of the boycott of foreign articles Mr. Gandhi set it going off his own bat, and a month later asked the Congress Committee to sanction it at its meeting on the 28th July at Bombay. He produced a resolution which not only proposed a complete boycott of foreign cloth but insisted on its total destruction. It was strongly urged that the discarded garments should be given away to the poor in India. Mr. Gandhi took strong exception to this mode of disposal, and put forward his own point of view that the cloth which marks India's shame and degradation was fit only to be destroyed. It would hurt the dignity and self-respect of the poor in the same manner as would rotten and uneatable food given to them. After prolonged discussion and considerable divergence of opinion Mr. Gandhi's resolution was adopted. It was also decided that the collection of discarded foreign clothes should be continued till the 31st August either for destruction or for exportation to Smyrna, and that dealers would be permitted to retain foreign cloth in stock for re-exportation only.



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

But Mr. Gandhi had no hesitation in running a coach and four through any resolution that did not suit him. The boycott of foreign cloth had remained a dead letter in spite of the Congress sanction so long as he did not approve of it, and in a similar manner he ignored the Congress Committee's decision to export to Smyrna discarded articles of this kind, and insisted on their immediate destruction. He set fire to the Bombay pile on the 1st August, and in other cities there were similar bonfires, while more were promised on different dates which were usually arranged so as to coincide with the visit of a non-co-operating celebrity, for whom the honour was reserved of performing the funeral obsequies of the cast off clothing by putting a lighted match or a torch to the heap of rejected articles. Such an honour was reserved for Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on the 28th August at Poona, where he was announced to address an open air meeting on *swadeshi*. The previous day there was a bonfire of foreign cloth on the occasion of Lala Lajpat Rai's lecture on the same subject and some enthusiasts wanted to repeat the scene for Malaviyaji's edification. Some foreign caps and clothes had been collected and pressure was being brought to bear upon a well-known Inamdar with a view to make him part with his turban. But the Inamdar refused to give away his turban unless



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
167

every piece of foreign cloth in possession of all the members of the audience had been secured for the bonfire. But this did not suit the enthusiastic young men. An outcry was then raised for the wearer of the foreign turban leaving the meeting. As soon as Pandit Malaviya came to know of what was happening, he caused it to be announced that if the turban wearer was interfered with he would be forced to leave the meeting without making any speech. This had the desired effect and the meeting continued without any trouble. In the course of his remarks, the Pandit while strongly in favour of *swadeshi*, expressed his emphatic disapproval of the burning of foreign cloth that had been paid for, it was wrong, in his opinion, to throw that money into water. If they did not want to use it, it could as well be used to clothe a number of people in the country who were going without clothes. The speech was listened to with attention, but as soon as the Pandit and the more prominent leaders left the meeting the audience indulged in a bonfire of foreign cloth at that place.

From what has gone before it is clear that up till recently Mr. Gandhi has been opposed to the boycott of foreign cloth, holding it to be a kind of violence. He, as stated before, flouted the Congress mandate which had made it a part of the non-co-operation programme. As to this



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

It is said, and perhaps with a certain amount of truth, that the Marwaris having helped him at the Special Congress both with men and with money he was unwilling to do anything that would inflict on them any pecuniary loss, which was inevitable, as they were closely interested in the foreign piece-goods trade. But how is that on the 1st July he suddenly became a convert to a theory he had repeatedly denounced? The *volte face* was so sudden and so striking that there must have been some strong reason for it. Ordinarily the conviction is gradual that an erroneous opinion is being entertained, and it is with hesitation and diffidence that it is surrendered. But Mr. Gandhi went to sleep on the night of the 30th June a strong opponent of boycott and the next morning woke up such a stern and uncompromising advocate of it that he was unwilling to tolerate any difference of opinion in respect to it. Some of his adherents will say he received a sudden inspiration, but as there is considerable method in this inspiration it is possible to explain it by natural causes. Several reasons combined to bring about this new departure.

We have seen that it was at his own instance Mr. Gandhi sought an interview with the Viceroy, which he characterised as a distinct success, having done a good stroke of business in saving the Ali brothers from a criminal



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
182

prosecution. In reply to the criticism to which he was exposed he not only defended his action but stated :— ' I expect in the future a settlement by discussion and compromise in matters not of vital interest'. Mr. Lajpat Rai expressed the sentiments of the non-co-operators when he sounded a note of warning against this new departure of Mr. Gandhi, which was dead against the principle of non-co-operation. But these laudable sentiments of Mr. Gandhi were very soon arrested, for he resented the Government Communique which was published the day after the Ali brothers' apology, and the Viceroy's speech at the Chelmsford Club, which followed a few days later. These had made the Ali brothers furious by reason of their being made the objects of scorn and contempt. If possible it increased their hostility to the English nation, for while giving solemn assurances that they would refrain from violence they found that in the boycott of foreign cloth there was a handy instrument for giving practical and immediate effect to their ill-concealed desire to inflict what injury they could on those towards whom they entertained an intense hatred. A reference has been made more than once to the fact that they exercised a considerable influence over Mr. Gandhi, and they took advantage of it to the full, and found in Mr. Lajpat Rai an excellent coadjutor. Mr.



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

Gandhi succumbed, as is evident by his changed attitude towards Lord Reading and the Government. He repudiated the Viceroy's efforts towards a reconciliation with the people and reiterated the demand for the full pound of flesh in the shape of adequate amends in respect to the Khilafat and the Punjab. He announced that it was the duty of every good man to be disaffected towards the existing Government if he considers it, as non-co-operators do, to be an evil. His futile efforts to convince the world that the Ali brothers' apology was no apology had no doubt an irritating effect on his mind, for at last he admitted that it was a mistake on his part to have interfered in the matter at all. He found besides that his propaganda had entirely failed to attain the end in view, that of paralyzing the Government and forcing it to surrender at discretion. Personal pique and resentment had a good deal to do in bringing him to a frame of mind which was unable to resist the pressure brought to bear by the Ali brothers to declare a boycott of foreign cloth, which would inflict a tangible injury on the English nation. In the subsequent picketing operations it was the Khilafat hirelings who were most active in influencing unwilling traders to desist from selling foreign cloth, which indicates the special interest taken in this matter by the Moslem leaders.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
171

But there was another powerful factor which helped to bring about Mr. Gandhi's conversion. He had made a demand on the 1st April for Rupees one crore, and had toured over a good part of India in quest of funds. In two and a half months,, that is by the 15th June, he had barely collected 30 lakhs and had tapped the country dry. It was more than doubtful if he could make up even 50 lakhs by the end of June. But Mr. Gandhi has an infinity of resources at his command. On his arrival in Bombay he began considering ways and means, and what is more to the point he discovered that by the boycott of foreign goods his demands could easily be met. His scruples were overcome so that in the last few days of June money came pouring in, till by the end of the month one crore and five lakhs had been raised. The details of the contributions as per provinces were as follows :—

PROVINCE :		RUPEES IN LAKHS :
Bombay city	...	37½
Bengal	...	25
Gujrat and Kathiawar	...	15
Punjab	...	5
Madras and Andhra	...	4
Central Provinces and Berars	} ...	3
Maharashtra (including Bombay subarbs.	} ...	0



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

Behar	...	3
Sind	...	2
Burmah	...	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
United Provinces	...	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Karnatak	...	1
Delhi	...	2
Ajmere and Merwara	...	$\frac{1}{2}$
Orissa and Assam	...	$\frac{1}{4}$
Total		<hr/> 105 <hr/>

It is doubtful if the details of individual donations will ever be published. Why is Madras so far behind and how is it that the United Provinces which is so keen about having civil disobedience started at once and is the home of the Ali brothers should cut so poor a figure? How is it that the personal magnetism of Mr. Gandhi which had failed elsewhere should have had such a special success in Bombay city and in Gujrat? He was shrewd enough to see that rich as they are their wealth is mostly in the hands of owners of mills that manufactured cotton goods and of the holders of large stocks in spinning and weaving companies. Here was a rich mine to tap. A week or so before the end of June he resolved on exploiting them, though the doing this involved a sacrifice of principle on his part, in as much as he would be dealing with people who utilised machinery, which he had consistently



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

condemned. He found them agreeable to be victimised provided they received an adequate return. This was to be furnished in the shape of an organised propaganda for the boycott of foreign piece-goods which would secure the Indian mill owners a double advantage. The people would be forced to patronise their products exclusively and the Indian mills would realise an assured position by the removal of the competition of foreign goods which might be sold at a price lower than that of their own products. The transaction was profitable to both parties, who acted on the principle that the end justifies the means. It is clear then that the boycott of foreign cloth on which now rests the political salvation of the country is the price that was being paid for the money that had been extracted from mill-owners and from shareholders in the various spinning and weaving companies which are chiefly to be found in Bombay city and in Gujrat. The recompense for their donations was not long in coming. It was reported that Bombay and Ahmedabad mill owners had within a few days raised their prices, and mill shares had gone up as a result of it. Within a short interval they will have recouped the amount they had parted with under the impression that they were doing a good stroke of business. Another method of compensating the special donors to the



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

Swaraj fund consisted in relaxing the cry against cloth made in Indian mills, and concentrating it on the boycott of foreign goods. Mr. Gandhi has a deep-seated aversion to machinery, and he considers that Indian mills are responsible to a large extent in strangling the cotton industry of India. His peculiar tenderness towards them at this juncture is significant. For a careful study of his speeches establishes the fact that boycott and the process of destruction were reserved exclusively for cloth made in foreign countries. Though he restricts the meaning of true *swadeshi* to cloth woven by hand-loom out of yarn produced by the *charkha*, he is aware that enough material of this kind is not available to clothe even a fraction of the Indian population, in spite of the fact that the luxury of the *khaddar* is reserved for the richer classes and the *intelligentsia*, while the poor and the ignorant have a free run of the products of the Indian mills. The owners and shareholders thereof are quite content with this arrangement, for it is a matter of indifference to them who buys their fabrics, so long as there is a ready sale for them.

But as a result of this interesting deal between Mr. Gandhi and the mill owners, absolute ruin stared in the face of the dealers in foreign piece-goods, whether wholesale or retail, and the rich *aratis* or middle men through whom foreign cloth is



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
173

distributed all over India. Mr. Gandhi prudently delayed the announcement of the boycott till they had been fully tapped and had paid in their donations big or small. This explains why the psychological moment of the declaration of the boycott fell on the 1st July and not before. 'What harm,' wrote Mr. Gandhi in *Young India*, 'is there in gaining a million by concealing my faith for a moment'. On that date, the financial operations having come to a close the day before, the exhilarating request was made to the traders that they had better seek other avenues of employment for a living, as foreign cloth was in future to be tabooed. If the boycott succeeded these would be ruined men and nothing more was to be got out of them, whereas mill owners and large share holders could again be exploited, having grown fat with big profits. Mr. Gandhi has declared that the amount now collected is not to be invested but to be spent before the close of the year, by which time *swaraj* would certainly have been declared. The author of this new political dispensation had scored at all points. He got the money he wanted and began posing as a hero who was paying off the British nation for their misdeeds in the past for having intentionally ruined the cotton industry of India. With an air of injured innocence he asserted that there was nothing vindictive about this new phase of



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

agitation, though only a short time before in the travail of his soul he had warned the people to eschew boycott as 'it is rooted in ill-will and a desire for punishment.' We live in a free world with full liberty to play skittles with our opinions, but it is difficult to understand how an action is reckoned at one time to be vindictive and at another time to be not vindictive. Any amount of license is however allowed to a saint, but as to the motives of his lieutenants the Ali brothers and Mr. Lajpat Rai, their antecedents unfortunately lay them open to the charge that they would hesitate at nothing that was calculated to injure the English nation.

The non-co-operators defend retaliation on the ground that British action in the past had deliberately ruined the cotton industry in India. On the other hand certain Anglo-Indian publicists have repudiated this charge. One of them in dealing with Mr. Gandhi's appeal to Englishmen in India to join him in the boycott of foreign cloth wrote that, 'the appeal would be more cogent if Mr. Gandhi did not confuse the issue by importing into the discussion aged myths which have long been exploded. It is not a fact that Lancashire cloth was forced upon India or that her own world famed manufactures were deliberately and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

127
SL

systematically ruined'. Now there can be no question that this new move on the part of Mr. Gandhi to boycott foreign cloth deserves to be condemned from various points of view, but why Englishmen should try to weaken a good case by ignoring historical facts is a puzzle. About 23 year ago, I contributed a long article on 'The Poverty of India' to a volume entitled Indian Politics, which was brought out by Mr. G. Natesan, the enterprising editor of *Indian Review*. In tracing the causes of this poverty I made a strong point that under the East India Company there was an absolute collapse of the industries of India for a variety of reasons, and that its teeming population was reduced to agriculture for a living. As regards the cotton industry it is a historical fact that its decline was partly due to English legislation of a restrictive nature. 'Many circumstances conspired', writes Sir William Hunter, 'to injure the Indian industry in the last century. England excluded these fabrics not by fiscal duties, but by absolute prohibition. The tide of circumstance has compelled the Indian weaver to exchange his loom for the plough, and has crushed many of the minor handicrafts'. In Mill's History of India the following account is given as to the manner in which the industrial superiority of India was lost :— 'It was stated in evidence that



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

the cotton and silk goods of India up to this period (1813) could be sold for a profit in the English market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent. lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent. on their value by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, the mills of Manchester and Paisley would have been stopped at the outset and could scarcely have been set in motion even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufactures. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated. This act of self-defence was not permitted her. British goods were forced on her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.'

It is useless labouring the point any further. England did resort to legislation to keep Indian cloth out of the British Islands. At the same time it is but fair to admit that in the long run India would have been unable to compete with Europe in the face of the progress of scientific knowledge in the West and its application to the cotton industry. And there can be no doubt that the latest development of the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
170

agitation is vindictive in its nature which would account for the disregard of the real welfare of the country and the people being asked to cut off their noses to spite their faces. The idea of reviving the cotton industry of India is praiseworthy in every way, and this can be achieved by strenuously stimulating a love for *swadeshi* articles. And pressure ought to be brought to bear on the Government and on the Ministers, who have the department of industries entrusted into their hands, to organise a systematic expansion of Indian manufactures as to which there can be no question that some of them are in a moribund condition by reason of the absence of adequate encouragement. If the industrial problem is taken in hand in right earnest a good deal of the existing unrest will disappear. The non-co-operators have found it easy to exploit the masses inasmuch as the bait has been held out to these that their material condition would be considerably improved on the establishment of *swaraj*. Whatever be the outcome of the new propaganda the agitator is satisfied that at least he has been able to unsettle the minds of the people and to instill in them an active hostility to British rule, which it is alleged is responsible for all their sufferings.



CSL

THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

But assuming for a moment that the boycott of foreign cloth is not vindictive in its nature, can it be justified from other points of view? Up till the 30th June Mr. Gandhi decidedly held the opinion that it could not. He deprecated boycott on the ground that it was a kind of violence to which in any form he is strongly opposed. He has stigmatized it as a purely worldly and political measure, and as such being a spiritually-minded man and not a politician, as he has repeatedly asserted, his soul revolted from the adoption of such a measure. Then again he once entertained the opinion that :—‘ One who wishes to be a Satyagrahi for ever cannot participate in any boycott movement.’ Now non-co-operation is an offshoot of Satyagraha, and those who are adherents of this cult are playing ducks and drakes with their principles in the practice of that which was forbidden. Finally Mr. Gandhi delivered himself of the dictum that he could see nothing but harm in the end of a nation that resorts to boycott. A very sensible conclusion to have arrived at. Here we have a variety of reasons advanced against the adoption of a measure which is not only condemned as ethically wrong, but is held to be injurious to the material interests of the people. No reason whatever was vouchsafed for a change of opinion. Moreover, Mr. Gandhi did not deem it necessary to give any reasons, as he expected



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

181

implicit obedience to his will, failing which he threatened he would retire from the movement he was leading.

But if Mr. Gandhi declined to give any reason for his change of views he had at any rate made it clear that it is the restoration of the cotton industry of India he is aiming at and that this end cannot be attained unless there is a complete boycott of foreign cloth. Supposing this boycott is fairly successful let us see how we will be situated then. In the first place half the people of India will have to dispense with cloth altogether, for the simple reason that the supply will be utterly inadequate to meet the demand. Then again the price of the cloth India is able to produce will be raised to such an extent that it will be prohibitive so far as the poor are concerned. In short it will produce a veritable cloth famine. And this will lead to all the evils attendant on a grain famine and to the utter demoralisation of the masses, who will indulge in riots, murders, incendiarism and *hat* looting. But Mr. Gandhi ignored all these considerations. He asked the people 'to perform the act of renunciation of all foreign cloth in utter disregard of the figures flung in our faces by wise economists.' He expected them during the transition period to put themselves on less than half the rations of cloth to avoid a famine due to



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

inflated prices. They were to use all *swadeshi* cloth like misers till every home has a *charkha* at work and every weaver was weaving handspun yarn. He believed that if we had the will we could manufacture in three months time all the cloth we need through hand-spinning and hand-weaving. And so to the women of India he appealed not only to give up their foreign clothing to be burnt, but to be content with coarse *khaddi* and with only so much of it as was necessary to satisfy the demands of modesty. They were further enjoined to emulate the women of olden time, who took the burden of spinning on their shoulders and who spun not only for home demands but for foreign use, not only the coarse counts but the finest the world has ever seen. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya would not hold a girl eligible for marriage unless she could spin, and Lala Lajpat Rai proposed that such a girl should not marry a husband until he also knew spinning.

Mr. Gandhi may affect to despise the figures which he says are flung in our faces by economists but he is beginning to find that in the long run they are getting the better of him. The present supply of cloth comes from three sources, (a) foreign imports, (b) the products of Indian mills, (c) the products of hand looms. If we take the figures for the five years ending 1913-14,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
188

that is just before the War, we find the total consumption of cloth during those years was 4,464 million yards and that about 2,400 million or a little more than half consisted of imported cloth. For the five years ending 1920-21 the total consumption had fallen to 3,732 million yards. The effect of the long hostilities in Europe was to reduce the supplies from Lancashire, so that the imports were no more than 1,324 million yards, or about a third of the total quantity that was utilised by the people. The deficit in the imports was not made up by the Indian product, for though there was a slight decrease in the hand-loom production, and this in the face of the fact that the price of cloth during the latter period was often three times the price during the period ending 1913-14. Such a rise in price should have made the mills and the handloom weavers strain every nerve to produce the greatest amount of cloth possible, and as a matter of fact they did do this so far as the existing machinery would allow. In the year 1917-18 the Indian mills produced 1,614 million yards of the value of 2,591 lakhs, whereas the product of 1919-20, which was 1,693 million yards or almost the same as 1917-18, was valued at 5,550 lakhs or more than double.



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

From these facts and figures the following conclusions irresistibly arise. India alone is unable at present to supply anything approaching the full demand of the cloth required by the people. Should foreign imports be stopped half the population will have to go about in the garb of nature or cover themselves with leaves as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu with the license allowed a poetess says Sita did during her exile in Ceylon. The implication that she was an ancient non-co-operator, reluctant to use foreign cloth, is as correct as that she made herself a garment of leaves, for it is stated in Ramayan that when she was rescued by Hanooman she was found wearing not only her costly royal dress but even her ornaments which Ravan, the King of Ceylon, who had abducted her, had not touched. It is also clear that any shortage in the foreign imports has the tendency to inflate the prices of Indian products, and this may be carried to such a length that cloth would be absolutely prohibitive to the poor. Mr. Gandhi appealed to the mill owners not to raise the price of cloth, but human nature being what it is he found that they were not willing to throw away their chances to enrich themselves. Then again the middle men have to be reckoned with, and indeed before cloth can go into the hands of the masses it will have passed several hands and it is an



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
186

outrage on one's common sense to expect that all these will be such devoted adherents of the new cult that they will sacrifice their opportunities for making hay while the sun shines. Mr. Gandhi has an immense faith in the potentialities of the spinning wheel, but it is a broken reed to rely upon. An impetus has certainly been given to home spinning, and it is to be hoped when the excitement is over the enthusiasm will not evaporate; but so far as hand-looms are concerned it will be a question of years before their products can make any impression on the total amount of cloth required for consumption. Long before that the masses will have settled the matter for themselves. They have only to discover that it is the *swadeshi* craze which is responsible for the deprivation of a necessary article of existence and they will make short work of *swadeshi* shops and of *swadeshi* preachers.

If there is one feature in Mr. Gandhi's propaganda which stands out in greater relief than another it is his real abhorrence of anything in the shape of violence. It was his apprehension on this head which made him refuse to sanction civil disobedience. Why then, against his previous convictions as to the ethical nature of the act, did he set in motion the boycott of foreign cloth when it was likely to produce a similar result?



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

The pressure brought to bear by the Ali brothers and the exploiting of the mill owners for the benefit of the Swaraj Fund were minor reasons as compared with the use this boycott of foreign cloth could be turned to in respect to a most important matter. Since the Bezwada meeting of the Indian Congress Committee Mr. Gandhi was being badgered to start civil disobedience. At last he gave a conditional assent on the people proving their ability to obey orders implicitly by discarding foreign cloth. This he said would be an acid test of their fitness to take up civil disobedience, without giving way to violence. Mr. Gandhi is safe to win either way. The boycott is bound to be a failure because India cannot supply the demand and people cannot go without clothes. And even a partial success will mean that the cost of cloth will be so prohibitive to the masses that they will resort to their usual method of showing their indignation by going in for looting. Mr. Gandhi will stand absolved of his promise to sanction civil disobedience, and the Government will have more time to consider how far it can meet the views of the people towards granting them greater rights and privileges. So far he was certainly playing into the hands of Government.

The inevitable soon came to pass. Mr. Gandhi found he could not afford to offend the dealers



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
197

in foreign cloth. The boycott continued, but his injunction forbidding them to sell foreign cloth was relaxed. He announced in *Young India* that if they were unable to send out of the country their stock they 'should not force the sale of their stock but sell only to customers who insist on buying foreign cloth'. This should have had the effect of converting boycott from being compulsory into voluntary and of doing away with the necessity of picketing. Mr. Gandhi in his varied performances had been most anxious to avoid coming into collision with the executive authorities. Their patient and forbearing attitude perhaps induced the belief that they would continue to remain passive spectators, never mind to what lengths the non-co-operators proceeded. But these were being gradually disillusionised. The Government declared in very precise terms that they did not intend to tolerate disorder and they assured merchants and importers of foreign cloth of their support in resisting all unlawful attempts to force them in this matter. This move on the part of Government made the organisers of cloth boycott more alert and circumspect. It was illegal picketing that was penalised, and they resolved on doing nothing that could be construed as constituting a breach of the law. In Calcutta in response to the demand of the traders in Burra Bazar a number of police constables with *lathis*



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

were posted at the various crossings in order presumably that they may lend the benefit of their moral support to the cloth dealers. But they were completely circumvented by picketers. These entered the shops in groups of two and saluted the shopkeeper with the *pranam*. A dialogue in *Hindustani* ensued and the shopkeeper was advised that the sale of English cloth was highly reprehensible, and that he should sell *deshi* cloth. Nothing more was said as a rule but a good deal more was implied, and when the volunteers left the shop the dealer knew he was a marked man, and trembled accordingly. The volunteers were unarmed, and there was no attempt to use force, but you had only to talk to the shopkeepers to find that intimidation had been practised.

That the Ali brothers had a good deal to do in inducing Mr. Gandhi to take up the boycott of foreign cloth was borne out by the fact that though the Congress Committee carried out his injunctions relaxing the stringency of the boycott, the Khilafat Committees ignored them and were acting independently under their Mahomedan leaders. In Calcutta ignorant and low class Mahomedans were engaged to do the work of picketing, and as no reliance could be placed on their discretion as to what to do or to say they were handed a printed letter for distribution,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

189
SL

which bore the signature 'Abul Kalam Azad,' who is the president of the Knitlatat Committee. The cloth merchants were enjoined to serve the country by stopping the sale of foreign cloth. But how the country would gain thereby was not explained. The letter however contained some significant passages. It supplied the information that any shopkeeper proving recalcitrant would find his name was written amongst the names of the enemies of the Motherland, and he was warned that:— 'That which will be done to-morrow, in any case, under compulsion, should be done to-day voluntarily as evidence of your religious zeal and desire to serve the Motherland'. And this is a sample of the exercise of soul force to which the propaganda stands pledged.

Meanwhile Bombay relieved of the presence of Mr. Gandhi had relapsed into the evil ways of old as to the use of foreign cloth. The Marwari piece-goods merchants of Calcutta signed a pledge suspending the import of such cloth till the end of December and eventually extended the period to February. Mr. Gandhi withdrew the order for picketing and took his departure for Madras, where he found the people in a recalcitrant mood, for the *Hindu*, an extremist organ, was found protesting that, while faith may move mountains it often knocks its



THE BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

CSL

head in vain against the stubbornness of economic facts, and that the programme of boycott as at present enunciated, pursued and eulogised requires modification if the test of India's fitness for *swarajya* is not to be a tragic failure. And Dr. Subramaniam Aiyar endorsed these remarks in language more forcible, only to be met with a retort from Mr. Gandhi that it would be better for the people to go about the streets of Madras with a *langoti* till they were able to clothe themselves by the sweat of their brow. And to bring practice into accord with precept he declared he intended to discard, at least up to October 31, his *topi* and vest and to content himself with only a loin cloth and a *chadar*. The boycott of foreign cloth was thus reduced to a farce and its failure was inevitable. It will soon sink into the limbo of oblivion, though it is to be hoped the love for *swadeshi* articles will continue.



CHAPTER VII.

CSL

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

On June 14th, 1920, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy pointing out that cruel violence had been done by the English nation to the Indian Mussalmans by the treatment meted out to Turkey, as the result of which Hindus and Musslamans had lost faith in British justice and honour. And Lord Chelmsford was requested to kindly head the agitation to obtain redress; failing which, the ultimatum stated, non-co-operation, though attended with some risks, would be set in motion. No response having been received to this modest request, Mr. Gandhi declared war on the 1st August 1920 by returning to the Viceroy his Kaiser-i-Hind medal and by giving peremptory directions for the various activities connected with non-co-operation to be put in operation. For several months previous to this the people were being prepared for this kind of warfare, and now that it was actually started they were assured that victory would be theirs within the period of a year; the first day of August 1921 being fixed as the day when the fruition of their hopes would be realised. This day has come and gone, and it would be pertinent to inquire if the promised victory had been won, or at any rate to take stock as to



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

what had actually been achieved up to that date.

The primary reason for starting non-co-operation was to obtain redress of the Khilafat grievance. That remained where it was, in spite of Mr. Gandhi's throwing his principles to the wind and entering the portals of Viceregal Lodge to explain to a sympathetic Viceroy its exact significance. That the evil had not abated was evident from the fact that Mr. Mahomed Ali threatened to invite the Afghans to help India to dislodge Englishmen from the country or in the alternative to unfurl the republican flag before long. Then there was the Punjab question over which Mr. Gandhi continued harping, indicating thereby that no adequate response was given by Lord Reading to his lucid exposition of the wrong done and the amends that were demanded. It is obvious that *swaraj* had not been attained for the agitation for it was to be continued on still more strenuous lines, and an extension of time was granted till the 1st October. But Mr. Gandhi was blessed with either an abundant supply of optimism or with the faculty for indulging in cryptic statements. He said *swaraj* is coming to us by leaps and bounds, and if we keep up the same velocity we shall be a free nation within this year. He only desired that no inconvenient questions be put



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

193
SL

to him as to what *swaraj* means. Mr. C. R. Das became the recognised second in command and the President elect of the next Congress. In the peroration of a speech delivered at Bombay he said : '*swaraj* is yours and it is yours. It is lying around you, and about you, and directly you realise it, it is yours.' He forgot that every one was not favoured with as lively an imagination as his own, but he was evidently alluding to a *swaraj* that is control over self, whereas others less spiritually-minded were mainly concerned in it as a kind of political rule. On the whole Mr. Gandhi considered non-co-operation an unqualified success, as it had placed to its credit the demolition of the prestige of the bureaucratic Government of this country and of its various institutions. We need not disturb Mr. Gandhi's equanimity and self-esteem. But on the 1st August the curious phenomenon was noticed in Bombay that the members of the All-India Congress Committee were torn with violent emotions and the tattle with a Satanic Government was raging furiously. New weapons of warfare were being forged in the shape of boycott of foreign cloth and civil disobedience.

In a previous chapter the question of the collapse of the original programme of non-co-operation has been fully dealt with and in another chapter its supersession by a constructive



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

propaganda which was to be put into operation with the accompaniment of the music of the spinning wheel. It looked innocent enough, for no objection could be raised to the collection of a crore of rupees, to the enrolment of a crore of members on the Congress register and to the introduction of 20 lakhs of *charkhas* in Indian homes. But behind it was a spectre which for the time being was driven back but continued groping in the dark, and was destined sooner or later to stalk the country in the shape of civil disobedience. The All-India Congress Committee met at Bezwada in April under somewhat depressing circumstances. Though non-co-operation had a run of eight months the net result was its practical failure so far as the educated classes were concerned, but a certain amount of mischief had been done to immature youths and to the ignorant masses who could not be restrained from indulging in violence. There was a marked change in the attitude of Mr. Gandhi towards the powers of darkness that he was contending against. *Hartal* and boycott were freely utilised on the arrival of and during the stay of the Duke of Connaught, but both were forbidden in the case of the new representative of a Satanic Government in the person of Lord Reading. In fact the further use of *hartal* was forbidden. He declared that the masses were no longer to be exploited



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
135

for political purposes, and he dissociated himself from and discouraged workmen going on strike. In an indirect way he expressed the view that a compromise was preferable to fighting to the death. The ultra-extremists in their disappointment and mortification were eager to make a further advance and bring into requisition the trump card that had been held in reserve in the shape of Civil Disobedience. They were becoming so impetuous and exacting that under the direction of Mr. Gandhi it had been found necessary for the Provincial Congress Committees to issue instructions that civil disobedience should remain suspended and not be resorted to till the All-Indian Congress Committee so decides. A few days before the Bezwada meeting the Bengal Provincial Conference, which badgered its president, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, for his lukewarmness in the non-co-operation cause, passed a resolution requesting the Congress Committee to fix a date for a general strike throughout India to inaugurate the remaining items of the non-co-operation programme. As a matter of fact civil disobedience was the main topic that was to be discussed by the Committee, and though the proceedings were private it is well-known it aroused a heated discussion. Finally it was resolved to keep civil disobedience in abeyance for the present, at least till such time as the people 'were able



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

to 'control themselves perfectly.' But it was stated that if any person took upon himself the responsibility of offering civil disobedience to particular orders or laws which he conscientiously thought he could not obey, he was at liberty to do so but he might do so only on his own responsibility and not in the name of the Congress. It is therefore clear that civil disobedience was not condemned on principle, but for certain reasons its adoption was postponed. This was further elucidated by Mr. Lajpat Rai in an interview given by him to the correspondent *Daily Herald*, London.

Question.—Why did the Congress Committee at Bezwada decide not to extend the programme of non-cooperation?

Answer.—Because, firstly, we want the movement to permeate the deeper mind of the masses. The country must be disciplined in non-co-operation. Congress, therefore, decided at present against civil disobedience because with Government provocation in different provinces the danger was apparent of violence, which we wish to avoid at all costs.

Question.—Can you tell me how in the near future India is to win *swarajya*?

Answer.—By making people realize the value of the non-co-operation propaganda, and especially aspect of non-violence.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
137

Question.—Ultimately do you propose a general strike?

Answer.—The leaders of non-co-operation do not want a general strike or to reach the climax of the programme, namely, non-payment of taxes, but they will not hesitate when the time is ripe. This will assuredly involve a general strike.

Mr. Gandhi has been accused of recklessness in starting political activities, the inevitable consequence of which is a maximum of injury done to the people with a minimum of gain derived by them. But as regards this question of civil disobedience he shewed an amount of caution which is simply phenomenal. He fought with his back to the wall against his own lieutenants. He was aware what a powerful engine of warfare civil disobedience was and yet he hesitated to set it in motion. Why? Because he had profitted by past experience, which had indelibly impressed on his mind the risks with which it was attended. It is an instrument of warfare which in India at least he has manufactured, but he was unwilling to use it unless the risks were minimised and he had a sporting chance of success. The danger lay in his having to succumb to the importunities of his adherents. At Bezwada where the propriety of offering civil disobedience was hotly discussed he protested that :—“Notwithstanding the great progress of



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

Non-violence among the people there was still an element of what he would, for want of a better term, call 'mob-law' not in the wrong sense but in the idea that the people had not yet so thoroughly disciplined themselves to such restraint as was needed when their direct wishes were violated or when their great leaders were snatched away to prison under the most provocative circumstances. Until they were able to control themselves perfectly they should not initiate civil disobedience." But as a matter of fact the resolution in respect to it was vetoed by the president, Mr. Vijayaraghava Achariar, on the ground that the National Congress had not sanctioned the inauguration of what amounted to a new policy.

The next open move in connection with civil disobedience took place at the Indian Congress Committee meeting at Bombay. The controversy was long and fierce. To start with the same president who had vetoed a similar resolution at Bezwada stultified himself and allowed it to be discussed at Bombay on the ground that the constitution provided that the All-India Congress Committee could initiate any policy as it had all the powers of the Indian National Congress when the Congress was not in session. It has been reported that the delegates from the Punjab and the United Provinces resented Mr. Gandhi's caution



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

SL

and were determined if possible to precipitate the declaration of civil disobedience. On this question such sharp differences were manifested that a distinguished leader from the Punjab was with difficulty restrained from a hand to hand conflict with an equally distinguished leader from Madras. Eventually a resolution was passed which is worth quoting in full 'The All-India Congress Committee has taken note of the reasonable desire of workers in the United Provinces and other parts to take up civil disobedience in answer to repressive measures of Local Governments and has also taken note of the fact that the administration in the North-West Frontier Province has even prohibited the entry into the province of members of the Frontier Inquiry Committee appointed by the Central Khilafat Committee to enquire into the outrages alleged to have been committed by local officials at Bannu, but with a view to ensure greater stability of non-violent atmosphere throughout India and in order to test the measure of the Influence attained by the Congress over the people and further in order to retain on the part of the nation an atmosphere free from the ferment necessary for proper and swift prosecution of *swadeshi*! It is of opinion that civil disobedience should be postponed till after the completion of the programme referred to in the resolution on *swadeshi* after which the Committee will not



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

hesitate, if necessary, to recommend a course of civil disobedience, even though it might have to be adopted by a special session of the Congress. Provided, however, that it is open to any province or place to adopt civil disobedience subject to previous approval of the Working Committee of the Congress, obtained within the constitution through the Provincial Congress Committees concerned.'

It is obvious that though civil disobedience was again postponed for the time being it could any day be enforced. A resolution to put it in immediate operation would have been passed but for the determined attitude of Mr. Gandhi who went to the length of threatening to sever his connection with the movement if not allowed his own way. He has, as stated before, no objection to it on principle, but was resolved to make the success or failure of cloth boycott the acid test of the country's fitness for civil disobedience. He wrote in *Young India* to the effect that every member of the All-India Congress Committee appeared to be enamoured of civil disobedience from a mistaken belief in it as a sovereign remedy for the present day's ills. For himself he can clearly see the time coming to him when he must refuse obedience to every single state-made law, even though there may be a certainty of bloodshed. Such are the woes of an autocrat, who is oft-times



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
201

at the mercy of his followers. No wonder Mr. Gandhi exclaimed from the bitterness of his heart that if he did not possess the saving grace of humour he would have committed suicide long ago. It is therefore evident that he was only biding his time, and that before long we were to be favoured with the delights of civil disobedience. Autocrat though he was he found he could only maintain his position by a real or nominal surrender to the views of his impetuous followers. Indeed his hands were being forced, for in the resolution quoted above provision was made for the adoption of this method of agitation by provincial or local bodies with the nominal approval of the Working Committee of the Congress. Mr. Mahomed Ali, in a speech delivered at Allahabad, took credit to himself for having this proviso introduced, and stated that in a short time civil disobedience would be taken up.

Now what is civil disobedience? We shall let Mr. Gandhi explain. 'Civil disobedience is civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments. The expression was so far, as I am aware, coined by Thoreau to signify his own resistance to the laws of a slave state. He has left a masterly treatise on the duty of civil disobedience. But Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of non-violence. Probably, also, Thoreau limited



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

his breach of statutory laws to the revenue law, *i. e.* payment of taxes, whereas the term civil disobedience as practised in 1919 covered a breach of any statutory and unmoral law. It signified the resister's outlawry in a civil, *i. e.* non-violent manner. He invoked the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffered imprisonment. It is a branch of Satyagraha. Civil disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can therefore be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate.' Later on Mr. Gandhi defined civil disobedience in *Young India* with greater lucidity. 'Complete civil disobedience,' he wrote, 'is religion without the element of violence in it. An out and out civil resister simply ignores the authority of the State. He becomes an outlaw claiming to disregard every unmoral state law. He never uses force and never resists force when it is used against him. In fact he invites imprisonment and other uses of force against him.'

The present unrest commenced in the early months of 1919, over the legislation which culminated in the Rowlatt Act. On February 29 1919 Mr. Gandhi published a pledge which he asked the people to sign that unless this legislation was withdrawn, we 'solemnly affirm that



in the event of those Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit.' Mr. Gandhi then undertook a tour through various parts of India, addressing meetings, and fixed the 6th April 1920 as Satyagraha day, when complete *hartal* was to be observed, prayers offered and the vow was to be taken amid great demonstrations. Delhi anticipated the day and observed it on the 30th March. The people and the authorities came into collision and the military fired, killing and wounding several persons. This incensed Mr. Gandhi to such an extent that he said it 'imposed an additional responsibility on satyagrahis of steeling their hearts and going on with their struggle until the Rowlatt Legislation was withdrawn.' It was resolved to initiate civil disobedience in the form of disobeying the laws regulating prohibited literature and registration of newspapers. At Bombay on the 7th April a leaflet called *Satyagraha* was brought out as also some early writing of Mr. Gandhi's which had been pronounced to be seditious. Mr. Gandhi and Mrs. Naidu openly sold these, and were not molested. Leaving Bombay for the Punjab Mr. Gandhi was arrested and brought back.



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

Meanwhile other parts of India were busy in observing satyagraha, resulting in riots, more or less serious and a deplorable loss of life, English and Indian. Having heard of these incidents Mr. Gandhi spoke as follows at Ahmedabad on the 14th April :— ' I have said times without number that satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism: and still in the name of satyagraha we burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trams, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison house or the scaffold I should not like to be so saved.' He therefore ordered a general suspension of the movement. Here we have the real reason for Mr. Gandhi's hesitancy in again setting civil disobedience in motion for he has admitted that satyagraha was a Himalayan error. As he is an adept in the manufacture of superlatives he may some day coin an adjective to describe the blunder he committed in initiating non-co-operation, which in spite of his endeavours to avoid it was attended by consequences more grave than its predecessor. But had he sanctioned civil disobedience it would have produced a calamity so colossal that it would have baffled even his descriptive powers.



SL

The Bezwada programme seemed innocent enough, but it wears a different complexion if with it is combined the secret resolve to promulgate civil disobedience as soon as the requisite conditions for doing it had been attained. Admitting that Mr. Gandhi's hands were being forced in this instance he cannot for all that be acquitted of the charge of indulging in an uncalled for reticence and absence of frankness. He was a somewhat illusive subject to deal with. When placed in a tight corner he without the least compunction or any regard to consistency changed his position relying on the fact that he had obtained such a hold on the people that they accepted his pronouncements without demur and were ready to carry out his injunctions to the letter. Apart from that he evolved his schemes by dribblets, never taking his followers completely in his confidence and indulging very largely in mental reservations. And it would also appear he was not always the autocrat he was made out to be, but allowed himself sometimes to be tossed about from pillar to post by the importunities of his adherents and that he pandered to these in total disregard of his earlier utterances. The previous pages afford ample evidence as to the extent he was dominated by the Ali brothers, much to the



CSL

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

chagrin and disgust of his Hindu followers, and he ran a great risk of finding himself propelled into dangerous if not fatal action by his ill-assorted partners. There is internal and circumstantial evidence to be found supporting the view that the Bezwada programme which received general approval was framed with the view of facilitating the introduction of civil disobedience, though he was opposed to its being given effect to at that time.

For eight months previous to the Bezwada meeting non-co-operation had been at work, and the people had been enjoined to look forward to the supercession of the present Government by another under the name of *Swaraj*, though they entertained no definite notion as to its nature. Suddenly they were informed that it was no longer necessary to concentrate their energies on the old activities, for *Swaraj* was to be attained by the plying of the spinning wheel, as it would enable the people to feed and clothe themselves by means of the products of the *charkha* and thus be independent of a foreign domination. It was a proposition so novel that it could only have emanated from Mr. Gandhi. He had a license to say what he liked. If any one else had given expression to half the extraordinary assertions that have emanated from him he would



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
207

have made himself an object of ridicule instead of being revered and even deified as he is. Anyhow that this proposition was propounded in all seriousness is evident from the fact that it was supported by his chief Hindu lieutenant, Mr. C. R. Das. This is the same politician who at the Calcutta Special Congress made the contemptuous remark, 'Mr. Gandhi says this and Mr. Gandhi says that ; this is not argument '. But evidently the proposition relating to the *charkha* received, after a certain amount of hesitation, his entire approval, for we find him stating at Bezwada, that he was one of those who did not formerly take to the spinning wheel kindly, but he found by actual experience (how his hands must have ached), that the spinning wheel movement was in every way calculated to achieve their object of *Swaraj*. If, he added, *Swaraj* meant that India should be self-contained and self-sufficient it was desirable that her people be made to understand how they could attain this result. That the use of the *charkha* should be encouraged will receive general assent, for it has no doubt certain potentialities for promoting the industrial and economic welfare of the people, but it is a matter of surprise to find a hard-headed lawyer like Mr. C. R. Das trifling with the meaning of *Swaraj* by asserting that it will be attained by the plying of the *charkha*.



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

We shall see that probably both he and Mr. Gandhi had something at the back of their minds which was not then desirable to disclose. At all events the new proposition excited extreme disappointment and dissatisfaction. Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal for one strongly protested against playing fast and loose with *Swaraj*, and it was to reassure him and other critics that Mr. Gandhi stated in *Young India* that the end in view remained the same as before, the ousting of a Government which owes its existence to the co-operation of the people. This if withdrawn would cause it either to obey the will of the people or to retire. The veil was only partly withdrawn.

Another link in the chain of circumstantial evidence was the re-affirmation at Bezwada of the non-violent nature of the propaganda, as regards which the Ali brothers entertained their own opinion, and soon after gave expression to it. The question is very pertinent why Mr. Gandhi should have been so insistent in respect to it. He claims to be and really is a man of peace, though much of its value is discounted by his repeated assertions that he would prefer anarchy to living in subjection to an unjust and depraved Government. The fact of his not protesting against and not repudiating the violent speeches



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

209
SL

of the Ali brothers, while supporting them in their militant attitude in case of an Afghan invasion, which led Mr. Gandhi's friend, Mr. Andrews, to tax him with an incitement to violence, has to say the least an ugly appearance. A strong reason for his deprecating violence is to be found in his anxiety to remove all obstacles in the progress of his propaganda, for he realised that any organised exhibition of violence in word or in deed would lead to its immediate suppression. Apart from his affection for the Ali brothers, it was this feeling which prompted his working for their rescue at the risk of compromising his position as a non-co-operator. And it is significant that he did not definitely condemn their violent speeches, for all he said was that they were susceptible of a wrong construction being placed on them. In the circumstances the inference is by no means forced that Mr. Gandhi besides his natural aversion to violence had another and a more practical reason for being hostile to it. It was the means to a particular end, and that was the initiation of civil disobedience when the time was ripe for it.

Put in a few words the Bezwada programme was merely a demand for men, money and munitions. To place a crore of men on the Congress register was no doubt a laudable object in as much as the country would benefit by so large



CSL

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

a number of persons being interested in its welfare. But out of these a good proportion was needed for propaganda work, which was mainly the preaching of the gospel of non-violence so as to facilitate the introduction of civil disobedience. And the object of securing a crore of rupees was the same. The labourer is worthy of his hire. The preachers were to be paid and with no stinted hand. We have seen that after the Bezwada meeting Mr. Gandhi stated in *Young India* in explicit terms that the crore of rupees was to be spent in the support of national schools and in providing *charkhas* to all Indian homes. A few weeks later this programme was amplified as follows :—

1. Removal of untouchability.
2. Removal of the drink evil.
3. Ceaseless introduction of the spinning wheel and the ceaseless production of the *khaddar*.
4. Registration of the Congress members.
5. Collection of the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

It is significant that whereas at Bezwada such stress was laid on the reconstruction of the educational system of the country that even a crore of rupees was not considered sufficient for the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
211

purpose, in the new programme national education suddenly and unaccountably disappeared. And when the Indian Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 28th July the fate of the national schools was finally settled by Mr. Gandhi moving a resolution that the existing national schools be converted into *charkha* schools. As the result of the protest of a number of members he consented to the addition of the qualifying words 'as far as possible'. As to *charkhas* no doubt a large number of these were introduced, but no announcement from any quarter was made that any fixed portion of the money collected was to be allotted for this purpose. Private benefaction had done a certain amount of work in this direction, as for instance the donation of Rs. 5,000 monthly for half a year by Mr. Belgaumwala, a Parsee gentleman in Bombay, for the purchase of *charkhas* to be utilised by the Parsee community. And Mr. Chotani made a gift of 5,000 *charkhas* for the benefit of the Mahomedan community, and offered to supply one lakh of *charkhas* immediately on the cheapest possible price, with the view of popularising both the *charkha* and *khaddar*. The Working Committee of the Congress gave directions that every Provincial Congress Committee had to set apart not less than one-fourth of its contribution to the All-India Tilak Swrajya Fund to organise



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

the spread of hand-spinning, the collection of hand-spun yarn, weaving *khaddi* and distribution thereof. To take the United Provinces as an illustration, its total collection being 2½ lakhs, the amount it was asked to spend in these various objects was Rs. 15, 500. The bulk of this was appropriated to what is called organising work, leaving next to nothing for the *charkhas*. As to national education that was ignored altogether. It therefore naturally follows that what remained of the fund after it had been frittered away in abuses of sorts was reserved for purposes of propaganda, in the interpretation of which a wide discretion was allowed to the Provincial and District Congress Committees. Full advantage was of course taken of the licence given them. But the main idea was never lost sight of, that of preparing the people for the practise of civil disobedience.

The method of raising this money was unique and gives us some idea of the object for which it was being collected. In most cases no reasons were assigned beyond mentioning that it was being done under the sanction of Mr. Gandhi. The people were satisfied that it would be utilised to some good purpose. In some instances the object was given out as the national schools, the *charkha* and *swaraj*. At the same time there were other collectors who were candid enough to assert



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL
213

that the money was needed to bring the Government down on its knees by engaging in an intensive agitation which would include the enticing of persons to leave its service and especially the police. Mr. Mahomed Ali's appeal to these at Aligarh to treat the people as their brothers, and his assertion that his efforts in influencing the police were not devoid of success has a peculiar significance. Certain speakers went so far as to say that an organised effort would be made to persuade domestic servants to leave the service of Europeans and that money was needed to subsidize them. It would be impossible to form an estimate of the money spent in inducing coolies to throw up work in tea plantations and in promoting strikes in jute and cotton mills, coal fields, railways and the Barisal steamers. These poor people danced to the tune of the agitators, who had to pay for their amusement. The word propaganda has a very wide meaning, and where the services of dancing women were engaged for this purpose, we may be sure a pretty large latitude was allowed.

But it was Mr. Gandhi's chief desire that his adherents should follow his example and preach to the people the gospel of self-control or non-violence and this was to be the chief feature in propaganda work, for on it rested the development of non-co-operation in its final stage. He



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

realised that a certain section of his followers were determined to force on civil disobedience which was bound to come sooner or later, and as an engine of agitation it would only be successful if there was no display of violence. Hence it was that he entreated the people if they wished to achieve *swaraj* within this year to give up every fear for jail or even death and submit to every thing without resistance. His anxiety in this respect was very natural having regard to some of the incidents that have been reported. The *Eastern Mail* states that:—‘At a meeting in Karachi organised by non-co-operators, while an orator was haranguing the audience and asking them to stand true in this hour of the country’s trial a disturbance started in the rear. People began to push and shout, and some one cried out that armed police had arrived. Immediately the greater part of the audience, numbering several hundreds ran in all directions, abandoning shoes, hats, money and bags. At this stage a volunteer jumped upon the platform and shouted to the gathering to remain calm as the disturbance had been caused by an evil-minded C. I. D. policeman. When quiet had been restored an inquiry was made, and it then transpired that the whole trouble had been started by a cow, which rushed one man in the last row, who



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

215
SL

pushed another, and who in turn hustled others till a general melee ensued.'

For the successful working of his programme, Mr. Gandhi stated he wanted an army of 50,000 workers who could go to jail with fortitude and joy, regarding the jail as the gates of their liberty, and if these could be obtained the people would be invulnerable. Their services he said could be utilised in preparing the kisans for the last stage of non-violent non-co-operation, that is, the suspension of the payment of taxes, which would not continue for a long time, for within a month of launching upon this stage *swaraj* would be achieved, but these 50,000 workers could not all afford to be patriots who would do honorary work. They would have to be paid even if it were a subsistence allowance, each according to his status and qualifications. The lawyers have always been foremost in the rank of agitators and the non-co-operators realised the value of their services, especially in the exploiting of the masses. At the Nagpore Congress one lakh was placed at Mr. Chotani's disposal for the payment of lawyers, and this is what the *Nayak* writes : — ' We are informed that those pleaders in the mofussil who gave up their practice for three months or five months as non-co-operators became paid preachers. One known pleader, when he



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

resumed practice after three months was asked by a leader of the non-co-operation movement not to do so and was promised a stipend of Rs. 500 per month. A list we have seen contains the names of pleaders of Eastern Bengal, and their stipends varied from Rs. 150 to Rs. 300 per month. Some of these have now given up non-co-operation and do not any further get a stipend but during the period of their non-co-operation, five months in some cases and three months in others, at least two of these pleaders by constant touring in village have secured good paying clients'. We have now some sort of idea how the Congress funds were being utilised, which makes it clear that apart from propaganda work no other object had any prospect of deriving any the least benefit.

After the Bezwada meeting Mr. Gandhi made a tour for a couple of months in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies and on to Sindh, and then came to the United Provinces. In the addresses he delivered the theme was uniform—the Bezwada programme disappointment at the indifferent response given to it, an appeal to the people to rise equal to the occasion and last but by no means the least an exhortation to adopt a spirit of non-violence on which rested the future salvation of the country. Towards the end of May he went to Simla to interview the Viceroy, and was the guest



of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, to whom he had no doubt confided his woes. Did he tell his host that the aim he had in view was to prepare the way for the initiation of civil disobedience? If so it is strange that the Pandit should have sent Mr. Gandhi a wire from Simla on the 26th June hoping that the people would not 'shrink from any sacrifice and suffering which may be needed to raise the Motherland by legitimate and peaceful means to a status of equality with the self-governing Dominions of the British Commonwealth and to uplift its honour among the nations of the world'. Mr. Gandhi deliberately sought an interview with the Viceroy to whom he has said he fully explained the significance of non-co-operation. Did he unburden himself of the fact that it was under contemplation soon to play the last card in the shape of civil disobedience, to which he was not opposed on principle, but was waiting till certain necessary conditions had been realised? It is incredible that Lord Reading would have consented to have any dealings with a person who he knew had committed himself to civil disobedience in respect to a matter which concerned individuals who were the foremost promoters of it. Verily, Mr. Gandhi knew how to keep his own counsel.

Let us pass on to the next stage. Mr. Gandhi kept up a strenuous agitation. He solemnly affirmed



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

SL

he would not rest till India had obtained *Swaraj*, which he averred could only be realised when the Khilafat and Panjab wrongs had been rectified. Like a cautious General he kept in reserve the most formidable weapon of attack, viz, civil disobedience. For this to be put into operation he laid down the condition that the people were to be thoroughly trained in the principle of non-violence and that the *charkha* was not only to be introduced in each household but each man and each woman was diligently to take to its use. Mr. Mahomed Ali tried at Karachi to force the Mahatma's hands by announcing that his chief had consented to civil disobedience being put in motion. There were certain other leaders in the United Provinces and the Punjab who insisted that the trump card of the extremists should be played without further delay. The next Indian Congress Committee meeting had been fixed for the 4th November at Delhi, when it was hoped Mr. Gandhi would find himself overwhelmed with the preponderance of opinion as to civil disobedience being launched out at once. Some there were no doubt who realised the serious consequences with which this was likely to be attended, and amongst these was the President of the Congress, Mr. Vijayaraghava Chariar. He desired to put off the evil day and therefore circularised the Provincial Congress Committees postponing the meeting of the Indian



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

219
SL

Congress Committee at Delhi on the ground that the existing structure of the Committee was unconstitutional as the election of the members from Bengal and Madras had been vitiated owing to a disregard of the rules governing their election. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, the General Secretary of the Congress, on the other hand, issued a counterblast repudiating the authority of the President to interfere in a matter, the decision of which rested with the Indian Congress Committee, and insisted on the meeting being held on the fixed date. This was also the view of Mr. Gandhi, and that being so it was obvious the President would be thrown overboard. We need not enter into the merits of this controversy. The Committee met, and of course the President was absent from it. Taking the most favourable view much weight cannot be attached to the deliberations and decisions of an assembly which had been proscribed by its own President.

The resolutions passed by the Committee brought out in broad relief the fact that though an autocrat is not an individual who can be trifled with even he is subject to certain limitations. To the vehement demands of his followers that civil disobedience, pure and simple, be forthwith set in motion Mr. Gandhi stood firm and unbending, but he sanctioned it under certain conditions :—



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

(1) In the event of individual civil disobedience the individual must know hand-spinning and must have completely fulfilled that part of the programme which is applicable to him or her, *e.g.*, he or she must have entirely discarded the use of foreign cloth and adopted only hand-spun and hand-woven garments, must be a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity and in unity between all communities professing different religions in India as an article of faith, must believe in non-violence as absolutely essential for the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the attainment of *swaraj* and, if a Hindu, must by his personal conduct show that he regards untouchability as a blot upon nationalism.

(2) In the event of mass civil disobedience a district or tahsil should be treated as a unit and therein a vast majority of the population must have adopted full swadeshi and must be clothed out of cloths hand-spun and hand-woven in that district or tahsil and must believe in and practice all other items of non-co-operation.

This virtually meant an indefinite postponement of civil disobedience, and a stern fight was set up to liberate it from the manifold brakes Mr. Gandhi had placed on its motion. But the Mahatma was adamant and his followers had to yield. To prove that personal reasons had



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
221

not influenced his decision he undertook to launch civil disobedience on his own account in Gujrat and selected the particular tehsil in which this was to be done, and the honour fell to the lot of Bardoli. The date fixed was 23rd November.

But the gods had willed otherwise. On the 18th November Mr. Gandhi issued an appeal to the hooligans of Bombay stating that : " See what have you done. Hindu and Mussalman hooligans have violated the sanctity of Parsi temples and they have exposed their own to similar risk from the wrath of Parsi hooligans. Because some Parsis have chosen to partake in the welcome to the Prince, Hindu and Mussalman hooligans have roughly handled every Parsi they have met. The result has been that : Parsi hooligans are less to blame. Hindu and Musslamans hooligans have rudely, roughly and insolently removed foreign cloth worn by some Parsis and Christians, forgetting that not all Hindus and all Mussalmans nor by any means even a majority of them have religiously discarded the use of foreign cloth. Parsi and Christian hooligans are, therefore, interfering with Hindu and Mussalman wearers of *khaddar*." And in a manifesto issued to the people of Bombay he stated :— " Thus the hope of reviving mass civil disobedience has once more been dashed, in my opinion, to



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

pieces. The atmosphere for civil disobedience is absent. It is not enough that such an atmosphere is to be found in Bardoli and therefore it may go on side by side with violence in Bombay. This is impossible. Neither Bardoli nor Bombay can be treated as separate unconnected units. They are parts of one great indivisible whole. It was possible to isolate Malabar, it was also possible to disregard Malegaon, but it is not possible to ignore Bombay. We were under a pledge bound to protect the person of the Prince from any harm or insult—and we broke that pledge in as much as any one of us insulted or injured a single European or any other who took part in the welcome. Nor can I shirk my own responsibility. I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit. The Working Committee will have to devote attention to the situation and consider in the light thereof whether mass civil disobedience can be at all encountered until we have obtained complete control over the masses. I have personally come deliberately to the conclusion that mass civil disobedience cannot be started for the present. I confess my inability to conduct the campaign to a successful issue unless a completely non-violent atmosphere is generated among the people." Civil disobedience received a decided check



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

223
SL

But it was not for long, for we have a will of the wisp in Mr. Gandhi and to those who have tried to obtain an insight into his mentality the face value of his declarations is not very impressive. No doubt he was thoroughly honest when with much tearful emphasis he proclaimed to the world that the behaviour of his own followers in Bombay had convinced him that the people were not in a fit state to undertake civil disobedience. This mood which was induced by the perturbation at the sight he saw during the rioting in Bombay was even more shortlived than the one which followed the Satyagraha outbreak of 1919. It was only a passing wave of emotion, and the mood having passed he resumed his former hostile and implacable attitude. He pledged himself to obtain *swaraj* in August, 1920, which was postponed to September 30, and then to October 31, and finally he solemnly announced his heart would break with agony if it was not attained by December 31. The fateful day arrived but instead of a broken heart it was with a cheerful mien entirely free from embarrassment he fixed a new date, January 15, not for *swaraj*, that was dropped, but for initiating 'aggressive civil disobedience,' destined to 'overthrow the Government.' And to carry on this new campaign to a successful issue he had himself appointed dictator by a resolution of the Congress. Fortunately it was for Mr. Gandhi that he had to deal with



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

CSL

people who are either possessed of a short memory or whose credulity or gullibility was phenomenal.

Between the mandate of no civil disobedience and that of aggressive civil disobedience there was a great gap, but it was bridged within the short period of a month. For an unlooked for development had taken place. Government had since the initiation of non-co-operation adopted a policy of masterly inactivity. It had borne patiently the taunts and sneers, the misrepresentation and the incitement to disaffection openly practised by the extremists. It had winked at the coercion and intimidation which were the prominent features at *hartals* and the various operations of the followers of Mr. Gandhi in general and the Khilafists in particular. It had refused to accept the challenge of those who were making a parade of the infraction of the laws of the land. The Mahatma in his repentant mood admitted in *Young India* the frequent exercise of social persecution and coercion on the part of his followers, and blamed himself for not condemning them as strongly as he should have done. He deplored the indulgence in violence, and hoped it would die a natural death, but instead of that it assumed a virulent form in Bombay. This very virulence was the last straw on the camel's back. The Viceroy, and under his direction the various Governors, decided the time had arrived to accept



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
225

the challenge offered to them by the malcontents and to put down their excesses by all the resources permitted by law. The enrollment of volunteers and the holding of meetings were prohibited under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Seditious Meetings Act. For a breach of the provisions of these Acts numerous arrests were made of both Hindu and Mahomedan leaders of non-co-operation, and notable amongst them were Mr. C. R. Das in Calcutta, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and his son Jawahar Lal of Allahabad, Lala Lajpat Rai of Lahore and a goodly number of Presidents and Secretaries of provincial and local Congress and Khilafat Associations, while amongst the Christians Mr. Stokes of Kotgarh and Mr. Joseph, Editor of the Independent, shared the same fate. All were sentenced to long or short terms of imprisonment and went rejoicing to jail, having refused to plead before a court they scornfully declined to recognise.

It was under these conditions the National Congress met at Ahmedabad and passed a resolution carefully drafted by Mr. Gandhi sanctioning civil disobedience, which in a modified and less offensive form was already being practised, but emphasized that for the time being it was to be non-violent, with the proviso that this qualification was to be withdrawn on the 15th January.



CSL

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

The reason for this extreme step was stated in the Congress Resolution relating to civil disobedience to be 'The threat uttered by his Excellency the Viceroy in his recent speeches and the consequent repression started by the Government of India in the various provinces by way of disbandment of volunteer corps and forcible prohibition of public and even committee meetings in an illegal and high-handed manner and by the arrest of many Congress workers in several provinces. Civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion whenever every other remedy for preventing arbitrary, tyrannical and emasculating use of authority by individuals or corporations has been tried.'

This is how the matter stood at the end of 1921, and its further development in 1922 will be dealt with in another chapter.



CSL

CHAPTER VIII.

ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

The narrative relating to India's unrest in 1921 would be incomplete without a somewhat detailed account of the activities of the Ali brothers. Mr. Gandhi, in the last week of May, had several interviews with the Viceroy. The Non-co-operator-in-chief approached the representative of a Satanic Government, with which he had repeatedly emphasized no traffic of any kind was possible, and to put a good face over it he said, 'Non-co-operation is not directed against Government, but against the system of administration.' Both the parties to the interview said at the outset a veil must be drawn over the details of the conversation, though both made certain important admissions. But the public, so far as it had been taken into confidence, began speculating on the reasons that led Mr. Gandhi to take at that particular juncture a step, which was a direct negation of the principle of non-co-operation, and which could have been taken at any time, for, as the Viceroy humourously remarked a few days later in his speech at the Chelmsford Club his address was not altogether unknown. It is obvious then that some powerful reason prompted this visit. Mr. Gandhi, in response to the demand made by his adherents, stated :—
explained as fully as I know the three claims,



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

the Khilafat, the Punjab and *swaraj*, and gave His Excellency the genesis of non-co-operation.' The inference was left to be drawn that it was to talk over these matters he had called upon Lord Reading. As regards the Khilafat and the Punjab Mr. Gandhi could have had nothing fresh to impart and as to the genesis of non-co-operation there was no secret about it to be disclosed, for even the man in the street knew why it was started and how it was being engineered. About *swaraj* no definite idea could have been conveyed to the Viceroy, considering Mr. Gandhi has scrupulously avoided giving any clear explanation as to what it is.

'We also discussed the question of violence,' said Mr. Gandhi. Now a discussion only takes place when two persons entertain different opinions on any topic. Mr. Gandhi we know is a man of peace, and to think of Lord Reading as an apostle of force, is so preposterous that it is obvious that the discussion of violence was not in the abstract, but in the concrete with reference to certain individuals, who were none other than the Ali brothers. Mr. Gandhi says :—
'When the Viceroy showed me some of the extracts from their speeches, I recognised that they were capable of bearing the interpretation sought to be put upon them. I therefore told His Excellency that as soon as I met them I would



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
229

advise the brothers to make a clearing statement irrespective of what the Government may do regarding their prosecution. The statement was not conditional upon a revision of the Government's decision.' But the Viceroy had stated at the Chelmsford Club dinner with reference to the interview that :— 'The result may be somewhat vague and indefinite, yet it is not entirely so, as you may be aware that the result of these visits and discussions was that Mr. Mahomed Ali and Mr. Shaukat Ali have issued a public pronouncement, which doubtless you have seen to-day, expressing their sincere regret for certain speeches that they had made inciting to violence and have given a solemn public undertaking that they will not repeat these speeches or similar speeches so long as they remain associated with Mr. Gandhi.'

It is not difficult to reconcile the two statements. Soon after Mr. Gandhi returned from Simla a declaration was made in the press, on the 29th May, by Messrs. Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, who were then in Bombay, which by reason of its importance needs to be quoted in full :— 'Friends have drawn our attention to certain speeches of ours which in their opinion, show a tendency to incite to violence, and we never imagined that any passages in our speeches were



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

capable of bearing the interpretation put upon them; but we recognise the force of our friends' argument and interpretation. We, therefore, sincerely feel sorry and express our regret for the the unnecessary heat of some of the passages in these speeches, and we give our public assurance and promise to all who may require it that, so long as we are associated with the movement of non-co-operation, we shall not directly or indirectly advocate violence at present or in the future, nor create an atmosphere of preparedness for violence. Indeed, we hold it contrary to the spirit of non-violent non-co-operation to which we have pledged our word'.

The next day a Government *communiqué* was published in Simla, which after quoting the declaration in full goes on as follows :—'In view of the publication of these expressions of regret and promises for the future the Government of India desire to make it known generally that they had decided on May 6, to prosecute Messrs. Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali for certain speeches delivered in the United Provinces during the last few months. These speeches, in the opinion of the Government of India, were of direct incitement to violence. The immediate object of the Government in determining to enforce the law on the present occasion was to prevent incitement to violence and to preserve order. After the



decision to which reference has been made was reached, it was urged on the Government that their immediate object could be obtained without recourse to the criminal courts. The Government consequently suspended further action and, in view of the statement now issued over the signatures of Messrs. Mahommed Ali and Shaukat Ali, have decided to refrain from instituting criminal proceedings against them in respect of these speeches so long as the solemn public undertaking contained in the statement issued to the press is observed. Should the condition of this undertaking not be performed, the Government of India will be at liberty to prosecute them for their past speeches.'

Early in May the air was thick with rumours that some drastic action of a repressive nature was about to be taken by the civil authorities. Mr. Gandhi happened then to be in Allahabad, and on the 10th May in reply to an address of welcome he alluded to the impending arrest of the Ali brothers. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was at the time indisposed, but as a labour of love he undertook a journey to Simla to pave the way for Mr. Gandhi obtaining an interview with the Viceroy, who has stated that he agreed to receive Mr. Gandhi should he apply for it, and that in due course he did apply. Why was Mr. Gandhi so keen to take a step which was dead against



the principles of non-co-operation, and by which he knew he ran a serious risk of not only stultifying himself but of losing his reputation and prestige in the eyes of his followers? It is obvious his feelings had been stirred on behalf of his Moslem friends, with whom, the previous pages show, he had entered into an offensive and defensive alliance, and at whose instance he had taken such important steps as starting the non-co-operation propaganda, repudiating his allegiance to British rule, insisting on a change in the creed of the Congress and the All India Home Rule-League, which eliminated the British connection, and had even partially supported their views in respect to the attitude of the people in case of an Afghan invasion, which led Mr. Andrews to impute to him an incitement to violence. That Mr. Gandhi should intervene on behalf of his friends no one can rightly take exception to. It was an honourable act, and did him infinite credit, but he certainly laid himself open to the imputation of having given an account of his deal with the Viceroy which is misleading. Complete silence would have been intelligible, but in his published account he not only suppressed the real motive of his visit, but made certain suggestions to throw the people off the scent. Though it was primarily to save his friends Mr. Gandhi visited Simla, it is more than probable



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

233
SL

other motives were also at work. There was the apprehension of an ebullition of violence consequent on the arrest and prosecution of the Ali brothers, which would have seriously affected his propaganda, and caused a breach in the Hindu-Mahomedan unity, besides inflicting incalculable injury on the people. The Government also it appears was to have extended to it the grace of redemption by being given a chance of repentance. It was to effect a compromise, in which the fate of his friends was included, that he undertook a task which was misunderstood by a needless secrecy being attached to it.

That the action of the Ali brothers in giving an apology and a promise for the future would be severely animadverted upon was to be expected. It was stigmatized in the most scathing terms, in the face of the fact that scores of persons were rotting in jail for having at their instigation refused to defend themselves on charges similar to those for which they were indicted by Government. Popular opinion credited the two brothers with a characteristic which usually commands respect, in that they possessed the courage of their convictions. They did not allow themselves to be intimidated by British rule, and did not attempt to conceal the fact. They would have been content to intercommunicate if they had possessed the same courage, but



they refused to do this. Their apology therefore aroused a certain amount of contempts.

But their subsequent conduct in disclaiming that they had apologised, or that they had done anything to apologise for, or that they had promised not to do anything which they had done before, certainly convicted them before the world of a duplicity so reprehensible that in spite of their most strenuous efforts they found it hard to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of honest men. Apart from that, their conduct seemed absolutely wanting in ordinary common sense. Had they refused to apologize, they would have been to-day the heroes of India, even in the eyes of those who disapproved of their speeches or their conduct. They had the opportunity that comes to a man once in a life time, and they missed it. But after rendering an ample apology and saving their skins, it was a silly subterfuge on their part to turn round and assert that in their pronouncement it was to their country and their co-workers that their public assurance and promise were in the first instance given, though the Government and those who co-operated with it were equally welcome to this assurance and promise. They had evidently a poor opinion of this world to imagine that dust can be thrown so easily in the eyes of the people. If they had done nothing objectionable



REVOLUTOIN OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
231

Where was the necessity to make any pronouncement? Who had asked for any apology or any assurance? Was any ultimatum placed before them by Mr. Gandhi? Where were the terms of the apology settled, and between whom? Had they knowledge of the fact that their prosecution had been decided upon? How came the Government communique to be published simultaneously with their apology? Why did Mr. Gandhi agree to the publication of any communique if it had no connection with the apology? These were pertinent questions, and a verdict adverse to the Ali brothers was pronounced. Meanwhile the Viceroy's categorical statement remained unrefuted.

These disclaimers were made by Mr. Mahomed Ali in his presidential speech at the Gujrat Khilafat Conference, held at Broach, on the 3rd June, and by his side sat one who was referred to as 'my dearly beloved leader' and 'my guide, philosopher and friend.' Instead of wasting so many words, if he had simply said, 'my recent deliverer' it would have more appropriately described Mr. Gandhi. He is a lover of truth and of this he has given striking instances to his own detriment. He knew wherein lay the truth of this transaction. The Viceroy had made a specific statement that as a result of Mr. Gandhi's visit the Ali brothers had made a public apology and had promised not to offend again, and that in



ALI BROTHERS OF THE WAB PATH.

CSL

consideration thereof their criminal prosecution had been stayed. If this was not correct Mr. Gandhi should have said so, and given a categorical denial to these statements, but he remained silent, even after hearing Mr. Mahomed Ali's disclaimer. We farther find him writing in his Gujrati paper *Nanjivan* and in *Young India*:—
'Let the gentleman (Viceroy) not treat the communication from the Ali brothers as a trifling one. That communication has not been written on his (Viceroy's) account. That letter has been written for the sake of their friends. It was instigated by me and me alone. It was not even suggested by the Viceroy. He was welcome to have pointed to their speeches. To acknowledge a mistake when it is pointed out, even by an enemy, is a mark of nobility, they have respected the advice tendered by a friend like me in order to testify to their nobility.' The manner in which some of India's patriots furnish evidence of their nobility is certainly very curious. This irritability and hostility exhibited towards the Viceroy by Mr. Gandhi seemed somewhat strange under the circumstances, but is easily accounted for.

Mr. Gandhi, after his several visits to Viceregal Lodge, was in such good humour that he was able to certify that Lord Reading was patient, courteous, attentive and anxious to do only the right thing, and that at



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

28

mutual understanding was arrived at between them, which he evidently considered a great point, for he went on to add, 'the interviews were a distinct success.' It seems to have been with him a case of, I came, I saw, I conquered. But unfortunately Lord Reading had not rid himself of the pernicious western habit of making post-prandial speeches, and by indulging in one of those at the Chelmsford Club he not only disillusioned Mr. Gandhi, but drew on himself severe strictures, in flat contradiction to what had been said previously by the head of the non-co-operators. This speech was stigmatized as having the Simla odour about it, and that it suggested elementary study. It lacked gravity, and had an air of unreality about it. Though it bore traces of the Viceroy having laboured to deliver a true message to an expectant India, it failed to do so because of the many limitations attached to his official position. He was unable to override the tradition of claiming infallibility for British rule, and he failed to give expression to a frank recognition of the many failures of the past. He attempted not to wound susceptibilities, whereas as a matter of fact there were no susceptibilities to wound. Though he tried to be cautious and reticent he blurted out certain unsavoury things with reference to the Ali brothers. The assurance given to them that there would be no prosecution so long as they held



to their undertaking was gratuitous, if not offensive.

He tried to conciliate the non-co-operators, who are not likely to be appeased by speeches but by actions. On the whole he furnished an excellent sample of diplomacy and absence of frankness. And later on Mr. Gandhi unburdened himself with the remark that:—‘We must play the game, whether the Government reciprocate or not. Indeed, I for one do not expect the Government to play the game.’

Lord Reading could not honestly complain about these strictures, for, though it may be unintentionally, he undoubtedly gave great provocation. After Mr. Gandhi had said pleasant things about him, it was his turn to be complimentary about his visitor, instead of which all he said in course of the after dinner speech was, in a matter of fact way, that the interviews produced at least this satisfactory result that I got to know Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Gandhi to know me.’ While the Mahatma freely gave out his impressions, the Viceroy could only give expression to a cryptic phrase, susceptible of any meaning. What sort of a man was Mr. Gandhi,—good, bad or indifferent? That was a matter in respect to which a diplomatic caution was observed. Any man would feel hurt and be disposed to resent such a slight. But there was worse to follow. Mr. Gandhi had gone on a labour of love, that is, to save his friends from



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
238

a criminal prosecution. He is a modest man, and does not like his good deeds to be proclaimed to the world, but Lord Reading let the cat out of the bag by recounting the achievement of Mr. Gandhi, oblivious of the fact that he was thereby exposing the Ali brothers to the scorn and contumely of their friends and foes. But there were still greater depths to be fathomed. Non-co-operation as indicated in the previous chapter, had exhibited signs of dissolution, but Lord Reading with his diplomatic hands squeezed the life out of it, and by a bold stroke put such a check on violence in speech and action for the future that the prosecution of a score of notable offenders would not have produced. This would indeed have been a source of great embarrassment to Government, and may be worse than that. By the exercise of a little patience, civility and consideration the evil was averted. The Viceroy was indeed diplomatic. And here it is Mr. Gandhi deserves our sympathy. He may be all he is credited to be, but he was no match against a trained diplomat. Lord Reading gained all he wanted, and considering he came to rule over India at a critical period of its history, the only standard by which his actions can be judged is whether they were for the good of the country. Applying this standard strictly he unluckily scored a success.



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

Though Lord Reading after the publication of the Government communique and his speech at the Chelmsford Club dropped the matter of the much talked of interviews, a one-sided controversy was carried on by Mr. Mahomed Ali, who went on offering any number of apologies for his apology to Government, in which delightful occupation he was aided and abetted by Mr. Gandhi. The Mahatma found that the more he protested and explained the stronger he made the case against the Ali brothers, for neither they nor he could give a categorical denial to the fact that a criminal prosecution was impending which could only be averted by an apology being given, and he made matters worse by stating that he made a mistake in not asking to be allowed to have a look at the communique, which he admitted it was proposed to issue with reference to the public statement to be made by the Ali brothers. Even if the wording of the communique was objectionable, the fact remained that there was a deal, which was to be evidenced by a statement on the one side and a communique on the other side and the outcome of which was to be the dropping of the prosecution of the two brothers. Mr. Gandhi fired his final shot by appealing to the Viceroy to issue a joint statement of the conversation which took place during the various interviews or for each party to publish a separate statement. And



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

In this he was backed up by Mr. Mahomed Ali, who in his presidential address at the Khilafat Conference at Karachi stated that:— 'If the Viceroy does not agree to join an announcement by Mahatma Gandhi and himself, Mahatmaji would issue a separate statement and let the Viceroy then issue his own. The world will give credence to each on its merits and I know the Indian people would believe Mahatma Gandhi more than the Viceroy'.

The Ali brothers had something more to say besides that. Mr. Shaukat Ali, speaking at a public meeting in Bombay, complained that he was being blamed for all the strong speeches made by his brother. He himself never made any strong speeches. He however had no hesitation in going to jail if necessary, although he did not like the heat very much as he was rather a fat man. The abnormal heat of last year and his own abnormal physique may have been responsible for Mr. Shaukat Ali's apology, but who or what was responsible for Mr. Mahomed Ali's apology? A mild Hindu in the person of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, to whom, on his being frightened out of his wits by the suggestion of an Afghan invasion, it was necessary to administer a sedative. Mr. Mahomed Ali is always considerate. 'Look', said he at Karachi, 'I have given up carrying even a stick, lest I should cause



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

42
anxiety to Englishmen'. It is to be hoped Englishmen were duly grateful, for what were their machine guns and bombs as compared to Mr. Mahomed Ali's stick? When a person is pushed in a corner he will commit any foolery to defend himself. We find Mr. Mahomed Ali stating at Karachi:—'Regarding the so-called statement, apology or whatever you call it, I wish to say that it was primarily meant for the public, but if mention of individual names were possible I declare it was meant for Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who entertained fears of an Afghan invasion. It was meant to set at rest the fears of the Pandit, but though it would seem it has unfortunately not succeeded, we have discharged our duty'. The apology did no good to the Pandit for whom it was intended, and Mr. Gandhi, who in defence of the Ali brothers had stated, 'the letter was instigated by me and was written for me', confessed later on with sorrow that more evil than good had come out of it. The only person who seemed satisfied was Lord Reading, for whom the apology was not intended. But this satisfaction could have been marred by Mr. Mahomed Ali who stated at Karachi: 'I have at this moment in my bag a document regarding my statement which I wish were published before I leave Sind. I have no authority to make it public'. How very unfortunate. Any how,



The Afghan invasion had been choked off, and no one in the future need have entertained any apprehensions as regards violence on the part of the Ali brothers. Soon after came the publication of what is called the 'Authorised Agreed Version' of Mr. Gandhi's interviews with the Viceroy. The Government communique established the following points :—

(1) Lord Reading showed Mr. Gandhi certain passages in the speeches of the Ali brothers which were construed as an incitement to violence. Mr. Gandhi agreed that they were capable of bearing this interpretation and that he would get his friends to express publicly their regrets for the unintentional incitement contained in the passages quite irrespective of any prosecution.

(2) Mr. Gandhi further showed the Viceroy the statement he intended the Ali brothers to sign and publish and he deleted certain passages that were considered objectionable, while adding at the Viceroy's instance an undertaking to refrain in the future from making speeches inciting to violence.

(3) The Viceroy then informed Mr. Gandhi that if the statement as altered were signed and published by the Ali brothers the prosecution would be suspended so long as the provisions contained in the undertaking were observed and that it would



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

It is necessary to issue a communique explaining the attitude of Government.

(4) That it was Mr. Gandhi who sought the interviews, and that when Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya invited him to go to Simla he did not mention the object of the visit.

Considering this invitation was sent by an urgent wire and that Mr. Gandhi knew and had publicly referred to the impending prosecution of the Ali brothers and that the Pandit had expressly gone to Simla to see if this prosecution could be staved off the fact that no reason was given in the invitation has no significance. Mr. Gandhi's memory plays him false when he says that the apology was received before he ever knew of the impending prosecution of the Ali brothers. The *Leader* of the 12th May published an account of an address of welcome presented to him on the 10th May at Allahabad. In course of the reply Mr. Gandhi stated he did not understand why the Ali brothers were going to be arrested, as the rumour went. The question of the apology did not arise till the end of May. From the fact as elicited in this authorised 'agreed version' it is obvious that they bear out the correctness of the statements contained in the Government communique and in Lord Reading's speech at the Chelmsford Club. Mr. Gandhi would have been wise



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

GL

if he had kept a silent tongue, for he now stands convicted with an utter and absolute want of frankness and with deliberately trying to mislead the public in reference to the apology. He had gone in for two separate deals, one with the Viceroy and another with the Ali brothers. The first he ignored altogether, and made certain disclosures with reference to the second. Having regard to the disclaimers of Mr. Mahomed Ali it appears he was approached primarily by Mr. Gandhi, who no doubt solemnly appealed to him, for the sake of the cause they were both interested in, to sign the statement, which as worded bore the construction that it was as much an apology to the people as to any one else. Mr. Gandhi is right in stating that the apology was instigated by him and not that the apology was instigated by him and not even suggested by the Viceroy, but by this quibbling he cannot get over the fact that on the strength of this document he got the Viceroy to withdraw the impending prosecution. Then again it would appear that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also let the Ali brothers know that their pronouncement as regards the Afghan invasion and their own attitude thereto and their declarations as to what was expected of the Hindus had given the latter a severe shock which would be removed by the signing of the statement. And so it was that Mr. Mahomed Ali was able to assert that this apology was intended primarily for the public



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

and if individuals had to be named then for the Pandit. Here again is to be found some further quibbling, which also ignores the outstanding fact that by appending their signatures to this document the Ali brothers derived considerable advantage, for but for that the prosecution would have gone on and they were doomed men, as under Mr. Gandhi's ruling they would not have defended themselves. That they knew of the impending prosecution is evidenced by Mr. Mahomed Ali's admission that he had asked before signing the statement to be shown the incriminating speeches, but his request was refused. And yet he signed. Why?

Henceforward we find the Ali brothers, though professing to follow strictly the injunctions of Mr. Gandhi to keep under restraint their violent instincts, engaged in a continuous and persistent campaign of exciting disaffection. For in this respect they had received a free charter from the Mahatma, who admitted he was an arch seditionist and that he reckoned it a virtuous act to foster disaffection against a Government which was depraved and had forfeited the confidence of the people. But he scrupulously abstained from resorting to any overt acts to seduce either the police or the military from their duty. This it was found the Ali brothers and certain other Khilafat leaders were doing, in so far that the Government of Bombay



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
247

decided on launching a prosecution against those who had at the Khilafat Conference held at Karachi in July passed certain resolutions which were intended to have this effect. It was also attributed to them that they conjointly with others had issued certain *fatwas* and distributed to the soldiers certain leaflets inciting them to leave the army.

The Ali brothers, Dr. Kitchlu and certain other leaders were arrested in September and tried at Karachi. The charges laid against them, and for which they were committed to the sessions court, were serious enough, but eventually the charges under sections 124 A and 153 A of the Indian Penal Code, which related to their creating disaffection, contempt and hatred and inciting to violence against the Government, were withdrawn. There remained the charge relating to a conspiracy to incite the military and the police to rebellion. The accused admitted that they had a hand in the passing of certain resolutions at Karachi which appealed directly to both these classes to give up service under Government, but they pleaded that in doing this they were only following the injunctions of their religion, to which they gave priority over the laws of the land. The Penal Code, said Mr. Mahomed Ali, must be regarded as subject to the teachings of the Quran, and if any soldier disobeyed the Quran by remaining in the army every Mahomedan was



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

entitled to ask him to leave the army. It is superfluous to examine the merits of a plea which claims from an individual the right to do what he pleases so long as he entertains the belief that his religion enjoins him to do this, and even the accused persons while advancing this argument realised its utter hollowness. But curiously enough they were on safer ground when they denied the existence of any conspiracy to commit this offence. The Public Prosecutor proved that so far back as February 1920 a resolution had been passed in Calcutta similar to the Karachi resolutions. It was again passed at Sylhet at a later period, and again at Gohak in June 1921. Fatwas to this effect had been issued at various periods signed by a number of Ulemas. Leaflets had been circulated amongst Moslem soldiers. A fund had been collected for the benefit of the soldiers who were to be seduced from their duty. These facts were not controverted, but they certainly involved individuals a thousand times as many as the seven accused who were being tried and on whom was being foisted the responsibility of all that had been done by their co-religionists during the previous two years. And the absurdity of the position became patent when all over India meetings were held at which hundreds of thousands of persons endorsed and openly repeated the resolutions passed at Karachi. A manifesto over



The signatures of about 150 leaders of the non-co-operation movement including Mr. Gandhi and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was issued stating that it is the inherent right of every one to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to or remaining in the employ of Government in the civil or military departments. And the Indian Congress Committee passed a resolution precisely to the same effect, while congratulating the non-co-operators who had been arrested or imprisoned in the country.

The charge of conspiracy failed, the jury bringing in a unanimous verdict of not guilty. The accused, except Pandit Bharti Krishna Tirthji, who had spoken in support of the resolution without quite understanding its significance, were convicted of the offence of passing a resolution calling on the police and soldiers to quit the service of Government, and they were sentenced each to imprisonment for two years.

It has been said that the mountain laboured and produced a mouse, that the prosecution was ill-advised, that the Khilafists won both a moral and a political victory, that the Government unwittingly gave its opponents a gigantic advertisement and that its hope that the conspiracy would be suppressed and the dangerous movement would receive a death sentence by a successful prosecution had been frustrated. But is it certain that the



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

Government intended any other result but that which they achieved? They found that certain demagogues were at large whose dangerous activities were being utilised under the cloak of religion to cover their revolutionary designs. It was desirable to close their mouths, and this has been achieved for two years at least. The withdrawal of the more serious charges supports this view, for had the dominant idea been the punishment of the offenders these charges would have been proceeded with. Lord Reading secured what he wanted and at a trifling cost. However misguided these men may have been I am not prepared to accuse them of being dishonest. It was after taking part in the Karachi resolutions that Dr. Kitchlu called on me at Dehra Dun and the conversation I had with him left the impression that he was as simple-minded and honest as he was when five or six years ago he was assisting me in my duties as Public Prosecutor. I would have resented, as I did before, his receiving a vindictive sentence, and the bulk of the Moderates were actuated by similar feelings towards the accused in the Karachi trial. Their conviction aroused very little public excitement. Possibly Mr. Gandhi's non-violent propaganda had something to do with it, but the leniency of the sentence and the fairness of the trial, to which even the Extremists



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
251

paid a hearty tribute, are entitled to a large amount of credit for this result. There can be no question that with the temporary incarceration of the Ali brothers the situation was somewhat eased, though as we shall see further on there were some serious ebullitions of disorder in various parts of India, unconnected with the trial.

The trial however disclosed the hollowness of Mr. Gandhi's assertion that his propaganda was not only being run on lines that were non-violent but that the leaders were sincere in the expression of their views that the exercise of force was anathema to them. Dr. Kitchlu in his defence speech stated that he was an agitator and a revolutionary. He believed in revolution. If they could not get *swaraj* by a revolution without violence he was ready for revolution with violence, just as had been done in England many years ago and in France and in Russia. He was ready for anything. Though it was his earnest desire to destroy the Government he had so far been following the principle of non-violent non-co-operation, but if he saw the Government persisting in not respecting religious tenets he might become a violent non-co-operator.

A few months after their conviction an attempt was made in the Legislative Assembly to obtain the release of the Ali brothers under an



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

amnesty to be granted by the Prince of Wales who was then on a visit to India. In resisting this appeal Sir William Vincent stated in the peroration of a powerful speech.—‘When I think of the treasonable practices of these two men during the Great War when the fate of the Empire was at stake, when I think of the secret support and encouragement which they gave to the King’s enemies when hundreds and thousands of British and Indian soldiers were daily risking their lives and making great sacrifices, when I think of those poor Mahajirins whose white bones are lying about the Khyber and on the way to Kabul who were misled by these two gentlemen and their followers who themselves never did a *hijrat* further than Paris and London, when I think of money extorted from the poor Mahomedans of this country and squandered away in Europe and elsewhere of which no recorded account has ever been kept and no account is published up to this time, when I think, lastly, of the Hindus, the unfortunate Hindus, dishonoured and killed in Malabar and the thousands of Moplahs innocent in a way but misled, driven to death and ruin at the instigation of Messrs. Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali and those who think with them, then, Sir, I marvel at the simplicity and the great ignorance and folly of the Muslim population that submits to such treatment and recognises such men as leaders,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
233

and I marvel the more at the temerity of the hon. member who proposes to an Assembly such as the present, an Assembly of intelligent men who really understand things, a suggestion that men of this class, traitors to their countrymen and traitors to their King, should be treated with any consideration. That the resolution would be unanimously rejected was a foregone conclusion. The Ali brothers' record of activities was so damning that it was impossible to condone it. While professing to be the followers of Mr. Gandhi they set at naught the principles inculcated by him. They paraded the fact that they entertained an implacable hatred to British rule in India, and addressed impassioned appeals in the name of their religion to the Moslem population to work for its subversion, even if it was requisite to resort to force. They were the apostles of direct action, and scorned to utilise the slow process of constitutional agitation. They sneered at Mr. Gandhi's propaganda as being effeminate and ill-calculated to achieve the result that was aimed at. The political salvation of India, based on a common nationality, occupied but a secondary place in their minds, for Islamic dominance was with them the first article of faith, and to attain this they had no hesitation to draw the sword or to welcome a foreign invader. Apart from this they furnished a



ALI BROTHERS ON THE WAR PATH.

CSL

striking contrast to the disinterested and selfless life of the leader of non-co-operation. Charges were freely launched against them by their own co-religionists that they had exploited their political views to their personal advantage, and that their much vaunted patriotism was a sham and a delusion.



CHAPTER IX.

CSL

ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

The year 1921 was ushered in with a jubilant shout on the part of Mr. Gandhi and his followers that they were marching on to victory. It closed with the bitter cry, on the part of at least of those people who had not lost the balance of their minds, that the country was drifting on to the road to anarchy. There was nothing startling in this, for it was only the inevitable that had happened. Even those who were primarily responsible for this catastrophe had no reason to be surprised. Mr. Gandhi, times without number, had stated that he was engaged in a peaceful revolution, but at the same time he had frankly declared rather than the existing condition of servitude to a foreign nation be continued he would welcome anarchy. At heart he was a man of peace and had faith in the novel experiment in which he was engaged. Not only, he wrote in *Young India*, did he believe in a bloodless revolution to be perfectly possible but many others implicitly believed in non-violence for the purpose of gaining India's freedom. But the basis on which this huge gamble involving the peace and order of the country was undertaken had no foundation except in the fond delusions of those responsible for the inauguration of the pernicious propaganda.



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

of non-co-operation. The desired for freedom was not attained at the period originally fixed, nor at the various extensions of grace granted by the autocrat, till at last in sheer desperation he finally announced at Ahmedabad that if he failed in the present campaign he would dissolve the compact of non-violence. This was a different tune to the impassioned heroics of the past, that he would cease to be or could not contemplate living after December 31, if *swaraj* were not secured. His threat to retire to the Himalayas or to cease to exist and his definite promise of *swaraj* before the expiry of the year were no more than jests, the like of which can only be perpetrated by Mahatmas.

But Mr. Gandhi had a special reason for a preference for non-violent non-co-operation as an adequate and all powerful remedy for the political salvation of India. He had the shrewdness to realise that violence at the present moment had not even a sporting chance of success. In one of his speeches at the last session of the National Congress he admitted that if the people adopted violence against the Government they would not spare their own countrymen and even their associates and fellow-workers in the future. It would not be possible for instance to protect the honour of the softer sex from the hands of our own infuriated brethren.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
257

As an astute strategist he had carefully marshalled his forces, in the belief that non-violent non-cooperation had a special purpose to serve. It was a preparatory stage wherein was to be accomplished the fusion of the masses in an atmosphere charged with racial hatred and enmity to the constituted authorities and was further calculated to provide a training for future mass violence which would follow as an inevitable consequence. Mr. Gandhi himself volunteered a true estimate of the movement in which he was engaged. He wrote in *New India*: 'Non-cooperation though a religious and strictly moral movement deliberately aims at the overthrow of the Government and is legally seditious in terms of the Indian Penal Code. But this is no new discovery. Lord Chelmsford knew it. Lord Reading knows it. We must spread disaffection openly and systematically till it pleases the Government to arrest us'. This did not detract from the honesty of his exhortations and injunctions to his followers to avoid violence. He called those traitors who utilised it in the name of peace. But it would be an insult to his intelligence to suppose that he was not aware that his propaganda contained the seeds of anarchy, which only needed time to develop its most repulsive aspect. And if it did, Mr. Gandhi was not above taking advantage of it to further



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

his cherished dream of securing *swaraj* for India.

Was the country then on the road to anarchy?

There is a mass of evidence forthcoming to force the conviction, even in the minds of those who are inclined to be sceptical, that it was. The ties that bind together parents and children had been sundered, teachers and pupils were at variance, friends parted in anger, masters and servants engaged in a profitless feud, communities were divided, and actuated by selfish motives were seeking to advance their respective interests, acute race hatred had been engendered, the masses were in a state of ferment, freedom of speech and liberty of action were denied, the constituted authority of the land was flouted and defied, whilst violence in a variety of forms reigned rampant over the land. In whatever department of life we enter we find a legacy of strife and turmoil, coupled with the apprehension of their development in a more intensified form. The atmosphere is still charged with the elements tending to disruption. And the pathetic part of it is that the convulsion with which the country is afflicted at present has been brought about in the sacred name of *swaraj*, a sample of which was given during the Bombay riots on the occasion of the landing in India of the Prince of Wales. 'With non-violence on our lips', wrote



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

269
SL

Mr. Gandhi, 'we have terrorised those who happened to differ from us and in doing so we have denied our God. The *swaraj* that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils.' And from the bitterness of his heart he admitted, 'I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit'.

The activities of the non-co-operators were manifold, and it will be seen that as regards each one of these the immediate result was to promote intimidation, lawlessness and violence or to break asunder the bonds which keep society together and which are essential to the well-being of the people who lay any claim to civilisation. To start with the "Volunteer" Corps, the underlying motive was to secure the gratuitous services of the young to promote the welfare of the country. But the experience of the people tells a curious tale. A graphic description is given by the Repressive Laws Committee, on which Indians were strongly represented. They say : "As we have already seen, there is definite evidence of certain organisations encouraging acts of violence or resorting to intimidation. Recently in Delhi it has been necessary to declare certain associations of 'volunteers' unlawful under section 18 of the Defence of India Act. We have carefully examined



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

the circumstances which led to this action. The 'volunteer' movement began with social service, but the adherents soon developed a definite tendency to interfere with the duties of the public and the liberty of the public. They then began to intimidate and terrorise the general body of the population. There was a tendency towards hooliganism". These statements were made with regard to the situation in Delhi, but they apply with extraordinary fidelity to the situation which was recently experienced in different parts of India.

As a matter of fact to the hooliganism that was indulged in may be attributed to a large extent the success of the various *harkats* that were carried out in obedience to the orders of Mr. Gandhi. Clad in non-descript uniforms, wearing badges and sashes indicative of their connection with the Congress or the Khilafat, armed with *lathies* and sometimes with knives, those impetuous and irresponsible youths went about in gangs and terrorised the people with threats of the Mahatma's curse, with social ostracism and indeed of personal violence if their behests were not carried out by shop-keepers, petty traders, domestic servants and indeed by the educated and the intelligent, who also were helpless to resist by reason of the apprehension that they would be subjected to insults and indignities.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

261
SL

This has been claimed as an instance of the exercise of soul force on the part of the followers of Mr. Gandhi and of the great success of a *hartal* wherein all classes and communities, rich and poor, had voluntarily taken an active part. What a travesty of truth is such an assertion.

It was partly in view of the mischievous, activities of the "volunteers" which gave every promise of becoming more offensive that the Repressive Laws Committee while recommending the repeal of all the Statutes included in the terms of reference advised 'that the repeal of the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1919, and Part 2 of the Indian Criminal Amendment Act, 1908, should be deferred for the present. Their retention is necessary in view of recent occurrences and possible developments which we cannot but regard with the gravest apprehension'. During the whole period of 1921, the Government adopted a policy dictated by patience, forbearance and conciliation, apprehensive that repression would strengthen the hands of the non-co-operators. But after the Bombay riots strenuous action was found imperative, if for no other reason to justify its existence by the maintenance of law and order. Sir. William Vincent, in the debate in the Legislative Assembly initiated to condemn this action, stated that he



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

had received communications from every Government that the "volunteers" were habitually indulging in violence and intimidation, and gave some striking instances of their illegal and vicious activities. It was scarcely necessary to do this, for Mr. Gandhi had himself admitted that coercion was being largely practised by his followers, whom he severely admonished, and he warned them that unless they refrained from it non-co-operation would collapse. But he could hardly have been ignorant of the fact that to a vast majority of his enthusiastic followers, vilification, threats and persecution were the very salt of life, which if they gave up, the propaganda would be doomed. Almost the first step taken by the Government when it was roused into action was to proclaim the "volunteer" associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, to order their disbandment and to prohibit their engaging in any form of activity connected with the new propaganda. This was a severe blow inflicted on Mr. Gandhi and his followers, but was most resented by the Khilafat rank and file, who had asserted themselves more prominently than the Hindus and had displayed a marked tendency to be more unscrupulous. As was to be expected when a few days later the National Congress and the Khilafat Conference met at Ahmedabad one of the main resolutions passed by them was a



strong protest against this action of Government and the inauguration of civil disobedience by a wholesale enlistment of volunteers. All students of the age of 18 and over were asked to sign a prescribed pledge and to become members of the national Volunteer Corps in view of the impending arrest of a large number of Congress workers.

The "Volunteers" rendered conspicuous service in the operations connected with *hartals*. Some idea how these were engineered will be obtained by a perusal of the following translation of a circular issued under the joint signatures of Mr. Birendra Nath Sasmal, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and Mr. Mujibar Rahiman, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee.

Coming of the Prince in India : Duties of the People of India.

The Prince of Wales, son of George V., the Emperor, will reach the Bombay Port on November 17. He will visit the principal cities and the Feudatory States of India by staying here for four months. The Government of India have decided to spend money like water in decorating the cities, in illuminating the streets, and in feasts and other functions. About Rs. 45 lakhs of the Indian Revenue were spent when the Duke of Connaught, the uncle of the Emperor, came last year. This year, on the occasion of the



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

Visit of the Prince, the Government and the Municipalities of the country have decided to spend about a crore of rupees. Since the talk of sending the Prince to India began, the people of India have been keenly protesting against this proposal of the Government, but the Government are maintaining their *aid* without paying any attention to this. Different provinces of India are just now under the clutches of terrible famine but still the Government are not hesitating to spend the money of the famine-stricken people by bringing the Prince to India. We have no personal enmity against the Prince. He is coming to India as the son of the Emperor of India and it is superfluous to say he is coming at the request of the Government of India to increase the prestige of that contemptible system of administration, which has not yet redressed the Punjab wrongs and settled the Khilafat problem satisfactorily. For this reason we are against the visit of the Prince. In order to translate our protest to action we shall cut off all connection with all sorts of amusements, decorations and such other functions as will be inaugurated to welcome the Prince. So according to the desire of Mahatma Gandhi and the All-India Congress Committee, the people of India are being invited to observe the following rules :—

1. November 17, the day when the Prince will land at Bombay Port, *hartal* will have to be



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

265
GL

observed in all places in India and in order to make this *hartal* successful (a) Shop-keepers must close their respective shops on that day. (b) Garriwallahs, garries drawn by horses, motor cars, rikshaws, bullock carts—all sorts of conveyance drivers must not drive conveyances throughout the day. (c) Coolies must not carry any load in railway stations, steamer ghats, bazaars and streets throughout the day. (d) No *mehtars* (sweeper, scavenger, etc) must work on that day. (e) Those who are employed in Government work must not do any work on that day.

2. On December 24, when the Prince will come to Calcutta, similar *hartal* will have to be observed throughout Bengal.

3. None of us will join nor will we allow our children to join in amusements, decoration, fireworks, songs and music or other functions that will be arranged for honouring the Prince.

4. No student will be present at the feasts that the authorities of the educational institutions may organise for the students in honour of the Prince.

5. The students will not accept any medal that the authorities of any school may want to present for keeping the memory of the Prince's visit permanent.

6. We shall not illuminate our houses for welcoming the Prince.



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

This circular in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu was circulated from house to house in Calcutta by Khilafat "Volunteers." Its phraseology needs to be studied. It is not a request or counsel given to observe *hartal*, but various classes of individuals are told that they *must* do what they are enjoined to do. It was left to the distributing agents to enlarge upon the consequences which would attend the disobedience of what was practically a command issued by those conscious of the fact that they had the power to enforce it. On the day after the *hartal* an extremist paper wrote with satisfaction that even if Government refused to realise it, there can be no question that Thursday's *hartal* was revolution, which freely translated means anarchy pure and simple. Picketing was reduced to a fine art by the Volunteers. It was resorted to an extent which constituted an intolerable interference with the liberty of a number of perfectly law-abiding persons. And bitter were the complaints of a large class of Indian piece goods traders and and liquor vendors that they were being compelled against their will to adopt a course which they did not wish to adopt. Many forms of intimidation were practised. And last but not least these Corps usurped the functions of authority and claimed to control the life of the city. Was it to be wondered at if the unruly elements in the



population, seeing the authority of the police thus challenged, thought that the times were favourable for the play of their lawless instincts? Stone-throwing at innocent persons became common; vehicles were held up and compelled to deposit their fares, and there was general talk of *Gandhiraj*, which those viciously inclined construed as implying *Goooda Raj*; the English Government having it was alleged practically abrogated their functions. Was not this form of coercion, however good its motives, a kind of ill-organised social tyranny, highly subversive of civic liberty? Was it not a standing menace to public peace and a stepping stone to anarchy? To carry out the mischievous designs of the new propaganda an army of volunteers was indispensable, and these were obtained often from the scum of society by doling out a daily or monthly wage, which depended on their capacity to make themselves a nuisance or a danger to the public. Mr. Gandhi could hardly have realised the moral effect of his announcement that he would resort to picketing in the case of any shop-keeper who was found selling foreign cloth from after August. Practical experience in Bengal fifteen years ago showed that violence was inseparable from boycott and picketing.

Economic strikes, where the workers have a real grievance, are entitled to full sympathy, but the no-co-operators deliberately set themselves



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

to promote indiscriminate strikes, the effect of which was not likely to be felt by the Government against which they were non-co-operating, but by the people, whether masters or servants, and by the general public. For instance, in respect to the steamer and railway strikes in East Bengal, which Mr. C. R. Das had a hand in promoting, he made a startling admission, indicating how far anarchism was associated with the new propaganda. 'I assert,' he said, 'with all the emphasis I can command that these strikes are not labour strikes. They are not political either. They are national. They have sprung from the same spirit with which the battle of *swaraj* is being fought all over the country, and is part of the general non-co-operation movement.' A strike in which the strikers had nothing to gain, having no grievance to complain of, can hardly be justified on the ground that it was intended to have a moral effect by holding up the railway and shipping officials to contempt, in that they were guilty of inhumanity to the tea-garden coolies or that the strikers were to be infused with a spirit of comradeship with the coolies that were to be repatriated. It is more than doubtful whether in either case the desired effect was produced. But the practical effect was serious enough in the inconvenience caused to the public, the pecuniary loss sustained by the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
260

merchants and the needless suffering inflicted on the strikers, some of whom had to return home in a destitute condition, while if the steamer and railway traffic had not been disorganised there would have been no congestion of coolies at Chandpur and the heavy mortality from cholera would have been avoided.

The question whether the refugees from the tea gardens had a legitimate grievance need not be discussed, as the evidence is conflicting, but the political agitators had no justification to interfere with them unless they felt confident they could improve their position. To organise a stampede of men, women and children, and to trust to Providence to look after their material wants, when most of them were absolutely destitute, was an unpardonable crime. The congestion and plight of strikers and passengers at Goalundo was simply horrible to imagine. Many had not the means to return, most of them were left to the merey of wind and waves on the banks of the Padma and had to submit helplessly to the tyranny of hunger and privations of all sorts. And what had the future in store for the refugees? The survivors were sent to their houses by Mr. S. R. Das who was moved to come to their help on humanitarian grounds. There was no fattened calf killed on their return home, for some had no relations left and others



CSL

ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

no land to fall back upon and many of them were treated as outcasts. Verily, though they were miserable enough in the tea plantations, they rued the day they left their huts, lured by politicians who desired to proclaim themselves as leaders. Mr. Gandhi has strongly deprecated the encouragement of political strikes, but the fault lies with his propaganda which stimulates the spirit of disruption and anarchy and an indifference to the sufferings of others. Mr. C. R. Das strongly resented humanitarian grounds being brought into question in the activities of non-co-operation, which demand a cheerful acceptance of sacrifice. He and his party can protest as much as they like, they can call the movement national or by any other name, but the verdict of all right thinking men is that their actions were clearly leading towards anarchy and constituted a crime against humanity and the laws of God.

Non-co-operation secured its first success amongst the students, for, according to Sir Ashutosh Mukerjee, the Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University, no less than 50,000 had left schools and colleges in Bengal alone. It is not as if they had obtained a resting place elsewhere, for national institutions were neither in existence nor likely to come into existence. Many of these boys were employed as volunteers by the Congress and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 271

Khilafat Committees, and in the company of hired rowdies they become thoroughly demoralised, and some at least were looked upon as a terror in their own families. They tyrannised over their fellow students and prevented them from entering the examination halls by lying on the footpaths or at the gates leading to them, apart from flinging abuse and taunts at their victims. To hoot every one who was not in sympathy with the extremists was their delight, and in Bengal, Sir Surrendro Nath Bannerjee was their special target. They indulged in every kind of hooliganism and became adepts in insult and annoyance, coercion and intimidation. Their lawlessness and contempt of authority, whether it be of parents or of their tutors or of the civil powers, became phenomenal and constituted a serious danger to the community. Their future is a total blank, for when the present agitation dies out they will be thrown on their beam ends and will be reduced to wasters and vagabonds as indeed a good many have already become. It is on soil like this anarchy easily gets a foothold. It will be decades before the ravages committed by non-co-operation are wiped out. At the same time the agitation, though damaging in its financial effects and in other ways, has served a useful purpose by helping to create a public opinion in favour of practical and vocational education.



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

It is impossible within the compass of a chapter to traverse the whole series of riots and disorders verging on anarchy for which the year 1921 was responsible and which were the direct outcome of Mr. Gandhi's novel propaganda. The methods of the non-co-operation-cum-Khilafat group exhibited everywhere a curious uniformity. Some cause of local discontent was seized upon as favourable ground upon which to sow the seed of revolt. In the hill districts the deservedly unpopular custom of begar was utilised. In the province of Oudh the jealousies for long excited among occupancy tenants by the existence of freehold tenure in the adjoining province was exploited with disastrous results. In centres adjoining the aboriginal tracts the anti-alcoholism of Brahmins was utilised to the full. In the tea and coal areas, among the Madras and Bombay mill workers, and in the ranks of railway and other employees, industrial grievances were exploited. In the frontier province, in the vicinity of Aligarh and in Malabar, among the Moplahs, the Khilafat grievance was worn almost threadbare. The list can be extended indefinitely but always the procedure has pointed to a malice that was deliberate and a hatred that was deep seated. Disorder, political chaos, anarchy and ruin were the ultimate aims of the destructive element that was at work in the country. To all



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

278
SL

This Mr. Gandhi gave the stereotyped answer: 'My followers I hope are assimilating the spirit of non-violence. But if it ever comes to pass that they under cover of non-violence, resort to violence I hope to find myself the first victim of their violence, but if by a stroke of ill-luck or by my own cowardice I find myself alive, the snow-white Himalayas will claim me as their own'. Mitigating and extenuating circumstances were always ingeniously discovered and enlarged upon in the worst of cases. But it is a puzzle why he should resort to flimsy excuse by which no one was impressed having regard to his express declaration:— 'We are challenging the might of the Government, because we consider its activity to be wholly evil. *We want to overthrow the Government. We want to compel its submission to the people's will*'.

That the forces of disorder gained strength as the time went on was disclosed by the figures supplied by Sir William Vincent in the course of a speech in the Legislative Assembly. During the year 1921 the military were called out 47 times to suppress serious disorders but during the last three months of the year their assistance had to be evoked no less than 20 times. By far the most serious of these outbreaks was that of the Moplahs of the Malabar coast. Tinirangadi, the scene of the outrage, is described in the District Gazetteer as the



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

Centre of Moplah fanaticism, which for the last hundred years has found vent in a series of murderous outbreaks. To win paradise by killing Hindus has been the chief ambition of those who are proselytes from the dregs of the Hindu population. In some instances the inspiration was supplied by the hatred of a particular landlord, or economic causes had been at work. In the present instance the leader was one Ali Musaliar, and from the judgment of the Special Tribunal which tried him it appears that he was enthusiastically leading the Khilafat movement. He had been preparing for war against the King by violently preaching sedition, by enlisting volunteers, arming them and making a show of force with them. This was after Khilafat Committees had been formed and were in existence at numerous centres for over a year or so and had been engaged in an active propaganda. The judgment records the finding that the Moplah rising was not due 'to mere fanaticism, it was not agrarian trouble, it was not destitution that worked on the mind of Ali Musaliar and his followers. The evidence conclusively shows that it was the influence of the Khilafat and non-co-operation movement that drove them to their crime. It is this which distinguishes the present from all previous outbreaks. Their intention was, absurd



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

275
SL

Though it may seem, to subvert the British Government and substitute a Khilafat Government by force of arms. In fact Ali Musaliar announced that he had become King, though he did not define his kingdom, and exercised his authority for about a week. He was later on arrested, tried and executed. Atrocities too horrible to relate were vouched for by most credible authorities. Sir William Vincent stated he had seen refugees, a thousand in one refuge, hungry, homeless, lacking clothes and presenting a most pitiable sight. He related the case of a respectable Nair into whose house the rebels forced their way, dragged him out, along with his wife and two children, carried them to the mosque and having bathed all four compelled them to recite verses from the *Koran* and dress as Moplahs. At midnight they were led home and imprisoned. The next day the Nair's head was shaved and ten days later he was forcibly circumcised. Three weeks later he and his family and other converts (some being Christians) escaped to Shoranur. Mr. G.K. Nariman, as the result of personal investigation, gives a graphic account of the atrocities that had been committed, the full details of which were difficult to obtain from young girls and women for obvious and natural reasons, and parents and guardians



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

preferred the lesser evil of silent shame to humiliating exposure and the risk of lifelong spinsterhood, and even sturdy males were most afraid to avow temporary Islamization. They were terrified at the penalty in store for them as apostates to their new faith by the relentless Moplahs with long memories. Hundreds of well-to-do converted refugees in Calicut from outlying districts will, they assured him, never venture to return to their rich forests, now destroyed ; or to their once smiling broad acres for the certain peril of assassination, even in times of profound peace, by frenzied Moslems. The Moplahs had such numbers of meek victims that they had barely the time to shave the Hindu males tuft of hair and forcibly put on the special Moplah jacket on the converted female and make them recite the Islamic profession of faith. He had met Hindus of wealth and intellect who were so overcome with indignation in relating their experiences that he had to defer noting their tragic accounts.

Though the full fury of the rebels fell ultimately on innocent Hindus, the outbreak was primarily directed against the Government under the instigation of Khilafat agitators. Lord Willingdon, in the Madras Legislative Council, described the immediate cause of the rising as 'the mere attempt on the part of the District authorities to enforce



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

277
SL

Ordinary processes of law which was the signal for a sudden and widespread outbreak of violence directed in the first place against Government, their officers and the whole apparatus of civil administration over a wide tract of country. In an incredibly short time communications of all kinds were wrecked or obstructed. Public officers and courts were attacked and their records destroyed. Police stations were plundered of their arms and ammunition and civil government was brought to a complete standstill. As a natural consequence excesses followed, of which private persons were the victims.' The loss of life and damage to property were simply appalling.

There were several minor riots and disorders in the year 1921 in the Madras Presidency; all more or less engineered or inspired by the new propaganda. The minds of the people were predisposed towards setting law and order at defiance and towards the indulgence in violence. On April 3rd at Kombakonam the hackney carriage men and hotel keepers struck work, and a large mob attacked the police station. Fire was opened with the result that one rioter was killed and six injured. At Ottapalam on 26 April certain Khilafat volunteers and the Reserve police came into collision. On July 1st at Madras the mill hands of the Buckingham and Karnatic mills



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

struck work and indulged in wholesale incendiarism by setting fire to the huts of the Audi-Dravidas. The military were called out to quell the disorder. On October 5th at Madras a serious riot ensued by reason of the Audi-Dravidas insulting a Mahomedan procession. A free fight was carried on for over a hour, which was only suppressed after the police had opened fire. On December 4th at Cannanore about 150 Moplah convicts and under-trial prisoners started a riot. They broke open a tool shed and arming themselves with instruments of sorts they attacked the warders so as to escape from the jail. They had to be fired upon with the result that nine were killed and several wounded.

In the Bombay Presidency there were two serious disturbances attended with loss of life. The riot at Malegaon on April 25 arose out of the conviction of 25 Khilafat volunteers for carrying arms. Fearing a disturbance, the city sub-inspector, the Mamlatdar and the resident magistrate proceeded to the town. The city sub-inspector being attacked took refuge in the house of Mr. Popte, a merchant, next to which is a temple. The mob demanded that he should give the sub-inspector up, but he put them off. They climbed up to the windows with ladders, and the sub-inspector and his men are said to have wounded and killed several in self defence. Failing to



REVOLUTOIN OR EVOLUTION.

279
SL

Obtain the sub-inspector's person by force, the mob then brought fuel and kerosine oil and set fire to several houses and the temple. Mr. Popte and his family escaped, while one or two constables ran up the roof, but the sub-inspector was caught, beaten to death and thrown into the fire. Four constables were also killed. The Mamlatdar and the resident magistrate were stoned but escaped to the hospital entrance to the fort. Both were injured, the latter seriously. The mob cut the telegraph wires and stopped the mail tongas from running.

The Bombay riots on November 17, the day the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay, culminated on the establishment of a veritable reign of terror for five days, when the authority of Government was practically effaced. The reason of the outbreak was to punish those who had participated in the welcome given to the royal visitor, in spite of the *hartal* proclaimed by Mr. Gandhi. The Parsees having been somewhat exuberant in their loyalty had to bear the brunt of the attacks of the non-co-operators, with whom the rowdy element to be found in every city had joined forces, the mill hands contributing a large proportion towards it. The military had to be called out to help in quelling the disorder. The total number of people killed by the rioters were two Europeans, one American and three



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

Parsees, while three Europeans, eighty-three police and an unknown number of Parsees were wounded. The worst incident of all was the attack upon the District Police Station, the burning of the *chowky* and the brutal murder of three courageous Indian constables who defended it, by hammering them to death. This was on the opening day. Of the happenings on that day Mr. Gandhi has given a circumstantial account. He was one of the few men who was able to gather information of the actual doings, and his account may be accepted as authoritative. There was a general smashing and burning of tram cars and motor cars, the rising anger of the undisciplined mob which had attended the burning of foreign cloth being wholly directed against those who had taken part in the ceremonies associated with the Prince's arrival. Stoning and assault upon pedestrians and those driving through the affected areas grew in violence and frequency. Indians were forcibly deprived of their national headdress. A British engine-driver was murdered in a most brutal and revolting manner. Isolated Europeans had to fight for their lives against overwhelming numbers or to run to safety. Ladies were grossly and obscenely assaulted, and even little children were illtreated. Liquor shops were looted and burned. A cinema was entered and much damage caused. Decorations in



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

281

SL

honour of the Prince were torn down. In some cases violence was accompanied by robbery and several Europeans who were sent to the hospital were robbed of all they possessed of value. The only parts of the city where life and property were really safe were the large business and residential areas. The trouble developed on Friday. Saturday marked the beginning of Parsi participation but on Sunday things seemed to take a turn for the better. During the week-end there were a number of brutal murders; on Saturday alone there were over a hundred admissions to the two principal hospitals, fifty of them suffering from gunshot wounds. The leaders of the various communities went round in motor cars urging the cessation of disorders. This had the effect of calming certain areas but a recrudescence of violence occurred particularly in the Tardeo district, where a number of liquor shops were burnt. More mill hands than usual were participating in the disturbances and instances were observed of women and children supplying their menfolk with stones to throw. It was found later on that 53 rioters were killed and 268 wounded. The police and military were not entirely responsible for this, for several dead and wounded were discovered in localities where the authorities had not opened fire. It would appear that the Parsees, Anglo Indians



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

and Indian Christians had joined hands and meted out punishment to the rioters by whom they had been molested.

On April 21 while celebrating the last day of the anniversary of the Pritam Dharam Sabha, a social and religious body of Shikarpur, a mob of about 200 people under the instigation of the local non-co-operation leaders burnt and took away the flag, carpets and the signboard, broke kitson lamps, doors and gates, damaged and destroyed whatever fell in their hands, the reason being that the Hindu Jatya Pathshala (the Hindu national school) owned and conducted by the above Sabha with its three branches for girls receives a nominal annual grant-in-aid of Rs. 1,200 from the Government as an indigenous school. The mob became riotous and showered stones and brickbats inside the school. Some students and volunteers got injured. At this stage the organisers were compelled to call in police aid. The police inspector was also injured. The meeting dispersed after great difficulty at midnight. The mob then mercilessly thrashed and seriously injured some of the prominent members of the Sabha. The police arrived on the scene with loaded guns and dispersed the mob. Picketing of liquor shops was carried on in a most intensive form in the Bombay Presidency and led to a series of riots.



The most notable of these were at Dharwar and at Karachi, where the mob threw stones at the police and at passers by, various Europeans and Indians being hurt. On 26 June there were disturbances fomented by non-co-operators at the Tata Mills in Bombay, while on 17 August some 7,300 employees of the G. I. P. Railway Workshops at Bombay went on strike. They stoned the time-keeper's office and then set it on fire together with the records. They further wrecked the office of the workshop manager. Some members of the Auxiliary Force who were employed in the Works were utilized to quell the riot and disperse the mob.

In the United Provinces political crime during 1921 was directly bound up with the agitation which openly and unceasingly aimed at the overthrow of Government. There was ample evidence forthcoming to show that the villagers of Kumaon had been incited to the wholesale and wanton destruction of the forests by non-co-operators and revolutionary agitators as a direct challenge to Government to relax control over these forests. Extremist agitators of the non-co-operation cult found in Oudh and other parts of the provinces, where the tenantry laboured under the sense of agrarian and kindred grievances, fertile soil for the dissemination of their doctrines and the result was seen in riots and



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

disturbances which it was not possible to suppress without bloodshed. And serious as these disturbances were, they would undoubtedly have been far more serious, had not the extremist leaders considered that the time had not yet come for the gathering of the harvest. There had already been trouble of a similar nature in Partabgarh in September 1920, but the situation there had been eased by the institution of an official enquiry. Throughout that year agitators had been busy amongst the cultivators in the Allahabad, Rae Bareli, Fyzabad, Sultanpur and Jaunpur districts.

In the Rae Bareli district political agitators exploiting the legitimate grievances of the tenantry worked them up to take the law into their own hands. It was preached that the British raj was coming to an end. A Moulvie was induced to declare that he would be king of Salona on the advent of the Gandhi raj. Disturbances began on January 2nd and 3rd with the destruction of crops and property belonging to certain landholders; similar incidents occurred on the following days, and on the 5th January a landlord was besieged in his house by a mob of 3,000 and was only rescued by the timely arrival of the district authorities. From that date onward the state of the south of the district deteriorated rapidly. Dacoities and attacks on bazars were



CSL

projected or perpetrated in increasing numbers and on the 6th a mob of 4,000 had to be dispersed by fire at Fursatganj. On the 7th there were further dacoities and a crowd of between 7,000 and 10,000 men which attempted to force its way into Rae Bareli to release prisoners in the jail there had to be stopped by firing at Munshiganj. The situation was soon brought under control but attacks were made on the police on January 23rd, and again on March 20th, and on the latter and following day firing again become necessary. On each occasion, however, when firing had to be resorted to, the number of killed and wounded was extremely small, four only being killed at Fursatganj, and only two, so far as is known, at Munshiganj. Between January 2nd and 8th when the disturbances were at their height, there were 37 distinct occurrences of dacoity, mischief and riot. One thousand and twenty four men in all were arrested, but all except 108 were subsequently released.

In Fyzabad disturbances began on January 12th. Some 30 villages and a bazar were looted on the following two days. Here the victims were the tenantry. The aggressors were mobs of low castes, landless labourers. The prompt arrival of the district authorities prevented the extension of the disturbance and during the next few days investigations were made and some 347 persons



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

were arrested. Further disturbances were threatened on the 20th, but the danger was averted. The characteristic feature of the Oudh disturbances was that not the ordinary tenantry but the landless men were the aggressors. It was men of this class who looted grain shops in broad day light in the heart of the city of Meerut, where safes were broken open and valuables were robbed.

Riots occurred at Aligarh on July 5th, on the occasion of the trial of a local agitator. The crowd attacked the police who had formed a cordon round the collectorate buildings and had to be dispersed by a baton charge. The mob again assembled in the city and attacked the Tahsil treasury, but were repulsed by the guard consisting of a head constable and four constables, who fired on them causing several casualties. Several police outposts were looted and burnt, as also was the Post office. Other disturbances of a less serious nature occurred at various places during the year. The outbreak at Aligarh was more malignant than the disturbances arising from the more or less spontaneous action of an excited crowd, for the mobs were manipulated by evil disposed persons. The various incidents of that day were parts of a single transaction with the same common object, namely, the destruction of Government property and attacks on Government officials, particularly



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

287
SL

the police. There was no looting of private property, no destruction of shops and houses. The mobs understood that the object was to loot and destroy Government buildings, and to burn both furniture and property. Incidentally, they were to kill police officers and constables. On the other hand the grain riots at Meerut on the 3rd September were of a different type. Grain shops were looted as the result of causes both political and economical coupled with a certain amount of official bungling in dealing with the situation.

Towards the end of the year the situation became more acute. In the Barabanki district the activities of the non-co-operators were directed to the stirring up of religious fanaticism. The villagers were deliberately and sedulously inflamed by lying statements. The Holy Places had been violated, they were told; Hindu and Mahomedan women had been outraged, medicines issued from dispensaries were mixed with wine, and the fat of cows and pigs was used in the manufacture of foreign cloth. A few more weeks would have seen the establishment throughout Barabanki, as in the Allahabad district, of non-co-operative police thanas, courts and all the other paraphernalia of an Indian Soviet. The Governor reported that things at that time looked like working to a climax. In many districts the situation was menacing. In one the Deputy Commissioner could not appear



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

without being hooted; in another the audience were urged by a political fanatic to murder the Deputy Commissioner. A similar exhortation the previous year had cost the life of the Deputy Commissioner of Kleri. And this year, in an outlying district in Oudh a Superintendent of Police for no special reason was attacked while going home on his bicycle. He was approached by two men saying *Hazoor, Hazoor*, and when he stopped one took out a pistol from underneath his *chudder* and fired at him wounding him severely.

In Bengal the activities of the non-co-operators were no less pronounced, for coercion and intimidation were freely practised all the year round. Mr. Abul Kassim related his personal experience in the Legislative Council during the debate on the 'repressive' measures. It would appear that no less a person than Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, of Calcutta, came to his house, where a meeting of a large number of Mahomedans was being held. He said 'Those of you who dare go to the Legislative Council against the mandates of the Congress will suffer for it.' That was the threat that was held out, and, what is more, before the elections were held one of the members, who had been present at that meeting and who had offered himself for a seat on the Bengal Legislative Council, had his house broken into by two



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
283

'volunteers' with a revolver, and the man was so terrified that he immediately wired the withdrawal of his candidature. Then, again, in the city of Burdwan, a junior pleader, who happened to be the editor of a small vernacular journal, had the audacity to write an article in his paper against this non-co-operation movement. The result was that while his wife was lying dangerously ill in bed—on her death-bed in fact—a man was sent to fetch a doctor. The doctor was obtained, but when he was on the way 'volunteers' held him up and said that the pleader was against non-co-operation and that he could not proceed to his house and the *ghariwallah* was threatened with bodily hurt if he carried the doctor there. Word was also sent round that no *ghariwallah* in the city of Burdwan was to carry a doctor to the unfortunate pleader's house. The result was that the poor girl—she was but a girl—died the next morning for want of medical aid. And these are the volunteers who met with the approval of Mr. Ghandi.

Khilafat and Congress Committees were scattered in most of the districts and subdivisions. In certain places they exercised powers that were as illegal as they were impudent. They established so called courts named *Panchayat*, styled themselves judges and magistrates, issued processes of sorts and decided cases, inflicting



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

more or less heavy fines which the people paid because of the fear of social boycott which is one of the worst of penalties. They organised a police manned by 'volunteers', who exercised a merciless terrorism, searching the houses of the people on the most frivolous pleas. They even created their own pounds, and forcibly got cattle into them which they refused to release for days together unless paid a rupee or two per head. All this they were capable of doing by imposing on ignorant villagers the idea that British raj had been abrogated. Lord Ronaldshay stated in the local council that 'We have been criticised for placing military pickets in the town. Had we no ground for doing so? I have already told the Council of one case of alleged violent intimidation which throws a somewhat lurid light on the claims of some at least of those associated with the movement to non-violence. I have now to inform the Council of the discovery on the night of December 8 of a number of sinister weapons concealed in an untenanted house in the heart of the town. The nature of these weapons left little doubt as to the sort of use to which they were intended to be put—swords ingeniously concealed in the handles of umbrellas, daggers of a peculiarly vicious type, tulwars and jars of acid.' Meantime a virulent anti-British propaganda was being carried out. An Urdu manuscript



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

291
SL

leaflet was found posted up in the city of which the following is a translation :—‘What are you thinking about? Just come face to face with your opponent. Let yourself be cut to pieces even to death, but do not let any loss come to the Khilafat. Do not look towards Bagdad neither do you look towards the Army, but kill your enemy right and left. Do not let any of your enemy be left unkilld if you see him, and do not think that you are alone, because you are being helped by Imam Mehdi, who is standing in front of you. Call him. Just fly a flag in your hand and cry out *Khoda, Khoda*, and beat a drum in the name of din Muhammad throughout the lanes.’

Absence of space will not permit more than a casual reference to the numerous riots and disturbances with which in Bengal and Assam the Non-co-operators were either openly or secretly associated. The following table bears eloquent testimony to the unsettled condition of the masses and how far their minds had been inflamed to set law and order at defiance.

Date	Place	Incident.
18th February	Calcutta	On the 22nd day of the Tramway strike a serious riot occurred on the Kalighat



CSL

ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

Date	Place	Incident.
		section. Three or four thousand rioters assaulted the Anglo-Indian drivers, and on the arrival of the police pelted these with stones. They were fired upon, one man being killed and seven wounded.
February } March }	Lillooah	The men in the Railway Workshops having gone on strike indulged from time to time in intimidation and violence. On March 15 several hundred men armed with lathies traversed the streets of Howrah shouting and brandishing their lathies. They threw stones at the Railway and at Engineer's office.
2st March	Assam	At the Halem Tea Estate, there was a strike of tea garden labourers, who assaulted the officials of the tea gardens.
6th May	Kaloj Valley	A strike of the labourers of the Kaloj Valley Tea Estate led to riots accompanied with violence.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 293

Date.	Place.	Incident.
19th, 20th May	Assam	Riots at Chandpur in connection [with tea garden labourers, who were prompted by non-co-operators to leave Assam and return to their original homes, of which some of them had no personal knowledge.
July	Chittagong	Disturbances during the trial of Non-co-operators.
1st August	Jamalpur	Riots in the workshop of the East Indian Railway resulting from <i>hartal</i> .
26th Oct.	Chittagong	When Mr. J. N. Gupta after his conviction for picketing was being led to jail a mob assaulted the <i>Gurkha guard</i> , by whom it was dispersed by the butt of their rifles.
4th November	Calcutta	On an alarm being given that a Khilafat volunteer had been arrested a mob created a riot. The Assistant Magistrate and Assistant Superintendent of Police were pursued up to the



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

Date.	Place.	Incidents.
		<i>thana</i> and bombarded with stones. Blank cartridges having been fired the mob retired, A second attack was made on the police reinforcements, which being unarmed took refuge in a police barrack until the armed police arrived, which fired a number of shots and dispersed the crowd.
14th No- vember.	Calcutta	In connection with the tramway strike a riot occurred at the Belgachi depot. The Military were summoned, but previous to this there were several casualties both on the side of the police and of the rioters.
28th De- cember	Rungpur	An armed police came in collision with the people whilst marching to Nilphamari. It was assailed with missiles and had to fire some shots in the air.

It was with great reluctance the Behar Government sanctioned the adoption of repressive



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

295
SL

measures, though during the course of the year the 'Volunteers' were guilty of intimidation and other forms of violence on no less than 122 occasions. A poor Mahomedan in Ranchi who had refused to fall in with extremist views having died was refused burial. The body was however taken by some friends under the protection of the police and buried. The non-co-operation volunteers dug up the corpse and dishonoured it. Many an unwilling convert was obtained by the threat of pains and penalties while living and even after death. It was at Bhagalpore within the jurisdiction of Behar that Mr. Dip Narain Singh publicly announced the inauguration of the final plan of campaign in anticipation of Mr. Gandhi's sanctioning civil disobedience. A notice calling upon the Government to grant *swaraj* within seven days would first be served upon the chief civil officer in the locality selected. The residents of that locality would then be directed to disobey the laws and disregard the orders of the Government, and to refuse to pay taxes, register documents, or comply in any other respect with their duties to the State. At the same time the courts and police stations would be surrounded, and the officials ordered to surrender their uniforms and other badges of office, the buildings thereafter being treated as *swaraj* property. The first experiment was fixed to take place on December 10;



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

Basantpur police station in the Chapra district had been selected as the *locus operandi*; and the whole programme was known to loyal Indian members of the Legislative Council, by one of whom it was divulged to Mr. Macpherson. Indeed, the revolutionaries courted publicity for the number and composition of the corps of 'National Volunteers,' of Bihar Sevak Dal, which was to form the army of occupation, were openly discussed in the public press.

In the course of the year there were several riots. Towards the end of April there was one at Giridih due to the people resenting the arrest of a Khilafat volunteer for outraging the modesty of a Mahomedan woman whose husband had come under a ban for want of sympathy with the non-co-operators. A mob of 2,000 attacked the police escort who took shelter in the jail warders' quarters where the gates were battered and a sub-inspector and several others were wounded. On the arrival of the sub-divisional officer the people left the jail and attacked the police station with volleys of stones and brickbats. The sub-inspector defended himself with a revolver, firing at the mob when hard pressed. His ammunition being exhausted he defended himself with a sword. The mob entered the inspector's office and set fire to the records. In October there was a serious disturbance at



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
29

West Champaran. The Chalwar factory was burnt down and three persons were killed.

Perhaps no other part of India was so thoroughly inoculated with the pernicious doctrine of non-co-operation as the Punjab. In accordance with the views of Mr. Gandhi it was considered a virtue to be disaffected towards a Satanic Government. The incessant preaching of disobedience of all laws had an evil effect on the minds of the ignorant rural Panjabees and was responsible for an ominous increase of violent crime. For the last six months,' said Mr. Joseph in the Provincial Council, 'public speakers had made perpetual appeals to race hatred. They had made definite assertions that the Sikhs would take back their raj and the Mahomedans would establish their own raj in the Punjab. There had been no less than 52 meetings in Lahore in one week, which were mostly of a violent character. The Press was packed full of lies. There had been persistent attacks on the police and interference with the police reporters at meetings. The activities of the 'volunteers' were well known. They had attempted successfully to picket liquor shops and foreign cloth merchants who had refused to order further foreign cloth. There was social boycott and pressure on shopkeepers to observe *hartal*. The 'volunteers' were the nucleus of a crowd of rowdies, who had been



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

organised to intimidate and cause annoyance to law-abiding citizens.'

Under these circumstances a serious recrudescence of riots and disturbances was natural, and their comparative absence can only be accounted for on the ground that in the Panjab the military are most strongly represented. The knowledge that any disturbance would at once be suppressed had on the whole a salutary effect so far as the outward expression of disaffection by disorderly acts was concerned. There was on 26 January a serious riot at Tarn Taran in which three men were killed and fourteen wounded, and on October 30 three convicts were killed and thirty-three wounded out of about 200 of their number who made a determined and preconcerted attempt to break out of the Lahore Central Jail. On the 23rd December at Ferozepor Jhirka a desperate attempt was made by a mob to rescue twelve non-co-operators who were arrested for having resorted to violence in the promotion of their propaganda. The police were forced to open fire which had the effect of dispersing the mob. The next day a larger number renewed their riotous operations but were overpowered by the Alwar troops and the Reserve Police.

Enough has been said to enable the inference to be drawn that the country



REVOLUTOIN OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
289

was on the road to anarchy. The authority of Government was openly challenged, and law and order were set at defiance. Disaffection was being openly preached and indeed a certain section of extremists advocated an immediate separation from England, while under the garb of soul force violence of sorts was being indulged in. The Government looked on as an amused spectator hoping by patience and forbearance to give the people time to be convinced of the error of their ways, but in return laid itself open to the charge of being weak and incompetent. When however it was roused to take action it had to bear the brunt of a counter charge of repression and coercion. The answer to this was given by Mr. Lloyd George in the following terms :— 'Our position is a clear one. Unless the authority of Government and of law is established in India, there is no one who would suffer more than the Indians themselves. Any action which may be taken to establish order throughout the whole of that vast dominion will get the full and unqualified support of the Government. We wish to make it clear that in no circumstances or conditions do we propose to withdraw or impair the full sovereignty of the King-Emperor. In terms, no agitator in India puts forward that demand ; in terms I say



ON THE ROAD TO ANARCHY.

CSL

but in substance that would be the ultimate effect of their proposals. But the British Empire, though it has come out of a great, terrible, exhausting war, is not so exhausted that it can discuss that proposal, or anything that equals it. We accepted a trust as a people when we occupied India. We cannot divest ourselves of that trust without shame and dishonour.'



CHAPTER X.

306
CSL

THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

It is an aphorism that good government is no substitute for self-government. The people of India are this day giving evidence of their complete faith not only in this proposition but some would extend it to mean that self-government is better than good government. They are bent on securing Home Rule even if it be at the cost of efficiency or happiness. The non-co-operators are crying for *swaraj*, a term sufficiently elastic to include the significance attached to it by a certain section of them—a complete separation from England. The moderates who now represent the National Congress as it was till captured by the extremist party recognise that it would be disastrous to India if the tie that binds it to the country with which its destiny is at present linked were to be snapped asunder. They have set before them the goal of Dominion Home Rule so as to become partners in the Commonwealth of Nations, which is designated by the term British Empire. And it is one of their fundamental articles that this goal is to be attained by purely constitutional means, that is, through the action of constituted authorities acting in response to the pressure of public opinion, whether in India or in England.



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

It was at an opportune moment that Britain recognising the only logical limit of the 'White man's burden' responded to the demands of a newly-awakened India, pulsating with the desire for self-determination, by the announcement of August 20th 1917, which declared that:—'The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.' In pursuance of this promise a new scheme of government was elaborated which took effect in the year under review, with an assurance given by the King-Emperor that: 'It is our will and pleasure that the plans laid by our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible Government in British India may come to fruition, to the end that British India may attain its due place among the British Dominions.' This scheme was rejected by the extremists but accepted by the moderates as the first instalment in the task of self-government and as paving the way for other and more substantial instalments being granted in course of time. The national consciousness that had come into existence was it was believed receiving its first response.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

303
CL

The question that we are mainly concerned with in this chapter is whether the constitutional reforms are, [as alleged by the non-co-operators, a sham and a delusion or by a process of evolution will lead to something substantial in the way of self-government? Is Mr. Gandhi correct in his estimate that 'not only would the reforms not mark a change of heart but they are only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude' or is it true that during the year under review a marked progress was made by the representatives of the people in the task of administration and legislation which are the prominent characteristics of Home Rule? At the very start, Lord Chelmsford, in his speech, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Indian Legislature, made the welcome announcement that with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government the principle of autocracy which had not been wholly discarded in all earlier reforms was definitely abandoned. This assurance was solemnly endorsed by the Duke of Connaught who expressed the hope that India may prove worthy of the political freedom that was being granted to its people. Evidence was soon forthcoming as to how far this hope was likely to be realised. The proceedings of the first session of the Legislature were characterised by two salient features. Both these



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

received special mention in the prorogation speech of the Viceroy. 'I make bold to say', stated Lord Chelmsford, 'that the tone and temper of your deliberations have been the outstanding feature of the past session. Non-officials have shown a sense of balance and responsibility in their treatment of great questions, and the Government have endeavoured to give the fullest possible effect, consistently with their own responsibility to Parliament, to the governing principles of her new Constitution. It is the first step which counts, and this first session should go far to dispel the doubts of those who have looked upon our new constitutional departure with gloomy forebodings.'

The privilege to vote supplies is out and out the most valued right of a parliamentary institution. In this respect stringent limitations were no doubt placed on the powers with which the Assembly was invested. For instance the military department and its expenditure had been jealously kept out of the reach of the popular vote. But in its very first session, on the occasion of the discussion of the budget, a good deal of licence was taken and allowed to be taken by the representatives of the people. Of the total estimated gross revenue of the Central Government for the current year, calculated at about 210 crores, only



105 crores were declared as votable by the Assembly. The rest was not even open to discussion. Nevertheless criticism was directed to the abnormal growth of the military expenditure, and methods of retrenchment were pointed out. Instead of protesting against the aggression the Government adopted a conciliatory attitude, allowing convention to supplement the elaborate rules of the Government of India Act of 1919. The Commander-in-Chief replied to the criticism, while Sir Godfrey Fell wished the military budget was equally subject to the Assembly's vote. A select committee was appointed to examine the Esher Report as also to consider the recommendations made for the Indianisation of the entire army. The principle was accepted that the chief function of the Indian Army is to be the defence of India internally and externally and that it is to be used outside India only in emergencies. While Indian cadets have a right to go to Sandhurst an Indian Sandhurst was to be established at Dehra Dun and 25 per cent of commissions were to be given to Indians.

It is impossible to enlarge upon the activities of the various Legislatures. In the Council of State amendments relating to the following subjects were moved by members, and being carried, were accepted by Government; the appointment of a Committee to examine the



repressive laws on the Statute Book and to report on their repeal or amendment, the announcement of the policy of Government to ensure the early rehabilitation of Government securities; the prayer to His Majesty's Government to grant to the Government of India full fiscal autonomy subject to the Government of India Act, 1919; the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code, providing two important preliminaries in the suppression of riots and unlawful assemblies; the exacting of a promise from Government that if any local Government desired to separate judicial from executive functions the Government of India would introduce the necessary legislation; the enhancement in connection with the Finance Bill of the 11 per cent. duty on jewels and jewellery to 20 per cent. and the reduction of the anna postage for one tola to 9 pies, and also in the amount of the newspaper postage; the exemption from the Arms Act in case of of magistrates and members of the Indian Legislatures and the admission of Indians among the recipients of the reparations made by Germany. Can any one honestly assert after this that the views of the members of the Legislatures were mere pious wishes which were treated with indifference?

The Legislative Assembly was able to render an equally good account of itself, as is evident



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
307

from the following summary of its activities given by Dr. H. S. Gour, a prominent member and the Secretary of the Combined Association formed by the members of the Chambers:—It has made the Government apologize for its Punjab mistakes. It has elicited from Government a definite pledge that the Army in India shall be maintained only for the primary needs of the country. It has asserted its rights to fiscal autonomy by levying an import duty on foreign cloth. It has driven the Government to appoint a committee to examine the repressive laws, most of which are doomed. It has rejected the Government's proposal to retain the punishment of the forfeiture of property in the case of certain political offences. It has pleaded successfully for the creation of an Indian Bar and the removal of all galling artificial distinctions between barristers and vakils. It has protected trade unions by providing for their registration. It has laid bare the fallacy underlying the popular complaint regarding the export of cattle. It has removed the racial question which entered in the appointment of Executive Councillors in Bihar. It has elicited from Government a clear enunciation of its policy as regards the non-co-operation propaganda, while its work in reversing several of the Esher Committee's recommendations is likely to be of enduring



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

interest. So are its resolutions in favour of the establishment of a Supreme Court and the codification of Hindu law while, if it succeeds in passing the Civil Marriage Bill, it will have added a store of its own hewing to form the keystone of true Indian Nationalism. It is impossible in these circumstances to dispute the assertion of Lord Reading that it is not a fact to assert that the Central Legislatures had no power. But it was exceedingly gratifying to receive the assurance that 'the present form of Government was only transitory and a further advance must depend on the co-operation of Indians and by the extent to which confidence could be reposed in their sense of responsibility.'

It has been the fashion in some quarters to decry the Reforms as a fraud, because it is asserted that the British Parliament has reserved for itself the power of control which would be exercised whenever there was a conflict of interests between the people of England and those of India. How baseless this apprehension is was proved by several striking incidents wherein the English Legislature has given evidence of the recognition of the fact that it had now to deal with an India which had been invested with large self-governing powers, and that any dictation to it would be likely to endanger the good relations which should



should subsist between the two countries. That Lancashire should be very much exercised in connection with the raising of the duties on cotton goods was but natural, and on the question being raised in the House of Commons the Secretary of State for India emphasized the right of the Government of India to devise those tariff arrangements which the exigencies of the country demanded and that she must have the same liberty to consider her interests as Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa had. Here again an important point was laid down by convention. And when the question of the appointment of the ex-rebel—Harkishen Lal—as one of the Ministers of the Panjab was raised the Speaker disallowed any discussion on the ground that 'the House of Commons had given practically Home Rule, or something akin to Home Rule, to the Councils, and the less it interfered with the Councils the better.' The Esher Committee had made certain recommendations that would under the old system of Government, with a complete subordination to the British Parliament, have been given effect to as a matter of course, but the modifications moved and carried by Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar in the Legislative Assembly indicated emphatically that India will have a good deal to say in respect to the maintenance and control of the Indian army, and that any interference



THE EVOLUSION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

on the part of the British Parliament will be resented.

The second Session of the Legislature met at Simla on the 1st September and on the 3rd the inaugural speech was delivered by Lord Reading, the newly appointed Viceroy. A reference was made to the resignation of Sir Thomas Holland, who had rendered distinguished service to the country but had been guilty of the indiscretion of withdrawing without the sanction of the Viceroy the prosecution of certain persons accused of misappropriation of Government munitions, mainly in consideration of the fact that these on their part had undertaken to withdraw certain civil suits brought by them against Government. 'The public felt', stated the Viceroy, 'and beyond all doubt rightly felt, that the proceedings in court had shaken the very foundations of justice. Fundamental principles of administration and justice had been violated. Our conclusions were announced only in relation to the proceedings in Court and to the omission to refer to me as the head of the Government. The existence of civil suits against the Government by the accused should be entirely disregarded in relation to the criminal case. Their unconditional withdrawal ought not to have any influence upon considerations of the withdrawal of the prosecution'. Attention was drawn to the part India



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

31
SL

was taking in the institution of the League of Nations. His Majesty had been graciously pleased on behalf of India to satisfy the acceptance of the Statute for the constitution of a Court of International Justice, which was accepted by the representatives of India on the Assembly of the League of Nations. To this Court the judges were to be elected from lists of persons nominated by national groups representing the various nations, and to the national group for India were nominated Mr. K. Srinavasa Iyengar, Member of the Executive Council of Madras, Mr. Justice Rankin, Mr. Hussan Imam, Barrister-at-Law, and Sir Thomas Strangman, Advocate General of Bombay.

An appreciative mention was made of the work of the two Committees that were appointed as the result of the deliberations of the Legislature in its first Session; in the personnel of both which non-officials predominated. One of these had dealt with the laws relating to the Press and its chief recommendation to repeal the Press Act of 1920 was accepted by the Government which undertook in due course to legislate on these lines. The Repressive Laws Committee made a careful examination of certain laws and regulations which conferred extraordinary powers on the Executive Government. The Viceroy promised



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

to give effect to the recommendation that a number of laws popularly regarded as infringing the liberty of the subject be repealed. Reference was made in the speech to the establishment in Dehra Dun of a College for training Indians, preparatory to their proceeding to Sandhurst, to the free admission of Indians to all arms of His Majesty's military and naval forces in India, to the appointment of a Fiscal Commission, the Chairman and the majority of the members of which were to be Indians. It was declared that it would be within the scope of this Commission to report whether it was in the interests of India to accept the principle of Imperial Preference and whether it was desirable to adopt a policy of protection. But by far the most notable pronouncement was that relating to the racial question. There was an unqualified admission of the existence of strong racial antagonism, which often led to the perpetration of 'regrettable incidents,' and the promise was made that instances of violence and discourtesy by Europeans against Indians would in the future not be overlooked. The anomaly of the existing law relating to the trial of Europeans for offences committed against Indians, was referred to, as also the unsatisfactory result in many instances of such trials, and it was announced that certain proposals



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

312
SL

would be made during the session to deal with this matter. Finally an appeal was made for the manifestation of mutual goodwill and forbearance without which no deliberations can be effective and lead to a lasting result.

According to the Reforms Scheme a fresh readjustment of the privileges granted to the people was to be made in the year 1929, but the new constitution had not been in operation quite a year when in the second session of the Legislative Assembly a resolution was moved that necessary steps should be taken (1) to introduce complete responsible government in the provinces from the next election (1923), (2) to transfer from the same date all subjects in the Government of India to popular Ministers, except Army, Navy, Foreign and Political Departments, (3) to confer full Dominion Self-Government in India from the beginning of the fourth term of the Legislative Assembly (1929). The work of evolution was indeed advancing with rapid strides. The members of the Legislature knew that they were encroaching on the authority of the Imperial Parliament, which had reserved for itself the regulation of the time and degree of each advance. But the manner in which they had discharged their legislative duties, in spite of their inexperience and of the many hindrances against which they had to contend, emboldened



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

them to strike out an independent line. No impartial student of politics can hesitate to pronounce upon the success with which the representatives of the people had emerged from the preliminary ordeal confronting them. They realised their power, they rose to their responsibilities. They vindicated the highest hopes of India's capacity to which expression had been given during the debates on Constitutional Reform. They were besides that inspired with confidence by the unsolicited encomium passed by those whose opinions carried considerable weight. Sir Frederick Whyte, the President of the Assembly, an ex-member of the House of Commons, characterised the debates in the Assembly as well worthy to stand by the best debates in the Imperial Parliament, while the Secretary of State and Lord Chelmsford referred in the most complimentary terms to the moderation and reasonableness which the members brought to bear on the discussion of controversial topics. This was exemplified in a striking manner by their attitude in respect to the resolution on autonomous advance which if pressed to the vote would most probably have passed in a House where the non-official members are in a majority, but it was waived in favour of an amendment proposed by Government which ran as follows:—This Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor General in Council that he should



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

convey to the Secretary of State the view of this Assembly that the progress made by India on the path of responsible Government warrants a re-examination and revision of the present constitution at an earlier date than 1929'. The response given to this by the Secretary of State was by no means discouraging or unsatisfactory.

Amongst the other achievements of the Legislative Assembly in the second session was the carrying of a motion in spite of Government opposition recommending the transference of the judicial administration of the North Western Frontier Province to the Panjab High Court and the appointment of a committee to report on the expediency of the re-amalgamation of that province with the Panjab. A committee has now been appointed under the presidency of Mr. Denys Bray, the Foreign Secretary. Another important matter discussed had reference to the racial inequalities in criminal trials. Lord Reading soon after assuming his high office had announced that the Government had made up their mind so far as possible not to allow the existence of any race inequality. Mr. Samarth moved a resolution for the removal of distinctions between the Indian and European members of the Indian Civil Service in regard to criminal jurisdiction over European British subjects and also between



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

Indians and Europeans in regard to the mode of trial, the sentence to be passed and the right of appeal. In the end an amendment proposed by Sir William Vincent as qualified by Mr. Rangachariar was accepted to the effect that a committee be appointed in order to remove racial distinctions between Indians and Europeans in criminal trials. A committee was appointed under the presidency of Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and recorded a vast amount of evidence given by officials and non-officials, European and Indian, drawn from all parts of India. A further advance was made with reference to the question relating to the separation of executive and judicial functions. Not satisfied with the undertaking given by Sir William Vincent in the previous session as stated above a resolution moved by Mr. T. P. Mukerji was carried by 46 votes to 35 recommending the separation of judicial and executive functions and urging the appointment of a committee for preparing a scheme for this purpose. Keen interest was taken by the members in the supplementary estimates that were sent up by the Finance Department. They carefully scrutinized the details and in one instance disallowed an item of two lacs to meet the expenditure incidental to the proposed Indian tour of Lord Lytton's Indian Students Committee. The Government



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

31

accepted its defeat with equanimity, and the proposed tour never came off. A curious feature in connection with the supplementary grants was the consistent support given to the Government by the members of the Finance Committee in respect to the items that had been previously passed by that body. Here again convention was getting the better of the Government of India Act, 1919, which had not contemplated the formation of such a Committee. The Government accepted a motion by Sir Vitaldas Thackersea instructing the High Commissioner for India ordinarily to buy stores for India in the cheapest market and to furnish a statement in respect to every deviation from this rule and the reason thereof.

As compared with the Assembly the activities of the Council of State were somewhat circumscribed and in some instances partook of the nature of academic discussions, which were not calculated to lead to any practical action being taken thereon. The debates were no doubt interesting, and sometimes afforded an opportunity for a doubtful situation being cleared up or for drawing the Government to reiterate the existence of a right which had never been questioned, but for the exercise of which no occasion had arisen. The resolution *re* the appointment of Indians as Secretary, Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

In certain departments of the Government of India was a case in point. The eligibility of Indians was never questioned, but the trouble arose because of the absence of efficient men. After a good deal of talk an amendment on behalf of Government was accepted to the effect that an opportunity be afforded to Indians to become qualified for these appointments; an absolutely meaningless phrase for all practical purposes. Fiscal autonomy for India was secured under the Reform Scheme, and the Secretary of State did not hesitate to inform the Lancashire deputation of this fact. It was superfluous to ask the Government to make a declaration of policy in respect to which there was no difference of opinion. The resolution on the report of the Sugar Committee, bereft of the portion in which some suggestions were made as to the method by which the sugar industry could be promoted and assisted, amounted to no more than pious advice to which the Government is always prepared to lend a ready ear, conscious that it possesses the capacity to pass it on from one ear to the other. The resolution as to the equality of status for Indians in East Africa, which asked for immediate steps being taken to effect this purpose, was accepted by Government, but it is more than doubtful if anything special was done which would not have been done if this resolution had not been



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

313
SL

moved. A similar resolution on behalf of the Indians in South Africa was accepted on behalf of the Government by the Hon'ble Mr. Sarma on the understanding that he did not encourage any hope that any thing drastic or radical would be done. To the meanest intellect it is obvious that it is only when something drastic is done or threatened to be done that the fire-eating politicians of East and South Africa will listen to the voice of reason and justice. The discussion relating to the transfer of Aden to the Colonial Office no doubt served a useful purpose. It appears that the mind of the Government of India was a total blank on this subject, in spite of the fact that a controversy in respect to it had been carried on since 1861. The foreign secretary frankly stated that the Government of India was hoping to have this blank filled up by the opinions expressed by Aden and also by India, and that if this resolution was adopted by the Council it would be accepted as representing the sense of the country. On the whole the honourable members of the Council of State had a clear perception of the limitations placed on their sphere of usefulness and therefore proposed to amend their own standing Order No. 70, which debarred them from the discussion of the budget except so far as the general principles underlying it were concerned. It is pathetic to read the description of the



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

hon. the Maharajah of Kassimbazar of this Council of which he is a member as 'a harmless and inane body rather inconveniently crowded with too many elder statesmen and condemned to remain as a mere ornamental body, while light and leading must be looked for in the Lower House'.

It is pertinent to ascertain here the verdict of the general public in respect to the achievements of the Indian Legislatures in the first year of their existence. So far as the Indians were concerned they were divided into two camps. A small minority, consisting mainly of thoughtful and level-headed men, for they were not altogether wiped out in the year of grace 1921, was satisfied with the solid work that was done by both the Central and Provincial Councils and the gradual progress that was being made, at least in laying the foundation of self-government. The bulk of the people however under the influence of the new gospel of non-co-operation contemptuously decried the work of their representatives in the Legislatures, hoping to win immediate *swaraj* as the fruit of their own agitation. Englishmen were also divided. The superior officials under a sense of responsibility attaching to the high position they were holding and with a desire to carry out loyally the new scheme of Government, recognised that much had been



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

321

achieved that gave promise of a healthy development, and were ready to co-operate with Indians in making it a success. The high position they had attained made them immune from the irritation to which their juniors were subjected. These by no means relished the new departure which had degraded them from being protectors and governors of the people to passive instruments for carrying out the orders of Indian Ministers. It was said of them by the authors of the Reforms Scheme that: 'We regard it as a libel on the Indian Civil Service as a body to say that they have resisted or will resist the policy announced last August. They will carry it out with determination just as they always carried out the policy laid down for them.' Rather than afford a contradiction to the possession of a particular virtue they were credited with they began strenuously to urge that they should be assured of the right to depart in peace with the grant to them of a proportionate pension whenever they might find themselves out of place with the new order. That they should so plead need create no surprise, having regard to their former traditions. It remains to be seen whether they will desert what they consider is the sinking ship of British rule in India. We can only hope they will rise above personal



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

considerations and allow the country the benefit of their knowledge and ripe experience in getting over smoothly the period of transition, though some of them at least consider the changes too drastic to be acceptable.

As regards non-official Europeans there are those whose views were represented by the correspondent of the *Times* who wired on September 28, after the close of the second session : 'The critical note sounded in both Houses is the desire to get rid of the British as early as possible ; it may be transient passion, but its strong expression has made for much anxiety.' This assertion is a caricature of the truth, and indicates the length to which prejudice will carry an otherwise fair-minded person. To be desirous of being rid of British dominance and autocracy is poles apart from anxiety to be rid of the British from the country. English statesmen are continually proclaiming that they desire India to become a partner in the Commonwealth of Nations. This can only be achieved when it can stand forth as a self-governing country, and Indians apart from rabid extremists are doing no more than display a perhaps undue eagerness to attain to this position at the earliest possible opportunity. On the whole there is a decided and most gratifying change in the attitude of non-official Englishmen, which is emphasized in a striking manner by the



friendly and sympathetic utterances of what is called the Anglo Indian Press to the aims and aspirations of the people of India. There is all round a greater cordiality and trust replacing the former restraints which divided Englishmen from Indians. Evidence of this changed mentality is to be found in a variety of directions, and perhaps the most notable instance of it was the telegraphic message despatched by the European members of the Legislative Assembly to the Amptill-Sydenham group, deprecating their interference in Indian affairs, which brought back the retort, 'mind your own business.' The exchange of civilities at the Rotary Club and the Constitutional Club in Calcutta is a new feature as also the formation of a Citizens Protection League for the suppression of racial hatred and the promotion of feelings of toleration and sympathy amongst the various communities. This change of mentality is not difficult to understand. A separation of India and England would lead to anarchy in the one country and a possible economic and financial revolution in the other.

A better understanding was bound to come. Englishmen after all are not destitute of a sense of humour. The conviction that they were rulers of the land naturally aroused a sense of superiority which found expression in a variety of ways that were irritating to those who were looked



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

324
down upon as the ruled, but the recent developments consequent on the constitutional changes have induced a recognition of the undoubted alteration in the political relations of the two classes. In the Councils and in various Municipal bodies and especially in the world of trade and commerce Europeans and Indians are being brought into closer contact with each other and are learning the advantage of mutual forbearance and the cultivation of friendly feelings, in spite of the misdirected energy of the non-co-operators which tried to sow the seeds of discord. During the Prince of Wales' visit to Calcutta all communities without distinction of race and creed joined hands as members of the Civic Guard to protect their hearths and homes, and Englishmen were found patrolling under Indian leaders. There is no evidence that British capital is being driven away from the country which is the most effective reply to the clamour of reactionary individuals who are vehemently asserting that the Reforms are paving the way for the ultimate expulsion of the British from India, by the official element being squeezed out of the services and the non-officials being hindered from developing the industrial resources of the country. The English nation must indeed have deteriorated if it can not hold its own in the changed condition



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

325
SL

of affairs. There is no reason to despair as to the future.

Of all the recent developments perhaps the most interesting is the change in the attitude towards the Indians of the Anglo-Indians or to give them their old and distinctive name of Eurasians. It would be idle to deny the existence of an intensely bitter feeling on the part of Indians towards the English, and it is mainly, if not entirely, due to racial considerations. It would be unfair to the educated Englishmen taken as a whole to saddle them with this racial feeling. The worst offenders in this respect are not those who come under this category, but are to be found amongst the mixed community, which British rule in India has brought into existence. These are the most hostile to the people whose blood is flowing in their veins, to hide which fact every device in creation is resorted to. One of their chief trials in life is to fix on the name they should bear. East Indians, Indo-Britons and Eurasians were successively tried and after a time discarded. The last to be assumed was Anglo-Indian, a name originally utilised to designate the pure European coming to India. These are now known as Europeans, and their advertisements are worded 'none but Europeans need apply'.



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

And now there is an agitation in the press for another name. The mixed community has some reason to complain of the treatment accorded to it. The colour bar stands in the way of their being enrolled as military officers or as ministers of religion, and in the higher grades of other services they are often barely tolerated. English clubs, except in small stations, are closed to them, and socially they are ostracised without much ceremony. And yet they cling to that half of their progenitors by whom they are despised and rejected. And why? Because they looked upon the English as the rulers of the land, and to satisfy the grudge they feel against Providence they treated the other half of their progenitors with a similar amount of contempt and disdain. But the discovery that Indians are gradually acquiring self-government, and that their future will largely be affected by this, is teaching its own lesson, however, galling it be. And it will be much to their advantage, for they will try to qualify themselves for positions of honour and responsibility by utilising the facilities for education and training granted to Indians, whereas their special institutions fit them to hold only subordinate positions. They have had a heavy penalty to pay for attaching themselves to a class which wanted them not. They have been derelicts without



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION:...

CSL
137

any name or home, for though born and bred in India, they have repudiated any connection with it and its people. They are now being gradually disillusioned. The following extract from a speech recently delivered by Col. H. A. J. Gidney, President of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association is very significant : ' If the community was prepared to realise that they were first citizens of India and next Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans, they would be acting correctly. Unless they remembered this their future in India was perilous ; in fact they would have no future whatsoever. The Reforms Scheme had also stated that Government felt it their bounden duty not to neglect the Anglo-Indian community which they realised could not stand alone against the sweeping odds they faced. They had on the one hand the assurance of Government protection as far as it was able, and on the other hand they had the offer to participate in the political development of India. Were the community falling in line with the rest of India ? They were not, and why ? Because they were absolutely indifferent to the political development and political needs of the country and more particularly of their own needs. What was to be their policy in future ? Were they to be [so foolish as to cover themselves with the Anglo-Indian cloak of



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

A reener of pseudo-superiority and look down on the Indians, continuing to live the isolated lives that they had hitherto done; or were they going to open their eyes, the same as the Englishman has had to, and realise that the time had come for them to fall into line with rest of India, to walk side by side with the citizens of India in their great fight for *swaraj*?'

It is laid to the charge of India that its impatient and unreflecting politicians do not understand or realise the qualifications and responsibilities attaching to a self-governing country. They are accused of having but a vague idea of the requisities of self-defence. This is no doubt a serious disability, but it is primarily due to the policy of England which subordinated the Indian Army to Imperial needs and allowed the British War Office to exercise more than a nominal control over it, while excluding Indians from holding commissions. To tell Indians that they are not fit for self-government unless they can defend the country and then deliberately to withhold all means of acquiring the capacity for doing it is a policy indefensible on the face of it. The Esher Committee Report in effect continued and indeed amplified the subordination of India to England by practically transferring the military control from the Viceroy to the High Commission in England. 'We



recommend in section 3,' it recites 'that the Commander-in-Chief in India shall be appointed with the concurrence of the Chief of the General Staff and that the Commander-in-Chief shall be the sole military adviser of the Government of India. If this system can be established, the chain of military responsibility over questions of an Imperial character will be complete. On the one hand, the Commander-in-Chief will look to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff not for advice but for *supreme direction* in all questions of Imperial military policy in which India is concerned, and on the other hand the Governor General will look to the Commander-in-Chief for military advice upon questions in which India only is concerned and also upon questions of a wider military character, so that the Commander-in-Chief will be in a position to express upon the latter the considered views of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.' It is obvious then that the Indian Army was to be controlled by the Imperial General Staff. This was repudiated by Sir Godfrey Fell on behalf of the Government of India, who admitted the principle that the Army in India should be entirely under the control, real as well as nominal, of the Government of India, and should be free from any domination or interference by



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

the war office on matters of military policy, organisation or administration.

Commissions in the Indian Army are now being granted to Indians, but it is obvious that it will be several decades before Indian officers will be qualified to occupy high positions in the Army and to undertake the defence of the country. Is the progress in the direction of self-government to be at a stand still till then? If the aim that Indian politicians had in view was independence pure and simple their incapacity for self-defence may rightly be thrown in their face, but it is a significant fact that even the most advanced colonies that are enjoying what is called Dominion self-government are not in possession of a navy but have to rely on England for protection from foreign aggression. And though some of them have a non-descript army for purposes of the internal defence of the country all they can do is to hold their own against certain potential enemies until help can come from the United Kingdom. Sir Godfrey Fell in the Esher Report Debate in the Assembly quoted with approval a few lines from an able article in the *Army Quarterly* which very aptly described the position of the Colonies and which thus foreshadows the future destiny of India: 'The Self-governing Dominions and India cannot stand



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
331

aloof in matters of defence. On the contrary with the growth of their power they should assume their responsibilities in the Imperial Council and accept their proportionate burdens and liabilities. Their defence representatives must be consulted in all places and projects if co-operation and co-ordination are to be truly Imperial and if the Empire is to be consolidated in the most effective and economic manner'. Co-operation is the basis of all evolution, a maxim which has a special application to the future Government of India and is by no means hostile to the growing desire of the people for self-determination.

That England honestly desires to grant India the boon of self-government cannot be questioned. How this was to be attained was foreshadowed in the notable announcement of August 20th, 1919. Self-governing institutions were to be gradually developed and there was to be an increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration. Whether dyarchy is an ideal form of Government we need not pause here to consider. At present it holds the field and there is no alternative scheme to replace it. In the Provinces it has provided a decided advance towards responsible Government. With one or more Indian members in the Executive Council, with Ministers in sole charge



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

Of certain departments, with the larger employment of Indians in the various services in posts hitherto exclusively held by Europeans it is a travesty of the truth to stigmatize the Reforms as a farce and a delusion and as calculated to lead to the further exploitation of India by the English nation. On the other hand to charge Indians with wishing to be rid of the English because they asked for the redemption of the promise as to their being more largely employed in the higher offices in the State for which they possess the necessary qualifications is equally unfair and unjust. That there is much leeway to make up will be obvious from the following statement laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly.

Service of Department.	Percentage of Maximum Indians to the total strength.	percentage of posts for Indians.
Indian Civil Service.	1·3 p. c.	34½ per cent.
Indian Police Service.	5 p. c.	33 per cent.
Indian Forest Service.	14·5 p. c.	12½ per cent.
		Provincial. 40 p. c. direct.
Indian Agricultural Service.	25·7 p. c.	50 per cent.
Civil Veterinary Service.		
(Imperial)	2 p. c.	50 per cent.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL 333

Indian Educational

Service. 37·6 per cent. 50 per cent.

Indian Medical Service. Civil 10·16 p.c. No maximum.

Military

28·25 p. c.

Imperial Customs

Service. 23 p. c. 50 per cent.

Survey of India. None 16 per cent.

Meteorological

Department. 11 per cent. No maximum.

Mint and Assay.

Department. Mint. none. Nothing fixed.
Assay. 1.

Royal Indian Marine. None. Nothing fixed.

From a statement laid recently on the table by the hon. Dr. Sapru in reply to a question in the Assembly as to the action taken by the Government of India on the resolutions passed during the Delhi session of last year, by either chamber of the Legislature, we glean the following interesting information. Six resolutions in the Council of State and nine in the Legislative Assembly concerned the Home Department. Of these, the following have been given effect to in full: Sir Maneckji Dadhabhoy's resolution asking for the circulation of the speeches of H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught and H. E. the Viceroy at the inauguration of the new constitution in the vernaculars throughout the country; the rt. hon. Srinivasa



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

Mr. Sastri's demand for the repeal of the repressive laws ; Mr. Mounig Po Bye's resolution for the working out of the details of the Burma reforms ; Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas' resolution on the martial law administration of the Punjab in 1919 ; Mr. O'Donnell's motion aiming at the repeal of the Press Act ; Mr. Kamat's request that the reports of Commissions and Committees should be submitted to the Assembly whenever possible before they are acted upon ; Dr. Nand Lall's recommendation that Government should as far as possible refrain from the use of extraordinary measures in dealing with the non-co-operation movement, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan's resolution regarding the respecting of the religious susceptibilities of Mussalmans was withdrawn, but the debate was communicated to the Secretary of State, who has been endeavouring to secure the satisfaction of the sentiments expressed. Mr. Sastri's partially successful resolution for the introduction of safeguards in the use of fire arms has been embodied in a Bill. With respect to the following, the Local Governments and other interested bodies if any are being consulted. The exemption of magistrates and the members of the Indian Legislature from the Arms Act, proposed by Mr. Sukhbir Sinha, (a committee is to revise the rules under the Act) ; increasing the number of listed posts in the I. C. S. available for the provincial service men to 25 per cent. of the total, moved by Mr. Hassanally ; the creation of



an independent Indian bar, suggested by Mr. Ishwar Saran ; the establishment of an ultimate court of appeal in India, demanded by Dr. Gour. The resolution on the equality of status between the members of the two Houses has been partially given effect to and the question of reducing the strength of the Bihar Executive Council is to be considered on the retirement of Sir H. Le Mesurier. Only one resolution fell to the lot of the Finance Department, and two committees were appointed to consider the subject, but as the resolution referred to the future policy of Government, so as to help the rehabilitation of Government stocks, it is not as yet possible to say when and to what extent the proposals of the committees should be acted upon. One resolution demanding the speedier execution of the new Delhi works is being given full effect to by the Public Works Department and double the usual sum is being provided for the purpose in the coming year's budget. Two resolutions were passed, which came within the purview of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture ; one of them relating to the removal of restrictions on the export of food grains could only be partially given effect to and the restriction on the export of rice from Burma has been removed, the other touching on the export of cattle has been sent to the Local Governments whose replies are now under consideration. The Department of Commerce



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

giving effect in full to the resolution on fiscal autonomy moved by Mr. Samaldas, the only resolution which fell to its share. There was similarly only one resolution for the Railway Department, moved by Mr. T. Rangachari, suggesting the provision of passenger superintendents for the help of third class passengers, which has been adopted by the more important railways with slight modifications wherever considered necessary. There was also one for the Legislative Department relating to India's share of the indemnities and reparations from Germany, which has been given effect to in full. To the Industries Department fell seven resolutions, all arising from the Washington Conference, which were passed separately by both the Houses, of which four relating to the restriction of hours of work in industrial undertakings, the minimum age for child employees, disinfection of wool and safeguards against lead poisoning have been embodied in the Factory Act Bill since passed by the Legislature; three relating to the creation of employment agencies, unemployment and Government Health Service are under the consideration of the Government of India and the Local Governments. Sixteen resolutions all arising from the Esher report concerned the Army Department; a select committee was formed to consider the report in pursuance of one of them and its conclusions have been sent to the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

337
SL

Secretary of State ; the resolution on the equipment and organization of the Indian Army in the same manner as the British Army was communicated to the Secretary of State and every effort is made to carry it out. The resolution on the Commander-in-Chief's right to communicate with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff has been approved. The establishment of a military college has been sanctioned and it has already been opened at Dehra Dun. The formation of a Territorial Army has been taken in hand. The reduction of the administration staff at Army Headquarters will be made as soon as conditions permit it. The grant of the rank of second Lieutenant or higher rank to officers of the territorial force is under the consideration of the Government of India and the Secretary of State. The fixation of the pay in all commissioned ranks in all branches of the Army on an Indian scale with overseas allowance is under consideration. The resolution on the appointment of a committee to consider the best means of giving effect to the rights and aspirations of the people was carried out by the Military Requirements Committee. The following have been referred to the Secretary of State ; the interchange of officers between British and Indian units ; the admission of Indian subjects to all arms of his Majesty's military, naval and air forces ; the method of appointments of the Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Staff officers in India



THE EVOLUTION OF HOME RULE.

CSL

the appointment of a Surveyor General of supply, the employment of Indian troops overseas. All these resolutions were moved by Sir Sivaswami Iyer and passed by the Assembly, as also another which insisted on the retention of full control over the Indian Army by the Government of India, notwithstanding anything contained in the Esher report. One resolution to include 'Anglo-Indians' in the term 'Indian subjects' was not given effect to. No resolution was passed concerning any subject under the Education Department.

A calm and dispassionate review of the proceedings of the Central Legislatures in the first year of their existence cannot fail to carry the conviction that we are making rapid strides on the road to Home Rule. And for this we are largely indebted to British statemanship. There is no reason in this for surprise, for twenty years ago Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman stated: 'We believe in self-government. We treat it not as an odious necessity, not as a foolish theory to which unfortunately the British Empire is committed. We treat it as a blessing and a healing, a sobering and a strengthening influence.' Yes, for the future contentment and happiness of the people are now centred in the attainment of this self-government.



CHAPTER XI.

CSL⁷⁹

A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

A faithful record of the stirring events of 1921 was to be the scope of this volume, which it was the writer's intention to publish soon after the entry into the new year, but circumstances beyond his control rendered this impracticable. An opportunity was thus afforded to bring the narrative up to date, so as to furnish a connected account of the latest developments of that unique propaganda in respect to which there are indications that it is now gasping its last breath. The year under review closed with what was undoubtedly a remarkable episode, in that a powerful Government had expressed its readiness to enter into negotiations for the suspension of what had become a warfare in which both sides had marshalled their forces for a fight to the finish. That nothing practical was achieved was due to the unyielding attitude of Mr. Gandhi who while agreeing to a truce expected the Government to cease its repressive operations but refused to put any check whatever on his own activities, not even consenting to call off the *hartal* on the 24th December, when the Prince of Wales was to arrive in Calcutta. This, it was obvious, was the main reason why Lord Reading



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

was desirous of arriving at an understanding with the non-co-operators.

Mr. Gandhi's attitude seemed unreasonable, but it was prompted by the instinct of self-preservation. A reconciliation with Government would have meant his extinction and that of his friends. Why should they pave the way for their own effacement? Ostensibly their aims were threefold, the redress of the Punjab grievances, the restoration of the Khilafat and the attainment of *Swaraj*. These were all war cries, for the real end in view was the overthrow of Government or at least so to paralyze it that it would eventually concede the demands that would be made by the victors. An exchange of views at a conference was not likely to further this end. Why then should a belligerent power which believed it was on the high road to victory care to enter into negotiations of any kind, apart from the fact that a truce involving a temporary stoppage of operations would have all the disadvantages attendant on having to restart active warfare? It was the moderates who were very keen about the round table conference, but they had not taken into account the complexities of the situation and the mentality of the extremists.

Mr. Gandhi was in the closing months of the year at the zenith of his power. He was worshipped as a saint and he exercised despotic sway over



an appreciable proportion of the population, made up of the thinking and of the unthinking classes. His word was law and none dare disobey him. He had even planned to secure the right of nominating a successor, should circumstances necessitate his withdrawal from the scene of his operations. He was preaching in all honesty non-violent non-co-operation against Government, a doctrine which his adherents paraphrased as they chose. Intimidation and violence were being freely exercised.

The *swadeshi* cult had degenerated into a tyrannous boycott. There was a general outcry from extremist quarters for the inauguration of civil disobedience. It was when the atmosphere was surcharged with all the forces subversive of law and tranquillity that a *hartal* was declared on the 17th November, the day the Prince of Wales was to land in Bombay. The incidents of that day have been duly recorded. Struck with horror at the orgy of disorder and violence of which he was a witness Mr. Gandhi peremptorily postponed civil disobedience. But the Government had exhausted its patience and forbearance. The insult offered to the Prince and the apprehension of its repetition proved the last straw on the camel's back. The Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Seditious Meetings Act were put in motion. There was a keen competition between repression on the one hand and non-co-operation on the other hand. The one



CSL

A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

was working silently and was entirely on the defensive, the other was blatant in its aggressiveness and was the more sanguine of success. *Swaraj* was dangled before the eyes of the people and was rendered all the more attractive by reason of the indefiniteness of the meaning attached to it. Each one construed it according to his own predilections, but paid homage to Mr. Gandhi as the political saviour of India.

It was while labouring under a keen sense of irritation and exasperation, due to the arrest of a large number of extremist leaders, the dispersal of the 'volunteers' and the prohibition as to the holding of political meetings, that the National Congress met at Ahmedabad in the closing days of the year. Here some notable utterances were made and some curious developments took place. Mr. Gandhi stated: 'Either we step into the new year with a full belief in this programme and finish it with lightning speed or we dissolve this compact of non-violence. So it is a fight to the finish with the Government in our own special manner.' The apostle of non-violence was evidently fed up with his favourite specific and seemingly had no objection to try another, the probable effects of which were disruption, revolution, bloodshed and all the horrors attendant on the worst passions of men being let loose. If there was any uncertainty in the meaning of the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

343
SL

Mahatma there was none in the pronouncement of some of his followers. Maulana Hasrat Mohani presiding at the All-India Muslim League emphasised the fact that non-violent non-co-operation may be useful up to a certain point, but a stage will be reached when action on peaceful lines will be absolutely impossible. Repression would lead to resistance and that to the declaration of martial law and then the reply of the people will be a guerilla warfare, or in the words of the Koran, 'kill them wherever you find them and dispatch them to hell.' He therefore proposed that from the non-co-operation creed the qualification of non-violence be eliminated. Mr. Mohani entertained no doubts and no scruples. Mr. Gandhi till the end of his career could not or would not give a precise definition of *Swaraj*, his Muslim lieutenant had no hesitation in defining it as independence pure and simple. 'Hindus and Mahomedans,' he said, 'after mutual consultation should have Indian independence declared by Mahatma Gandhi so that in future neither the English might have an opportunity of deceiving nor India of being deceived.' The subjects committee rejected the proposed resolution relating to independence, nevertheless it was discussed at the open session of the Muslim League, though no vote was taken in respect to it, because a day or two before the



CSL

A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

National Congress and the Khilafat Conference had voted a similar resolution as antagonistic to their respective creeds and it was not held desirable to cause a split. But as a counterblast to the activities of Government certain resolutions of great significance were carried through the National Congress. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's motion for a round table Conference was rejected. Mr. Gandhi was appointed the sole executive authority of the Congress with power to appoint a successor and Civil Disobedience was promulgated as the 'only civilised and effective substitute for an armed revolution', to take immediate effect.

This is how matters stood at the end of the year 1921. The New Year opened with both the Government and the non-co-operators drawn up in battle array, each seeking the discomfiture of the other. Lord Reading had stated :—'The Government of India are very conscious of their strength, and recent events have made it imperative that the full strength of the Government should, if necessary, be exerted for the purpose of vindicating the law and preserving order'. On the other hand, Mr. Gandhi believing that the country was with him, was equally conscious of his strength. To unprejudiced minds there was no doubt as to the issue of this struggle. The Punjab



excesses practically paralysed for a time the moral strength of the Government, but it had made such amends as were practicable and had three years within which to recuperate. But it was only a few weeks before Mr. Gandhi had in the bitterness of his heart exclaimed 'On the 17th I felt as if all my strength had vanished,' for he honestly admitted that he was responsible for the tragic events of the day. What was the elixir that had suddenly restored his lost energy and erased from his memory the horrors which led him to impose on himself a prolonged fast and a process of purification? The only answer is that an idealist has but little depth of feeling, which will account for the sudden changes of mood and the exaggerated language which during the last three year Mr. Gandhi had been indulging in.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is an enigma. He is here, he is there and everywhere. He is sometimes in the Congress and sometimes out of it. He is ready to sign any and every creed. He speaks sometimes with the voice of a moderate and at other times of an extremist. He has reduced sitting on the fence to a fine art. He is in the confidence of the Viceroy as well as of Mr. Gandhi. What has been the net result of his activities? No one, not even he himself, could answer that. But he is always serene and never



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

disconcerted. Snubbed at the Congress for bringing up the question of the round table conference he found solace in redoubling his efforts to achieve the same end by enlisting the support of Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Mr. Jayaker and other stalwarts in the political world. It was proposed to have an informal gathering of the patriots of India, extremists and moderates and sitters on the fence to formulate certain propositions on the strength of which the Viceroy was to be asked to convene a round table conference. About 350 invitations were issued, the writer receiving one as representing the Indian Christian community. Out of these 200 agreed to make a holiday tour to Bombay, for very few were hopeful that anything practical would be achieved. The *hartal* on the 24th December had taken place and the non-co-operators had done their level best to insult the Royal visitor and to indulge in their lively proceedings to the annoyance of peaceful citizens, in which they were baulked to a large extent by the Civic Guard in Calcutta who had suddenly come into existence, indicating that sanity had not altogether departed from the City of Palaces. Why the Viceroy should under the circumstances trouble himself with a conference was never explained. He had honestly given a trial to the policy left as a legacy by Lord Chelmsford to let non-Co-operation work itself out, but the result was far from encouraging.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

347
SL

Then there was the inscrutable Mahatma to be reckoned with. Would he attend ? Yes, he would, said some ; no he would not, said others. He did attend, clad in a loin cloth, and sitting on the table he gave the auditors to understand that he had not come as a representative of the non-co-operators, who by the way were conspicuous by their absence, but in the capacity of a guide, philosopher and friend to win the distinguished patriots to his way of thinking, for he emphasised there was one thing he was certain of, that so far as he and his friends were concerned they were not going to budge an inch from their position or abate even a fraction of their demands. The dictator asked the conference to inform the Viceroy that 'if he wants to convene a round table conference, he should summon that conference, expecting that the non-co-operators will be satisfied with nothing less than what I have said. I confess we are fully able to take charge of the military dispositions of the country and that we are fully able to deal with the complications ' And what was his ultimatum ? In the first place he stigmatised the conduct of Government in resorting to wholesale repression as absolutely unjust and indefensible. Amen, cried Pandit Malaviya, for he had set the ball rolling for an hour and a half by preaching on this very text. The Mahatma then asked if there was a change of heart on the



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

part of Government and was it penitent for the grievous wrongs done to the country? Here was a poser, and even the Pandit who is credited with enjoying the confidence of the Viceroy was non-plussed. Receiving no answer, Mr. Gandhi laid down his minimum demands which were that antecedent to the meeting of the Round Table Conference :

- (a) All the notifications and notices declaring illegal and prohibiting the formation of the volunteer corps, public meetings, picketing and other normal activities of the Congress and the Khilafat committees be withdrawn and prisoners undergoing prosecution or conviction in respect of such notices be discharged or released as the case may be.
- (b) All the *Fatwa* prisoners including the Ali brothers and their companions be released.
- (c) All the other prisoners already convicted or under trial for non-violent and other innocent activities be dealt with and discharged in the manner appointed therefor in the third resolution of the Congress.

And at the conference the following demands would have to be rigidly met :

- (a) The deprivation of the pensions of Sir Michael O' Dwyer and others, and the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

349

CSL

punishment of the subordinate officials in the Punjab who were still in service.

- (b) The restoration to the Sultan of the country wrested from him, and the French to leave Syria and England to leave Egypt.
- (c) The establishment in the Central and Provincial Governments of full Dominion status as may be determined by the duly elected representatives of the people.

Mr. Gandhi was evidently impressed by the moderation of his views, for he deemed it probable that the Viceroy as a reasonable man would accept his terms. In anticipation of this he graciously consented to postpone civil disobedience till the 31st of January, but he made it clear that even in the case of a round table conference being convened he reserved his freedom to continue all his various activities connected with the enrolment of volunteers, picketing and civil disobedience. It was a surprise to him to find Sir Sankaran Nair, who had been elected speaker of the Bombay Conference, far from falling in with his views, had retired in dudgeon after the first day of the meeting, the 14th January, and had further in a letter to the press used language that was far from complimentary to himself and his friends. Mr.



CSL

A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

Gandhi was accused of making false promises of *swaraj* and of heading a propaganda revolutionary in its nature and which had led to bloodshed, the ravishment of thousands of women and general misery all round. A conference with him and his friends was considered useless, as neither he nor they could be parties to any honourable settlement nor could they be relied on to carry out faithfully any settlement that had been arrived at. The Bombay conference dispersed after electing a committee to carry out further negotiations. The resolutions that were passed were communicated to the Viceroy and a few days later the question of a round table conference was also raised in the Assembly and the Council of State, but as the Government declined to countenance the proposal in view of the recalcitrant attitude of Mr. Gandhi and the preposterous nature of his demands, both Houses threw out the motion.

Guntur in the Madras presidency desired to have the honour of initiating civil disobedience by the refusal to pay taxes, but failed to obtain the sanction of the dictator, who, however, finding that Government had declined to entertain his demands decided on asserting himself. He called a meeting of the citizens of Bardoli on the 25th January, and at his instance they passed a resolution declaring their fitness to undertake civil disobedience and applied to the Working Committee



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

351

CSL

of the Congress for permission to do so. This committee met at Surat on the 1st February and despatched a congratulatory message to Bardoli for their resolve to offer mass civil disobedience and wished them every success. That same day Mr. Gandhi sent the Viceroy an ultimatum containing certain peremptory demands which if they were conceded within the period of seven days, he would postpone civil disobedience. The Government replied by their communique dated the 5th February and a portion of the last para may be quoted as it sums up the situation :

‘The demands put forward in the concluding paragraph of Mr. Gandhi’s present manifesto, exceed even the demands made by the Working Committee of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi’s demands now include (1) the release of all prisoners convicted or under trial for non-violent activities; (2) a guarantee that the Government will refrain absolutely from interference with all non-violent activities of the non-co-operation party even though they fall within the purview of the Indian Penal Code, or in other words, an undertaking that the Government will indefinitely hold in abeyance in regard to the non-co-operators the ordinary and long established law of the land. In return for these concessions he indicates that



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

he intends to continue the illegal and seditious propaganda and the operations of the non-co-operation party and merely appears to postpone civil disobedience of an aggressive character until the offenders now in jail have had an opportunity of reviewing the whole situation. In the same paragraph he reaffirms the unalterable character of the demands of his party. 'The alternatives that now confront the people of India are such as sophistry can no longer obscure or disguise. The issue is no longer between this or that programme of political advance, but lawlessness, with all its consequences, on the one hand, and, on the other, the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised Governments. Mass civil disobedience is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with sternness and severity.'

Meanwhile on the 4th February occurred the Gorakhpur tragedy, in respect to which Mr. Devadas Gandhi who visited the scene is reported to have said that after what he had seen he must ask his father to forget the Punjab wrongs. Chauri Chaura is a station on the B. N. W. Railway and within a stone's throw is the police thana, which many a time has been visited by the writer during his thirteen years stay in Gorakhpur. On the 4th a mob of volunteers and villagers about



SL

2,000 strong led by the former made an organised attack on the thana Chauri Chaura at about 4 p. m. They killed the entire thana staff and one chaukidar and Sub Inspector and seven armed police who had been sent to reinforce the thana. They then burnt all the thana buildings, and all the bodies were stripped and burnt. It is believed that two volunteers were killed and several wounded. Most of the bodies were found in and just outside the thana. The police fired several volleys in the air in order to avoid bloodshed, although this is contrary to orders. The railway staff were prevented from communicating and the Railway line was cut between Chauri Chaura and Gorakhpur about a mile from the former. On receipt of information the district magistrate immediately took out reinforcements, but the affair was over soon after 5 p. m. and the interruption of communication prevented them arriving before 9 o'clock, by which time the mob had already dispersed. In all 21 police and chowkidars were killed, being first brutally beaten and then burnt. One police and one chowkidar escaped.

Yet another incident took place on the 5th February at Bareilly in the United Provinces, when the police came into violent collision with the 'volunteers'. Under the Seditious Meetings Act processions in the city had been



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

prohibited. Nevertheless one composed of 5,000 volunteers started early that morning. The police dispersed it, seized their flags and silenced the bands. The volunteers and crowd rallied at the town hall. The charge by the police was met with a volley of brickbats. With the number of men available it was found impossible to hold the situation and to repel attack. The order was given by the District Magistrate to fire, with the result that the crowd was driven off. One man was killed on the spot, two since died in hospital out of seven, including one woman. There were others wounded who did not go to hospital. The military were called out but did not take part in the firing. The District Magistrate, Mr. Stubbs, sustained severe injuries while those of the Superintendent of Police were slight.

In view of the excesses committed at Chauri Chaura and elsewhere Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya advised Mr. Gandhi to reconsider the situation including the employment of volunteers. He was asked to attend the meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress at Bardoli on the 11th February. Meanwhile telegrams from different parts of India were sent by certain extremist leaders to postpone civil disobedience. The Working Committee met on the date fixed and passed the following resolutions:—



(1) In view of Nature's repeated warnings every time mass civil disobedience has been imminent some popular violent outburst has taken place, indicating that the atmosphere in the country is not non-violent enough for mass civil disobedience, the latest instance being the tragic and terrible events at Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur—the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere be suspended and instructs the local Congress Working Committee forthwith to advise the cultivators to pay the land revenue and other taxes due to the Government whose payment might have been suspended in anticipation of mass civil disobedience, and instructs them to suspend every other preparatory activity of an offensive nature.

(2) By certain other resolutions activities especially designed to court arrest and imprisonment were proscribed, including picketing, save for the *bona fide* and peaceful purpose of warning visitors to liquor shops against the evils of drinking. Volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance to Government notifications were also to stop. The ryots were advised to pay their rents to zamindars. All Congress organisations were called upon to revise their lists of volunteers and to remove the names of those who did not



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

strictly conform to the requirements of the pledge.

(3) All Congress organisations were directed to take up certain constructive work (a) to enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress; (b) to popularise the spinning wheel and organise the manufacture of hand spun and hand woven *khaddar* (c) to organise national schools; (d) to organise the depressed classes for a better life and to remove the prejudice of untouchability; (e) to organise the temperance campaign by house to house visits; (f) to organise village and town panchayats for the private settlement of all disputes; (g) to organise a social service department; (h) to continue the Tilak Memorial *swaraj* fund by the payment of at least one-hundredth part annual income.

These resolutions are evidence of a change of heart on the part of Mr. Gandhi which led him into a thorough going recantation of his past sentiments. Writing in *Young India* on the Chauri Chaura tragedy he said that as the author of civil disobedience he felt specially responsible and must do additional penance. He desired to undertake a 14 days fast, but in the end was persuaded to restrict it to five days. Here was another sample of Mr. Gandhi's emotional temperament, which was enough to inspire doubt as



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

357
SL

to its practical effect. On two previous occasions he gave expression to a similar humiliation and contrition, but soon after resumed his original mentality. He had a happy knack of indulging in mental reservations. The constructive programme outlined at Bardoli seemed innocent enough but its very first item, that of enrolling one crore of members of the Congress, which freely paraphrased meant volunteers, indicates that he had not lost sight of future contingencies when these recruits could be utilised to advantage. This recantation and penitence were for the time being sincere, but we shall see that within a few days his mind retained but a faint recollection of them. To the appeals made to him to drop non-co-operation he turned a deaf ear, nor was he disposed to call off *hartals* so far as the Prince of Wales was concerned. In one sense of the term he was an autocrat and a dictator, but from another point of view he was the slave of his followers, for he realised the fact that he would be summarily discarded if he exhibited too marked a disposition to be reconciled to the Government.

It is useless to enter into the somewhat vexed question that Mr. Gandhi's recantation and the Bardoli resolutions were due to the information that had somehow leaked out that he was about to be arrested. Mr. Montagu admitted that his arrest had been decided previous to the Bardoli



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

51

non-co-operation was identified, though ostensibly professing to confirm them. Picketing in respect to the boycott of foreign cloth was to be resumed. There was to be no abandonment of the original Congress programme of non-co-operation. Civil Disobedience was acknowledged as the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed whenever the State opposes the declared will of the people. And therefore it was resolved that individual civil disobedience whether of a defensive or aggressive character may be commenced, in respect of particular places or particular laws at the instance of and upon permission being granted therefor by the respective provincial committee, provided that such civil disobedience shall not be permitted unless all the conditions laid down by the Congress or the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee are strictly fulfilled. In *Young India* of February 23rd, Mr. Gandhi wrote that he was convinced of the correctness of the decision of the Working Committee and on the 24th by a mental somersault he allowed this to be revised. Those who refused to attach any weight to his contritions and fasts and penances have been amply justified. But as a matter of fact he was overruled by his followers, who were indeed further desirous that the restrictions placed on the promulgation of civil disobedience should be removed, for they knew how difficult



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

meeting to take effect as soon as he embarked on the no-tax campaign, but consequent on the conciliatory nature of the proceedings there the arrest had been stayed. The secret of Mr. Gandhi's influence lies in his moral courage. He had assiduously courted arrest and the knowledge that it was about to come could not have moved him a hair breadth from the line he thought proper to pursue. But the fact that the arrest had been stayed evoked a good deal of adverse criticism in England, the press being fairly unanimous in characterising it as an act of weakness. The *Times* declared that if the Viceroy hesitates further, Indians will be confirmed in the belief that the Government is afraid to act and as to Mr. Montagu he should be removed and a new head of the India Office, preferably a statesman of a stronger fibre, should be appointed. On the other hand there was a decided preponderance of opinion amongst the extremist leaders and specially those in jail, such as C. R. Das, Moti Lal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and Jitendralal Bannerjee, hostile to the Bardoli resolutions which had relaxed the aggressive nature of the non-co-operation propaganda. They desired to go ahead, regardless of consequences.

It was under such conditions the Indian Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 24th February and practically superseded the Bardoli resolutions relating to the activities with which



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

it would be to produce the necessary atmosphere for mass non-violence by concentrating on the constructive programme of Bardoli.

On March 9th, Mr. Montagu's resignation was accepted and on the 10th Mr. Gandhi was arrested at Ahmedabad. This was a mere coincidence. Mr. Gandhi had times without number challenged the Government to arrest him; others who had done no more than what he had done had been prosecuted and were undergoing the punishment awarded them. It certainly seemed as if he was immune. Tremendous pressure was being brought to bear for his arrest and the Secretary of State had sanctioned it, on his starting subversive activities at Bardoli as a preliminary to the initiation of civil disobedience. Chauri Chaura intervened and Mr. Gandhi stayed his hand. The impending arrest was also suspended, and the forbearance of the Government of India was justified by the tenor of the Bardoli resolutions which were subsequently passed. But these were radically modified at Delhi though against Mr. Gandhi's personal convictions. It seemed 'as if his influence was distinctly on the decline and he was becoming a spent force. Nevertheless these resolutions by which provincial freedom had been granted for initiating civil disobedience had received his sanction and it was but natural to suppose full advantage would be taken of it.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

361
SL

to set in motion this the most aggressive item of the agitation, while utterly ignoring the essential preliminary to the attainment of a spirit of non-violence. The Government of India having been given a free hand decided the time had arrived for putting Mr. Gandhi under restraint. Mr. Montagu's resignation had nothing to do with this incident, nor did the fact that he was no longer in office have any influence on the arrest.

The closing scene of Mr. Gandhi's active career was not devoid of pathetic interest and dignity. He was aware that he was to be arrested and had exhorted the people to maintain perfect peace and good will, which he would reckon as the highest honour that was paid him. There were to be no *hartals*, no demonstrations and no processions, but the energies of the people were to be concentrated in maintaining a peaceful and non-violent atmosphere and in the pursuit of the Bardoli programme so as to secure the full quota of Congress membership, to enrol volunteers strictly according to the prescribed pledge, to push the campaign of *swadeshi* with all vigour, to convince the country of the economic and moral necessity of wearing hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, to introduce necessary improvements in national education and panchayats and to remove the sin of untouchability.



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

SL

On Friday, the 10th March, at 10.30 p. m. when those in Sabarmati Ashram were preparing to retire Mr. Healey, superintendent of police, Ahmedabad, arrived in a motor car with a warrant of arrest under section 124A. Mr. Healey waited at the gate of the Ashram, sending word to Mr. Gandhi that he had come with a warrant of his arrest and Mr. Gandhi was allowed to take his own time for preparation to leave the Ashram with Mr. Healey. Mr. Shanker Lal Banker, who was the righthand man of Mr. Gandhi and publisher of *Navajivan* and *Young India* and keeper of the press had just then left the Ashram for the town. He met Mr. Healey on the road. The latter told him that he was also to be arrested. Mr. Banker immediately gave himself up. The news that the expected had happened went quickly round the Ashram and all collected near Mr. Gandhi, paid obeisance to him and asked for his blessing. Mr. Gandhi's favourite hymn describing the qualities of an ideal Vaishnava was sung in chorus. The final leave taking was of a touching nature but did not occupy more than a few minutes. Mr. Gandhi then came out and got into Mr. Healey's car accompanied by Mr. Banker. Mrs. Gandhi and Srimati Anusaya Bahen Sarabhai were allowed to escort the prisoners as far as the Sabarmati jail which is in the neighbourhood of the Ashram.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
353

His parting words to the Ashram people were that all who bore patriotism and love for India should strain every nerve to propagate peace and good will all over India among all communities.

The final scene, which for a time at any rate has arrested Mr. Gandhi's activities, vindicated the salient features of his character, simplicity and the love of truth. The trial of a man who had earned for himself a world-wide fame and who wielded a powerful influence in the country had every element of sensation in it. Yet the proceedings were short and simple and devoid of startling incidents. A state trial in which the whole of India was interested and which involved the personality of so unique a man was disposed of within a few hours by the mere production of formal evidence, for the accused denied nothing, but pleaded guilty to the charges laid against him. The day following his arrest he was produced before the magistrate when the superintendent of police, Ahmedabad, produced the Bombay Government's authority to lodge the complaint for four articles published in *Young India* dated the 15th June, 1921, entitled 'Disaffection a Virtue', dated the 29th September, 'Tampering with Loyalty', dated the 15th December, 'The Puzzle and its Solution'



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

and dated the 23rd February, 1922, 'Shaking the Manes'. Formal evidence was then adduced of Mr. Gandhi being the editor and Mr. Banker the printer of *Young India*. Asked to plead, Mohandas Karam Chand, aged 53, farmer and weaver by profession (he ignored that he was a barrister) stated that at the proper time he would plead guilty so far as disaffection towards Government was concerned, that the articles were written by him and that the proprietors and publishers had permitted him to control the whole policy of the paper. Shanker Lal Banker who described himself as a landed proprietor, made a statement on the same lines. Charges were framed on three counts of section 124A, and the accused were committed to the sessions to be tried on the 18th March.

On the day of trial the hall was full of the public, mostly clad in *khaddar*. The case was taken up punctually at noon by Mr. Bromfield, the Sessions Judge, and lasted for a little more than an hour. All those inside the court stood up as Mr. Gandhi entered the hall, and remained standing until he was shown a seat to the left of the judge. A little further up, in the same row to the right of Mr. Gandhi, sat Mr. Banker with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on the right; while to the left of Mr. Gandhi sat his wife, with Mrs.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
365

Naidu and Mrs. Saraladevi Chaudhrani next to her. It is from one of these ladies now recruiting her health in Dehra Dun that the writer has received some interesting details of the trial. As both the accused pleaded guilty the task of Sir Thomas Strangman, the Advocate General, was an easy one. He read out extracts from the articles in question to show that to create disaffection towards Government was the creed of non-co-operators, the Congress and the Khilafat party, and went on to point out that they were not the writings of an uneducated or obscure man. They had also to consider what results those writings had led to. He referred to the occurrences in Bombay, Madras and Chauri Chaura resulting in rioting, murder and involving people in misery and distress. It was true non-violence was insisted upon as an item of the campaign but of what value was it if disaffection towards Government was incessantly preached and Government held up as treacherous, and if it was openly and deliberately sought to instigate others to overthrow it? Those were the circumstances which he would ask the judge to take into account in passing the sentence. As regards Mr. Banker his guilt was only of a lesser degree in that he printed and aided the publication of the particular articles. But he would ask the court to impose a substantial fine in addition to such term of imprisonment as he deserved.



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

Mr. Gandhi then made a lengthy statement, after obtaining the permission of the court to do so sitting, in the course of which he admitted that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government had become almost a passion with him. He had discharged his unpleasant duty of preaching so knowing the responsibility that rested on his shoulders, and he endorsed all the blame that the Advocate General had thrown on his shoulders for the occurrences in Madras, Bombay and Chauri Chaura. If he was set free today he would still play with fire. But non-violence was the first and last article of his faith. People had sometimes gone mad. That was why he was there to submit not to any light punishment but to the highest penalty. The judge had either to administer the law properly or he should resign his office and preach disaffection as he (Mr. Gandhi) had been preaching. By the time he had finished reading his statement perhaps the judge would be able to have a glimpse of what was raging in his heart. Mr. Gandhi reviewed at great length the various causes that led him to launch non-co-operation and justified his action as being the only method of getting redress of the grievances of the people.

The judge then addressed Mr. Gandhi that though he had made his task easy by pleading guilty, still the determination of a just sentence



was a difficult task. Law was no respecter of persons. Nevertheless it would be impossible to ignore the fact that he (Mr. Gandhi) was in a different category from any person he had ever tried or was ever likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of his countrymen he was a great leader. Even those who differed from him in politics looked up to him as a man of high ideals and leading a noble and even saintly life. But he (the judge) had to judge him as a man subject to the law who by his own admission had broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man should appear to be a great offence, against the State. He (Mr. Gandhi) had done much to prevent violence but having regard to the nature of his political teachings and the nature of those to whom it was addressed, how he (Mr. Gandhi) could have continued to believe that violence would not be an inevitable consequence passed his capacity to understand. Every one would agree that he (Mr. Gandhi) would have made it impossible for any Government to leave him at liberty. He (the judge) was trying to balance what was due to him (Mr. Gandhi) against what appeared to him as necessary in the interests of the public. He then quoted the case against Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 12 years ago, under the same section as on



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

a similar footing to the present one and said he would pass the same sentence as passed on him finally, namely, simple imprisonment for six years, that is a sentence of two years simple imprisonment on each of the three counts. If the course of events in India should make it possible to reduce the period and release him no one would be better pleased than he. The judge then sentenced Mr. Banker to six months' simple imprisonment on each of the first three counts and on the third count Rs. 1,000 fine, in default six months' simple imprisonment, the sentences to run consecutively.

Mr. Gandhi then addressing the Judge said as he had done him the honour of recalling the trial of the late Lokmanya Tilak, he (Mr. Gandhi) considered it to be a proud privilege to be associated with Mr. Tilak. He certainly considered that the sentence was as light as any judge could have passed. As far as the court was concerned he could not have expected better courtesy. After the judge had left the court all those inside the hall outside pressed towards Mr. Gandhi and bade him a tearful farewell one after the other. Sir Thomas Strangman, Advocate General, also exchanged a smiling farewell with Mr. Gandhi.

The conviction and sentence of Mr. Gandhi provoked no disorders and no violence and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

369
SL

indeed hardly much excitement. It may have been partly due to his last injunctions as also to the effect of his assiduous preaching and teaching non-violence, but to some extent the explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the waning influence of Mr. Gandhi. He had proved himself to be a leader and a prophet on whose words implicit reliance could not be placed. He had promised *Swaraj* and was constantly postponing the dates of its achievement. He professed to be leading a peaceful propaganda and yet disorders, bloodshed, and worse deeds of horror followed in its train. The conviction was gaining ground that he was an idealist and not a practical man. And yet another factor has to be taken into account. The calm atmosphere that prevailed was mainly due to the fact that there was an utter absence of any effort to influence the public and to incite them to commit disorders. Take away the evil influence that misleads and provokes them, cease to supply the stimulus of passion and make no inflammatory and subversive appeals, and the people of India in their normal and spontaneous selves may be trusted to preserve their peace-loving and gentle-minded traditions and to eschew disorders and violence of any kind.

Had the Bardoli resolutions not been modified Mr. Gandhi would have been still at large.



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

It was natural to expect that those who had been mainly instrumental in forcing the modifications would have stood by their guns and have insisted on the Delhi programme being carried out. But Mr. Gandhi's arrest and subsequent conviction seem to have damped their ardour and circumscribed their activities. Hakim Ajmal Khan, the President of the Congress, Mr. Patel, the General Secretary, the fire-eating Hasrat Mohani and Maulana Abdul Bari, all wrote emphasising the necessity of Hindu-Mahomedan unity and of carrying out the Bardoli programme. Mr. Patel being pointedly asked deprecated picketing unless absolute non-violence could be assured and advised that in all the provinces the lists of the volunteers should be scrutinised so that the names of those who should not be there could be removed. The All-India Congress Committee he said, had forbidden mass civil disobedience, but as regards individual civil disobedience each province was given leave to deal with it as it liked. He however advised that if it was of an aggressive character it should not be undertaken for the time being and even if it be of a defensive character it should be undertaken only—for the present at least—where it is absolutely necessary. The Bengal Congress Committee decided to ask the Congress organisations in Bengal to



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

371
SL

carry out the Delhi resolutions except civil disobedience. The Nagpore committee after dilating on the failure of the people to grasp the principles of non-co-operation appointed a sub-committee of three to report what programme was to be followed in the future. The United Provinces committee urged that an intensive propaganda be carried on in favour of *khaddar* and the boycott of foreign cloth and ignored picketing and civil disobedience. A motion at the Bombay merchants meeting to cease to trade in foreign cloth, by way of protest against the repressive policy of Government, fell through as no one would second the resolution. At the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Chittagong the president, Mrs. C. R. Das, no doubt, inspired by her husband, then in jail, not only ignored civil disobedience but struck out a new line by advising non-co-operators to capture the union committees, local boards, and municipalities, and if necessary even the provincial councils, where possibly if they did not get their rights their task would be to obstruct all work, good or bad. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, presiding at the Central Provinces Conference held at Chindwarra, enlarged on the benefits derived from the Hindu and Mahomedan unity and from the use of *khaddi* but evaded the question of civil disobedience. The president of the Khilafat Conference, also held at the same place, followed the example set by her. The Conference



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

held at Pen in the Colaba district was significant of the utter demoralisation that had crept in. Mr. Gandhi, of course he was an excellent man, but *swaraj* was not likely to be attained by the use of *khaddi*, nor indeed by the programme chalked out by the Congress. It needed revision, and a committee was appointed to investigate and report to the All-India Congress Committee. *Inter alia* there was a strong expression of opinion in favour of Mrs. C. R. Das's view that public institutions should not be boycotted but availed of to further the ends of non-co-operation. The Working Committee of the Congress warned the provincial committees against the hasty use of the powers conferred on them. It is significant that at Khulna, once a hot-bed of extremism, some members of the local Congress committee joined the People's Association in voting an address to Lord Lytton, the new Governor of Bengal. Alarmed at the direction the wind was blowing Mr. Patel thought he would give non-co-operators a gentle reminder that the time for launching civil disobedience was not far distant, but Hakim Ajmal Khan entertained a different opinion and refused to allow it to appear on the agenda paper of the Working Committee's meeting.

Non-co-operation was a one man's show. Now that he is out of the way, the unity, which



was a characteristic of the movement while he was the acknowledged dictator, is lost. Each section is pulling in its own direction and a total collapse is imminent. Verily Mr. Gandhi played for a heavy stake. His motives were excellent and up to the end he maintained a passionate desire to serve his country and to promote the moral and material progress of the people. He has been defeated because in the region of practical politics idealism has no place. And he was an idealist *par excellence*. And now India is without a leader. C. R. Das and Moti Lal Nehru have made heavy sacrifices for their country, but both were in prison at the time of Mr. Gandhi's conviction. Since then both have been released. They made excellent lieutenants but how far they would be accepted as leaders outside their province it is difficult to say, for they lack the commanding personality of Mr. Gandhi. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya tried to capture the vacated seat and if possible to unite the moderates and extremists. In politics he is a trimmer and he is too orthodox a Hindu to play with the cow as did the Mahatma. The Mahomedans of Punjab which he exploited first have repudiated him and as he is unwilling to subscribe to the full programme of the non-co-operators the All-India leadership is not for the glib-tongued Pandit.



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

Bereft of Mr. Gandhi's leadership non-co-operation began to go to pieces. It had lost its vitality and for a time was kept going by the momentum of the past. Those within its ranks struck out each a line for himself. The Mahatma had been forced to agree to the Delhi resolution that the Bardoli constructive programme had not abrogated the propaganda as sanctioned by the Congress. But the Maharashtra leaders were in open revolt and in the other provinces there were subdued murmers of discontent. Mr. Jayakar of Bombay, Mr. Pain of Howrah and several pleaders in Bengal and Howrah resumed their practise as lawyers. Mr. Natrajan who was supposed to be won over and had been rewarded by being appointed vice-president of one of the bodies working under the Congress started a series of tirades against the whole programme of non-co-operation. All this was very disconcerting. But a much greater blow came from a very unexpected quarter.

Addressing a students' meeting, Mr. Jinnah emphasised that students should go to schools and colleges as these were started with the people's money. Referring to the non-co-operation movement he said it was a revolutionary movement and was not practicable and could not succeed. He strongly disapproved of the boycott of Councils and said if they were going to have



swaraj on Parliamentary lines based on democratic principles they must join the Councils, where they could vigorously fight for the country's cause. Although the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms did not satisfy him, yet they were undoubtedly in a progressive direction. The Reforms were not granted in proportion to the growth of public opinion and their fitness. It was impossible for the Government to withhold dominion status from India for more than 10 years. Mrs. Gandhi, after visiting her husband at the Yervada jail at Poona addressed a meeting of the Bombay ladies and said; 'You have to tell the British that you did not want them to go out of India, but that Indians wanted them in this country as equals and not as masters.'

To counteract the demoralising influence of these attacks the Congress officials decided on concentrating their attention on their trump-card, civil disobedience. Whereas at one time the mere mention of it was enough to provoke the utmost enthusiasm, the bulk of their followers were now disposed to fight shy of it. At least there was considerable difference of opinion. People were tired of going to jail. To start with there was a certain amount of glory attached to it, but those who had served out their time and had been released



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

found that there were no bands and no processions to greet them and that there was an entire change in the atmosphere. They had sacrificed themselves hoping to give an impetus to the country's cause, but they found it to be languishing and their sacrifice hardly appreciated. The extremist leaders had landed themselves in a very uncomfortable position. To order the starting of civil disobedience would be suicidal, for an ignominious defeat was inevitable. To drop it altogether would imply an abject surrender. They therefore resorted to that last hope of the forlorn, the appointment of a Committee to decide the important question whether it was to be or not to be. The underlying motive was obviously to placate the few irreconcilables who were eager to win the crown of martyrdom.

The Committee was composed of Hakim Ajmal Khan, the President of the Congress, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Messrs Patel and Duni Chand and Mrs. Sorijini Naidu. The last named declined the honour and was replaced by Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Evidence was recorded in various cities in the Panjab and the United Provinces, and was by no means encouraging; in anticipation of which it was being taken *in camera*. Hakim Ajmal Khan at a meeting in Allahabad stated that the evidence the Committee had recorded so far had not been hope-inspiring and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

317
SL

Even hinted that the decision of the All-India Congress Committee after the Committee had submitted its report might not be to the liking of some enthusiastic souls. Mr. Moti Lal Nehru compared the absence of political life owing to the lack of Congress activities to to the peace of death and the quiet of grave. It is not difficult to foresee the result. A solemn declaration will be made deploring the absence of the requisite atmosphere for initiating civil disobedience, and the lukewarmness of the people for the adoption of this drastic remedy will be glossed over. A death blow will any how be given to non-co-operation.

But though non-co-operation will be dead the fight will be revived under the banner of co-operation. The extremists are marshalling their forces to capture the Councils at the elections of 1923. The Government and the moderates will have to be on the alert. Unless they can show by then an appreciable diminution in the cost of administration, a genuine programme for the industrial development of India and some advance towards making her capable of defending herself against attack, the wide political powers committed to the electorates may conceivably be used to produce a constitutional deadlock. The moderates must fight for all they are worth, and the Government it is to



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

CSL

be hoped will realise that it would be unsafe to ignore altogether the demands that are being made in respect to fiscal autonomy, the control over the purse, a larger measure of responsibility in the provincial governments and a substantial measure of responsibility in the Central Government. Conciliation is always more effective than repression. Then only will be realised, enjoy, in peace restored, the fruits of A Fight to the Finish.



CHAPTER XII.

CSL

WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

Well may India ask, "Watchman! what of the night," distracted as she is by forces pulling in different directions. There is a complete unanimity as to the goal that is to be reached, but it is in the method of approaching it that a sharp difference of opinion has declared itself. The *intelligentsia* of the land are agreed that India should be its own mistress, and the English nation stands committed to further this end; but when and how it is to be achieved is a matter which has provided food for a bitter controversy. Gradual evolution has many supporters, for it is peaceful and sure. But it is slow. This irritates the impatient and unreflecting politicians whose enthusiasm and eagerness cannot be restrained. They would much rather enter with a rush the paradise they are longing for, throwing caution to the winds and utterly regardless of the pitfalls which beset their path. If in their headlong career they trample under their feet the foundations of law and order it is a matter of indifference to them, for they believe that the end justifies the means. If bloodshed and deeds of horror follow in their train, they console themselves with the reflection that other



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

countries in the quest of freedom have gone through a similar and perhaps a worse experience. To the appeal that this freedom may be gained by means that are constitutional and by the exercise of a little moderation and tact they furiously retort that those who differ from them are not only lacking in patriotism but are acting under the influence of base and selfish motives. How to manipulate the hostile forces that are at work is the problem of the day.

The previous chapter has recorded the activities of Mr. Gandhi during the earlier months of the present year, with a reference only to those incidents with which he had some sort of connection. To be able to ascertain how we stand today it will be necessary to extend the field and to pass under review certain other striking events during this period. We shall then be able to form a fair estimate of the political condition of the country. On the one hand we shall find disclosed the ravages for which non-co-operation is responsible and on the other hand that an appreciable advance has been in the evolution of self-government. If dark clouds are overhanging they are due to the crisis through which the country has passed, but there are significant indications that they will disperse without having done any permanent injury.



A casual mention has been made of the fact that the Government exhibited for over a year a praiseworthy patience in dealing with the situation that had been created by the aggressive activities of Mr. Gandhi. It was only after the insult offered to the Prince of Wales that they took up the defensive by letting loose the forces of repression. Without in any way detracting from the saintliness of the character of the leader of non-co-operation or impugning the purity of the motives by which he was actuated, it is incomprehensible why a boycott was proclaimed of one who was wholly unconnected with politics and was absolutely innocent of wrong doing. He had sought the hospitality of these shores and his attitude towards the people was invariably sympathetic and kindly. Conscious that he had given no cause of offence and placing implicit faith on those whom he considered his hosts, he times without number broke through official restraints to move freely among them. Mr. Gandhi was an idealist, but he had as his counsellors and friends shrewd men of the world capable of giving practical advice in every emergency. Could they not see that they were placing an indelible stigma on the Indian nation by a breach of the most ordinary instincts of hospitality in the treatment accorded to one who should have been received as an honoured guest? Could they not realise as



practical men that the cause in which they were engaged, than which there could have been nothing more sacred, in that they were seeking the political salvation of the country, that this cause would be grievously prejudiced by their offensive attitude towards one who while scrupulously avoiding any interference with political questions showed a keen desire to win the friendship of the people? Could they not see that they were needlessly lacerating and embittering the feelings of loyal Englishmen, who after all are still in the country? The indifference to their feelings would be intelligible if it was intended to drive them out by force and that at once, but failing that, ordinary common-sense should have shown the utter futility and foolishness of irritating those who are quite capable of doing us immense harm if they chose to do so. Non-co-operators assert they have performed mighty deeds. It may be so, but the impartial observer will have no hesitation in pronouncing the verdict that the deliberate insult offered to the Prince of Wales does not redound to their credit, and that it has had a prejudicial effect on the political prospects of the country.

The record of the evils arising from non-co-operation is pretty full, as we shall see further on, but it would be a grave injustice to Mr. Gandhi to stigmatise his propaganda as purely destructive.



with nothing constructive to be placed to its credit.

The authors of the Reforms Scheme have been jeered at for wishing to disturb the placid contentment of the masses. Mr. Gandhi undoubtedly came to their rescue. He forestalled the Reforms by planting in the the masses the germs of political consciousness and brought them to realise that they possess rights and privileges in respect to which they can insist that an opportunity for their exercise be given them, or that it is within their option to demand relief from genuine grievances. The *Eka* movement was a warning to Government not to ignore any general causes of agrarian unrest, for even the agricultural classes have been stirred up. Divested of the spirit of lawlessness that was aroused, non-co-operation to some extent simplified the problem of self-government, which demands an enlarged and intelligent electorate capable of giving sanction to their representatives to legislate for the people and to exercise a controlling voice in the administration of the affairs of the country. It has been cast up to the present legislatures that their members represent nobody but themselves, but it is more than probable this reproach will be wiped out at the next election, a result partially due to the exertions of Mr. Gandhi.

But a still more signal and gratifying achievement was the stimulus given to the women of India to take an active and sympathetic interest



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

in the political, material and moral advancement of the country. They within the short period of a couple of years substantiated their claim to be the partners of their husbands and their brothers in the assertion of legitimate rights and in obtaining redress of just grievances. Men are often influenced by base and selfish motives but the gentler sex came forward in all simplicity and disinterestedness to bear their share of the burden. The plying of the spinning wheel is with them a labour of love, for it is being utilised in thousands of homes not merely with the idea of supplementing the family income but for the industrial emancipation of India. As a tribute to their zeal and earnestness the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution for the removal of sex disqualification of voters in the Assembly elections. At the request of the Madras Corporation the local Government nominated an Indian lady Councillor in the person of Mrs. Devadasan, an Indian Christian, and the wife of Mr. Justice Devadasan. The Calcutta Corporation, which not long ago refused votes to women as electors, has cancelled its refusal and proffered a similar request.

Mr. Gandhi decidedly gave an impetus to the resuscitation of indigenous industries. He was most assiduous in preaching the gospel that *Swaraj* will be attained when the people take to the use of *khaddar*. He is right in a way because the use of *swadeshi* articles will make India self-reliant and



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

38

self-contained. The present unrest is largely due to economic causes and to the inability of the people to carry on the struggle for existence when the influx of foreign goods has to a large extent extinguished the industrial occupation of the people. A revival of these industries would undoubtedly lead to *Swaraj* from one point of view. The pity of it is that Mr. Gandhi against his former good judgment made the boycott of foreign cloth part of his propaganda. He at one time stigmatised boycott as a form of violence, which painful experience has certainly verified. He deprecated it because of its tendency to promote race hatred. It has done this with a vengeance. The burning of foreign cloth furnished a fertile field for insincerity and hypocrisy, for some of the leaders of this campaign had their houses fairly well stocked with foreign articles. The extent to which traders in foreign cloth were subjected to intimidation and black-mailing was a veritable scandal. Picketing was reduced to a fine art and its operations were effective in a variety of ways. Prior to the Government asserting itself the non-co-operators had obtained written pledges from the traders that they would not sell foreign cloth till the close of 1922. Some of these began backing out, and for so doing they were intimidated. In Allalabad this led to the prosecution and conviction of Pandit Jawahir Lal Nehru, Keshav Dev



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

Malaviya and others. And this was by no means an isolated case.

But for the evils attendant on picketing it might have been possible to say that Mr. Gandhi had done much to popularise temperance. Whether prohibition has actually been achieved in America and whether it is an unmixed blessing we need not discuss here, but it is more than likely that some of the Indian provincial legislatures will, before long, give it a trial. The Government has already been hard hit by the decrease in the excise revenue, which does not necessarily imply a diminished consumption of liquor but in some places at least an increase in the number of illicit stills. The executive are bent on preventing the consumers of liquor being coerced or their being cajoled by the statement that if they would only join in compelling the shutting down of the shops which pay fees to Government they would bring about a regime in which there will be no restrictions whatever on their consumption or on the manufacture of intoxicants and no tax to be paid on that account. Soon after Government stirred itself, picketing, whether of liquor or of foreign cloth shops, appeared only in a sporadic form, and before long it will be discontinued, for the good sense of the people is asserting itself.

Mr. Gandhi preached the gospel of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind. He



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

387
SL

exhibited a great interest in the depressed classes.

He desired to remove the stigma of untouchability, and in the Bardoli resolutions, which are a legacy left by him to his extremist followers, this finds a prominent place. All honour to him for trying to raise the depressed classes. If only he had confined his energies to the moral and social uplifting of the people he would have been a blessing to humanity. But he undertook the political salvation of the country, a task sufficiently stupendous to daunt the boldest of men. In the midst of the strenuous fight he was engaged in he brought forward at the end of the last year the question of the removal of untouchability, giving evidence of a large heart and of the versatility of his enterprises, but that another and very simple explanation is available. In the preceding pages it will be found that it was after the Bezwada meeting of the Indian Congress Committee that he took the depressed classes under his wings. The original programme of non-cooperation had failed, and it was superseded by the *charkha*, to which the boycott and the burning of foreign cloth and the removal of untouchability were subsequently added. These he declared were essential for the attainment of *swaraj*, which meant the overthrow of the present Government. For this he wanted a crore of rupees and a crore of men. The



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

of rupees he got, but the crore of men had yet to come. The field of recruitment was limited, so he proposed to extend it to the depressed classes. It is clear that it was partly at least for political purposes and not entirely on humanitarian grounds this part of the programme was started. The emancipation of the depressed classes can only be achieved by imparting to them the benefits of education, but education in any form is anathema to Mr. Gandhi. He has however set the ball rolling, never mind for what object, and it is to be hoped that people that are more practical-minded will take the matter up. For the untouchables have been roused, and some ameliorative measures will have to be adopted unless the caste people are prepared to face their hostility.

One of the chief objectives of non-co-operation was the uniting of Hindus and Mahomedans, than which there could be no enterprise more worthy. But the underlying motive was bad, the discomfiture of a common enemy, the present rulers of the land. To the question how far has the desired union been attained the Moplah tragedy gave a final answer. Previous to that the declaration of Mr. Mahomed Ali had a disturbing influence on the minds of the Hindus that he was a Moslem first and an Indian afterwards. Indeed, if we look a little further afield we find that the relations between the



two communities have so little improved that any little incident where the religious factor intervenes leads to an outburst of feeling which only the strong arm of the law can keep under check. In the Punjab while the Hindu Minister inveighs against communal representation the Moslem Minister has aroused the ire of the Hindus by his strenuous attempts to extend the principle in unlooked-for directions. A similar mishap has attended Mr. Gandhi's efforts to check litigation by a resort to arbitration, as regards which he had the hearty sympathy of the Government and of the people at large. But non-co-operation in its crusade against British courts brought into existence a most mischievous and deplorable state of affairs. Groups of people, not entirely free from the *badmash* element, assumed the function of administering justice. Offenders, and often those who were innocent of any wrong-doing, were hauled up and after an apology of a trial were sentenced to punishments the most humiliating and even brutal. They dared not complain as a rule because their life would be made a misery to them. Some did do it and disclosed a variety of abuses amongst which extortion and black-mailing figured prominently.

It is hardly open to question that the country became thoroughly demoralised as a result of the unique propaganda, the sole



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

responsibility for which Mr. Gandhi took on his own shoulders. To preach disaffection was with him the first article of faith, and a good many of his followers proved faithful pupils. That this should lead to the development of racial feeling in a pronounced form against Englishmen was a logical sequence. That some of these in their turn display a similar feeling against Indians is unfortunately a fact. It is discreditable, and strenuous efforts are being made to suppress it. But the non-co-operators were responsible for a wholesale and virulent antagonism displayed against those who came from the West and for every thing that is Western. When sanity is restored people will marvel at the extent they allowed their feelings to be worked up against Englishmen who at least at present are engaged in keeping India from becoming the prey of foreign invaders, and restrain its people from indulging in fratricidal wars. This racial feeling was utilised with a certain amount of success to discredit Government in every possible direction. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri was by no means exaggerating when he said that he had never known such profound distrust of Government as existed today, such absolute lack of faith in their sincerity, a rooted tendency to put aside all their pledges, promises and declarations as of no value whatever. Another offshoot is the antipathy to



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL
391

western civilisation and all it connotes, modern education in arts and sciences, the introduction of machinery and the various expedients for relieving suffering humanity. All this is to be wiped out because it is associated with the alien rulers of the land. But these have not yet fully discharged their trust. They have to complete the task imposed on them by Providence and to prepare India to take its place with the Dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Happy will India be if that is her destiny. India has never stood alone and can never stand alone. This is the answer to those who long for independence. It is useless to argue with extremist writers, one of whom asserts in the *Modern Review* that the British are past masters in the art of cant. When cornered they bring in the theory of trust. They are trustees and as such must remain in possession of your country and your purse. But may there not be considerable truth in the remark of Sir Surrendro Nath Bannerjee with reference to the charge of his change of attitude towards Government. "It is not I that have changed, it is the Government that has changed," for it is agreed at all hands that the attainment of self-government is only a question of time.

Some very hard things have been said by the extremists about British rule in India and even the moderates assert that it has not been



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

an unmixed blessing. As regards this it is enough to say that an opportunity is now afforded us to remedy these defects and what is more that it is being earnestly availed of: The fault will be ours if in course of time our Legislatures do not succeed in removing or at least minimising the evils attendant on alien rule. But a reference to certain benefits derived from the British connection becomes imperative because of the onslaught on them under the influence of non-co-operation. No one can deny that British rule had drilled into us a respect for law and order, besides providing security to life and property. No doubt there were occasional outbreaks and breaches of the law, but there was always some excuse, reasonable or unreasonable, for them. The previous pages however show how in the name of *hartal* and picketing there has been unrestrained indulgence in intimidation and violence, frequently accompanied by the most barefaced black-mailing. We have also seen how riots attended with loss of life or property have followed in quick succession without any adequate cause except that the people had lost all respect for authority. But the evil has gone beyond that. From statistics that have been published it appears that crime is on the increase. In the Punjab in the first three months of 1921 there were 136 murders, 86 dacoities and 2524



burglaries. During the same period of 1922 there were 193 murders, 149 dacoities and 4181 burglaries. In the western and eastern ranges where political activities were greatest there were 33 more murders, 73 more dacoities and 421 more burglaries. This lawlessness was undoubtedly due to the attempts made by agitators to set the masses against authority. In the United Provinces in the course of trial of a dacoity case it was elicited that the accused thought that Gandhi Raj was shortly coming and they wanted to loot enough before it became general. They had committed no less than 200 dacoities.

Lawlessness developed to such an extent that bands of men sometimes many thousand strong were formed to defy the law and commit crimes as an organised body. The *Akali* menace in the Punjab is one not to be despised. A Government resolution gives us an insight as to what it is. An extremist section of the Sikhs had for some time been combining religious and political cries and had associated itself with parties whose avowed object was the destruction of the existing Government. Early in February agitation of a definitely revolutionary character began in certain Sikh villages by *Akalis* and others. The number of *Akali* associations increased and the resolution gives many instances of their lawless behaviour and of the intimidation and



terrorism which they exercised over the central districts. Some of the *Akali* bands declared their intention of having a Government of their own. The subordinate officials were boycotted or humiliated. Everything that was possible was done to engender a spirit of lawlessness and contempt for authority. The resolution alludes to the threats to take forcible possession of police stations and other Government buildings and to the punishments of almost incredible barbarity inflicted by non-co-operation panchayats. It is stated that bands of *Akalis* insisted on travelling by train without tickets and there were many instances of their intimidating soliders on leave and their threatening molestation of their women if they would not leave the army by the end of February. A conservative estimate put the number of *Akalis* as 25,000, and in some districts their bands contained a higher proportion of criminal classes. Their lawlessness led to a general sense of insecurity and to a very serious increase in the graver forms of crimes. The *Akalis* came to be regarded as a privileged class owing to the manner in which they moved about in armed bodies, brandishing weapons, terrorising passers by and displaying a contempt for the Government. This behaviour caused alarm to the more respectable element of the Sikh community, and troops had to be moved about the country to reinforce the civil force.



In the United Provinces a similar movement had come into existence, but with a different object. A Government *communiqué* states:— The Eka movement is really a revival of the Kisan Sabha movement which produced agrarian disturbances in Rae Bareli and elsewhere in January 1921 under another name and with somewhat different causes. The Rae Bareli troubles were caused by the efforts of itinerant and non-co-operating agitators. The Eka movement was initiated or at any rate fostered in its inception by the Khilafat and Congress leaders of Malihabad in Lucknow district near the Hardoi border. It began in November 1921, and at first attracted little notice. Nor was its spread rapid or accompanied by any marked increase of crime. Later on the movement spread very rapidly in Hardoi district and particularly during February 1922 Sandila tahsil and considerable portions of Hardoi and Bilgram tahsils in Hardoi district became affected. Sidhaultahsil of Sita pur became affected in January 1922 and Misrikh and Biswan tahsils later. Madari Pasi rapidly assumed the position of a leader in Hardoi and became head of a large gang who on several occasions practised intimidation. He also habitually collected subscriptions and dispossessed zemindars. *Balmashes*, etc., naturally joined in hoping to make something out of it."



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

As to the pecuniary loss due directly or indirectly to non-co-operation it will have to be calculated on a more gigantic scale. Some of it is known and some unknown. In connection with the boycott of foreign cloth, besides the loss to the trader, there, was loss of freight to railways and of income tax to Government. The *hartal* amongst the coolies of coal mines caused a reduction of coal supply necessitating coal being brought for railways at a higher price from England. The *hartal* amongst railway employees resulted in the fall in railway income. Owing to the E. I. R. strike which had a political origin the Government lost about 13 crores and the loss to private individuals due to the stoppage of coal it is impossible to calculate. In certain districts in Madras, Assam and Bombay the refusal to pay taxes resulted in a certain loss of income to Government. The loss to the Assam tea planters must have been enormous owing to the the stampede of coolies which was admittedly brought about for no economic reasons but to punish the alleged foreign exploiters in India. The loss in expenditure was even greater than the loss in receipt. The Military Department reports that about 2 crores of rupees were spent in the movement of troops to suppress riots at Malabar, Bombay, Madras, Malegaon, Chandpur, Bareilly and Chauri Chaura. Owing to internal disturbances the police expenditure has largely increased.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

397

CSL

The activities of the frontier tribes are to a large extent due to the unsettled state of India, and the trouble in Waziristan which is responsible for 23 crores of rupees being spent in military operations was due mainly to the express invitation extended to its turbulent population by Indian malcontents to enter India to help to turn out the English from this country and to the bait thrown out of a big harvest in rapine and plunder.

Mr. Gandhi made no pretence of concealing the fact that he was engaged in a fight to the finish with a Government that was satanic and depraved and which gave no signs of mending. He therefore proposed to end it. So far from this being accomplished the result has been that his own activities have been cut short for a time at least. He had, however, brought the country to have a foretaste of all the horrors attendant on a revolution. After remaining passive for over a year, hoping to let non-co-operation run its course, the Government was roused to take action after the 17th November, consequent on the reign of terror established in Bombay and the disorders in Calcutta, Madras and other places where *hartal* was proclaimed. Repressive measures were started, but a tactical blunder was committed in not consulting the Ministers or taking the opinion of the Central Legislatures. How far repression becomes a



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

necessity depends on the state of the country and what that was is disclosed in the preceding pages. But once started the Government was in no mood to relax its operations, though the activities of the non-co-operators were getting less strenuous. To ensure a favourable reception for the Prince of Wales in Calcutta Lord Reading was willing to unbend, and to agree to a round table conference, but Mr. Gandhi having frustrated that, each side was left to its own devices and the devices of Government are bearing fruit. The proclamations and ordinances that were issued to check the activities of the volunteers who were to be disbanded were rigidly enforced. Some of them took up a defiant attitude and indulged in open picketing in spite of the order of Government. Thousands of them in different parts of India were arrested, tried and sent to jail. In Bengal they were originally led by Mr. C. R. Das and after his arrest by the ladies of his family, who in their turn were arrested, but released within 24 hours. Happily a good many volunteers, for instance a hundred in Delhi, obtained their release by executing bonds renouncing their former tactics. Public meetings in certain places were proscribed and where they were held in defiance of the orders of the of the executive arrests, prosecutions and convictions of the promoters brought their activities in.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

399
CSL

this direction to an end. Some of these also recanted and promised to be of good behaviour and were released. Altogether at one time there were over 20,000 persons in jail.

The reactionaries in England were at once upon arms. In their distorted vision India was on the eve of a revolution, to arrest which 20,000 criminals were clapped in jail. What cared they that these battalions of goal-birds were most of them raw inexperienced youths who were beguiled by the voice of a charmer, whom they could not resist. They were told that picketing was a virtuous act and that by filling the goals they would paralise the Government and win *swaraj* for India. Having served their time they find their sacrifice was in vain, for while non-co-operation has lost ground, the Government is stronger than ever. Direct action stand discredited for a generation at least. The following tabular statement furnishes the names of the leaders who were put under restraint in the present year.



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

Name	Charge	Date of conviction	Sentence
Krishna Kant Malaviya	Incititing Volunteers	4th Jany.	18 months' R. I.
Govind Malaviya.			
Shyam Sunder Chucker butty	Contempt of Court	do.	3 months' S. I.
Lajpat Rai	Section 124, I. P. C.	7th Jany.	1 year I. R.
C. Santanam			
Dr. Gopi Chand			
C. R. Das	Sec 17 Criminal Amend-ment Act.	14th Feby.	6 months' S. I.
B. L. Sasmal			
M. K. GANDHI.	124, I. P. C.,	18th March.	6 years' S. I.
Shanker Lal Banker	do.	do.	1 years' S. I.
Dr. Mahmud	do.	10th April	6th months' S. I.
Sardar Kharak Singh	do.	14th April	3 years' R. I.
Hasrat Mohani	do.	4th May	2 years' R. I.
Devidas Gandhi	Sec. 17, Criminal Law Amend-ment Act.	12th May	18 months' S. I.
Jawahir Lal Nehru	Secs. 506 and 305, I. P. C.	do.	19th May
Keshab Dev Malaviya			



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

401

CSL

Most of the extremist leaders were put out of the way, and with them went a whole host of their followers. The charge was laid against Government that it indulged in an uncalled for orgy of repression as the agitation for carrying out the Bardoli resolutions was harmless. A careful reading of the programme cannot fail to leave the impression that there was no fundamental change in the policy of the non-co-operators who only decided to suspend civil disobedience and not to abandon it. Hakim Ajmal Khan admitted this and hoped the masses would be better equipped for a renewed and vigorous offensive. And though volunteer processions were forbidden their enrollment was to be carried out in a more intensified form and attempts to seduce Government servants from their allegiance were specially provided for. And after all the Bardoli programme was a few days later radically modified at Delhi. Even after Mr. Gandhi's arrest, though the agitation lost a good deal of its strenuousness, the obnoxious features of the propaganda had so permeated the various orders of society that there was no guarantee that any conciliatory action on the part of Government would induce a corresponding response.

As to the allegation that repression led to excesses on the part of the executive and the police,



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

the Government as in duty bound denied this.

The refusal to offer a defence favoured abuses, which could not be corrected as there were no appeals. The High Court, United Provinces, set aside the conviction of a non-co-operator on the report of the superintendent of police that two sub-inspectors had falsely deposed against him. Mr. Justice Ryves of the Allahabad High Court in acquitting all the accused convicted in the Aligarh Riot Case regreted that the perpetration of a heinous crime should escape punishment but considered it would be more regretable if innocent men were sent to jail. After forty years' experience at the bar the writer cannot bring himself to believe that the police have radically changed their nature, though the charges against them may be exaggerated. But if sinning, they have been sinned against too, and after the Chauri Chaura atrocities it is too much to expect them to be above paying off old scores. The repeal of certain repressive enactments will reduce police activities, but the Government and specially that of the Punjab, where the resentment is the greatest, will do well to exercise the utmost tact and forbearance in the thankless task of restoring law and order.

Non-co-operation promised *swaraj*. It has not been achieved, while its own life hangs in the balance. It preached the doctrine of non-violence,



and has laid to its credit riots, intimidation, social boycott, tyranny at public meetings and an utter disregard for the feelings of others. It made super-human efforts to promote Hindu-Mahomedan unity but was baffled because the underlying motive was not pure and the tactics employed were of a questionable nature. On the contrary, it has intensified race feeling and accentuated the antagonism between the Englishman and the Indian. It played for all it was worth for a revolution, which has a strange fascination for some persons. Revolution, says an extremist writer in the *Modern Review*, is after all not such a dreadful thing. It is a phenomenon which nature loves and without which there can be no progress, either in nature or in human affairs. It has always been a terror to the holders of power and privilege, though it has always defied the machinations of the latter and put in its appearance in due time. We are certainly aiming at a revolution for revolution is but rapid evolution.

But can this rapid evolution be achieved without the shedding of blood? We need not appeal to history, for we have seen what has just happened in Ireland. England having agreed to the south and West of Ireland being constituted into a Free State there is nothing improbable if in the course of years this Free State with the



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

consent of all parties developed by a process of evolution into a republic, but the irreconcilables in their extreme haste staked their all on a revolution. After a deplorable loss of life on both sides and a still greater loss of valuable property they are now fugitives carrying on a guerilla warfare. Rapid evolution has certainly failed them. If by chance the efforts of the non-co-operators had been crowned with success and they had been able to bring about a revolution what would have been the ultimate fate of India? It is a curious fact that the ultra-extremists carefully avoid entering into any details about it, but airily dismiss the subject with the remark that some sort of Government will replace the present rule. But there cannot be a shadow of a doubt that anarchy pure and simple will be the result, when the people will be at each others' throats. Hindus and Mahomedans will each strive for supremacy, while the Native States will assert themselves to secure as large a slice of what will be considered no man's land and no man's property. Revolution by all means, but it would be wiser to have made some provision for a stable Government to supersede British rule. This can only be achieved by a process of slow evolution.

We have therefore to consider whether such evolution is in progress or we are at a stand



still. And for this we shall have to turn to the work done by the Legislatures and to the actions of the executive, and we will find that with the tolerance and co-operation of Government a decided stimulus has been given to the self-governing principle.

A resolution was moved in the Assembly that Standing Committees elected by the members of the Legislature be associated with the different departments of the Government of India and though strongly opposed by the Executive was carried by 40 to 36 votes. As such committees exist in many of the provinces and as they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, effect will probably be given to the motion. In the Council of State two bills were passed, one repealing part of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908 and the other certain special enactments of a repressive nature dating from the time of the East India Company. In the Assembly a resolution was carried asking for the appointment of a mixed committee of officials and non-officials to discuss the question of retrenchment in the Central Government. In the Legislative Assembly a Bill to repeal the Press Act was unanimously passed. On the 18th April 1922 the Financial Conference of the Representatives of the Central and Provincial Governments met at Simla and on the same date



WATCHMAN.. WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

the Government made the appointment of a Frontier Committee to be presided over by Mr. Bray and of the Retrenchment Committee, with Lord Inchcape as its president. On the last day of the session two motions by private members were rejected. Mr. Spencer moved for the appointment of members of the Assembly as Council Secretaries in certain departments of the Government of India but was outvoted by 38 to 24, while another motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss the action of the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi in prohibiting a public meeting met the same fate, 29 being for and 39 against it. In both instances non-official members supported the Government. But curiously enough the Bihar Council carried a motion, though opposed by Government, for the reduction of the High Court budget by Rs. 1,000 as a protest against the alleged charges of favouritism and nepotism brought against the High Court.

There can be no question that the Central Legislatures discharged their duties in a serious manner and with a due sense of the responsibility resting on them. It was therefore somewhat startling to find they had drawn on themselves the fulminations of the *Times* which wrote :—The Home Government promised progressive advancement if the experiment had favourable results,



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL
407

But there is the evident implication of the possibility of a reverse step if Indians do not co-operate in the fulfilment of the new duties and responsibilities. Both in Delhi and in the provinces Indians seem to be casting the new Reforms into the melting pot, and they must not be surprised if their present attitude leads very soon to an examination of the whole problem from a new angle.

The cry in India was for an enhancement of power and responsibility and that the time limitation in the Reforms Scheme as regards further advancement should be removed. The reply was thundered forth that what we have now may be taken away. What was the offence of the Indian legislators? The Government introduced their budget. There was a huge deficit. It was proposed to make this good by additional taxation. The Assembly accused the Government of being extravagant, and desired to examine the military expenditure. The European non-official members were as keen about the matter as the Indians. Hands off! said the Executive, We are advised by the highest legal luminaries in England that you are not permitted by the rules either to discuss or vote on military expenditure. In a round about way the Assembly let the Government understand they were spending 9 crores



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

too much under this head and they protested against it. But by way of a more effective and practical protest they knocked off 5 per cent from certain heads of civil expenditure, which near about covered the amount they were objecting to in the military expenditure. They further disallowed the increased duty on salt, on machinery, on the import of cotton goods and on the excise of cotton goods manufactured in India. The Viceroy had the right to veto this drastic treatment of the Finance Bill, but wisely refrained from doing so, thus giving a further illustration of the policy deliberately acted upon that the discretion vested in him should be exercised in favour of extending the power of the legislature. Sir Malcolm Hailey admitted the Government was prepared to accept not merely on financial but on general grounds the decisions arrived at by the Assembly, though these placed the Executive in a tight corner. The result of the five days debate on the Bill was that of the total taxation proposed, namely, 29 crores, the Assembly refused nine and a half crores and agreed to 19½ crores. On the other hand, the House transferred three crores of the paper currency reserve interest to the revenue account. The final result was an uncovered revenue deficit of Rs. 9,16,000 lakhs. With the cry for retrenchment on the one hand, it was not very edifying



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

409

CSL

for a motion to be introduced in the Bengal Council for the payment of its members, which however was not pressed to a division. But from statistics that have been published it appears that there is considerable abuse on the part of some members in drawing travelling and residential allowances.

The threats of the *Times* were repudiated by Sir Malcolm Hailey, but they gave cause for uneasiness combined with the resignation of Mr. Montagu, though he left assurances that there would be no change of policy so far as the English Government was concerned. And Mr. Sastri who had just returned from England testified to the bad impression that had been created there by the offensive treatment of the Prince of Wales by the extremists, which he said was calculated to put back the hand of the clock of political progress, though he felt sure there would be no change of policy. However in order to allay the wide-spread apprehension due to all these causes Earl Winterton, the new Under Secretary of State for India, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, made the declaration that the policy of 1919 would be carried out in the spirit and in the letter. Lord Reading has given evidence that he is not only a strong administrator but that his sympathies are entirely with the people over whom



416
he is ruling. So long as he is at the helm of affairs in India no mishap need be apprehended. Indeed we may expect under him an acceleration of the pace of advancement. He gave a sympathetic response to the appeal made to him by Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Madras, for permission to pursue in increasing measure the path of reform leading to the establishment of complete provincial autonomy as soon as such a consummation is found to be justified.

It is obvious that to prevent India from becoming bankrupt a reduction in its expenditure, both civil and military, is imperative. The Inchcape Finance Committee has been authorised to deal with both these branches of administration, while in each province a local Committee is engaged in reducing departmental expenditure. In the civil departments the Indianisation of the services is calculated to give some relief, and it is a curious fact that so far as the Civil Service is concerned this is likely to be achieved more rapidly than the authors of the Reforms Scheme had anticipated. That a certain proportion of those in the higher grades of the service will retire on proportionate pensions, the scale of which has just been announced by the Secretary of State, seems as likely as the fact that there will be a paucity of English candidates.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

411

CSL

This will enable a higher percentage of Indians to be recruited and will also afford a solution of a somewhat complex problem. The Ministers are at present in charge of certain departments under the system of dyarchy, but they have as their subordinates English officials some of whom are entirely out of sympathy with them and in whose selection, pay or service conditions they have no voice whatever. These officials, on the other hand, find it irksome to serve under Ministers whose activities they do not approve. The Indianisation of the services, except such posts as require technical knowledge, will therefore be as welcome to the Ministers as it will help to reduce expenditure. The Anglo-Indians are up in arms for they assert they are entitled to preferential treatment by reason of their origin. They admit they are purely Indian in their domicile and outlook and claim to be statutory Indians. It was a wise move on the part of Col. Gidney, the President of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, to inspire the Committee appointed to consider the Esher Report to put in a para that Anglo-Indians should be included in the terms "Indian subjects," or "Indians." As such they would benefit directly by the Indianisation of the services. But they realise that if merit be the final test of employment they would be nowhere, as their highest ambition is to pass the senior Cambridge



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

SL

Examination. As the bulk of this class earn a livelihood on the railways they resent the declaration of Col. Waghorn in the Assembly as to the Indianisation of the railway service. They have appealed to the Government to explain what this means, though there can be no doubt as to the real significance, which is that in the future it will be a case of the survival of the fittest. It would be doing them a kindness to convince them that the days of preferential treatment had gone and they must put their house in order unless they wish to be submerged.

It is gratifying to find that during this year a decided progress was made in the constitution of the Territorial Force and that India is gradually realising the imperative necessity for voluntary service in the army. In the United Provinces one battalion had been sanctioned but four have already been formed and it is under contemplation to form two more. In the Punjab two were sanctioned but there are now five. In Bombay the Parsees are showing great enthusiasm and one battalion has been formed and another is under preparation. In Madras instead of one battalion four are now complete. The North-Western Frontier Province will soon have two battalions in working order. Bihar, Orissa and the Central Provinces are lagging behind, but in Bengal Dr. S. K. Mullick reports that a double company will be ready as



soon as the arrangements for medical examination are completed and that the landed gentry are manifesting great keenness in the movement. It is proposed to stimulate their interest by conceding to such as are qualified the privilege of becoming officers in the Territorial Force. Considering the financial stringency and that the upkeep of each battalion amounts to Rs. two lakhs per annum the experiment of the Territorial Force may be voted a success.

Democracy is certainly not indigenous to the Indian soil, but the *intelligentsia* are taking to it readily. Formerly in the Councils, the Indian non-official members, who were all nominated, were reckoned as the opposition. They, without any special mandate, professed to represent the will and the interests of the people. The Reforms Scheme laid the foundation of Representative Institutions wherein the members of the legislature are elected by a popular vote. It was inevitable that the next development should be in the form of a division into parties. First came the National party. It aimed at preventing a deadlock due to the Assembly utilising its large non-official majority to thwart the Executive. But during its last session another called the Democratic party was evolved. It was well organised, had a whip, though not yet a leader, and members were deputed to speak on



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

behalf of the party on certain subjects. Communal feeling being what it is other parties may be developed, a fruition much to be deprecated. The non-official European members set an excellent example. They heartily co-operated with the Indian members on all constitutional questions of vital importance. They voted solid with the Indians for a demand for full power of vote on all items and also on reducing by Rs. 100 Army Department Estimates by way of censure of military expenditure. 'We propose to proclaim to the world,' said Mr. C. W. Rhodes, the Chairman of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, 'that we are able to work together, that we are determined to work together and that work is towards a common goal—the goal of India and her people and of all who make this land their home.' The next move in contemplation is to bring into existence a democratic party in the country, which if accomplished would complete the structure of a Parliamentary system on the most approved Western methods. But this system is by no means the last word in Democracy. India may evolve her own system suited to her genius, her traditions and her predilections, keeping in view British connexion on the one hand and the will of the people on the other hand.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

In the statement put in by Mr. Gandhi in the sessions court prior to his conviction he reviewed at great length India's grievances and alleged that for their redress non-co-operation was the only remedy. This is by no means correct. Perhaps the greatest grievance of all was the fact that India has been kept in subjection as a conquered country and her people have been treated as a conquered race. Up to within a few years this charge would have been difficult to meet, but what is India's status today? Not long ago the Viceroy, in course of an eloquent speech, delivered at the farewell dinner to the Right Hon'ble Mr. Sastri prior to his departure on his mission to the Dominions, read out a message from the Secretary of State in which he referred to the status of equal partnership won by India, and Lord Reading himself went on to add: 'There are some who ask what is India's place in the Empire? Where does she stand? The answer will be found in the history of the Imperial Councils of the last few years. We see in rapid review India taking her place with the Home Government and the Dominions at the Imperial Conference, at the Imperial War Cabinet, at the Great Peace Conference, at the League of Nations, at the Washington Conference, and with them affixing her signature to the great world-celebrated



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

creaties.' And surely the fact that India was sending one of her own sons to conduct negotiations on certain disputed matters with the Dominions has its own significance. It unquestionably indicates that India is no longer in the leading strings of England, but is able to deal directly and in terms of equality with the Dominions through one of her own gifted and trusted statesman and not through the medium of His Majesty's Government. May it not further be taken as an evidence of the fact that Government has within recent years begun to identify itself with the people of India? It would be a travesty of the truth to assert that this new status is the result of the activities of non-co-operation. Its foundation was laid long before the propaganda was started, when Lord Sinha was sent out to represent India in the Imperial War Cabinet and at the great Peace Conference.

The Viceroy forwarded to the Secretary of State the following resolution passed on the 9th February by the Legislative Assembly. — 'That this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he do represent to His Majesty's Government that any failure in His Majesty's African territories to meet the lawful claims of India for equality of status with all other classes of His Majesty's subjects will be regarded as a serious violation of the rights.



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

of Indians to citizenship, which were recognised and affirmed only so recently at the Imperial Conference of 1921 and further that he do cable to the Secretary of State for India and through him bring to the notice of the British Cabinet the emphatic protest of this Assembly against the pronouncement reported to have been made recently by the Right Hon'ble Winston Churchill at the East African dinner in London.' The Viceroy further added that the Indian public regard a satisfactory solution of the Kenya question as a vital test of the British Government's sincerity and of their willingness to give effect in Crown Colonies to the resolutions passed in respect of the rights of citizenship at the Imperial Conference last year together with the determining of the British Government to prevent the immigration policy being altered to the prejudice of Indians. This has already borne fruit in the proposed supercession of Sir Edward Northey, Governor of Kenya, who had adopted a strong anti-Indian attitude. And a special significance is attached to Mr. Montagu's resignation of the office of Secretary of State. He without consulting the Cabinet published a telegram sent by the Viceroy relating to the Turkish question. The Government of India had taken up a position materially differing from that of His Majesty's Government,



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

thereby asserting the right of India to entertain and formulate an independent opinion on matters with which she was concerned. Lord Curzon considered this a piece of presumption on the part of a 'subordinate branch of the British Government.' But Mr. Montagu made it clear that India having been given separate representation at the Peace Conference and having received Dominion status, in so far that she was the same as the Dominions a signatory to the Treaty of Sevres she was entitled to express her opinion when its modification was being discussed. This view was not controverted either by the press or by any member of the Cabinet and it had considerable influence in the decision that was arrived at. We are far off yet from actual self-government, but there can be no question we are taking satisfactory strides towards it.

The extremists are constantly inveighing against slave mentality to which they allege the people of India have been reduced under British rule. But it is nothing as compared to the slave mentality of which they were victims under the autocracy of Mr. Gandhi. At his bidding they had lost all power of initiative and had blindly carried out his behests, utterly ignoring the fact that the country was being gradually led to the verge of anarchy. They did incalculable harm to the



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL 412

school-boys and to the masses, in both of whom they have aroused a spirit of lawlessness and defiance of authority. They placed in peril the political progress of the country by their insensate cry for independence. India will never have a greater friend than Mr. Montagu, whose resignation from his high office as Secretary of State the Legislatures, the press and the people at large have combined to deplore. The Constitutional Reforms are mainly due to him and he would have seen us through the transition period which is by far the most trying. But even he was alarmed at the political condition of India and the extraordinary views that were being advanced, during the earlier months of this year, and he gave us a clear warning. Speaking in Parliament shortly before his retirement he said : 'I would say in all sincerity to India that the exhibition of separatist tendencies and of disloyalty to the King Emperor, futile attempts to mar the welcome given to the King Emperor's son, must postpone or at any rate prejudice the good will of the British people towards Indian aspirations.'

Those who are crying for separation can hardly have counted the cost. Neither have they taken into account that the pin-pricks to British rule they are inaugurating in can have but little effect on what Englishmen consider the settled policy that should



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

be adopted towards India. Dominion Home Rule, yes; but beyond that an emphatic no. Both these points were clearly elucidated by the Prime Minister in the recent debate in Parliament on Indian affairs: "What would," he said, "be left if British authority were withdrawn? Could Mr. Gandhi govern? Could he protect? Could he defend? You have only got to see what happened in the Moplah rising, even with British authority there, to know what the answer should be. You cannot talk of India as if it were one people. The only unity created in India has been by British rule, and if Britain withdrew her strong hand there would be chaos—, confusion and desolation indescribable. Anyone who reads the history of India just before we went there will see that it is right that these things should be brought home to India as well as here. I will quote some words used by Lord Morley, which are pregnant as a warning. He was a man who believed in reform and in a sympathetic treatment of India; but he knew the dangers of the course which has been pursued by some of the leaders in India. These are the words which we adopt as the declaration of our policy: 'How should we look in the face of the civilised world if we turned our back upon our duty and our trust? How should we bear the savage



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

CSL

scorn of our consciences when, as assuredly we should, we heard in the dark distance the storm and confusion and change in India ? ”

The respective merits of revolution and evolution have now been discussed ; the problem to be solved is as to the pace at which this evolution is to proceed. The Reforms Scheme has outlined the stages of advancement. Mr. Lloyd George, speaking on the occasion of the House of Commons debate on India early in March, affirmed that India is not a democratic country and never had a democratic Government and it will have to be seen what the educated classes make of the experiment which in England took centuries to develop. He added that ‘the experiment in India if it was to be a success must be a gradual one as it had been in the West.’ The Prime Minister failed to take into account that what was appropriate in the Middle Ages is not necessarily so in the year of grace 1922. The British nation were attached to their sovereign and proceeded leisurely to develop democratic institutions. But India is under an alien rule and there is a body of opinion which cannot be despised which desires freedom from this rule. The idea has taken root that as an alternative there is a form of Government in which the people can have a voice in the administration of the country. It is growing with a speed which may appear



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

startling, but is by no means unnatural. Can the British Premier recall any period of British history when 25,000 of its population were incarcerated for their desire for freedom, however foolish be the form in which they gave expression to it? Can he name any period when unrest was brooding over England to the extent that India is inflicted with? It is this which emboldened the Assembly to commit with impunity breaches of the Constitution, conscious that they were doing their duty to their country and indirectly to the power that rules over it by easing its relations with the people which at present are by no means satisfactory.

India is indeed in a state of transition, when fresh developments are a common occurrence. A bomb has just been thrown by no less a personage than the Prime Minister of England. It would make his ears tingle if he heard the compliments that are being paid him by the Indian press and Indian politicians. In the course of a speech on the 4th August Mr. Lloyd George characterised the Reforms as an experiment, stating that Great Britain could never relinquish her responsibility for India and pointing out that at no time could the functions and privileges of the British Indian Civil Service be taken away. Yet another bomb is placed to the credit of Lord Reading whose recall is demanded by the *Morning*



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

SL

Post for having issued a circular to all provincial Governments suggesting that it is an open question whether the time has not come when European recruitment for the Indian Civil Service might not be abandoned altogether. This would imply that the complete elimination of the European element in the Indian Civil Service is in view or it is at least looked upon with equanimity by the Government of India. Might it not be possible that the two bombs will destroy each other and that the original position will remain unaltered. It is too late in the day for any English statesman, however powerful he may be to modify the solemn declaration by the English nation that India may look forward to Dominion Home Rule as its goal. So nimble a politician as the Prime Minister will have no difficulty in persuading all and sundry that his pronouncement in no way militates against the policy which underlies the announcement of August 20, 1917. And Lord Reading's circular, the details of which have now been published, turns out to be no more than an inquiry from the provincial Governments as to how far the Indianisation of the Civil Service can be carried out, having special regard to the shortage of English candidates for that service. It might be that a few ultra-extremists desire the entire exclusion of the English element from the Civil



Service, but such a demand finds no place in the programme of any political party. For the Die-hards in England to credit the Viceroy with such an enterprise must indeed have afforded Lord Reading considerable amusement.

The British Parliament is busy with its own domestic affairs and with European complications. It has neither the time nor the requisite material on which to base any intelligent opinion as to how the experiment of progressive self-government is faring. The English extremists who have the ear of Parliament assert that never was a country better governed than India by its present rulers and any attempt to resist them should firmly be put down. On the other hand, Mr. Gandhi though at present out of the way is still a power to conjure with, the value of which it is not wise statesmanship to underrate. In his statement in Court he drew a picture of British rule as a crime against humanity and in its baseness unequalled in history, and as such deserving to be ended as it cannot be mended. Here it is the Moderates have their chance if only they will have the pluck and the readiness to seize it. It is by no means a superhuman task to be able to convince the people at large that the political salvation of the country is not to be achieved by driving the English out



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

427
SL

of India, a step which would lead to anarchy pure and simple, but by utilising them to carve out a future wherein India stands forth in the world as a self-governing country, with a status equal to that of the Dominions, forming a federation of States attached to the British Commonwealth. And with the English rulers their task will be easier, for these have only to be impressed by the fact that the present unrest will not be removed unless and until the people find that there are no obstructions on the path leading to self-government. Englishmen have begun to realise that it is by no means desirable or safe to flout Indian opinion and they have given evidence of a desire to co-operate in making the Reforms a success. Two important points have already been gained. The Viceroy has clearly conceded the principle that the Assembly's authority is supreme and final in matters of taxation and that the Crown law officer's opinion notwithstanding the precept of the statute defining the Assembly's power is less important than its practice. Thus progress is assured in spite of the so-called restrictions. What form further advances will or should take is a problem which we may leave the future to solve, though in the previous pages some indication in respect to it has been given.



WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

CSL

With the decadence of the activities of the non-co-operators is to be noticed a corresponding increase in the expression of public opinion in favour of the maintenance of law and order and in deprecating operations which have a revolutionary tinge about them. This is by no means a sudden departure, for since over a year Aman Sabhas, which were originally started under official auspices, have been silently at work in the various provinces in counteracting the revolutionary propaganda. Tactfully worked and gradually de-officialised these Sabhas have a great future before them in educating public opinion, in giving the lead to the expression of views in respect to matters involving the welfare of the people and in impressing on the electorate and the masses a sense of their responsibility and power under the new political era which has dawned in India. In the United Provinces these institutions have not only done excellent work, but they have secured a stable footing. In November last there were 5,500 branches and 17,95,623 members, the voluntary subscriptions amounted to over two and a half lakhs, while 20,000 leaflets and pamphlets had been distributed. Since then there has been more progress.

In bringing this narrative to a close it is gratifying to be able to remark that though sorely



REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION.

427
CSL

stricken in the severe crisis through which India has passed there has been no real loss of vitality or sanity. The temporary aberrations of a certain class will in the future furnish food for surprise. The revolutionary movement if not dead is far less acute than it was a few months ago. The latest announcement of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, that civil disobedience must be postponed as the people are not prepared for it, has given non-co-operation its death blow, and though it may linger a few months, it is bound before long to disappear. This is a golden opportunity for putting the Reforms to a sober and severe test. We need not fear the ogre of the Councils being swamped by obstructionists from the ranks of the extremists. If the Government and the Moderates co-operate towards the removal of the causes which have produced unrest and discontent and which are mostly economic the good sense of the people will reassert itself and they will rally round the standard of peace and order and give practical evidence of their faith in the proposition that gradual evolution is much to be preferred to revolution.

