

they were taught to regard Congressmen as other than their own countrymen. "There is an absolute wall between them and us," said Gandhi. "The British Army," he said "was there for the defence of the British interests, for resisting foreign aggression and putting down internal revolt." In fact, these were the purposes of the whole Army. But the British Army was there to hold the balance evenly. The whole Army must pass under Indian control in its entirety. "But the Army would not accept my command," said Gandhi, "nor the Commander-in-Chief, nor the Sikhs nor the Rajputs. But I expect even so to exercise that command with the goodwill of the British people. The British troops may also be told that they are there to protect, not British interests but India against foreign aggression." All this, Gandhi said was only his dream. He knew that he could not infect the British statesmen or public with the idea or with the ideal that this dream should be their cherished mission, and until that is realized he would wait till eternity, if he could not get control of the Defence. India knew how to defend herself. Mussalmans and Gurkhas, Sikhs and Rajputs can defend India. The Rajputs are responsible for a thousand victories, not one.

The fact is that Gandhi had faith in Englishmen some day doing their duty, and said, "we must infect the British with that love for India. If the British people think that we shall require a century before that can be done, then for that century the Congress will wander through that terrible fiery ordeal; it must go through that storm of distress, of misrepresentation and,—if it becomes necessary and if it is God's will,—a shower of bullets." He spoke of the safeguards and said that although they were stated to be in the interests of India, yet he would reciprocate Lord Irwin's statement who used Gandhi's name and said that Gandhi also admitted that they must be in the mutual interests of India and England. "I endorse," said Gandhi, "that I do not conceive of a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Britain, provided that we contemplate a partnership, a partnership at will and a partnership on absolutely equal terms." Speaking at the plenary session of the Conference, Gandhi made plain to the people assembled, that he was under no delusion that liberty could be obtained by argumentation or even by negotiation. But he felt called upon to point out how, after having declared that no decisions would be taken by the test of majority at the Conference or at the Committee, the conveners jotted down opinions of a large majority in report after report of such committees, and did not even mention the name of the 'one' dissenting. Who was that 'one'? Was the Congress one of the many parties there? He had already claimed that it represented 85 per cent. of the population. Now he would claim by right of service, it claimed to represent even the Princes, the landed gentry and the educated classes. All other delegates represented sectional interests. The Congress was the one body which had no communalism about it. It had its platform as a universal one, recognising no distinction of race, colour or religion. It had an exalted creed to which it may be that people could not come up, but the Congress was a daily growing organisation reaching the remotest



villages. Yet it was being treated as one of the parties, but let it be remembered that it was the only body that could deliver the goods, being bereft of all communal bias. Some people were feeling that it was trying to run a parallel Government. [Well would he endorse the charge, if it could be run by non-violence, eschewing the dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet and the spear.] A damaging reference had been made to the Calcutta Corporation, but it was only fair to the Mayor, who, when called upon by the Congress to explain, owned up the mistake and made handsome reparation in regard to the policy of violence. The Congress stood not for violence but for non-violence. Hence its Civil Disobedience movement. Even this was not tolerated. But no one could resist it. General Smuts himself could not. What was resisted in 1908, had to be yielded in 1914. Civil Disobedience succeeded in Borsad and Bardoli. Lord Chelmsford had recognised it. There were a few men in England like Professor Gilbert Murray who would ask Gandhi not to think that Englishmen did not suffer when Indians suffered. Lord Irwin tried to govern India by his Ordinances. He failed. "Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass," said Gandhi, "I want you to understand what the Congress stands for. It stands for liberty, call it by whatever name you will." The difficulty that Gandhi felt was that there was not one mind and one definition of any idea recognised by the Conference. When words have different meanings and different implications to different people, no agreement could be possible.

A friend had drawn his attention to the Statute of Westminster and asked whether he had noted the definition of the word 'Dominion'. 'Yes', he did. The Dominions were enumerated but not defined. They could not adopt even the earlier definition of 1926 which was to the effect that "Dominions are autonomous communities within the British Empire equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." Egypt was not there. Gandhi felt relieved because he was out of it. He wanted Complete Independence. An English statesman had told him that he did not know what Gandhi meant by Complete Independence. Partnership with England? Yes; partnership for mutual benefit. Gandhi only craved for friendship. A Nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say 'no' and the Nation is to-day learning to say 'no'.

He then dwelt upon safeguards and pointed out how he had been informed by three experts that no responsible Minister could carry on administration when 80 per cent. of the resources are irretrievably mortgaged. He was not asking for the protection of the illegitimate interests of India. He would not allow the safeguards in Indian interests to be prejudicial to English interests. Even Mr. Jayakar and he did not agree on these safeguards; much less could Sir Samuel Hoare and himself. "India," he added, "survived many problems, the problems of plague and malaria, of snakes and scorpions and tigers. It will not be baffled. For heaven's sake, give me, a frail man 62 years gone, a little bit of chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he repre-



sents. You distrust that organisation, though you may seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organisation to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organisation, and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derive from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say, good-bye to terrorism, then you will not need terrorism. To-day you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there, with your disciplined and organised terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood, will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want the bread of liberty, and without that liberty, there are thousands to-day who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace."

When the Conference concluded on the 1st of December, Gandhi proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair and pointed out that they had come to the parting of ways and their ways would take different directions,—the dignity of human nature, he said, required that we must face the storms of life. "I do not know in what directions my path would lie, but it does not matter to me. Even though I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from the bottom of my heart." With these ominous words did he bid good-bye to the Round Table Conference. The position then was that one of the conditions on which the Congress agreed to participate in the R.T.C. the abandonment of stark repression, was altogether broken. Gandhi was greatly worried by the ugly situation developing in Bengal and U.P., as he considered that the sanctioning of the repressive policy in India was wholly inconsistent with the desire expressed in London to part with power and give India freedom.

When Gandhi had left for the Round Table Conference, there was the understanding that an enquiry should be held into the allegations of Police excesses in connection with the collection of Revenue in Bardoli. Mr. R. G. Gordon, I.C.S., was appointed special officer, with powers under the Land Revenue Code, within the District of Surat for the purpose of the Bardoli inquiry, which commenced on the 5th of October, '31. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress President, were present, the former of whom represented the Congress. At the very outset, the Government Pleader objected saying that Mr. Desai's appearance was unauthorised and irregular and argued that the Congress by its Constitution could only appoint a legal representative at a special session of the Congress, by a resolution duly passed. The objection was over-ruled. It was agreed by both sides that the people should pay Revenue to the utmost of their capacity. They must even borrow and pay if they were not amongst the Satyagrahis that had suffered substantially. Mr. Desai quoted various letters, articles and telegrams, amongst which there was a telegram from Bardoli that 'Rayam' village was raided by the Collector accompanied by 15 policemen. Also the villages of Timberva, Rajapure, Lambha, Manekpore, Navafaly, of Valod Godhe, Alghod and Jamania.



The inquiry proceeded some length. Then the Congress asked for all orders of the Government of India and the Government of Bombay which had been issued between March 5th and August 28th, because they "would and must throw considerable light on the question of standard which referred to in the agreement." Mr. Gordon was unable to see why Government should be asked to produce evidence to prove things for them. "Presumably before the Congress made these allegations," he said, "they were in full possession of the material upon which they were based, and it was for them to produce their materials and to prove their case." The inquiry officer said that if there was any definite order of Government to which Congress desired to refer, that was a different matter. Thereupon the Congress stated the reasons for asking for the papers desired by them and they indicated the nature of the documents in the possession of the opponents. Mr. Gordon passed the order on 12-11-31: "It is impossible to agree to the vague and unreasonable demands made in the reference now in question." Mr. Desai objected to this order which presumed that the decision of the Congress to ask for the production of Government records was made at that late stage in order to fill up a large hiatus discovered in their own evidence, and felt that it was a clear indication to the Congress as to the spirit in which the opponents intend to co-operate in an inquiry intended for ascertainment of essential facts, and also an indication as to their desire to act for 'public good.' "And having regard to that spirit, I am the more fortified in the conclusion to which I have regretfully come." "The trend of the enquiry has appeared to be hostile and one-sided," wrote Vallabhbhai in his Manifesto to the farmers, "but I was prepared to go to the end until our Counsel was satisfied that further prosecution of the enquiry was futile." In fact, the refusal to produce papers in the possession of the Government removed the one salutary check on the cross-examination of Government witnesses, and it was realised that "such mutilated inquiry was worse than useless." Accordingly, Vallabhbhai withdrew from the inquiry and sent the following Cable to London to Gandhi on 13th November, '31:—

"Examined 62 Khatedars and 71 witnesses belonging to the seven out of the eleven villages allowed. Five villages disallowed as not falling within the terms of reference. After important admissions in part cross-examination of the Mamlatdar, first Government witness, inquiry officer held we were not entitled to production and about rejection of Government documents of any kind relating to the issues raised in inquiry. Trend of inquiry distinctly hostile and one-sided. Tenants were in agreement with Bhulabhai, withdrew from inquiry today."

The situation of first class importance was developing, and it was not possible to see the destiny, it may be said, of Indian politics for many years. The agrarian condition of the tenants in the U.P., Government was again approached. The Zamindars and Zamindars, was anything but ennobling. There was no relaxation shown in arrears and local conditions. The intermediaries had neither the sense nor the will to represent the Government, nor did they understand the needs of the poor cultivators. They

were middlemen, happily situated, secure in the protection afforded by a benevolent Government, free from the cares and worries of labour, and always invoking the interference of the authorities on grounds of sedition, Non-co-operation, lawlessness and anarchy, of any friends of the ryot and public men who chose to plead his cause. It is one of the tragedies of life in India that whatever service is rendered to the dumb millions, especially in administrative and political matters, should be through the agency of Congressmen, for, other schools of thought, while they argue for the ryot and sincerely sympathise with his causes, do not descend to the plane of action. Accordingly the Congressmen in the U.P., were all marked and made the victims of the wrath of the Zamindars and Talukdars, with the active support of Government. The correspondence about the agrarian crisis in the United Provinces relating to the months of October, November and December, 1931 has been published and is very interesting, but too big to be published here. A short but sufficiently detailed summary, however, is included in the publication by way of 'Foreword' to an official publication.

Immediately after the Delhi Settlement, the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee put themselves in touch with the Provincial Government. A large number of letters were exchanged. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was specially appointed by the Provincial Congress Committee to bring to the notice of Government the various grievances of the people and to put before them the view-point of the Congress. The continuing agrarian crisis particularly occupied the attention of the Provincial Congress Committee, and the correspondence largely dealt with this. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also wrote frequently to the Local Government. Both Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had several interviews with the Chief Secretary and other officials. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also sought an interview on two occasions with His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey but this could not be arranged. Gandhi interested himself in the United Provinces agrarian crisis, and besides writing to the officials of the Government of India and the Local Government, interviewed Sir Malcolm Hailey.

The condition of the United Provinces peasantry became progressively worse during the months that followed the Delhi Settlement. Inadequacy of remissions, in spite of the heavy fall in prices, resulted in great distress and this was intensified by large numbers of ejectments and coercive processes. In many rural areas the tenantry were subjected to a reign of terror and atrocities were perpetrated on them. The United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee appointed special Committees to visit the affected districts and to report on the agrarian conditions and the distress. These reports, on the basis of the evidence taken on the spot, were then considered by the Provincial Congress Committee. The reports, known as the Pandit Committee, was published.

Meanwhile attempts continued to be made by the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee to help the distressed and suffering peasants. In the districts of Timberva, Rajapur, and suffering peasants. In the districts of Timberva, Rajapur, and suffering peasants.



and the Government of India in August, 1931, the United Provinces agrarian crisis was specially considered and it was pointed out by Gandhiji that failing relief the peasantry would be entitled to defensive direct action or Satyagraha. In the letter dated August 27, 1931, addressed by Gandhi to Mr. Emerson, Home Secretary to the Government of India, which formed an integral part of the Simla Agreement, it was expressly mentioned that "if unfortunately any grievance is so acutely felt that it becomes a paramount duty of the Congress to seek some method of relief, in the absence of an enquiry, in the shape of defensive direct action, the Congress should be held free to adopt such remedy, notwithstanding the suspension of Civil Disobedience." This statement of the position of the Congress was noted in the reply of Mr. Emerson to Gandhi, dated August 27.

It may be added that the President of the Congress, Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressed the Government of India on several occasions on the United Provinces agrarian crisis.

It will thus be seen that the Congress in the United Provinces did everything in their power to co-operate with the Government in finding a solution of the agrarian problem. Repeated letters were sent after the Simla Agreement but no relief was forthcoming for the ejected tenants and others, and coercive processes and enforced collections, often accompanied by physical violence, continued long after the usual period for collections.

Before any satisfactory solution was found for the last season's difficulties and ejectments, a new situation arose with the beginning of the new Fasli year 1339 when the question of fresh collections had to be considered. The peasantry, exhausted and worn out by a continuous struggle against heavy odds, had to face a repetition of this. The remissions announced by the Local Government were considered wholly inadequate and no arrangements were made for the ejected tenants or for the arrears or for local calamities. On the top of this came the official announcement in many districts that if the full rent as demanded was not paid within a month, even the remissions sanctioned might be withdrawn. Further, it was stated that the tenants could only raise any objections after they had paid up the rent demanded. These announcements brought about an immediate crisis. It has to be borne in mind that in fixing the remissions neither the Congress nor any other representative of the tenants was consulted.

The Allahabad District Congress Committee raised the issue immediately after the official announcements were made, and pointed out that it was not possible for the peasantry to pay the amounts demanded. Most other districts were in the same or in a worse position. The Local Government was again approached and it was pointed out how unfairly the tenants were being treated in regard to remissions, ejectments, arrears and local calamities. A Conference was arranged between some local officials and the Settlement Commissioner on the one hand and Congress representatives on the other, in order to discuss specially the case



of Allahabad District as exemplifying most districts in the United Provinces. This Conference proved ineffective, as it was stated on behalf of Government that they were not prepared to discuss any of the vital matters in issue. They could only discuss the application of the rules already laid down by them. The crux of the problem was thus not touched.

During the last months repeated attempts were made on behalf of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee to arrange a Conference with representatives of the Local Government who would be in a position to discuss all the aspects of the problem. The Provincial Congress Committee appointed a special committee with full powers to negotiate with Government. These attempts did not succeed either.

In the course of the correspondence it was made clear on behalf of the Congress that they were prepared to accept any solution, however arrived at, provided it gave sufficient relief to the peasantry. When the time for collections came, advice was repeatedly sought by the tenants as to what they should do. The United Provinces Congress Committee wished to take no steps to put an end to negotiations which might result in a settlement. At the same time, they could not remain silent when advice was sought and they could not advise payment of a demand which, they were convinced, was grossly unfair and likely to ruin the peasantry whom they represented. The Congress thereupon, after obtaining permission therefor from the President of the All-India Congress Committee, advised the peasantry to withhold payment of rent and revenue temporarily, pending negotiations. They made it clear, however, that they were ready and willing to negotiate and, as soon as relief was given, to vary their advice. They further suggested to the Government that they would withdraw their advice as to withholding payment if Government would suspend collections while negotiations were going on. The suggestion was not accepted by Government who wanted the advice to be withdrawn first. The United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee had no alternative left but to repeat its advice to the peasantry to withhold payment. In spite of these developments, the Provincial Congress Committee adhered to the position that it was prepared to explore all avenues leading to a settlement and to withdraw its advice regarding non-payment as soon as sufficient relief was in sight or collections were suspended. Government's view was to meet popular representatives at a Conference only if, as they called it, the No-tax campaign was suspended. But on their own part they had put into prison hundreds of Congressmen 'sharp shooting', so to speak, all tall poppies and all earnest workers—a policy which culminated in the arrest of Jawaharlal and Sherwani and Purshottamdas Tandon 5 days before the arrival of Gandhi from England. As a matter of fact, Jawaharlal and Sherwani had been served notices that they should not leave their places. Jawaharlal soon after had attended a meeting of the Working Committee on the eve of Gandhi's return to Bombay. He could not possibly obey this order as against the imperious, public calls on his time and personal presence at various important meetings, and when he broke the order, he was arrested and so was Sherwani and both were subsequently sentenced for breach of Internment orders.

Then there was the third centre of strife in Bengal. During the period of truce, atrocious scenes were enacted. They were probably meant as reprisals against the terrorist outrages in the district. A non-official Committee of Enquiry was appointed on the happenings in the town and district of Chittagong on August 31, 1931, and the three subsequent days. Certain non-official Europeans and hooligans broke at night into the premises of a Printing Press and with huge hammers and iron rods broke the machinery and belaboured the manager and others connected with the Press. The Working Committee having considered the report on the 27th, 28th and 29th November 1931 at Delhi, recorded "its severe condemnation of the local Police and Magistracy who, with the assistance of certain non-official Europeans and hooligans, inflicted terrible losses and indignities on innocent people in pursuance of a policy of terrorization." The Committee noted with satisfaction that there was no communal strife in Chittagong in spite of deliberate efforts to create one by the employment of hooligans whose activities were intended to give the occurrence a communal colour. The Committee was of opinion that "the least that the Government of Bengal should do was to compensate those who had suffered and to punish all those whose responsibility for the incidents was established." While the people outside the Jails were being thus victimized by the 'Black and Tan' methods of Bengal, those inside jails and detention camps were being subjected to even more severe treatment. The tragedy which had occurred in the Hijli Detention Camp for detenus resulted in the death of two and in injury to 20 detenus. The Working Committee "while awaiting the report of the commission of enquiry appointed by the Government," felt that "the Government were specially responsible for the lives and well-being of unarmed men detained in custody by Government without trial, against whose detention the Nation had for long protested; and the callous disregard of this fundamental duty must be met with punishment of those who were guilty." It was at this same meeting that the U.P. situation was considered and the Working Committee expressed the opinion that the question of defensive action should first be considered by the U.P. P.C.C., before permission could be granted, as asked for by the Allahabad District Congress Committee, "to offer Satyagraha as against the present agrarian policy of the U.P. Government, and in particular the oppressive collection of rent and revenue at a time when the agriculturists were unable to pay on account of acute economic depression." The Committee accordingly referred the application to the U.P.P.C.C. and in the event of its being of opinion that the case was a fit one for defensive Satyagraha on the part of the agriculturists in terms of the Simla Agreement dated August 27th, 1931, the Committee authorised the President of the Congress to consider the application and to give such decision on it as he may consider necessary.

Incidentally we may add that the Working Committee at this very meeting protested against the proposal to impose an additional duty on Salt as a breach of faith by the Government of India regarding the implications of the Delhi Settlement. It passed another resolution regarding Currency and Exchange policy. It will be remembered that on



September 21, the Bank of England took a three-day holiday in view of the shortage of its gold, and England went off the Gold Standard. The problem at issue was whether the Indian rupee, was to be tied down to the coat tails of the pound sterling or whether it should be left to find its own level in terms of gold. The former course which was adopted by Government was conceived solely in the interests of England so as to provide *inter alia* a back-door preference for Britain's imports into India, and deplete the gold resources of the Indians. A resolution was passed to this effect.

There was a fourth fire kindled by Government at the Northern gateway of India. The Khudai Khidmatgars have figured already in the history of India as well as in these pages. They are a splendid lot,—these Frontier men who had been brought together and drilled and disciplined for national Non-co-operation. There were over a lakh of these who were working under the guidance and inspiration of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan Saheb. These Khudai Khidmatgars were till the month of August unattached to the Congress. Gandhi had, ever since the truce, been striving to obtain permission to go to the Frontier and study the organisation which had given such a wonderful account of itself. He had asked Lord Irwin for permission in this behalf but they said 'not yet'. The same answer was being repeated throughout the year and so he had sent Devadas Gandhi to the Frontier Province, and this young friend produced a marvellous Report which was considered by the Working Committee, and a great achievement was wrought when the Khudai Khidmatgars were made a part of the Congress organisation. With this culminating act, the organisation should have been above all suspicion but Government were not willing to allow a seemingly semi-military organisation—albeit they were Congress volunteers—with band and bugle, dressed *cap-a-pie* in red robes and owing allegiance to a towering personality who, by his character, humanity, sacrifices and services had already earned the title of Frontier Gandhi and been fast becoming the observed of all observers, the cynosure of all eyes. Who knows, beneath his meek countenance and Satyagrahi looks, there might not be a deep design to set up a buffer State on the Frontier, to tract an alliance with the Amir, to befriend the Tribes on the Frontier, and to lead an expedition into India? A lakh of red robed army—Pathans all. They were not to be trusted. And so, on the pretext that Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan did not co-operate with Government because he did not care to attend a Durbar held by the Chief Commissioner of the N.W.F. Province and preached Complete Independence, the innocent Khan Saheb and his devoted and equally innocent brother, Dr. Khan Saheb, were put into prison just a few days before Gandhi's return to India in 1931.

The Pathans joined the Non-violence Movement under the influence of Badshah Khan (Frontier Gandhi) who had first come in contact with Gandhi in 1920 in Calcutta while Dr. Khan Saheb came to know him only in 1933 after his (Dr.'s) release from jail.

The origin of the Red Shirt Movement is thus described by Dr. Khan Saheb in his article "Frontier Revolution" contributed to the memorable



volume in connection with Gandhi's 76th Birthday (October 2, 1944). "The starting of the Red Shirts was a historic event and their conversion to non-violence was even more so. One day after the meeting of the Afghan Jirga in September 1929, Badshah Khan collected a few workers to discuss the formation of a volunteer corps who would serve humanity irrespective of any religious or other prejudice. So he gave the name *Khudai Khidmatgars* (Servants of God) for the organisation. In the beginning, the uniform was just of white Khadi which got dirty very soon. One of the volunteers dyed his cloth in a solution of red brick and the first Red Shirt was born. The first official meeting of the Red Shirts was held on April 18, 19, 1930 a few days before the starting of the Civil Disobedience Movement. About 200 Red Shirts attended. C. D. started on April 23, 1930. Badshah Khan was arrested before he reached Peshawar. There was firing by the Police. Next day when the Police were taking Badshah Khan towards Mardan in a car, people lay on the road to stop the car. But he told them that they should allow the Military to take him away.

"At Utmanzai next day, a meeting was to be held and there was the possibility of an outbreak of violence. So I motored down from Peshawar to Utmanzai and reached the place a couple of hours before the appointed time and was successful in taking away whatever arms the people had with them. When I finished my speech (my first political one) I was told that the guides cavalry had arrived. I announced that those who were not prepared to face the situation should leave the meeting. But none left."

Thus, by the time Gandhi returned to India, a pretty mess was created. In Gujarat the enquiry into excesses which was promised to Gandhi and on the promise of which he had left for London, proved abortive on the 13th November. Let it be noted that it was not an impetuous and explosive Vallabhbhai that resiled from the enquiry in a fit of disgust, but it was the sober and sedate Bhulabhai that withdrew after due deliberation. In U. P. the partial relief that was given by the landlords through the influence and intervention of Government was inadequate and unsatisfactory and Government would not meet popular representatives unless they ate the humble pie and withdrew their injunction advising suspension of rent. The situation that was thus developed led to the arrest, as already mentioned, of Jawaharlal and Sherwani, five days before Gandhi's return, and although the news was wirelessed to the steamer on which Gandhi was sailing home, it was withheld from him. Gaffar Khan and his brother and son were detained as State prisoners from the N.W.F. Province. The Bengal situation did not consist of one occurrence or one event, although the happenings at Chittagong and Hijli constituted two such, but one festering sore that had been left open for long and appeared to be destined to remain open and raw for an unlimited length of time.

It was in the midst of such a situation that Gandhi returned to Bombay on the morning of the 28th December, 1931.



PART VI

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I

BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

Meeting at Azad Maidan—Gandhi's Vow repeated—Gandhi studying the Situation—Telegrams between Gandhi and the Viceroy—Working Committee Resolutions—Bentham's Circular—Government preparations for renewed hostilities—Emergency Powers Ordinance—Intensive fight—Political Conferences—Fate of Ashrams—In Bihar—In Andhra—In Bengal—In Bombay—In C. P.—In Delhi—In Gujarat—In Karnataka—In Kerala—In N. W. F.—In Sind—In Tamil Nadu—Events in Bengal, Gujarat and Karnataka in 1933.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE FAST TO THE LOOSE PULLEY

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CHAPTER III

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Khan—Last meeting of Working Committee—Gandhi's withdrawal from Congress—Details regarding 21 days' fast—Self-purification—"There must be will behind fast"—A pleasant surprise—Gandhi's Statement—Interrupted thread—"I shall not abuse release"—Vallabhbhai Patel's care for Gandhi—No room for smallness—"Not a party to cat and mouse game"—Referendum at Guruvayoor—Gandhi's Letter to Dr. Ansari—Gandhi's Statement—Congress reorganisation—Reply to critics—A substitute for Violence—Constitutional by instinct—An optimist—Authority of General in Non-violent Warfare—Spirituality in Politics—Bardoli Decision—Congratulations to Pathans—Suspension of Civil Disobedience, act of wise Statesmanship—Need of severe discipline—Woes of Bengal—Incarceration of masses—Nehru, Gaffar and Vallabhbhai—Bigger jail outside—Previous History—Council work of little value—Different conditions—Advice to Socialists—Confidence in Pandit Malaviya—Government's goodwill—Gandhi's Statement after retirement—Difference in outlook—Terrible oppression—Social group—Question of States—Untouchability—Non-violence—Failure of Non-violence—Satyagraha—Purna Swaraj—Means and end, convertible terms—Differences sterilised Congress Programme—Corruption in our ranks—Congress to be tested—Khaddar Franchise—Habitual wearer of Khaddar—Delegates to be restricted to 1,000—Conclusion—A.I.V.I.A.—Gandhi's exit—New Congress—Bombay Session—Rajendra Babu's Address—Bombay Resolutions—Exhibitions and demonstration—Congress Parliamentary Board—Election Campaign—Assembly verdict on J.P.C. Report—Jinnah's Amendment—Working Committee on withdrawal of C.D.—Disciplinary rules—Famine in Andhra—All-India Protest Day re. J.P.C. Report—Unity talks—Government's repressive policy continued—The Congress Museum—The Detenu Fund—Bengal's prohibition—Bengal Government's Communique—Congress President's Rejoinder—Congress reorganisation in the N. W. Frontier—Frontier will fight Communalism—The Quetta Earthquake—The Working Committee's Resolution—Acceptance of Office—The Congress and the States—Resolution on office acceptance—50 years' Anniversary of the Congress—A.I.C.C. meets in Madras—The Government of India Act—The Congress President's growing responsibility.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

I

The Presidents—The Religion of Politics—Prof. Gilbert Murray on Gandhi—Success and Failure—The Programme of the Congress—The three planes of Constructive Work—Village Leadership.

II

The new Technique, Satyagraha—Its Contribution to Life and Politics—The Evolution of Satyagraha—The Principle of Non-violence—Tapasya—Lingering doubts.

III

The Manhood of Nation on Trial—A Graph of our Progress—Swaraj a Process—Conclusion.



PART VI

CHAPTER I

BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

There were gathered in Bombay representatives of all parts and Provinces of India to accord a fitting welcome to the Tribune of the People. Gandhi greeted the friends that went on board the steamer to welcome him, patting many, thumping a few and pulling the venerable Abbas Tyabji by his beard. There was a formal welcome in one of the Halls of Customs House and then a procession in the streets of Bombay which kings might envy in their own country, but which political leaders and ambitious statesmen always get from an admiring populace. How much more than should the people of India have felt when they were welcoming not an adventurer carving out a kingdom, not a statesman wringing out concessions from an unwilling monarch, not a warrior decorated with marks of honour for deeds of prowess on the battle-field, but a Saint and Satyagrahi who had renounced the world yet was of it and in it, who had no axe to grind but was himself being ground down between the mill-stones of an active legalized terrorism above and a passive impotent thralldom below, whose only purpose in life was the emancipation of his Motherland and the evolution of a feeling of fellowship, friendliness, and fraternity amongst the nations of the world. That day the men-folk of Bombay were on the roads and the womenfolk were gathered on the balconies of the sky-scrapers of the city. Almost the first thing that Gandhi did was to address the public of Bombay,—indeed the people were assembled on the Azad Maidan—and in grave and solemn tones, Gandhi poured out his heart to the vast concourse of men and women before him, saying that he would strive his best and strain every nerve to work for peace.

In this speech, he again repeated his terrific vow that he would not have the dismemberment of the 'untouchables' from the Hindu fold and would resist any attempts that way, with his very life. Let it be confessed that neither on this occasion, nor when he had spoken at the Minorities Committee in London, did it occur to any one that Gandhi would on this issue declare a fast unto death. Either the vow escaped attention altogether or it made no further impression upon the hearers' and the readers' minds than as a piece of the usual rhetoric. But everyone knows that Gandhi indulges in no exaggeration and never allows himself to make any wild statement. His 'yea' is 'yea' and his 'no' is 'no'. They must be taken at their value and do not admit of any 'bear' and 'bull' transactions.

For three days together, Gandhi was acquainting himself with the woes of the different Provinces. What was he to do? Here was Subash Babu with four companions from Bengal, who, though they chose to meet Gandhi independently and severally, still gave the same account of Re-

pression following on the Bengal Ordinance. The U. P. friends had their Ordinance, and the N.W.F. had its Ordinance. During the truce period, these Ordinances were holding the field. Gandhi playfully called these Ordinances his New Year gifts from Lord Willingdon. But he was not the man to plunge the country into the depths of suffering without exploring like a true Satyagrahi every avenue to peace. Deputations were waiting on him from morning to evening and repeating the same tale of official excesses in Province after Province. The country was passing through dire distress and depression. As yet Karnataka got no relief in spite of the long struggle it was engaged in. In Andhra, the taxes were to be raised in periodical revisions of settlement by 18¾ per cent and the Governor of Madras was threatening the promulgation of an Ordinance if the people should talk of the suspension of payment of taxes.

These were the woes of the country narrated to Gandhi by his friends. He himself had a tale of woe to tell his friends, which he brought from London. He was never willing to go to the R.T.C. The shadows of the coming Conference were cast even in the months of July and August. But the Working Committee had insisted on his going. He had an opportunity later, on the ground of breach of the truce, of avoiding the London visit. But the Labour Government was anxious that he should be bundled into the steamer somehow. He went to London and saw things for himself. The first thing he told his colleagues on return was that the actualization of a thing was quite different from its visualization. He knew the Moderate mentality in India but he was not prepared for the scenes enacted in London. He knew the temperament of the Muslims and their reactionary bent of mind, but he was not prepared for the vivisection that was practised at the R.T.C. He had made up his mind that the Congress should not lend its support thereafter to any kind of communalism. Its cult must be one of pure and unadulterated Nationalism. He said that India had no chance if she went on dallying with the communal problem in the same old fashion. He wanted an assurance from his Mussalman and Sikh friends that they would agree to any future Constitution of India being fashioned, only on the basis of Indian Nationalism untainted by any communal considerations. He was really tormented by these thoughts and experiences and had to face the situation in front of him with calmness and equanimity—qualities that have never failed him. He had abundant confidence in himself and in his countrymen. They had trusted him and he returned the trust. He saw a huge chasm before him. Could he bridge it, or should he make a bridge of men, living and dead, on which to cross the yawning gulf? With these conflicts surging in his breast, with this storm raging in his bosom, he set about his business. The Working Committee was with him. It was not a Committee of fourteen colleagues that he was counting upon. The country was his Working Committee. Accordingly he gave a telegram to Lord Willingdon which got a reply—long, detailed, and minatory. Gandhi sent a rejoinder without any avail. We give below the telegram *in extenso* :—

1. Telegram from Mr. Gandhi, to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 29th December, 1931.



"I was unprepared on landing yesterday to find Frontier and U.P. Ordinances, shootings in Frontier and arrests of valued comrades in both, on top of Bengal Ordinance, awaiting me. I do not know whether I am to regard these as indication that friendly relations between us are closed or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to course I am to pursue in advising Congress. I would esteem wire in reply."

2. Telegram from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, to Mr. Gandhi, dated the 31st December, 1931. No. 306 C.

"His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram of the 29th instant in which you refer to Bengal and United Provinces and N.W.F.P. Ordinances. In regard to Bengal it has been and is necessary for Government to take all possible measures to prevent dastardly assassination of their officers and private citizens.

"2. His Excellency wishes me to say that he and his Government desire to have friendly relations with all political parties and with all sections of the public and, in particular, to securing co-operation of all in great work of constitutional reforms which they are determined to push forward with minimum delay. Co-operation, however, must be mutual. His Excellency and his Government cannot reconcile activities of Congress in the United Provinces and N.W.F.P. with spirit of friendly co-operation which good of India demands.

"3. As regards United Provinces, you are doubtless aware that while the Local Government were engaged in devising means to give all possible relief in the existing situation, the Provincial Congress Committee authorised a No-rent campaign which is now being vigorously pursued by Congress organisations in that Province. This action on the part of the Congress bodies has compelled Government to take measures to prevent a general state of disorder and spreading of class and communal hatred which the campaign, if continued unchecked, would inevitably involve.

"4. In North-West Frontier Province, Abdul Gaffar Khan and bodies he controlled have continuously engaged in activities against Government and in fomenting racial hatred. He and his friends have persistently refused all overtures by the Chief Commissioner to secure their co-operation, and, rejecting the declaration of the Prime Minister, have declared in favour of Complete Independence. Abdul Gaffar Khan has delivered numerous speeches open to no other construction than an incitement to revolution, and his adherents have attempted to stir trouble in tribal area. The Chief Commissioner, with the approval of His Excellency's Government, has shown utmost forbearance and to the last moment continued his efforts to secure assistance of Abdul Gaffar in carrying into effect, with the least possible delay, the intentions of His Majesty's Government regarding constitutional reforms in the Province. The Government refrained from taking special measures until activities of Abdul Gaffar Khan and his associates and, in particular, open and intensive preparation for an early conflict with Government, created a situation of such

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grave menace to peace of Province and of tribal areas as to make it impossible further to delay action. His Excellency understands that Abdul Gaffar Khan was in August last made responsible for leading Congress movement in Province; and that volunteers' organisations he controlled were specially recognised by All-India Congress Committee as Congress organisations. His Excellency desires me to make it clear that his responsibilities for peace and order make it impossible for him to have any dealing with persons or organisations upon whom rests the responsibility for activities above outlined. You have yourself been absent from India on the business of Round Table Conference, and in the light of the attitude which you have observed there, His Excellency is unwilling to believe that you have personally any share in responsibility for, or that you approve of, recent activities of Congress in the United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province. If this is so, he is willing to see you and to give you his views as to the way in which you can best exert your influence to maintain a spirit of co-operation which animated proceedings of Round Table Conference, but His Excellency feels bound to emphasise that he will not be prepared to discuss with you measures which Government of India, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, have found it necessary to adopt in Bengal, United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province. These measures must in any case be kept in force until they have served the purpose for which they were imposed, namely, preservation of law and order essential to good Government. On receipt of your reply, His Excellency proposes to publish this correspondence."

3. Telegram from Mr. Gandhi, to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 1st January, 1932.

"I thank His Excellency for wire in reply to mine of 29th instant. It grieves me, for, His Excellency has rejected, in a manner hardly befitting his high position, an advance made in friendliest spirit. I had approached as seeker wanting light on questions, while I desired to understand Government version of very serious and extraordinary measures to which I made reference. Instead of appreciating my advance, His Excellency has rejected it by asking me to repudiate my valued colleagues in advance and telling me that, even if I become guilty of such dishonourable conduct and sought an interview, I could not even discuss these matters of vital importance to the Nation.

"In my opinion, constitutional issue dwindles into insignificance in face of Ordinances and acts which must, if not met with stubborn resistance, end in utter demoralisation of Nation. I hope no self-respecting Indian will run the risk of killing national spirit for a doubtful contingency of securing a Constitution, to work which no Nation with a stamina may be left. Let me also point out that, as to the Frontier Province, your telegram contains a narration of facts which, on face of them, furnish no warrant for arrests of popular leaders, passing of extra-legal Ordinance, making life and property utterly insecure, and shooting unarmed peaceful crowds for daring to hold demonstrations against arrests of their trusted leaders. If



Khan Saheb Abdul Gaffar asserted the right of Complete Independence, it was a natural claim and the claim made with impunity by the Congress at Lahore in 1929, and by me with energy put before the British Government in London. Moreover let me remind the Viceroy that despite knowledge on Government's part that Congress mandate contained such claim, I was invited to attend London Conference as Congress delegate. Nor am I able to detect in a mere refusal to attend Durbar an offence warranting summary imprisonment. If Khan Saheb was fomenting racial hatred, it was undoubtedly regrettable. I have his own declarations to the contrary made to me, but assuming that he did foment racial hatred, he was entitled to open trial, where he could have defended himself against accusation. Regarding United Provinces, His Excellency is surely misinformed, because there was no 'No-rent' campaign authorised by Congress, but whilst negotiations were proceeding between Government and Congress representatives, the time for collection of rents actually arrived and rents began to be demanded. Congressmen were, therefore, obliged to advise tenants to suspend payment pending the result of the negotiations, and Mr. Sherwani had offered on behalf of the Congress to withdraw this advice if the authorities suspended collections pending negotiations. I venture to suggest that this is not a matter which can be so summarily dismissed as your wire has done. Controversy in the United Provinces is of long standing and involves well-being of millions of peasantry known to be economically ground down. Any Government jealous of the welfare of the masses in its charge would welcome voluntary co-operation of a body like the Congress, which admittedly exercises great influence over the masses and whose one ambition is to serve them faithfully; and let me add that I regard the withholding of payment of taxes as an inalienable ancient and natural right of a people who have exhausted all other means of seeking freedom from an unbearable economic burden. I must repudiate suggestion that the Congress has slightest desire to promote disorder in any shape or form.

"As to Bengal, the Congress is at one with the Government in condemning assassination and should heartily co-operate with the Government in measures that may be found necessary to stamp out such crimes. But whilst the Congress would condemn in unmeasured terms the methods of terrorism, it can in no way associate itself with Government terrorism as is betrayed by the Bengal Ordinance and acts done thereunder, but must resist, within the limits of its prescribed creed of non-violence, such measures of legalised Government terrorism. I heartily assent to the proposition laid down in your telegram that co-operation must be mutual, but your telegram leads me irresistibly to the conclusion that His Excellency demands co-operation from the Congress without returning any on behalf of Government. I can read in no other way his peremptory refusal to discuss these matters which, as I have endeavoured to show, have at least two sides. Popular side I have put, as I understand it, but before committing myself to definite judgment, I was anxious to under-

stand the other side, i.e., the Government side, and then tender my advice to the Congress.

"With reference to the last paragraph of your telegram, I may not repudiate moral liability for the actions of my colleagues, whether in the Frontier Province or in the United Provinces, but I confess that I was ignorant of the detailed actions and activities of my colleagues whilst I was absent from India, and it was because it was necessary for me to advise and guide the Working Committee of the Congress and in order to complete my knowledge, I sought with an open mind and with the best of intentions an interview with His Excellency and deliberately asked for his guidance. I cannot conceal from His Excellency my opinion that the reply he has condescended to send was hardly a return for my friendly and well meant approach, and if it is not yet too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend without imposing any conditions whatsoever as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I, on my part, can promise that I would study with an open mind all the facts that he might put before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective Provinces and, with the aid of the authorities, study both sides of the question and if I came to the conclusion after such a study that the people were in the wrong and the Working Committee including myself were misled as to the correct position and that the Government was right, I should have no hesitation whatsoever in making that open confession and guiding the Congress accordingly.

"Along with my desire and willingness to co-operate with Government, I must place my limitations before His Excellency. Non-violence is my absolute creed. I believe that Civil Disobedience is not only the natural right of people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own Government, but that it also is an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion. I can never, therefore, deny my creed. In pursuance thereof and on the strength of uncontradicted reports, supported by recent activities of the Government of India, to the effect that there may be no other opportunity for me to guide the public, the Working Committee has accepted my advice and passed resolutions tentatively sketching a plan of Civil Disobedience. I am sending herewith text of the resolution. If His Excellency thinks it worth while to see me, operation of the resolution will be suspended pending our discussion, in the hope that it may result in the resolution being finally given up. I admit that correspondence between His Excellency and myself is of such grave importance as not to brook delay in publication. I am, therefore, sending my telegram, your reply, this rejoinder and the Working Committee's resolution for publication."

RESOLUTION OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

"The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi's account of his visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extraordinary Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, United Provinces and the Frontier Province and by the actions of the authorities, in-

cluding the numerous arrests made, among those of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Mr. Sherwani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and by the shootings in the Frontier Province of innocent men resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him.

"The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts, and others of lesser gravity, that have taken place in some other Provinces, and the telegram from His Excellency, seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Congress utterly impossible unless the Government policy is radically changed. These acts and the telegram betray no intention on the part of the bureaucracy to hand over power to the people and are calculated to demoralise the Nation. They also betray a want of faith in the Congress from which co-operation is expected by the Government.

"The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism, on any account whatsoever, resorted to by individuals, such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns with equal force terrorism practised by Government as shown by its recent acts and Ordinances. The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the Nation, especially when through its greatest political mouth-piece—the Congress—it is pledged to non-violence for achieving Swaraj. But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seeks to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in dealing with the known cause that prompts such crime.

"If the Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence, the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province have still less. The Working Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the U.P. for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress, as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of taxes if they fail, as in the United Provinces they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods.

"In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Working General Secretary of the Congress, who were proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have gone even beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance, in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part, in Bombay, in no-tax campaign in the United Provinces.

"So far as the Frontier Province is concerned, on the Government's own showing, there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and his co-workers. The

Working Committee regards the shooting in that Province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman, and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier Province upon their courage and endurance and the Working Committee has no doubts that, the brave people of the Frontier Province would retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations.

"The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial enquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the Ordinance Courts of Law and Legislative machinery and the necessity of several acts committed thereunder. And thereafter, if a proper enquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence, it will be prepared to assist the enquiry by leading evidence before it.

"The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debates in the Houses of Parliament, and regards the declaration as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress Demand and places on record its opinion that nothing short of Complete Independence carrying full control over the Defence and External Affairs and Finance with such Safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of the Nation can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory.

"The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table Conference to regard the Congress as representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the Nation as a whole, without distinction of caste, creed or colour. At the same time the Committee recognises with sorrow that communal harmony could not be attained at the said Conference. The Working Committee invites the Nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the Nation as a whole and promote an atmosphere that would make a Constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the Nation. Meanwhile, the Working Committee is prepared to tender co-operation to the Government, provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram and adequate relief is granted in respect of the Ordinances and its recent acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future further negotiations to prosecute the Congress claim for Complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives, pending the attainment of such Independence.

"In the absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph, the Working Committee will regard it as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact. In the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming, the Working Committee calls upon the Nation to resume Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes under the following conditions and illustrative heads:—

(1) No Province or district or tahsil or village is bound to take up Civil Disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-



violent nature of the struggle with all its implications, and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property.

(2) Non-violence must be observed in thought, word and deed in the face of the gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification.

(3) Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, Police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence.

(4) It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance; therefore, there should be no hired volunteers but their bare maintenance and maintenance of the dependants of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations.

(5) Boycott of all foreign cloth, whether British or of other countries, is obligatory under all circumstances.

(6) All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in the indigenous mills.

(7) Picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops should be vigorously conducted chiefly by women but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence.

(8) Unlicensed manufacture and collection of salt should be resumed.

(9) If processions and demonstrations are organised, only those should join them who will stand *lathi*-charges or bullets without moving from their respective places.

(10) Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressors is perfectly lawful, inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore, boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted.

(11) Civil breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to the people wherever it is considered possible and advisable may be practised.

(12) All unjust orders issued under the Ordinances may be civilly disobeyed."

VICEROY'S 'NO'

4. Telegram from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, to Mr. Gandhi, dated the 2nd January, 1932.

No. 3-S.—"His Excellency desires me to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of 1st January which has been considered by him and his Government.

"They much regret to observe that under your advice the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution which involves general revival of Civil Disobedience unless certain conditions are satisfied which are stated in your telegram and the resolution.

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"They regard this attitude as the more deplorable in view of the declared intentions of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to expedite the policy of constitutional reform contained in the Premier's statement.

"No Government, consistent with the discharge of their responsibility, can be subject to conditions sought to be imposed under the menace of unlawful action by any political organisation, nor can the Government of India accept the position implied in your telegram that their policy should be dependent on the judgment of yourself as to necessity of measures which Government have taken after the most careful and thorough consideration of the facts, and after all other possible remedies had been exhausted.

"His Excellency and his Government can hardly believe that you or the Working Committee contemplate that His Excellency can invite you, with the hope of any advantage, to an interview held under the threat of resumption of Civil Disobedience.

"They must hold you and the Congress responsible for all the consequences that may ensue from the action which the Congress have announced their intention of taking, and to meet which, Government will take all necessary measures."

GANDHI'S FINAL TELEGRAM

5. Telegram from Mr. M. K. Gandhi, to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 3rd January, 1932.

"Thanks your wire even date. I cannot help expressing deep regret for decision of His Excellency and his Government. Surely it is wrong to describe honest expression of opinion as threat. May I remind Government that Delhi negotiations were opened and carried on whilst Civil Disobedience was on, and that when Pact was made Civil Disobedience was not given up but only discontinued? This position was re-asserted and accepted by His Excellency and his Government in Simla in September last, prior to my departure for London. Although I had made it clear that under certain circumstances Congress might have to resume Civil Disobedience, Government did not break off negotiations. That it was made clear by Government that Civil Disobedience carried with it penalty for disobedience, merely proves what civil resisters bargain for, but does not in any way affect my argument. Had Government resented attitude, it was open to them not to send me to London. On the contrary, my departure had His Excellency's blessings. Nor is it fair or correct to suggest that I have ever advanced the claim that any policy of Government should be dependent on my judgment. But I do submit that any popular and constitutional Government would always welcome and sympathetically consider suggestions made by public bodies and their representatives and assist them with all available information about their acts or Ordinances of which public opinion may disapprove. I claim that my messages have no other meaning than what is suggested in last paragraph. Time alone will show whose position was justified. Meanwhile I wish to assure Government that every endeavour will be made on the part of Congress to carry on struggle without malice and in strictly non-violent manner. It was hardly necessary



to remind me that Congress and I, its humble representative, are responsible for all the consequences of our actions."

For the sake of convenience all the telegrams are given together but they cover a range of six days. On the 30th of December, Mr. Benthall who was commercial representative for India on the R.T.C. had seen Gandhi and had a long talk. There was no doubt that Gandhi's attitude was alarming to the commercial community, and well might that be, for later events and experiences proved what a mighty weapon boycott was in the hands of the Nation. Yes, but this same Mr. Benthall and his fellow loyalists expressed their view in language which, at this distance of time, has lost none of its poignancy. We give some extracts from the 'confidential' circular issued by them:—

"We went to London determined to achieve some settlement if we could, but our determination in that regard was tempered with an equal determination that there should be no giving way on any essential part of the policy agreed to by the (European) Associated Chambers of Commerce in regard to financial and commercial Safeguards, and by the European Association on general policy. It was obvious to us, and we had it in mind throughout the Conference, that the united forces of the Congress, the Hindu Sabha and the (Indian) Federated Chambers of Commerce would be directed towards whittling down the Safeguards already proposed."

"If you look at the result of this last session, you will see that Gandhi and the (Indian) Federated Chambers are unable to point to a single concession wrung from the British Government as the result of their visit to St. James' Palace. He landed in India with empty hands."

"There was another incident, too, which did him no good. He undertook to settle the communal problem and failed before all the world."

"The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team: Ali Imam, the Nationalist Muslim, caused no division. They played their cards with great skill throughout; they promised us support and they gave it in full measure. In return they asked us that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and we should 'without pampering them' do what we can to find places for them in European firms, so that they may have a chance to improve their material position and the general standing of their community."

"On the whole, there was one policy of the British Nation and the British Community in India, and that was to make up our minds on a national policy and to stick to it. *But after the general elections, the right wing of the Government made up its mind to break up the Conference and to fight the Conference and to fight the Congress.* The Muslims, who do not want responsibility at the Centre, were delighted. Government undoubtedly changed their policy and tried to get away with Provincial Autonomy, with a promise of Central reforms. We had made up our minds that the fight with the Congress was inevitable; we felt and said that the sooner it came the better, but we made up our minds that for a crushing success we should have all possible friends on our side. The Muslims were al-



right; the Minorities Pact and Government's general attitude ensured that. So were the Princes and the Minorities."

"The important thing to us seemed to be to carry the Hindu in the street as represented by such people as Sapru, Jayakar, Patro and others. If we could not get them to fight the Congress, we could at least ensure that they would not back the Congress, and that, by one simple method of leaving no doubt in their minds that there was to be no going back on the Federal Scheme which broadly was also the accepted policy of the European Community, and we acted accordingly. We pressed upon the Government that the one substantial earnest of good faith which would satisfy these people was to bring in the Provincial and Central Constitutions in one place. Provincial Autonomy could not be forced upon India; the Muslims alone could not work it. Congress Provinces facing a bitter Centre present grave political difficulties; each Province would be a Calcutta Corporation on its own. So we joined with strange companions; Government saw the arguments, and the Conference, instead of breaking up in disorder with 100 per cent. of Hindu political India against us, ended in promises of co-operation by 99 per cent of the Conference, including even such people as Malaviya, while Gandhi himself was indisposed to join the Standing Committee."

"The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us."

"It must not, however, be supposed that when we agree that Reforms are necessary, we advocate democratic reform in every Province. All that we mean is such change in the system of Government as will improve its efficiency."

These extracts sufficiently show how the Tory Government and its allies worked to defeat the object of the declaration that the Labour Government had made promising to concede to India her due. But it would be wrong to believe that the pact between the Muslim reactionaries who were prepared to sell their country for a mess of pottage,* and the British reactionaries who wanted to keep Indians down for ever, was an impromptu performance. The foundations for it were laid in India and England long before the second session of the Conference. In fact when Gandhiji and Lord Irwin came to an understanding between themselves, those of the reactionary element in India which did not like this alliance immediately gathered forces and organized themselves into a united force to defeat the Indian Nationalists. It was in Simla, at the headquarters of the Indian Government, that a part of this conspiracy was hatched.

The Working Committee having picked up the gauntlet thrown by Mr. Emerson and Lord Willingdon, the members departed to their places and found on return home that they had not much or anything to do. Government really took up the fight where it had been left on the 4th

* The recent revelations in the Indian Legislative Assembly about the demand of H. H. The Aga Khan to be made a Ruling Prince of some territory in India, as a reward for his services at the Round Table Conference, throw much lurid light on these transactions.



March, 1931. They had ordered thousands of new *lathis* during the truce period. In fact the truce period was the period of preparation on the part of Government for renewed hostilities, the outbreak of which was imminent almost any month during the truce and inevitably on Gandhi's return. Three Ordinances had already been promulgated and three more were in the pocket of the Viceroy, to be released the moment they were called for. The Government offensive commenced on the 4th January, 1932. Every Congress organisation and every allied organization was banned, and Congressmen, whether they did any overt act or not in defiance of the Law or the Ordinance, which came to be spoken of as the Lawless Law, were got hold of, arrested and sentenced. We had no reason to complain either. The truce was at an end and the drill-master cried, "As you were". In fact, if only the Congressmen had been so desired, they would have found their way to their old jails and taken their lodgings in their old quarters. But Government had apparently not the courage required for such unusual and 'illegal' course. Nor would they like the dramatic settings which it would give to the Civil Disobedience movement.

While Government began where they had left, the Congress had to begin it all over again. The *lathi*-charge of Government was a later development in the first movement (1930). In 1932, it was the first friend that greeted the Satyagrahis. Lord Willingdon, it was widely believed, hoped to be able to put this outbreak in six weeks but six weeks are such a short time and Satyagraha is such a long drawn struggle that his hopes could not be realised. Gandhi was intending to go to the Talukas in Gujarat which had borne the brunt of the struggle in 1930, but before he could do so, he and his trusty lieutenant Vallabhbhai were both arrested and spirited away as State prisoners in the small hours of the 4th of January, 1932. Khan Saheb and Jawaharlal had already led the van. The rest of the Indian politicians led the rear. The Satyagrahis came forward in their thousands. In 1921 they were thirty thousand in number and that was considered a big number. In 1930-31, within a short interval of 10 months, ninety thousand men, women and children were convicted and sentenced. No one knows how many were beaten, but the number cannot be less than 3 or 4 times the number imprisoned. People were either beaten down into paralysis of all activity, or simply tired down by a 'cat and mouse' policy. The old game of beating prisoners was renewed. Office secrets were asked to be divulged. "Where are your papers, your books, and your lists of subscriptions and volunteers?" That was the demand of Government and young men were harassed and unutterable things were said, unspeakable punishments were planned and executed. Imagine an advocate of the High Court being subjected to the torture of his pubic hair being plucked out one by one as a mark of Police displeasure at his not giving out his name and address.

New occasions called for new Ordinances. Though they were promulgated from time to time, it would be convenient to refer to them together. Reference has already been made to an Ordinance which was issued in Bengal while Gandhiji was still in London. It was said to be for the purpose of suppressing the terrorist movement in Bengal and for speedier trial of offences in connection therewith. It gave power to any officer of

Government authorised by the Local Government to require any person whom he suspected to give his identity and movements and to arrest and detain him for a day for verifying his statements; and in making his arrest the officer might use any means that might be necessary. The Local Government might require the occupier or owner of any building to place it at the disposal of Government for any time with all its furniture, etc., with or without compensation. Similarly a District Magistrate could call upon the owner or possessor of any article or thing to place it at his disposal, with or without compensation. The District Magistrate could prohibit or limit access to any building or place including Railways, etc. He could also regulate traffic, require a person to submit a return of vehicles or other means of transit owned or possessed by him or commandeer the same. He could prohibit or regulate sale of arms and ammunition or take possession of the same. He might require a land-holder or a teacher or any other person to assist in the restoration of Law and Order. He could issue search warrants. The Local Government could impose collective fines on the inhabitants of a particular area, could exempt a particular person or class from any liability, and the amount of fine apportioned to any individual could be recovered as a fine or arrears of Government Revenue. Any disobedience would entail imprisonment of six months, or fine, or both. The Local Government was authorised to make rules to prevent communication with absconders and secure information of their movements, to prevent attacks on persons or property of the King's subjects, to secure the safety of His Majesty's forces and Police and provide for the custody of prisoners. No action taken under the Ordinance could be challenged in Civil Courts. New Courts of Criminal jurisdiction known as Special Tribunals or Special Magistrates might be constituted for trying cases which the Local Government might determine for their trial. Special rules of procedure were laid down for these Special Tribunals. The Special Courts might proceed under certain conditions with the trial, in the absence of the accused.

The United Provinces Emergency Powers Ordinance which was issued on the 14th December, 1931, authorised the Local Government to declare any dues paid to Government, local authority or landlord, to be a notified liability which was made recoverable as arrears of Land Revenue. The Local Government could direct any person, believed to be acting prejudicially to public safety, not to reside in a particular area, to remove himself from a particular area, to conduct himself in a particular way. This order was to remain in force for a month. The Local Government may require the owner of a particular land or building to place it at the disposal of the Government with all its fixtures and furniture, with or without compensation. The District Magistrate might prohibit or limit access to any building or place, require any person to take such order as he might be directed with any vehicle or means of transport in his possession. Any authorised officer of Government might require any landholder, local authority, or teacher to assist in the maintenance of Law and Order. Any person suspected of instigating non-payment of a notified liability was punishable with imprisonment of two years, or fine, or both. Any person inducing a public servant to disregard his duty or dissuading any person from entering Police or Military service was punishable with imprisonment for a year or fine.



A Local Government could impose collective fines on the inhabitants of a particular area which could be recovered as Land Revenue. Any person repeating the contents of any proscribed document was punishable with six months' imprisonment or fine. A fine imposed upon a young person under 16 years could be realised from his parent or guardian, who could be convicted to imprisonment in default as if he himself had committed the offence. Such order could not be challenged in a Civil Court.

The three Ordinances relating to the North-West Frontier Province were issued on the 24th of December, 1931. One of them ran on the lines of the U.P. Ordinance and provided against non-payment of liabilities. The other two were known as N.W.F.P. Emergency Powers Ordinance and the N.W.F.P. Unlawful Association Ordinance. Under the former any authorised officer could arrest or detain any suspected person for a day without warrant, for a period of two months which could be extended by the Local Government. The Local Government could direct any person to enter or remain or not in any area, to remove himself from such area, and generally to conduct himself in a particular way for a period of one month. A failure to comply with such orders was made punishable with imprisonment for two years. The Local Government could take possession of any private building. The District Magistrate might regulate, prohibit or limit access to any building, and traffic by any road or waterway. The Local Government might control the supply and sale of any commodity, requiring traders and manufacturers to submit returns of their dealings in such commodity or to place the whole or a portion of their stocks at the disposal of the Government. Similarly it might require the owner of any article or thing to place it at the disposal of the Government. The District Magistrate could require a return of vehicles or any means of transport or their possession to be delivered. The District Magistrate could regulate the sale of arms and ammunition. The Local Government may appoint anybody as Special Police Officer or require a landholder or teacher or a local authority to assist in the maintenance of Law and Order. The Local Government might require the owner or person in charge of an utility service to take any specified action in respect thereof and on failure of compliance assume control of such service. The District Magistrate could control operation of the post, telegraph, telephone and the wireless, intercept articles or messages, require accommodation in any Railway train or vessel, order any specified person or goods not to be carried to any destination, or exclude or eject any passenger from a train, stop any train at a particular station, and require special conveyance of troops and Police. He might depute a Police officer to attend any public meeting even though the meeting was held in a private place and the admission was by tickets. Special powers were conferred regarding searches. Any person inducing a public servant to disregard his duties or dissuading a person from entering the Police or Military service, or propagating any statement or rumour likely to create hatred or contempt towards a public servant or to cause alarm to the public was liable to imprisonment for a year, or fine, or both. The Local Government could impose a collective fine on the inhabitants of an area which was realisable like Land Revenue. Any person repeating the contents of a confidential document was liable to imprisonment for six months and fine. Parents or guardians of young men

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under 16 years were liable to pay fines imposed on their wards and in default to imprisonment. Special Courts under Special Judges, Special Magistrates and Summary Courts were constituted and their jurisdictions defined and special procedure laid down for trial and appeal.

Under the other Ordinance, the Local Government might notify any place as a place which is used for an unlawful association and the Magistrate could take possession of such a notified place, ejecting therefrom any person found therein. The Magistrate could also take possession of moveables and the Local Government might declare them forfeited. Any person entering or remaining on a notified place committed criminal trespass. The Local Government could forfeit moneys, etc., belonging to an unlawful association and seize the same and prohibit any person in possession of moneys believed to be for an unlawful association from dealing with such money except under Government orders. The Local Government could authorise the examination of books of such persons or enquiries touching the origin and dealings in such moneys.

On the 4th of January, four new Ordinances were issued known as (1) the Emergency Powers Ordinance, (2) Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, (3) Unlawful Association Ordinance, and (4) Prevention of Molestation and Boycott Ordinance. Under the first Ordinance, powers similar to those already detailed above were taken relating to arrest and detention of persons, restricting their movements, commandeering of buildings, restricting access to buildings and Railways, controlling traffic, controlling supply and sale of any commodity of general use or its seizure, relating to control of means of transport, control of sale of arms and ammunition, appointment of Special Police Officers, obligation on landlords and teachers, etc., to assist in the maintenance of Law and Order, control of Public Utility Services, withholding and interception of articles and messages transmitted by post, wire or air, commandeering accommodation on Railways and vessels, control of traffic thereon, and attendance of Police officers at meetings. Similarly Special Courts, special procedure, new offences and special punishments, were provided as in the case of the Frontier Regulation. The Indian Press Emergency Act was made more stringent by a Special Section of the Ordinance.

Under the Unlawful Instigation Ordinance the Government could notify any liability as a notified liability and any person instigating non-payment of a notified liability could be imprisoned for six months and also fined. A person to whom a notified liability was due could ask the Collector and the Collector could realise it as arrears of Land Revenue.

Under the Unlawful Association Ordinance the Local Government could seize, as in the case of the North-West Frontier Province Ordinance referred to above, and take possession of any buildings, moveable property and funds belonging to an unlawful association. The Local Government could also forfeit such funds and require any person in custody of such funds not to deal with them except with Government permission, and order examination of books, etc., relating to such funds. Any association could be declared unlawful which, in the opinion of the Governor-General-in-



Council, interfered with the administration of Law and Order and constituted a danger to the public peace.

Under the Prevention of Molestation and Boycott Ordinance, whoever molested and boycotted or abetted the molestation or boycott of another person was liable to six months' imprisonment or fine. A person was said to molest another when he obstructed or used violence or intimidated another or any one in whom such other person was interested, or loitered at or near a house of such other person, or persistently followed him from place to place, or interfered with his property, or dissuaded any person from entering, approaching or dealing at such place, with a view to cause such other person to abstain from doing, or to force him to do, a thing or to cause loss to him. Boycott was defined as refusal to deal or do business with, or supply goods to, or to let a house or land to, or to render any customary service to, any person or to any one in whom such person is interested, or refusal to do any of the above things on ordinary terms and in ordinary course, or abstention from professional or business relations. The performance of a mock ceremony resembling a funeral ceremony done with intent to annoy a person was declared to be an offence punishable with imprisonment for six months or with fine.

It would thus appear that under these Ordinances very wide powers were taken and they were extended to practically the whole country.

When the Ordinance period expired, they were renewed in a consolidated form for another term, and in November, 1932, they were validated by regular legislation. Unlawful associations, molestation and boycotting, and the Press were all brought under the operation of these Ordinances.

So early as on the 26th of March, 1932, Sir Samuel Hoare in the House of Commons admitted that the Ordinances were very drastic and severe. They covered almost every activity of Indian life. They were drawn up in that comprehensive form because "the Government, with the full knowledge at their disposal, sincerely believed that they were threatened with an attack on the whole basis of Government and that the Ordinances were essential if India was to be prevented from drifting into anarchy." Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had sent 1,100 word telegram to England but the Postal authorities refused to send it at the prescribed rates. It will be remembered that the Press Law (Act XXIII of 1931) passed during the truce period expired on October 9th, 1931. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1932 contained provisions to place the Press Law (Act XXIII of 1932) permanently on the Statute Book. The provisions of this Press Law resemble those of the Press Act of 1910. Besides the Government of India Ordinances and Ordinance Bills or Acts, the Bombay Government brought forward, in November, 1932, a Provincial Ordinance Bill in which adequate safeguards were provided against a No-tax campaign as well. Wilful refusal to pay the arrears of a notified liability involved a punishment of one year's imprisonment, with or without fine. In prosecutions under this section, unless the contrary was proved, it was to be presumed that failure or refusal to pay arrears of a notified liability was wilful. All



these Ordinances and repressive measures were in fact under contemplation even in year of truce (1931). The fact is that the Secretary of the Bombay Branch of the European Association wrote a letter, in 1931, to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of Bombay, after the presentation of an address to him on the 15th October, 1931, by the Europeans of Poona. The delegation then suggested to Government to take firm and immediate action in the event of a recrudescence of the Civil Disobedience movement,—all this when the R.T.C. was sitting in London, with a view ostensibly to conciliate the Congress school of thought,—and made specific suggestions that the Congress flag should be forbidden and likewise all parading or drilling of volunteers, that all ex-Civil Disobedience men should forthwith be brought under restraint, treated as enemy subjects in war and interned, that Congress funds should be stopped at the source and unearthed by a special Ordinance, that mills which agreed to Congress conditions should be made to withdraw their pledges on pain of being denied Rail transit of their goods, that no one should be permitted to benefit financially from political agitation and boycott.

The events of 1932-33 ran on much the same lines as those of 1930-31. Only, the fight was more intensive and more determined. The repression was ever so much more ruthless and the suffering was ever so much more deep.

The Government offensive started with the arrest of Gandhi and the President of the Congress, Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the early hours of the 4th of January. The above mentioned Ordinances of 1932 were issued the same morning and extended to several Provinces. Within the next few days, they were applied to practically the whole country. Many Provincial and subordinate Committees, Ashrams, National Schools and other National institutions were declared unlawful, and their houses, furniture and funds and other moveables seized. Most of the leading Congressmen in the country were suddenly clapped into jails. The Congress organisation was thus apparently left without leaders, without funds, and even without any local habitation. The Congressmen who had been left behind were not, in spite of this sudden and determined swoop, without resources. Every one took up the work wherever he happened to be. The Working Committee had decided that vacancies on it, unlike in 1930, be not filled up and Sirdar Vallabhbhai, anticipating his own arrest, had made out a list of several persons who would act in his place during his absence, one after another. The Working Committee had transferred all its powers to the President, and the President in his turn transferred them to his successors who, in their turn, could nominate their own successors with similar powers. In the Provinces also, wherever it was possible, the whole power of the organisation was delegated to one person and similarly these powers percolated to a series of individuals exercising the rights of a Congress Committee in Districts, Thanas, Talukas and even villages. It was these individuals who came to be popularly known as 'Dictators.'

One of the difficulties which faced the organisers of any Civil Disobedience campaign related to the laws which could be selected for disobedience. It is evident that any law and every law may not be disobeyed.



The Ordinances with their wide ramifications solved this difficulty for the Congress. In the different Provinces different items were selected, while there were certain items prescribed from time to time by the Acting President of the Congress. Thus, picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops and of British goods was an item common to all Provinces. In the United Provinces on a pretty large scale, and in a portion of Bengal, non-payment of rent was an important item. In places in Bihar and Bengal, payment of Chaukidari tax was withheld. In the Central Provinces and the Berars, Karnatak and some places in U. P., the Madras Presidency and Bihar, Forest Laws were disobeyed. Salt Laws were defied in many places by manufacture, collections, or sale of illicit salt. Meetings and processions were of course prohibited and were held in spite of such prohibition. At an early stage of the struggle, a favourite item of the programme was the observance of what came to be known as special days. These were in connection with special events or individuals, or for special purposes, e.g., Gandhi Day, Motilal Day, Frontier Day, Martyrs Day, Flag Day and a number of other days.

As already stated, the Government had taken possession of Congress offices and Ashrams. Attempts were made in many places to get back symbolical possession of these places in Government hands, thus disobeying the Ordinance which made entry into those places a trespass. These attempts came to be known as 'raids'. Under the Ordinances the service of any Press was not available to the Congress. This deficiency was made up by the issue of unauthorised bulletins, leaflets, news-sheets, reports, etc., which were typed, cyclostyled, duplicated, or even printed, but without the names of the Press or the printers as required by law, sometimes under the names of non-existent Presses and persons. It is remarkable that in spite of Police vigilance these news-sheets and bulletins were issued regularly and continued to furnish information to the country, as a whole, of all that was happening. The service of the Post-Office and the Telegraph was denied to the Congress, and it established independent postal communication from the All-India Office to the Provinces. Sometimes the volunteers carrying these postal articles were detected and naturally arrested or otherwise dealt with. This system which had really been started towards the latter part of the movement of 1930 was almost perfected in 1932. The Government were unable to locate even the offices of the A.I.C.C. or the Provincial Committees, from whence not only the bulletins but also instructions for carrying on of the movement emanated, and when once either an office or an individual conducting it was located and put out of action, another sprang up and carried on the work. Another item which created much enthusiasm among the people and caused not a little embarrassment to the Police, was the holding of a session of the Congress following by a series of Conferences in the Provinces and the Districts all over the country. In some places an attempt was made to interfere with the regular working of the Railways by volunteers pulling the alarm signal in Railway trains and bringing them to a stop. An attempt was even made to make the Railway working difficult by large numbers of people boarding trains without tickets, simply to cause loss to the management, but these found no encouragement from responsible quarters and were stopped.



The Boycott took a most intensive form and special items were selected for concentrated work. Thus in some places separate weeks were devoted to intensive propaganda for boycott of foreign cloth, of British medicines, British Banks, Insurance Companies, foreign sugar, kerosene oil, and British goods generally.

It is not to be supposed that Government after arresting the leaders would become quiet and mild. All the powers referred to in the Ordinances were used. But there were certain other forms of repression which even the Ordinances, drastic as they were, did not sanction or contemplate. Needless to say that arrests were made in large numbers but they were made with discrimination, the total number of convictions being anything not less than a lakh. It soon became apparent that, in spite of camp jails and temporary jails being opened, the numbers that offered themselves for arrest could not all be accommodated. It was therefore necessary to make a selection, and only those who were supposed to possess some organising capacity or were prominently associated with the Congress organisation were ordinarily imprisoned. Nor was it an easy matter to deal with them in prison. More than ninety-five per cent of the persons convicted were placed in the 'C' class. There was a very small sprinkling of Congressmen placed in the 'B' class, while the 'A' class was maintained only in name in several places, and very sparingly granted in others. It will be recalled that early in 1930 this classification had been introduced, and while Government had resolutely refused to recognise political prisoners as a class by themselves, their statements had led people to believe that most of the Civil Disobedience prisoners would, by reason of their education, social status, and mode of living, fall in class 'B' at least. Graduates, Professors, Lawyers, Editors, well-to-do traders and businessmen, rich Zamindars, high grade agriculturists, philanthropic workers,—men whom the Government themselves recognised as well-to-do by imposing heavy fines running often into four figures,—were all thrown pell-mell into the last class, with the food and clothing of ordinary convicts. No wonder that, apart from other considerations, men and women who had sought imprisonment for the sake of their convictions and, as they felt, for the noble cause of gaining freedom for their country, were not likely to submit to humiliating conditions such as sitting in a particular posture in a row or lifting their hands on order and so on. The conditions of prison life were also not such as to be easily tolerated by a class of persons well brought up and having their own ideas about them. All this very often brought them into conflict with prison authorities, which resulted in the imposition of various kinds of jail penalties sanctioned by the rules and not unoften in beating and other kinds of torture which can easily be practised within prison walls where there is no fear of detection. One particularly atrocious case of assault and beating for refusal to submit to the humiliating condition of sitting in a particular posture led to the prosecution and conviction of a jailor and his assistant and some others in Nasik Jail, but *lathi-charges* on Civil Disobedience prisoners were not uncommon. The conditions of life in the temporary jails, with their tin sheds which gave protection neither against the heat of May and June nor the cold of December and January, with their over-crowding and consequent insanitary conditions,



were quite intolerable. There were, no doubt, some jails where the treatment was tolerably fair but permanent jails also were no better. It was reported that the health of the political prisoners in many of the jails, particularly in camp jails, was far from satisfactory. Dysentery was common in all the seasons, while the rains and cold weather brought pneumonia and serious lung trouble to not a few. Many died as prisoners. The conditions in the permanent jails in some places were not much better. The treatment depended naturally on the character and temper of the immediate jail officials, and these, with some notable exceptions here and there, were neither considerate nor even fair.

The Police had early taken to the device of dispersing crowds and processions by *lathi*-charges. There was hardly an important place in any Province where the movement showed signs of life which did not experience these *lathi*-charges. In many places, the injuries caused were serious and the number of those injured large. It was a practice with the crowds to collect together to see what was happening where some Satyagrahis were marching in procession, holding a meeting, carrying on what is called a 'raid' or engaged in picketing, and when the *lathi*-charge was made, no discrimination was made between those who had assembled as sight-seers and those who had gone with the set purpose of disobeying the law. It was not unoften that the sight-seers were the victims of these *lathi*-charges and the Satyagrahis were arrested and otherwise dealt with. The Satyagrahis, too, had their share of these assaults, not only in a crowd where they were mixed up with other people but within the quieter and less exciting environments of a Police lock-up or a prison cell. It was commonly reported that in many places unmentionable atrocities and tortures were perpetrated, the variety and the cruelty of which varied with the intelligence, resourcefulness and callousness of the particular officers concerned. Even women and boys and children were not spared. The Government had discovered that while the Satyagrahis were prepared for prison, beating and torture, and many of them even to be shot, there were many who would succumb if an attack was made on their property. Accordingly heavy fines were imposed on conviction. Sometimes they rose to five figures. Three and four figures were common enough. Where non-payment of Revenue, rent or taxes was resorted to, for realisation of such dues and taxes and for realisation of fines, the properties of not only the defaulters and the convicts but also the property of joint families and sometimes of relatives were attached and sold. This by itself would be nothing if, as a result of such attachment and sale, properties of much value were not sold off virtually for a song. Besides the legally correct form of distress and attachment, what really mattered even more was the extra-legal and the illegal harassment and loss amounting in not a few cases to wanton loot and waste. Not only were moveables like furniture, household utensils, jewellery and even cattle and standing crop attached and sold and sometimes destroyed, but the very lands and homesteads were not spared. There are many in Gujarat, the U.P. and Karnatak who are landless even today and whose suffering was entirely voluntary, in the sense that they refused to pay what they could easily have paid if they cared to save themselves and their property. These suffer-

ings were none-the-less imposed upon them, because if the object was the realisation of the dues only, they need not have been deprived of all that they lost. The agriculturists of Gujarat who joined in the non-payment, of Revenue and rent campaign, went through sufferings which it is impossible to describe, but they did not bend. There were many places where extra Police were posted as a punitive measure and their cost realised from the inhabitants. From four or five places only in Bihar where such extra Police were posted in the Province, no less than four lakhs and seventy thousand was realised as Punitive tax. The terror and havoc created by the posting of additional force was so great in parts of the district of Midnapore in Bengal that the bulk of the Hindu population of two Thanas in the district actually evacuated their homes and shifted to the neighbouring areas in the midst of indescribable suffering resulting in the death of women.

Besides such Punitive tax, collective fines were also imposed on many localities and the inhabitants made to pay them. In several places in the country, firing was resorted to and many persons killed and many more injured. In this respect the N.W.F.P. suffered the severest losses in killed and injured.

It is unnecessary to burden this description with details. It would be invidious to mention names of persons or places. If we attempted anything like an adequate account of all the acts of defiance on the part of Congressmen and women, and all the legal, illegal and extra-legal measures adopted by the Government and its officials and all that the people had to suffer in consequence, it would cover a volume by itself. The movement was country-wide and the Provinces vied with one another in putting forth their best effort. It was not confined to British India alone. Some of the Indian States as, for example, Baghelkhand contributed their mite to it and workers and people belonging to many of the States joined in the fray and suffered.

The Ashrams and Congress offices which had been taken possession of were demolished or even set fire to.

The newspaper Press was hard hit. Many of the newspapers were called upon to furnish securities. The securities of many of them were forfeited and many had to stop publication on account of failure to deposit security or seizure of press or fear of action by Government.

In the midst of all this havoc and terror, one thing stands out most prominently. Never did the people resort to any serious acts of violence and the lesson of non-violence had gone deep down and enabled the movement to be continued for months and months, when the Government had expected to finish it in a few weeks. Nor would it be an exaggeration to say that it would have been even more difficult to control it than it actually was, had it not been for the extra-legal and the extra-Ordinance methods which were employed in dealing with it and which in themselves constituted the very negation of all law and civilised Government. All open avenues of communication having been closed, the Congress workers.



many of them, almost unconsciously slid into methods of secrecy and in this too they proved themselves quite resourceful and quite a match to the widespread ramifications of the Police—ordinary, secret and special. We have already referred to the maintenance of Congress offices, regular publication of bulletins, timely promulgation of instructions to Congressmen and the public in respect of programmes to be observed. Although Satyagraha does not need much money, a campaign on such an extensive scale could not be conducted without it. At no stage did the work come to a standstill for want of funds. They came, nobody knew from where. The anonymous donor paid without knowing to whom he paid. It is remarkable how under such conditions the moneys received were scrupulously used for the purposes of the campaign, and how strict accounts were maintained even in those exciting times when the whole office was carried about in people's pockets. The secrecy enabled the movement to be guided and conducted by a Head, but at the same time it reduced what ought to have been an open battle of defiance regardless of consequences, and carrying its own appeal to the nobler instincts of our people, to a mere battle of wits which only evoked admiration of cleverness.

We may not close this description without referring to two sessions of the Congress which were held in the month of April 1932 and 1933 in Delhi and Calcutta respectively. The session at Delhi was held in spite of Police vigilance which succeeded in spotting and arresting large numbers of delegates on their way to Delhi.

The Congress session was held under the clock tower in Chandni Chowk. In spite of Police vigilance, about 500 delegates found their way to the meeting place. The Police, suspecting the announcement regarding the place of meeting as a mere ruse, were looking for the delegates somewhere in New Delhi, and others were busy dealing with a procession of Akalis elsewhere, and before they could arrive at the Chandni Chowk in sufficient numbers, the delegates had assembled and commenced business. It is said Seth Ranchhoddas Amritlal of Ahmedabad presided. The Annual Report was presented and four resolutions were passed,—the first reiterating Complete Independence as the goal of the Congress, the second wholeheartedly endorsing the revival of Civil Disobedience, the third congratulating the Nation on its splendid response to Mahatma Gandhi's call and expressing complete faith in his leadership, and the fourth reaffirming deep faith in non-violence and congratulating the country, particularly the brave Pathans of the Frontier Province, upon their non-violence in face of acts of gravest provocation from the authorities.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the President-elect of the Delhi Congress but he was arrested *en route*. During the whole of this period he was the only leader of note amongst Congressmen who was out, and ever since the date he landed after his return from the Round Table Conference, in spite of growing years and frail health, he never spared himself and was very busy issuing statements exposing the high-handed action of the authorities, ever encouraging and inspiring Congress workers by his indomitable will and phenomenal energy. In all moments of doubt and difficulty, it was to him that the Congress workers turned and were never disappointed.



CHAPTER II

FROM THE FAST TO THE LOOSE PULLEY

It will be remembered that at the second Round Table Conference Mr. MacDonald, the Premier, offered to arbitrate on the communal question if every one present put his signature to that agreement in that behalf, and that arbitration never materialised. The Premier took an unusual course, for it is considered improper for any one to offer his own arbitration instead of leaving the parties to invite him to arbitrate, and therefore he naturally failed. Accordingly the decision that the Government gave upon the Minorities question was a proposal on a par with the rest of the proposals embodied in the White Paper, and not an Award. It will be remembered further how Gandhi indicated his determination at the second R.T.C. to resist the dismemberment of the 'untouchables' from the Hindu Community with his life. Now came the time for testing Gandhi's fateful vow. He had written so early as in March 1932 a letter to the Secretary of State on the subject which we extract here (*vide infra*) and which speaks for itself. The Lothian Committee had arrived in India on January 17th, to determine franchise and electoral seats. Time was flying, their Report would be ready and the British have the knack of doing things while we are cogitating. So, after furious thinking and after anxious meditation, Gandhi drafted his letter to Sir Samuel Hoare on the 11th March, 1932, conveying his decision to 'fast unto death' in case Government decided to carve out separate electorates for the untouchables or depressed classes. Sir Samuel sent his reply on the 13th April, 1932. It was a piece of petrified routine. He must await the Lothian recommendations. Of course, Gandhi's views would be taken into account at the proper time.

It was on the 17th of August that Mr. MacDonald's decision—which has wrongly come to be spoken of as an Award—was announced. (*See Appendix XI*). It was a wanton attempt on the Premier's part to put Gandhi in the wrong if he should oppose it. The depressed classes were not only to have separate electorates, but additional votes and the right to contest seats in the general electorate. This was a bounty with a vengeance. On August 18th, Gandhi decided his course of action and intimated the same to the Prime Minister, adding that the fast would begin on September 20th noon ((1932). Mr. MacDonald replied on the 8th September—somewhat at leisure—and the whole correspondence was published on the 12th September. That the Premier should have thought fit to impute to Gandhi inimical intention in respect of the depressed classes has to be referred to here, only to be condemned. We shall not discuss here the merits of the communal decision. Part of it has been scrapped and replaced by the Poona Pact, and the other part remains yet to be scrapped. Now we are on the question as to how the Poona Pact was hammered out. That was the direct result of Gandhi's fast to death.



That fast was to begin on the 20th September, 1932. The interval of one week between the publication of correspondence and the commencement of the fast was a period of utter stress and strain to the Nation,—yea, to the whole world,—a period of tension, in which people, institutions and nations tried to do whatever immediately occurred to them. Interviews were sought and rejected. Cables flew from the ends of the earth to Poona. Exhortations and argumentation were resorted to, to dissuade Gandhi from his determination. While friends were anxious to save his life, enemies were watching the process with a derisive interest. While the great Russian Church was on fire people were rushing to hear the tintinabulary crash from near. When storm breaks and floods uproot trees, submerge houses, demolish buildings, and sweep away roads and bridges, when conflagrations rage and destroy life and property, when natural cataclysms occur, they rouse the idle interest of the curious and the greedy interest of the wicked. Some such outbreak of emotions was witnessed when Gandhi, in reply to the Premier, declared that his fast would begin. It threw the country into a state of alarm, consternation and confusion. All of us have witnessed death-bed scenes in our life. People gather round the dying person, and when the doctor arrives, he is almost inclined to feel like one of them,—not like the physician that must send people out, each about a business improvised for the occasion. When a series of remedial measures are suggested, hot water fomentations, smelling salt, medicine, turpentine, brandy, this, that and the other, people disperse each to do his bit for the dying patient or the living physician, and the latter gets some little peace of mind to think and act. Here was Gandhi, not accidentally struck by appendicitis as he was 8 years previously in the same jail, but deliberately taking to his death-bed and entering upon a fast. No wonder then that the country should have been thrown into a state of paralysis, from which, however, the patient himself raised it to life and activity.

The Premier's decision was to be scrapped. He would not do it himself. It must therefore be done by agreement amongst the Hindus themselves. A Conference was therefore a desideratum. Was it to be on the 19th or the 20th? That was the question. Gandhi's life must be saved. It was creditable that a leader of the depressed classes should have made the first move in the matter. M. C. Rajah, Rao Bahadur, condemned the separate electorates. Sapru demanded the release of Gandhi. Congress men naturally strove to mobilize thought and arrange a settlement. But Pandit Malaviya, always on a level with his age, immediately thought of organising a Conference of leaders. In England, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Polak and Mr. Lansbury began to invite the attention of the English people to the serious character of the issues involved and an appeal was made, which was influentially signed, for a special prayer throughout the country. In India the 20th of September was observed as a day of fasting and prayer and Shantiniketan participated in the observance. It did not take long for the movement inaugurated to secure an amendment of the Premier's decision, and to sublimate itself into a wider movement for the removal of untouchability. Temples were being thrown open to the untouchables in Calcutta, Delhi and other places. It was hoped that Gandhi would be released as soon as he began his fast, but as it was



discovered that Gandhi's so-called release would take the shape of an internment at some suitable place of private residence under certain restrictions of movement, Gandhi wrote to Government sparing them the expense and the trouble of such a change and expressing his inability "to conform to any conditions." Government readily agreed and refrained from forcing any arrangements upon Gandhi which were distasteful to him.

It is not possible for us to take the reader through a detailed history of the developments which resulted in the Poona Pact. The Conference convened by Pandit Malaviya met first in Bombay but it shifted its scene of labour soon to Poona. We would refer those interested in these details to the magnificent publication entitled 'The Epic Fast' by Pyarelal, Gandhi's Private Secretary, but suffice it to say that Dr. Ambedkar was soon drawn into the negotiations, and with the aid of men like Syt. Amritlal Thakkar, Syt. Rajagopalachari, Sir Chunilal Mehta, Pandit Malaviya, Birla, Sirdar Patel, Mrs. Naidu, Mr. Jayakar, Dr. Ambedkar, M. C. Rajah, Rajendra Prasad, Hridaynath Kunzru and others, a scheme was formulated which met with the acceptance of all parties by the fifth day of the fast. The depressed classes were to forego their separate electorates and content themselves solely with the general Hindu electorate (in which, of course, they were already included, as well, by the terms of the British Award), subject to important safeguards which the caste Hindus are to concede to them. In the first place, they are to have a specific number of reserved seats (148) out of those assigned by the British Award to the general constituencies in the various Legislatures. In the second place, they are to elect by themselves, four candidates for each reserved seat, the general electorate being confined, in its subsequent choice, to one of these four. The settlement as a whole is to last until altered by common agreement. The depressed classes primary elections are to last for a maximum period of ten years.

The Poona Agreement was accepted by the British Government in so far as it would modify the Premier's decision, subject to reservation of judgment on points in the Poona Agreement that fell outside the scope of the Award. The depressed class leaders had reason to be grateful because the Poona Pact secured them double the number of the seats granted in the Prime Minister's decision, and a measure of representation somewhat in excess of the proportion of their population. The question of a referendum at the end of ten years became the subject of a last moment controversy but Gandhi fixed five years instead of ten if there should be a referendum, for, in postponing it to ten years, people would suspect that what Ambedkar wanted was not to "test the *bona fides* of the caste Hindus but time to organize the depressed classes for an adverse referendum." "Five years, or my life" was the ultimate reply of Gandhi. Ultimately it was decided to leave the whole question to be decided by mutual agreement in the future—a formula evolved by Syt. Rajagopalachari and approved of as 'excellent' by Gandhi. On the 26th, Syt. Rabindranath Tagore visited Gandhi just when the news of the Cabinet having accepted the agreement was received. Simultaneous statements were issued in England and India on the morning of the 26th announ-

ing the acceptance of the Poona Agreement. Mr. Haig made a statement in the Assembly embodying the following points:—

(1) It accepted for recommendation to Parliament the scheme of representation of the depressed classes in the Provincial Legislatures, adopted under the Yeravada Agreement, in place of the scheme of separate electorates in that behalf that had been adumbrated in the Premier's decision.

(2) It accepted the number of seats in the Provincial Legislatures assigned to the depressed classes under the Yeravada Agreement.

(3) As regards the clauses in the Yeravada Agreement, referring to the guarantees for the welfare of the depressed classes, it recognised them as a definite pledge of the intentions of the caste Hindus to the depressed classes.

(4) As regards the method of electing depressed class representatives to the Central Legislature and the level of franchise, it stated that whilst the Government could not definitely commit itself to the terms of the agreement, as the whole question of representation in Central Legislature and the franchise was under consideration, the Government was not against it.

(5) It recognised the figure of 18 per cent. of the British general seats at the Centre to be reserved for the depressed classes as a matter of arrangement between them and the other Hindus.

Gandhi felt a little difficulty in accepting the wording of Government. He felt that the depressed class leaders should be satisfied as well. The issue to him was not the saving of his own physical life but the saving of the moral lives of the millions for whom he was fasting. In the end, however, Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru and C. Rajagopalachariar satisfied Gandhi who then decided to break his fast on the 26th at 5-15 p.m. after prayer and the singing of religious hymns. It was true that Gandhi's life was saved for the moment, but almost in the same breath in which he had agreed to break the fast, he foreshadowed the certainty of its resumption if the reform of the removal of untouchability was not faithfully achieved within a measurable period. He had thought of laying down a period but he had no definite call from within. "The message of freedom," said Gandhi, 'shall penetrate every untouchable home, and that can only happen if reforms will cover every village.' It was Gandhi's hope, we are told, that the almost ideal solution reached on the question would pave the way for the larger unity between the various communities.

People had doubted the efficacy or appropriateness of a fast. Gandhi had something to say, and this he said in statements issued on the 15th and the 20th September. Gandhi's position is this: "Fasting for light and penance is a hoary institution. It can be observed commonly in Christianity and Islam, while Hinduism is replete with instances of fasting for purification. Having made a serious attempt to attain self-purification, I have developed some little capacity to hear correctly and clearly the 'still small voice within'. My present penance I have undertaken in obedience to this voice." Some would hold the view that the fast is a coercion. To them Gandhi's reply is that "love compels, it does not coerce," even as



Truth and right do. "My fast I want to throw in the scale of justice. This may look childish to the on-lookers but not so to me. If I had anything more to give, I would throw that also to remove this curse. But I have nothing more than my life." "The impending fast is against those who have faith in me—whether Indians or foreigners—and for those who have it not." Thus did he show that his fast was not against the English official world nor against his opponents in India, whether Hindus or Muslims, but against countless Indians who believed that he represented a just cause. Above all, Gandhi said: "It is intended to sting the Hindu conscience into right religious action." Gandhi was all the while searching his heart to see if malice and anger were still lurking in his breast. At any rate he felt that he was not conscious of any feelings of hatred or anger in him and that his penance was undertaken from the purest of motives and with goodwill towards all.

Immediately after the Pact was accepted by the Premier, and Gandhi had broken his fast, the Conference met again in Bombay and passed a resolution practically pledging the Hindu community to the removal of untouchability. What has developed into the Harijan Sevak Sangh was founded as a result of this resolution with Syt. Ghanashyamas Birla as President and Syt. Amritlal Thakkar of the Servants of India Society as Secretary.

We give below the resolution unanimously passed by the meeting held at Bombay on 25th September, 1932,—Pandit Malaviya being in the chair, which has been adopted as the motto of the *Harijan*:—

"The Conference resolves that, henceforth, amongst Hindus no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and that those who have been so regarded hitherto will have the same right as other Hindus in regard to the use of the public wells, public schools, public roads and all other public institutions. This right shall have statutory recognition at the first opportunity and shall be one of the earliest Acts of the Swaraj Parliament, if it shall not have received such recognition before that time.

"It is further agreed that it shall be the duty of all Hindu leaders to secure, by every legitimate and peaceful means, an early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called untouchable classes, including the bar in respect of admission to temples."

A penance so pure naturally bore its full result. There was widespread response in the country for the cause of the removal of untouchability, so much so that this new field of work,—rather this new interest in an old field of work—came in as a means of satisfaction to those that did not seek imprisonment in the Civil Disobedience movement and as an excuse to those that would or could not go back to jail for a second or third time. People doubted whether a note of warning should not be administered to Congressmen that they should not be deflected from Congress work on account of untouchability work. The country was big enough to produce the required number of workers for the removal of untouchability



without encroaching upon the claims of the Congress. Gandhi made it clear in so many words and the very fact that he entrusted the organization of untouchability work to men like Birla and Thakkar showed that he was inclined to pick and choose his untouchability workers from non-Congress workers. Anyway, the loss to the Congress work is a gain to the untouchability work and this field of work received a great impetus by Gandhi's fast. The danger lay in young men going too fast. Gandhi had to apply his reins. A fast unto death was undertaken by more than one person in the country in order to secure the entry into temples of untouchables or 'Harijans' as they were soon called. Just as in the Non-co-operation movement people were anxious to precipitate Civil Disobedience, so too in the Harijan movement did young enthusiasts want to precipitate Satyagraha, little caring for the conditions around or the competence of themselves to undertake such austere penance. Gandhi's re-training influence which had saved many a situation in 1921-22 was once again at work.

The response to the call of Gandhi both to men and women to interest themselves in the Harijan movement was so quick and so ample that the complexion of affairs began to be transformed almost every hour and every minute. There was the Nawab of Bhopal offering a 5,000 rupee donation to the Hindu Reform movement. There was Father Winslow issuing an appeal with fellow Christian signatories condemning separate electorates for the Indian Christian community. Elsewhere was Shaikat Ali asking for the release of Gandhi and urging the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question as well. The atmosphere was surcharged with a feeling of, and a cry for, unity everywhere and communal unity would doubtless have been achieved had it not been for the sudden reversal of the Government's policy and the withdrawal, on the 29th September, of all the new privileges regarding visitors, etc., conceded to Gandhi during his fast. Mr. Jayakar who wanted to see him was not permitted to see him. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was sent back to her own Ladies' Jail. Mrs. Gandhi was taken away from Gandhi's presence. Visitors were cut off. Gandhi was once more a prisoner, as he was before the 13th of September. But it must be said to the credit of the Government that Mrs. Gandhi alone was allowed to be with him from the next day as she had been released five days before her time. Gandhi protested against the sudden deprivation of the opportunities for serving the Harijan cause. It was opposed to the terms of Poona Pact itself.

After protracted correspondence Government at last allowed Gandhi to carry on his 'untouchability' propaganda, removed the restrictions regarding visitors, correspondence and publicity lately imposed, and on 7th November, Mr. Haig, the Home Member, made the following statement in the Assembly :—

"Recently Mr. Gandhi represented that if he was to carry out a programme which he has set before himself in regard to the removal of untouchability, it is necessary that he should be given greater freedom in regard to visitors and correspondence on matters strictly limited to this question. The Government does not wish to

interpose obstacles in Mr. Gandhi's efforts in connection with the problem of untouchability which, as Mr. Gandhi pointed out, is a moral and religious reform having nothing to do with the Civil Disobedience movement. The Government have, therefore, removed all restrictions regarding visitors, correspondence and publicity relating to matters which are strictly limited to the removal of untouchability. However, the restrictions in regard to interviews specifically on political questions, stand totally on a different footing and the position in regard to this remains unchanged, as is clear from the reply given by the Private Secretary to the Viceroy to Maulana Shaukat Ali."

We now publish below the correspondence on the subject of the Fast and the text of the Poona Pact, in full.

The following is the relevant portion of Gandhi's speech at the Minorities Committee of the 2nd R. T. C. delivered on 13-11-'31 in London:—

"I WILL RESIST IT WITH MY LIFE"

"I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities, but the claim advanced on behalf of the 'untouchables' is to me the unkindest cut of all. It means a perpetual bar sinister.

"I would not sell the vital interests of the 'untouchables' even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself, in my own person, to represent the vast masses of the 'untouchables'. Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the 'untouchables', their vote and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the 'untouchables' that separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar sinister.

"Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today there is a body of Hindu reformers who feel that this is a shame, not of the 'untouchables' but of orthodox Hinduism, and they are, therefore, pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our rolls and on our census 'untouchables' classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muslims, so may Europeans. Would 'untouchables' remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.

"Therefore, with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar and for his desire to see the 'untouchables' uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say that here is a great error under which he has laboured and, perhaps, the bitter experiences he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of the 'untouchables' which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with, a due sense of responsibility when I say it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar, when he seeks to speak for the whole