

The removal of the khadi clause in the Constitution would mean removal of the living link between the Congress and millions whom it has from its inception sought to represent, and yet if it remains, it has to be rigidly enforced. But it cannot be, if a substantial majority of Congressmen have no living faith in it.

"Take again the Parliamentary Board. Though the author of Non-co-operation, I am convinced that in the present circumstances of the country and in the absence of any general scheme of civil resistance, a Parliamentary Party within the Congress is a necessary part of any programme that may be framed by the Congress, but there are sharp differences of opinion among us on that point. The force with which I urged the programme at the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Patna, I know, oppressed many of our best colleagues, but they hesitated to act according to their own conviction. Up to a point, suppression of one's views in favour of those of another, considered superior in wisdom or experience, is virtuous and desirable for healthy growth of organisation; it becomes a terrible oppression when one is called upon to repeat the performance from day to day. Though I have never wished any such untoward result, I cannot conceal from me or the public the tragic fact that such has been my own experience. Many have despaired of resisting me. This is a humiliating revelation to a born democrat,—I make that claim of complete identification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best one's ability can entitle one to make it.

"I have welcomed the formation of the Socialist group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing co-workers. With all this, I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorized pamphlets. But I would not, by reason of the moral pressure I may be able to exert, suppress the spread of ideas propounded in their literature. I may not interfere with the free expression of those ideas, however distasteful some of them may be to me. If they gain ascendancy in the Congress, as they well may, I cannot remain in the Congress. For to be in active opposition should be unthinkable. Though identified with many organizations during a long period of public service, I have never accepted that position.

"Then there is the policy advocated by some in regard to the States which is wholly in difference from what I have advised. I have given many an anxious hour to the question but I have not been able to alter my view.

"Even on untouchability, my method of approach is perhaps different from that of many, if not of most Congressmen. For me, it is a deeply religious and moral issue. Many think that it was a profound error for me to have disturbed the course of the civil resistance struggle by taking up the question in the manner, and at the time, I did. I feel that I would have been untrue to myself if I had taken any other course.



"Last of all, take non-violence. After 14 years of trial, it still remains a policy with the majority of Congressmen, whereas it is a fundamental creed with me. That Congressmen do not still regard non-violence as a creed is no fault of theirs. It is undoubtedly my faulty presentation and, still more, the faulty execution that are responsible for this failure. I have no consciousness of faulty presentation or execution, but it is the only possible inference from the fact that it has not yet become an integral part of the lives of Congressmen.

"And if there is uncertainty about non-violence, there must be still more about civil resistance. In spite of my 27 years of study and practice of the doctrine, I cannot claim to know all about it. The field of research is necessarily limited, as occasions for civil resistance in a man's life must not be frequent. It can only come after voluntary obedience to authority, whether of parents, teachers or other elders, religious or secular. There need be no wonder that, as the only expert, however, imperfect, among us, I should have come to the conclusion that it should, for some time to come, be limited only to me. This was necessary in order to minimise the errors and mischief proceeding from them, as also to explore its hidden possibilities; but again for no fault of the Congressmen. It has been increasingly difficult for me to carry the reason of fellow Congressmen with me in all the resolutions recently passed on the subject, whilst they have generously voted for them.

"Even the memory of the sense of oppression which they experienced at the time of voting, without an intelligent belief in these resolutions, oppresses me just as much as they were oppressed. They and I must be free from this oppression if we are at all to grow in pursuit of what we believe to be the common goal. Hence it is necessary for all concerned to act freely and boldly according to their convictions.

"I have, in my Patna statement recommending suspension of civil resistance, drawn attention to the failure of civil resistance to achieve two obvious results. If we had the full non-violent spirit in us, it should have been self-evident and should not have escaped the notice of the Government. Their Ordinances were certainly not warranted by any of the misdeeds done by or imputed to us. They were undoubtedly intended to break our spirit anyhow. But it would be wrong if we contended that civil resisters were above reproach. If we are non-violent through and through, our non-violence would have been self-evident. Nor were we able to show to the terrorists that we had greater faith in our non-violence than they in their violence. On the contrary many of us made them feel that we had the same spirit of violence in our breasts that they had. Only, we did not believe in deeds of violence. The terrorists rightly argued that if the spirit of violence was common to both, the policy of doing or not doing violence was a matter of opinion. I need not repeat what I have said before, that the country has made great strides towards non-violence indeed and that many have exhibited great courage and self-sacrifice. All I want to say is that ours has





not been unadulterated non-violence in thought, word and deed. It is now my paramount duty to devise ways and means of showing demonstrably to the Government and the terrorists the efficacy of non-violence as a means of achieving the right thing, including freedom in every sense of the term.

"For this experiment to which my life is dedicated, I need complete detachment and absolute freedom of action. Satyagraha, of which civil resistance is but a part, is to me the universal law of life. Satya, in truth, is my God. I can only search Him through non-violence and in no other way. And the freedom of my country, as of the world, is surely included in the search for Truth. I cannot suspend this search for anything in this world or another. I have entered the political life in pursuit of this search, and if it cannot carry the reason as well as the heart of educated Congressmen when I say that this search necessarily includes Complete Independence and many other things which may be part of Truth, it is plain I should work single-handed, in the implicit faith that what I fail to make clear to my countrymen today shall be clear to them some day of itself; or, if God wills it, through some apt word He may put in my mouth or some apt work which He may prompt me to do in matters of such tremendous importance. A mechanical vote or a grudging assent is wholly inadequate, if not injurious to the cause itself.

"I have referred to the common goal but I have begun to doubt if all Congressmen understand the same thing by the expression 'Complete Independence'. I want for India Complete Independence in the full English sense of that English expression. For me Purna Swaraj has an infinitely larger meaning than 'Complete Independence' but even Purna Swaraj is not self-explained. No one word or compound expression will give us a meaning which all can understand. Hence, on several occasions I have given several definitions of Swaraj. I hold that they are all hopelessly incomplete even when put together, but I do not wish to labour on it.

"My mention of the difficulty if not the impossibility of giving a complete definition leads me to another serious point of difference between many Congressmen and myself. I have always said, since 1903, that means and end are convertible terms and that, therefore, where the means are various and even contradictory the end must be different and even contradictory. We have always control over the means and never on the end. But we may not bother about its content if we all employ identical means with identical connotation for them. It will be admitted that many Congressmen do not admit this (to me) obvious truth. They believe that the end justifies the means, whatever they may be.

"It is the sum-total of these differences which has sterilised the existing Congress programme, because members who gave their lip-assent to it without believing in it, have naturally failed to reduce it to practice and yet I have no other programme save the Congress programme now before the country, that is, untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, total prohibition, hand-spinning with khadi



## THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

cent per cent. Swadeshi, in the sense of the revival of Village Industries and general re-organisation of the seven lakhs of villages, ought to give all satisfaction that one's love of one's country may demand. Personally I would like to bury myself in an Indian village, preferably in a Frontier village. If the Khudai Khidmatgars are truly non-violent, they will contribute the largest share to the promotion of the non-violent spirit and of Hindu-Muslim unity. For, if they are non-violent in thought, word and deed, and are lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity, surely through them we should see the accomplishment of the two things we need most in this land. The Afghan menace which we dread so much should then be a thing of the past. I am, therefore, yearning to test the truth for myself of the claim that they have imbibed the spirit of non-violence and are believers, in the heart, of unity of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. I should like also personally to deliver the message of the spinning-wheel to them in this and various such other ways. I would love to serve the Congress in my own humble manner, whether I am in or outside it.

"I have reserved to the last the reference to the growing corruption in our ranks. I have already said enough about it in public. In spite of all I have said, the Congress still remains in my estimation the most powerful and the most representative organisation in the country. It has a history of uninterrupted noble service and self-sacrifice, and from its inception it has weathered storms as no other institution has done. It has commanded a measure of self-sacrifice of which any country would be proud. It holds today the largest number of devoted men and women of unimpeachable character. If I must leave this organisation, I shall not do so without a wrench and I should do it only when I am convinced that being outside I would serve it, i.e., the country, better than by being in it.

"I propose to test the feeling of the Congress on all the points I have touched by placing before the Subjects Committee certain resolutions giving effect to the views enunciated above. The first amendment I would propose is to replace the words 'legitimate and peaceful' by 'truthful and non-violent.' I should not have done so but for the furore of opposition which was raised against the utterly innocent use by me of the two adjectives in the place of 'legitimate and peaceful.' If Congressmen really believe in the necessity of truthfulness and non-violence for the attainment of our goal, they should have no hesitation about accepting the unequivocal adjectives.

"The second amendment would be to replace the four anna franchise by the delivery by every member to a Congress depot of 2,000 rounds (one round equal to four feet) per month of well-twisted even yarn of not less than 15 counts spun by himself or herself. The arguments for and against need not be repeated here. If we are to be a truly democratic body representing even the lowest paid labour, we cannot do it better than by devising a simple labour franchise. Hand-spinning is by common consent the lowest paid labour and yet the most dignified. It is the nearest approach to adult franchise within the means of almost every one who is willing to labour for the sake of the country for half an hour daily. Is it too





much to expect the intelligentsia and the propertied classes to recognise the dignity of labour, irrespective of the material benefit it brings? Is not labour, like learning, its own reward? If we are true servants of the masses, we would take pride in spinning for their sakes. I recall what the late Maulana Mahomed Ali used to repeat from many a platform. As the sword was the symbol of brute force and might, he would say, the wheel or the *takli* was the symbol of non-violence, service and humility. When the wheel was accepted as part of the national flag, it was surely implied that the spinning-wheel would hum in every household. If Congressmen do not believe in the message of the wheel, we must remove it from the national flag, and khaddar from the Constitution. It is intolerable that there should be unashamed fraud in the observance of the khaddar clause.

"The third amendment I should propose would be that no one shall be entitled to vote at any Congress election whose name has not been on the Congress register continuously for six months without default, and who has not been a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar for that period. A great difficulty has been experienced in the working of the khaddar clause. It can be easily avoided by giving powers, subject to appeal to the President of the Congress and to the chairman of respective committees, to decide the question whether a particular voter is or is not a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar within the meaning of the Constitution. No one is to be considered such a wearer who, at the time of voting, is not manifestly wholly clad in khaddar. But no rule, however carefully and strictly worded, can produce satisfactory results if a large number do not voluntarily carry it out.

"Experience has shown that the Congress is an unwieldy organisation, even with 6,000 delegates. In practice, the full number has never attended the Congress, and when the Congress register nowhere contains a truly representative list, the delegation can hardly be claimed to be a reality. I would, therefore, have an amendment reducing the number to not more than 1,000 delegates nor more than one delegate per every thousand voters. To have the full number of delegates would mean one million voters, not an over-ambitious hope in a country having a population of 315 millions. The Congress would, by this amendment, gain in substance what it may lose in the show of numbers. The spectacular part of the session would be kept intact by making ample provision for visitors, but Reception Committees will be spared the wholly unnecessary anxiety of having to provide accommodation for an unwieldy number of delegates. Let us recognise the fact that the Congress enjoys a prestige, democratic in character and influence, not by the number of delegates and visitors it has drawn to its annual functions but by the ever-increasing amount of service it has rendered. Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk a true test of democracy. True democracy is not incon-



## THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

sistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.

"I have mentioned here only the principal amendments I should propose in the Constitution. There would be other resolutions bringing out clearly the points I have touched upon in the foregoing paras. I do not need to burden this statement with them.

"My fear is that even the amendments I have named will hardly commend themselves to the large number of Congressmen who will attend the Congress. Nevertheless, if I am to guide the policy of the Congress, I hold them and the resolutions in keeping with the spirit of this statement to be essential for the earliest attainment of our goal. No voluntary organisation can succeed in its purpose without its resolutions and policies being carried out whole-heartedly by its members, and no leader can give a good account of himself if his lead is not faithfully, ungrudgingly and intelligently followed; and this is truest of a leader who has no resource at his disposal but what truth and non-violence can supply. It follows, therefore, that there is no room for compromise in the essentials of the programme I have endeavoured to adumbrate in these paras. Let the Congressmen, therefore, examine it dispassionately and on its merits. They must eliminate me from their consideration and give effect to the dictates of their reason."

The Bombay Session (October 26th to 28th, 1934) of the Indian National Congress would have been of the humdrum type and devoid of any exciting interest, but for the imminent exit of Gandhi from the arena of politics and the foreshadowed amendment of the Congress Constitution. The enthusiasm and interest awakened in the popular mind in respect of the very thought of a regular session of the Congress being held and people preparing to attend a session, after an interval of three and a half years, was itself a sufficient sustenance to the country at a time when a certain paralysis had overtaken it. Surely any kind of activity was better than the utter inactivity that prevailed. Ere long, the country's attention was rivetted on to this scheme. Parliamentary Board, Socialism, and Communal Award,—all receded into the background. In a moment every one began to discuss even before the Congress, and more so during the session, whether, after all, the Congress should cease to be a spectacular body thereafter, whether the All-India Congress Committee, which was to be composed of but a thousand delegates and to be brought into existence by the delegates assembled after its session, should on the one hand in its full strength function as the year's Congress and on the other, in its parts, play the role of the Provincial Congress Committee. It was argued that such an arrangement made for homogeneity of composition as well as continuity of policy through the creation of a handy, compact and close-knit body or bodies working throughout the year. Gandhiji's central idea was that the provincial representatives should sit together with their credentials and evolve, pooling their experience, a programme for the



Congress in the All-India Congress Committee and break up once again to carry out that programme in their respective Provinces. This was the central theme. It was at the same time contemplated that the Congress membership should be on a strict basis of manual labour, the fruits of which are tendered to the Congress, symbolising the ideal of service and sacrifice for which the Congress stands and the national duty which each Congressman had to observe in his daily life as a sacrament. Again no Congressman was to be entitled to vote unless his name had been in the register for six months. This was designed to avoid corruption in Congress elections which flowed from an improvisation of membership by monied and influential people to advance their own ends. Then the President was to be a President in reality of a Cabinet formed exclusively by himself. The clause relating to the habitual wear of khaddar was of course to be there and Gandhi demanded that the Creed of the Congress which had lent itself to ambiguous interpretations should be made to imply indisputably the adherence of the Congress to 'truthful' and 'non-violent', in place of 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' methods. There raged a storm in the country before the Congress session and during it. But no one is at his best so well and so readily as Gandhi in the midst of a *tufan*. He then summons all his calmness and resources to his aid and turns a seeming defeat into a substantial victory, not by any wiles and stratagems but by his only strategy in life, namely, the strategy of Truth and Non-violence. He had separated, early in the session, the constitutional section of his amendments from the Satyagrahis section and left the latter to be dealt with by the Working Committee as it chose, while the former was to be moved by him and made a test of confidence in the new President and his colleagues. Strangely enough, though not unexpectedly, the Working Committee accepted both the sections with suitable changes and the Congress itself has substantially accepted them all, much to the satisfaction of Gandhi himself. It is unnecessary to weary the reader with a repetition of the detailed changes introduced into Gandhi's draft by the Congress. Suffice it to say that the change of Creed was required to be circulated to the Provinces for opinion and awaited the decision of the Congress of 1936. The Labour franchise had been accepted as applicable to elective membership, and the habitual wear of khaddar was wholly endorsed. The Congress delegation was reduced to a maximum of 2,000 apportioned between the rural and the urban areas in the proportion of 1,489 to 511. The A.I.C.C. was to be continued at half its strength and the delegates were to be elected at the rate of 1 to 500 members, instead of one to thousand as proposed by Gandhi. Thus the principle of modulating the strength of the delegates strictly to the membership of the Congress enunciated in Gandhi's draft was accepted, thereby making the delegates not visitors at a spectacular gathering but representatives of the Nation charged with the duty of electing an All-India Executive as well as the Provincial Congress Committees. The rest of Gandhi's draft was virtually accepted by the Congress.

The issues before the Congress were, why it should change its Constitution, why it should change it now, and why it should be changed just as Gandhi was leaving the Congress. This naturally raises the question of Gandhi's exit from the Congress, which we shall deal with presently.



but let it be remembered that it was Gandhi's bare duty to tell the Congress what, in his opinion, was wrong with it, as he was the General who had marshalled the forces these fourteen years, while it is equally the duty of the Congress to reconnoitre the situation during a period of respite so as to be able to set its house in order and prepare itself for future emergencies.

It was not, however, the new Constitution or the confirmation of the old resolutions on the Parliamentary Board, the Constructive Programme and the Communal Award, that should be reckoned as the events of the year. They are undoubtedly notable achievements. But really the more notable, though a trifle less noticed, achievement is the formation of an All-India Village Industries' Association which is to work under the advice and guidance of Gandhi and apart from so-called politics. This is the logical fulfilment of the khaddar programme. Khaddar is but the forerunner of a series of village industries which make the village and the country self-sufficient. The arts and crafts of a Nation are the true index of its civilization.

Scientific achievements are the common heritage of the world. Knowledge is universal property, but arts and artistic crafts speak out the soul of the Nation, and when they are dead, the Nation's individuality is dead. It may have an animal existence but its creative genius is gone,—gone no more to reappear. When, therefore, Gandhi has planned a revival of the dead and dying industries of Indian villages, he has really planned a revival of Indian civilisation, a rehabilitation of Indian economic prosperity and a re-aligning of Indian National Education. There is a universal demand for the formation of an All-India Board of National Education, but the public minds are not prepared for the revolutionary changes contemplated in that behalf by Gandhi. It is only when the Indian village is once again revived and made self-sufficient that the true import of National Education will be understood. Gandhi's aim is not to build sky-scraper of wealth or span the oceans for commerce and trade, but to add a little *makkhan* (butter) to the *rottee* (dry bread) of the starving millions of India. This he seeks to do through the A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A.

What comes last in this narration of achievements is perhaps the most outstanding event of the Bombay Session. Gandhi's exit from the Congress, notwithstanding his definite assertion in that behalf, was not taken literally by friends or foes. But it did not take them long to realise that Gandhi always means what he says and always does what he means. His anxiety is that his words should be taken at their face value.

This is not merely a formal declaration of an open mind but a trait of character which was noticed in 1929 when there was a strong feeling that he should preside over the Lahore Congress and not Jawaharlal. It was noticed again during the Bombay Session in 1934. But in both cases he was not convinced of the incorrectness of his earlier decisions. It was, therefore, stunning news alike to the Press and the public that Gandhi would not be even a primary member of the Congress. Albeit, it is true



that Gandhi has left the Congress with a vote of confidence and a standing invitation to re-enter. Only, the Congress has to deserve what it desires. It must purge itself of all impurity, making Congress and khaddar equivalent to purity, sincerity and integrity. If that should be so, the Congress intelligentsia must lose no time in proving to the leaders that they stand for no selfish ends but for the ideal of service and sacrifice,—an ideal pursued through a programme of daily labour for at least 8 hours a month, the fruits of which are tendered to the Congress. Some people have misinterpreted this clause as a set-off or safeguard against the socialistic invasion of the Congress. It is not so. The Congress has been wedded to the cult of manual labour and the service of the poor, peasant and labourer alike, for the past fourteen years. The Congress is really socialistic in outlook. If only the Socialist would declare his faith in khaddar and village industries, in truth and non-violence, in a programme of daily duties to realise the high ideal set before the country, the Congressmen would be as much Socialists as the Socialists themselves should be Congressmen. And who is more socialistic not merely in name, but in fact, than Gandhi who has renounced his wealth and property and snapped his ties of blood relationship? The Labour franchise, therefore, is not a make believe but an honest rendering of a socialistic ideal into the daily programme of Congressmen.

Another aspect of the so-called crisis in Bombay is involved in the oft-repeated questions as to what Gandhi would do and what the Congress should do hereafter. The simple query is raised on the one hand as to whether Gandhi has renounced politics, and on the other what political work the Congress would do if Gandhi should take away with him the Spinners' Association as well as the Village Industries' Association. These questions betray a certain confusion in the public mind. If it is admitted that the Constructive Programme constitutes essentially political work, as Satyagrahis believe it does, then Gandhi has no more renounced politics after the Bombay Session than before it. Moreover, he has reserved to himself the right of Individual Civil Disobedience under the very Congress resolution which has withdrawn it for the Nation. Therefore, instead of renouncing politics he has taken away the whole of it,—Constructive Programme as well as destructive,—with himself. Then many people legitimately ask as to what is left to Congressmen. We may in turn ask, "what is not left to them?" The Constructive Programme is always there and has been really worked by Congressmen themselves in the past with the aid of outsiders. As for the destructive, it is always open to the Congress which has affirmed its faith once again in Civil Disobedience, to reorganise it at any time. In fact, the resolution congratulating the Nation and the workers on their sacrifices in the past, declared the faith of the Congress in Civil Disobedience and non-violence as a better means of achieving Swaraj than methods of violence which, as experience has abundantly shown, result in terrorism both by the oppressed and the oppressors. Gandhi had begun to feel that he is a big weight weighing down upon the Congress and the more he had suppressed himself, the more had he added to that weight. Civil Disobedience had to be inaugurated by him, withdrawn by him, and regulated by him. Peace and war were his concern. He is the one person to whom the Congress had been looking up for



orders to halt or march, to advance or retreat. The withdrawal of such a mighty force could only make for the strength of the body on which it had been acting, even as the retirement of the father from the home would but strengthen the son, encourage him to take the initiative, fill him with a sense of responsibility and inspire him with hope and courage, the more so when the patriarch is prepared to make his advice and guidance available to the family or the Nation whenever necessary. Gandhi had given such an assurance. His object is to make the Indian National Congress a power in the land. It is not the numbers that give strength but the moral power behind them; and this power grows in proportion to the sense of responsibility entertained by the leaders. Instead of assuming such responsibility, the Congress has too long and too much relied on Gandhi and demands his co-operation on its own terms. That is impossible. Congressmen can get Gandhi's co-operation on his terms, and any day, on that basis, he is willing to return to the Congress and direct its work. Only, let the Congress set its house in order, create a genuine membership, though small in measure, bring into existence executives that are active throughout the year, which will purify and ennoble the Congress institutions, and then he will readily come and assume command. Gandhi is the founder of the New Congress wedded to the ideal of service as against power. He has taken public life to the villages and made them the foundation of Indian Nationalism. He has enlarged the scope and meaning of Politics so that it now embraces a programme of national reconstruction all round. He has given the Nation a cause, a flag and a leader. Gandhi may have retired, but Gandhi is always there as the first Servant of India to lead the Nation to its destiny in accordance with the high principles which he has all along applied to the Congress and its manifold activities.

The success of the Bombay Session was in no small measure due to the tact, energy and circumspection of its President, Babu Rajendra Prasad. His Address to the Congress is one of those model addresses which leave an abiding effect on the political situation. His criticism of the White Paper was detailed and scathing and his observations on the Congress programme were helpful.

The President concluded his short and telling Address thus:—

“Independence is the natural outcome of all that the freedom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation, particularly when we remember that it has to be achieved by non-violence. It means the end of exploitation of one country by another, and of one part of the population of the same country by another part. It contemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for the mutual benefit of all. It forebodes evil to none, not even to those exploiting us, except in so far as they rely upon exploitation rather than goodwill. The sanction behind this Independence movement is non-violence which, in its positive and dynamic aspect, is goodwill of and for all. We already see signs of how it has begun appealing to a certain extent to world opinion. This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so according as the element of distrust and suspicion, which has its birth in fear, is eliminated and replaced by a





sense of security born of confidence in the goodwill of India. India having no designs on others, will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the goodwill of her inhabitants. Having no designs on others, she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others, and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the goodwill of the world at large. Conceived in this light, our Independence ought not to frighten even the Britishers, unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions.

"The method too is crystal clear. It is active, dynamic, non-violent mass action. We may fail once, we may fail twice; but we are bound to succeed some day.

"Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of our great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed, and firm in our determination. Satyagraha in its active application may meet with temporary set-backs, but it knows no defeat. It is itself a great victory, for, as James-Lowell put it,

'Truth for ever on the scaffold,  
Wrong for ever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
And behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own'."

Now we proceed to give a summary of the resolutions passed by the Bombay Session on October 26th to 28th, 1934, of which Syt. Rajendra Prasad was the President and Syt. K. F. Nariman was the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

The Congress opened with a resolution endorsing the resolutions passed by the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee at their meetings held in May, 1934, and thereafter, especially the resolutions regarding the Parliamentary Board and its policy and programme, the Constructive Programme, the status of Indian settlers overseas, condolence resolution, and the resolution on Swadeshi.

The Nation's sacrifices and faith in civil resistance were then dealt with.

The Congress congratulated the Nation on the heroic sacrifices made and the sufferings undergone by thousands of civil resisters,—men and women, young and old, drawn from cities as well as the villages in the different Provinces,—and placed on record its conviction that "without non-violent Non-co-operation and civil resistance there would never have been the phenomenal mass awakening that has taken place throughout the country." Whilst recognising the desirability and necessity of the



suspension of the civil resistance campaign except with reference to Gandhiji, the Congress reiterated its undying faith in non-violent Non-co-operation and civil resistance "as a better means of achieving Swaraj than methods of violence which, as experience has abundantly shown, result in terrorism both by the oppressed and the oppressors."

A resolution was next passed expressing anxiety over the illness of Mrs. Jawaharlal Nehru, and hoping that the change to the hills would result in her restoration to health.

The All-India Village Industries' Association was the topic on which interest was concentrated and a lengthy resolution was passed:—

"Whereas organisations claiming to advance Swadeshi have sprung up all over the country, with and without the assistance of Congressmen, and whereas much confusion has arisen in the public mind as to the nature of Swadeshi, and whereas the aim of the Congress has been, from its inception, progressive identification with the masses, and whereas village re-organisation and re-construction is one of the items in the Constructive Programme of the Congress, and whereas such reconstruction necessarily implies revival and encouragement of dead or dying village industries besides the central industry of hand-spinning, and whereas this work, like the reorganisation of hand-spinning is possible only through concentrated and special effort, unaffected by and independent of the political activities of the Congress, Shri J. C. Kumarappa is hereby authorised to form, under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji, an association called the All-India Village Industries' Association as part of the activities of the Congress. The said Association shall work for the revival and encouragement of the said industries and for the moral and physical advancement of the villages, and shall have power to frame its own Constitution, to raise funds, and to perform such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects."

A consequential resolution was passed on the subject of exhibitions and demonstrations which ran thus:—

"Inasmuch as it is desirable to free the Reception Committee from the distraction and expense attendant upon the organisation of exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations that take place at the annual sessions of the Congress, and as these make it impossible for smaller places to invite the Congress, the Reception Committee shall henceforth be relieved of the task of organising exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations. But as exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations are a necessary part of the annual national gathering, the duty of organising these is hereby entrusted to the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries' Association, which bodies shall organise these functions so as to combine instruction with entertainment of the general public, especially of the villagers, with the sole view to illustrate and popularise the activities of the two associations and, generally, to demonstrate the potentiality of village life."





The Congress Parliamentary Board claimed attention.

The Board itself was of opinion that, "inasmuch as this Board was constituted as an emergency measure, it is desirable that its life should be limited to one year and that thereafter it should be placed on an elective basis for the period and on the terms as might appear desirable." This resolution of the Board was forwarded to the Working Committee as a 'recommendation of the Board', and the Congress accepted the said recommendation and resolved that the existing Parliamentary Board should be dissolved on 1st May, 1935, and a new Board of 25 should be elected by the A.I.C.C. on or before the aforesaid date. The elected Board should have the power to co-opt not more than five members. There should be a fresh election of the Parliamentary Board at every annual session of the Congress, with the same power of co-option. The elected Board should possess the same powers as are possessed by the existing Board.

The revised Constitution has been dwelt upon at length in these pages.

A separate resolution was passed prescribing a khaddar qualification which ran thus: 'No member shall be eligible for election to any office or to any Congress Committee unless he is a habitual wearer wholly of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.'

For the first time, a Labour qualification was introduced :—

"No person shall be eligible to be a candidate for election to membership of any Congress Committee, unless he or she has performed some manual labour continuously for six months immediately before the date of nomination for election, on behalf of or for the Congress, equal in value to 500 yards per month of well-spun yarn of over ten counts, and in time to eight hours per month. The form of acceptable labour alternative to spinning shall be prescribed from time to time by the Working Committee, in consultation with the Provincial Congress Committees and the All-India Village Industries' Association."

Gandhiji's retirement naturally demanded a resolution of confidence in him which was thus expressed :—

"The Congress reiterates its confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and is emphatically of opinion that he should reconsider his decision to retire from the Congress. But inasmuch as all efforts to persuade him in that behalf have failed, this Congress, while reluctantly accepting his decision, places on record its deep sense of gratitude for the unique services rendered by him to the Nation and notes with satisfaction his assurance that his advice and guidance will be available to the Congress whenever necessary."

The next session of the Congress was invited to U.P. and the invitation was accepted.



Hardly had the Bombay Session concluded its sittings when the Nation was plunged into the elections to the Assembly. The change from the lathi-charges and sufferings of the offensive movement to the lightning marches of an election campaign and its thundering orations was truly refreshing. People were restored for a while to their wonted tastes. They had a splendid case to present. Every District and every Tahsil was visited. An educative and propagandist campaign was carried on throughout the country. Almost every general constituency seat was contested. The Nationalists under the lead of Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney chose to stand as Congress Nationalists, apart from the mere Congressmen. The seat that attracted general attention was that contested by Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetti—the Commerce seat in South India. He had been sent to Ottawa by the Government of India to negotiate a scheme of trade relations based on Empire Preference and, on his return, had been elected President of the Assembly. He had the virtual support of the Madras Government and the Government of India. Sir Mohammad Osman, the ex-Home Member of the Madras Government, and the Raja of Bobbili, the Chief Minister, were amongst the first signatories to his manifesto. The English practice of not contesting the seat of the ex-President or Speaker of the Legislature was invoked. Government officers freely took part in the elections. The Congress worked for Swami Venkatachalam Chetti, the rival candidate, and it was no trite victory that the latter scored over the former. It was a victory really of the Congress over Government, of moral force over wealth and power; it was a victory of India over Britain and Ottawa put together. Government too wanted to make this election a test election, one intended to judge whether their man, who had espoused their cause at Ottawa and had the courage—some might say the hardihood—to act against informed commercial opinion in the country, had the support of a commercial constituency such as it was. In the end, the test proved to be not merely a test of support based on numerical strength which would have been true if the combatants had fought on a territorial electorate, but a test of support based on moral strength and intellectual conviction of a picked few competent to judge. This election was so timed as to lead almost every other election in India, and when the result was announced it had an effect just the opposite of what was anticipated and expected. South India swept the polls. Eleven territorial seats had a thumping majority for the Congress. In Bengal, Congress Nationalists got all the general seats. U. P., unlike in 1926, captured all the general seats and one Mussalman seat, Bihar and C. P., Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnatak and Assam swept the polls for the Congress. Punjab alone lagged behind, with only one seat for the Congress. Altogether the Congress captured 44 clear Congress seats, apart from the seats of the Congress Nationalists, who were with the Congress on all points except on the question of the communal decision.

The Congress Party in the Assembly put up Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani as candidate for the Presidentship of the Assembly but he failed. Heavy tolls Congress had to pay in the deaths of three successful candidates, viz., Abhyankar and Sherwani and Sasmal, the last of whom was a Congress Nationalist, and all of whom passed away from our midst in



the prime of their life, and after they had contributed their best to the country's cause.

The Congress Party soon set to work in the Assembly which began its session on January 21. An adjournment motion on the Government's Circular on the A.I.V.I.A. was talked out and that on the detention of Sarat Chandra Bose was passed by 58 to 54 votes. The refusal of permission to Syt. Sarat Chandra Bose who had been, while an internee, returned to the Assembly uncontested, to attend its sittings, attracted the earliest attention of the Congress Party which had marshalled its forces under the able leadership of Syt. Bhulabhai Desai. Syt. Desai brought to the Assembly the same prestige and glamour as Motilalji himself. He had been for some time Advocate-General of Bombay and did not care very much for the prize posts to which this recognised leadership of the Bar is the usual stepping stone. The Indo-British Trade Agreement was the object of the next attack and a resolution that it should be terminated was passed by 66 against 58 votes. The Pact was a scandalous piece of jobbery which was perpetrated as between the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary to the Board of Trade in the British Cabinet. Two members of the British Cabinet agreed to divide the spoils of trade in India and chose to call it by the dignified name of the Indo-British Trade Agreement. This Agreement is really a document intended to implement beforehand the forthcoming recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report on the commercial safeguards under the new Reforms. It was specifically laid down that the protection afforded to Indian industries "shall only be so much as, and no more than, will equate the prices of the imported goods to fair selling prices for similar goods produced in India and that, wherever possible, lower rates of duty will be imposed on goods of United Kingdom origin." Differential margins of duty as between English and foreign goods shall not be altered to the detriment of the United Kingdom goods. Whenever the question of protection to any Indian industry is referred to the Tariff Board, the Government of India shall afford full opportunity to any industry concerned in the United Kingdom to state its case and answer cases presented by other interested parties. The privilege of duty-free entry of Indian pig-iron into the U.K. will be continued so long as the duties applicable to the article on iron and steel imported into India are not less favourable to the U. K. than hitherto. Now, this extraordinary Agreement was signed on the 10th January, 1935, and earned the unmitigated condemnation of the Assembly. The ban on Khudai Khidmatgars was asked to be removed by 74 to 46 votes. The Taxation policy of Government was the next subject of victory for the popular party and this was followed by that on Siamese rice and twenty-five or thirty other subjects big and small. We have reserved a reference to the victory on the J.P.C. Report to the last. The tadpole of the White Paper at the time of the elections had since developed into the frog of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report. It has since passed both the Houses of Parliament and become Law. As these pages are nearing completion, we give a comprehensive survey of the recommendations of the J.P.C. and the case for their rejection in Appendix XIV, but the resolution passed by the Assembly is given below, as well as details of the procedure followed in this behalf.



The procedure followed by the Government in the Assembly in connection with the debate on the J.P.C. Report was different from that followed in the Provincial Councils. In the Provinces, the official bloc rightly refrained from taking part in the voting, so that only Indian opinion represented in Provincial Councils might register its vote on the Report. In the Assembly, however, the Government decided to intervene in the debate and cast all votes at their disposal against amendments to their proposition for the consideration of the Report. But for this intervention, the unambiguous resolution moved by the Congress Party recommending the Government, "not to proceed with any legislation based on the said scheme," would have been carried.

The Assembly, however, adopted the amendment moved by Mr. Jinnah. For the purpose of voting, the amendment was divided into two parts, the first part relating to the acceptance of the Communal Award. The Congress amendment of neutrality was first put to vote as an amendment to Mr. Jinnah's amendment, and was lost, there being 44 votes cast in its favour by the members of the Congress Party. After the Congress amendment was lost, the Congress group remained neutral and the first clause was carried with the votes of the Mussalmans and the Government.

The second and third clauses were put together as being an entire alternative and were adopted by the House by 74 against 58 votes. The Congress Party voted for the amendment; the Government and nominated members voted against it.

Mr. Jinnah's amendment was as follows:—

"1. That this Assembly accepts the Communal Award, so far as it goes, until a substitute is agreed upon by the various communities concerned.

"2. As regards the scheme of Provincial Governments, this House is of opinion that it is most unsatisfactory and disappointing inasmuch as it includes various objectionable features, particularly the establishment of Second Chambers, the Extraordinary and Special Powers of the Governors, provisions relating to Police rules, Secret Service and Intelligence Departments, which render the real control and responsibility of the Executive and Legislature ineffective, and, therefore, unless these objectionable features are removed, it will not satisfy any section of Indian opinion.

"3. With respect to the scheme of the Central Government, called 'All-India Federation' this House is clearly of opinion that it is fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable to the people of British India, and, therefore, recommends to the Government of India to advise His Majesty's Government not to proceed with any legislation based on this scheme and urges that immediate efforts should be made to consider how best to establish in British India alone a real and complete Responsible Government, and with that view, take steps to review the whole position in consultation with Indian opinion without delay."



The amendment contained in clauses 2 and 3 which was put as an entire alternative scheme was treated by the Government, speaking through the Law Member, as being as much a rejection of the J.P.C. Report proposals as the more direct rejection of the same by the Congress. The Law Member, while describing the nature of Mr. Jinnah's amendment, said as follows:—

"Now, Sir, I was going to say that instead of the honest, direct and frontal attack which comes from my friend, Mr. Desai, we have this disingenuous and indirect attack from my Hon. friend, Mr. Mohamed Ali Jinnah, although directed on the identical purpose. My Hon. friend knows perfectly well that although, in form, it is an attack only on half, yet in substance, in effect, there is no difference in the amendment of my Hon. friend Mr. Jinnah, and the amendment of the Congress leaders."

The Government sustained a series of defeats in the Assembly when consideration of the Railway Budget came up for discussion. The Government policy in connection with the management of Indian Railways was exposed by the members from various points of view. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Leader of the Opposition, moved a motion for the reduction of the Railway Board Grant to Re. 1.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Desai incidentally exposed the present policy of the Government which was, as he said, inspired by their Despatch in 1930. The reasons given there for such policy were, (a) rendering prompt and adequate service to Military authorities in times of political crisis, (b) safeguarding the enormous capital sunk in Indian Railways, (c) guaranteeing service of higher railway officers appointed by the Secretary of State, (d) to ensure future recruitment of Europeans on Military and other grounds, and (e) maintenance of the interests of the Anglo-Indian community in Railway Service. It was in pursuance of this policy that the proposed India Bill has made the Railways a subject of the Governor-General's special responsibilities:

Mr. Desai's motion was, as he pointed out in the course of the discussion, "not a token cut, but refusal of supplies." The motion was carried by 75 to 47 votes. In a free country, the adoption of the motion for refusal of supplies would have produced its inevitable effect on the Government. Other cut motions introduced in connection with the Railway Budget related to the Indianisation of the Railway services (passed by 81 votes against 44), greater facilities for 3rd class passengers, Railway policy, Wheatley Commission's recommendations on Labour, and reduction of freights for transport of agricultural produce.

The first meeting of the new Working Committee was held at Patna on the 5th, 6th and 7th of December, 1934. The Committee recorded its sorrow at the death of Syt. B. N. Sasmal who had passed away just on the day of the result of his election to the Assembly was announced. The Working Committee expressed itself on the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report and passed the following resolution:—



"Whereas the Congress has after full and earnest consideration resolved that the scheme of future Government of India adumbrated in the White Paper be rejected and that the only satisfactory alternative is a Constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly:

"And the said rejection and demand for a Constituent Assembly has been endorsed in a clear and unambiguous manner by the country at the recent general election to the Legislative Assembly;

"And whereas the proposals made in the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report are in several respects even worse than those contained in the White Paper and have been condemned by almost every shade of opinion in India as reactionary and unacceptable;

"And whereas the Joint Parliamentary Committee Scheme, designed as it is to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of this country by alien people under a costly mask, is fraught with greater mischief and danger than even the present Constitution;

"This Committee is of opinion that the said Scheme should be rejected, well knowing that the rejection must involve the necessity of struggling under the present Constitution, humiliating and intolerable as it is, until it is replaced by one framed by a Constituent Assembly in accordance with the Congress resolution on the subject. This Committee requests the members of the Assembly to reject the Scheme of Government sought to be thrust upon India in the name of reform and appeals to the Nation to support the Congress in every step that it may decide upon to secure the national objective of Purna Swaraj."

The Working Committee after congratulating the country on the faith and confidence it had shown in the leadership of the Congress by its splendid response at the Assembly elections, asked Congress organisations and Congressmen to concentrate their attention for the next three months on (1) enrolment of Congress members and organisation of Congress Committees under the new Constitution, (2) collection of accurate and useful local data for village industries, and (3) education of the masses on the Fundamental Rights and duties and the economic programme as adopted by the Karachi Congress. The Committee deplored the action of the Government for the irritating and humiliating restrictions placed upon the liberty and movements of Syt. Subhash Chandra Bose during his short sojourn in India at the time of his father's death. The Committee expressed its opinion that Congress members in the Legislatures should be habitual wearers of khaddar and requested them to adhere strictly to this rule. The Committee having been asked by the Nationalist Party of Bengal to reconsider the Congress attitude on the question of Communal Award, in view of the adverse verdict of the Hindu electorate in Bengal during the Assembly elections, the Committee recorded the opinion that that policy of the Congress being laid down by the resolution of the Bombay Congress, it could not alter it, particularly when it had been overwhelmingly endorsed by the country at large.





We may now profitably give a summary of the progress of events directly connected with the Congress in the year 1935—the fiftieth year of the Congress and the last year covered by this volume.

The Working Committee met again on 16th to 18th January, 1935, and it had to offer condolences to the families of Abhyankar of Nagpur and Acharya Gidwani. Both had suffered much and served the country nobly and long. The Purna Swaraj or Independence Day was observed this year as in previous years, and a particular resolution was prescribed for the whole of India. Here are the instructions and the resolution issued by the Working Committee:—

“As Civil Disobedience has been suspended by the Congress, the proceedings for the day should not be in breach of the Ordinances, or other laws or orders promulgated by local authority. Consistently with this precaution, silent processions should be taken to previously announced meeting places, and at the meetings the under-noted resolution worded in Hindustani or the local language should be read out by the Chairman and, without any speeches, passed by the audience standing. Where meetings are prohibited, every household should meet at the appointed time and pass the resolution and inform the nearest Congress Committee of having done so.

“At every meeting, or in every house, the passing of the resolution should be preceded by the unfurling of the National Flag.

“The resolution shall be as under:

“We remind ourselves on this, the solemn National Day, that Complete Independence is our birthright and we shall not rest till we have achieved it.

“To that end we shall strive to the utmost of our ability in thought, word and deed, to observe Truth and Non-violence and shall consider no sacrifice or suffering too great to be undergone.

“As a token of the expression of the two essential qualities of Truth and Non-violence, we shall seek to

- (i) adopt and promote heart unity among different communities and to establish complete equality of status among all, irrespective of caste or creed or race;
- (ii) to adopt and promote complete abstinence from intoxicating drink or drugs;
- (iii) to promote hand-spinning and other village industries and to adopt for personal use khaddar and other products of village industries to the exclusion of other products;
- (iv) to abolish untouchability;
- (v) to serve the starving millions in every way we can; and,
- (vi) to engage in all other national and constructive effort.”

“It is recommended that the National Day be devoted, in so far as it is possible, to some special constructive effort and a determination be made to develop greater dedication to the cause of Purna Swaraj.

“There should be no *hartal* observed.”





The Jubilee celebrations connected with King George's reign naturally attracted special attention and was the subject of the following resolution :—

"Official announcement has been made that the Silver Jubilee of His Britannic Majesty's reign is to be celebrated in India. It is necessary for the Working Committee to guide the public as to the attitude to be adopted on the occasion.

"The Congress has and can have nothing but good wishes for the personal well-being of His Majesty, but the Congress cannot ignore the fact that the rule in India with which His Majesty is naturally identified has been a positive hindrance to the political, moral and material growth of the Nation. It now threatens to culminate in a Constitution which, if enforced, promises to exploit the Nation, to drain her of what she still possesses of wealth and to harden her political subjection as has perhaps never been attempted before.

"It is, therefore, impossible for the Working Committee to advise any participation in the forthcoming celebration. At the same time, the Working Committee has no desire, by hostile demonstrations, to wound the susceptibilities of Englishmen and others who will want to take part in the celebrations. The Working Committee, therefore, advises the general public, including Congressmen who may be members of elected bodies, to be satisfied with mere abstention from the events that may be arranged for celebration.

"The Working Committee trusts that the authorities and responsible Englishmen will recognise and appreciate the honest and inevitable attitude of the Working Committee and refrain from unnecessarily wounding national self-respect by compelling, directly or indirectly, participation in the forthcoming celebrations."

On the question of the Textile Mills the position was cleared :—

"As most of the textile mill-owners have broken their pledges given to the Congress, the Working Committee is of opinion that it is no longer possible to continue the system of certification by the Congress or associated bodies, the old certificates issued should, therefore, be considered as cancelled.

"The Working Committee is further of opinion that it is the duty of all Congressmen and those who sympathise with the Congress to confine their attention and give their support exclusively to the promotion of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth."

Under Article XII (d) (iii) of the amended Constitution, the Working Committee framed disciplinary rules.

Doubts having been raised regarding the interpretation of 'Residential Qualifications' in the Congress Constitution, the same was made clear by a resolution of the Working Committee.

The Committee then discussed the problem of Burma under the Scheme of Reforms in the J.P.C. Report, and Burma as a Congress circle, and decided that the Burma Provincial Congress Committee should, for the time being, function as before.





With regard to the position of Indians in Burma under the new Scheme, the Committee was of opinion that as the whole Scheme was unacceptable and therefore no amendments could be suggested by the Congress, there was no bar to Burma Indians criticising parts of the Scheme which virtually affected their position and status.

The President was authorised to issue an appeal for funds for relieving the distress in the famine stricken areas of Rayalaseema in Andhra.

Again the unity of command and action was demonstrated in the observance of an All-India Protest Day against the J.P.C. Report on the 7th February, 1935. In pursuance of an appeal in that behalf, meetings were held not merely in every town of any importance but also in distant nooks and corners of many Provinces, and the resolution suggested by the President was adopted at such meetings.

The demonstrations held in Rangoon under the auspices of the Burma Provincial Congress Committee was unique in the sense that Burmans and Indians came together on a common platform to press for the rejection of the Report.

We must now refer to the Unity Talks that took place in January and February, 1935.

Negotiations for an agreed settlement between the communities which could replace the so-called Communal Award, and which by minimising communal discord and bickerings could enable the country to present a united front, proceeded for more than a month between the Congress President, Babu Rajendra Prasad, and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League. The talks started on January 23rd, and were continued with a short break upto 1st March, 1935, when they terminated without any tangible result, much to the disappointment of the country.

The policy of repression adopted by Government received nothing but encouragement from the cessation of the Congress offensive. It is always a feature of despotic rule to take advantage of the enemy's passivity in order to wipe out traces of revolt. The universal condemnation of the J.P.C. Report and the Bill before Parliament which it gave birth to, only irritated the Government the more. In Calcutta, sedition prosecutions were being pursued. The Government of Bengal refused to allow the session of the All India Trade Union Congress to be held in Calcutta. Police harassments of Congress workers in the peaceful pursuit of the Congress programme became the subject of complaint from certain districts.

The year 1935 did not witness any change in the Government attitude or policy. The Congress was looked upon with suspicion and as a potential enemy, and no opportunity was lost of taking action against Congress workers even on the slightest pretext. Those suspected in connection with terrorist activities continued to remain in detention either in jail or private residences, without trial, and their number in Bengal alone came to 2,700. House searches were held from



## THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

time to time in various places and even offices of the A.I.C.C. and some of the P.C.C.'s like those of Bihar did not escape attention. Khan Abdul Gaffar was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for a speech delivered in Bombay and Dr. Satyapal to a year's imprisonment for a speech in connection with the election campaign.

The detenus in Bengal could be counted in thousands. Their families were left in a helpless condition. Government detached from them the youngmen competent to maintain them. These youngmen had been interned or externed or detained for years without trial. The All-India Congress Committee, when it met at Jubbulpore on the 24th and 25th of April, passed a resolution expressing sympathy and decided to raise funds for the relief of the distress caused to the families and dependants of the detenus. The 19th of May was observed as a day of protest against the detention of large numbers of persons without trial by a Court of law and for making collections, and the President sent a public appeal to the country in this behalf. The Bengal Government met this move on the part of the Congress by an order issued under section 2-A of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act by which they prohibited absolutely the publication of any information connected with the observance of the Detenu Day throughout India in accordance with instructions issued by the President of the Congress. This evoked a protest from the journalists of Bengal who suspended the publication of their journals for a day on that account.

The All-India Congress Committee met at Jubbulpore on the 24th and 25th of April, passed a resolution on Congress Parliamentary Board and an Election Dispute Panel, and appointed auditors. It expressed its condolence at the death of Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani. It expressed its satisfaction at the work of the Congress Party in the Assembly and drew the attention of the country to the continuance of the ban on Congress organisations in the N.W.F. Province and all Congress Committees in Midnapore district in Bengal, and on affiliated and allied bodies like the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Hindustan Seva Dal in Bengal, Gujarat and elsewhere, to the suppression of Labour and Youth League organisations in Bengal, the Bombay Presidency, the Punjab and elsewhere on the plea of alleged tendencies without reference to any overt acts and to organisation; and appealed to the people at large to increase the strength of the Congress organisation as a means of liberation.

The Committee noted the flagrant abuse of the ancient piece of legislation called the Foreigners' Act and the externment of Congressmen from British India under the said Act, thus depriving them of the opportunity of legitimate residence and carrying on their business in British India.

The Committee strongly condemned the continued repression in Bengal and the detention and internment of a large number of youths, depriving their families of their support and without themselves making any arrangement for the maintenance of these suffering families. It recorded its opinion that the Bengal Government should either discharge





the detenus or give them a fair trial. It assured the people of Bengal and the detenus of its full sympathy in their affliction. It also called upon the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to submit to the Working Committee a list of detenus with full particulars about the period of detention and financial condition of the families. It also resolved to start an All-India Fund for the relief of detenus' families, under the control of its Working Committee.

The Committee deplored the horrible acts of mob violence at Ferozabad culminating in the burning alive of the whole family of Doctor Jivaram, including children and patients, and drew the attention of leaders to the deplorable results to which frenzied communalism can go and appealed for effective steps to impress upon the public at large the need for living together in peace and friendship, with mutual good understanding and respect. The Committee laid down that the interests of the people of the Indian States are as much the concern of the Indian National Congress as those of the people of British India, and assured the States' people of its full support in the struggle for freedom.

The Working Committee, which met at the same time at Jubbulpore, fixed the maximum number of delegates returnable by each Province under the new Constitution and prepared a time-table for the various steps to be taken for the organisation of Congress Committees and election of delegates to the next Congress and members of the A.I.C.C. It dealt with certain election disputes in Provinces and provided for the representation of the N.W.F.P. and the District of Midnapore in Bengal in the Congress and the A.I.C.C., inasmuch as Congress organisations being under ban in those places no election could take place.

Hardly had 18 months elapsed since, on January 15th, 1934, the Bihar earthquake convulsed the country, when on the 31st of May, 1935, the earthquake at Quetta cast a shadow of gloom all over the land. That the initiative for relief should have been taken by Government is natural in view of the city being a Military centre, but that orders should be issued prohibiting outsiders from entering Quetta to give relief or organise aid, passes all understanding. Neither the Congress President nor Gandhi has been given permission to go to the place. Under the circumstances all organisation of help could be made only on the outskirts of the prohibited zone. The President of the Congress organised a Quetta Central Relief Committee which, with branches in Sind, the Punjab and the N.W.F.P., has been giving relief to sufferers who have been sent to these Provinces from Quetta. June 30th was observed as a day for showing sympathy to sufferers and for prayers for the dead. The policy of Government in this regard is but the crowning piece of a policy of suspicion and distrust and has obliged the Working Committee to pass the following resolution on Quetta relief on 1-8-'35:—

“The Working Committee records its sense of deep sorrow at the loss sustained in men and money by thousands of people during the recent earthquake in Quetta and other parts of Baluchistan and tenders its condolences and sympathy to the bereaved and the sufferers.



## THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

“The Working Committee endorses the action taken by the President in forming a Central Relief Committee for collecting funds and administering relief. The Committee thanks all those who rendered valuable aid through personal care to thousands of the injured and distressed under very difficult circumstances and acknowledges the response of the public to appeals for funds.

“The Working Committee, while recognising the efforts made by the authorities at Quetta to meet the situation with the resources at their disposal, is of opinion based on the published statements of eye-witnesses, official and non-official, that many persons under the debris could have been rescued if the digging operations had been undertaken on an adequate scale and not stopped after two days, and if the offered help from the public had not been rejected.

“The Working Committee is of opinion that the Government should appoint a commission composed of officials and non-officials to enquire into the allegations made by the public and, in some respects, supported by published statements of officials, viz.,

1. that the statement made on behalf of the Government when assistance was offered, that they had ample resources to deal with the situation in Quetta, does not appear to be borne out by facts;
2. that they unjustifiably turned away such proffered assistance;
3. that they ought to have recruited available assistance from neighbouring areas to cope properly with the emergency;
4. that whilst every European resident of the affected area was accounted for, no adequate attempt was made in respect of the Indian residents and there was similar discrimination between Indians and Europeans in the matter of rescue, relief and salvage.”

Another problem that agitated Congressmen, notably those in the Assembly and those who were keen on Council-entry, in the middle of 1935 relates to the question of acceptance of office under the new Constitution. It was somewhat unfortunate that this task should have been started in the country while yet the Bill was before Parliament; nor can we ignore the fact that the attitude expressed in India by this wing of Congressmen was taken full advantage of by those in charge of the Bill, to assure Parliament that there were men who would work the new Reforms. The attitude of the Congress itself was definitely declared in the Congress resolution of Bombay (1934), and no one is competent to deal with this question before the next Congress sits. Accordingly, the Working Committee passed the following resolution at the end of July at Wardha, referring the question to the plenary session of the Congress:—

“Having read the resolution of several Congress Committees relating to the acceptance or non-acceptance of office under the new Constitution, this Committee is of opinion that any decision on the question would be premature at this stage and should be left over for the next session of the Congress. It declares that any expression





of opinion on the question by individual Congressmen does not represent the view of the Congress."

The Indian States Peoples' Organisation was, in the course of the early part of the year, somewhat agitated over the opinion of Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Leader of the Parliamentary Board, which he had tendered in his professional capacity to the Princes of India in relation to the question of Federation under the Government of India Bill, while yet the Bill was before the Commons, and a speech which he had delivered at Mysore. In the month of July, there was a demand for a meeting of the A.I.C.C. to consider the attitude of the Congress towards the rights of the people of the Indian States who base their demand on the following utterance of Gandhi at the second Round Table Conference:—

"The Congress is not going to be satisfied with any Constitution which does not provide for the fundamental rights of citizenship for the States' people, with a right of representation on the Federal Legislature."

The Working Committee at its meeting held at Wardha on the 29th, 30th and 31st July, 1935, passed a resolution on the subject, embodying its considered opinion on the subject which was as follows:—

"Although the policy of the Congress regarding the States in India has been defined in its resolutions, a persistent effort is being made by or on behalf of the people of the States to get a fuller declaration of the Congress policy. The Working Committee therefore issues the following statement concerning the policy of the Congress with regard to the Princes and the people of the States:

"The Indian National Congress recognises that the people in the Indian States have an inherent right to Swaraj no less than the people of British India. It has accordingly declared itself in favour of the establishment of representative Responsible Government in the States and has in that behalf not only appealed to the Princes to establish such Responsible Government in their States and to guarantee fundamental rights of citizenship, like freedom of person, speech, association and the Press to their people, but has also pledged to the States' people its sympathy and support in their legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of full responsible Government. By that declaration and by that pledge, the Congress stands. The Congress feels that even in their own interests the Princes will be well advised to establish at the earliest possible moment full Responsible Government within their States, carrying a guarantee of full rights of citizenship to their people.

"It should be understood, however, that the responsibility and the burden of carrying on that struggle within the States must necessarily fall on the States' people themselves. The Congress can exercise moral and friendly influence upon the States, and this it is bound to do wherever possible. The Congress has not other power under existing circumstances, although the people of India, whether



under the British, the Princes or any other power, are geographically and historically one and indivisible.

"In the heart of controversy, the limitation of the Congress is often forgotten. Indeed, any other policy will defeat the common purpose.

"With regard to the impending constitutional changes, it has been suggested that the Congress should insist upon certain amendments of that portion of the Government of India Bill which deals with the relation of the Indian States to the Indian Federation. The Congress has more than once categorically rejected the entire Scheme of Constitutional Reforms on the broad ground of its not being an expression of the will of the people of India and has insisted on a Constitution to be framed by a Constituent Assembly. It may not now ask for an amendment of the Scheme in any particular part. To do so would amount to a reversal of the Congress policy.

"At the same time, it is hardly necessary to assure the people of the States that the Congress will never be guilty of sacrificing their interests in order to buy the support of the Princes. From its inception, the Congress has stood unequivocally for the rights of the masses of India as against vested rights in conflict with their true interest."

Finally it was resolved that the fiftieth anniversary of the Congress be observed in a fitting manner on the day the Congress met for the first time in 1885, and for this purpose the Working Committee appointed a Sub-Committee to draw up a programme for the occasion.

The short interval between the Wardha meeting and the close of the year more or less uneventful, except for the sudden release of Jawaharlal Nehru from the Almora Jail,—on account of the grave state of his wife's health on the 3rd September. He was straightway to leave for Europe and should he return to India before the term of his imprisonment expired, he would, as orders stood, have to return to prison.

The only other event of any importance or interest was the sitting of the A.I.C.C. in Madras on the 17th and 18th of October, 1935. There was a rich promise of a reinforced attack on the questions of 'office acceptance' and 'the Congress and the States' which was expected to be made at the meeting. The A.I.C.C., it may be said, met for the first time in the city of Madras, if we leave out of account the sittings of the body directly associated with a session of the Congress. It was, however, agreed in Madras that the statement of the Working Committee on the question of the States and the Congress be approved, and, on the question of acceptance of office, the A.I.C.C. thought that, considering the long interval that would elapse before the provincial elections under the new Constitution would take place, as well as the uncertain character of the political conditions in the interval, it would be not only premature, but inadvisable and impolitic to commit the Congress to any decision on the subject.

The minor but important point may be noted, in connection with the sitting of the A.I.C.C. in Madras. The Bengal members of the A.I.C.C.





were informed that they would not be allowed to sit at the meeting as the Bengal P.C.C. had not paid in full its contribution of Rs. 500 to the A.I.C.C. A notice was also served by the Working Committee on the Executive of the B.P.C.C. to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against it for having deliberately defied the instructions of the Working Committee in the matter of the recognition of the Calcutta Central District Congress Committee.

In closing, we may just mention the fact that the Government of India Act was passed by Parliament and received the Royal assent on July 2nd, 1935. We have no wish to burden this volume with any criticism of the Act. Only, we feel tempted to quote a short extract from the speech of a member of the House of Commons with which the debates virtually terminated. On the 5th of June, 1935, Major Milner, speaking on the India Bill, compared Mr. Churchill and Sir Samuel Hoare to the villain and the hero of a play. The hero (Sir S. Hoare), said he, had beaten the villain. "He will doubtless finally dispose of him today (5-6-'35) without any loss of blood." "Then," declared Major Milner, "the two protagonists will be found to leave the stage-door arm in arm." Verily, this is the drama enacted in Parliament not only in 1935, but in 1920 as well. While it is broadly true that there is an ultra-conservative section in the English Parliament which in popular parlance is known as the 'die-hard' party, the fact remains that ultimately the object of all the parties is the same, namely, to evolve a picture which, as the *Manchester Guardian* once urged, looks like Swaraj to India and like British Raj to England. For this purpose, the different parties stage a quarrel on the floor of the Houses of Parliament, some appearing inclined to give, others appearing to resist, and the former prevailing upon the moderate elements in India to accept whatever is possible of being given under the circumstances, as the latter would not allow them to go even thus far. The party in power plays the part of the hero, and the party in opposition plays the part of the villain. The two stage a quarrel within the walls of Westminster, and once they leave the arena they congratulate each other on the magnificent, realistic turn given to their feigned differences. Between the two, India is befooled.

Before this chapter closes, let us say a word regarding the growing sense of responsibility that is being evinced by the Presidents of the Congress from year to year. Mrs. Besant had emphasised the conception of her being the President of the Congress throughout the year. Ever since, this high precedent has received full support at the hands of her numerous successors. Except for one or two Presidents who simply disappeared from public view soon after the spectacular sittings of the Congress were concluded, the rest have taken to their duties with a real zest and a high sense of responsibility. Following this noble precedent, Babu Rajendra Prasad, whose health is below par but whose energies and capacity for endurance, however, vary inversely as the square of his health, has had a whirlwind tour round the country, and in this respect has taken a new step altogether in order to keep himself in direct touch with the men and the movements in the country. His hands are already full with work relating to the Bihar Earthquake Relief. On the top of it, he has heavy





duties as President of the Congress, duties of a routine character, and the earthquake in Quetta has further added to the weight of those duties. It is remarkable that in the midst of such pressing engagements he should have toured Maharashtra, Karnatak, Berar, the Punjab, part of C.P., Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Kerala. He is, in addition, connected with the A.I.S.A. and his 'no-change' proclivities have in no way lessened his interest or participation in the activities of the election campaign. The absence of Gandhi from the political arena has augmented the burdens on his shoulders, for, so long as Gandhi was there, it is an open secret that Congress was sitting lightly upon the shoulders of his colleagues. Not that they ever evaded their responsibilities, but that an overshadowing personality like Gandhi's would leave to his colleagues little share in the arduous tasks that public life demands. Thus has the Presidentship of the Congress become a throne of power burdened with heavy cares and responsibilities. Shall we not go one step further and say that the Congress has become a parallel organisation in the country to that of Government, with its own ideals which are repressed by Government, with its schemes of uplift for the villages which are sought to be outstripped by those of Government, with its own philosophy of Truth and Non-violence which are discredited and reviled by a Government wedded to physical force? The Congress has worked for fifty years and been acclaimed a great success. Some say it has proved a failure. Success or failure, Satyagraha is a new force introduced into Congress politics. It is yet on its trial, but has been sufficiently long at work to be able to arrest public attention. This change of ideals, this alteration of methods and means, has been brought about by the initiative of one man who, though born and educated in India, was in the formative period of his life an exile from the country, living in South Africa and making his strange 'Experiments with Truth in a strange land'. People ask whether the Congress is not a failure, whether Satyagraha is not weighed and found wanting, and definitely whether Gandhi is not played out. We shall conclude this volume with an answer to each of these questions.





## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

## I

We have rapidly reviewed the progress of events during the past fifty years and dealt with the latter half of the period in somewhat greater detail than the former half. During this long course of years, various eminent men have been called upon to lead the Nation. Dadabhai Naoroji presided over the Congress thrice and introduced the term *Swaraj* into Congress phraseology. W. C. Bonnerjee, the first President, presided a second time; Surendra Nath Banerjee—the 'Trumpet voice of India'—enjoyed the honour twice, and so did the white-robed Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as well as Pandit Motilal Nehru and Sir William Wedderburn. The Mussalmans contributed eight Presidents out of fifty-one—Tyabji, Sayani Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur, Hasan Imam, Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mahomed Ali and Dr. Ansari. Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta came as the representatives of that noble community—the Parsees—who have enriched India's Vedic and Islamic cultures by the confluence with them of their own culture,—the culture of Zend Avesta. Bengal stands foremost in having contributed men like W. C. Bonnerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Lal Mohan Ghose, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Sir S. P. Sinha, Ambika Charan Mazumdar and C. R. Das. To U. P. belong Bishan Narayan Dhar, Malaviya, Motilalji and his son Jawaharlal. The last of the Presidents, Rajendra Babu, comes from Bihar, which had earlier given Hasan Imam. The Punjab had the honour of giving Lala Lajpat Rai, and C. P. Mudholkar. From Gujarat came Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. The crop from Bombay was abundant. Tyabji and Sayani have already been referred to, as also Mehta, Wacha, Gokhale and Chandavarkar complete the list from the western Province. From Madras came Ananda Charlu, an Andhra, then Sir C. Sankaran Nair, a Kerala-putra, and finally the Grand Old Man of the South—Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachari who, along with Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, hails from Tamil Nadu. Two ladies, Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, have graced the Presidential throne. The European community had its own turn through Messrs. Yule, Webb, Wedderburn and Cotton. This varied list shows how the Congress is not merely a national but truly an international body.\*

Let us now revert to the questions which we have set ourselves at the end of the last chapter—Is Congress a failure? Few will gainsay the fact that the past decade has witnessed the steady rise of new concepts controlling the time-honoured ideas of politics and culture. The domain

\* The addresses of these distinguished Presidents fill over 2,000 printed pages and have been published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, in two volumes. The gratitude of the public is due to this enterprising and patriotic firm—forerunners in the field of national literature—for this act of additional service to Indian Nationalism, done in the 'jubilee' year of the Congress.



of politics itself which is, broadly, the science of human well-being has been extended not only in India but all the world over so as to embrace a study and solution of the larger problems of a socio-economic character. And when to these we superadd ideas of culture and morality, we have elevated politics from the vulgar levels of the nineteenth century to the healthy and ethical standards to which India has been introduced during the past fifteen or sixteen years; and this has been done under the guidance of a world character, M. K. Gandhi, whose invulnerability is appropriately and tersely described by Prof. Gilbert Murray in the following words:—

“Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy, because his body which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase over his soul.”

It is under the guidance of such a teacher that Congress has sought to impress politics with the ideal of service, emphasised the need for a wider culture and higher patriotism amongst the classes and laboured for establishing village leadership. Congress has in fact founded a new religion—the religion of politics. We cannot, without being false to our creed, regard any great human issue as outside the sphere of religion. For religion stands not for any particular dogma or method of worship but for a higher life, a spirit of sacrifice, and a scheme of self-dedication. And when we speak of the Religion of Politics we merely make the sordid politics of the day sacred, the compartmental politics of the day comprehensive, the competitive politics of the day co-operative.

In this attitude and frame of mind, it is that we have pleaded for Truth and Legitimacy as the cardinal factors in the upbuilding of Indian Nationalism. Untruth has always gained earlier and cheaper victories in life, dissimulation and duplicity have often triumphed easily over reason and rectitude. Yea, law and logic have scored over life itself in the past. But these victories and triumphs are as partial as they are fleeting, and have only betrayed the victors into unenviable positions. On a larger scale, the triumphs of the Great War have brought no success to the victors over the vanquished. On a smaller scale, the conquest, so-called, of England over India has brought to lasting happiness to the former as against the latter. The policy underlying the conduct of statesmen in organising the various Round Table Conferences has not ensured for ever India as the out-house of England. Every wave of repression has only reacted against the interests of the repressors and engendered a spirit of resistance, now manifesting itself as Civil Disobedience and now taking sterner and fiercer forms at the hands of the rising generation. To say that we have failed in our programme of Non-co-operation is but to read the wish for the thought, for in the long last, every failure is only seemingly such and is in reality but a step to success. Success itself is but the last phase of a series of failures.





Thus do we judge the programme of the Congress. That programme is of a two-fold character. On the aggressive side, it has given battle to Government in a manner which no civilized Government dare condemn. Non-violence, in thought, word and deed, has been the key-note of that fight and Gandhi has been acknowledged the Chief Constable of India. Government may have affected to abominate his cult of Satyagraha but who can condemn the hold of Truth and Non-violence on the affections of the people? In an age when Royal families have been annihilated and monarchies have been upset and democratic constitutions have given way, in an age, too when the bi-party or the tri-party system of old has disappeared from politics and the rise of opposition is subdued not by defeating the opponent at the polls but by annihilating the party literally, to speak of non-violence may sound a mockery. Our recent experiences have furnished a fit and timely warning to us that the victories won through bloodshed are only maintained through bloodshed and lost through more of it, and that, when once force has become installed as the arbiter between two nations, it tends to butt in between any two communities and, for the matter of that, between any two individuals on all possible occasions.

On the constructive side, the programme of the Congress has been simple,—incredibly so. We must admit it may not have appealed to the sophisticated classes of the country, who live in towns and cities, wear foreign cloth, speak a foreign tongue and serve a foreign master. A census of our towns would be a study in itself, revealing the surprising fact that almost every alternate man is dependent for his living, for his prosperity and for his fame, upon the goodwill of the foreign rulers. These facts are not discerned readily, for we do not know who our masters really are. But we know that they range from the constable to the Excise Inspector, the Bank Agent and the English tailor. The P.W.D. *lascar*, the Revenue Collector, the Bench Magistrate and the Bill discounter are all the unpaid representatives of the British Empire Ltd., whose Local Board of Directors is the Government of India with sub-offices in the various Provinces. The British Government is entrenched behind the seven *prakarams* of the Army, the Police and the Services, the Courts, the Councils, the Colleges, the Local Bodies and the titled aristocracy. The eighty per cent of rural population in the country lives in fear of the Revenue authorities and the balance of urban population in fear of the Municipalities, Local Boards, Income-tax officers, Excise authorities and the Police.

It has, therefore, become supremely important to cast off fear resulting from a recognition of force, and plant, in its stead, hope and courage that spring from a genuine love of non-violence. The constructive Programme has, therefore, taken on hand activities typical of three respective classes which bring Congressmen engaged in them into close touch with the masses. When, therefore, we speak of khaddar, we not only help the poor to find a subsidiary occupation or even a living wage, but give them an opportunity of cultivating self-respect by throwing off the symbol of slavery that is on their backs. We conserve the sacredness of the home and give the craftsman that creative joy through the exercise of



his craft which forms the true index of civilization. When people are asked to pay a bit more for khaddar, we teach them to give a voluntary bounty to a national industry which it is the legitimate duty of the State really to provide, but which it would not. Above all, we teach simplicity to our people and with simplicity of living come sublimity of thought, ideas of self-respect, self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-realization. What we have sought to achieve on the economic plane through khaddar, we strive to attain on the moral plane through prohibition, and, on the social, through the removal of untouchability. There must be something unspeakably low, not to say worse, in a State objecting to the organisation of prohibition amongst its citizens. The problem is far too simple to need any discussion. The Nation is mainly composed of the two great communities—Hindu and Muslim—both of whom base their religious teachings on the prohibition of drink. The temperance movement in the country has worked on this basis; yet, when the Nation is serious and constructs this moral plank in its political platform and organizes it by picketing, Government comes down on the Congress like a wolf on the fold. When the Congress Governments have introduced prohibition,—much to the universal satisfaction of the people concerned,—notably of the women of the families, the exit of Congress Ministries from the office has served as a signal for a retrograde step in Bombay and Bihar.

We have not fared better when we add a social plank to this platform in the removal of untouchability. The Premier's decision had "rent asunder those whom God hath united" by carving out the Harijans into a separate electorate. Only the fast unto death of the great leader of India has made an amendment possible of that undesirable document and has established a broad unity in the Hindu community, though with some internal compartmentalism still lingering. And when we have sought to remove the prevailing bar to the entry of the Harijans into temples, even when a plebiscite has strengthened the hands of their trustees, Government have interposed their irresistible opposition to a progressive measure which is but permissive, and nipped it in the bud.

The problem that the country has to face is one of supreme complexity—with a Government that would divide and rule, and rule and divide, with towns and cities arrayed against villages, with the classes having interests conflicting with those of the masses, with an unholy opposition organised against elementary reforms, with an embargo upon khaddar, with obstruction to communal equality, and with resistance to the fostering of moral virtues. These have made it abundantly clear that Swaraj cannot be won, if at all, only through the votaries of English education, the followers of the learned professions and the captains of trade or industrial magnates. New values have had to be evolved. The power of the Nation has had to be developed through the development of a sense of national consciousness in the masses living in the villages, and their confidence secured not by a mere delivery of lectures or by contributions to the Press but by a day-to-day service rendered to the people at large. Once this confidence is secured, the programme set forth by the Congress for the emancipation of the Nation will be readily followed. Swaraj may not by this process readily fall into our hands like a ripe apple, but it will soon be evi-





dent that every act of service rendered to the people is a stone, well and truly laid, in the foundations of Swaraj, and every disability removed from society in its socio-economic structure is a storey raised in building the edifice of Swaraj. The process is doubtless slow, but the results are certain and abiding. Thus has the Congress taken its message to the villages and established what we have described as village leadership.

## II

We must now say a word upon the new technique that has been brought into play in order to work out the programme of the Congress. We are as yet in the rudimentary stage of its evolution, and to study a movement while yet it is imperfect or even inchoate is perhaps as difficult and delicate a task as one may be called upon to discharge; the more so for ardent votaries thereof, who believe in its mighty potentialities and have become, therefore, the butt of ridicule by its opponents and the object of hatred by its enemies. All great movements have passed through similar stages. They are always interpreted—be it purposely or inadvertently—as the equivalent of their counterfeits, at best as but the variants of the cruder forms in which perhaps they had their beginnings. It is as if a diamond is studied as carbon with which it is chemically identical and of which it is the isomer; Satyagraha is likewise equated to mere Passive Resistance. But the two movements are substantially different, even as the scintillations of the gem in the jewel differ from the dark element of the chemist in the laboratory. Nay more, Passive Resistance and Satyagraha exhibit diametrically opposite qualities. Yet one need not be surprised that Satyagraha, though it was not initiated consciously by its founder as a kind of Passive Resistance, had been preceded earlier by some such manifestation a short time before Gandhi came into the movement, and people understood it as such. It was while Mrs. Besant was interned in 1917 that the Congress threatened Passive Resistance, but with her release, it aborted. And when Gandhi came on the scene and inaugurated a campaign of Satyagraha, first outside the Congress against the Rowlatt Acts, and next inside the Congress against the Khilaphat wrong and the Punjab Tragedy, most of the Congressmen and the public understood it merely as a revival of the aborted movement contemplated earlier.

Recent political developments have ultimately evolved a movement which in its earlier manifestations had, from time to time, assumed different aspects under different names. As *Passive Resistance*, it was a movement of bitterness and pride which had perhaps even a tinge in it of hatred and violence. As *Non-co-operation*, it was an attitude of sulky and sullen people, angry with their rulers and anxious to wound but unwilling to strike. When it was *Civil Disobedience*, it took time to emphasise the adjective equally with the noun. On the whole the idea of civility, little understood at first, gradually gained ground and paved the way for the next development of the idea to the level of *Satyagraha*. Ere long, we saw that the basis of Satyagraha was nothing short of love and non-violence. Non-violence was not merely to be a negative factor, but a positive force and was equivalent to "that love which does not burn others, but burns itself to death." When, on the basis of such a definition and



demand, we discovered by the Bardoli resile in February, 1922, that one Chauri Chaura was enough to punish the whole country instead of isolating and penalizing the local District of Gorakhpur in U.P., we discovered too how Satyagraha was not merely a physical but a truly moral and spiritual force which is exacting in its demands, and which in its nature is active, aggressive and dynamic. It has taken long for people to see correctness of the position that, if the massacre of Jallianwala-bagh perpetrated by Government could inaugurate a nation-wide movement like Satyagraha by the people, the massacre at Chauri Chaura perpetrated by the people must terminate that Satyagraha. Satyagraha is really a compendium of all the virtues known to man, for Truth is the mainspring of such virtues, and non-violence or love is its envelope. The country was thus plunged into a world of new values in which hatred and abhorrence, fear and cowardice, anger and vengeance were at once to yield place to love, courage, patience, self-suffering and chastity; in which, too, wealth is to yield place to service, and in which the enemy is not to be conquered but converted. We are taught that all fear revolves round ourselves as the centre, and when once we cast off fear and selfishness, we are able to welcome death itself. Every Satyagrahi is a seeker after Truth and must therefore, give up the fear of man, of Government, of society, of poverty and of death. Non-co-operation as a discipline, as a *Sadhana* to achieve our ends, has, therefore, become a means of training in self-sacrifice pursued in that true spirit of humility which alone begets courage and not in that spirit of pride which generates fear. Thus, in a bound, has the author of the movement sublimated and spiritualised the sordid politics of the day.

Let us study the implications of the movement a little further. It furnishes a real key to an understanding of the basis of Indian society. That basis which is epitomised in the simple *Sutra*, *Ahimsa Paramodhar-mah* and in the simple prayer, *lokaḥ samastah sukhāno bhavantu*, is a positive force which is not only self-effacing but enjoins on every one to love those that hate us, in the true spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. To do good unto him that doth you good is at best a business proposition. To be non-violent to a person who is loving and kind-hearted is to claim virtue for not being brutal or diabolical. Satyagraha is not meant to overpower Vasishta or Janaka, and when people ask in despair how non-violence can fight the physical force of the British, we ask whether Satyagraha would not be superfluous and thrown out of fight if the opponents were saints. It is our old, old concepts and values that drive us to this kind of despair. The teaching of the West that life is a survival of the fittest in which the weaker must go to the wall, has made such deep impression upon us that it has only inflamed our passions and made us im-bibe the vices of pride and its accompaniments which but engender coward-ice and violence.

Indian society is based upon the cult of Satyagraha which does not ask us to abandon the world, but infuses in us the spirit of renunciation. Once we adhere to Truth and repress our passions and purify ourselves, a love of service and spirit of humility will naturally follow. Once we sub-





due anger and practise forgiveness, non-violence will be enthroned as the only arbiter in human relations.

How shall we attain this end, by what disciplines shall we cultivate those qualities and virtues which are compendiously termed, 'Satyagraha'? The only means in *tapas*, by which is implied *Satya* and *shaucha*, *dana* and *dharma*, *dama* and *yama*, *kshama* and *daya*. To indulge the flesh is to give us over to our passions which, under the sway of pride and anger, commit us to the cult of violence and vengeance. It also promotes selfishness, with its love of wealth and pomp, and the untruthful way by which these are secured. What is wanted is a spirit of contentment, which does not mean that asceticism which abandons society, but that austerity which moderates one's wants and subdues one's passions. The new teaching liberates a volume of moral energy by which to revivify the land which has been enervated by vain philosophical teachings. It imposes on us the duty of seeking intercourse with our enemy, while withholding co-operation from him except on conditions that would ensure self-respect. It exhorts everybody to do his quota of labour as a daily sacrament and help the poor earn their food and raiment. To these ends, it is necessary for the mind to control the body, and the spirit to direct the body and the mind, so that the flesh craves for nothing which the intellect condemns and thought does not dwell upon aught that emotion forbids. What can be a better guide or means for the attainment of these ends than abstinence, which in relation to food and flesh is *fasting*, which in relation to thought and speech is *silence*, and which in relation to passions and emotions is *celibacy*?

When, therefore, people revile the tortures of the flesh that *fasting* to them means, when they jibe at that *mauna* (silence) which to them is a mere mockery, and when they talk with levity about the *Brahmacharya* which to them is simply impossible, they but indulge in that variety of criticism bordering on ridicule, which has been the inevitable lot of all progressive movements in the early period of their development. But all progressive movements have survived such cavil and abuse and regenerated the ideals of rising generations. Even so has public life in India chastened and purified during the past 15 years.

When all is said, there is still an element of doubt in the potency or appropriateness of non-violence as a factor in the settlement of political disputes. The one argument against those to whom doubt occurs naturally is, that circumstanced as we are, non-violence, while it is unassailable as a principle in life, is unquestionable and unquestioned as a policy. The task of infusing life into a large mass of subject people like the Indians would be impossible, were it not for the avowal of, and adherence to, the principle of non-violence. People there are who would argue that non-violent Non-co-operation has failed, but no one has undertaken to bring success in one bound, notably when the mass of the population has been slow in taking to the new movement. Non-violence is the only abiding principle which can bring peace and contentment to two opposing parties, for, when once violence is installed on the throne of arbitrament, it is a weapon that can be used, as has already been pointed out, alike by the



victor and the vanquished, leaving no end to vendetta and making life move eternally in a vicious circle.

### III

What, then, is the secret of this abiding influence of Gandhi over millions of men, women and children? He was born into an age when there is not merely political commotion but political chaos. "It would seem to be the will of God", as Lowell puts it, "that from time to time the manhood of nations like that of individuals should be tried by great dangers or great opportunities. If the manhood be there, it makes the great opportunity out of the great danger; if it be not there, then the great danger out of the great opportunity." It was thus that Gandhi had made his great opportunity out of great danger and had inaugurated a new revolution, not indeed a sanguinary one, but one that invites suffering instead of inflicting it, and seeks to convert the enemy, not to conquer him. He has preached from housestops the right, yea, the duty of a civil rebellion, while recognizing equally the right and duty of governments to hand men for it. He has set before himself not merely the immediate object of abolishing slavery in India, but the utter extirpation of all dogmas which seek to justify it in any shape,—physical, political, or economic,—in the wide world. He has shown that subjection and slavery are a moral wrong, a political blunder and practical misfortune. To this end, he has all along addressed the intelligence of men, never their prejudice, or passion,—their sense of right, never their selfishness or ignorance. To him a moral wrong can never be local in its effects, and principles alien to Truth and Non-violence can never result in peace or prosperity to a Nation.

Now let us see how the high-sounding principles elaborated in these pages have operated in their application to our day-to-day politics. For the first time we saw this principle brought into play at the Amritsar Congress in the year 1919, when Gandhi insisted upon the Congress condemning the violence of the people in killing four Englishmen and burning the National Bank and other buildings. The Subjects Committee of the Congress threw out the proposition late at night and Gandhi declared that he would have to leave the Congress. That was not really a threat, as the term is popularly understood, but an indication of an attitude which was inevitable according to his principles, and the proposition was accepted, though grudgingly, by the Subjects Committee the next day. It was then that Gandhi began to din into the ears of the Congress what non-violence really meant. The Congress, to which Swaraj meant the driving out of the English, was told that Englishmen were and would be welcome as fellow-citizens in India, and not a hair on the foreigner's head should be touched. Lo and behold! the test for the Nation came and the Nation found wanting at Chauri Chaura. But the Congress did not despair. When the movement was withdrawn, loud protests came from influential quarters. But Gandhi was adamant. The Satyagrahi does not fear foes or friends or even colleagues. He fears Truth. Gandhi had, therefore, virtually suspended the movement for a period of six years. The later developments and happenings are well known and bear testimony to the





potency of Satyagraha. Though they sound like the events of a fabled past, like the quick-moving scenes of a day-dream, yet they are but transposition into practice of the sublime teachings of Satyagraha applied to life as a composite whole.

A graph of our progress during the past fifty years shows its own rises and falls. More correctly may the progress be described as a spiral. We are repeatedly coming upon the same programme,—of Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education and Swaraj of 1906. It was reiterated in 1917, but at a higher level—the level of Passive Resistance; the same was repeated in 1919-21,—on the still higher level of Civil Disobedience. (Then we had the movement of 1930-34, on a yet higher level of Satyagraha. The course of ascent is like that of a hill railway where you clear the curves, and, as you pass higher and higher, you come upon the lower curves of the spiral until you attain your height. The course covered comprises a hard drive up-hill and an easy drive down-hill. Satyagraha representing a period of strenuous struggle, and Council-entry, equally a struggle though less strenuous, adopted during the intervals of fight, have alternated with each other. The spiral is doubtless running its long-winded course and we have yet to attain to the height of our ascent—Swaraj.)

But if Swaraj is a process, not a result, an attempt, not an attainment, a direction, not a destiny, to use language analogous to Lord Irwin's adopted by him before the truce of 1931 was concluded, then no one can ask the architect who is still ramming the concrete of foundations, why the edifice is not ready. The foundations and basement of even a brick-and-mortar building are built, and left to settle for a year or two. How much longer may the foundations of Swaraj not rest there to get consolidated, in order that they may bear the weight of the edifice to be raised on them!

We have described how all these years we have struggled on. But our remedy is clear. Let us make the home the centre of craft life, and the village the centre of Indian Nationalism, and let us make both as far as possible self-contained and self-contented. Let us carve out our Nation with equality as the base and liberty as the summit and fraternity as the cementing factor; not indeed that equality which is disrupting and fissiparous, nor indeed that other equality which is all vegetation on a level, a society of big spears of grass and small oaks, a neighbourhood of jealousies emasculating each other, but equality which is, civilly, all aptitudes having equal opportunities, politically, all votes having equal weight, and, religiously, all consciences having equal rights. Vast fields of public and popular activity are thus opened out and the collective power is employed so as to balance the 'ought' and the 'have', to proportion enjoyment to effort, and gratification to need. In one word, let us evolve from the age-long social structure, for the benefit of those who suffer and those who are ignorant, more light to our homes and more comfort to their inmates. The Congress has recognised this to be the first of all natural obligations, yet the first of all political necessities, and therefore guarantees unto all, these two inalienable estates which every young man inherits in life,—



## THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

namely, the labour which makes him free and the thought which makes him noble.)

Thus has the stream of the Congress that had its humble origin in Bombay in 1885, flowed on for half a century,—now as a narrow channel and now as a wide river, here cutting across wood and forest and there eroding hill and dale, at one place, pooling its freshes into a bed of serene and even stagnant waters, and at another, presenting a mighty and roaring torrent,—all the while, swelling its volume and enriching its content by an unceasing flood of annual downpour of new ideas and new ideals and waiting, with pious faith, to realize its destiny by the final absorption of its national culture, integrated and purified, into the wider and vaster culture of inter-nationalism—or Cosmo-nationality.





## APPENDIX I

### POST-WAR REFORMS

[Below we print the Memorandum submitted to H. E. the Viceroy by nineteen additional members of the Imperial Legislative Council with regard to post-war reforms. In all there are twenty-seven non-official members, of whom two are Anglo-Indians, who were not consulted for obvious reasons, and three were away. Three Indians refused to sign: (1) Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhuri, (2) Mr. Abdur Rahim and (3) Sirdar Bahadur Sirdar Sunder Singh Majithia.]

There is no doubt that the termination of the War will see a great advance in the ideals of Government all over the civilised world and especially in the British Empire, which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small Nationalities and is pouring forth its richest blood and treasure in upholding the cause of justice and humanity in the international relations of the world. India has borne her part in this struggle and cannot remain unaffected by the new spirit of change for a better state of things. Expectations have been raised in this country and hopes held out that, after the War, the problems of Indian administration will be looked at from a new angle of vision. The people of India have good reasons to be grateful to England for the great progress in her material resources and the widening of her intellectual and political outlook under British Rule and for the steady, if slow, advance in her National life commencing with the Charter Act of India of 1833. Up to 1909, the Government of India was conducted by a bureaucracy almost entirely non-Indian in its composition and not responsible to the people of India. The reforms of 1909 for the first time introduced an Indian element in the direction of affairs in the administration of India. This element was of a very limited character. The Indian people accepted it as an indication on the part of the Government of a desire to admit the Indians into the inner councils of the Indian Empire. So far as the Legislative Councils are concerned, the numbers of non-official members were merely enlarged with increased facilities for debate and interpellation. The Supreme Legislative Council retained an absolute official majority, and in the Provincial Legislative Councils, where a non-official majority was allowed, such majority included nominated members and the European representatives. In measures largely affecting the people, whether of legislation or taxation, by which Europeans were not directly affected the European members would naturally support the Government, and the nominated members, being nominees of Government, would be inclined to take the same side. Past experience has shown that this has actually happened on various occasions. The non-official majorities, therefore, in the Provincial Councils have proved largely illusory and give no real power to the representatives of the people. The Legislative Councils, whether Supreme or Provincial, are at present nothing but advisory bodies without any power of effective control over the Government, Imperial or Provincial. The people or their representatives are practically as little associated with the real government of the country as they were before the reforms, except for the introduction of the Indian element in the Executive Councils, where again the nomination rests entirely with the Government, the people having no voice in the selection of the Indian members.

The object which the Government had in view in introducing the reforms of 1909 was, as expressed by the Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons, on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill (1st April, 1909), that "it was most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are not



mere automations, the wires of which are pulled by the official hierarchy." This object, it is submitted, has not been attained. Apart from this question of the constitution of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the people labour under certain grave disabilities, which not only prevent the utilisation, but also lead to the wastage, of what is best in them, and are positively derogatory to their sense of National self-respect. The Arms Act which excludes from its operation Europeans and Anglo-Indians and applies only to the pure natives of the country, the disqualification of Indians for forming or joining Volunteer Corps and their exclusion from the commissioned ranks of the army, are disabilities which are looked upon with an irritating sense of racial differentiation. It would be bad enough if these were mere disabilities. Restrictions and prohibitions regarding the possession and use of arms have tended to emasculate the civil population in India and expose them to serious danger. The position of Indians in India is practically this, that they have no real part or share in the direction of the Government of the country, and are placed under very great and galling disabilities from which the other members of the British Empire are exempt, and which have reduced them to a state of utter helplessness. The existence, moreover, of the system of indentured emigration gives the British Colonies and the outside world the impression that Indians, as a whole, are no better than indentured coolies, who are looked upon as very little, if at all, above the slave. The present state of things makes the Indians feel that, though theoretically they are equal subjects of the King, they hold a very inferior position in the British Empire. Other Asiatic races also hold the same, if not a worse, view about India and her status in the Empire. Humiliating as this position of inferiority is to the Indian mind, it is almost unbearable to the youth of India whose outlook is broadened by education and travel in foreign parts where they come in contact with other free races. In the face of these grievances and disabilities what has sustained the people is the hope and faith inspired by promises and assurances of fair and equal treatment which have been held out from time to time by our Sovereigns and British statesmen of high standing. In the crisis we are now going through, the Indian people have sunk domestic differences between themselves and the Government, and have faithfully and loyally stood by the Empire. The Indian soldiers were eager to go to the battlefields of Europe, not as mercenary troops but as free citizens of the British Empire which required their services, and her civilian population was animated by one desire, namely, to stand by England in the hour of her need. Peace and tranquillity reigned throughout India when she was practically denuded of British and Indian troops. The Prime Minister of England, while voicing the sentiments of the English people in regard to India's part in this great War, spoke of Indians as "the joint and equal custodians of one common interest and future. India does not claim any reward for her loyalty, but she has a right to expect that the want of confidence on the part of Government, to which she not unnaturally ascribes her present state, should now be a thing of the past, and that she should no longer occupy a position of subordination but one of comradeship. This would assure the Indian people that England is ready and willing to help them to attain Self-Government under the aegis of the British Crown, and thus discharge the noble mission which she has undertaken and to which she has so often given voluntary expression through her rulers and statesmen. What is wanted is not merely good Government or efficient administration, but Government that is acceptable to the people because it is responsible to them. This is what, India understands, would constitute the changed angle of vision.

If, after the termination of the War, the position of India practically remains what it was before, and there is no material change in it will undoubtedly cause bitter disappointment and great discontent in the country, and the beneficent effects of participation in common danger, overcome by common effort, will soon disappear, leaving no record behind save the painful memory of unrealised expectations. We feel sure that the Government is also alive to the situation and is contemplating measures of reform in the administration of the country. We feel that we





should avail ourselves of this opportunity to respectfully offer to Government our humble suggestions as to the lines on which these reforms should proceed. They must, in our opinion, go to the root of the matter. They must give to the people real and effective participation in the Government of the country, and also remove those irritating disabilities as regards the possession of arms and a military career, which indicate want of confidence in the people and place them in a position of inferiority and helplessness. With this view, we would take the liberty to suggest the following measures for consideration and adoption:

1. In all the Executive Councils, Provincial and Imperial, half the number of members should be Indians; the European element in the Executive Councils should, as far as possible, be nominated from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England, so that India may have the benefit of a wider outlook and larger experience of the outside world. It is not absolutely essential that the members of the Executive Councils, Indians or Europeans should have experience of actual administration, for, as in the case of ministers in England, the assistance of the permanent officials of the departments is always available to them. As regards Indians, we venture to say that a sufficient number of qualified Indians, who can worthily fill the office of members of the Executive Councils and hold portfolios, is always available. Our short experience in this direction has shown how Indians like Sir S. P. Sinha, Sir Syed Ali Imam, the late Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Sir Shams-ul-Huda and Sir San-karan Nair have maintained a high level of ability in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, it is well known that the Native States, where Indians have opportunities, have produced renowned administrators like Sir Salar Jang, Sir T. Madhav Rao, Sir Sheshadri Aiyar, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, not to mention the present administrators in the various Native States of India. The statutory obligation, now existing, that three of the members of the Supreme Executive Council shall be selected from the public services in India, and similar provisions with regard to Provincial Councils, should be removed. The elected representatives of the people should have a voice in the selection of the Indian members of the Executive Councils and for that purpose a principle of election should be adopted.

2. All the Legislative Councils in India should have a substantial majority of elected representatives. These representatives, we feel sure, will watch and safeguard the interests of the masses and the agricultural population with whom they are in closer touch than any European officer, however sympathetic, the latter can possibly be. The proceedings of the various Legislative Councils and the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League bear ample testimony to the solicitude of the educated Indians for the welfare of the masses and their acquaintance with their wants and wishes. The franchise should be broadened and extended directly to the people; Muslims or Hindus, whereas they are in a minority, being given proper and adequate representation, having regard to their numerical strength and position.

3. The total number of the members of the Supreme Council should be not less than 150, and of the Provincial Councils not less than 100 for the major Provinces, and not less than 60 to 75 for the minor Provinces.

4. The Budget should be passed in the shape of money bills, fiscal autonomy being conceded to India.

5. The Imperial Legislative Council should have power to legislate on, and discuss and pass resolutions relating to, all matters of Indian administration, and the Provincial Councils should have similar powers with regard to Provincial administrations, save and except that the direction of military affairs, of foreign relations, declarations of war, the making of peace, and the entering into treaties, other than commercial, should not be vested in the Government of India. As a safeguard, the Governor-General-in-Council or the Governor-in-Council, as the case may be, should have the right of veto, which, however, should be exercised subject to certain conditions and limitations.



THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

6. The Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, hold in relation to the Government of India a position similar to that which the Secretary of State for the Colonies holds in relation to the Colonies. The Secretary of State should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian. The salaries of the Secretary and the Under-Secretaries should be placed on the British estimates.

7. In any scheme of Imperial Federation, India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of the Self-Governing Dominions.

8. The Provincial Governments should be made autonomous, as stated in the Government of India's despatch dated 25th August, 1911.

9. The United Provinces, as well as the other major Provinces should have a Governor brought from the United Kingdom and should have an Executive Council.

10. A full measure of Local Self-Government should be immediately granted.

11. The right to carry arms should be granted to Indians on the same conditions as to Europeans.

12. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers and units of a territorial army established in India.

13. Commissions in the army should be given to Indian youths under conditions similar to those applicable to Europeans.

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D. E. Wacha.

Bhupendranath Basu.

Bishan Dutt Shukul.

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V. S. Srinivasan.

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Ibrahim Rahimtoola.

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Mir Asad Ali.

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